



Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

24 May 2023

A hybrid meeting of the **Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston, EH54 6FF** on **Thursday 1 June 2023** at **3:00pm**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members must declare any interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda items and the nature of their interests.
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held on 28 March 2023 (herewith).
5. Housing Need Improvement Programme & Sharing Spaces Update - presentation by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
6. Housing Turnover January to March 2023 - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
7. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023/24 Update - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).

8. Performance Reporting - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
9. CIH Scotland 2023 Housing Festive - A Review - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
10. Affordable Housing Delivery Programme - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
11. Housing Asset Management Plan 2023 - 2028 - presentation and report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
12. Draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 - presentation and report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
13. Workplan (herewith).

NOTE **For further information please contact Lorraine McGrorty on 01506 281609 or email lorraine.mcgrorty@westlothian.gov.uk**



CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (2021)

This form is a reminder and an aid. It is not a substitute for understanding the Code of Conduct and guidance.

Interests must be declared at the meeting, in public.

Look at every item of business and consider if there is a connection.

If you see a connection, decide if it amounts to an interest by applying the objective test.

The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection does not amount to an interest then you have nothing to declare and no reason to withdraw.

If the connection amounts to an interest, declare it as soon as possible and leave the meeting when the agenda item comes up.

When you declare an interest, identify the agenda item and give enough information so that the public understands what it is and why you are declaring it.

Even if the connection does not amount to an interest you can make a statement about it for the purposes of transparency.

More detailed information is on the next page.

Look at each item on the agenda, consider if there is a “connection”, take advice if necessary from appropriate officers in plenty of time. A connection is any link between the item of business and:-

- you
- a person you are associated with (e.g., employer, business partner, domestic partner, family member)
- a body or organisation you are associated with (e.g., outside body, community group, charity)

Anything in your Register of Interests is a connection unless one of the following exceptions applies.

A connection does not exist where:-

- you are a council tax payer, a rate payer, or a council house tenant, including at budget-setting meetings
- services delivered to the public are being considered, including at budget-setting meetings
- councillors’ remuneration, expenses, support services or pensions are being considered
- you are on an outside body through a council appointment or nomination unless it is for regulatory business or you have a personal conflict due to your connections, actions or legal obligations
- you hold a view in advance on a policy issue, have discussed that view, have expressed that view in public, or have asked for support for it

If you see a connection then you have to decide if it is an “interest” by applying the objective test. The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection amounts to an interest then:-

- declare the interest in enough detail that members of the public will understand what it is
- leave the meeting room (physical or online) when that item is being considered
- do not contact colleagues participating in the item of business

Even if decide your connection is not an interest you can voluntarily make a statement about it for the record and for the purposes of transparency.

The relevant documents are:-

- [Councillors’ Code of Conduct, part 5](#)
- [Standards Commission Guidance, paragraphs 129-166](#)
- [Advice note for councillors on how to declare interests](#)

If you require assistance, contact:-

- James Millar, Interim Monitoring Officer and Governance Manager, 01506 281613, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk
- Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor and Depute Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk
- Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621
committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

January 2022

MINUTE of MEETING of the HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 28 MARCH 2023.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Alison Adamson, Robert De Bold, Jim Dickson, Andrew McGuire and Kirsteen Sullivan (substituting for Councillor Tony Pearson)

Apologies – Councillors Tony Boyle and Tony Pearson (substituted by Kirsteen Sullivan)

In attendance

Julie Whitelaw, Lead Officer, Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services, West Lothian Council

Graeme Struthers, Depute Chief Executive, West Lothian Council

Marjory Mackie, Housing Strategy Manager, West Lothian Council

Robert Smith, Housing Investment Manager, West Lothian Council

Kirsty Weir, Service Development Officer, West Lothian Council

Silence Chihuri, Third Sector Representative

Jessie Duncan, Tenants' Panel Representative

Pippa Plevin, Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 26 January 2023 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services setting out the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services indicators that were the responsibility of the panel.

It was recommended that the panel note the current performance on Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. PROPERTY TURNOVER OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2022

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

the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing members of property turnover for Quarter 3 of 2022/23 (1 October to 31 December 2022).

In response to a suggestion, the the Head of Housing undertook to include an additional column in the quarterly turnover table to show the actual movement position against the previous quarter in future reports.

It was recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for Quarter 3 of 2022/23 and in particular note:

1. The increase in property lets for Quarter 3 2022/23 compared to the same period the previous year;
2. That of the 49 communities in West Lothian, 17 had had no properties available for let throughout Quarter 3 of 2022/23; and
3. That 42% of lets throughout the quarter had been allocated to people who were homeless.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. UPDATE ON HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMMES FOR SCOTLAND: AREA BASED SCHEMES (HEEPS: ABS) 2022/23 AND 2023/24

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the progress made for the 2022/23 HEEPS:@ABS programme of External Wall Insulation (EWI) and providing details of the proposed 2023/24 programme.

It was recommended that the panel note:-

1. That the final funding allocation for the 2022/23 HEEPS:ABS programme was £1,044,085.72;
2. The progress made on the 2022/23 HEEPS:ABS programme;
3. That it was proposed to continue to provide HEEPS:ABS funding to home owners in the Dedridge area; and
4. The continuation of delegated powers to the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services for non-substantive changes to the HEEPS:ABS programme.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. UPDATE TO ENERGY COMPANY OBLIGATION (ECO) SCHEME FLEXIBLE ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT OF INTENT.

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services presenting an updated Statement of Intent for West Lothian Council for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) fifth iteration (ECO4) and updated Flexible Eligibility scheme criteria.

It was recommended that the panel note the following recommendation which would be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

1. Notes that the UK Government had updated the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Scheme with the new iteration known as ECO4 and ECO-flex;
2. Notes that the qualifying criteria for ECO-flex was no longer defined by Local Authorities and guidance was set by OFGEM and must continue to be published in a Statement of Intent document;
3. Notes that ECO-flex would still apply to owner occupier and private rented households;
4. Notes that publishing a Statement of Intent would allow for increased numbers of households to benefit from ECO support to improve the energy efficiency of their home;
5. Notes that publishing a Statement of Intent would help to tackle levels of fuel poverty in West Lothian; and
6. Notes that the proposed Statement of Intent would be presented for approval to the Council Executive on 25 April 2023 and would be published on the council's website thereafter.

Decision

To note the terms of the report which would be submitted to Council Executive for approval.

7. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

Housing Need Improvement Programme & Sharing Spaces Update

Housing Services PDSP – 1st June 2023

Improvement Programme

Programme of improvement sprint projects commenced in January with conclusion and delivery of improvement actions throughout 2023.

Sprint Projects

- Allocations - complete
- B&B management - underway
- Furniture, storage & repairs - underway
- Housing Options - complete
- Income Management - complete
- Temporary Accommodation – underway
- Homeless Services Support – June 2023
- 3rd sector parties & commissioned services – July 2023

Allocations

Headlines

- Method - shadowing, process mapping, data cleanse and customer feedback
- Action plan agreed and implemented
- Backlog reduced from 18 months to 3 weeks – 288% improvement in productivity
- Performance review undertaken – refocus on core business
- Review of application suspension process underway – should cut complaints and delays
- Once backlogs cleared, opportunities for more joint work on tasks to expedite applications
- Wider group of staff can process minor changes

Next Steps

- Review communication process
- Continue to reduce application process time – aim to process all applications within 5-10 days
- New training and briefing for staff and stakeholders to be rolled out

B&B Management

Headlines

- Accommodation officers in hotel settings along with TSO support
- Review of management policy in hotels undertaken
- Behavioural process in hotel settings with warning letters in use and recording system
- Meeting with hotel providers, agreed core standards by all providers
- Benefits realised through improved provider relationship management – operational and financial
- Improved financial control – cancellation of unused rooms

Next Steps

- Review of arrears process for B&B charges including recharges for damages
- Review of guidance for all staff on messages around hotel provision
- Liaise with community police service for support within hotel settings
- Use of rapid access flats within emergency accommodation to reduce hotel use

Furniture, Storage and Repairs

Headlines

- Furniture spec for Temporary Accommodation reviewed and agreed – standard basic package for bedding, seating and cooking
- Many people do have their own furniture and goods – cost saving on provision and storage
- Review of current furniture storage cases undertaken and monitoring in place
- Specification of what can be stored along with a cap on amount of storage provided by WLC developed and agreed with Legal Services
- **Additional items can still be provided, they just will not form part of the core package**

Next Steps

- Revised specification for TT furniture rolled out with briefing notes for staff and FAQ for customers
- Revise furniture storage process – starting/ending provision to find further efficiencies
- Review current spec for repairs within temporary accommodation and see if there is scope for this to be reduced with additional management to limit non-wear and tear damages

Housing Options

Headlines

- Shadowing undertaken and evaluation of main challenges from front line
- Action plan signed – operational shift to earliest possible prevention
- Drop in duty revised and replaced with appointment/roofless service – launching 15th May
- Extensive customer information packs developed
- Monthly quality audits as part of all staff supervisions
- Discussion held with all in TT to refresh app and discuss realistic options
- New repayment options for those receiving help with deposits
- Specialist provision for youth, domestic abuse and SHORE redesigned to refer early for support

Next Steps

- Briefing of all customer facing staff on new appointment and roofless system – underway

Income Management

Headlines

- Council Executive agreement given on 7th February to index the nightly B&B charge to the LHA rate going forward. New nightly charge of £16.11 introduced.
- Void Improvement Plan has been developed to reduce the current backlog of voids and decrease the void period and subsequent void rent loss

Next Steps

- Reverse current practice of not pursuing former temporary tenancy arrears
- Review of council tax charges for temporary accommodation
- Recharging for deliberate damage to accommodation

Arising Issues

- Condition of temporary accommodation likely to deteriorate if tenants unable to properly heat homes – will mean longer void periods and loss of income.
- Cost of living rises are likely to have an impact on recovery and collection of rent.

Temporary Accommodation

Headlines

- In-flight – shadowing and best practice gathering ongoing
- Shadowing undertaken of key tasks and evaluation of core challenges impacting effective tenancy management
- Key pressure areas identified – availability and turnover, income management, damages
- New patch system for officers – similar to Housing Operations

Next Steps

- Tenancy sustainment to begin in temporary accommodation – benefits to mainstream
- Links with Social Policy on support for high tariff cases
- Housing 1st – new workstream for those highest tariff cases

Risks and Challenges Arising

- Cost savings for 2023/24 and beyond will be challenging as a result of rising demand and additional workloads
- Continued use of B&B at increased cost for more people, offsetting successful preventions and savings achieved
- Lack of confidence in security and affordability of private sector provision
- Increasing legal challenges from SHELTER/CLAO
- Push from NHS for hospital releases – lack of adapted properties
- Increasing behavioural challenges from a number of clientele
- Perception vs reality
- RRTP funding due to expire next year
- Staff recruitment and retention

Programme Management

- Designed to achieve savings of over £900k to control rising costs, improve performance and customer journeys
- Aligns improvement with actions arising from audit, complaints and WLAM
- Strong focus on embedding prevention and avoiding homelessness as per RRTP
- Ensures we deliver against statutory duties and those most in need
- Support sprint – impact on those with sustainability challenges such as low income, addictions and behavioural issues/disorders
- 3rd party provisioning – potential for savings through improved contract management and impacts on SP and other services
- Clarity of focus – sticking to root cause/programme and resisting temptation to allow scope drift into firefighting

Update on Sharing Spaces

- Council Executive agreed to additional sharing spaces to alleviate pressures of young people over-represented in B&B IN Nov 2022
- An additional 30 OMAS purchases of 2 bedroom properties approved
- These will be converted into shared accommodation of 60 spaces
- Separate, private bedrooms, with shared kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Offered as an option – not forced, and does not count as a full offer under the Allocations Policy if refused
- Reliant on availability of suitable, affordable properties in acceptable condition being on the market
- Upon opening of new Young Persons Supported Accommodation in Livingston, these will be returned to entire property for mainstream stock
- Managed by staff within Housing Need in Accommodation Team and support staff
- 4 completions to date, with 7 under offer

Questions?

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

PROPERTY TURNOVER JANUARY TO MARCH 2023

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the panel of property turnover for Quarter 4 of 2022/23 (1 January to 31 March 2023).

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for Quarter 4 of 2022/23 and in particular to note:

1. The decrease in property lets for Quarter 4 2022/23 compared to the same period last year;
2. Of the 49 communities in West Lothian, 21 had no properties available for let throughout Quarter 4 of 2022/23; and
3. 53% of lets throughout the quarter were allocated to homeless applicants.

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 1 January to 31 March 2023 was 152 compared to the same quarter last year when 167 properties were let. Of the 152 lets, 10 of them were due to exceptional circumstances and 34 of them were new build properties. Details of all lets, their area and property sizes are provided in Appendix 1 and 2. Council stock figures by Ward are detailed in Appendix 3. Applicants can choose from a total of 49 communities.

The main points to note for Quarter 4 are:

- The communities with the highest percentage of total lets were Deans with 22 lets (15.5%); Whitburn with 21 lets (14.8%); and Ladywell with 12 lets (8.5%).
- Nine communities had one mainstream property available to let – Bridgend, Dechmont, Winchburgh, Alderstone, East Calder, Kirknewton, Addiewell, Stoneyburn and Whitesdie.
- Eight communities had between two and four properties available to let – Linlithgow, Uphall, Dedridge, Pumpherston, Polbeth, Seafield, Wester Inch and Blackridge.
- There were 4 sheltered housing properties let in the quarter;

Across Quarter 4, the following 21 communities had no properties becoming available.

No	Community	Number of properties remaining Q4	Number of properties remaining Q3
1	Bellsquarry	4	4
2	Breich	67	67
3	Craigshill	3	3
4	East Whitburn	45	45
5	Ecclesmachan	4	4
6	Eliburn	273	273
7	Greenrigg	104	104
8	Howden	22	22
9	Kirkton	14	14
10	Linlithgowbridge	84	84
11	Livingston Village	8	8
12	Longridge	91	91
13	Mid Calder	55	55
14	Murieston	42	42
15	Newton	12	12
16	Philpstoun	25	25
17	Threemiletown	6	6
18	Torphichen	26	26

19	Uphall Station	113	113
20	Westfield	69	69
21	Wilkieston	5	5

D2 Type of property

The majority of properties that were available for letting in Quarter 4 were Cottage types at 74 (49%) followed by Four in a Block at 36 (24%) and Flats at 24 (16%), there were also 14 Maisonettes (9%) and 4 Sheltered Housing lets (2%).

In terms of property size, 51% of the lets were two-bedroom properties (77 Lets); 21% were one-bedroom properties (32 lets); 19% were three-bedroom properties (29 Lets); 5% were four-bedroom properties (8 Lets); and there were 6 five-bedroom properties let during the quarter.

D3 Applicants

The 152 properties let in Quarter 4 were allocated in accordance with the council's Allocations Policy.

Details on which applicant groups the properties in Quarter 4 were let to is detailed in the table below.

Group	Number of Lets	Percentage Met
Homeless (HL)	80	53%
Transfer (TL)	27	18%
General (GN)	42	28%
Housing with Care	3	1%
Unsatisfactory Housing (UH)	0	
Out with (OW)	0	
Total	152	

E. Conclusion

The report provides information on the property turnover and lets in Quarter 4 of 2022/23. The report highlights that there has been a decrease in available lets when compared to the same quarter of 2021/22 and 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 – Quarter 4 Lets excluding Exceptional Circumstances

Appendix 2 – Quarter 4 Exceptional Circumstances Lets

Appendix 3 – Total Housing Stock per area

Contact Person: sarah.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk – Tel No- 01506 281877

JULIE WHITELAW

INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

Date of Meeting: **1 June 2023**

Appendix 1: Quarter 4 Lets excluding Exceptional Circumstances

Lets – January to March (excluding Exceptional Circumstances)								
Ward	Community	House Type	Number of Bedrooms					
			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Armadale	<i>Armadale</i>	Cottage	-	-	2	-	-	2
		Four in Block	-	3	1	-	-	4
	Armadale Total		-	3	3	-	-	6
	<i>Blackridge</i>	Maisonette	-	-	2	-	-	2
	Blackridge Total		-	-	2	-	-	2
	Ward Total		-	3	5	-	-	8
Bathgate	<i>Bathgate</i>	Cottage	-	1	2	-	-	3
		Four in Block	-	2	-	-	-	2
		Sheltered	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Bathgate Total		1	3	2	-	-	6
	<i>Boghall</i>	Cottage	-	3	-	-	-	3
		Sheltered	2	-	-	-	-	2
	Boghall Total		2	3	-	-	-	5
	Wester Inch	Cottage	-	2	-	-	-	2
		Flat	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Wester Inch Total		-	3	-	-	-	3
	Whiteside	Four in Block	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Whiteside Total		-	1	-	-	-	1
	Ward Total		3	10	2	-	-	15

Ward	Community	House Type	Number of Bedrooms					
			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Breich Valley	<i>Addiewell</i>	Four in Block	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Addiewell Total		-	1	-	-	-	1
	Fauldhouse	Cottage	-	1	2	-	-	3
		Flat	1	1	-	-	-	2
		Four in Block	1	4	-	-	-	5
	Fauldhouse Total		2	6	2	-	-	10
	Polbeth	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Flat	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Polbeth Total		-	1	1	-	-	2
	Stoneyburn	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Stoneyburn Total		-	1	-	-	-	1
	West Calder	Cottage	-	8	-	-	-	8
		Four in Block	1	-	-	-	-	8
	West Calder Total		1	8	-	-	-	9
	Ward Total		3	17	3	-	-	23
Broxburn	<i>Broxburn</i>	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Flat	2	4	-	-	-	6
		Four in Block	-	3	-	-	-	3
		Maisonette	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Broxburn Total		2	9	-	-	-	11
	Dechmont	Cottage	-	-	1	-	-	1
	Dechmont Total		-	-	1	-	-	1
	Uphall	Four in Block	2	-	1	-	-	3
		Flat	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Uphall Total		3	-	1	-	-	4
	Winchburgh	Cottage	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Winchburgh Total		1	-	-	-	-	1
	Ward Total		6	9	2	-	-	17

Ward	Community	House Type	Number of Bedrooms					
			1	2	3	4	5	Total
East Livingston	<i>East Calder</i>	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
	<i>East Calder Total</i>		-	1	-	-	-	1
	<i>Kirknewton</i>	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
	<i>Kirknewton Total</i>		-	1	-	-	-	1
	<i>Pumpherston</i>	<i>Four in Block</i>	2	-	-	-	-	2
	<i>Pumpherston Total</i>		2	-	-	-	-	2
	<i>Ward Total</i>		2	2	-	-	-	4
Linlithgow	<i>Bridgend</i>	Four in Block	-	-	-	1	-	1
	<i>Bridgend Total</i>		-	-	-	1	-	1
	<i>Linlithgow</i>	Cottage	-	2	-	-	-	2
		Flat	1	-	-	-	-	1
	<i>Linlithgow Total</i>		1	2	-	-	-	3
	<i>Ward Total</i>		1	2	-	1	-	4
North Livingston	<i>Alderstone</i>	Four in Block	1	-	-	-	-	1
	<i>Alderstone Total</i>		1	-	-	-	-	1
	<i>Deans</i>	Cottage	1	1	10	6	1	19
		Flat	1	1	-	-	-	2
		Maisonette	-	1	-	-	-	1
	<i>Deans Total</i>		2	3	10	6	1	22
	<i>Knightsridge</i>	Cottage	-	3	2	-	-	5
	<i>Knightsridge Total</i>		-	3	2	-	-	5
	<i>Ward Total</i>		3	6	12	6	1	28

Ward	Community	House Type	Number of Bedrooms					Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
South Livingston	Dedridge	Flat	-	-	2	-	-	2
		Maisonette	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Dedridge Total		1	-	2	-	-	3
	Ladywell	Cottage	-	2	-	-	1	3
		Flat	4	-	-	-	-	4
		Four in Block	2	2	-	-	-	4
		Maisonette	-	1	-	-	-	1
	Ladywell Total		6	5	-	-	1	12
	Ward Total		7	5	2	-	1	15
Whitburn	Blackburn	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Flat	-	2	-	-	-	2
		Four in Block	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Maisonette	-	-	-	1	-	1
	Blackburn Total		-	4	-	1	-	5
	Seafield	Cottage	1	-	1	-	-	2
			1	-	1	-	-	2
	Whitburn	Cottage	2	4				6
		Flat	1	1				2
		Four in Block	2	4				6
		Maisonette	-	6				6
		Sheltered	1	-	-	-	-	1
	Whitburn Total		6	15	-	-	-	21
	Ward Total		7	19	1	1	-	28
	Total		32	73	27	8	2	142

Appendix 3 – Quarter 4 Exceptional Circumstances lets

Exceptional Circumstances Lets – January to March								
Ward	Community	House Type	Number of Bedrooms					
			1	2	3	4	5	Total
Breich Valley	<i>West Calder</i>	Cottage	-	2	-	-	2	4
	<i>West Calder Total</i>		-	2	-	-	2	4
	<i>Ward Total</i>		-	2	-	-	2	4
North Livingston	<i>Deans</i>	Cottage	-	-	-	-	1	1
	<i>Deans Total</i>		-	-	-	-	1	1
	<i>Knightsridge</i>	Cottage	-	-	-	-	1	1
	<i>Knightsridge Total</i>		-	-	-	-	1	1
	<i>Ward Total</i>		-	-	-	-	2	2
Whitburn	<i>Blackburn</i>	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Flat	-	-	1	-	-	1
	<i>Blackburn Total</i>		-	1	1	-	-	2
	<i>Whitburn</i>	Cottage	-	1	-	-	-	1
		Flat	-	-	1	-	-	1
	<i>Whitburn Total</i>		-	1	1	-	-	2
	<i>Ward Total</i>		-	2	2	-	-	4
Total			-	4	2	-	4	10

Appendix 3 – Council Stock Numbers (Mainstream Properties) – 31st March 2023

Ward	Name	Number of Properties
1	BRIDGEND	216
	LINLITHGOW	339
	LINLITHGOW BRIDGE	84
	NEWTON	12
	PHILPSTOUN	25
	THREEMILETOWN	6
		682
2	BROXBURN	865
	CRAIGSHILL	3
	DECHMONT	27
	ECCLESMACHAN	4
	UPHALL	207
	WINCHBURGH	278
		1,384
3	ALDERSTONE	45
	DEANS	592
	ELIBURN	273
	KIRKTON	14
	KNIGHTSRIDGE	629
	LIVINGSTON VILLAGE	8
		1,561
4	BELLSQUARRY	4
	DEDRIDGE	718
	HOWDEN	22
	LADYWELL	671
	MURIESTON	42
		1,457
5	EAST CALDER	296
	KIRKNEWTON	40
	MID CALDER	55
	PUMPHERSTON	270
	UPHALL STATION	113
	WILKIESTON	5
		779
6	ADDIEWELL	275
	BREICH	67
	FAULDHOUSE	615
	LONGRIDGE	91
	POLBETH	353
	STONEYBURN	238
	WEST CALDER	220
		1,859
7	BLACKBURN	845
	EAST WHITBURN	45
	GREENRIGG	104
	SEAFIELD	109
	WHITBURN	1,487
		2,590

Ward	Name	Number of Properties
8	BATHGATE	1,057
	BOGHALL	649
	WESTER INCH	194
	WHITESIDE	39
		1,939
9	ARMADALE	1,280
	BLACKRIDGE	227
	TORPHICHEN	26
	WESTFIELD	69
		1,602
	Total Stock	13,853

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN 2023/24 UPDATE

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Panel on the annual update to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and seek comments prior to submission to the Council Executive and Scottish Government by 30 June 2023.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the achievements made in delivery of the RRTP in 2022/23;
2. Notes the update to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023/24;
3. Notes that the priorities in the RRTP align with available budget;
4. Notes the challenges in meeting the RRTP largely due to the ongoing imbalance between supply and demand and other extenuating factors; and
5. Notes that a report will be presented to Council Executive on 20 June 2023 seeking approval of the RRTP 2023/24 before it is submitted to the Scottish Government on 30 June 2023.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

Focusing on our customers' needs;
being honest, open and accountable;
providing equality of opportunities;
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 the Homelessness (etc) (Scotland) Act 2003, Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Housing (Scotland) 2014. Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014

III	Implications for Scheme Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The RRTP activities are aimed at early intervention and prevention through joint working with Education, Health and Social Policy are aimed at decreasing the number of homeless referrals
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 6: People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances. Outcome 7: we live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	2023/24 budget is £5.082million, consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base budget of £4.187 million • RRTP resource of £315,000 • Prevention one off funding £80,000 • One off funding for B&B pressures £500,000
VIII	Other consultations	Financial Management Unit

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Scottish Government instructed all local authorities to develop, produce and cost a 5-year RRTP by 31 December 2018. Further to this, local authorities were asked to submit annual updated RRTP's.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017. The group made 70 recommendations regarding the solutions and actions needed to eradicate rough sleeping, transform the use of temporary accommodation and bring an end to homelessness in Scotland. All of the recommendations were accepted by Scottish Government, including the instruction for all local authorities to develop RRTPs.

The definition of rapid rehousing outlined by the Scottish Government is, where homelessness cannot be prevented:

- A settled mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible.
- Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation is reduced to a minimum, with as few transitions as possible.

- When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.
- And for people with multiple needs beyond housing:
 - Housing First is the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages.
 - Highly specialist provision with small, shared, supported and trauma informed accommodation.

HARSAG reconvened in summer 2020 to provide updated recommendations to the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

D.2 Changes to Legislation

There has been a number of legislative changes which have come into force during the lifetime of the RRTP and have had an impact on the Council's ability to deliver rapid rehousing and may continue to hinder efforts. Further changes are also expected to impact. These are summarised in Table 1:

Table 1 Legislative Changes

Legislative Change	Summary of Change	Implemented
Extension of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004	Anyone staying in accommodation deemed as 'unsuitable' for more than 7 days will constitute a breach of the Order.	October 2021
Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 (Commencement No.4) Order 2019	Households are able to present and receive homelessness assistance, including accommodation, in any Scottish local authority area of their choice.	November 2022
Prevention Duties	Public services must 'ask and act' about people's housing situation. Councils must respond to all referrals from Public Bodies where there is a risk of homelessness.	Due 2023

D.3 RRTP Summary

Progress on the delivery of the RRTP continues to be collaborative in its operation both at a strategic level through the quarterly meetings of the RRTP Board and at an operational level through the three working groups. All of the West Lothian Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) continue to support the delivery of the RRTP through targeted lets to homeless households.

The annual update provides a review of the key factors impacting on homelessness locally, an update on the key statistics for 2022/23, with analysis of comparisons with previous years. Modelling has been undertaken to determine the required lets to

homeless for 2023/24. A summary of the key achievements is provided and the main challenges that remain are outlined.

D.4 Supply and Demand Update

The need for affordable social housing in West Lothian remains high due to the high number of applications for housing, high sustainability and low turnover of properties.

Low wages, reduced disposable income and increased mortgage rates continue to drive people of West Lothian to regard council and RSL housing as the main affordable housing option. Table 2 shows that homeless demand increased by 5% in 2022/23.

Table 2 Supply & Demand Summary

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% change
Homeless Applications	1,516	1,469	1,462	1,188	1,252	5%
Placements in Temporary Accommodation	1,952	1,825	1,749	1,791	1,522	-15%
Breaches of UAO	89	26	11	328	516	57%
No of Open Cases (at end of previous year)	1,061	686	674	939	1,362	45%
No of Lets to Homeless – WLC&RSLs	927	961	566	589	629	7%

Despite increases in demand the number of placements in temporary accommodation reduced by 15% including B&B placements declining by 17% in 2022/23. The number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO) however increased by 57%. This is due to the reduced throughput in temporary accommodation, as less people exited, people stayed longer which meant the time in temporary accommodation and particularly B&B accommodation has increased along with the costs of providing B&B accommodation as providers increase charges due to increasing costs of utilities and food.

Permanent accommodation continues to remain lower than demand despite a modest 7% increase in lets to homeless in 2022/23. The number of lets continues to be low and affected by high sustainability, delays in construction industry, issues with suppliers, external contractors as well as employment and retention of skilled tradesmen.

As a result of the ongoing imbalance between supply and demand open cases have continued to rise since the COVID-19 pandemic and as at the end of March 2023 they have now reached 1,606 cases rising by 18%.

D.5 RRTP Projections

Officers have updated the illustrative rehousing model to demonstrate the impact of projected supply of social rented stock, the private rented sector and homeless demand scenarios on rapid rehousing.

The updated projections for the final year make certain assumptions around the level of homeless demand based on the ongoing pressures with the cost of living crisis and changes to legislation. It also makes assumptions on the availability of permanent lets both from the council and RSL partners and the percentage of those lets which will be made available to homeless applicants. It does not consider factors such as requirements for specific sizes, types and areas of property available.

It is therefore proposed to increase the overall lets to homeless between the council and RSL partners to target lets 59% in 2023/24, with the council allocating 65% lets to homeless. This aims to continue to strive to reduce pressures in temporary accommodation and achieve a balance in the demand for affordable social housing from other high priority groups. It should be noted that these target lets are amongst the highest nationally.

As outlined in Appendix 1, the modelling continues to project that despite increasing the target lets to homeless households, and based on current assumptions, rapid rehousing will not be achieved by the end of RRTPs in 2023/24.

D.6 RRTP Achievements

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic there were positive reductions in homeless demand and the use of temporary accommodation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a material impact on the progress made by the majority of Local Authorities. As lets ceased in response to social distancing measures the backlog of homeless households grew significantly. As the country began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic a cost of living crisis emerged where it was predicted homeless demand would rise in response to the increasing mortgage rates, increases energy costs and high need for affordable social housing.

In response to the challenges, the RRTP's actions were re-focused in 2022/23 with the support of additional council funding to deliver a more enhanced focus on the key priorities needed in 2022/23 to support measures to reduce pressures across homelessness services and strive to achieve rapid rehousing.

Whilst reductions in homeless demand were not achieved in 2022/23 and length of stay remained high in temporary accommodation, the RRTP was successful in suppressing this demand from rising further and reducing the number of placements in temporary accommodation through a variety of activities.

The key achievements in 2022/23 include the following:

- Enhanced Housing Options approach developed and implemented
- Implementation of Private Rented Sector (PRS) approach with 18% of referrals achieving a sustainable outcome in PRS and 14% supported to achieve another sustainable outcome
- Increased sharing spaces for use as temporary accommodation to 28 spaces
- Increased Private Sector Lease properties for use as temporary accommodation to 101 properties
- New affordable homes programme agreed in February 2023
- Implemented hotel management approach to improve hotel standards and support applicants to sustain accommodation
- Implemented Rapid Access approach to rapidly assess applicants needs and find suitable move-ons out of hotels

- Developed and delivered youth homeless prevention education programme rolled out across 11 secondary schools
- Developed targeted intervention to prevent homelessness in secondary schools
- 11% reduction in 16-17 homeless applications as a result of new Young Persons Emergency Prevention Support Service and Youth Housing Options Service
- Sustained 14 households with high support needs in Housing First for Adults in partnership with Cyrenians
- Sustained 12 young people with high support needs in Housing First for Young People in partnership with Social Policy and Rock Trust
- Sustained Nightstop alternative to homelessness and temporary accommodation for Young People in partnership with Rock Trust
- Site approval for the proposed new build support accommodation unit for Young People
- Implemented emergency Addictions support for people living in Bed & Breakfast accommodation
- Implemented new Housing Support assessment framework to ensure households needs are assessed in a consistent way and the people with the highest needs are prioritised
- Housing Support staff trained in Trauma Informed Awareness
- Evaluated Housing First for Adults and secured funding to increase service provision and transition to mainstream service approach
- 94% of all homeless households who received a settled outcome have successfully sustained permanent accommodation
- 15% reduction made in placements in all temporary accommodation
- 17% reduction made in placements in Bed & Breakfast accommodation

D.7 Resources

The original RRTP 2019-2024 sought to secure £3 million of additional resource to allow the transition required to fully implement the RRTP from the £50 million Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund, however the council has only been awarded a total of £1.8 million in the period to 2024/25, a shortfall of £1.2 million.

Mainstreaming successful activities will therefore be a key priority in 2023/24 however this will be largely dependent on the redirection of resources by reducing the use of temporary accommodation. This is likely to be a challenge due to the chronic pressures in homeless services budgets due to costs of providing B&B accommodation.

Delivery of RRTPs will be required beyond 2023/24 and therefore to ensure effective implementation of RRTPs and continuity of services for service users, there are requirements for sufficient resources beyond 2023/24 from both the Scottish Government and partners who benefit from homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing.

D.8 Challenges

There are a number of challenges that lie ahead in achieving rapid rehousing. The operating context has changed significantly since the council was asked to develop a RRTP. There remain large backlogs of homeless cases awaiting housing which stemmed from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing imbalance between supply and demand however continues to be the councils biggest challenge.

Any further increases to demand that are possible due to the ongoing cost of living crisis, humanitarian efforts to accommodate refugees and the Prevention of Homelessness

Duties expected in 2023 will widen this supply and demand gap further leading to greater pressures in homeless services and the ability to achieve rapid rehousing.

The lack of long-term funding commitments and future of RRTPs beyond 2023/24 will continue to create challenges in securing and retaining skilled staff and services and ensuring continued service delivery to the council's customers.

Delivering the RRTP within a context of constrained resources and lack of long-term funding will therefore continue to cause pressures. Given the scale of challenges that remain, it is not anticipated that rapid housing will be achieved by the end of RRTP in 2023/24.

D.9 Key Priorities

Mainstreaming successful RRTP activity will be a main priority in 2023/24 due to the lack of certainty around long term funding. Effective partnership working will remain key to delivering the actions within the constraints of RRTP resources. The priorities will remain focused on the commitment to achieve rapid rehousing and aligned to the 4 high level RRTP actions.

The key funding priorities for 2023/24 include:

- Seek to sustain enhanced housing options approaches;
- Continue to increase access and supply of affordable housing solutions;
- Continue to reduce the need for B&B accommodation through increasing access to other more suitable forms of temporary accommodation;
- Continue to deliver enhanced services to households who require to use temporary accommodation to maintain sustainability;
- Increase prevention of youth homelessness through earlier interventions in secondary schools
- Seek to sustain a successful approach to responding to and reducing Youth Homelessness;
- Deliver a new build supported accommodation unit and dispersed temporary accommodation for young people;
- Redesign Housing Support services to mainstream and increase Housing First services;
- Continue to work with Health & Social care to improve the outcomes for people at risk of homelessness and respond to the needs of adults where housing in the community is not suitable.

D.10 Next Steps

The 2023/24 West Lothian RRTP is attached at Appendix 2. Following review and comment by the Panel the updated plan will be considered by Council Executive on 20 June 2023 before submission to Scottish Government by 30 June 2023.

E. CONCLUSION

The operating context has changed significantly since local authorities were asked to develop RRTPs but there is a strong sense that they are still relevant and helping to drive positive changes in homelessness services. RRTP work must be supported beyond the current five-year period, allowing local authorities to continue working

towards long-term changes in their service provision, aligning with the new prevention duty.

It is considered that good progress has been made on the delivery of the West Lothian RRTP in 2022/23 against a back drop of pressures in homeless services and other council services and in light of limited financial resources from the Scottish Government to deliver RRTPs.

The demand for homeless services however remains high, with the RRTP activities continuing to suppress this demand from rising further. As updated modelling has projected, rapid rehousing will not be achieved by 2023/24 unless there is a large rise in affordable social housing or similar reduction in demand. Given the challenges related to the ongoing cost of living crisis, demand for affordable social housing and changes to legislation it is unlikely homeless demand will reduce to the extent required to achieve rapid rehousing.

The council is still on a path towards long-term changes and working towards embedding approaches into mainstream service delivery. With rapid rehousing not likely to be achieved by the end of RRTP; continued high rates of homelessness and pressures in temporary accommodation, long term certainty of RRTPs supported by long term funding of RRTPs is required to continue efforts to achieve rapid rehousing.

F. Background References

West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2022/23 Update

Scottish Govt/Cosla consultation on prevention of homelessness
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/prevention-homelessness-duties-joint-scottish-government-cosla-consultation/>

Appendices/Attachments: 2

1. RRTP Modelling
2. West Lothian Council Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023/24

Contact Person: Laura Harris, Service Development Officer

Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
1 June 2023

Appendix 1 - RRTP Modelling

Year 5 - Revised Modelling		
16 Mainstream Lets per week		
Delivery of OMA Sharing Space Project (60 Spaces - phased over the year)		
WLC % Lets to Homeless (65%)		
RSL % Lets to Homeless - 59% (Almond - 60%, Link - 65%, Places for People - 60%, Dunedin Canmore - 50%)		
New Build Programmes updated for 2023/24		
Demand based on 5 year average with decreases/increases included for various factors		
Temp Accommodation Numbers includes Sharing Spaces and PSL properties (Void factor included)		
	Original Year 5 (as updated April 2020)	Revised Year 5
	2023/24	
Open Cases	807	1,685
New Demand	969	1,097
Resolved Homelessness		115
Less loss contacts and refusals	- 97	- 110
Total Demand	1,679	2,556
Private Rented Sector	30	36
Lets to Homeless	718	739
Total Supply	748	775
Open Cases	931	1,781
<i>cases that were open overdue closure</i>		
Open Cases: (10% Void Factor Included)		
Temp Tenancies - Council	491	479
Temp Tenancies - RSL	65	55
Temp Tenancies - PSL	105	91
B&B	49	194
Self Accommodation	222	963
Total	931	1,781
(b) Less loss contacts and refusals	10%	10%
(c) Mainstream Lets		
Total Available Lets	1,238	1,167
(d) Homeless Mainstream Lets		
Total Available Homeless Lets	718	739
Collective % Lets to homeless		63%
Total Lets to Homeless	718	779



Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Update
2023/2024

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1. Summary

This report provides the final annual update for the year 2022/23 which has informed the key priorities and actions for 2023/24.

This annual update also provides a review of the key factors impacting on homelessness locally, an update on the key statistics for 2022/23 and a modelling update for 2023/24. A summary is provided on the successes which have been achieved in 2022/23 despite the challenges faced and an updated RRTP action plan for 2023/24 is also included.

The RRTP modelling in 2022/23 had identified that homelessness demand would remain high, impacted by a range of external factors such as changes to legislation, cost of living crisis and the lack of affordable social housing.

Material poverty continues to remain a significant issue for many households and communities locally exacerbated by the ongoing cost of living crisis which continues to drive demand for people to seek council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) housing as the main affordable housing option.

Turnover rates for social housing stock continue to remain low and tenancy sustainability high, the council and its partners continue to face challenges in meeting peoples housing needs due to the significant imbalance between demand and supply of affordable social housing. This ongoing imbalance has also resulted in significant pressures within emergency accommodation and challenges in meeting the amendments to the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 which took effect in October 2021.

Changes to legislation also took effect in 2022/23 which has caused a demand for services to increase and impacted the Councils prevention approach. This includes the removal of local connection powers removed allowing households to present and receive homelessness assistance, including accommodation from any authority in Scotland and the ongoing moratorium on evictions and rent increases causing Private Landlords to exit the sector and sell properties.

The updated plan therefore highlights that despite the range of ambitious actions which have progressed in 2022/23 the demand for homelessness remains high in West Lothian and length of time in temporary accommodation continues to rise and therefore the RRTP it is anticipated through updated modelling that unless there is a significant rise in affordable social housing the objectives of RRTP will not be achieved by 2023/24.

2. Economic Context

Material poverty remains a significant issue for many households and communities locally. West Lothian, similar to other parts of Scotland is still recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw substantial impact on jobs loss and a rise in local levels of unemployment, and is now dealing with the economic impact of the Cost of Living and Cost of Doing Business crises.

Unemployment rates in West Lothian continued to decrease to 2.5% by the end of 2022, reaching pre-pandemic levels. Work sectors which were affected during the pandemic which employ the largest proportion of young people (18-24 years) have now returned to work and undertaking large recruitment drives and Youth unemployment for West Lothian was at 4.4% in February 2023.

Despite the positive upwards trends in employment in West Lothian, there are still underlying issues of poverty and deprivation with a core of individuals and households experiencing hardship and wider groups experiencing some financial difficulties and challenges.

Low pay continues to be a factor which pushes people into poverty, with 34% (26,000 people) of people working in West Lothian are employed in low pay sectors and an estimated 18% of West Lothian working residents earn below the living wage level of £9.50 per hour compared to 14.4% for Scotland. The West Lothian Anti-Poverty strategy 2019-2024 identified that 25% of all households have an overall income of less than £16K per annum and 38% have an overall household income of less than £20,000 per annum.

The number of in-work claimants has also remained high with 5,950 claimants in January 2023 representing a 122% increase from January 2020. Low wages are likely to be a significant reason for the surge in the number of people who are in-work and claiming Universal Credit. West Lothian has also seen an increased number of people becoming 'economically inactive' (16 – 64-year olds not available for work). Inactive claimants were at 6,610 claimants in February 2023 which was up 200% since January 202 - pre the COVID-19 pandemic. This is mainly attributed to the pandemic with a rise in long-term sickness.

Finally, the rising cost of living has also contributed to large reductions in household disposable income. Inflation reached a 4 year high in October 2022 at 11.1%, energy costs have continued to rise contributing to food shortages in the UK causing food inflation to also reach a 45-year high. In efforts to control inflation the Bank of England have raised interest rates for the 11th consecutive time which has affected millions of homeowners across the UK.

Low wages, reduced disposable income and increased mortgage rates are expected to continue to drive people of West Lothian to regard council and RSL housing as the main affordable housing option meaning it is likely West Lothian will continue to see high demand for affordable social rented housing.

3. Factors influencing the R RTP

3.1. Housing Tenure & Availability in West Lothian

At the 31 March 2023, West Lothian Council had a social rented stock of 14,246 units this is compared to 14,075 in 2021/22. West Lothian has a high rate of sustainability which results in low numbers of lettable properties that become vacant. In 2022/23, 5.5% of council owned stock became available for re-let, this was an increase from 4% in 2021/22 and 2020/21. Table 1 provides a comparison of this data and shows the extent of housing demand which has risen 7,998 applications on the Common Housing Register in 2019/20 to 10,476 applications in 2022/23, with a high of 11,003 in 2021/22.

Table 1: West Lothian Stock Availability (2019/20 – 2022/23)

Stock	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Local Authority Stock	13,022	13,442	14,031	14,075	14,243
Local Authority Lettable Properties that became Vacant	933 (7%)	929 (6%)	608 (4%)	632 (4%)	785 (5.5%)
Number of applicants on the waiting list	8,824	7,998	10,326	11,003	10,476

Source: Internal reports

3.2. Applications for Housing

A key change to housing applications occurred in March 2021 through implementation of the council's reviewed Allocations Policy which aimed to prevent homelessness through increasing points to those at risk of homelessness with the creation of strategic needs points. In addition to this new points category the previous group of Unsatisfactory Housing was amalgamated with the General Needs group.

The demand for affordable social housing remains high and at the end of March 2023 there were 10,476 applicants on the West Lothian Common Housing Register (CHR). Over the last five years West Lothian has seen a 26.2% rise in applicants on the CHR. Table 2 below provides a further breakdown.

Table 2: Reason for Housing Applications (2018/19 -2022/23)

Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Homeless Applicant	498 (6%)	560 (7%)	909 (9%)	793(7%)	835(8%)
Transfer Applicant	1,578 (19%)	1,440 (18%)	1,851 (18%)	1,813 (16%)	1,597(15%)
General Needs Applicant	3,901 (47%)	3,519 (44%)	4,987 (48%)	7,714 (71%)	7,521(72%)
Unsatisfactory Housing	1,785 (21.5%)	2,079 (26%)	1,877 (19%)	No longer in use	No longer in use
Housing with Care	124 (1.5%)	80 (1%)	84 (1%)	86 (1%)	96(1%)

Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Outwith West Lothian	415 (5%)	320 (4%)	618 (6%)	597 (5%)	427(4%)
Total	8,301	7,998	10,326	11,003	10,476

Source: internal information held by WLC

3.3.Private Rented Housing in West Lothian

The number of registered landlords has declined over the last five years with the lowest number registered in 2022/23 at 4,613. The number of registered properties in the private rented sector is also at the lowest level over the last five years, declining to 7,444 properties registered in 2022/23.

Table 3: No of Landlords & Registered PRS Properties (2018/19 -2021/2022)

Year	Registered Landlords	Registered Properties
2018/19	5,465	7,874
2019/20	5,165	7,520
2020/21	5,099	7,957
2021/22	4,789	7,548
2022/23	4,613	7,444

Source: Internal reports

The reduction in properties results in less housing solutions for applicants, hindering the council's prevention approach and also increasing homeless demand from private tenants. In order to understand these reductions in 2021/22 the councils Private Rented Sector Team sought insight into reasons why landlords were leaving the sector and reducing their property portfolio.

The feedback received whilst anecdotal suggested that a large contributing factor has been due to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing mortgage costs due to the cost of living crisis, costs of materials and goods and legislative changes offering more enhanced protection for tenants who fail to pay rent.

3.4.Need for Affordable Housing in West Lothian

The need for affordable social housing in West Lothian remains high due to the high number of applications for housing, high sustainability and lower turnover of properties. Whilst rights for private tenants are being improved with greater security, Private Landlords are exiting the sector. Increasing the portfolio of affordable housing stock remains a key requirement to address increasing demand and mitigate pressures in homeless services whilst responding to other housing needs.

The council and its RSL partners completed 100% of the 3,000 affordable social housing targets by March 2023. Considering the challenges, particularly over the last three years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic this is a significant achievement. It is clear however that further investment in affordable social housing is required to meet the imbalance between demand and supply.

The draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2013/24 - 2027/28 has identified both affordable and market housing supply targets based on Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA3). These targets are 310 affordable homes per annum and 401 market homes per annum based on the average over a 20-year period to 2040. Housing supply targets will be reviewed and monitored during the course of the LHS.

Table 4 provides an overview of the new supply completions over the last five years which have supplemented the additional stock levels to assist meet the needs of households on the CHR and reduce homeless demand. A total of 4,939 new supply completions will have been delivered by February 2023 between RSLs, the council and Open Market Acquisitions.

Table 4: All Tenure new supply completions 2018/19 - 2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
WLC New Builds	361	315	35	69	139
RSL New Builds	55	110	43	124	347
WLC Open Market Acquisitions	73	35	34	31	34
Sub Total	489	460	112	224	520
Market Completions	631	683	470	664	686*
Total	1,120	1,143	582	888	1,206

(*To February 2023)

3.5. Increasing Affordable Housing Supply

The current Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2023-28 identifies sites for up to 2,848 affordable homes over the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28. This includes 407 homes for Mid-Market Rent and 9 for shared equity. The Scottish Government has provided Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs) to support the delivery of affordable housing for the next 3 years. This is outlined in the Table 5.

Table 5: RPA Funding 2021/22 – 2025/26

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
RPA Funding	£17.889million	£15.420million	£15.376million	£15.430million	£15.685million

Source: WLC internally held data

3.6. Open Market Acquisitions

In addition to new build affordable housing, the council and RSLs also acquire homes on the open market. The open market acquisitions have been successful by increasing the available social rented stock to reflect housing needs – Livingston, Bathgate, larger family properties as well as properties to meet medical needs.

Table 6 identifies that over the last five years 207 homes have been acquired by the council through open market acquisitions.

Table 6: Open Market Acquisitions by West Lothian Council

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
WLC Open Market Acquisitions	73	35	34	31	34

Source: WLC internally held data

In addition to the open market acquisitions shown on Table 6, there have also been a further 21 acquisitions concluded by RSLs during 2012/13-2022/23

4. West Lothian Homeless Position

4.1. Homeless Applications

Table 7 below demonstrates that over the past year there has been a 5.4% increase in homeless applications whereby applications have increased from 1,188 in 2021/22 to 1,252 in 2022/23. Since 2018/19 there has been a 17.4% reduction in homeless applications.

Table 7: West Lothian Homeless Applications 2018/19 – 2022/23

Homeless Applications	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Number change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
Total	1,516	1,469	1,462	1,188	1,252	64	5.4%

Source: HL1 report

4.2. Age Profile and Household Composition

Table 8 below shows that between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there has been a 11% decrease in homeless presentations from 16 -17 year olds. This is largely attributed to the new enhanced Prevention of Youth Homelessness approach developed in West Lothian in 2022/23. Overall, the percentage of young people (16-25 years of age) presenting has reduced from 33% in 2021/22 to 32% in 2022/23. Table 8 also shows that the largest group of applicants continues to be from 26 – 59 year olds staying at 63% of all applications in 2022/23.

Table 8: Age Profile of Homeless Applicants 2018/19 – 2022/23

	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		No change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
16 to 17 yrs	71	5%	71	5%	83	6%	75	6%	67	5%	-8	-11%
18 to 25 yrs	401	26%	402	27%	444	30%	322	27%	338	27%	16	45%
26 to 59 yrs	991	65%	945	64%	889	61%	750	63%	782	63%	32	4%
60 yrs plus	53	6%	51	4%	46	3%	41	4%	65	5%	24	58%
Total	1,516		1,469		1,462		1,188		1,252		64	5.4%

Source: HL1 report

Homeless applications from single people mainly single men in West Lothian continue to make up the vast majority of applications as highlighted in Table 9 below. In 2022/23 homeless applications by single people accounted for 62% of all homeless applications compared to 70% during 2021/22. Single parents make up the second largest group of applicants consisting of 25% in 2022/23 compared to 20% in 2021/22.

Table 9: Household Composition of Homeless Applicants

Household Types	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	No change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
Single Person: Male	706	673	776	592	525	-67	-11%
Single Person: Female	288	290	274	240	246	6	3%
Total Single Person	994	963	1050	832	771	-61	-7%
Single Parent: Male	43	62	50	63	89	26	41%
Single Parent: Female	280	259	226	184	227	43	23%
Total Single Parent	323	321	276	247	316	69	28%
Total Apps Single Person Households	1,317	1,284	1,326	1,079	1,087	8	0.7%
Couple without children	90	92	72	58	76	18	31%
Couple with children	90	82	57	46	75	29	63%
Other without children	6	4	5	3	2	-1	-33%
Other with children	13	7	2	2	12	10	500%
Total	1,516	1,469	1,462	1,188	1,252	64	5%

Source: HL1 report

4.3. Reasons for Homeless Applications

Asked to Leave continues to be the highest reason for people seeking homeless assistance at 46% of all homeless applications in 2022/23. Household Dispute (non-violent – non-abusive) declined to 19% of all applications in 2022/23 followed by household dispute (violent) now at 11%. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the top 3 reasons for homelessness.

Table 10: Reasons for Homelessness

Reason West Lothian (Top 3)	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		% Change
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Asked to leave	903	55%	600	41%	434	30%	435	37%	572	46%	32%
Household Dispute (non-violent – non abusive)	153	13%	302	21%	503	34%	326	27%	234	19%	-28%
Household Dispute (violent – abusive)	139	11%	187	13%	180	12%	177	15%	141	11%	-20%

Source: HL1 report

4.4. Homeless Assessment Decisions and Outcomes

Table 11 below shows the top 6 outcomes reached by homeless households. In total 1056 homeless cases reached an outcome in 2022/23 compared to 1,004 in 2021/22, an increase of 5.2%. The top outcome continues to be duty discharge into Scottish Secure Tenancies which increased from 577 in 2021/22 to 672 in 2022/23, a 16.5% increase. Duty discharge into the Private Rented Sector continues to be low with 2022/23 recording the smallest number at 12 compared to 20 in 2021/22, a 40% decrease. This is despite the increase in outcomes achieved. Contact lost before duty discharge saw a significant increase of 637.5% from 8 in 2021/22 to 59 in 2022/23. This was the highest number since 2019/20.

Table 11: Homeless Outcomes 2018/19 – 2022/23

Top 6 Outcomes (% of all outcomes)	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		No change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Scottish Secure Tenancy	888	55%	1057	64%	660	61%	577	57%	672	64%	95	17%
Private Rented Tenancy	40	3%	31	2%	24	2%	20	2%	12	1%	-8	-40%
Returned to previous/ friends/ vol org.	126	8%	156	9%	96	9%	67	7%	54	5%	-13	-19%
Other	129	8%	86	5%	46	4%	75	7%	72	7%	-3	-4%
No duty owed to applicant	373	23%	254	15%	247	23%	255	25%	186	18%	-69	-27%
Contact lost before duty discharge	58	4%	65	4%	17	2%	8	1%	59	6%	51	637%

Source: HL1 report

4.5. Homelessness Case Duration

Over the period 2021/22 to 2022/23 the average case duration of a homeless (unintentional case) has increased from 61.2 weeks to 73.8 weeks as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Homeless Case Duration 2018/19 – 2022/23

Average HL1 Case Duration (weeks)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Homeless Unintentional	48.8	39.7	45.19	61.2	73.8

Source: HL1 report

4.6. Tenancy Sustainment

West Lothian continues to experience a high rate of sustainability attributed to offering high standards of permanent accommodation and appropriate housing support where required. Table 13 below provides a breakdown of sustainment between 2018/19 -2022/23, and shows that in 2022/23 sustainment for homeless applicants remained high at 94% an increase of 3% from 2021/22.

Table 13: Tenancy Sustainment 2018/19 – 2022/23

Year	Homeless Applicants	Transfer Applicants	General Need Applicants
2018/19	87%	96%	86%
2019/20	89%	98%	94%
2020/21	94%	99%	95%
2021/22	91%	94%	93%
2022/23	94%	94%	96%

Source: Insight Reports

4.7.Repeat Homelessness

West Lothian continues to experience low repeat homelessness. In 2022/23 0.7% of applications received were repeat homelessness, compared to 1% in 2021/22.

Table 14: Numbers of repeat homeless cases 2018/19 – 2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Numbers of repeat homeless	27 (1.8%)	16 (1.1%)	26 (1.8%)	12 (1%)	9 (0.7%)

Source: HL1 report

4.8.Housing Support

Households are asked to indicate whether they feel they have a support need at their homeless assessment. The largest proportion of homeless households who presented as homeless state they had no to low housing support needs and were only seeking affordable social housing. Table 15 below shows that in 2022/23, there was a rise to 64% of homeless households who stated they had no support needs with 19% stating one support need and 17% stating two or more support needs categorised as severe and multiple disadvantaged (SMD).

For those households who did state they had a support need in 2022/23 almost 50% of the support needs were related to a mental health problem followed by a medical condition at 20%. People who indicated they had a drug or alcohol dependency was at 12% in 2022/23.

Where a household is not engaging with another mental health service and has indicated they have a mental health support need they are asked whether they wish a referral to the Homeless Health Team. A full mental health assessment is then carried out and a care plan is developed. A total of 151 referrals were made to the Homeless Health Team in 2022/23.

Table 15: Homeless Support Need Summary (2018/19 – 2021/23)

Support Needs	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No/Low Support Needs - 0	904 (60%)	821 (56%)	779 (53%)	679 (57%)	818 (65%)
Medium Support Needs – 1	363 (24%)	398 (27%)	371 (25%)	295 (25%)	230 (18%)
SMD/Complex Needs – 2+	246 (16%)	250 (17%)	312 (22%)	214 (18%)	204 (17%)
Total	1,516	1,469	1,462	1,188	1,252

Source: HL1

Table 16: Homeless Support Need Analysis (2018/19 – 2022/23) (multiple responses allowed)

Support Needs	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023
Mental health problem	473	541	567	432	361
Learning disability	22	35	45	50	38
Physical disability	75	82	96	67	73
Medical condition	199	183	233	142	145
Drug or alcohol dependency	161	150	167	102	92
Basic housing management / independent living skills	38	41	53	41	23
Total	968	1,032	1,161	834	732

Source: HL1

4.9. Youth Homelessness

West Lothian has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness in Scotland and has a history of significant numbers of homeless presentations by young people. A large focus of 2022/23 RRTP has been to reduce homeless demand from those aged 18 and under.

Table 17 shows that applications from people aged 16-25 years old increased from 397 in 2021/22 to 405 in 2022/23, however this is actually a decrease of 1.1% when considered as a proportion of all homeless applications. This is largely attributed to targeted RRTP actions in 2022/23.

Table 17: Homeless Applications by 16-25 years olds

Year	West Lothian Applicants (16-25 years)	West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16- 25 years	National % of Homeless Applicants 16 – 25 years
2018/19	472	31%	24%
2019/20	473	32%	23%
2020/21	478	33%	25%
2021/22	397	33%	23%
2022/23	405	32%	TBC in summer 2023/24

Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual reports & Scottish government Homeless annual statistics publications, supplementary tables and charts

4.10. Temporary Accommodation Placements and Exits

When considering certain aspects of temporary accommodation such as number of placements, average time spent in temporary accommodation and breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO), the true extent of this can only be fully understood once a household has exited temporary accommodation. A reduction in exits means less access to temporary accommodation and higher usage of B&B accommodation which consequently now results in breaches of the UAO if it is used for over 7 days following changes to legislation.

Table 18 below shows a reduction of 15% from 2021/22 to 2022/23 in the overall number of placements in all types of temporary accommodation. There has been a reduction of 8% in WLC Owned Temporary Accommodation in 2022/23 when compared to 2021/22. There has also been a reduction in placements in Bed and Breakfast of 17% when compared to the same period.

It should be noted that whilst placements in temporary accommodation have reduced in 2022/23 there has also been reductions in the number of placements exiting temporary accommodation. Table 19 shows the number of exits from temporary accommodation. Therefore, despite some positive reductions in placements, as there has been less throughput and access to temporary accommodation, overall length of stay has increased and can be seen in Table 20.

Table 18: Placements in Temporary Accommodation by type

Temporary Accommodation Placements	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	No Change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
WLC Ordinary Dwelling	463	575	481	434	399	-35	-8%
Housing Assoc/RSL	71	67	53	37	33	-4	-11%
Private Sector Lease	44	74	78	102	82	-20	-20%
Hostel WLC Owned	183	201	116	113	78	-35	-31%
Bed and Breakfast	1,191	908	1,021	1,085	904	-181	-17%
Women's Refuge	0	0	0	20	26	6	30%
Totals (all)	1,952	1,825	1,749	1,791	1,522	-269	-15%

Table 19: Exits from Temporary Accommodation by type

Temporary Accommodation Exits	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	No Change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
WLC Ordinary Dwelling	470	567	384	424	396	-28	-7%
Housing Assoc/RSL	75	81	38	43	36	-7	-16%
Private Sector Lease	46	70	48	76	85	9	12%
Hostel WLC Owned	189	210	105	115	85	-30	-26%
Bed and Breakfast	1,197	972	888	1,086	858	-228	-21%
Women's Refuge	0	0	0	16	24	8	50%
Totals (all)	1,977	1,900	1,463	1,760	1,484	-276	-16%

4.11. Temporary Accommodation Length of Stay

Table 20 below shows the overall increase in length of stay in all types of temporary accommodation has increased by an average of 28 days. The average time spent in council owned temporary accommodation increased to 316 days in 2022/23 and time spent in Bed & Breakfast increased to 55 days. This is a result of fewer permanent lets being available in 2022/23 which results in reduced capacity within temporary accommodation as less households can exit.

Table 20: Temporary Accommodation Length of Stay (average days)

Temporary Accommodation Length of Stay (average days)	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Change 21/22 – 22/23
WLC Ordinary Dwelling	243	184	248	293	316	23
Housing Assoc/RSL	224	218	204	279	337	58
Private Sector Lease	244	162	211	244	306	62
Hostel WLC Owned	86	67	97	110	167	57
Bed and Breakfast	30	26	30	46	55	9
Women's Refuge	0	0	0	82	73	-9
Totals (all)	99	91	103	124	152	28

4.12. Breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order

In May 2020, legislation was laid to amend the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 which extended the seven-day restriction on time spent in unsuitable temporary accommodation from families with children and pregnant women to all households experiencing homelessness. Temporary exceptions were also put in place at this time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to allow local authorities to use accommodation deemed unsuitable if this was needed to allow households to self-isolate or physically distance. These were then removed and the full Order was implemented on 1st October 2021. Due to the significant supply vs demand issues experienced in West Lothian, the council outlined in its consultation and subsequent meetings and monitoring reports to the Scottish Government that it would not be able to meet the new Order and would be in breach the UAO by a substantial number.

Table 21 below shows the impact in the change in legislation in 2021/22. Despite reducing the number of placements in B&B accommodation, breaches increased in 2022/23 by 57% due to there being less exits out of temporary accommodation thus increasing the length of stay.

Table 21: Breaches of the UAO

Breaches of the UAO	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
Number of breaches	89	26	11	328	516	188	57%

4.13. Homelessness Prevention and Homeless Outcomes

Prevention of homelessness is fundamental in the delivery of the RRTP and reducing homelessness. Prevent 1 applications are recorded when a household not classed as homeless or threatened homeless or withdraws from the homeless route. Table 22 shows that homeless prevention approaches reduced by 31% as a result of less people seeking assistance prior to the threat of homelessness.

Table 22: Homeless Prevention 2018/19 – 2022/23

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Change 21/22 – 22/23	% change
Prevent1 Approaches	1,127	772	445	754	523	231	-31%

Source: Insight reports

Table 23 below shows that the most common prevention outcomes were support and advice to Remained in Current Accommodation, which remained 69% in 2022/23. The number of households who went on to make a homeless application increased to 19% in 2022/23.

Table 23: Top 5 Homeless Prevention Outcomes

Prevent1 Outcomes	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Remained in current accommodation	347	31%	385	51%	199	58%	400	69%	252	69%
Made homelessness application to local authority	562	50%	238	32%	84	24%	79	14%	70	19%
Moved-in with friends/relatives	42	4%	46	6%	28	8%	56	10%	24	7%
Private Rented Assured Tenancy	4	0%	12	2%	10	3%	13	2%	14	4%
LA Tenancy	22	2%	9	1%	10	3%	33	6%	4	1%
All	1,127		748		345		581		364	

5. West Lothian Homeless Demand v Supply Gaps Analysis

5.1. Demand and Supply Gap

The Scottish Government asked that a baseline position (Year 0) was developed at the start of R RTP to identify the total gap in all social lets in 2018/19 which was projected to be 819. This consisted of the unintentional homeless demand for 2017/18 plus the total number of open cases at the end of March 2018.

Using the unintentional homeless demand for 2022/23 plus the number of open cases at the end of March 2021/22, Table 24 below shows that compared with the baseline position from 2018/19, there is a gap in social rented stock of 741 at the end of March 2023.

Table 24: Demand and Supply Gap Analysis

Demand and Supply Gap Analysis	Year 0	2022/23 Projections	2022/23 Actual
Homeless Unintentional Demand Cases	1,165	1,027	1,021
Homeless live cases (backlog)	1,061	1,362	1,186
Less Contacts and Refusals	117	211	259
Total Homeless Demand	2,109	2,178	1,948
Social lets available	927	1,227	1,207
Gaps in Social Lets	1,182	951	741
Homeless lets available	927	729	629
Gaps in Homeless Lets	1,182	1,449	1,319

Source: Internal reports

Table 24 shows that when considering the total lets that were allocated to homeless households the gap is greater at 1,319. This means that homeless demand outstrips supply by 312%. If lets to homeless households were increased to 100% it would still not be enough to outstrip demand. It should be noted that this would not be achievable as not all properties are suitable in terms of size, type and area. Additionally, having no lets for other high housing need groups can drive demand for homelessness services further as it becomes the only route to achieving social rented housing and a direct conflict of the Allocations Policy which aims to prevent homelessness from occurring.

5.2. Lets to Homeless

Lets to Homeless

The R RTP identified that to address the demand for accommodation and balance the need for affordable social housing the target lets to homeless would need to remain high in 2022/23. Each of the four main providers of social rented housing continued to support the council in addressing homeless demand pressures in 2022/23. The four main providers agree their own target lets on an annual basis. It should be noted that whilst targets are set they are not always achieved due to a variety of reasons such as property type, size, area and applicant choice.

Table 25: Target Minimum Percentage Lets to Homeless 2019-2024

Provider	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Target	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target
WLC	71%	70%	61%	65%	64%	65%
Almond HA	45%	62%	52%	60%	49%	60%* tbc
Dunedin Canmore	67%	38%	48%	50%	49%	50%*tbc

Provider	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Target	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Target
Link / Weslo	67%	74%	58%	60%	72%	65%
Places for People	48%	51%	61%	60%	50%	60%
WLHP*	40%	76%	45%	50%	48%	*
Total	65%	67%	56%	62%	59%	60%

Source: Internal reports. *WLHP merged with Dunedin Canmore in September 2022

Table 25 shows that in 2022/23 the council let 64% of its available properties (387) to homeless applicants from 602 houses, compared 61% of its available properties (395) in 2021/22. In comparison RSLs let an average 52% of their available stock in 2022/23 to homeless applicants compared to 53% in 2021/22, 63% in 2020/21, 48% in 2018/19 and 27% in 2017/18.

5.3.Revised Position

One of the main requirements of RRTP's is to improve flow by ensuring a consistent high level of lets to homeless households whilst balancing the high demand from other high housing need groups thereby preventing homelessness whilst striving to reduce the backlog of open cases and improving the throughput in temporary accommodation.

Updated projections have been modelled, for 2023/24 as shown in Appendix 1. This includes the following assumptions;

- Homeless presentations and demand are expected to increase by 5% in 2023/24 due to the economic position of west Lothian, changes in legislation and ongoing cost of living crisis.
- The backlog of 1,606 will reduce in 2023/24 as the availability of permanent lets will increase from 2022/23 due to an increased number of properties becoming available from existing council stock as well as RSL new build programmes.
- The revised new build programme will result in more new properties being available in year 5 from RSLs than originally projected.
- Increase in use of private sector as a permanent outcome for applicants

These projections will be monitored on a monthly basis and reported to the RRTP Board quarterly. They will assist in developing proposed targets for meeting the RRTP vision of reducing homelessness, reducing use of B&B accommodation and reducing length of stay in temporary accommodation.

As set out in Section 5.1 there are not enough lets to meet new and current demand even if the council were to allocate 100% lets to homeless. A revised set of three updated scenarios have been developed for Year 5 as shown in Section 5.4 which look to consider what scenario is likely to have the most impact on homeless pressures whilst balancing the demand from other high housing need groups and supporting the prevention of homelessness.

5.4.Revised Modelling and Projections

It is anticipated there will be an increase in homeless presentations and unintentional demand of around 5% in year 5 of the RRTP, similar to 2022/23. The council anticipates that demand from the private sector will continue to increase and the rising cost of living and the impact of the changes to the Local Connection duties will all drive demand for affordable social housing and homeless services.

To mitigate this demand the council's revised Allocations Policy will continue to be used to meet applicants housing need more quickly as well as making best use of the available stock and looking to turn around and re-let void properties quicker to increase the availability of social lets.

Increases in the Private Sector Leases are also predicted to rise in Year 5 to 110 spaces along with increases in Sharing Spaces by 60 through Open Market acquisitions. New Build Programme, primarily from RSLs have also been factored in to updated modelling for 2023/24.

All scenarios are modelled on the current backlog of 1,606 cases.

Scenario 1

This scenario assumes the agreed lets to homeless targets of 50% from both council and RSL partners for Year 5 (2023/24). This scenario assumes an increase in demand of around 5% throughout the year. This also includes the planned additions to temporary accommodation stock through the Open Market acquisitions of Sharing Space TTs.

Lets to homeless:

WLC: 50% in 2023/24

RSLs: 50% in 2023/24

Under this scenario retaining 50% lets for Year 5 from both council and RSL partners will result in projections of over 200 people in B&B accommodation by the end of March 2024 and over 1,800 open homeless cases.

Scenario 2

This scenario is based on the predicted increase in demand, increases in the Sharing Spaces as outlined above. This scenario however would look to increase the percentage of council lets to homeless to 65% in 2023/24.

Lets to homeless:

WLC: 65% in 2023/24

RSLs: 59% in 2023/24

Increasing the lets to 65% from the council and to 59% for RSL partners will potentially generate an additional 155 lets to homeless households. This would reduce the number of predicted households in B&B accommodation by 13% in 2023/24. This would also reduce the number of open cases by 14%.

Scenario 3

This scenario is based on the predicted increase in demand, increases in the Sharing Spaces as outlined above. This scenario however would look to increase the percentage of council lets to homeless to 70% in 2023/24.

Lets to homeless:

WLC: 70% in 2023/24

RSLs: 59% in 2023/24

Increasing the lets to 70% from the council will potentially generate an additional 196 lets to homeless households. This would reduce the number of predicted households in B&B accommodation by 16% in 2023/24. This would also reduce the number of open cases by 16%.

Preferred Scenario

The preferred scenario for 2023/24 is Scenario 2, this will allow both the council and RSL partners to maintain a high percentage of lets to homeless applicants. This will provide a higher number of permanent outcomes for homeless applicants and reduce the potential backlog of open cases at the end of the year. It will also ensure that there a fair proportion of properties available to be let to other groups which will help to prevent homelessness before it occurs and potentially reduce demand for homelessness services as the chances of securing affordable social rented housing out with the homeless route are still available.

Due to the current backlog of open homeless cases and the predicted demand for 2023/24 the pressure and need for B&B type emergency accommodation will continue regardless of what scenario is taken forward.

6. Performance and Achievements

The following section provides an update on the key achievements that have been delivered in 2022/23.

6.1. Prevention, Housing Options & Supply Action

6.1.2 Housing Options approach – High Level Action 1

Housing Options staff remobilised in April 2022 following the COVID-19 pandemic and recommenced face to face services. The service has made a recognisable shift towards a preventative approach by ensuring that all attempts are made to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first instance. A broad range of housing options are explored with each customer. Following several challenges in recruitment over the last two years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and fixed term posts, the team now consists of 11 Housing Options Officers and two specialist officers, Addictions and DASAT (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault).

The Addictions officer works closely with the addiction services offering a 'drop in' service aside addiction services. There is strong partnership working between services to support households to prevent homelessness and explore all housing options. The officers remit also includes delayed hospital discharge relationships with the hospital and Health colleague have strengthened over the year to increase earlier referrals and improve interventions.

The DASAT officer undertakes the same specialist role as the Addictions Officer but focused on people fleeing domestic abuse. Again, strong partnership working is in place, responding early to interventions, involvement in the MARRAC process ensuring advice and assistance on housing matters is provided and a clear focus on ensuring the safety of households in the first instance.

6.1.2 Develop PRS approach – High Level Action 1

The Private Rented Sector Officer (PRSO) commenced in March 2022 with the service approach implemented in May 2022. The purpose of the role is to offer a 'tenant find service' to assist homeless and threatened with homelessness households find a suitable and affordable private let. This includes identifying a property, viewings, sign ups and assistance with the deposit/first month's rents if needed. The post also assists households to access the Flexible Fund where assistance is required to fund a deposit, first month's rent. The role also involves engaging with landlords to build positive relationships to increase the portfolio of available properties to enhance the housing options of homeless households.

The service has contacted over 4,000 landlords raising awareness of the new service and seeking empty property referrals. A total of 129 households have been referred to the service to seek an outcome in the private rented sector. 18% of referrals successfully achieved a private rented tenancy and 14% were supported to sustain their existing tenancy or secure another secure housing solution.

The demand for the service is lower than anticipated and the reasons for this are largely attributed to most households seeking affordable social housing due to their financial circumstances. The service has also experienced challenges trying to find housing solutions for households in the private sector due a reduction in private lets, landlords increased rent charges, limited options for single people and a reluctance from suitable applicants to consider this as a viable housing option.

6.1.3 Shore – High Level Action 1

The council has updated its information-sharing agreement with the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and implemented a local data sharing agreement with most RSLs. The Housing Options service now receives weekly reports from the SPS on prison admissions and upcoming liberations. The Housing Options Team identify and cross-check housing and related issues, liaise with landlords, benefit agencies and any relevant support providers to prevent housing loss across all tenures which includes Council, Housing Association and private rented sector (PRS) tenants, linking in with private rented landlords as required.

In 2021, the Allocations Policy was revised to award higher points to applicants threatened with homelessness including prison leavers, who will be homeless. Housing Options Officers now aim to assess prisoners' housing needs early, avoiding a homelessness applications and temporary accommodation however due to the significant shortfall of available lets it often impossible to achieve this. Officers therefore support prison leavers to undertake homeless assessments and seek to ensure appropriate temporary accommodation is secured for their release.

6.1.4 Increase Private Sector Leases for use as Temporary Accommodation - High Level Action 2

The council has now successfully onboarded 101 properties from the private rented sector to use as an alternative to temporary accommodation reducing the reliance on council owned stock as temporary accommodation. The RRTP has funded 2 full time equivalent officers within the councils Accommodation Team to support the scheme working with landlords, tenants and ensuring properties are maintained and occupied. The scheme has been working successfully however due to volume of work within the Accommodation Team mainly attributed to the ongoing pressure to supply Bed & Breakfast accommodation there is no further capacity to increase this provision without detrimentally impacting the service delivery and therefore the scheme has been paused to new properties.

6.1.5 3,000 Affordable Homes Programme 2012/13 – 2022/23

The previous affordable housing programme completed and handed over 81% of the target 3,000 units by 31 March 2022, with the remaining sites within the programme under construction. This included completion of 1,807 council house completions from the target of 2,047, with the 240 units in progress in financial year 2022/23 included in the new affordable housing programme approved by the council on 7 February 2023.

6.1.6 Hotel Management - High Level Action 2

The RRTP has funded 1 full time equivalent officer to support the Accommodation Team to deliver a housing management services in hotels. Weekly onsite visits to each hotel has now commenced to work alongside visiting Rapid Access staff. Work has been undertaken with the hotel providers to develop a core set of standards to improve the standard and cleanliness of rooms for applicants, ensure quicker access to rooms and respond earlier to reports of antisocial behaviour. A new internal process has also been developed to aim to ensure applicants with complex needs who are not suitable for this type accommodation are prioritised for more appropriate temporary accommodation.

6.1.7 Rapid Access – High Level Action 2

The RRTP has funded 2 full time equivalents Tenancy Sustainment Officers to begin work within hotels to ensure a rapid response to assessing households support needs. Once housing support needs are identified the officers and ensuring support plans are put in place with appropriate support. The officers are also providing drop in support services for applicants with low to no support need who need shorter assistance and interventions such as support with income maximisation, access to food services or referrals to other services. This support has commenced across four different providers consisting of up to 90 spaces. The Tenancy Sustainment Officers are working alongside the Accommodation Officers to deliver a joined-up approach to ensuring peoples support needs are identified.

6.2.Prevention of Youth Homelessness Action

6.2.1 Develop and deliver education programme – High Level Action 1

The Tenancy Award SCQF L4 has been developed with colleagues in Housing Need to focus on homeless prevention and tenancy sustainment. This has now been rolled out to all 11 secondary schools in West Lothian. This is a targeted intervention within small group settings. The award is embedded in Citizenship skills providing learners with an opportunity to develop skills and knowledge which will help them to understand housing choices, manage their finances, develop straightforward cookery skills, and ultimately gain and sustain a tenancy successfully.

6.2.2 Target educational support for young people identified at risk of homelessness – High Level Action 1

The RRTP has funded a 12-month Education Youth Homeless Prevention Officer to help develop actions within secondary schools to prevent homelessness. The existing Risk Matrix in secondary schools has been enhanced to identify young people at risk of homelessness. Schools are now updating this with the new information and when required referrals are made to either the YEP (Young Persons Emergency Prevention) officer or YHO (Youth Housing Options) who provided targeted intervention to prevent or respond to homelessness. In total 48 young people have been identified and referred to both services for assistance. Through this resource strong working relationships between secondary schools and Youth Housing Options staff have been developed. Youth Housing Options staff have been visiting secondary schools raising awareness of the available services for young people at risk of homelessness.

The officer has also worked with Rock Trust colleagues to research a transformational change to early intervention services and identified a pathfinder pilot model to be rolled out in 2023/24 to reduce youth homelessness. The model, Upstream, will be a key action for RRTP in 2023/24 jointly funded by RRTP, Rock Trust and the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The pathfinder pilot will be delivered by the City of Edinburgh, Perth & Kinross and West Lothian Council.

6.2.3 Young Persons Emergency Prevention Service (YEP) – High Level Action 1

The RRTP has funded a 24-month Young Person's Emergency Prevention Officer post to work as part of the Youth Housing Options Service. The service aim is to provide emergency preventative support to Young people aged 16 to 18 years of age who may be or at risk of homelessness. The purpose of this is to provide short term mediation and conflict resolution support to young people and families to assist each individual to return home and work with other relevant agencies where support is a longer-term requirement. The service specification has been developed following research into a variety of other successful projects similar to this across Scotland.

The Service is working alongside the Youth Housing Options service to ensure that homeless rights are still adhered and provide the physical support to mitigate the risks of homelessness and work with the Young Person and families to achieve a positive outcome with the Young person safely returning home. 38 young people have been supported since it commenced in July 2022 with 35% safely avoiding homelessness and 39% supported to find another suitable long-term housing outcome.

6.2.4 Specialist Youth Housing Options Team – High Level Action 1

The RRTP has funded 1 x full time Youth Housing Options Officer to work with young people who are either at risk of homelessness or homeless. The officer undertakes specialist housing options work in partnership with the YEP service and where required undertakes homeless assessments and case co-ordinates the homeless application until the young person achieves a permanent outcome. Taking this specialist approach has helped to ensure young people's needs are better identified and responded to and other services have a single point of contact including the young person. The service went live in September 2022 and by the end of March 2023 70 young people have accessed the service.

The Youth Housing Options Officer and YEP service have worked jointly with Education to promote services and raise awareness to relevant departments, groups and agencies within West Lothian to respond earlier to risks of homelessness.

6.3. Housing Support including Housing First & Health & Wellbeing Action

6.3.1 Implement Trauma Informed approach to Housing Support Services - High Level Action 4

All Housing Support staff have now undertaken Level 1 awareness training to support them to deliver services in ways that prevent further harm or re-traumatisation for those who have experienced psychological trauma or adversity at any stage in their lives and support their unique recovery journey. Training will be extended to the wider Housing Need service in 2023/24.

6.3.2 Evaluate and Seek to Sustain Housing First for Adults – High Level Action 4

Housing First for Adults has been delivered for the last 3 years in partnership with Third Sector partners, Cyrenians. The first year of the pilot was funded through the West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) with the remaining two years funding from RRTP with a contribution from Health and Social Care. A review has now been undertaken of the Housing First for Adults pilot to identify how the service could be either mainstreamed or move to a contract & commissioning process. The review has taken consideration of the findings from the [Branching Out: National Framework for Housing First](#).

The review has concluded that Housing First will now be scaled up to create a more effective housing system by increasing capacity of the service through mainstreaming the model into existing Housing Support Services. Housing Support Services will be restructured to transition to this mainstreamed approach with RRTP funding supporting the final transition into mainstream funding. A key to ensuring effective service delivery of this model will be adequate housing supply which will require support from other housing providers.

6.3.3 Implement New Support Process - High Level Action 4

A new enhanced Housing Support assessment tool has been developed which is aligned to the thresholds of the Eligibility Criteria. The assessment tool allows officers to undertake housing support assessments in a more consistent and transparent way by assessing Housing Support needs under 4 bands from no need to high needs. This now ensures everyone who is assessed is assessed consistently and people with the greatest need are prioritised.

7. Funding and Resources

The original RRTP 2019-2024 sought to secure £3 million of additional resource to allow the transition required to fully implement the RRTP from the £50 million Scottish Government Ending Homelessness Together Fund. The Scottish Government have awarded total funding of £1.8 million for the period to 2024/25, a shortfall of £1.2 million.

The delivery of the RRTP has benefited from one off funding from the council and its partners which has been vital to deliver the new initiatives and projects aimed at preventing and reducing homeless demand and reducing the use of unsuitable accommodation.

There have been a number of recruitment challenges in 2022/23 caused by a shortage of skilled staff in the sector and lack of demand for fixed term posts. This has resulted in an underspend in the RRTP resources for 2022/23, which will be carried forward to support planned activities for 2023/24..

The demand for homeless services however has grown in 2022/23 due to the continued need for affordable social housing however the RRTP activities have suppressed this demand from rising further and supported households who have had to rely on the use of temporary accommodation to go on to sustain permanent accommodation. There is a clear need for dedicated funding to support RRTPs going forward. There is also a need to encourage more long-term financial contributions from other partners that benefit from homelessness prevention and rapid rehousing.

Mainstreaming the RRTP activities has been dependant on the redirection of resources by reducing the use of temporary accommodation. This will not be achieved by 2024/25 as there remains chronic pressures in homeless services budgets due to costs of providing B&B accommodation, despite efforts to make efficiencies and improve income sources. Scaling back or withdrawing services will create uncertainty and a lack of continuity for homeless households and particularly detrimental to people who rely on these services.

With no further financial commitment from the Scottish Government beyond 2023/24 there will continue to be challenges in securing the future delivery of RRTPs beyond its final year. RRTP projects have made a significant contribution towards preventing and responding to homelessness and are essential to the Scottish Government's wider aim to end homelessness. This lack of certainty over long term funding will continue to create difficulties in sustaining high quality staff on fixed term posts for both the Council and its Third Sector commissioned partners.

To ensure effective implementation of the RRTP, there is a requirement for continued funding from the Scottish Government beyond 2023/24 and for the level of funding to be commensurate with the pressures being faced by the council and RSL partners.

8. Challenges

The delivery of RRTP is impacted by a range of external factors. The operating context has also changed significantly since the council was asked to develop RRTP and the council is still dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and large backlogs of homeless cases.

The ongoing imbalance between supply and demand however continues to be the council's biggest challenge. The lack of supply and continued high demand for homeless services will continue to hinder efforts to respond quickly to homelessness and minimise the use of temporary accommodation and breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO).

The ability for the council to meet the changes made to legislation in such quick succession has also caused challenges, particularly the changes to the UAO. Until supply pressures ease the council will continue to rely on temporary accommodation placing it at risk of continued reliance on unsuitable accommodation for homeless households and breaches of the UAO which may lead to financial penalties.

Homeless rights are now stronger than ever before, which is welcomed, however the need for more affordable social housing is greater than ever. The Scottish Housing Regulator has warned of an "emerging risk of systematic failure" in homelessness services as councils are facing such challenges in meeting its statutory duties. Building more affordable social homes in the right places is required to tackle homelessness and the challenges faced.

Retaining and recruiting skilled staff has also been difficult which has affected and delayed the delivery of a number of activities. This is mainly attributed to the short-term nature of RRTP funding whereby other long-term employment options are more desirable to staff.

Delivering RRTP is therefore becoming increasingly more challenging in a context of constrained resources, lack of certainty of its future and ongoing demand and supply pressures. The council is still on a path towards long-term changes and working towards embedding approaches into mainstream service delivery.

There are still further risks ahead surrounding the potential increase in homelessness presentations when the refugee schemes come to an end and the resources required to implement and meet new Prevention of Homelessness Duties expected to be introduced in 2023.

9. Key priorities for 2023/24

The lack of certainty around long term funding and commitment to continue to deliver RRTPs will contribute towards the direction of priorities in 2023/24. Activity will be aligned to seek more longer-term sustainable models to current activity that reduces homeless demand and the use of temporary accommodation. Delivering the RRTP will continue to be dependent on effective partnership working at a local level and joint efforts will remain between Health and Social Care, Education, Housing Providers, the Advice Shop and the voluntary sector.

In addition to RRTP activities Homeless Services will also embarked on a programme of additional improvement activity. This includes targeted activity to alleviate chronic budget pressure and activity to improve and enhance processes and approaches.

The key funding priorities for 2023/24 include:

- Seek to sustain enhanced housing options approaches;
- Continue to increase access and supply of affordable housing solutions;
- Continue to reduce the need for B&B accommodation through increasing access to other more suitable forms of temporary accommodation;
- Continue to deliver enhanced services to households who require to use temporary accommodation to maintain sustainability;
- Increase prevention of youth homelessness through earlier interventions in secondary schools
- Seek to sustain a successful approach to responding to and reducing Youth Homeless;
- Deliver a new build supported accommodation unit and dispersed temporary accommodation for young people;
- Redesign Housing Support services to mainstream and increase Housing First services;
- Continue to work with Health & Social care to improve the outcomes for people at risk of homeless and respond to the needs of adults where housing in the community is not suitable.

The full planned activity for 2023/24 can be found in Appendix 2.

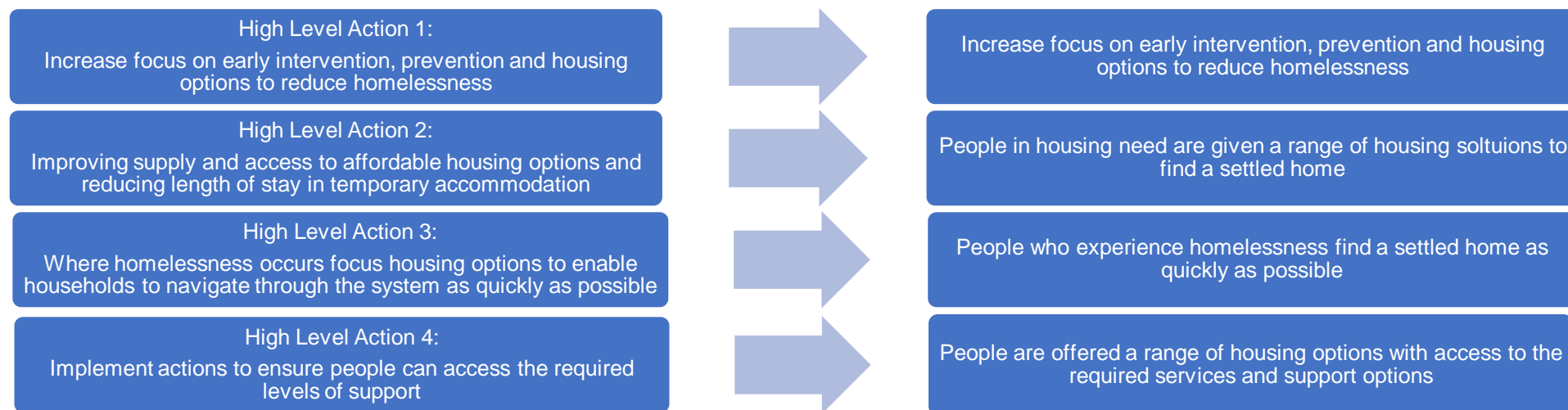
Appendix 1

Year 5 - Revised Modelling		
16 Mainstream Lets per week		
Delivery of OMA Sharing Space Project (60 Spaces - phased over the year)		
WLC % Lets to Homeless (65%)		
RSL % Lets to Homeless - 59% (Almond - 60%, Link - 65%, Places for People - 60%, Dunedin Canmore - 50%)		
New Build Programmes updated for 2023/24		
Demand based on 5 year average with decreases/increases included for various factors		
Temp Accommodation Numbers includes Sharing Spaces and PSL properties (Void factor included)		
	Original Year 5 (as updated April 2020)	Revised Year 5
	2023/24	
Open Cases	807	1,685
New Demand	969	1,097
Resolved Homelessness		115
Less loss contacts and refusals	- 97	- 110
Total Demand	1,679	2,556
Private Rented Sector	30	36
Lets to Homeless	718	739
Total Supply	748	775
Open Cases	931	1,781
<i>cases that were open overdue closure</i>		
Open Cases: (10% Void Factor Included)		
Temp Tenancies - Council	491	479
Temp Tenancies - RSL	65	55
Temp Tenancies - PSL	105	91
B&B	49	194
Self Accommodation	222	963
Total	931	1,781
(b) Less loss contacts and refusals	10%	10%
(c) Mainstream Lets		
Total Available Lets	1,238	1,167
(d) Homeless Mainstream Lets		
Total Available Homeless Lets	718	739
Collective % Lets to homeless		63%
Total Lets to Homeless	718	779

Appendix 2

West Lothian RRTP Action Plan 2023/24

High Level Actions



Action Plan 2023/24

	Action	Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Lead Agency
1.	Review and implement wider approach to Housing Options with Area Offices and RSL partners	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Housing Need
2.	Provide training and awareness training to Housing Need staff	High Level Action 1	June 2024	Housing Need
3.	Develop early intervention model to prevent homelessness in secondary schools	High Level Action 1	August 2023	Education

	Action	Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Lead Agency
4.	Seek to secure long term funding to mainstream specialist Youth Housing Team	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Housing Need
5.	Evaluate and seek to sustain the YEP service through a new long-term funding model	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Housing Need/Third Sector
6.	Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for people accessing health and social care services.	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Health
7.	Develop pathways for vulnerable people in transition at risk of homelessness leaving hospital.	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Health
8.	Develop pathways for people at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse.	High Level Action 1	March 2024	Health
9.	Renew focus on housing options advice as part of Housing Options interview through introduction of Housing Options plans and information packs for applicants	High Level Action 1, 3	March 2024	Housing Need
10.	Develop and increase partnership with PRS and raise awareness of the tenant find service.	High Level Action 1, 3	March 2024	Housing Need
11.	Seek to develop sustainable model to continue PRSO approach	High Level Action 1, 3	March 2024	Housing Need
12.	Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First Service for Young People in partnership with Social Policy through a new long-term funding model	High Level Action 1, 3, 4	March 2024	Housing Need/Third Sector
13.	Evaluate and seek to sustain the Nightstop Service through a new long-term funding model	High Level Action 1, 3, 4	March 2024	Housing Need/Social Policy/Third Sector
14.	Develop and mainstream Housing First services for Adults	High Level Action 1, 3, 4	July 2023	Housing Need
15.	Maximise the contribution of the private sector and establish a West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership	High Level Action 2	March 2024	Housing Strategy
16.	Implement rapid access provision in hotels and at Blackburn Homeless Unit assessment centre	High Level Action 2	March 2024	Housing Need
17.	Increase dispersed temporary sharing spaces by additional 30 properties	High Level Action 2	March 2024	Housing Strategy/ Housing Need

	Action	Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Lead Agency
18.	Develop crashpad spaces at Blackburn Homeless Unit	High Level Action 2	March 2024	Housing Need
19.	Implement void improvement plan to reduce number of void properties & increase throughput of properties	High Level Action 2	March 2024	Building Services
20.	Deliver new build supported accommodation for young people	High Level Action 2	January 2025	Housing Strategy
21.	Quantify the residential accommodation requirements for adults where housing in the community would not be suitable including Addictions and mental Health.	High Level Action 2, 4	March 2024	Health
22.	Develop Choice Based Letting (CBL) approach required for the new housing management system	High Level Action 3	March 2025	Housing Need
23.	Complete the balance of the 383 new affordable council houses targeted over the period 2023/24- 2027/28	High Level Action 3	March 2028	Housing Strategy
24.	Review Moving into Health Service and implement changes.	High Level Action 3, 4	March 2024	Health
25.	Review and reconfigure current support provision within the council's homeless units at Strathbrock to meet support accommodation requirements	High Level Action 4	March 2024	Housing Need
26.	Evaluate Addictions Support in hotel provision	High Level Action 4	March 2024	Health
27.	Review and reconfigure support services to deliver medium to high level support and ensure statutory support duty is met	High Level Action 4	July 2023	Housing Need
28.	Co-ordinate and ensure the delivery of Trauma Informed training across Housing Need Service	High Level Action 4	March 2024	Housing Need



HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

PERFORMANCE REPORTING

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services indicators that are the responsibility of the Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the current performance on Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; Being honest, open and accountable; and Making best use of our resources.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	In compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and the principles of Best Value.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is no impact but this report is part of the agreed process for performance reporting.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII Consideration at PDSP	N/A

VIII Other consultations

Tenants Panel and service staff.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Current Position – Q4 2022/23

Overseeing and challenging council performance is contained within the remit of every Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel (PDSP). Scrutiny of performance by elected members in PDSPs forms a key part of the council's wider scrutiny and public performance reporting arrangements.

To support this, each PDSP is allocated areas of the Corporate Plan, strategic priorities and key council performance, relevant to the focus areas of the Panel, and receives quarterly and annual performance reports.

The relevant performance report for this PDSP is included within Appendix 1. Of the 10 performance indicators for Q4 2022/23, 4 are categorised as green, 1 is amber and 5 are red.

Each indicator in the appendix displays the latest note which offers an explanation from the service on current performance levels.

D.2 Red Performance Indicators

The current trend for those indicators that are currently at red status is summarised below:

- **P: BUS005_6a.7 Percentage of customers who are satisfied with the overall housing repair Service-** In Quarter 4 of 2022/23 we have not met target with 74.47% recorded against 1226 responses. 313 responses indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. These came through operative devices and additional surveys carried out by our Customer Excellence team. Delay in allocating jobs in operatives' calendars being the main issues due to resource issues and operative availability.
- **P:HQSHOM2097_9b The percentage of Homeless Applications Assessed within 28 days-** There has been a marked improvement this quarter with 59.4% of decisions made within 28 days. Greater stability within the team, greater emphasis on performance at team meetings and one to ones, service wide improvement and enhanced specialist training has contributed to this increase. It is anticipated that there will be further improvement in the next quarter.
- **P:HQSLETS001m_9b Average length of time taken to re-let mainstream properties-** The overall trend shows that the service has been above target 10 out of the 13 months, December 2022 being highest month and April 2022 being the lowest. Reasons are attributed to factors associated with the overall number of lets in the period, deployment of resources, time applicants took in considering offers of housing also linked to the severe weather episode in December resulting in flooding in void properties. Building Services resources are continuing to prioritise houses and repair to lettable standard and the service monitors weekly

void performance. The same resources are also prioritising our emergency temporary accommodation and resources are mobilised to alleviate B&B usage by prioritising temporary tenancies. During January through to March 2023, Temporary Tenancy accommodation was prioritised over mainstream properties which has had a knock on impact on the mainstream letting timescales. Benchmarking information published by Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) indicates that our Peer Group average is 66 days during 2021/2022 our Service is ranked 5th out of the medium sized Local Authorities.

- **P:HQS021q_6b HCBS - Total number of complaints received by Housing, Customer and Building Services-** 376 complaints were received within this quarter. The service has been above the target of 240 complaints received for 4 out of 5 completed quarters displayed in the chart. Although the number of complaints will fluctuate quarter to quarter this can be impacted by seasonal factors. Generally the highest complaint generators are Building Services, Housing Needs and Housing Operations. Customer and Communities and CSC receive a low level of complaints.
- **P:HSD311_9b Cumulative Number of New Build Council Houses Completed-** Ongoing issues in the construction industry due to the impact of Covid and Brexit have resulted in ongoing delays on all construction . During Quarter 4, there were an additional 29 council new build handovers at two sites - Mossend and Deans South, bringing the total for the year to 143. This is below target due to delays with handover at Mossend (18 units), Hopetoun Street (4 units), Wellhead Farm (16 units) and Cawburn Road (16 units). These are still due to handover early 2023/24.

E. CONCLUSION

The performance information provides the Panel with a summary and status of the performance indicators which are the responsibility of this PDSP and actions being taken to address where current performance is below target.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: 1: HCBS Performance Q4 Report

Contact Person: Kirsty Weir, Kirsty.Weir@westlothian.gov.uk Tel No: 01506 281873.

JULIE WHITELAW, INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

Date of Meeting: 1 June 2023

APPENDIX 1

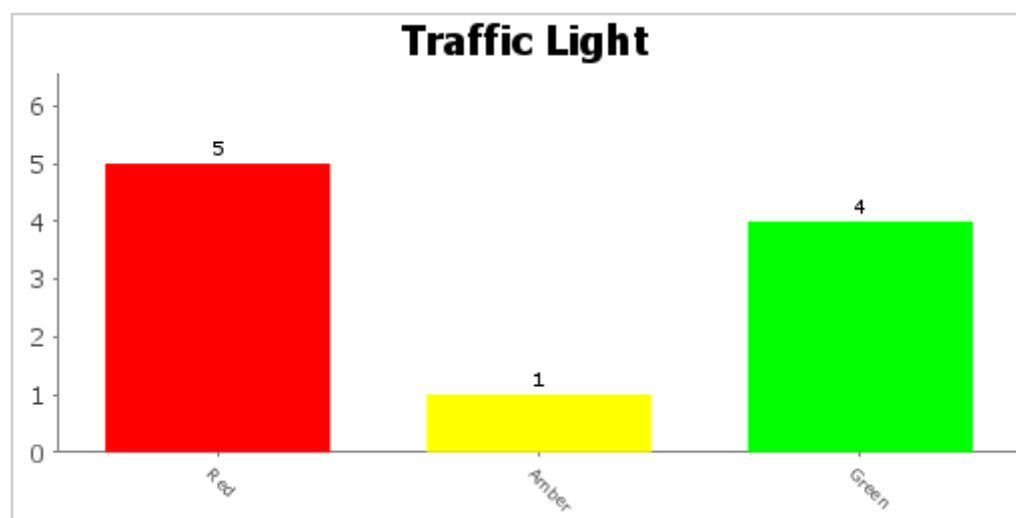
HCBS PDSP Report

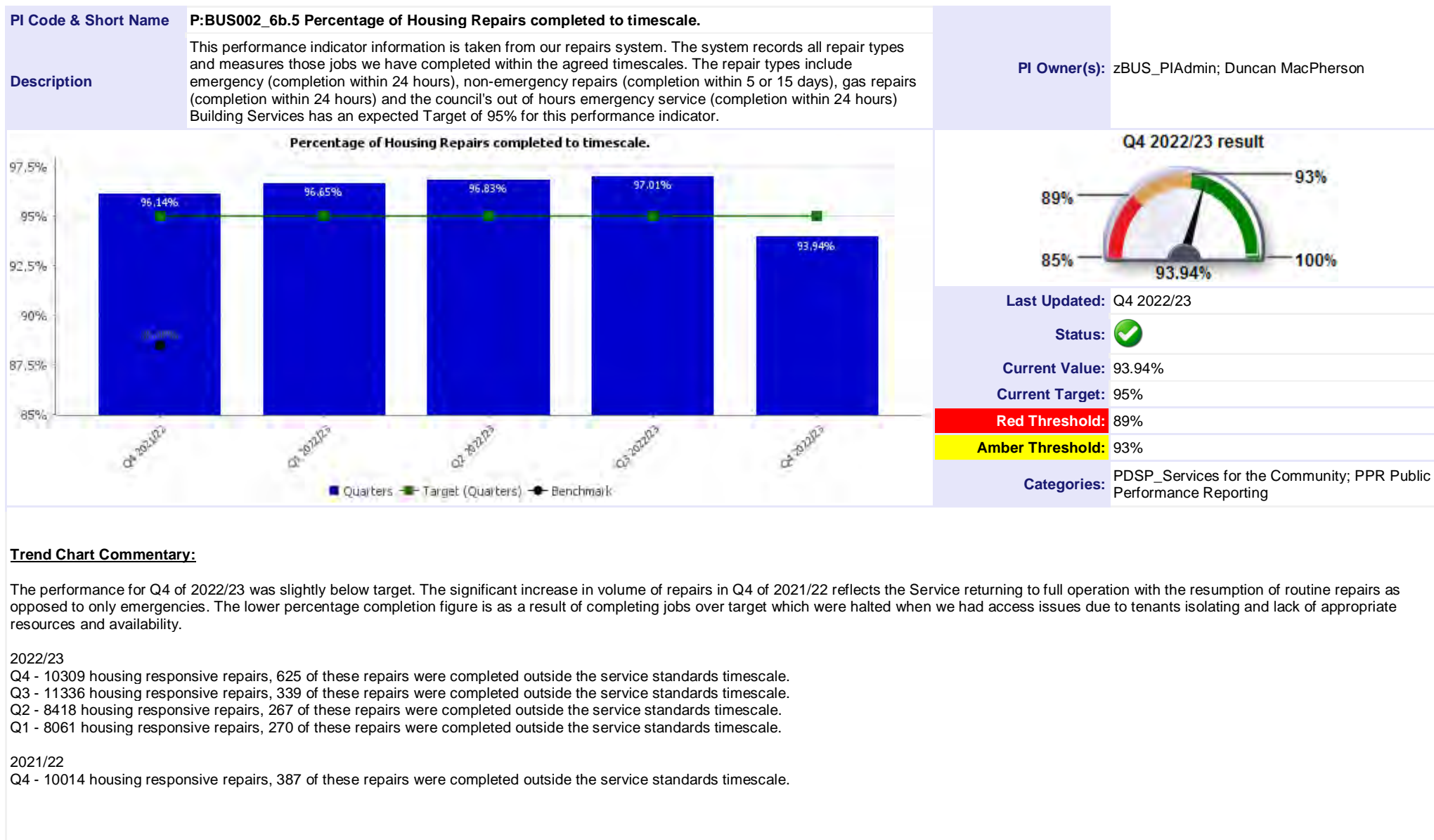
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Report Author: Kirsty Weir

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The trend chart shows that the performance since Q3 in 2021/22 has exceeded target for each quarter. This is due to the process of analysing any repairs with timing issues and implementing improved procedures.

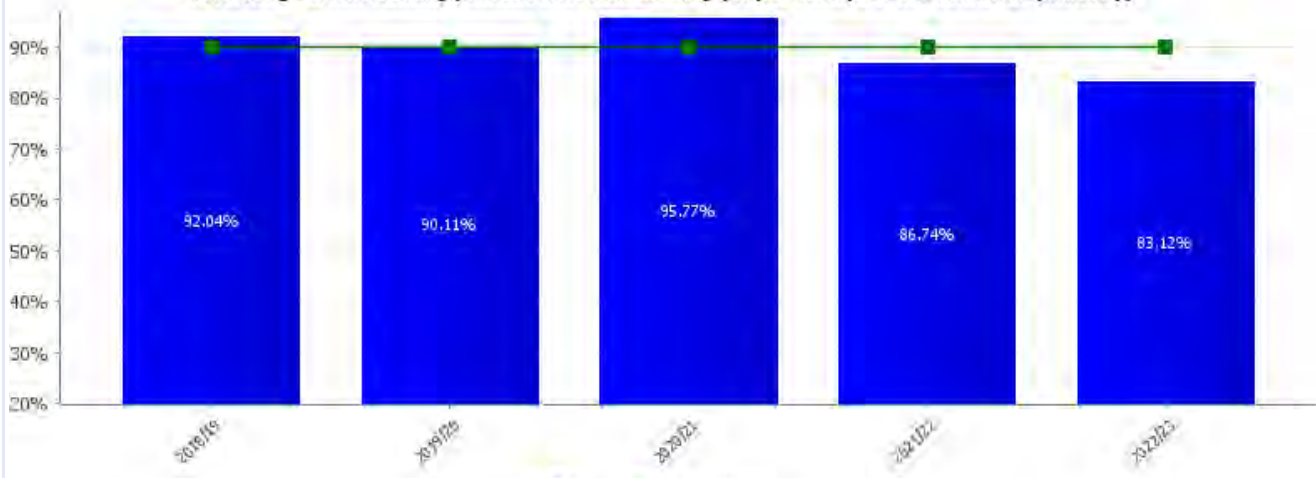
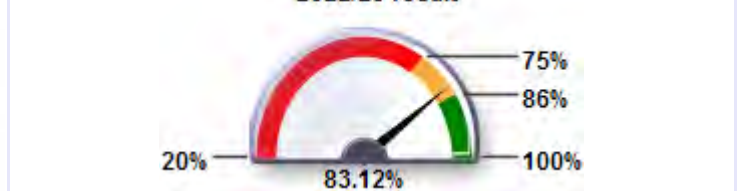



The benchmarking figure used in the chart is the Scottish Housing Network (SHN) average for the year for similar sized Local Authorities which is collated at the end of each financial year.

In 2021/22 the Scottish Housing Network (SHN) average for the year was 88.48% for similar sized Local Authorities of which we were placed second highest of the 8 providing data. The Local Authorities included Aberdeenshire Council, Dundee, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Highland, West Dunbartonshire.

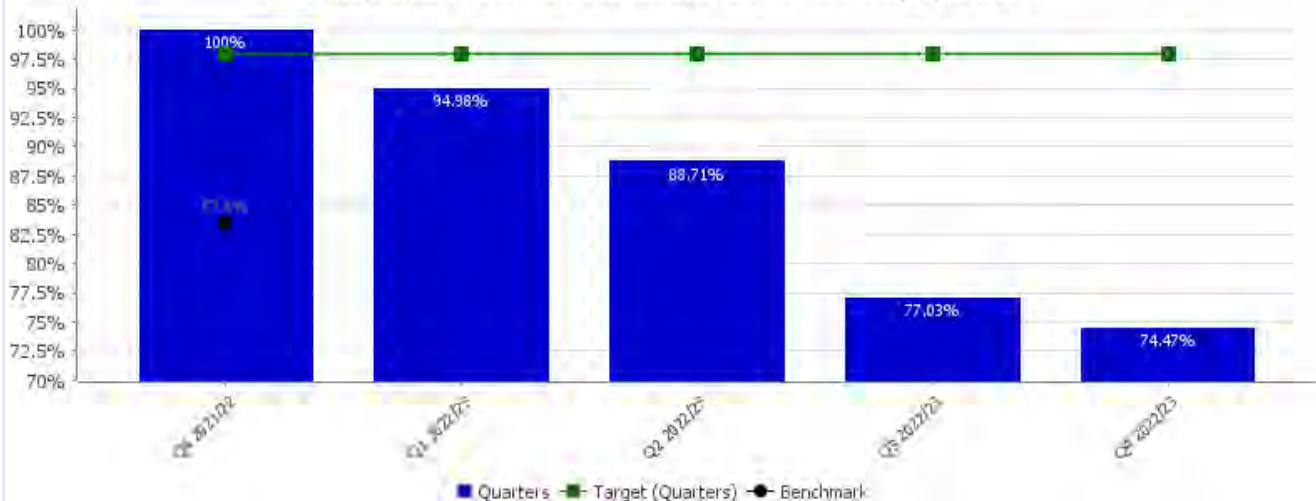
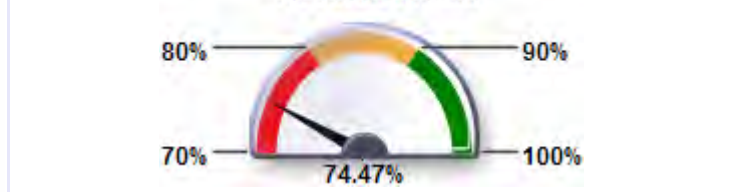
In 2020/21 the Scottish Housing Network (SHN) average for the year was 94.21% for similar sized Local Authorities of which we were placed highest of the 8 providing data. The Local Authorities included Aberdeenshire Council, Dundee, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Highland, West Dunbartonshire.

In 2019/20 the Scottish Housing Network (SHN) average for the year was 95% for similar sized Local Authorities of which we were placed second highest of the 8 providing data. The Local Authorities included Aberdeenshire Council, Dundee, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Highland, West Dunbartonshire.

The target of 95% is derived from discussion with Buildings Services and the Tenant's Panel with adherence to the Building Services Management Plan. This target is reviewed on a yearly basis and remains for 2022/23. .

PI Code & Short Name	P:BUS003_9b.2 Percentage of Non-Housing (Schools and Public Buildings) repairs completed to timescale (Annually)	PI Owner(s): zBUS_PAdmin; Duncan MacPherson																										
Description	This performance indicator information is taken from our repairs system. The system records all repair types in Schools and Public Buildings and measures those jobs we have completed within the agreed timescales. The repair types include emergency and non-emergency repairs. Timescales can vary from attendance within 3 hours for an emergency to 20 days for a routine repair. Building Services has a reviewed target of 90% for this performance indicator. Building Services is one of a number of contractors Construction Services use to carry out reactive repairs on the councils non housing properties																											
<div>Percentage of Non-Housing (Schools and Public Buildings) repairs completed to timescale (Annually)</div>  <table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2018/19</td><td>92.04%</td></tr><tr><td>2019/20</td><td>90.11%</td></tr><tr><td>2020/21</td><td>95.77%</td></tr><tr><td>2021/22</td><td>86.74%</td></tr><tr><td>2022/23</td><td>83.12%</td></tr></tbody></table>		Year	Percentage	2018/19	92.04%	2019/20	90.11%	2020/21	95.77%	2021/22	86.74%	2022/23	83.12%	<div>2022/23 result</div>  <table><tbody><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>83.12%</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>90%</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>75%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>86%</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>PPR Public Performance Reporting</td></tr></tbody></table>	Last Updated:	2022/23	Status:		Current Value:	83.12%	Current Target:	90%	Red Threshold:	75%	Amber Threshold:	86%	Categories:	PPR Public Performance Reporting
Year	Percentage																											
2018/19	92.04%																											
2019/20	90.11%																											
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2022/23	83.12%																											
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Current Target:	90%																											
Red Threshold:	75%																											
Amber Threshold:	86%																											
Categories:	PPR Public Performance Reporting																											
<div>Trend Chart Commentary:</div> <p>This annual performance indicator trend shows the target was not met in 2022/23 with a decline from the previous year's figures with a slight decrease of 3.62%. In 2022/23 Building Services completed 1084 repairs jobs with 901 of the jobs complete within Target. The reduction in the number of jobs completed is mainly due to attempting to maintain service levels with operating resources being utilised in other areas of the business to assist with absence issues and recruitment. We are striving to maintain the relevant numbers of operatives required in the Non-Housing section to retain the higher levels of performance required going forward.</p> <p>Performance can vary depending on the volume and complexity of repairs requested by our customers. After analysis of internal processes within both Building Services and Construction Services we have seen an increase in jobs completed within the agreed timescale.</p> <p>Building Services had a target of 90% for this performance indicator for 2021/22 after consultation with Construction Services and will remain for 2022/23.</p> <p>In 2021/22 Building Services completed 2731 repairs jobs with 2369 of the jobs complete within Target. In 2020/21 Building Services completed 2270 repairs jobs with 2174 of the jobs complete within Target. In 2019/20 Building Services completed 3366 repairs jobs with 3033 of the jobs complete within Target. In 2018/19 Building Services carried out 4735 Non-Housing jobs with 4358 within Target</p>																												

Benchmarking data for this Performance Indicator is not available as Annual Returns do not include this information.

PI Code & Short Name	P:BUS005_6a.7 Percentage of customers who are satisfied with the overall housing repair service.																													
Description	<p>This performance indicator reports on the percentage of customers who gave a positive response on their experience with the overall housing repair service they received. Other questions include 'Was the member who dealt with your request helpful, Are you satisfied with the quality of the work provided, Did the operative who carried out the work tidy up before leaving and Was the work completed in time'.</p> <p>Customers are asked to complete a customer survey once the repair has been carried out. The survey information is captured by paper surveys and personal digital assistants (PDA). This indicator is the number of respondents who chose 'a positive response, as in Very and Fairly satisfied, as a percentage of the overall responses. Measuring customer satisfaction helps ensure that we continue to provide an excellent repairs and maintenance service that meets tenants' expectations. The results are analysed to identify improvements to the way the service is delivered to customers. In 2013/14 as part of the introduction of Scottish Housing Charter Building Services now report customer satisfaction using the 5-point scale responses. The categories are, Very satisfied, Fairly Satisfied, Neither or, Fairly Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied.</p>																													
 <table><caption>Percentage of customers who are satisfied with the overall housing repair service.</caption><thead><tr><th>Quarter</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Q4 2021/22</td><td>100%</td></tr><tr><td>Q1 2022/23</td><td>94.98%</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2022/23</td><td>88.71%</td></tr><tr><td>Q3 2022/23</td><td>77.03%</td></tr><tr><td>Q4 2022/23</td><td>74.47%</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>Legend: ■ Quarters ■ Target (Quarters) ● Benchmark</p>		Quarter	Percentage	Q4 2021/22	100%	Q1 2022/23	94.98%	Q2 2022/23	88.71%	Q3 2022/23	77.03%	Q4 2022/23	74.47%	<p>Q4 2022/23 result</p>  <table><thead><tr><th>Metric</th><th>Value</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>Q4 2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td>●</td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>74.47%</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>98%</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>80%</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>90%</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>PDSP_Services for the Community; PPR Public Performance Reporting</td></tr></tbody></table>	Metric	Value	Last Updated:	Q4 2022/23	Status:	●	Current Value:	74.47%	Current Target:	98%	Red Threshold:	80%	Amber Threshold:	90%	Categories:	PDSP_Services for the Community; PPR Public Performance Reporting
Quarter	Percentage																													
Q4 2021/22	100%																													
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Categories:	PDSP_Services for the Community; PPR Public Performance Reporting																													
<p>Trend Chart Commentary</p> <p>In Q4 of 2022/23 we have not met target with 74.47% recorded against 1226 responses. 313 responses indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. These came through operative devices and additional survey carried out by our Customer Excellence team. Delay in allocating jobs in operatives calendars being the main issues due to resource issues and operative availability.</p> <p>In Q3 of 2022/23 we have not met target with 77.03% recorded against 875 responses. 201 responses indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. These came through an additional survey carried out by our Customer Excellence team. Delay in allocating jobs in operatives calendars being the main issues.</p> <p>In Q2 of 2022/23 we have not met target with 88.71% recorded against 1010 responses. 114 responses indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. These came through an additional survey carried out by our Customer Excellence team.</p>																														

In Q1 of 2022/23 we have not met target with 94.98% recorded against 635 responses. 32 responses indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. These came through an additional survey carried out by our Customer Excellence team

In Q4 of 2021/22 we have exceeded target with 100% recorded against 274 responses. No response indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. Responses were down due to the reduction in visits resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In Q3 of 2021/22 we have exceeded target with 100% recorded against 439 responses. No response indicated that they were very dissatisfied, fairly dissatisfied or neither with the housing repairs service. Responses were down due to the reduction in visits resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In 2021/22 the Scottish Housing Network average customer satisfaction figure for a comparable medium sized Local Authority was 83.5%. The Local Authorities included Aberdeenshire Council, Dundee, Falkirk, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, Highland, West Dunbartonshire.

Surveys are monitored to investigate negative responses to assess their relativity to the repairs processes. As a result the service has recently implemented new customer communication cards to assist with the improvements. The repair teams analyse all feedback and arrange to contact all customers who provide non positive responses to discuss ways of improving the service.

The target has been agreed at 98% after review with the Tenant's Panel and will remain for 2022/23.

PI Code & Short Name P:HQSARR700m_9b Total rent collection

Description

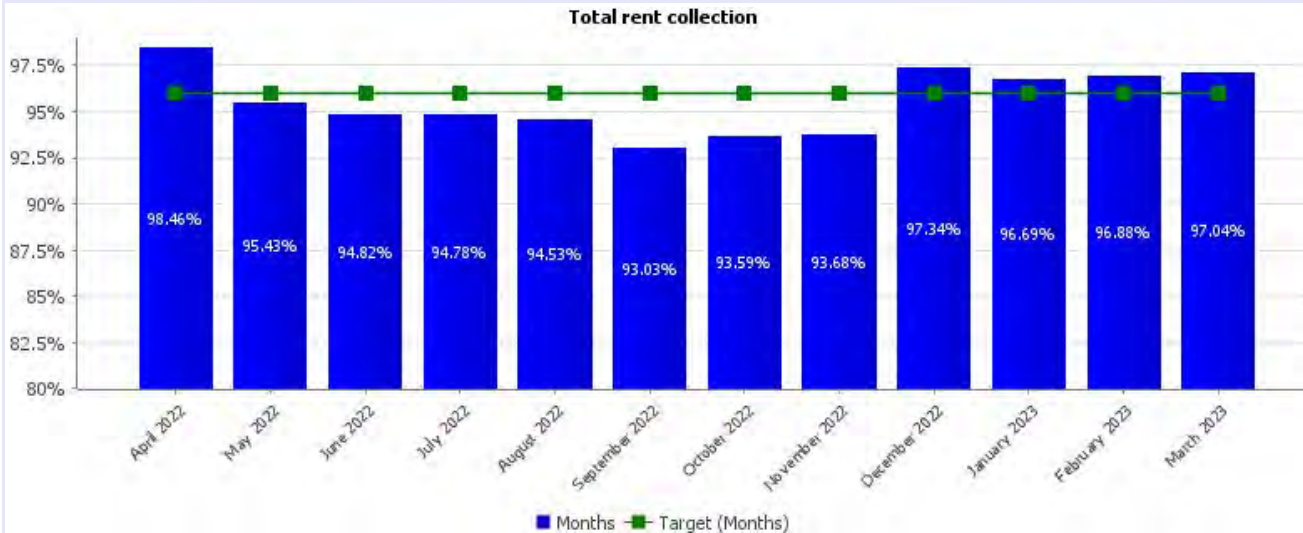
This indicator measures the rate at which Housing Customer & Building Services is collecting rent. This value is:

. The cumulative sum of rental payments made so far in the financial year by current tenants (excluding garages),
 . divided by the cumulative charge we applied to rental accounts, to give us the year-to-date collection rate percentage.

This value emulates the collection value reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) as part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) which social landlords are required to complete each year. Please note this value will be slightly different as this is an operational value and does not include void loss as the reported figure would.

Source: HCBS Financial Dashboard

PI Owner(s): zHQSARR_PAdmin; Alison Smith



Last Updated: March 2023

Status:

Current Value: 97.04%

Current Target: 96%

Red Threshold: 91.2%

Amber Threshold: 93.6%

Categories: High Level

Trend Chart Commentary

Total Rent Collected has been above the 96% target for 6 months out of the last 13. The fluctuation is due to the way customers pay, therefore there can be some variation from month to month. Customers will invariably make their payments to suit, their income (wages, benefits). There can be some extreme results each year in December and March; this is due to the fact that for most properties there are two non-collection weeks in each of these months and tenants can pay in this period whilst the rent debit is not raised.

The accelerated move of customers from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit has had an impact on the amount of rent collected since it was introduced. When Full Service UC went live, the number of tenants on UC has increased substantially. Each customer that transitions across experiences a break in income as they move from weekly payments to a monthly payment in arrears. This will in the short term in almost all cases generate a month's arrears. Customers on extremely low income will find this difficult to catch up within their income. This transition will decrease collection for the foreseeable future.

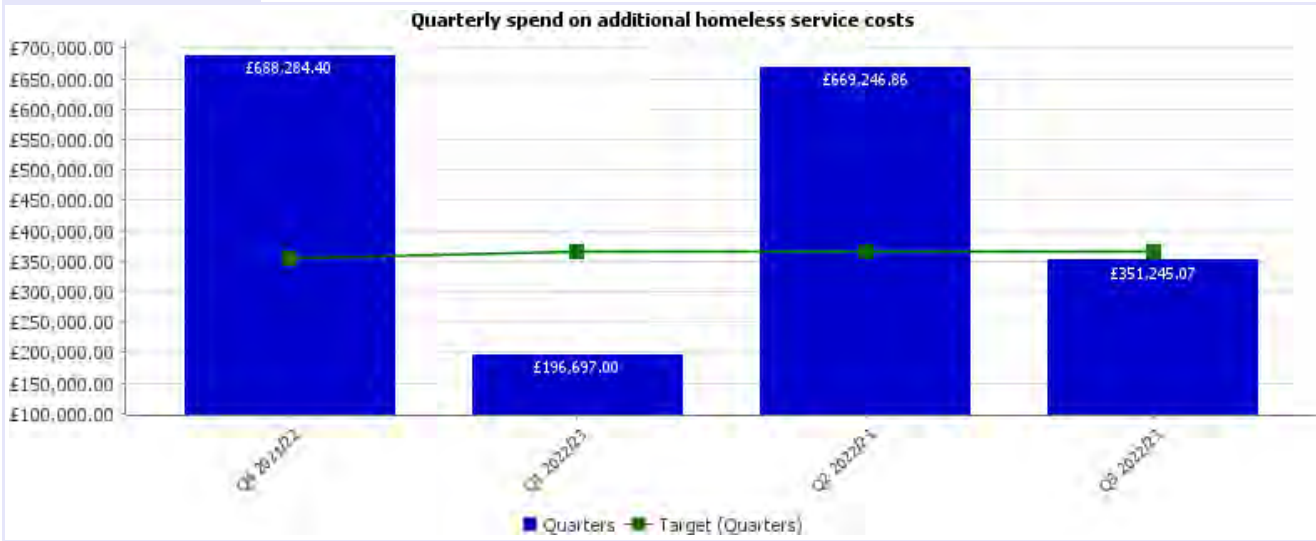

The service is also seeing an impact following recovery period after Covid19 and actions are being progressed through the recovery process for arrears, however the cost of living crisis is a concern and the service is doing as much engagement, support and recovery actions practically possible to maximise rental income.

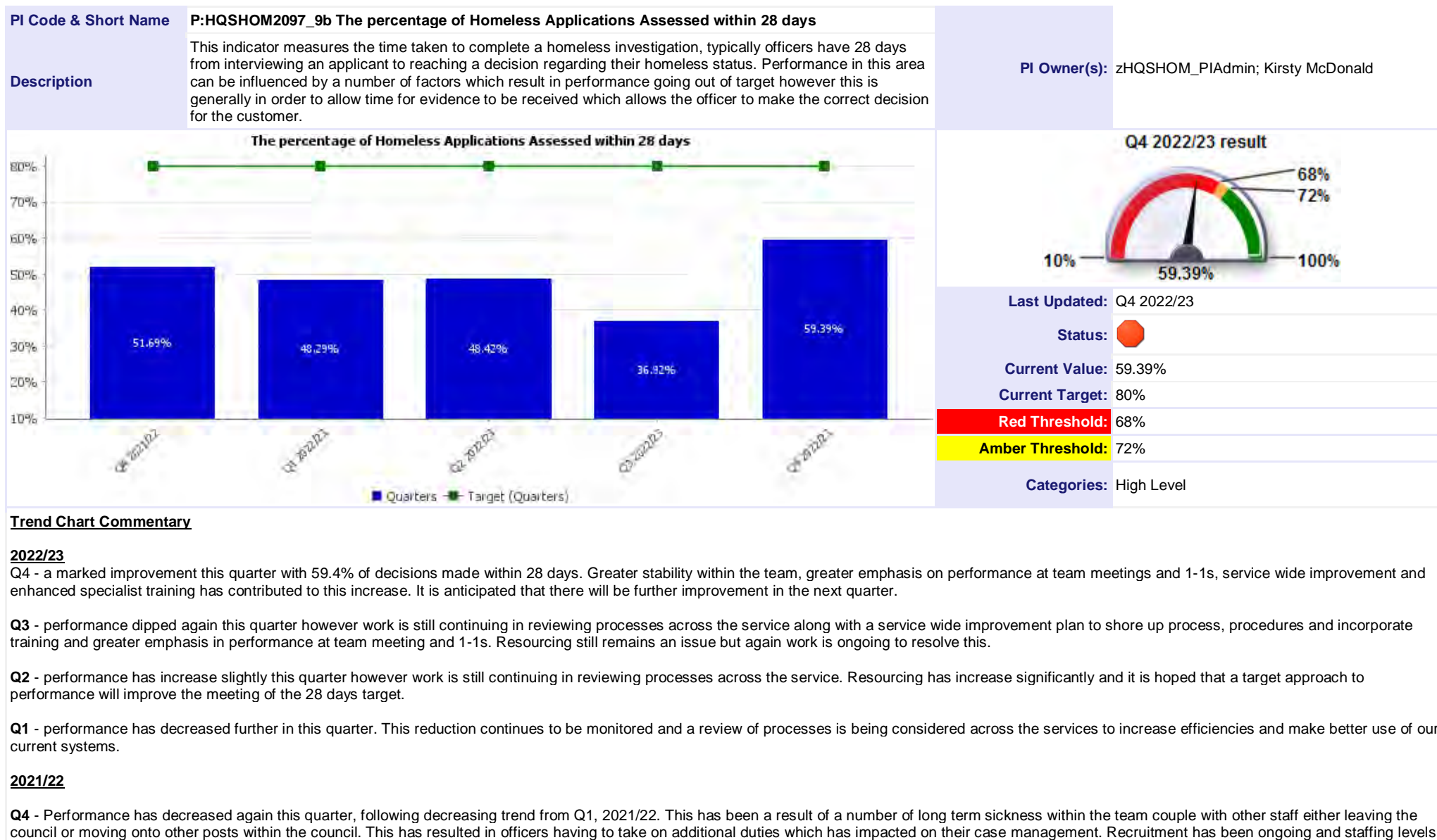
Benchmarking information published by Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) shows that we performed marginally higher compared to the Scottish average of 99% and our SHN Peer Group average of 98.9%.

Target:

The Housing Operations monthly target of 96% is set and based on historical data, the HCBS collection rate when calculated in this way (HQSARC30 which is the service wide indicator sets overall target at 99%)

The 2022/2023 target will remain at 96% and be reviewed for 2023/2024 at end May 2023 once return to the regulator is completed.

PI Code & Short Name	P:HQSHOM004_9a Quarterly spend on additional homeless service costs																																
Description	This measure is aiming to monitor quarterly spend on the additional homeless service costs, which are made up of Transport, Property Storage, Furniture, Council Tax and Voids. The aim is to reduce costs and ensure the service is within budget at year end. The target is the monthly budget multiplied by 12 months and divided into quarters.	PI Owner(s): zHQSHOM_PAdmin; Daniel Matonti																															
<div>Quarterly spend on additional homeless service costs</div>  <table><thead><tr><th>Quarter</th><th>Actual Spend (£)</th><th>Target (£)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Q4 2021/22</td><td>£688,284.40</td><td>£365,619.00</td></tr><tr><td>Q1 2022/23</td><td>£196,697.00</td><td>£365,619.00</td></tr><tr><td>Q2 2022/23</td><td>£669,246.86</td><td>£365,619.00</td></tr><tr><td>Q3 2022/23</td><td>£351,245.07</td><td>£365,619.00</td></tr></tbody></table>		Quarter	Actual Spend (£)	Target (£)	Q4 2021/22	£688,284.40	£365,619.00	Q1 2022/23	£196,697.00	£365,619.00	Q2 2022/23	£669,246.86	£365,619.00	Q3 2022/23	£351,245.07	£365,619.00	<div>Q3 2022/23 result</div>  <table><thead><tr><th>Category</th><th>Value (£)</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Last Updated:</td><td>Q3 2022/23</td></tr><tr><td>Status:</td><td>✓</td></tr><tr><td>Current Value:</td><td>£351,245.07</td></tr><tr><td>Current Target:</td><td>£365,619.00</td></tr><tr><td>Red Threshold:</td><td>£376,587.57</td></tr><tr><td>Amber Threshold:</td><td>£369,275.19</td></tr><tr><td>Categories:</td><td>High Level</td></tr></tbody></table>	Category	Value (£)	Last Updated:	Q3 2022/23	Status:	✓	Current Value:	£351,245.07	Current Target:	£365,619.00	Red Threshold:	£376,587.57	Amber Threshold:	£369,275.19	Categories:	High Level
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Categories:	High Level																																
<div>Trend Chart Commentary</div> <div>2022/23</div> <p>Q4 reporting on costs will be updated in the coming weeks as the council finalises the financial outturn position.</p> <p>Q3 2022/23 costs are £351,245.07 which is council tax bill £0, voids £112,084.53, furniture Storage £98,304.47, property £36,625.09 and transport costs £104,230.98. There was an increase in school transport costs due to their being more school days in Q3 than in Q2. Property storage Costs also increased as we a rise in the number of people requiring storage as a result of a rise in the families coming out of private Lets. Void costs reduced but this was due to a reduction in the throughput of temporary accommodation. There are no council tax payment in Q3. The 2nd half yearly payment will be made in Q4.</p> <p>Q2 2022/23 costs increased to £669,246.86 which is council tax bill £290,315.49, voids £118,841.08, furniture Storage £40,175.62, property £163,661.19 and transport costs £41,592.76. This quarter includes the council tax bill and shows a large increase in property storage costs as the result of increasing demand for storage facilities and increasing time in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Q1 2022/23 costs are £196,697.00 which is council tax bill £0, voids £64,139.44, furniture Storage £20,819.42, property £69,335.09 and transport costs £42,403.05. All costs are down except property costs which increased and council tax which has not been billed.</p> <div>2021/22</div> <p>Q4 2021/22 costs are £688,284.40 which is council tax bill £308,380.09, voids £70,372.56 furniture Storage £166,034.49, property £19,061.17 and transport costs £124,436.09. All other costs outwith those associated with property have declined positively. The increased costs in property is a result of a higher number of applicants who require goods storage, and who are then staying longer in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Target for 2022/23 was £365,619 per quarter and £1,642,476 budget provided by finance</p>																																	



are slowly beginning to increase and it is hoped that the team will reach full capacity by the start of the next quarter. Refresher training has been provided to the team as part of the improvement plan. As capacity increases within the team it will allow officers to refocus on their case management and performance moving forward.

Q3 - Performance decreased from previous quarter. Implementation of the improvement plan has progressed in Q2. In addition, staffing levels have increased allowing for Officer to have more time to focus on casework and performance. this is continuing to be monitored.

Q2 - Performance declined in quarter as work priorities were realigned to allow front line officers to focus on other tasks. An improvement plan has now been developed with increased resources focused on improving casework, communication and performance.

Target will remain at 80% for 2022/23



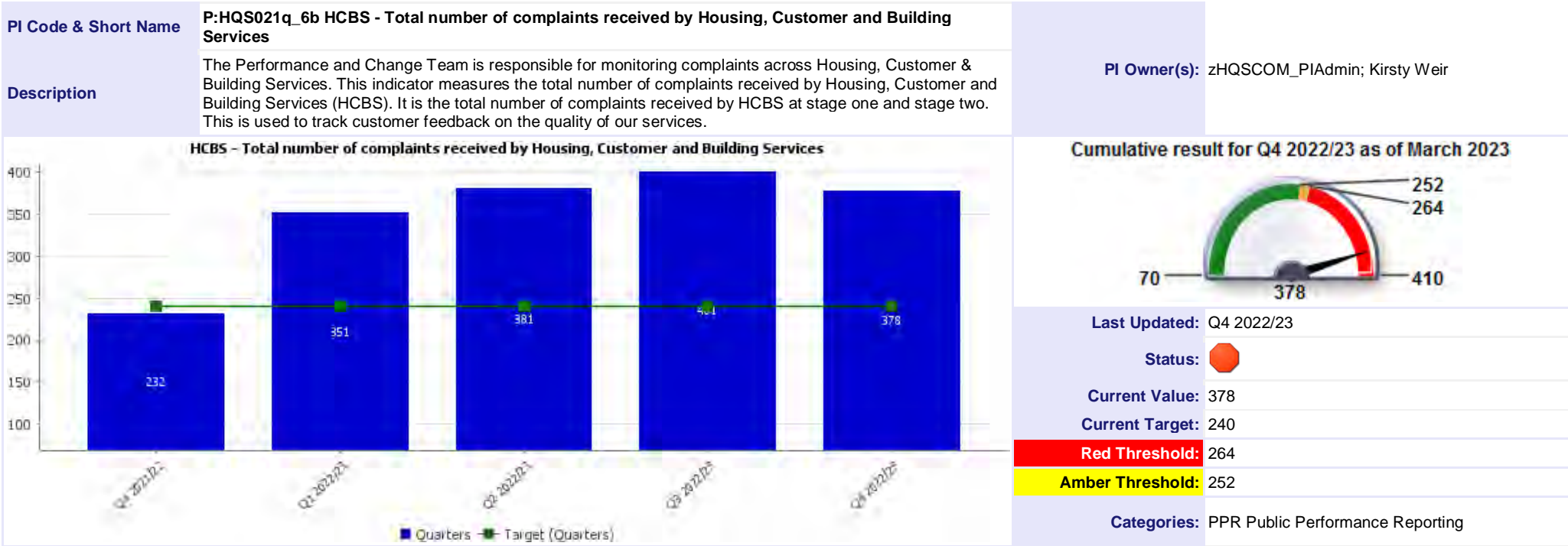
Trend Chart Commentary

The overall trend shows that the service has been above target 10 out of the 13 months. December 2022 being highest month and April 2022 being the lowest.

Reasons are attributed to factors associated with the overall number of lets in the period, deployment of resources, time applicants took in considering offers of housing also linked to the severe weather episode in December resulting in flooding in void properties. Building Services resources are continuing to prioritise houses and repaired to lettable standard and the service monitors weekly void performance. The same resources are also prioritising our emergency temporary accommodation and resources are mobilised to alleviate B&B usage by prioritising temporary tenancies. During January through to March 2023, TT accommodation was prioritised higher than mainstream properties which has a knock on impact on the mainstream letting timescales.

Benchmarking information published by Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) indicates that our Peer Group average is 66 days during 2021/2022 our Service is ranked 5th out of the medium sized Local Authorities.

Target for void performance is set at 48 days for 2022/2023, this is a challenging target to strive for improvement in the letting figures.



Trend Chart Commentary

The total number of complaints received by HCBS is as follows -

2022/23

Q4 2022/23 - 376 complaints were received within this quarter
 Q3 2022/23 - 401 complaints were received within this quarter
 Q2 2022/23 - 381 Complaints were received within this quarter
 Q1 2022/23 - 351 Complaints were received within this quarter

2021/22

Q4 2021/22 - 232 Complaints were received within this quarter
 Q3 2021/22 - 312 Complaints were received within this quarter
 Q2 2021/22 - 340 Complaints were received within this quarter

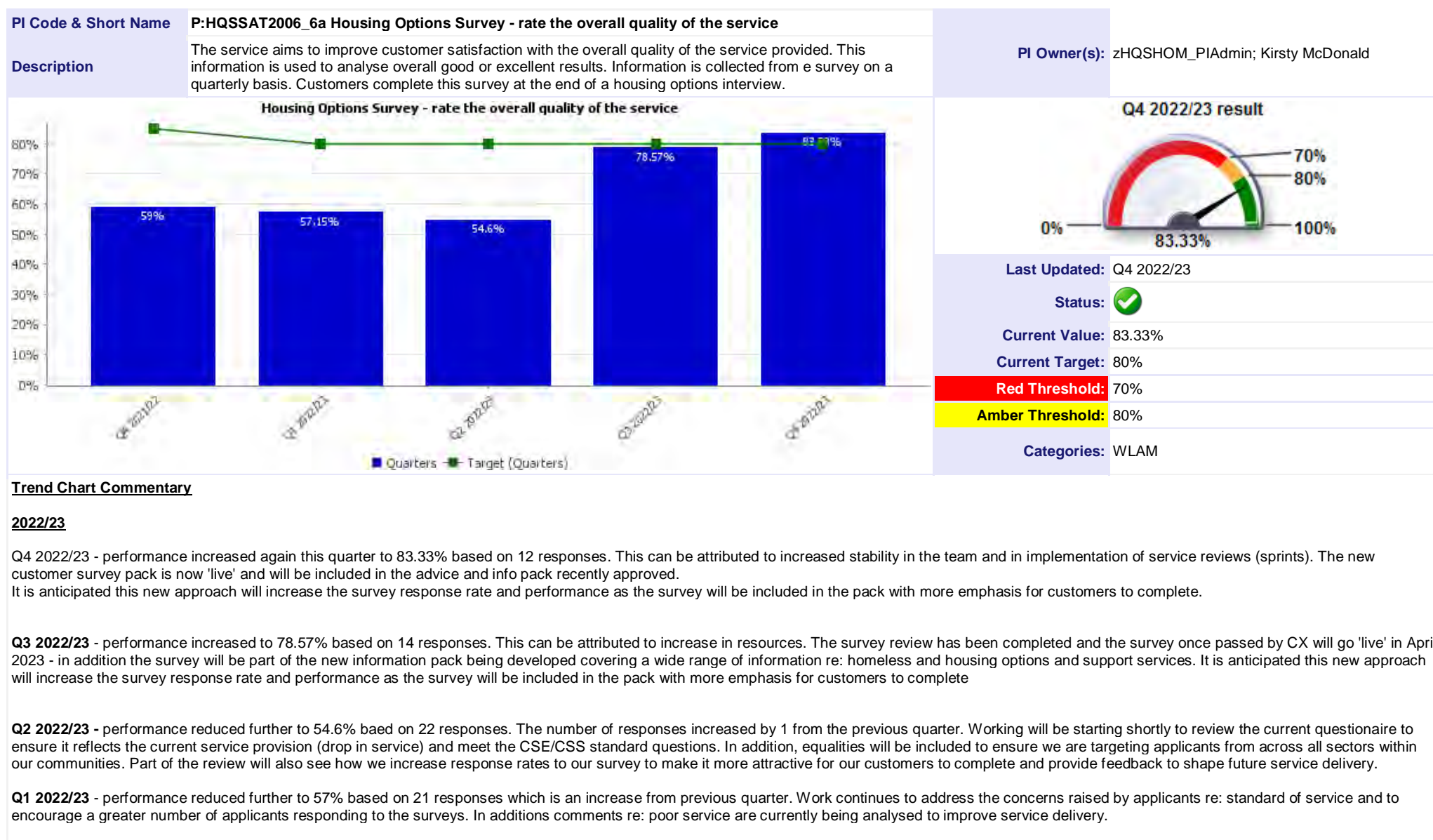
The service has been above the target of 240 complaints received for 4 out of 5 completed quarters displayed in the chart.

Although the number of complaints will fluctuate quarter to quarter this can be impacted by seasonal factors, generally the highest complaint generators are Building Services, Housing Needs and Housing Operations. Customer and Communities and CSC receive a low level of complaints.

COVID 19 has impacted on the receipt and handling of complaints as:

“West Lothian Council is set to focus on delivering essential services due to the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID 19). The Council will continue to focus on our statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act. To enable this, the Council is suspending responses to enquiries or complaints about our service provision and will instead be focusing our efforts to prioritise our statutory services, caring for the vulnerable, cooperating with our Resilience Partners and supporting economic recovery “

Target: The target was reviewed and left at at 240 for complaints to be received within a quarter. This will be reviewed again in April 2023.



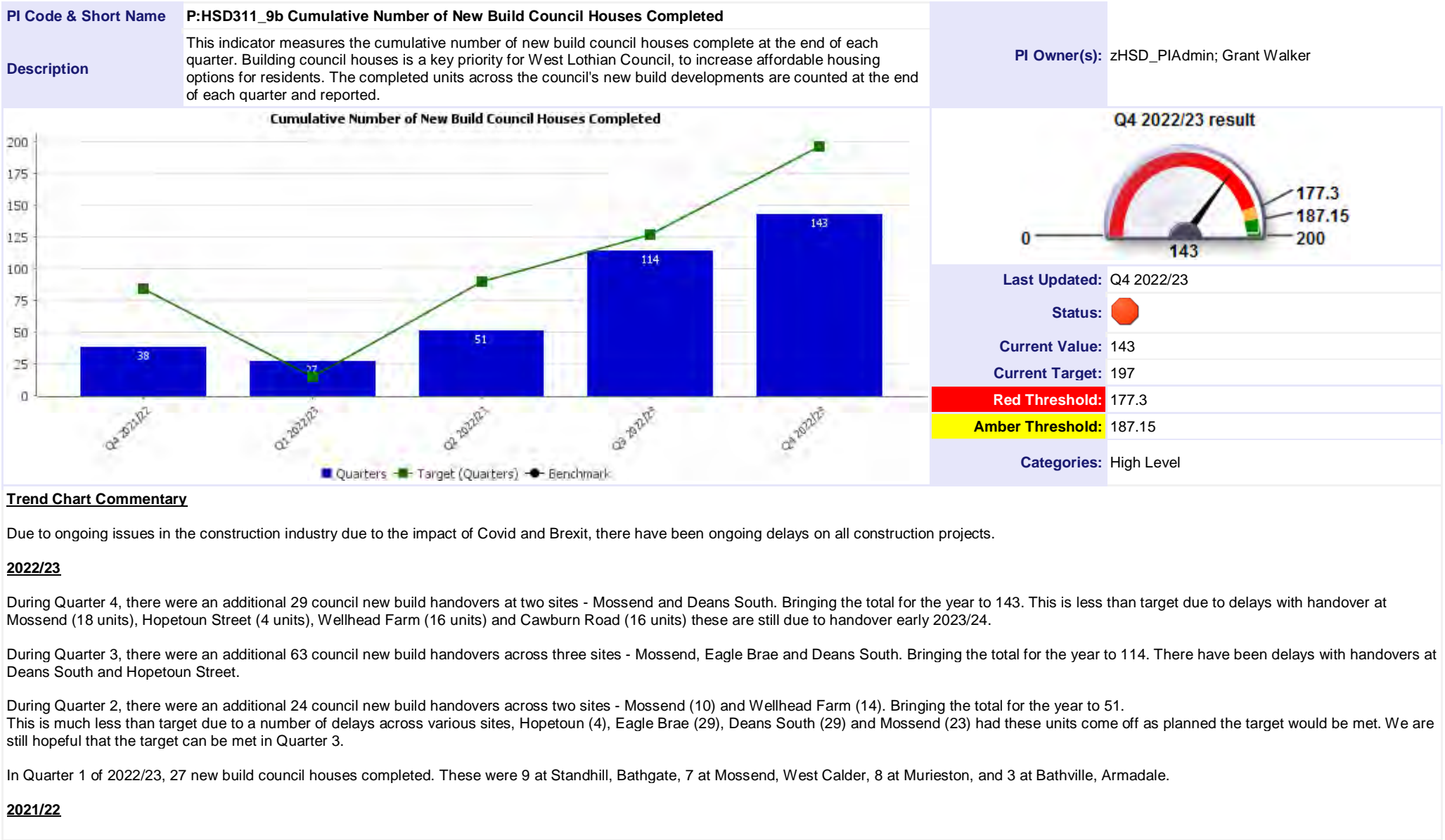
2021/22

Q4 2021/22 performance reduced to 59% which is based on 17 responses which is a decrease from previous quarter. Currently there is work being undertaken to try determine why there is a low response rate to our surveys which moved to text/links being sent rather than a paper copy. This change from link/text was in response to the Covid pandemic and officers working from home unable to issues a paper copy. Further analysis is being sought to address this decline including reviewing the survey questions to ensure what is asked is relevant and the number can be reduced.

Q3 2021/22 performance reduced to 69% and is below the current target. Discussions are being taken forward on how to make our surveys more appealing/inviting to customers so we can increase out response level.

Q2 2021/22 performance improved to 80.64% which is based on an increased response rate of 31 responses. This is attributed to an improvement in resources which has resulted in more communication and enhanced communication with customers.

Target will remain at 80% for 2022/23



Trend Chart Commentary

Due to ongoing issues in the construction industry due to the impact of Covid and Brexit, there have been ongoing delays on all construction projects.

2022/23

During Quarter 4, there were an additional 29 council new build handovers at two sites - Mossend and Deans South. Bringing the total for the year to 143. This is less than target due to delays with handover at Mossend (18 units), Hopetoun Street (4 units), Wellhead Farm (16 units) and Cawburn Road (16 units) these are still due to handover early 2023/24.

During Quarter 3, there were an additional 63 council new build handovers across three sites - Mossend, Eagle Brae and Deans South. Bringing the total for the year to 114. There have been delays with handovers at Deans South and Hopetoun Street.

During Quarter 2, there were an additional 24 council new build handovers across two sites - Mossend (10) and Wellhead Farm (14). Bringing the total for the year to 51. This is much less than target due to a number of delays across various sites, Hopetoun (4), Eagle Brae (29), Deans South (29) and Mossend (23) had these units come off as planned the target would be met. We are still hopeful that the target can be met in Quarter 3.

In Quarter 1 of 2022/23, 27 new build council houses completed. These were 9 at Standhill, Bathgate, 7 at Mossend, West Calder, 8 at Murieston, and 3 at Bathville, Armadale.

2021/22

By the 31st March 2022, there were 38 new build council houses completed. These were 20 at Eliburn, Livingston, 13 at Standhill, Bathgate, 4 at Murieston, Livingston and 1 conversion at Newton. Delays were seen at Bathville, Armadale 3, 4 units at Hopetoun Street, the remaining 9 at Standhill, 29 at Eagle Brae, Livingston and Deans South had also expected 6 units to complete.

The target for 2023/24 completions is set at 54 units.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

CIH SCOTLAND 2023 HOUSING FESTIVAL- A REVIEW

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide information as to developments in policy, practice and ideas for implementation gained from attendance at CIH Scotland Housing Festival on 7-8th March 2023.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel note the sessions attended and the key points of discussion taken from the Housing Festival.

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)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.

VII Consideration at PDSP NA.

VIII Other consultations NA.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The CIH Scotland 2023 Housing Conference, “Scotland’s Housing Festival” is the sector leading, annual conference and exhibition and Scotland’s largest social housing event. The conference took place at the SEC in Glasgow on 7th -8th March 2023.

This key event provided delegates with the opportunity to learn and network, with speakers on all of the key issues affecting the sector and new developments in policy, practice and implementation.

It was agreed at Council Executive on 28th February that an update on the key learning points would be provided to the relevant PDSP following officer attendance at the conference.

Officers from Housing, Customer & Building Services attended Scotland’s Housing Festival in March. Attending the Festival provides officers the opportunity to review best practice across the sector and allows reflection of the processes and approaches taken by other organisations. In turn, this allows officers to assess whether there is anything we can take from them and implement into our own services. Appendix 1 details the sessions attended and the key discussion points which will be considered by Housing, Customer & Building Services going forward.

E. CONCLUSION

The panel is asked to note the key discussion points which officers took from the sessions which they attended. Officers in Housing, Customer & Building Services will reflect upon these and take steps to implement any changes where it is considered that there will be a positive impact on service delivery.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

CIH Scotland’s Housing Festival Speaker Presentations- [Speaker Slides \(cih.org\)](https://www.cih.org.uk/speaker-slides)

Appendices/Attachments: None.

Contact Person: Kirsty Weir, Service Development Officer, Kirsty.Weir@westlothian.gov.uk

Julie Whitelaw

Interim Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services

Date of Meeting

1 June 2023

APPENDIX 1

Session Attended	Key Points of Note	HCBS Links and considerations to Strategy, Work/ Action plans
The Cost of Everything	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are seen as the “shock-absorbers” of financial crises. A lack of affordable housing and rent instability contribute to the lack of security especially following experience of gender-based violence. Women spend a higher portion of their income on accommodation than men. • Women are more likely to be living in poverty and are more reliant on social security payments than men. • Registered Social Landlords have helped their tenants through various means- by providing food & essentials, appliances, assistance with gas/ electricity etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCBS Income Management Strategy
Creating New Communities – Integrating New Scots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of the improvements now compared to the Syrian Refugees Resettlement Scheme in 2015. There are now safer options for refugees. • Consideration should be given for introducing policies to ensure long-term integration of Refugees and to make them feel more a part of society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lothian Council’s management of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Super Sponsor Scheme
How Healthy Are Our Homes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The session highlighted that disrepair in the housing sector requires tackling and more than ever. • Conversation was mainly based around retrofitting existing stock with energy efficiencies such as insulation etc and the subsequent environmental impacts • Discussion around the unintended consequence of air tightness and improved insulation- i.e. condensation and black mould- there needs to be more education around the impacts of this and trials are being undertaken to have installed environmental monitors in properties to monitor levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lothian Local Housing Strategy • Housing Capital Investment Program
Are We on Track to Prevent Homelessness in Scotland?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been significant change and updates to homelessness policy over the last six years and are continuing. • CIH have published 2 reviews on the progress of RRTP. These are available at https://www.cih.org/publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Improvement Programme 2023

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that there are now record numbers in temporary accommodation, a record number of children in temp accommodation, and the length of stay and case duration is increasing. • There has been a 10% reduction in Private Sector availability. • Recruitment and retention of quality staff is a sector wide issue within housing services. • It was noted that tenancy support is very important for sustainability and there should be a person-centred approach matching landlords and tenants. This means there is a central point of contact and could be mentoring and motivational work going forward. • Noted that providing tenants with the information/advice in an easy read format about how to manage /keep home clean is important. • Services which are reactive and flexible are important but it is also essential that staff have key skills including being great communicators, empathetic, letting experienced. A diverse team is also encouraged to reflect diverse landlord/tenants' groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-24
Customer Service Campfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service designers look to assist organisations to re-design services by taking the customer experience and customer insight of service usage and making changes to improve customer experience. • This is done by analysing the 'mess', crafting the vision and changing the 'mess' by working with organisations to map journey/modelling. The process involves reflecting /pausing, mapping barriers and building consensus to make the changes. • Speaker reflected on what survey respondents said, in particular listening to the dissatisfaction. • Organisations should consider customer segmentation • Key learning point- Session stressed the importance of listening and asking customers to learn and understand the impact of change on them. It means organisations must be willing to let customers talk openly and enable their views to be heard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Improvement Team Workplan 2023 • CX Team Workplan 2023
Tenant's First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The session provided an overview of the reforms planned for the Rented Sector, the urgency around the cost of living crisis and the need for a strong response to energy policy/transport/family support. • Putting tenants first and the importance housing has in terms of a human right. • The discussion around the "Ask & Act duty" needs to be considered by landlords. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Customer Participation Strategy • Customer Service Strategy

Old Map/ New World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This session was presented by a motivational /insightful speaker talking about automation, digital changes and how organisations adapt/cope/don't cope with change. • Things to look at and consider included, technology, leadership, culture – personal + mental wellbeing • The main message was to encourage organisations to ask questions about what they know about customers and assets. • There was also discussion as to whether organisations understand problems fully before launching into projects. • There was mention of 'zombie' projects where lot of effort goes into something that does not deliver expectations. • Consideration should be given to assessing tenant satisfaction – do we consider customer loyalty? Would we ever consider a "Rate your Tenant" approach which could be linked to rewards? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Customer Participation Strategy • Customer Service Strategy • Digital Transformation Strategy
Tenant participation and the cost of living: Can we afford our homes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion around the current financial pressures; 1 in 4 children live in poverty, 1 in 5 people of working age live in poverty. 71% of tenants concerns about rent affordability, High levels of fuel poverty and 66% of tenants get help with rent and growing concern for those that don't get help • Causes and effects of fuel poverty • 1 in 4 people in 2019 were in fuel poverty and we are now heading to 1 in 3; cause & effect of fuel poverty • Main considerations for the service should be the effects of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under occupation - Energy inefficient homes - Low incomes - Tenant Behaviour - High fuel costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCBS Income Management Strategy • Housing Capital Investment Program • Strengthening our ties with the Advice Shop & Community Planning Partnership
Making Housing a career of	<p>How can the housing sector attract new talent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise Apprenticeships throughout your business – 3 types, foundation, modern and graduate for different age groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment & Selection Policy

choice – The future of frontline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on digital marketing, data analytics, and digital applications to rejuvenate interest • Seek to expand into skill-bases in project management, construction skills and business management to unlock potential • Online apprenticeship advertising through Apprenticeships.Scot has over 57,000 accounts with 21,000 direct applications and over 10.5k opportunities advertised • Engage with schools and the local community to improve brand and sector awareness • Provide opportunities for growth and development • Promote a strong company culture, impact and values • Sign up to be a Young Persons Guarantee employer • Embed Meta Skills throughout your recruitment processes • Work with partners to act and strengthen local links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning Framework • Access 2 Employment Action Plan
Planning as an enabler for housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a 28% cut in Planning Departments since 2009 against a backdrop of significant sectoral growth being forecast • Demand for 730 planners over next 10-15 years, growth of 58% on 2020/21 levels • Aging workforce – only 8% of planning staff in LA are under 30, and 35% over 50 • An additional 130 planners will be needed to cover a projected 11% growth in the Scottish planning sector up to 2030. • Future Planners Report produced in June 2022, set out 13 recommendations with ministerial backing to progress key actions to increase the number of qualified planners and introduce an apprenticeship scheme for Scotland, with more on how to train/retain those with key skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Lothian Local Housing Strategy • West Lothian Local Development Plan
Future of Frontline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should have context of those we serve – you should be working on knowing your tenants and be able to segment them into profiles of age, gender, connectivity, employment status etc. • Consideration should be given to enabling tenant influence across all levels of decision making • Housing Organisations should refocus on priorities, purpose and design services to deliver against this. We are getting involved in far too many projects and workstreams led by other organisations and services that have minimal links to housing, this is preventing us focussing on what matters to tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Improvement Team Workplan 2023 • CX Team Workplan 2023 • Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy • Recruitment & Selection Policy • Succession Planning Framework

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing providers should develop pro-active community presence through community hubs to promote greater multi-agency working • There are new competencies required for organisations to give staff tools to cope with these new and emerging demands relating to cost of living, welfare changes, access to affordable housing an aging population, cuts to public services and digital disruption. They need skills in resilience, partnership working skills, commercial mindset, communication and problem solving. • Housing sector leaders should consider developing a broader understanding of leadership, that extends beyond vision, resilience and communication skills • Current leaders should consider developing talent pipelines for succession planning that identify future leaders from across the entire demographic of the existing workforce 	
Breaking the link between housing and wealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89% of people in Scotland say housing plays a vital or important role in creating a thriving community • 57% of people believe that a mix of high-quality housing types is important for a thriving community • 56% believe their community is <i>not</i> thriving • People need places to connect, places to meet, places to be proud of, places to celebrate • We should not be in competition as housing providers; homelessness is our competition • There is a need for housing partnerships and for social care providers to join up services rather than separating into silos to deliver for people as their health journey impacts their housing needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CX Team Workplan 2023 • Service Improvement Team Workplan 2023 • Housing Operations working the Cost of Living Hub partners. • HCBS Income Management Strategy
This is going to Hurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A refocus on homelessness and accommodation provision need to be our priority. • Partnerships with health, housing & social work is imperative. • Too many projects/silo-working examples as a result of funding regimes and misguided targets. The focus should be on building communities, not numbers. • The sector needs to refocus on the big issues to enable sectors to work together rather than compete for the same funds and against one another for results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Improvement Programme 2023 • Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2023-24

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HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on various initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian including proposed sites for the development of 1,621 affordable houses over the next five years to 2027/28.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the anticipated outcomes of the Affordable Housing Programme to 2027/28;
2. Notes the progress being made on delivering the Affordable Housing Programme in West Lothian over the five year period to 2027/28;
3. Notes projected delivery timescales and updates on the Council's new build programme.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs; • Being honest, open and accountable; • Providing equality of opportunity; • Making best use of our resources; and • Working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The policy of supporting the delivery of affordable housing is covered in the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy.</p> <p>Environmental and equality assessments will be carried out as appropriate.</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegation to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>Our economy is diverse and dynamic and West Lothian is an attractive place to do business.</p> <p>We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</p> <p>We make the most efficient use of our resources by minimising our impacts on the built and natural environment.</p>

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	<p>The Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 approved by West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023 approved £27.245 million for the New Housing Supply Programme</p> <p>Scottish Government grant of approx. £28.5 million has supported the delivery of affordable housing in West Lothian in 2022/23.</p> <p>Scottish Government Resource Planning Assumptions for years 2023/24 to 2026/27 total £46.491 million for West Lothian.</p>
VII Consideration at PDSP	<p>The proposed Housing Capital Investment Programme was considered at the Housing Services PDSP on 26 January 2023.</p>
VIII Other consultations	<p>Finance and Property Services; Corporate Services; Planning & Transportation</p>

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022-2027 has identified both affordable and market housing supply targets based on Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA3). These targets are 316 affordable homes per annum and 401 market homes per annum based on the average over a 20 year period to 2040. Housing supply targets will be reviewed and monitored during the course of the LHS.

D.2 3,000 Affordable Homes Programme 2012-2022

The previous affordable housing programme completed and handed over 81% of the target 3,000 units by 31 March 2022, with the remaining sites within the programme under construction. This included completion of 1,807 council house completions from the target of 2,047, with the 240 units in progress in financial year 2022/23 included the new affordable housing programme as outlined within the budget paper approved at full council on 7 February 2023.

D.3 Affordable Housing Programme 2023 - 2028

Significant resources will continue to be invested in the creation and acquisition of new homes, commencing with an initial five year new build programme, approved as part of the Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 approved by West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023.

The new programme includes the continuation of approved projects which will deliver 240 new houses over the five year period and a further 140 new houses from budgeted resources of £27.245 million. The majority of the new supply will be delivered through direct “turnkey” projects, purchased directly from residential housing developers, as part of Planning obligations.

The Open Market Acquisitions Scheme (OMAS) target for financial year 2022/23 was 31 properties, this target was exceeded with 34 properties settled by 31 March

2023. Over the next five years, the council aims to purchase another 38 properties.

To augment the council's objectives in the building of new build affordable housing, Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners, who are currently developing in West Lothian, also plan to deliver over 1,200 houses in the next 5 years from 2022/23. Details on all council and RSL developments is provided in Appendix 1. Within financial year 2022/23, the council has secured record levels of Scottish Government Grant Funding for new supply, which serves to support the new build programmes of both the council & our RSL Partners.

In terms of new council supply, an overall total of 383 new houses is anticipated for delivery over the five year period, including both new build and open market acquisition additions, and the council will continue to support applications that meet required criteria under the Scottish Government Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

Since the start of financial year 2022/23 to the end of Quarter 4, 546 affordable homes have been completed and/or acquired. A breakdown is provided in table 1 below and includes the number of completed units on the overall programme at 31 March 2023 along with those committed or under construction projected to 2027/28:

Table 1

	Completed (end of Q4 2022/23)	Under Construction / committed to 2027/28	Total
Existing Council Programme:			
New build projects	139	70	209
Open Market Acquisitions	34	-	34
New Council Programme:			
Houston Road, Livingston	-	30	30
Simpson Parkway, Livingston	-	32	32
Almondvale Cres, Livingston (HRA)	-	21	21
Mossend K, West Calder	-	19	19
Open Market Acquisitions	1	37	38
WLC Sub Total	174	209	383
RSL:			
New build	372	866	1,238
Open Market Acquisitions	-	-	-
RSL Sub Total	372	866	1,238
Total	546	1,075	1,621

D.4 Affordable homes currently under construction

Affordable homes are currently under construction at 10 sites across West Lothian. Three of the sites are part of the council's new build programme and the remaining seven are being developed by RSL's. A total of 476 houses are under construction.

A breakdown of the sites under construction is provided in Table 3 overleaf:

Table 3

Site	Housing Provider	Total no. of Units	Est. Compl.
Mossend, West Calder	WLC	69	2023/24
Wellhead Farm, Livingston	WLC	42	2023/24
Cawburn Rd, Pumpherston	WLC	16	2023/24
Wellhead, Murieston	Places for People	28	2023/24
Calderwood Ph2, East Calder	Places for People	49	2023/24
Craiginn Terrace, Blackridge	Cairn Housing Association	26	2023/24
Gregory Road, Livingston	Places for People	53	2023/24
Raw Holdings, East Calder	Wheatley Group	63	2023/24
Raw Holdings, East Calder	Link	75	2024/25
O2A, Winchburgh	Home Group	55	2024/25
Total		476	

D.5 Update & commentary on the council's new affordable housing programme (140 units)

Of the indicative projects included within the council new supply programme, updates on the progress at each site is detailed below. The council is also planning to acquire 38 additional former council houses via the Open Market Acquisition Scheme (OMAS) over the five year period of the programme.

D.5.1 Houston Road, Livingston (30 units) Estimated completions 2025/26

Negotiations are ongoing with Barratt Developments Ltd for the direct purchase of the completed affordable housing units. Council officers have met with Barratt Development team and they are currently revising the proposed affordable housing layout to reflect council feedback.

D.5.2 Simpson Parkway, Livingston (32 units) Estimated completion 2025/26

Negotiations are ongoing with Persimmon Homes for the direct purchase of the completed affordable housing units. Council officers have provided feedback to Persimmon Development team and the dialogue has been encouraging.

The housing mix is reflective of that suggested by council officers and the opportunity to promote both amenity and fully compliant wheelchair bungalows has been incorporated into the proposal.

D.5.3 Mossend Site K, West Calder (19 units) Estimated completion 2025/26

Negotiations are ongoing with Springfield Developments Ltd for the direct purchase of the completed affordable housing units. The housing mix reflects the authority

requirements and the house types are identical to the current Mossend development which has been positively received.

**D.5.4 Almondvale Crescent, Livingston (21 units plus 28 as part of Supported Housing for Young People)
Estimated completion 2024/25**

The affordable housing unit numbers (21) are estimated based on the overall masterplan for the site alongside the Supported Housing for Young People development to ensure the development reads visually as a whole.

There are efficiencies in delivering the affordable housing (21 units) and the Housing for Young People (28 units) as one project with a phased completion due to shared infrastructure requirements for the overall site delivery, similar housing design specification and reductions in construction preliminaries, and it is proposed that this approach is adopted for the project.

Design work is being undertaken by Property Services and is progressing well, and a report is being prepared for Council Executive with an update on delivery of the project.

E. CONCLUSION

The council's target is to facilitate the delivery of new affordable homes over the next five years in line with the draft Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 and the recent Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA3), including 383 additional council homes and 1,238 additional homes delivered through Registered Social Landlords.

The proposed sites identified for development by the council and RSL's within the five year period are provided in Appendix 1, and good progress is being made in delivery of the programme across the active sites, with 546 units completed during financial year 2022/23.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Report to West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023

Several reports to Council Executive and Housing Services PDSP from 7 February 2012 to 16 August 2022

Appendices/Attachments: One

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Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
1 June 2023

APPENDIX 1
AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEW SUPPLY LIST

WLC New Supply - Active Sites	TOTAL
Deans South, Livingston	29
Eagle Brae, Livingston	29
Mossend, West Calder	69
Standhill, Bathgate	4
Wellhead Farm, Livingston	42
Social Policy, Pumpherston	16
Hopetoun Street, Bathgate	4
Almondvale Crescent, Livingston (Supported flats)	16
OMAS 2022-23 (target 31, achieved 34 within budget)	34
Total WLC Active	243
WLC New Supply - Approved	
Houston Road, Livingston (Barratt)	30
Simpson Parkway, Livingston (Persimmon)	32
Mossend K, West Calder (Springfield)	19
Almondvale Crescent, Livingston (mainstream)	21
OMAS	38
Total WLC New Supply Approved	140
WLC New Supply - Active + Planned - 5 year	383

RSL New Build - Active SPLA Block A	TOTAL
Almondvale, Livingston (Wheatley Homes East)	146
Wellhead Farm, Livingston (Places for People)	26
Springfield, Linlithgow (Wheatley Homes East)	14
Calderwood, E Calder (Homegroup)	69
Calderwood, E Calder (Places for People)	66
Craiginn Terrace, Blackridge (Cairn HA)	27
Crusader Rise, Livingston (Ark)	20
Hunter Road, Livingston (Places for People)	28
Fauldhouse Road, Longridge (Cairn HA)	52
Calderwood Phase 2, East Calder CWC+OSD (Places for People)	49
Calderwood Phase 3, East Calder LKG (Places for People)	57
Gregory Road, Livingston (Places for People)	53
Raw Holdings, East Calder (Link)	55
Rawholdings, East Calder (Wheatley Group)	63
Site O2A, Winchburgh (Homegroup)	55
RSL OMAS / Buy Backs (Almond HA)	10
Total RSL New Build - Active	810
RSL New Build - Approved SLPA Block B	
Drumshoreland Road, Pumpherston (Cairn HA)	20
Deans South Phase 1, Livingston (Wheatley Homes East)	46
Site 'BB', Winchburgh (Wheatley Group)	81
Armada - AS Homes - (Places for People)	94
Total	241
RSL New Build - Approved SLPA Shadow	
Sibbalds Brae, Bathgate (Wheatley Homes East)	29
Preston Crescent, Linlithgow (Wheatley Homes East)	15
Sydney Street, Livingston (Link)	49
Near Lindean Terrace, Wilkieston (Places for People)	12
Deans South, Livingston Balance (Wheatley Homes East)	82
Total	187
RSL New Supply - Active + Planned - 5 year	1,238

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HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/28

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Panel members on the Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28. Updates are provided on other council asset plans to the appropriate scrutiny panel.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Note and provides feedback on the proposed Housing asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28,
2. Note that the comments from the Panel will be addressed in the report to the Council Executive for approval, and
3. Note that the draft Housing asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 will be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on our customers' needs; • Being honest, open and accountable; • Providing equality of opportunity; • Making best use of our resources; and • Working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegation to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>Our economy is diverse and dynamic and West Lothian is an attractive place to do business.</p> <p>We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</p> <p>We make the most efficient use of our resources by minimising our impacts on the built and</p>

	natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	<p>Budget provisions have been made in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets 2023/24 to 2027/28.</p> <p>The Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 approved by West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023 approved £157.972 million for new supply and refurbishment and investment to council housing stock.</p>
VII Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII Other consultations	Finance and Property Services.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The previous council Housing Asset Management Plan covered the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

On the 21st February 2023 Council Executive approved the Corporate Asset Management Strategy (2023/24 to 2032/33). The Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 (the Plan) is attached at Appendix 1 and establishes a framework to support the Corporate Asset Management Strategy. The overall aim of the Plan is to manage housing assets efficiently and effectively whilst continuing to improve performance. Housing assets owned and managed by the Council are high in the community's perception of the council and the services that are delivered. It is therefore important that houses are looked after for the benefit of current tenants, future tenant and local communities.

D.2 Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

The Housing Asset Management Plan sets out the council's approach to the management of its housing assets. It supports the delivery of the council's priorities by:

- Establishing a corporate framework for the management of the housing assets;
- Highlighting corporate outcomes and priorities and how they will be supported through the effective and efficient management of these assets;
- Presenting an overview of the housing assets owned by the Council;
- Identifying the internal and external influencing factors and challenges affecting the housing stock;
- Identifying a number of activity themes to improve the performance of property asset management and;
- Outlining the investment that will be made to houses over the next five years.

The monitoring of performance is critical to measuring the success of the Plan's implementation. The key performance measures which reflect the Corporate Asset Management Strategy are:

- Compliance
- Condition

- Suitability
- Sufficiency
- Accessibility
- Sustainability

Specific performance indicators are detailed in the Plan. Management and decision making processes will also require to be structured and effective. The Plan sets a management hierarchy that incorporates both elected member decision making and officer level delegated authority. To drive improvement in performance a number of themes have been identified which concentrate on specific activities and property types.

The document is intended to assist the council to meet strategic objectives and to review and balance the competing needs for investment in order to:

- Keep houses in good condition in cost effective ways;
- Bring properties up to date and in line with current expectations and demand;
- Ensure houses comply with current and prospective regulations, and;
- Provide a balance between responsive and cyclical repairs, and capital investment.

E. CONCLUSION

The Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 combines information about separate policies, plans and activities into one document. Given the Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 is now approved and the ongoing impact of changing legislation, this revision of the Housing Asset Management Plan provides an update on the approach to managing and maintaining the council's housing assets.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Corporate Asset Management Strategy and General Services Ten Year Capital Investment Strategy 2023/24 to 2032/33 – Report to West Lothian Council on 21 February 2023

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Report to West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023

Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Report to West Lothian Council on 7 February 2023

Appendices/Attachments: Two

Appendix 1: Housing Asset Management Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23

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Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
1 June 2023

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

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West Lothian Council

Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

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HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

1 Foreword

West Lothian Council is committed to managing its housing stock effectively and efficiently.

This plan sets out the council's proposed framework for the management of the housing stock over the next five years. It has been produced in accordance with national guidance and recognises good practices to support the delivery of our corporate priorities.

The plan recognises the outcomes of the draft Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028. A new Local Housing Strategy has been developed for the period 2023 to 2028 and the current West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2013 - 2023 is being reviewed. This plan recognises the importance that is placed upon ensuring that the housing stock is managed in a sustainable manner. It also builds upon the approved Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2023/24 to 2032/33, which sets out the main outcomes used to demonstrate that our property assets are managed efficiently and effectively.

It is recognised that the application of modern asset management practices can enable more efficient and effective resource deployment, service modernisation, long term financial planning and improved risk management. In these challenging times it is essential that the council embraces this approach and strives to ensure that we invest as wisely as possible and ensure that the housing stock continues to be maintained for the benefit of local communities and future generations.

Significant resources are deployed in the management, maintenance of existing houses and construction of new council houses. It is essential that these are deployed to deliver the best possible outcomes for West Lothian Communities. This plan forms an important part of the council's commitment to achieve this.



Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing Customer and Building Services

2 Introduction and Background

2.1 Introduction

Welcome to the Housing Asset Management Plan (HAMP) 2023/24 to 2027/28. This plan sets out the strategy for the management of the council's housing assets for the period 2023/2024 to 2027/2028. This builds upon the previous Housing Asset Management Plan produced in 2018.

The council has a draft Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028, which sets out five priorities that have been developed in consultation with local communities, partner organisations, stakeholders and staff. These priorities are the focus for council services in the next five years, as we work to deliver better outcomes for West Lothian. Successful management of property assets will be critical to ensure the delivery of these. Effective and efficient asset management was also identified as a key priority from the consultation.

To ensure a consistent approach to the management of our assets, the council has approved a Corporate Asset Management Strategy that sets out a number of performance outcomes within the context of our vision *“to manage assets efficiently and effectively to support the achievement of corporate priorities and outcomes”*.

The purpose of this Housing Asset Management Plan is to support the achievement of this vision and ensure our Housing assets continue to play an active role in the delivery of our services. Consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023 to 2028, also identified the importance of the Housing Asset Management. Customers identified the following as the top three priorities for the new LHS.

- Building more affordable homes of the right size, type and tenure;
- Improving property condition, and;
- Improving energy and efficiency in homes and addressing fuel poverty.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

This Housing Asset Management Plan sets out the council's approach to the management of its housing assets. It supports the delivery of the council's priorities by:

- Establishing a corporate framework for the management of all housing assets;
- Highlighting our corporate outcomes and priorities and how they will be supported through the effective and efficient management of housing assets;
- Presenting an overview of the 14,000+ houses owned and managed by the council;
- Identifying the internal and external influencing factors and challenges affecting property;
- Identifying a number of activity themes to improve the performance of housing assets management; and
- Outlining the investment to be made in the housing stock over the next 5-years.

The revenue resources deployed in the management of our housing assets represent the highest area of expenditure. It is therefore essential that these significant resources are deployed effectively and efficiently to sustain and where possible improve the performance of our housing assets. The council currently spends significant resources on the management of its housing assets on matters such as statutory compliance, maintenance and repairs. The council has an approved five year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue strategy and the management of property budgets will continue to play a large role in the council's financial planning for the delivery of Housing services and modernisation programmes.

The council has approved a five year Housing Capital Investment Programme that has been formulated based on our priorities, managing risks, ensuring asset management best practice and adherence to the prudential code. By having the housing asset management strategy, capital and revenue resources agreed for the next five years the council has established a sound basis for aligning our resource deployment with corporate priorities.

This approach has enabled commitment to a number of significant investments over the next five years set out in the Housing Capital Investment Programme that will substantially improve the performance of homes and support achievement of corporate priorities (see Appendix A and B). These include:

- Provision of New Housing Supply investment over £27 million
- Delivering refurbishment projects and major elemental upgrades of over £31million
- Undertaking planned maintenance programmes totalling over £43 million
- Improving and sustaining our housing statutory compliant responsibilities on matters such as asbestos, electrical safety and accessibility with investment of over £53million

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

As West Lothian recovers from the pandemic there are a number of challenges which may impact the delivery of the new Housing Asset Management Plan. In particular, the challenges directly relate to the current economic climate of budget constraints, high inflation, costs of materials and labour shortages as well as requirements of new legislation and best practice guidance.

Despite these challenges the investment priorities outlined in this plan, together with a wide range of environmental works, clearly demonstrates the commitment the council is making to ensuring that houses are and continue to be, fit for purpose.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

2.2 Background – Housing Assets Overview

The assets of Housing, Customer and Building Services are essential to the services delivered by the council. Managing these assets is a structured process that seeks to ensure best value; continuous improvement in performance; achievement of our corporate priorities; and service modernisation.

It is recognised that:

- Managing assets effectively is a key element of supporting service delivery;
- Resources employed in the management of our housing assets are significant and therefore the efficiency of their deployment is critical;
- The value of housing assets owned by the council is significant, and;
- Properties are at the centre of public perception of our local authority.

As of 31 March 2023, the council has a housing stock of 14,243 residential properties plus a portfolio of land and non-domestic assets which include over 1,700 lock up garages, 744 garages plots, general amenity land and un-adopted roads and footpaths. The assets consist of two distinct types of property identified below:

Operational Properties

Operational properties are those that are used to benefit present or prospective council tenants through direct usage and include the council housing stock.

Non-Operational Properties

Non-Operational properties are properties or land which benefit the present or prospective tenants by way of providing a financial return to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This category includes surplus assets for disposal to support capital programmes and strategic development land.

If neither of these situations applies, then the assets are not benefiting the HRA and removal from the HRA should be considered.

Property Type	SIZE						TOTAL	% of Stock
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed		
Four In A Block	906	2,342	545	89	-	-	3,882	27%
Flat	587	658	174	5	-	-	1,424	10%
Maisonette	-	382	295	5	-	-	682	5%
House	1,001	3,345	3,229	395	148	7	8,125	57%
Sheltered Housing	129	-	1	-	-	-	130	1%
TOTAL	2,623	6,727	4,244	494	148	7	14243	
% of Stock	19%	47%	30%	3%	1%	0%		

Figure 1: Residential Stock by Type and Size

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

In February 2023 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) produced recommended practice guidance for Integrated Asset Management which aims to support social landlords to review and develop their approach to integrated asset management.

The SHR has not attempted to outline a prescriptive blueprint for strategic asset management; as it would not work for the very wide range of organisations and operating contexts that exist. Under each strand, they have explored some common issues and then they have suggested some useful self-assessment questions.

To support social landlords to pursue and achieve an integrated approach to asset management, and to ensure their assets continue to meet the needs of tenants and residents, the SHR recommended practice guide is based around five practical principles:

- Principle 1: Governing bodies and committees lead the strategic response to asset management and should be assured that assets are managed effectively
- Principle 2: Social landlords should have a comprehensive understanding of their assets
- Principle 3: Social landlords should develop an approach to understanding the value of their assets
- Principle 4: Integrated asset management outcomes should be understood and used as evidence to inform future investment decisions
- Principle 5: Social landlords should use the integrated asset management outcomes to inform their asset management strategies

Given the foregoing, the aim of this asset management plan is to ensure that council tenants receive the maximum benefit from their rents and ultimately the best standards of service. It will assist in promoting consistency in the way in which Housing assets are managed by promoting the efficient use of resources.

It will also help ensure transparency in the operation of HRA assets and the recording of financial information so that tenants can better understand how their housing service is delivering benefit to them and at what cost in line with the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

2.3 Background – Management

The asset management of the council's housing stock sits within Housing, Customer and Building Services, with stewardship from a strategic level being the responsibility of Housing Strategy and Development. This role primarily consists of the following main activities:

- Leading on the scope and direction of this Housing Asset Management Plan;
- Prioritising and managing the deployment of capital resources to support and undertake planned improvements, statutory compliance works and to deliver new houses;
- Leading on the development of strategies in support of housing asset management, including the Local Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance and Affordable Housing Programmes;
- Managing the housing capital receipts programme;
- Leading on Housing Asset Management initiatives.

In managing the council housing stock Housing, Customer and Building Services staff pay particular attention to;

- Voids management and lettings
- Statutory compliance and reactive maintenance and repairs
- Managing tenancies to make best use of the housing stock
- Maximising income including arrears management and benefit take up
- Sustaining communities by working in partnership (multi agency approach)
- Reducing antisocial behaviour
- Encouraging and promoting tenant participation
- Obtaining customer feedback and resolving customer complaints.
- Ensuring property records are maintained

2.4 Background - Influencing factors

The management of the housing stock is influenced by a variety of factors, these can be summarised as follows:

External

- The current economic climate means there are fewer resources to deploy in the management and maintenance of property due to increase in material costs and difficulties in recruitment;
- Regulatory and statutory changes at both UK and Scottish Government level will occur throughout the life of this plan. These will need to be reacted to and will affect how we manage and improve our property assets. The Scottish Housing Regulator is responsible for monitoring performance;
- Demographic changes mean that West Lothian population will grow in the future and will become older;
- Best practice guidance issued by professional organisations or influential bodies such the Scottish Housing Regulator will need to be responded to where appropriate;
- Property requirements of strategic partners may influence the delivery of projects, and;
- Costs of energy, construction materials and professional advice will vary during the plan period and therefore need to be considered on an ongoing basis.

Internal

- Service modernisation and new ways of working may mean that existing properties may need to be adapted and new houses will need to be more flexible;
- Efficiencies in resource usage will require to be achieved to reduce long term operating costs therefore prioritisation of works based on risks may need to be implemented;
- The council is committed to reducing carbon and improving the energy efficiency of housing for the benefit of tenants. It is recognised that fuel poverty is a real issue in West Lothian Communities. This will influence planned improvements and the construction of new houses.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

3 Council Corporate Plan Priorities

The council has set five priorities in the draft Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028 in consultation with the local community, partners, stakeholders and our staff. These priorities represent all the vital activities that the council will undertake in order to achieve better outcomes for West Lothian.

Figure 1 below illustrates where quality rented housing can *directly* contribute to the delivery of the council's priorities:

Raising Educational Attainment	✓	The link between good quality housing and health and educational attainment is long established and the service is committed to maintain the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) for healthy homes.
Strengthening Care and Support for Children, Adults and Older People	✓	The five year Housing Capital Investment Programme includes £4.541 million targeted at making provision to support people to remain in their own home through aids and adaptations. The New Build Programme makes provision for housing for varying needs and wheelchair accessible housing
Investing in Skills and Jobs	✓	The Housing Capital Investment Programme has £157.9 million planned for investment in our existing housing stock and creation of new homes over the five year period, supporting the construction industry in the West Lothian area.
Helping to Create Strong and Sustainable Communities	✓	By investing in the housing stock for current and future generations and ensuring they are managed in a sustainable manner we ensure that the impact on the environment is minimised. In particular the council has committed £52 million to meeting The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and work towards net carbon zero
Tackling Homelessness, Poverty and Inequality	✓	The Housing Capital Investment Programme has £27.245 million planned for the creation of 380 additional council homes over the five year period to 2027/28

Figure 2: Council Priorities

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

4 Corporate Asset Management Strategy – Housing Performance Outcomes

The Corporate Asset Management Strategy sets out how we will manage assets efficiently and effectively to support the delivery of services and corporate priorities. To demonstrate these six performance outcomes have been developed for all asset categories including housing. The following table demonstrates how these relate to housing and sets out appropriate high level performance indicators.

Strategy Outcome	Primary Performance Indicator	Target
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of council houses meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) 	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of council houses fitted with compliant smoke alarms 	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of houses with a gas safety service completed within 12 months of previous service 	100%
Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of tenants who are satisfied with the overall condition of their home 	85%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of council houses meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) 	100%
Suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Housing Quality Standard modern facilities and Services Percentage of Stock 	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scottish Housing Quality Standard healthy, safe and secure number of houses meeting standard of stock 	100%
Sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year 	7%
Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of houses maintained or upgraded to ensure their use is safe and secure and meets the needs of individual tenants. 	100%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average length of time taken to re-let properties in the last year 	48 days

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

Strategy Outcome	Primary Performance Indicator	Target
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of houses maintained or upgraded to meet the accessibility requirements of tenants. 	100%
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of council housing stock compliant with Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). 	100%

Figure 3: Corporate Asset Management Strategy – Housing Performance Outcomes

Additional management performance indicators will, where appropriate, also be reported within annual updates of this Housing Asset Management Plan. These support the higher level performance measures and also specific activity themes outlined in the plan.

5 Housing Asset Management Plan

5.1 Strategic Hierarchy

The housing stock is managed within an integrated strategic framework that has at its highest level the Corporate Plan where direct and enabling service priorities are identified. These priorities are reflected in the Corporate Asset Management Strategy that sets out the primary outcomes required to ensure effective and efficient asset management takes place in support of these. At this level financial resources are considered within the context of the council's financial management strategy which sets the framework for the prioritised deployment of revenue and capital resources for the different asset categories. This housing asset management strategy builds upon these and sets out the direct requirements for housing to support the delivery of the corporate level outcomes and priorities. The following illustration shows the strategic hierarchy for the Housing Asset Management Plan.

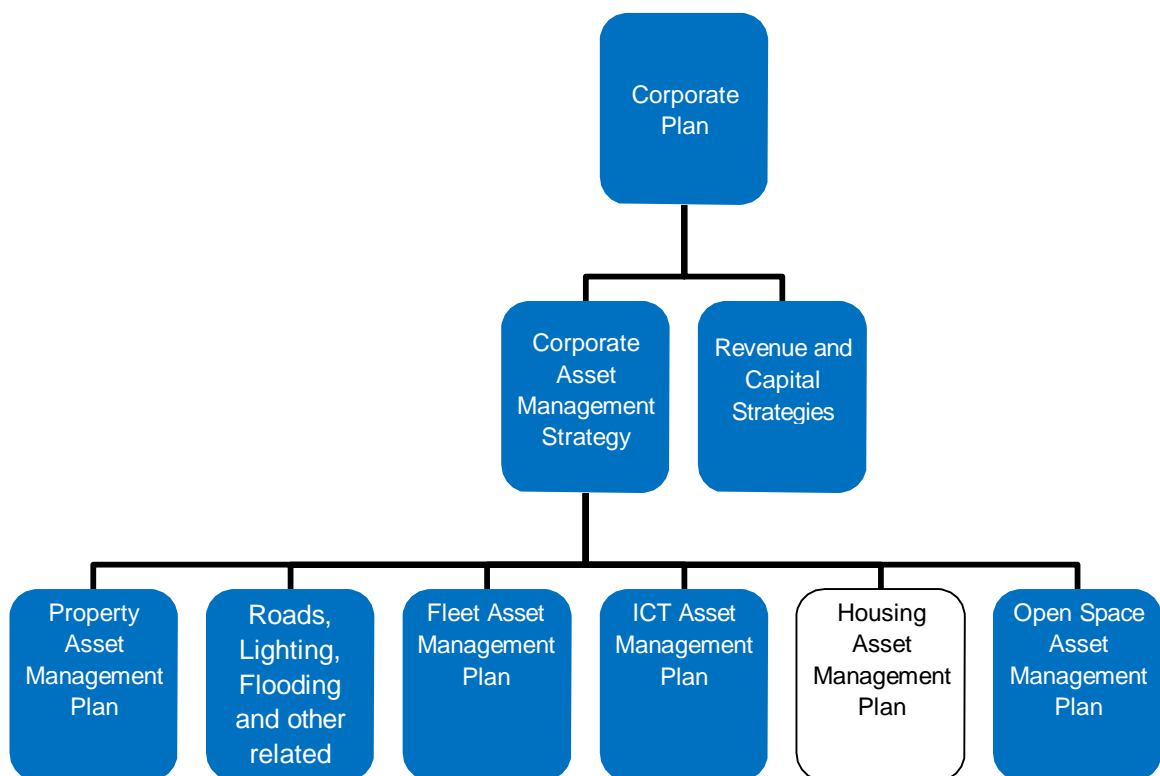


Figure 4: Housing Asset Management Plan – Strategic Hierarchy

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

5.2 Property Asset Management Plan Decision Making Hierarchy

To ensure that housing assets are management consistently within a clear decision-making framework that facilitates the effective and efficient management the following structure has been established.

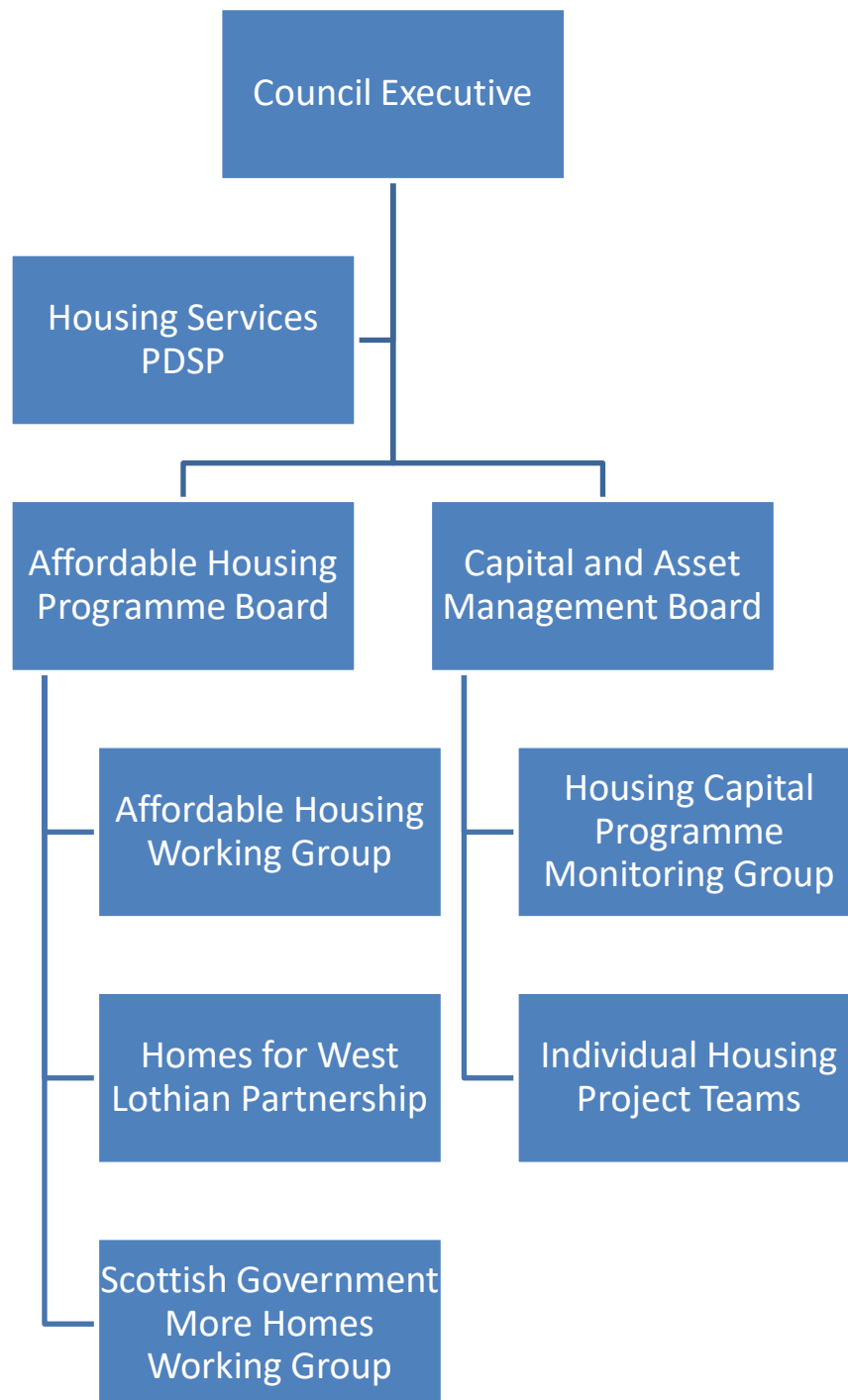


Figure 5: Housing Asset Management Structure

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

Each of these groups remit and responsibility is shown on the following table:

Level	Group Name	Remit and Responsibility	Frequency / Attendance
1. Elected Members	Council/ Council Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of Corporate and Housing Asset Management Strategies Approval of Housing Capital Programme Approval of Housing capital programme monitoring reports. Approval of any housing investment or policy reports that require decisions by elected members 	Quarterly (as required)
1. Elected Members	Housing Services PDSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of performance reports. Consideration of Asset Management Plan and Housing Capital Investment Programme Project reports that require consideration by elected members 	Quarterly (as required) / Elected Members
2. Senior Officers	Capital and Asset Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the direction and scope of the Corporate Asset Management Strategy and Property Asset Management Plan. Corporate monitoring of general services capital Evaluation of emerging investment requirements and strategic outline business cases (SOBCs). Oversee the coordination of corporate asset management projects and initiatives. 	Quarterly / Head of Finance and Property Services, Asset Lead Officers
3. Senior Officers	Affordable Housing Programme Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the direction and scope of the Affordable Housing Programme. Monitoring of the Affordable Housing Programme for West Lothian, including council and Registered Social Landlord projects Review dashboards from working groups and make decisions based on recommendations for the programme. 	Bimonthly / Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services, Housing Asset Lead Officer, Enabler Services

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

Level	Group Name	Remit and Responsibility	Frequency / Attendance
4. Officers	Housing Capital Programme Monitoring Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the implementation of the Housing Asset Management Plan. Reviewing project management of housing capital projects and considers post project evaluations Initial evaluation of emerging investment requirements. Facilitate service liaison on specific housing capital projects and general operational management issues. Monitoring performance and progress on initiatives. 	Monthly, Depute Chief Executive, Head of Service & Service Representatives
5. Officers	Individual Property Project Groups*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of Specific Projects and Initiatives Implementing the Housing Estate Code 	As appropriate / variable depending upon project

*Groups report to Housing Capital Monitoring Group as appropriate.

Figure 6: Housing Asset Management Decision Making Groups Hierarchy

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

6 Housing Asset Management Activity Themes

The draft Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028 sets the service delivery priorities that we will support through the use of assets. The Corporate Asset Management Strategy sets the higher level performance outcomes that are used to measure that we are effectively and efficiently managing our assets and resources in pursuit of these priorities.

This Housing Asset Management Plan in addition sets out activity themes that will be undertaken over the next 5-years to support the achievement of the corporate priorities, the asset management strategy outcomes and support the modernisation of service delivery.

The key activity areas services involved in summary are as listed in the table below.

Activity Theme	Activity Description
Asset Management Efficiency and Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource deployed in the management of assets will be optimally required to sustain condition and performance of the stock and where appropriate, improve performance; investment evaluations involving options appraisals in accord with the housing estate code will be pre-requisite for any significant expenditure.
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment across all housing assets will be prioritised to ensure all assets remain in a fit for purpose condition, providing safe and efficient environment for tenants. This will align with investment priorities. Robust and clear project governance and management priorities will be adopted for all projects.
Delivery Models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods of procurement and managing housing investment projects to be evaluated and considered for all new and emerging projects with critical evaluation on key criteria of timescales, cost and quality.
Partnership Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Tenants Groups to develop and agree the housing stock asset management plan has a coordinated approach to property investment and service delivery accommodation requirements

Figure 7: Corporate Asset Management Strategy – Activity Themes

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

These themes represent the main modernisation activity areas for the management of housing assets. There are however, significant other areas of operation involved in the ongoing day to day management of the housing stock which are covered within the service management plan. This is reported separately together with appropriate performance measures. Throughout the 5-year life of this plan additional modernisation opportunities will arise and these will be incorporated and reported within annual monitoring performance monitoring reports as appropriate.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

7 Financial Resources

7.1 Housing Revenue Account Five Year Strategy

In formulating the five year strategy, it is assumed that there will be a 3.5% rent increase each year from 2023/24 to 2027/28, in line with the approved rent strategy. This rental increase, along with an increase in housing stock up to 14,626 by 2027/28, 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.

The summary five year HRA budget is shown below

Expenditure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Employee Costs	5,511	5,619	5,734	5,851	5,970
Premises Costs	23,735	25,099	26,629	28,217	30,096
Transport Costs	102	107	112	118	124
Supplies & Services	2,673	2,673	2,673	2,673	2,673
Third Party Payments	146	157	169	182	195
Transfer Payments	2,311	2,328	2,347	2,366	2,386
Support Services	2,552	2,552	2,552	2,552	2,552
Capital Financing	16,052	17,305	18,716	20,163	21,712
CFCR	8,098	7,599	7,050	6,376	5,211
Total Expenditure	61,180	63,439	65,982	68,498	70,919
Funding	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000
Housing Rents	(60,033)	(62,301)	(64,834)	(67,313)	(69,673)
Garage Rents	(650)	(673)	(697)	(721)	(746)
Miscellaneous	(497)	(465)	(451)	(464)	(500)
Total Funding	(61,180)	(63,439)	(65,982)	(68,498)	(70,919)

Significant resources are employed in the management and improvement of our housing assets. The table provided in Appendix A highlights the new investment being made to support priorities and deliver improvements in the asset management outcomes.

8 Customer Demand, Consultation and Expectations

In the development and implementation of this asset management plan it is important for us to ensure that we are aware of our unique customers groups, their needs and expectations. The following table highlights the customer consultation schedule that will be implemented which will influence any changes to the plan as it is deployed over the next 5-years and will form part of periodic reviews and updates.

Customer Consultation Schedule				
Customer Group	Survey Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer	Feedback Method
Service Users / Members of Public (recent survey as part of Your Council Your Say)	On-line and Physical Questionnaire	Ongoing	Corporate Services	Annual Report
Tenants and Tenants Groups	Face to Face Interviews and Feedback	Annually	Housing Manager	Annual Report

Figure 8: Customer Consultation Themes

9 Risks to Housing Asset Management Plan

In the delivery and implementation of this plan there are a number of risks that require to be mitigated. These include the following:

- **Managerial** – It is vital to the success of the asset management plan that high level managerial support is in place across all services;
- **Political** – Ensuring that there is high level support is essential to the success of the plan. The need to achieve efficiencies may in some instances require tough choices and hard decisions to be made;
- **Budgetary** – In dealing with construction projects and maintenance there is considerable expenditure on items where the price is influenced by external factors, these include fuel costs, material costs and professional fees. Unforeseen increases in these could lead to the full implementation of this plan being compromised;
- **Legislative** - changes meaning certain properties are no longer compliant for use would mean unplanned increased costs to make compliant or the potential closure of buildings. There could also be changes that affect construction standards thereby increasing costs;
- **Staff Resources** – To progress the various activity themes and projects within the scope of this plan, the appropriate staff resources require to be available.

In terms of scale, each of these risks would have a significant effect on the success of the implementation of the plan. Each though has been considered and there are appropriate controls in place to mitigate these. Whilst it is recognised that there will be instances where each of these will have some impact whether on specific projects or activity themes these are not considered to be highly likely or insurmountable to the overall implementation and success of the plan.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

APPENDIX A

Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
NEW SUPPLY						
New Build	990	9,060	9,560	1,660	660	21,930
Open Market Acquisition Scheme	1,040	1,950	1,950	0	0	4,940
Mortgage to Rent	75	75	75	75	75	375
TOTAL NEW SUPPLY	2,105	11,085	11,585	1,735	735	27,245
REFURBISHMENT AND INVESTMENT						
Major Refurbishment						
Almondell Road, Broxburn	0	0	0	0	400	400
Harrison Houses, Lochs Scheme, Whitburn	182	0	0	0	0	182
	182	0	0	0	400	582
Major Elemental Upgrades						
Auldhill Cottages, Bridgend	0	446	0	0	0	446
Belvedere/ Dundas, Bathgate	0	0	0	0	1,241	1,241
Brown Street, Armadale	0	776	0	0	0	776
Craighinn Terrace, Blackridge	0	0	0	302	0	302
Croftmalloch, Whitburn	800	821	0	0	0	1,621
Dedridge, Livingston	3,250	3,413	3,583	3,762	3,950	17,958
Eldrick Avenue, Fauldhouse	0	0	0	231	0	231
Harestanes, Armadale	0	0	1,021	0	0	1,021
Heights, Blackridge	0	0	0	880	0	880
Hillside Place, Longridge	0	0	0	0	682	682
McLeod, Ferguson, Greendykes, Broxburn	180	0	0	0	0	180
McNeil/ King Street, Armadale	0	0	0	1,021	0	1,021
Preston Area, Linlithgow	382	401	421	172	0	1,376
School Place, Broxburn	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Seafield	880	924	0	0	0	1,804
	5,492	6,781	5,025	6,368	6,873	30,539
Planned Programmes						
Air Quality, Dampness and Ventilation	150	158	165	174	182	829
Common Access Door Upgrades	100	105	110	116	122	553
Common Stair Upgrades	42	44	46	49	51	232
Fencing	200	210	221	232	242	1,105
Kitchens and Bathrooms	3,996	4,196	4,406	4,626	4,857	22,081
Painting	150	158	165	174	182	829
Planned Reactive/ HIO Investment	500	525	551	579	608	2,763
Rainwater Goods Testing and Upgrading	140	147	154	162	171	774
Windows & Doors Refurbishment / Renewal	2,628	2,759	2,898	3,041	3,195	14,521
	7,906	8,302	8,716	9,153	9,610	43,687
Environmental / External Upgrading						
Aerial Upgrades	25	26	28	29	30	138
Play Areas	50	52	55	58	61	276
Programmed Drainage	50	52	55	58	61	276
Tenant Environmental Projects	150	159	165	174	182	830
	275	289	303	319	334	1,520
Statutory Compliance Works (Direct and Assistive)						
Aids and Adaptations - Building Services	850	600	630	661	695	3,436
Aids and Adaptations - Occupational Therapists	200	210	221	231	243	1,105
Asbestos Management	400	420	441	463	486	2,210
Central Heating	2,801	2,941	3,088	3,242	3,405	15,477
Energy Efficiency/Carbon Zero Works	4,000	4,200	4,410	4,631	4,862	22,103
Orlit Remedial Upgrades	680	0	0	0	0	680
Periodic testing and Electric Upgrades	841	883	927	974	1,022	4,647
Smoke and Heat Detector Upgrades	560	588	617	648	681	3,094
Stock Condition Surveys/Energy Performance Certificates	200	210	221	231	243	1,105
Water Safety	10	10	11	12	12	55
	10,542	10,062	10,566	11,093	11,649	53,912
Miscellaneous						
Feasibility Surveys	20	20	20	20	20	100
Home Safety Service	70	74	77	81	85	387
	90	94	97	101	105	487
TOTAL REFURBISHMENT & INVESTMENT	24,487	25,528	24,707	27,034	28,971	130,727
TOTAL HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME	26,592	36,613	36,292	28,769	29,706	157,972

(As approved on 7 February 2023)

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

APPENDIX B

HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2023/24 TO 2027/28

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.

Details of indicative sites included as part of the new supply programme are provided below. It is anticipated these units will be constructed during the period of the programme. The list of sites is at present indicative and updates on new build council housing will be reported as part of the overall affordable housing programme updates.

Site	Units
Houston Road, Livingston	30
Simpson Parkway, Livingston	32
Almondvale Crescent, Livingston	21
Mossend, West Calder	19
Total	102

The council will also add to its stock by purchasing houses, and resources for acquisition of former council houses through the Open Market Acquisitions Scheme are included in the planned programme. Provision has been made to continue with the Mortgage to Rent scheme, which is a Scottish Government subsidy scheme to allow owners in extreme financial difficulty to sell their properties to the council and become council tenants.

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

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 (EESH). The first part of EESH has now been subsumed within the Scottish Housing Quality Standard Energy Efficiency criteria.

The Scottish Government recognises that the current economic climate with rising inflation leading to increased costs for construction and maintenance, rising energy bills and the moratorium on rent increases has added pressure to the need for investment and has had an impact on landlords and tenants. The Zero Emissions Social Housing Taskforce (ZEST) recommended that the Scottish Government bring forward its review so it better aligns with the Net Zero strategy and the ZEST transition. The Scottish Government agreed to bring forward and accelerate the review. The review commenced in September 2022 and should take nine months to complete. Whilst the review is underway, the 2025 and 2032 EESH2 milestones are on hold. EESH1 continues to apply during this period.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

Whilst social landlords are not required to meet or show progress towards EESSH2 milestones in reporting their performance for 2023/2024, Social Landlords should however continue to collect data for their own use, including:

- The number of properties in each EPC band at the end of the year;
- The value of investment in energy efficiency improvements in each reporting year.

Whilst the review is under way social landlords are also advised to continue to invest in energy efficiency measures and zero direct emissions heating where appropriate. Investment should be driven by a cost-effective investment policy. During this time the priority remains:

- Fabric first approach using measures to improve thermal efficiency and ventilation;
- Measures that use zero emissions heating;
- Reducing energy use;
- Projects for district heating/communal heating systems;
- Projects that make a significant difference to hard-to-treat properties;
- Projects that help to model the actual performance of new technologies and their impact.

The review will develop new targets for domestic dwellings which will meet the aims outlined in the ZEST Report and the Scottish Government's response to it. The timing of this presents a risk to the programme in that the precise statutory requirements and timescales remain unknown at this time, however by following the principles above the council can ensure positive outcomes for tenants and make best use of tenants' rent money.

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 requirements of SHQS and will also ensure that the stock moves toward Net Zero whilst maintaining the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

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.

Almondell Road, Broxburn

This project will include extensive external works across 1-45 Almondell road, involving roofs, windows and new and more secure stairwells as well as remedial external wall repairs.

Harrison Houses, Whitburn

This project will comprise final phases to ongoing maintenance issues with high cost roof repairs at the Whitburn Harrison Houses in Gareloch Way, Loch Awe Way, Loch Earn Way, Loch Fyne Way, Loch Maree Way and Loch Trool Way, which have been receiving both external and structural upgrades.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

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 from 2023/24 to 2027/28 is detailed below:

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	TOTAL £'000
Auldhill Cottages, Bridgend	0	446	0	0	0	446
Belvedere/ Dundas, Bathgate	0	0	0	0	1,241	1,241
Brown Street, Armadale	0	776	0	0	0	776
Craiginn Terrace, Blackridge	0	0	0	302	0	302
Croftmalloch, Whitburn	800	821	0	0	0	1,621
Dedridge, Livingston	3,250	3,413	3,583	3,762	3,950	17,958
Eldrick Avenue, Fauldhouse	0	0	0	231	0	231
Harestanes, Armadale	0	0	1,021	0	0	1,021
Heights, Blackridge	0	0	0	880	0	880
Hillside Place, Longridge	0	0	0	0	682	682
McLeod, Ferguson, Broxburn	180	0	0	0	0	180
McNeil/ King Street, Armadale	0	0	0	1,021	0	1,021
Preston Area, Linlithgow	382	401	421	172	0	1,376
School Place, Broxburn	0	0	0	0	1,000	1,000
Seafield	880	924	0	0	0	1,804
TOTAL	5,492	6,781	5,025	6,368	6,873	30,539

c) Planned Programmes

Air Quality, Dampness & Ventilation

This programme supports required individual upgrades and investment in ventilation systems.

Common Access Door Upgrades

This budget undertakes work which keeps the properties in compliance with the SHQS. This requires Secure Door Entry System upgrades or replacements in order to keep them in compliance with the SHQS. The budget funds around 7 communal blocks each year.

Kitchens and Bathrooms

This category incorporates work which keeps Kitchens and Bathrooms in compliance with the SHQS. The budget funds around 350 full kitchen and bathroom installations 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.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

All properties within the council stock are to be surveyed externally by the service as part of the five year rolling programme. The survey programme is pre-determined as shown in the table below:

Year	Areas
2023/24	Broxburn, Uphall, Winchburgh & Linlithgow
2024/25	Armadale & Blackridge
2025/26	Fauldhouse & Breich
2026/27	Blackburn, Whitburn & Bathgate
2027/28	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

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 to ensure compliance with the SHQS.

Windows and Doors

Windows and Door upgrades to keep them in compliance with the SQHS and contribute towards meeting Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). This funds around 390 full Window and Door Upgrades each year.

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, while the Tenant Led Environmental Projects support the council's Community Choices works.

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	TOTAL £'000
Aerial Upgrades	25	26	28	29	30	138
Play Areas	50	52	55	58	61	276
Programmed Drainage	50	52	55	58	61	276
Tenant Environmental Projects	150	159	165	174	182	830
TOTAL	275	289	303	319	334	1,520

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

e) **Compliance Works**

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.

Central Heating

The central heating upgrades are in order to keep the properties in compliance with the SHQS and meet EESSH. The budget funds around 700 full central heating systems each year.

EESSH2 / Carbon Zero Additional Works

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 works required to meet EESSH.

Orlit Remedial Upgrades

The final phase of the structural work to the Orlit houses in Armadale is planned which will ensure these houses meet SHQS.

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.

Smoke and Heat Detector Upgrades

The original smoke detector programme, which commenced in 2010/11, concentrated on upgrading battery operated smoke detectors to hard wired smoke detectors.

On 5 May 2020, the Scottish Government published updated guidance on the SHQS. The amendment included changes to bring the guidance in line with changes to the tolerable standard for fire and smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. A review of the programme has taken place and all properties are now compliant with the new standard. The proposed budget will ensure continued compliance with the standard.

Stock Condition Survey/Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)

This budget funds stock condition 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.

To date 1,550 properties have been surveyed, with the remainder of the stock to receive a full house condition survey by 2027/28.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023/24 to 2027/28

This will also help focus investment measures required to ensure the council complies with the SHQS and EESSH.

f) **Miscellaneous**

Feasibility Surveys

This budget will support the 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.

HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Service

June 2023

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West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028



Contents

1. Local Housing Strategy (LHS) – purpose
2. Summary of key achievements 2017-2022
3. Context for the next LHS
4. Consultation
5. LHS Themes
6. LHS Outcomes and Actions
7. Next Steps
8. Questions

Local Housing Strategy Purpose

- Local Housing Strategies are required by law - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- They should be completed every 5 years
- They cover all tenures
- Scottish Government provides guidance for councils on the LHS and set out the key areas that must be referenced.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-housing-strategy-guidance-2019/>

- The LHS should link to other Strategies and Plans including:
 - The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP)
 - The Local Development Plan (LDP)
 - Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan
 - Corporate Plan
 - Housing Asset Management Plan

LHS - Key Achievements 2017 - 2022

- 869 Council new build completions
- 325 Registered Social Landlord completions
- 2,278 Private completions
- 211 Open Market Acquisitions by WLC
- New affordable housing in all council wards between 2017 and 2022.
- Large scale private sector development in Winchburgh, Calderwood, Livingston, Armadale and Bathgate.
- Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland: Area Based Schemes
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard performance – ranked 4th from 26 Scottish local authorities (2021/22)

Current context for the LHS

- Ongoing Impact of Covid19 pandemic on health and wellbeing
- Cost of Living crisis. Material poverty in West Lothian caused by low wages and reliance on in work benefits
- Despite extensive new build, very high demand for affordable housing.
- Ageing housing stock for both councils and RSLs and requirement to meet ever increasing standards
- Increased requirement for accommodation for people with particular needs
- Ageing population
- Climate change and net carbon zero

Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with the following groups to inform the LHS:

- Disability West Lothian
- Race Forum
- Tenants Panel
- Voluntary Sector Gateway
- Customers and members of the public (through an online survey with 603 responses)

There have been consistent comments about challenges including;

- access to housing and affordability
- lack of housing supply

Customer Feedback

Customers responded that they consider the main issues affecting housing in West Lothian as follows:

- Providing enough supply of social housing;
- Affordability of housing across all tenures;
- Providing specialist housing and housing support for younger people, older people and people with particular needs;
- Lack of housing options available for young people across all tenure types;
- Not enough accommodation that addresses particular housing needs:
 - One-bed accommodation, which would allow elderly customers to downsize, and in turn, free up family accommodation;
 - Lack of bigger housing stock for families, in particular, four and five-bedroom tenancies

LHS Themes

1. Housing Delivery
2. Private Rented Sector Housing
3. Placemaking
4. Preventing and Addressing Homelessness
5. Specialist Provision and Integration
6. Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
7. House Condition

Summary of Proposed LHS Outcomes and Actions

Theme 1 Housing Delivery

Outcome 1.1 Working in Partnership we will increase housing supply in West Lothian between 2023 and 2028

Outcome 1.2 Accessible housing is made available by private developers and affordable housing providers

Theme 2 Private Rented Housing

Outcome 2.1 Working with private sector landlords to ensure the sector provides good quality housing options for people in West Lothian

Theme 3 Placemaking

Outcome 3.1 With our Partners we will ensure that our communities are great places to live and work

Theme 4 Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

Outcome 4.1 Homelessness is reduced through a focus on prevention, early intervention and housing options

Outcome 4.2 People in housing need are given a range of housing solutions to find a settled home

Outcome 4.3 People who experience homelessness find a settled home as quickly as possible

Outcome 4.4 People are offered a range of housing options with access to the required services and support options

Summary of Proposed LHS Outcomes and Actions

Theme 5 Health & Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision

Outcome 5.1 Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need

Theme 6 Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

Outcome 6.1 We will work in partnership to reduce the impact of climate change in West Lothian in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy

Outcome 6.2 Minimise the number of households in fuel poverty

Theme 7 House Condition (private and social rented sector)

Outcome 7.1 House condition will be improved in the social and private rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations

Next Steps

- Share draft with RSLs
- Draft LHS to be put on council website
- Final comments to be included in the LHS
- Outcome and Action plan to be finalised
- Council Executive report June 2023
- Peer review coordinated by More Homes Division of Scottish Government
- Annual monitoring report June 2024

Questions ?

DATA LABEL: SENSITIVE



HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DRAFT WEST Lothian LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023 - 2028

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Panel on the development of the new Local Housing Strategy 2023 to 2028 and seek comments on the Strategy and the consultation.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel notes the following:

1. Notes the development of the draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023 to 2028;
2. Notes the consultation already undertaken to identify key issues, priorities and actions identified;
3. Notes any comments or feedback on the draft LHS;
4. Notes that the draft LHS will be available for further consultation on the council's web page between from 23 May 2023 to 6 June 2023;
5. Notes that a report will be brought to Council Executive in June 2023 following the consultation period.

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 2001 requires that the council produces a Local Housing Strategy every five years. A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	N/A
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business. We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.

	<p>People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances.</p> <p>Older people are able to live independently in the community and with an improved quality of life.</p> <p>We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.</p>
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	<p>The approved Housing Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 of £157.972 million includes £27.245 million for new housing supply and £130.727 million for improvements to existing housing stock.</p> <p>Scottish Government grant funding of £28.420 million was available to support the delivery of affordable housing in West Lothian in 2022/23. Resource Planning Assumption for grant funding in 2023/24 is £15.376 million.</p>
VII Consideration at PDSP	<p>LHS update report to Housing Services PDSP in August 2022 reported on progress with the LHS.</p>
VIII Other consultations	<p>Tenants' Panel, Disability West Lothian, Race Forum, the Voluntary Sector Gateway, West Lothian public (through survey), Registered Social Landlords, Housing, Social Policy, Property and Planning Services. There has also been input from Public Health Scotland and NHS Lothian.</p>

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

The local authority has a statutory duty to develop a local housing strategy (LHS). The purpose of the LHS is to set out the council's strategy to prioritise future investment in housing and related services across the local authority area. The current LHS was approved on 24 October 2017. Since then a number of actions have been progressed and new actions identified and this was reported to Council Executive in June 2021.

A Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is at the heart of the arrangements for housing and planning through its links with Development Plans and its strategic role in directing investment in housing and housing related services locally. It sets out a strategic vision for the delivery of housing and housing related services and the outcomes that it will seek to achieve. The Scottish Government expects the LHS to be prepared and submitted around every five years.

A report was presented to Housing Services PDSP in August 2022 that set out the main actions and progress on developing a new Local Housing Strategy. A draft Local Housing Strategy has now been developed that covers the themes listed overleaf.

1. Housing Delivery
2. Private Rented Sector
3. Place Making
4. Preventing and Addressing Homelessness
5. Specialist Provision and Integration
6. Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty
7. House Condition

Each of the themes has been developed in conjunction with the appropriate stakeholders. A full copy of the draft LHS 2023 to 2028 is provided in Appendix 1 of the report.

D.2 CONSULTATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There has been widespread engagement and consultation on the LHS with detailed consultation and engagement undertaken from January 2022 to January 2023.

The LHS online survey was made available from April to July 2022 on the key themes and issues and outcomes for the LHS. There were over 600 responses. There was engagement with the Tenants Panel on each of the key themes that took place during 2022 and their input has shaped some of the key issues, priorities and actions for the new LHS.

There has been a number of meetings with community groups including Disability West Lothian, Voluntary Sector Gateway and the Race Forum. The LHS themes and issues was also shared with Community Councils for comment.

A strategic housing event was held with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Developers in February 2022 to consider requirements for new housing supply including specialist housing provision.

The LHS has been discussed at the Homes for West Lothian Partnership meeting to ensure the RSLs can provide input. There has been joint working with teams from across the council including Planning and Social Policy to ensure that the LHS reflects a wide range of policy requirements. There have been detailed discussions with teams in Housing Customer and Building Services including the Private Rented Team, Housing Needs Team and Housing Management with a specific discussion on Placemaking. In addition, there has been collaboration with the Council's energy team and input from the Advice Shop relating to fuel poverty and the cost of living crisis.

During the consultation period, consideration was given at all stages to the likelihood of impacts to any individuals or groups and a full Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed and is provided in Appendix 3.

D.3 LHS VISION

Following consultation, a draft vision for the LHS is proposed. This is;

“Working together to ensure that the council and our partners in West Lothian provide good quality, accessible and energy efficient housing, within healthy and sustainable communities.”

D.4 LHS - STRATEGIC CONTEXT

It is important to note that the LHS 2023 to 2028 should now align with some key Strategic Plans including;

- New Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028
- New Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2023
- New Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023 – Link to identified priorities
- New Local Development Plan (currently being developed)
- New Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28
- A new Housing Need and Demand Assessment which was approved in March 2022

D.5 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED LHS KEY PRIORITIES

The key priorities for the LHS have been identified through consultation and are noted below;

- Increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian (mainly social rented housing);
- Identify and develop sites in high priority areas that meet housing needs;
- Encourage people to consider the private rented sector as a good housing option;
- Improved collaboration between health and social care to understand how gaps in provision can be identified and met;
- Care and housing support should be prioritised to ensure that people can live independently;
- There is a need to consider embedding accessible housing in all new housing developments and develop a tenure neutral approach;
- Develop a Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) during 2023 and;
- Ensure people at risk of fuel poverty receive advice and assistance

D.6 PROPOSED LHS ACTIONS AND OUTCOMES

An Outcomes and Action plan has been prepared following the consultation exercise covering each of the seven themes within the LHS and this is provided in Appendix 2. Twelve outcomes have been developed with each of them aligned with the key themes, and actions to assist in delivering each of the outcomes have also been developed. The Outcomes and Action plan will be subject to ongoing monitoring and evaluation in the overall delivery of the LHS.

D.8 NEXT STEPS

The draft LHS will be made available on the council's website between 23 May and 6 June 2023. Following a review of comments and feedback, a report recommending approval of the new Local Housing Strategy will be taken to Council Executive in June 2023.

The Outcomes and Action plan will be taken forward and there will be annual reports to Housing Services PDSP & Council Executive on progress. The draft LHS will also be shared with More Homes Division at the Scottish Government for comment and Peer review.

E. CONCLUSION

There has been widespread consultation and engagement with organisations, residents of West Lothian and council services on the development of the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028. The new draft LHS provides a pragmatic plan for delivering more affordable homes and improving the quality of housing and neighbourhoods in West Lothian as well as aligning with key plans and strategies to address homelessness and climate change. There is an emphasis on partnership working to ensure delivery of the main actions.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel 16th August 2022 – Development of a New Local Housing Strategy

Council Executive Report 22nd June 2021 West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 Update

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022

https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/18527/West-Lothian-Councils-Local-Housing-Strategy-2017-2022/pdf/20171221LHS_Final_approved_by_Council_Executive.pdf

LHS Guidance

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-housing-strategy-guidance-2019/documents/>

Appendices/Attachments: 3

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Julie Whitelaw

Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services

1 June 2023

West Lothian Council

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028

To ensure that the council and our partners in West Lothian provide high quality, accessible and energy efficient housing, within healthy and sustainable communities.

Foreword

Welcome to the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023 - 2028

It is a pleasure to present the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028. The Local Housing Strategy is the leading strategic plan for housing and related services across all tenures. Our proposals for housing over the coming five years reflect West Lothian Council's vision for our community to be able to access a home that is warm, affordable, accessible and meets their needs.

West Lothian has an excellent track record of affordable housing delivery, with more than 3,000 new affordable homes delivered in partnership with our Registered Social Landlords, including over 2,000 additional council houses delivered through our new build programme and our buy back schemes.

In developing the Local Housing Strategy, we have engaged with organisations and individuals to prioritise the themes and activities over the next five years, and the success of the Strategy depends on strong partnership working. More than ever before, we need people to come together to deliver housing outcomes, particularly in the recovery period following the pandemic.

This strategy recognises the vital role that housing has in West Lothian and sets out how West Lothian Council and its partners will meet key housing challenges over the next five years. I am immensely proud of the progress we have made so far and look forward to working with communities and partners in taking forward the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028.



Councillor George Paul
Executive Councillor, Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The purpose of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is to set out the strategic approach in West Lothian to delivering high quality housing and related housing services, across all tenures, to meet identified need. Housing has a fundamental impact on the lives of people across West Lothian and the LHS must consider legislative requirements as well as alignment with national and local strategic priorities.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to produce an LHS which sets out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery. Guidance published by the Scottish Government requires the LHS to cover statutory housing responsibilities including fuel poverty, house condition, and homelessness. The full list of statutory responsibilities and relevant legislation covered by the LHS can be found in section 13. The LHS also sets out West Lothian's approach to meeting relevant priorities within the Scottish Government National Outcomes, National Health and Well Being Outcomes and the West Lothian Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The LHS priorities are therefore, aligned with a number of national and local outcomes and targets including the National Health and Well Being Outcomes, Housing to 2040 and the National Planning Framework. A full list of the relevant outcomes with references is also contained in section 13.

1.2 Strategic Vision and outcomes

The West Lothian Local Housing Strategy vision for 2023 to 2028 is:

“Working together to ensure that the council and our partners in West Lothian provide good quality, accessible and energy efficient housing, within healthy and sustainable communities.”

Seven themes forming the basis of the LHS 2023 – 2028 Outcome and Action Plan, which is provided in Appendix 1 have been established through strategic analysis, housing need and demand assessment and stakeholder consultation. These priorities will provide physical housing improvement, help eradicate fuel poverty and maintain recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

LHS Themes 2023-2028

1.	Housing Delivery
2.	Private Rented Sector
3.	Placemaking
4.	Preventing and Addressing Homelessness
5.	Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision

6.	Climate Change Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency
7.	House Condition (private and social rented sector)

Eleven specific outcomes have been identified to be achieved through the LHS 2023-28, linking to the seven priorities above. The actions to be taken to achieve these outcomes are outlined within the LHS Outcome and Action Plan.

LHS Outcomes 2023-2028

1.1	Working in partnership we will increase housing supply in West Lothian between 2023/24 and 2027/28.
1.2	Accessible housing is made available by private developers and affordable housing providers.
2.1	Working with private sector landlords to ensure the sector provides good quality housing options for people in West Lothian.
3.1	With our partners we will ensure that our communities are great places to live and work.
4.1	Homelessness is reduced through a focus on prevention, early intervention and housing options.
4.2	Ensure there is support and suitable accommodation options for young people who become homeless.
4.3	Housing support is available to those who need it.
5.1	Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need.
6.1	We will work in partnership to reduce the impact of climate change in West Lothian in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy.
6.2	Minimise the number of households in fuel poverty.
7.1	House condition will be improved in the social and private rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations.

1.3 Local Strategic Planning Framework

The LHS is aligned with, and contributes to, a number of key local strategies and plans for West Lothian.



1.4 LHS Governance

The LHS outcomes are reflected in the activity of a number of strategies and plans as noted above. In line with the LHS Outcomes and Action Plan (at Appendix 1) progress on LHS targets will be reported to Council Executive on an annual basis. Some of the key actions also link with the activity of other strategies and plans and will be reported to the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels (PDSP) and Boards including Housing Services PDSP, Public and Community Safety PDSP, Development Management Committee, Community Safety Board and the Integration Joint Board.

In order to deliver the LHS outcomes, there will be regular liaison with WLC partners including Registered Social Landlords and the Voluntary Sector.

1.5 What has changed since 2017

During the implementation of the LHS 2017 to 2022 there have been several areas of change which have had an impact on the delivery of the LHS and in turn will inform future housing policy. The key changes include:

- The impact of the COVID pandemic and the implementation of temporary emergency legislation slowed down the availability of supply of housing and housing options both of which have resulted in an increase in homeless people waiting a permanent outcome in West Lothian;
- Legislative changes in relation to Homelessness and temporary accommodation, along with the proposed public prevention duty are likely to result in increased demand for homeless services and also threats of judicial review;

- The cost of living crisis cuts across all the key areas of the LHS with the council and its partners seeing increase in demand for social rented housing and affordability issues in the private rented sector;
- The West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018-2023 estimated that 22,000 households were fuel poor. This is likely to have increased further due to recent extreme rises in the cost of fuel;
- Although average incomes have increased in West Lothian with the gross weekly average pay for full time workers increasing from £538 in 2017 to £602 in 2022 (ONS 2017 and WLC data 2022);
- Prices in the housing market have also increased with average house prices increased from £166,900 in January 2018 to £237,420 in January 2022. The average private rents in West Lothian for a 2-bedroom property increased from £595 per month in 2017 to £642 per month in 2021, although average 2-bedroom rents have been lower than the Scotland average in each year since 2010. (Source <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-2020/pages/28/>)
- The abolition of the Right to Buy in Scotland and extensive new build programmes has resulted in the total social rented housing stock, including council and registered social landlord stock in West Lothian increasing from 20,000 in 2017 to 22,000 in 2020 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-stock-by-tenure/> (statistics available to 2022). At the same time demand for social rented housing has also increased with 9,406 applicants on the common housing register in 2017 and 10,476 as of 31 March 2023, a rise of approximately 11%;
- The council declared a Climate Change emergency in September 2019. A Climate Change Strategy 2021-2028 has been put in place and aims to meet targets to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions to ensure that West Lothian is well adapted and prepared for changing weather patterns brought about by climate change;
- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and West Lothian Council are faced with competing priorities of investing in existing council stock to meet statutory requirements and the provision of new build housing in an environment of rising costs in the construction sector, and
- Competing demand priorities for social rented housing provision including demand for accommodation for refugees, asylum seekers and health and social care clients with a particular housing need.

1.6 Progress and Achievements

Despite the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic and more recent challenges due to the cost of living crisis along with changes to homeless legislation and increasing demand for accommodation, there have been some notable achievements in the delivery of the LHS between 2017 and 2022 which is set out below:

LHS 2017-2022 Summary of progress against key outcomes	
Outcome 'What we said we would do'	Summary of progress 'What we did'
Theme 1 – Housing Supply and Placemaking	
Ensure that good quality housing is available in all tenures	Between 2017/18 and 2021/22 there were 869 council new build completions, 353 RSL new build completions, 2,278 private new build completions and 211 Open Market acquisitions (OMAS) by the council

LHS 2017-2022 Summary of progress against key outcomes	
Outcome 'What we said we would do'	Summary of progress 'What we did'
Our communities continue to be attractive, safe places to live and work	and RSLs. Between 2017/18 and 2020/21, the council had the third highest number of completions of any local authority in Scotland https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/ Bathville, Armadale regeneration work was completed. Deans South regeneration is underway with one site complete, one nearing completion and plans at an advanced stage for 128 new homes for Wheatley Group East Over the last 5 years, 117 places for training, apprenticeships or work placements have been provided as a result of the new build council housing programme
Promote regeneration and sustainability to enhance communities	
New build affordable housing will continue to be a council priority	
Maximise employment opportunities through housing investment	
Theme 2 - Preventing and Addressing Homelessness	
Improving Housing Options to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place	The Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan is in place with focus on shifting further to a housing options prevention approach with a 19% decrease in homeless presentations between 2020/21 and 2021/22. There is a range of new build housing being provided by the council and the RSLs in high demand areas with focus on sustainability and housing mix based on identified need. Housing support is in place for a range of client groups, including statutory homeless. The development of the Housing First approach has enabled greater tenancy sustainment for a number of people. High levels of tenancy sustainment achieved in West Lothian. This has increased from 87% in 2018/19 to 91% in 2021/22
Promoting sustainable communities by ensuring that, where possible, housing need can be met in a planned manner	
Ensure there is access to a range of housing support.	
Theme 3 - Independent Living and Specialist Provision	
Ensure that accommodation is planned and available for people with a wide range of needs	Since 2017/18 146 wheelchair units have been completed by the council and RSLs. A new development of 16 homes for people with complex needs has been completed. RSLs continue to develop accessible housing and there will be further development of specialist accommodation by an RSL in 2022/23 in Livingston. Support packages and housing adaptations continue to be available to people who meet the required criteria. Support models have been reviewed by Social Policy. Through the development of strategic commissioning plans, joint working with NHS Lothian, Social Policy and Housing has enabled people to access housing for independent living through a range of models including core & cluster.
Enable people to live independently where they choose to do so. Ensure that housing support is available to those people who need it	
Enable integration of health, social care and housing solutions for people to live independently for as long as they are able to do so	
Theme 4 - Private Rented Accommodation	
The private sector in West Lothian provides good quality housing options for people	The West Lothian Landlords forum continues to provide advice to landlords to encourage best practice in private rented housing. The number of tenancies in the Private Sector Leasing Scheme has increased from 29 to 101. Landlord forums have continued with focus on responsibilities through the new private rented tenancy.
Landlords are informed of their responsibilities	
Improved Tenant Satisfaction with the sector	
Theme 5 - House Condition	
Improve stock condition across all tenures	There has been major investment by the council and RSLs between 2017 and 2022 to meet both the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. The council has commenced a stock condition survey and RSLs in West Lothian are also undertaking house condition surveys. Properties in West Lothian are in better condition than the Scottish average with 58% regarded as having some disrepair compared to the Scottish average of 71% according to the Scottish House Condition survey 2017-19. 89.84% of council housing stock meets SHQS this is ranked 4 th of 26 local authorities with housing stock in Scotland

LHS 2017-2022 Summary of progress against key outcomes	
Outcome <i>'What we said we would do'</i>	Summary of progress <i>'What we did'</i>
Theme 6 - Fuel Poverty and Climate Change	
Reduce levels of fuel poverty and increase number of people living in energy efficient homes	People at risk of fuel poverty continue to be assisted by the Advice Shop. Fuel poverty levels in West Lothian reduced from 21% in 2015-17 to 18% in 2017-19 according to the Scottish House Condition Survey.
Measure, manage and reduce carbon emissions from housing stock	All new council housing delivered throughout the previous strategy is energy efficient and overall 93.7% of council housing meets Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2) in 2021/22. West Lothian Council ranks 9 out of 26 with Scottish average of 87.22%.

1.7 Key Issues and Challenges

As West Lothian recovers from the pandemic and continues to deal with the effects of the cost of living crisis several key issues and challenges have been identified which have been considered in the development of the LHS Outcomes and Action Plan.

- Economic Challenges - both the council and NHS Lothian are facing significant financial challenges over the next five years;
- Poverty and the consequences of the cost of living crisis - including increases in inflation, energy costs and mortgage interest rates and an understanding of the impact on the affordability of housing in West Lothian;
- Growth and change in Demographics - West Lothian's population is growing. Between 2018 and 2028 the population is projected to increase from 182,140 to 192,812, 5.9%. Over the same period, there is a projected increase of the over 75 population from 12,406 to 17,289, an increase of 39.4%. These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services;
- These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services;
- Health inequalities - there are significant differences in health outcomes between some communities and individuals with an 8-10-year gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived in West Lothian;
- Long Term Conditions and Complex Needs - almost one in four people in West Lothian are living with one or more long term conditions which affects their wellbeing;
- Competing housing demands for investment – meeting statutory requirements on house condition as well as providing new homes when resources are limited. This is also an issue for RSLs and
- Homeless prevention duty will increase demand on homelessness prevention and the removal of local connection is also highly likely to impact on demand given West Lothian's location to Edinburgh City Council

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

2.1 Consultation

Consultation on the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028 began in January 2022. Given Covid restrictions at the time, the majority of the consultation has been done online through Teams meetings and surveys. Consultation took place with the Tenants' Panel, Homes for West Lothian Partnership (including RSL partners and teams from within West Lothian Council as well as engagement with Private Sector Developers, Disability West Lothian, Race Equality Group and the Voluntary Sector Gateway. An online consultation was conducted between April and July 2022 to invite opinion on the key themes and issues that were being considered for inclusion. Customers were also asked to identify priorities for the LHS. The full consultation report is available on the council website alongside the LHS.

There were 603 consultation responses and following review, it was identified that customers believe the three main issues affecting housing within West Lothian are as follows:

- Providing enough supply of social housing;
- Affordability of housing across all tenures;
- Providing specialist housing and housing support for younger people, older people and people with particular needs.

The survey also asked whether people agreed with the key themes provided by the Scottish Government proposed for the LHS

- Housing Supply and Delivery;
- House Condition;
- Preventing and Addressing Homelessness;
- Place Making and Communities
- Specialist Housing Provision;
- Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency & Climate Change;
- Health and Social Care Integration.

The outcome of the survey was that 85.02% (505) of respondents agreed that the themes provided by the Scottish Government cover the main aspects of the LHS. Housing Supply and Place Making was identified as the most important theme by our customers, with 50.26% (288) of respondents rating this a five (most important). This was followed by Independent Living, receiving 24.78% (142) of responses who voted it a four (fairly important) and Private Sector Housing receiving 25.83% (148) of responses who voted this a three (neutral).

LHS Theme	% Respondent Rating
Housing Supply and Placemaking	50.26% (5, Most Important)
Independent Living	24.78% (4, Fairly Important)
Private Sector Housing	25.83% (3, neutral)

2.2 Customer Feedback

There were a number of issues raised through the consultation from the survey, from the meetings with the Tenants' Panel and from engagement with council teams and at the strategic housing event with developers and RSL partners. These comments have influenced the policies and proposals that are included in the LHS.

Comment	LHS response
Theme 1 – Housing Delivery	
Customers have indicated that there needs to be a more significant requirement for private sector developers to build more social and affordable housing;	Consideration may be given to increasing the percentage of affordable housing in new developments. This will be looked at in line with the next Local Development Plan through the mechanism of obligations on private developers via the Planning system.
Impact of new build on infrastructure including traffic.	All new build developments are carefully considered through the planning system. Consideration of connectivity to public transport routes is given when new estates are built.
Reconfiguration of commercial properties	Consideration will be given to opportunities for conversion of commercial properties to housing. However, this can be costly.
Building more mixed tenure, commercial with flats above for example.	This has been considered by RSLs.
Theme 2 - Placemaking	
Honest discussion with communities about what can and cannot be achieved. Ensuring contact is made with a wide range of age groups and interest groups so that projects can be supported that meet a range of needs.	There will be further development of the Placemaking theme through work being undertaken on town centres, empty homes and proposals for environmental improvements linking to work being done on community wealth building and community regeneration activity. There will also be a link to Community Safety work being undertaken through the West Lothian Community Safety Partnership to ensure a safer West Lothian.
Provision of play facilities in new build estates	Provision of play areas is considered as part of the planning process and contributions are made by housing developers including the council and RSLs to play facilities.
Theme 3 - Prevention and Addressing Homelessness	
Lack of housing options available for young people across all tenure types;	A key aim will be to increase housing options for young people available as well as considering the range of house types and sizes that can be delivered through new build programmes.
More focus on the 'Housing First' approach;	This will continue as part of the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Theme 4 - Private Sector Housing	
Private rented accommodation within the area is costly, with customers feeling this is not a viable housing option;	Private rents were below the Scottish average between 2010 and 2022 but will continue to be monitored. Consideration of rent controls may be developed through the New Deal for Tenants Strategy being finalised by Scottish Government.
Theme 5 - Specialist Provision and Health & Social Care Integration	
It would be good to see accessible and inclusive housing used;	The development of the West Lothian Standard and inclusion of targets on wheelchair accessible housing. A target for wheelchair accessible housing of 10-15% of all

Comment	LHS response
	housing new build across all tenures is proposed in the Local Housing Strategy
Lack of bigger housing stock for families, in particular, four and five-bedroom tenancies;	Provision of larger family housing will be considered on a site by site basis.
Theme 6 - Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change	
Customers feel that the service should invest in making our existing housing stock more energy efficient to assist with energy bills, given the rising cost of living.	The council is committed to meeting energy efficiency requirements including the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing 2 and will invest in housing stock to achieve this. There will be a similar requirement for RSLs. Private home owners can be assisted through the Home Energy Efficiency Projects scheme (HEEPs)
New-build housing stock should be built with energy efficiency from the offset	It is proposed that all new build council housing is designed and constructed to meet the requirements to achieve an A – Rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in terms of both the building's 'energy efficiency rating', and the building's 'environmental impact rating', which shows the buildings CO2 emissions. In addition to this it is proposed that all future new build council housing stock should meet all 8 standards to achieve the current Scottish Building Standards "Silver" Standard.
Theme 7 - House Condition	
Improve systems for checking homes regularly to ensure the condition is up to standard and maintained;	A survey of WLC housing stock is being undertaken to ascertain repair requirements. Properties are inspected when they become void or when repairs are required.

2.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 states that local authorities must exercise the functions conferred on them by the Act in a manner that encourages equal opportunities and observance of the equal opportunity requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. The council is committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations both in our workforce and community. Mainstreaming equality is the process by which the council will work towards achieving this as an organisation. The objective in mainstreaming equality is to integrate an equality and human rights perspective into the everyday work of the council, involving managers and policy makers across all council services, as well as equality specialists and community planning partners to ensure that 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do'.

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. The aim of the Act is to provide a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It provides a discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society in employment, and as users of private and public services. It is based on the following nine protected characteristics;

- age,
- disability
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,

- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex
- sexual orientation

An Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for the LHS to review the key proposed policy changes in line with the council's duty to meet equalities legislation and to ensure we create an environment of equal opportunity. The full version is available at Appendix 2.

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3.0 Local Context

3.1 Population and Local Demographics

West Lothian has one of the fastest growing and youngest populations in Scotland. It is strategically located in the central belt of Scotland and is served well by a number of motorways and trunk roads and it has direct rail links to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and beyond. Its central location and excellent business and labour market connections make the area an important economic hub. West Lothian is ideally located, with 60% of Scotland's population within a one-hour drive, making for easy access to customers, suppliers and workforce.

Although West Lothian has a significant jobs base in its own right, these transport links have helped to shape West Lothian into a commuter district and as a result the population of West Lothian has continued to increase. West Lothian has experienced economic change and become a diverse place for people to live and work.

As of June 2021, West Lothian is the ninth largest local authority in Scotland serving a population of approximately 185,580. This is an increase of 1.0% from 183,820 in 2020. Over the same period, the population of Scotland increased by 0.3%. Between 1998 and 2020, the population of West Lothian has increased by 20.0%. This is the 2nd highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland, with East Lothian being the highest. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 7.7%.

Source: National Registers of Scotland <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html>

It is projected that population growth will continue in West Lothian with a projected increase of 10, 672 people or 5.8% between 2018 and 2028. Between 2018 and 2028, the 0 to 15 age group is projected to see the largest percentage decrease (-5.4%) and the 75 and over age group is projected to see the largest percentage increase (+39.4%). In terms of size, however, 45 to 64 is projected to remain the largest age group.

Age group	2018	2028	% change	Scotland % change
All people	182,140	192,812	5.8	1.8
0 to 15	35,485	33,562	-5.4	-6.0
16 to 24	18,575	19,604	5.5	-0.9
25 to 44	46,800	50,401	7.7	3.1
45 to 64	51,470	51,212	-0.5	-5.5
65 to 74	17,404	20,744	19.2	14.4
75 and over	12,406	17,289	39.4	25.4

Source: https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table_pop_proj_age

West Lothian is also projected to have the 10th highest number of households in 2028, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The number of households is projected to increase from 77,953 households to 85,634 households (9.9%) between 2018 and 2028. This is the 4th highest percentage change in household numbers out of the 32 council areas in Scotland,

with Midlothian having the highest percentage change in household numbers and a national percentage change of 4.9%.

Projected variances in household types are used to inform housing policy. Highest household increases in West Lothian between 2018 and 2028 are projected for one-person households at 14.6% followed by two-person households at 13.3% and then single adult households with dependent children at 8.8%.

Type	2018	2028	% change	Scotland % change
All households	77,953	85,634	9.9	4.9
One adult	23,216	26,595	14.6	8.1
Two adults	23,744	26,894	13.3	7.2
One adult, one or more children	6,293	6,845	8.8	2.2
Two or more adults, one or more children	17,102	17,485	2.2	-0.9
Three or more adults	7,598	7,816	2.9	-3.0

Source: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/households/household-projections>

3.2 West Lothian Economic Context

West Lothian is in the centre of Scotland and has a mix of urban and rural communities, a significant jobs base in its own right and is well located relative to other parts of Scotland (especially Edinburgh) for jobs and services. The area's recent economic history has been one of industrial change. In addition, as outlined above the area has experienced significant population growth, which is set to continue over the next 15 years. Housing development and associated population growth has benefited all parts of West Lothian.

There are still, however, underlying issues of poverty and deprivation with a core of individuals and households experiencing extreme hardship and wider groups experiencing financial difficulties and challenges. Low pay and underemployment as well as unemployment are key factors. Headline anti-poverty figures show that for West Lothian 12% of the West Lothian population is income deprived

- Almost 25% of children experience relative poverty
- 73.5% of working age adults are in work⁴
- 18% of employees earn below the Living Wage
- 19% of residents experience fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)
- 9% of residents experience extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)

Source: West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report 2021-2022, Council Executive June 2022

West Lothian as a whole tends to have slightly lower levels of material poverty than that of the Scottish average i.e. typically 1 to 3 percentage points below the Scottish rate. West Lothian has similar levels of poverty to a number of other central Scotland local authority areas, which have been our traditional bench mark areas. This is illustrated by the summary statistics below:

Summary Statistics		
Population (1)	183,100	
Area (2)	42,733 hectares	
Households (6)	78,966	
Businesses (2)	5,965	
People in Work (4)	93,000	
	West Lothian	Scotland
Population growth 2001-2019 (1)	14%	7%
Population not white Scottish/British (3)	6.3%	8.2%
Population qualified to SVQ4 and above (4)	45,000 39.3%	43.7%
Population qualified to SVQ2 and above(4)	84,500 73.8%	75.5%
Population with no qualifications (4)	10,400 9.1%	9.9%
Residents in work (4)	93,000 78.4%	74.5%
Unemployment level (ILO based estimate) (4)	3,000 2.9%	3.3%
Average hourly wage levels residents (FT) (5)	£12.62 per hour	£13.54 per hour
Average hourly wage levels workplaces (FT) (5)	£12.44 per hour	£13.50 per hour

Sources: (1) National Records of Scotland mid-year estimates 2019; (2) ONS IDBR; (3) Census 2011; (4) Annual Population Survey ONS; (5) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; (6) NRS 2019

3.3 West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy

The West Lothian Anti-poverty Strategy and Action Plan was first launched in 2012 and has been updated regularly. A review of the strategy took place in 2018 and an action plan is produced annually. Regular monitoring of key indicators helps to map the nature and scale of poverty in West Lothian, summarised below. Analysis of information reveals a complex pattern of change. Between 2012 and 2016 there was a sustained reduction in the number of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits. There were signs that the reduction in unemployment bottomed out in 2019 and then most measures increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since 2022 rates have again fallen and are now very low by historic standards.

The latest estimates for people in work suggest that employment has increased by 2,600 since 2012.

In West Lothian, 2.6% (3,115) of the population were claiming out-of-work benefits compared with 3.2% of the population for Scotland as a whole (January 2023). There were 625 people between the ages of 18-24 (4.5%) on out of work benefits in West Lothian as of January 2023 (compared with 4.2% in Scotland).

In March 2021, 9.8% of 18–24-year-olds in West Lothian were claiming out of work benefits (8.6% in Scotland) compared to 4.5% in January 2023. Therefore, there is a significant decrease in claimants in West Lothian in the 18-24 age range, back to pre-pandemic levels. Youth unemployment has been consistently higher in West Lothian than Scotland for many years.

In November 2022, 11,991 West Lothian households were on Universal Credit payment. This is an increase of 1,018 from November 2021.

3.4 Child Poverty in West Lothian

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and associated delivery plan sets out the three key drivers of child poverty that need to be addressed. These are:

- Income from employment – including consideration of hourly pay, number of hours worked, skills and qualifications and the labour market
- Costs of living – including housing, energy and food costs, affordable childcare and transport, digital inclusion, savings, affordable credit and debt management and the cost of the school day
- Income from social security and benefits in kind – maximising income by ensuring awareness and uptake of benefit entitlement.

The new Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026, published in March 2022 sets out how the Scottish Government plans to meet the interim targets set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, which would see relative poverty of no more than 18% by 2023/24.

Latest child poverty estimates indicate that 21.1% of children in West Lothian experienced poverty in 2019/20. It is important to note that the most recent estimate covers a period of time that is pre-pandemic and cannot account for the financial impact of the pandemic. These estimates also cannot effectively measure the impact of the range of anti-poverty measures introduced in Scotland, including the Scottish Child Payment which it is estimated will shift poverty downwards by two to three percentage points by 2023/24.

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) is produced annually by the council and NHS Lothian to highlight action taken to tackle child poverty in West Lothian. A Child Poverty Reference Group has been developed to track progress of action to address child poverty and co-produce the annual LCPAR. Tackling child poverty is a shared responsibility and in West Lothian, this responsibility is assumed by Community Planning Partners through the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The LCPAR highlights local measures, undertaken in partnership, between West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian and a range of community planning partners to contribute to the overall aim of mitigating the impact of poverty on families and young people. A two-year action plan was developed in 2020/21 detailing activity in response to the impact of the pandemic and rising cost of living. The LCPAR 2021/22 sets out progress of these actions to date and gives details of forward planning, taking into account the current landscape of poverty and the strategic priorities, particularly over the next year as the current anti-poverty strategy reaches the end of its lifetime.

Further scoping will be carried out to identify potential action areas to support priority groups in relation to adequate housing. Colleagues from the council's Housing services have joined the Child Poverty Reference Group.

3.5 Housing Tenure and Benefits

The pattern of housing tenure in West Lothian is generally similar to that for Scotland for social rented housing with a lower level of private rented accommodation and higher level of owner occupation. Generally, private rented is highest in cities where there is a large student resident population or market for young people. Nevertheless, in West Lothian the private rented sector has increased from 4% of households in 2008 to 11% in 2019. The incidence of poverty amongst private rental residents has been noted at UK and Scottish level research. Increased rental levels mean that for working households on a modest net income of £20,000 might be paying 50% of that income towards housing costs.

In considering the general pattern of poverty in West Lothian there appears to be a close relationship between housing tenure and economic status. Information from the Census 2011 that the social rented sector housing is much more likely to be occupied by people who are not in employment, unemployed, post retirement and others who are economically inactive through caring commitment or ill-health.

Housing Tenure and Economic Status

Housing Tenure and Economic status – adult population			
	% of adults in work	% of adults Unemployed	% adults Inactive
Owner occupied	69.8%	3.0%	27.2%
All Social rented	41.4%	10.9%	47.7%
Private rented	64.5%	8.3%	27.2%

Source: Census 2011

3.6 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

The SIMD is a relative measure of deprivation across data zones and can be used to examine the extent in which an area is deprived across seven domains of income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing. West Lothian has 11 of 239 data zones in the 10% most deprived in Scotland, and four data zones in the 5% most deprived. The 5% most deprived areas are mainly located in the east of West Lothian.

In terms of relative levels of poverty, the pattern across West Lothian evidenced through the SIMD, provides a basis for informing the targeting of interventions. The Whitburn and Blackburn area has the highest apparent levels of poverty (and the Linlithgow area having significantly lower levels than the West Lothian average). There are however local pockets of deprivation across West Lothian where higher levels of income deprivation are present.

3.7 Housing Stock in West Lothian

In 2021 there was estimated to be 82,591 homes in West Lothian, this is an increase of 3,479 homes since 2017. West Lothian had the 10th highest number of dwellings in 2021, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The stock profile has remained relatively unchanged over time with older housing being located in areas such as the east of West Lothian and older town centres. Around 78% of dwellings are provided as houses and the remainder as flats. The highest proportion of dwellings in West Lothian are terraced at 32.6%, with semi-detached

being the lowest at 20.8%. Comparison of dwelling types in Scotland shows that West Lothian has a lower proportion of flats (22.3%) compared to the national position (37.7%).

West Lothian has a higher percentage of stock in lower council tax bands A to C when compared to the national position and a lower proportion of dwellings in the higher bands.

Council Tax Band	West Lothian	Scotland
A-C	64.4%	59.2%
D-E	23.3%	27.2%
F-H	12.3%	13.6%
Total	100%	100%

Source https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table_dwelling

The tenure profile indicates around 61% owner/occupation, 26% social housing and 11% private renting. The percentage of social housing has increased proportionately through new build affordable housing programmes. The tenure profile has remained largely the same in West Lothian since 2013.

Housing Tenure	West Lothian	Scotland
Owner Occupied	61%	59%
Rented Privately	11%	14%
Vacant Private Homes and Second Homes	2%	4%
Registered Social Landlord	9%	11%
West Lothian Council Homes	17%	12%
Total	100%	100%

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-stock-by-tenure/> (*2019 is the most recent complete statistic)

4.0 Theme 1 - Housing Delivery

LHS Strategic Outcomes:	<p>1.1 Working in partnership we will increase housing supply in West Lothian between 2023/24 and 2027/28.</p> <p>1.2 Accessible housing is made available by private developers and affordable housing providers.</p>
National Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe. • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating affordable, sustainable housing • Everyone has access to appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing which meets their needs.
<p>Context:</p> <p>Since 2017, there have been major changes to the housing market in West Lothian. Demand for affordable housing remains high with more than 10,400 applicants on the waiting list for social rented housing at June 2022. Of these applicants, 1626 are transfer (existing council tenants) applicants.</p> <p>The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has had increased demand for market housing with house sales and house prices rising rapidly in West Lothian during the latter part of 2021 and 2022.</p> <p>A buoyant market has meant that demand for properties has increased rapidly in recent months resulting in higher prices, in many cases well above home report values. Increased competition for properties has also meant that many properties are sold before viewings can be arranged to assess suitability under OMAS policy guidelines.</p>	

4.1 Context

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on local authorities to prepare an LHS supported by an assessment of housing provision. A Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) is a key part of the evidence base for the LHS. West Lothian is part of the South-East Scotland housing market area with the HNDA prepared to cover the South-East Scotland Strategic Development Planning Area or 'SESplan' area. At local authority level, HNDAs should inform individual Local Development Plans, as well as the LHS.

The purpose of the LHS is to provide strategic direction to tackle housing need and demand (as identified through the HNDA) and inform future investment in housing and related services across a local authority area. The purpose of a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is to set out strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over a 5-year period to achieve the outcomes set out in the LHS.

Theme 1 demonstrates how local partners will meet housing supply targets over the five year term of the West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2023/24 to 2027/28*.

*https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/52193/2022-2027-SHIP/pdf/2022-02-07_Council_Executive_SHIP_Report_and_appendix.pdf?m=637801937204070000

The SHIP is prepared in line with statutory guidance, overseen by the Scottish Government, with capacity to deliver 2,460 new homes from 2023/24 to 2027/28. There are close links between the LHS, SHIP and the West Lothian Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan (RRTP). In combination, these frameworks play a pivotal role in addressing homelessness, delivering equality and reducing child poverty.

At the start of the LHS 2023/24 to 2027/28, West Lothian's development partners have completed the affordable housing programme of 3,000 new affordable homes from 2012-2022. Work is underway with an approved council housing programme for a further 380 new council homes and up to 1,200 affordable homes delivered by Registered Social Landlords in West Lothian. All new affordable homes support the Scottish Government's carbon reduction targets, sustainable design and placemaking principles. Housing for Varying Needs and Secured by Design are adopted as minimum design standards.

Housing is also provided through wider Scottish Government initiatives, such as Open Market Shared Equity, the National Housing Trust, Mortgage to Rent, Rural Housing Fund, empty homes loans, self-build and town centre projects. West Lothian Council has agreed £21.9 million for the acquisition of former local authority properties on the open market to supplement the affordable housing programme and support regeneration.

Despite an estimated £46.491 million in Scottish Government funding to 2027, risks are emerging through increasing cost price inflation, and the cost of meeting statutory energy standards in existing social housing by 2032, reducing the capacity for new build investment.

The scale of Housing development in West Lothian is currently determined largely by the Strategic Development Plan, approved by the Scottish Government in June 2013, which covers the six South East Scotland local authorities (West Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian, City of Edinburgh, Scottish Borders and the southern part of Fife Council) and by the Local Development Plan (LDP 1) 2018, which covers West Lothian. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/LDP> The first Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for Edinburgh and South East Scotland set the context for the West Lothian LDP. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/sesplan-strategic-development-plan/> In addition, the SDP requires LDPs to have regard for the built and natural environment when considering land allocations and the development strategy to be taken forward, whilst also addressing the challenges of climate change.

There is a statutory requirement for all planning authorities in Scotland to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) for their area and the plan must be updated every five years. The council has commenced preliminary work on a new plan to replace the existing West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP 1) which was adopted in September 2018 and this will set out how West Lothian could grow over a ten-year period.

It should be noted that the preparation of LDP 2 is being done within the context of a new regulatory regime introduced by The Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act which makes substantive changes to the process for preparing development plans in Scotland and with the overarching

aim of making them more effective, with greater community involvement and a heightened focus on delivery.

Many of the features of the new development planning system require secondary legislation and additional guidance to give greater clarity as to how they will work. While secondary legislation to enable implementation of the new Act has begun to come forward (and with some sections of the Act already commenced) some key elements of the guidance have been delayed, in part, due in part to the Coronavirus pandemic. It is therefore anticipated that the timescale for the preparation of the next West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP 2) may have to change during the course of 2022 and adapt to a range of external factors and which may be beyond the control of the council.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is authored by the Scottish Government and sets out a long-term spatial strategy for the development of Scotland as a whole and identifies what Scottish Ministers consider to be development priorities. This includes the allocation of land in the right locations to accommodate development needs and the phasing of development to secure the provision and delivery of infrastructure to accommodate this. The National Planning Framework sets land supply targets. <https://www.transformingplanning.scot/national-planning-framework/supporting-information-for-draft-npf4/national-spatial-strategy/>.

NPF4 incorporates Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) which contains detailed national policy on a number of planning topics and for the first time spatial and thematic planning policies will be addressed in one place. NPF4 has also been made the new vehicle for identifying the housing land requirements for LDPs, taking over this role from the soon to be abolished SDPs.

The current West Lothian LDP supports the delivery of housing through the Core Development Areas (CDA) of Heartlands at Whitburn; Wester Inch at Bathgate; Drumshoreland, to the east of Pumpherston and Uphall Station; and the former Bangour Village Hospital, Dechmont Winchburgh and Calderwood.

The CDAs will continue to provide a large number of homes over the duration of this LHS with The LDP also brings forward a small number of new housing sites in and around other communities to spread the benefits of growth and to complement the spatial strategy. Further land allocations for development are required in order to meet SESplan requirements in full. A key requirement is the provision of infrastructure to support development and maximising use of the existing infrastructure.

The current LDP sites three priority areas for affordable housing investment;

- Priority 1 - Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh, East Livingston & East Calder, Linlithgow, Livingston North, Livingston South.
- Priority 2 - Armadale & Blackridge, Bathgate, Whitburn & Blackburn.
- Priority 3 - Fauldhouse & Breich Valley.

The percentage of Affordable Housing for each area is included in current West Lothian Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance (2018).

There is a continuing need for affordable housing in West Lothian. Despite the increase in numbers of affordable homes built between 2017 and 2022, the number of applicants for affordable housing has also increased. In recent years, the majority of new affordable homes have been developed on sites that have come through the affordable housing policy with most council sites being developed. The current imbalance between housing supply and demand for affordable housing means that there is a strong case to review the priorities.

Local demand for social rented housing is evidenced through analysis of the West Lothian Common Housing Register (CHR). In West Lothian, Almond Housing Association, Link Housing Association and the council are part of the CHR which provides a single point of access for people to apply for social rented housing in West Lothian.

There is significant demand for social rented housing in West Lothian with 10,476 applicants registered in 2022/23. At 31 March 2023, there were a total of 10,476 applications on the CHR, of which 9,118 (92%) are housing applications and 835 (8%) homeless applications. Between 2018/19 and 2022/23 the total applications on the common housing registered have increased by 26%.

West Lothian Common Housing Register Applications

Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Homeless Applicant	498 (6%)	560 (7%)	909 (9%)	793(7%)	835 (8%)
Transfer Applicant	1,578 (19%)	1,440 (18%)	1,851 (18%)	1,813 (16%)	1,597 (15%)
General Needs Applicant	3,901 (47%)	3,519 (44%)	4,987 (48%)	7,714 (71%)	7,521 (72%)
Unsatisfactory Housing	1,785 (21%)	2,079 (26%)	1,877 (19%)	N/A	N/A
Housing with Care	124 (2%)	80 (1%)	84 (1%)	86 (1%)	96 (1%)
Out with West Lothian	415 (5%)	320 (4%)	618 (6%)	597 (5%)	427 (4%)
Total	8,301	7,998	10,326	11,003	10,476

West Lothian Common Housing Register Applications Preferred Area

Ward	No. of Applicants Selecting Preferred Area	Sub-Area Most Selected as Preferred Area
Livingston North	1,158 (14%)	Deans (41%)
Livingston South	1,256 (16%)	Dedridge (43%)
Livingston East	630 (8%)	East Calder (47%)
Linlithgow	424 (5%)	Linlithgow (85%)
Bathgate	1,615 (20%)	Bathgate (89%)
Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh	1,590 (20%)	Broxburn (43%)
Armadales	223 (3%)	Armadales (78%)
Whitburn / Blackburn Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	1,167 (14%)	Whitburn (64%)
Total	8,063 (100%)	

Source: WLC records

In addition to those areas currently identified as Priority 1 demand on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance (SG), analysis of the West Lothian CHR shows that Bathgate is also

in very high demand whilst there is considerable demand in most of the other areas. It is therefore necessary to consider as part of the development of the new West Lothian LDP, whether an increase in the percentage of affordable housing required on sites in West Lothian would assist in increasing the overall supply of affordable housing.

The new LDP will inform future development plans and proposals. The new Local Development Plan (LDP 2) will feature affordable housing. It is proposed that:

- there will be a review of the percentage of affordable housing to be applied on all private sites in West Lothian, and
- it is likely that all areas in West Lothian will need to be reviewed regarding the priority they are awarded for affordable housing and some the level of affordable housing to be applied.

Any increase in affordable housing supply targets would have to be consulted upon and developed as part of the next Local Development Plan.

4.2 Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare a LHS supported by an assessment of housing need and demand which are a key part of the evidence base for the LHS and the development planning framework. Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) provide a framework to enable an understanding of additional future housing estimates and help local authorities to consider the level of housing that can realistically be delivered across an administrative or wider regional area.

The South East Scotland local authorities (East Lothian Council, City of Edinburgh Council, Fife Council, Midlothian Council, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Council) worked together to develop the HNDA to provide an evidence base for developing housing supply targets. It is designed to provide an in depth understanding of housing need across the City Region and it examined a range of issues from the local economy, housing affordability and the housing market context.

The total additional future housing estimated through the HNDA is used to inform the process of setting Housing Supply Targets and Housing Land Requirements. There have been three HNDAs prepared over the past 10 years. The first HNDA was used as evidence for the first Strategic Development Plan and consequently influenced the Housing Supply Target included in Strategic Development Plan 1. HNDA3 was prepared during 2021, which included extensive consultation was undertaken, and Scottish Government in July 2022. It presents a number of scenarios incorporating the 2018 Based Household Projections.

The South East Scotland HNDA indicates that 1,385 households are in housing need and require social rented housing to meet that need. This comprises the following categories of need:

Existing Housing Need from HNDA

Households	West Lothian
Homeless / housing insecurity	1,246
Both overcrowded and concealed	139
Requiring specialist housing	0
Total existing need	1,385

These figures informed a range of scenarios within the Scottish Government HNDA tool, the database that supports local authorities to calculate housing estimates. West Lothian Council's Heads of Housing and Planning Services, in discussion with regional partners, have agreed a preferred HNDA scenario for West Lothian based on an assumption of 'steady growth' in income, house prices and rents over 20 years from 2021-2040. The combined housing estimates under the steady growth scenario are shown in five year bands, by tenure as follows:

HNDA Housing Estimates for Steady Growth Scenario in West Lothian

Steady Growth Scenario	2021 - 2025	2026 - 2030	2031 - 2035	2036 - 2040	20 Yr Total	20 Yr p.a.
Social rent	314	266	123	111	4,068	203
Below market	140	105	98	83	2,131	107
Owner occupied	165	130	131	127	2,771	139
Buyers	289	247	261	255	5,259	263
Total p.a.	908	748	613	576	14,229	711
Affordable p.a.	454	371	221	194	6,199	310
Market p.a.	454	377	393	382	8,030	401

4.3 HNDA 3 Specialist Provision

HNDA3 examines a number of areas of specialist housing provision as follows:

- Non-permanent housing (including temporary housing and intermediate care housing)
- Supported provision
- Site Provision for gypsy/travellers and travelling show people
- Accessible, adapted and wheelchair housing

For West Lothian, the number of households in temporary accommodation increased from 355 in 2016 to 665 in 2021. The percentage increase between 2019 and 2021 for West Lothian is 49%, which was the highest percentage increase of all the South East Scotland councils. There has been an increase in all social care client types in South East Scotland, with significant growth in the number of clients with a physical & sensory disability, mental health or learning disability which impacting on demand for services. Predominantly, older age groups (75+ years) present greater demand for care across all local authority areas.

West Lothian currently has a wheelchair housing target of 30 homes per annum for affordable housing. Research was undertaken for HNDA3 using Horizon's Still Minding the Step methodology. This identified the need for wheelchair homes in West Lothian across all tenures as 750 over the next 20 years.

4.4 Housing Supply Target

Although a Housing Requirement was identified for SDP1, the Housing Supply Targets to be included in the LHS will align with HNDA3 and NPF4 with the targets being reviewed annually as part of the LHS update.

In order to develop a Housing Supply Target, the HNDA information has been taken into account along with consideration of available resources and policy matters. These include:

- Economic factors which may impact on demand and supply;
- Capacity within the construction sector;
- The potential inter-dependency between delivery of market and affordable housing at the local level;
- Availability of resources;
- Likely pace and scale of delivery based on completion rates;
- Recent development levels;
- Planned demolitions;
- Planned new and replacement housing or housing being brought back into effective use.

The Housing Supply Target should be split into market and affordable and expressed at both local authority and functional housing market area level.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-housing-strategy-guidance-2019/pages/8/>

Indicative Affordable Housing Supply Targets LHS 2023-2028

Tenure	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
WLC	70	70	80	80	80	380
RSL	240	240	240	240	240	1,200
Total Affordable	310	310	320	320	320	1,580

The Housing Supply Targets for West Lothian will be agreed in line with the development of the new Local Development Plan and NPF4. This will include a target for private sector housing.

4.5 New Housing Supply

The provision of more affordable housing in West Lothian is a priority. It aligns with objectives of Housing to 2040 and the Scottish Government Housing Supply Target of 110,000 units by 2026. A number of developments are already underway and a large number of sites are being considered for development. Each year the council in conjunction with RSL partners produces a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) which details what development is planned for the next 5 years.

West Lothian Council remains committed to expanding housing supply and work is underway with an approved council housing programme for a further 380 new council homes and up to 1,200 affordable homes delivered by Registered Social Landlords in West Lothian. All new

affordable homes support the Scottish Government's carbon reduction targets, sustainable design and placemaking principles. Housing for Varying Needs and Secured by Design are adopted as minimum design standards. West Lothian Council has approved £21.9 million for the acquisition of former local authority properties on the open market to supplement the affordable housing programme and support regeneration. The council will continue to support applications that meet required criteria under the Scottish Government Mortgage to Rent Scheme and in addition, the council will include houses purchased through the Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Programme in the overall housing supply target.

Housing Delivery Issues

- Increasing demand for affordable housing due to costs of living crisis and affordability of the private market tenures
- Competing capital funding priorities for social rented housing impacting on ability to fund new build provision to meet demand
- Lack of availability of sufficient sites in areas of high demand for affordable housing
- New build housing should be built to standards that can meet a range of needs, but specialist provision can be more expensive due to particular requirements
- Cost increases in the construction sector.

Priorities

- Increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian
- Identify and develop sites in high priority areas that meet housing needs
- Encourage private sector developers to provide housing that is accessible to people with a range of needs

Actions

- Commit to a delivery plan for new affordable housing
- Private Sector Homes to be delivered
- Continue the Open Market Acquisition programme
- Agree specialist Housing Supply Targets including wheelchair supply targets
- Provide an updated Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29
- Provide an updated Open Market Acquisition Policy and Procedures
- Review and develop new Affordable Housing Policy in line with the new Local Development Plan (LDP2)

5.0 Theme 2 - Private Rented Sector

LHS Strategic Outcome:	2.1 Working with private sector landlords to ensure the sector provides good quality housing options for people in West Lothian.
National Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone has access to appropriate affordable and sustainable housing which meets their needs Develop messages around housing options and choices Developing a strategic preventative approach to homelessness
Context <p>The Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Scotland has undergone significant change in terms of the overall size of the sector and the tenant and landlord profile. Since 2000, the regulatory framework for the Private Rented Sector has been developed with ten different areas of intervention with the aim of improving quality and standards.</p> <p>There are further proposals to raise standards through increased regulation of the Private Rented Sector following recent consultation on a “New Deal for Tenants draft strategy”. The Scottish Government envisages that by 2025 there will be a new approach to rented housing in Scotland including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhanced rights for tenants; new requirements for data collection on rents in the private sector; new cross-tenure housing standards a new Private Rented Sector Regulator; and legislation to underpin a new effective system of national rent controls 	

5.1 Private Rented Sector in West Lothian

At March 2022 there were 4,798 registered landlords and 7,548 registered properties. The number of registered landlords and properties was broadly consistent between 2017 and 2020 but there has been a significant reduction in the number of landlords registered since 2021. This may be due to recent upturn in the housing market.

Year	Registered Landlords	Registered Properties
2018/19	5,465	7,874
2019/20	5,165	7,520
2020/21	5,099	7,957
2021/22	4,789	7,548

Source: WLC records

Since the last LHS in 2017, the council has increased engagement with private landlords and private sector tenants to encourage best practice through the establishment of the Private Landlord Service. The service provides advice and assistance to private landlords in a variety of ways:

- Established Practitioner Forum – sharing, encouraging and developing best practice by private landlords
- Provision of templates for best practice
- Advice and assistance on tenancy matters, rent levels and property repair and maintenance through sharing WLC expertise and staff knowledge in these areas, and providing access to workshops through the forum
- Providing training sessions run by Landlord Accreditation Scotland on various topics within the private rented sector.

The private rented sector can provide sustainable housing options for people and in light of the current housing pressures, there is increased requirement to encourage use of the private rented sector housing for people who are at risk of homelessness. The Private Sector Team works closely with the Housing Needs Team to share knowledge and information on the sector. The council has also recently recruited a dedicated Private Rented Lets Officer based within the Housing Options Team to work with private rented landlords and customers at risk of homeless, or homeless, to consider the sector as a viable housing option to meet their needs.

Private Rents in West Lothian

Evidence on rents in the private rented sector in Scotland is made available by the Scottish Government. According to the analysis, average (mean) 2-bedroom rents in West Lothian have been lower than the Scotland average in each year since 2010, with the average rent in 2021 being £642 per month, compared to the Scotland average of £693.

5.2 Understanding the Private Rented Sector in West Lothian

The council conducted surveys of private sector landlords in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The data provided gives a better understanding of private sector rented housing property types and size, landlord portfolio size, and the rent levels which are currently charged within West Lothian. This is important to understand affordability in the sector and the equity of rent setting exercises in the social housing sector, and to understand demand for council housing when comparing cross-tenure accommodation options.

The private rented sector contributes to the authority area in terms of building a thriving housing sector and increasing housing options. Due to the increase in pressure on local authorities in regards to homelessness and demand for social rented housing, the sector is critical to encouraging a practical approach to housing options and prevention of homelessness going forward. Key findings were as follows:

- Size of properties - In 2022 and 2020, 51% of the respondents said their properties were 2 bedrooms.
- Over all three years of the survey, the highest number of properties held by landlords were in Livingston. The second highest numbers reported varied over the years of the survey but in 2022 it was Linlithgow and in 2021 and 2020 it was Bathgate.

- In all three years of the survey, the majority of respondents said their rent levels were between £500 and £600 per month.
- In each of the three years, it was only the minority of landlords that intended to raise rents, 22% in 2022, 24% in 2021 and 11% in 2020.

5.3 Private Rented Housing Standards and Quality

Private landlords have an important role in providing a supply of good quality housing and in meeting housing need. They are asked to meet increasing standards of management, property condition and repair and maintenance. It is important that landlords are encouraged and supported to meet the standards so they continue to operate in the sector and contribute to housing supply.

The administration, provision and maintenance of an up to date register of almost all private landlords within the authority area is a statutory function delivered by the Private Rented service. This includes registration and application checks to ensure applicants are fit and proper to let property. The activity also requires instigating enforcement action against unregistered or noncompliant landlords where required. The sector encompasses a range of house types in a variety of locations with most properties being located in Livingston and Bathgate. In many cases private rents represent good value for money but in some limited cases the property condition does not reflect the rent that is being charged. Where this is found to be the case, the council will intervene. Since the implementation of enforcement processes, the number of enquires received in relation to rented properties failing to meet the Repairing Standard has increased each year.

Repairing Standard Enquiries

Year	Number of Enquiries
2019/20	21
2020/21	50
2021 – Present	65

There is now increased knowledge of the sector through detailed case work and an improved understanding of the routes to enforcement that are required. Partnership working with Building Standards, Legal Services, Environmental Health and Police Scotland is critical when considering enforcement activity. There is a need to consider the role of the Third Tier Tribunal in enforcement for private rented housing. This could improve the approach to enforcement and develop a more joined up response encouraging quality in the sector. It is noted that there are some challenges with the current legislation in relation to enforcement. This can impact on the council's ability to regulate the quality of housing provision in the sector. It is anticipated that Housing to 2040 will address some of these gaps. The objective should be to ensure a high quality private rented sector which meets the needs of both tenants and landlords

5.4 Houses of Multiple Occupation

There are 30 HMO licenses in West Lothian. Some are for social rented housing. Linlithgow has the highest number of HMO licenses.

5.5 Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

There has been an increase in the number of private landlords using the PSL scheme since the pandemic to assist with meeting the rising demand for temporary accommodation. The number of properties has risen from 29 in 2017 to 101 in 2022. This is a welcome addition to temporary accommodation options that are available, providing greater choice of property. Resources may have to be reviewed to ensure that the PSL continues to flourish in West Lothian.

Current Private Rented Sector Issues

- Perception of the quality of the private rented sector.
- Effective enforcement may require new legislation.
- Encouraging private sector landlords to continue to operate when there are changes to the market and changes to regulations.
- Increases in cost of living, goods and services impacting landlords and their tenants, leading to PSL landlords leaving the market.

Current Priorities

- Develop an accreditation scheme to reflect the quality of provision in the sector and to give confidence to those seeking accommodation that a PSL is a secure, viable option.
- Encourage people to consider the private rented sector as a good housing option through building the capacity of landlords, and advice and support during their search/tenure.
- Continue partnership working to ensure that enforcement action can be taken when required.
- Monitor private rents and landlord assets to gain insight into the sector capacity and affordability

Key Actions

- Review of Private Sector Lease (PSL) Agreements
- Encourage landlords who have larger properties to participate in PSL
- Develop a Landlord Accreditation Scheme

6.0 Theme 3 - Place Making and Communities

LHS Strategic Outcome:	3.1 With our Partners we will ensure that our communities are great places to live and work.
National Outcome: To be added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving health and well being • West Lothian is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enhance their mental and physical health and wellbeing.
<p>Context : Scottish Government's planning, design and placemaking policies are included in Scottish Planning Policy and architecture policies, namely Creating Places and Designing Streets policy statements. Place Making is one of the two Principle Policies of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. SPP therefore complements the Scottish Government's Place Principle which requires agencies responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place to work and plan together, with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places.</p> <p>In West Lothian, the Scottish Government guidance on Creating Places is taken into account when considering sites for housing development and determining planning applications for housing in West Lothian. The six qualities of a successful place according to the guidance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinctive; • safe and pleasant; • easy to move around; • welcoming; • adaptable; and • resource efficient <p>This is further referenced in West Lothian Supplementary Guidance Residential Design Guide (adopted 2019) and continued in NPF4</p> <p>Local authorities can also apply to Scottish Ministers to designate an 'Enhanced Enforcement Area' where there is a concentration of PRS properties in the area, and where those properties are in a 'poor environmental standard'.</p>	

6.1 Background

Scottish Government's planning, design and placemaking policies are included in [Scottish Planning Policy](#) and architecture policies, namely [Creating Places](#) and [Designing Streets](#) policy statements. Place-Making is one of the two Principle Policies of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose.

Place-Making complements the Scottish Government's Place Principle which requires agencies responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place to work and plan together, with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places. Increasing communities' input to design of places is also an objective of the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015.

Housing is an important component of healthy neighbourhoods. For an ageing population and people living with long-term conditions or disabilities, homes for varying needs are key to independent living and better quality of life. There is good quality evidence that well designed, warm, ventilated, affordable homes are good for people's health. But the evidence base also highlights the importance of greenspace, street design, access to services, work and education, transport links and community facilities. Housing is part of what makes a place which in turn shapes people's health and wellbeing. The West Lothian public health team workplan includes a focus on shaping vibrant communities with specific actions linked to partnership work with the planning and housing teams in the local authority. Work to address Type 2 Diabetes in Whitburn exemplifies a whole system approach to placemaking for better health.

The six qualities of a successful place according to the guidance are:

- distinctive;
- safe and pleasant;
- easy to move around;
- welcoming;
- adaptable; and
- resource efficient

The Core Development Areas, typify many of the six qualities. At Calderwood and Winchburgh in particular, there is continuity in terms of the design and specification of many aspects of the street scape whether the housing is private or affordable. Further major developments are planned at Heartlands, Whitburn, Southdale Armadale and Gavieside and these developments will be required to comply with all the relevant guidance.

A new Local Development Plan is being prepared and further consideration will be given to the use of the Place Standard tool. Both NPF4 and Housing to 2040 reference 20-minute neighbourhoods and the need to ensure that housing developments are within walking distance of community, health facilities and retail. All new housing developments are

considered with this in mind, with all new build social rented housing meeting housing for varying need and delivered with reference to the Place Standard Tool.

6.2 Understanding Community Needs

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 states that all Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland must develop plans for those communities which experience the poorest outcomes. These plans must identify local priorities and detail actions to be taken to reduce inequalities.

The council's Regeneration Framework 2013-2034 provides the long-term plan for targeted action to improve the life chances of those living in the most disadvantaged communities. It gives fresh impetus and greater clarity for the targeting of interventions to address deprivation and economic exclusion within specific areas and communities. The framework has been implemented and monitored at a local level through community owned Regeneration Plans, based on priority areas with clusters of data zones in the worst 20% in West Lothian. In West Lothian thirteen 'regeneration areas' have been identified. All of the identified regeneration areas have data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The thirteen areas are Addiewell, Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Bridgend, Craighsill, Dedridge, Fauldhouse, Knightsridge, Ladywell, Polbeth, Stoneyburn and Whitburn. The 2018 LDP seeks to ensure that the necessary social and physical infrastructure accompanies growth, will support regeneration and enhance the quality of life for people living in our most disadvantaged communities.

The Place-Standard tool has been used to inform community needs in a number of the 13 regeneration neighbourhoods in West Lothian including Blackburn, Craigshill, Whitburn and Dedridge, Livingston. Prior to the pandemic, work was done using the Place Standard tool to engage communities to develop regeneration plans which are in place in each for each of the areas. Further community engagement will be undertaken as part of the Local Development Plan and through the development of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. Community Councils also provide the opportunity to engage people in the development of communities particularly through the Planning process.

Community safety is an important aspect of placemaking and there can be some considerable challenges when supporting some individuals in the community. A collaborative approach across agencies is required but resourcing can be challenging. There may be a need to consider a range of models of housing and support that meets both the needs of individuals and the community.

6.3 Tenant Engagement on Place Making

As part of the LHS consultation and engagement process a session was carried out with the council's tenants' panel in April 2022 to understand tenant's view on successful Place Making. The full outcome of the session is provided as part of the LHS Supporting Documents Section. The panel identified that good transport links, well maintained quality open space and access

to local shops and health services were what mattered for place making. To achieve better places over the next five years the LHS will focus on;

- Supporting people to develop projects that enhance their communities
- Providing access to funding sources for community projects
- Ensuring new housing developments are high quality
- Ensuring transport links are considered when planning new housing developments

6.4 Vacant, Brownfield and Derelict Land

There are 60 sites of vacant and derelict land identified in West Lothian through the Vacant and Derelict Land Register. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-vacant-and-derelict-land-survey---site-register>

A number of affordable housing developments have been built on brownfield sites. These include;

- Deans South (2 developments and one planned), providing a mix of housing including wheelchair accommodation.
- Former Lammerrmuir House site in Livingston, providing a mix of cottage flats, mainstream housing and wheelchair accommodation.
- Former school and Community centre sites at Uphall and Pumpherston
- The former Police station site at Almondvale, Livingston has been redeveloped for housing. This is now a development of 146 flats for Dunedin Canmore Housing Association. This site demonstrates how town centre sites can be suitable for medium density housing. The development has been designed to meet the needs of a number of client groups including older people, people who require support and a small number of homes suitable for wheelchair users.

A major redevelopment of the former Bangour hospital site is planned and work is already underway. It is anticipated that up to 1000 homes will be built on the site and more than 200 of these will be affordable.

Often vacant sites come with a number of challenges including poor ground conditions, ground contamination and service diversion requirements. This can mean that they are costly and take a long time to develop however, in some cases, their central locations provide significant advantage.

6.5 Conversions of existing buildings

Re -purposing existing buildings can contribute to new housing supply. In terms of council housing, this has been done in a number of locations including Fauldhouse and Bathgate, with six new homes created from existing buildings.

6.6 Self-Build and Custom-Build

The council recognises the important role that self and custom build housing can play in providing homes, sustaining communities and supporting smaller building companies in both

rural and urban areas. Self-build, or on a larger scale, custom build can be individually driven, collective, or community led, providing viable options for a range of households. It can be an affordable option for housing delivery, with the flexibility to support the development of accessible housing. Developers of custom-build projects work with individuals or groups of individuals to provide new housing, using a range of different models and approaches.

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces a requirement for planning authorities to prepare and maintain a list of persons who have registered interest with the authority with the intention of acquiring land in the authority's area for self-build housing. West Lothian Council Planning will look at developing a self-build register over the duration of the LHS.

6.7 Empty Homes

West Lothian has around 260 long term empty homes. There has been a successful approach to bringing empty homes back into use through the Open Market Acquisition scheme. Since 2017, more than 180 properties have been acquired.

A cross council approach is used to collect information and provide appropriate support and guidance to owners of empty homes. Advice and information are provided to owners of empty homes to encourage them to bring the properties back into use either through sale or rent and there is good engagement across council teams on empty homes work. Shelter also provide guidance and support to both home owners and the council in relation to empty homes work. Further consideration will be given to bringing town centre properties back into use.

Clusters of empty homes are around the main settlements in Bathgate, Livingston and Broxburn. There may be opportunity to consider whether vacant retail and office premises can be converted to housing and whether some flats above shops can be brought back into use. This will be considered through the development of the next Local Development Plan

It is proposed that further work will be done on empty homes over the period of the Local Housing Strategy. The aim is to encourage home owners to bring homes back into use and make best use of existing housing stock.

6.8 Town Centres

The changes to town centres over the last five years have provided some opportunity for housing development. In some areas, shops and offices may be converted to housing and other buildings re purposed. The conversion of the former hostel at Hopetoun Street, Bathgate into 4 self-contained flats is a good example of making best use of existing housing stock in a town centre to meet modern standards of housing. In Livingston, the site of the former police station has been re developed to form 146 affordable homes by West Lothian Housing Partnership. Consideration will be given to re purposing office space too with a greater shift to home working.

6.9 Compulsory Purchase

Where negotiations with landowners has not enabled land required to be acquired by the council on a voluntary basis, local authorities have a number of legislative powers to acquire

land compulsory via a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) including those granted under the under s.189 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. These powers can be used where there are areas of housing in a state of disrepair and where the land is required to enable planning/regeneration proposals to be delivered to improve housing conditions.

West Lothian Council's strategy is to acquire properties by voluntary acquisition failing which, it will consider using powers of compulsory acquisition where it is necessary and proportionate to do so in order to provide social housing. There may also be some circumstances where the council could consider compulsory purchase of individual properties that are in severe disrepair.

6.10 Community Safety and Place Making

West Lothian Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022-2025 was approved in September 2022. The plan outlines our vision for community safety for the people of West Lothian; what our priorities are and how we will continue to build on a foundation of strong partnership work to deliver them. The Community Safety Plan will support the current local Police and Fire Plans and the work being undertaken by the Community Planning Partners (CPP) to re-new the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which sits at the top tier of the governance framework. The new LOIP is anticipated to have 4 Pillars within the framework

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) includes West Lothian Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Lothian, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Scottish Prison Service, West Lothian College, Justice Services and the Voluntary (third sector) Organisations and businesses. This 'Partnership' also extends to colleagues in all the other 31 Local Authorities across Scotland as we share Best Practise and intelligence in order to protect life and maintain safety. Partners are committed to delivering effective joint working arrangements to continue to share information, work collaboratively in order to pull resources, target the most vulnerable and provide the best outcomes possible to reach our joint aim. The aim of the Community Safety Partnership is to reduce incidents of crime and harm and prevent offending and reoffending whilst removing the opportunity for escalation of incidents thus promoting a safe and nurturing environment to live and work.

Community Safety Partners have developed a list of high-level strategic priorities considering the 5 key principles - Partnership - People – Performance – Prevention and Place. The Community Safety Partners report on the strategic priorities and on the action plans that will flow from these priorities. The success of the plan will be measured through outcomes and key performance indicators throughout the lifetime of the strategy.

One of the areas that a connected partnership can assist with is developing the ethos of place making. Our physical environment can have a significant impact on our health. It influences what we do, the way we move, and how we interact with people and places. The places we live can help us and be places that support our physical, social and mental wellbeing and prevent negative issues such as inactivity, obesity, air quality and a variety of other physical and mental health challenges. Healthy Place Making and nurturing sustainable places will help provide a better balance. West Lothian Community Safety Partners want to promote the

development of healthy places and together our planners, developers, designers, and a range of other professionals consider how policy and practice can positively influence health. In turn, this helps us all better understand the impact of the built and natural environment on our wellbeing and explore opportunities to make our places healthier. We need to work together, with communities, to help maintain these safe places and keep them free from litter, damage, fly-tipping, deliberate fire-raising, vandalism and antisocial behaviours. Community Safety Partners aim to promote the value of a consistent set of place and wellbeing outcomes when delivering places that enable wellbeing and support Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood ambition.

Issues

- Although a relatively low level of empty homes in West Lothian, empty properties have a negative impact on the quality and amenity of neighbourhoods and communities and could help address supply issues in West Lothian.
- Private sector housing – there are some pockets of poor quality private sector housing in West Lothian which can impact on the amenity of the neighbourhood.
- The place standard tool kit provides a valuable instrument to assess quality of place. There exists greater scope for using the tool kit across a wider range of settings

Priorities

- The council is in the process of preparing a new Local Development Plan and further consideration will be given to use of the Place Standard tool.
- A full time, dedicated Empty Homes Officer will be recruited
- Projects to convert empty properties to housing in town centre and other locations either completed or in progress
- Dedicated private sector registration team in place working with the private rented sector landlords to ensure properties meet required standard
- Deans South – regeneration

Key Actions

- Identify further future affordable housing sites through the forthcoming Local Development Plan (LDP2)
- Develop housing on vacant/derelict land including public sector land
- Bring empty homes back into use
- Develop an Empty Homes Strategy
- Develop a self-build and custom build register

7.0 Theme 4 - Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

LHS Strategic Outcome:	<p>4.1 Homelessness is reduced through a focus on early intervention, prevention and housing options</p> <p>4.2 People in housing need are given a range of housing solutions to find a settled home</p> <p>4.3 People who experience homelessness find a settled home as quickly as possible</p> <p>4.4 People are offered a range of housing options with access to the required services and support options</p>
National Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has access to appropriate affordable and sustainable housing which meets their needs • Develop messages around housing options and choices • Developing a strategic preventative approach to homelessness
<p>Context</p> <p>The council is responsible for undertaking statutory duties to provide advice, assistance and temporary accommodation to households who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. To meet these statutory duties the council and its partners provide a range of services to meet the need of West Lothian taking account of the homeless statutory code of guidance and the range of prevention guidance.</p>	

7.1 Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

Since 2017 the council and its partners have continued to focus on homeless prevention with the approach developed and prevention actions implemented through the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019/20 – 2023/24.

The key aim of the RRTP is to reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention, the provision of consistent advice and information and by offering a range of housing options to find a settled home with access to services and support where required to ensure sustainable solutions. Where homelessness does occur, the council and its partners will work with people to ensure they are housed as quickly as possible with reduced lengths of stay in temporary accommodation.

In March 2021, following extensive consultation, the council implemented a new Housing Allocations Policy which was aligned to the preventative approach set out in the RRTP and included increasing points to local strategic needs categories for households at risk of homelessness. Since 2020/21 there has been a decrease in homeless applications in West Lothian from 1,462 in 2020/21 to 1188 in 2021/22 which represents a 19% reduction, whereas during the same period, homeless prevention cases increased by 69.4%. Increasing the level of homeless prevention cases was a key action of the council in 2021/22 whilst making better use of the reviewed Allocations Policy to shift demand. This continues to be priority during the remainder of the RRTP plan period along with increasing efforts to improve the council's approach to housing options services.

West Lothians Housing First Model, was developed by the council in partnership with NHS Lothian and the third sector during 2019/20 with the establishment of the Housing First Co-ordination and Assessment Team. The aim of the Housing First pilot is to provide housing first service to people with addictions and mental health issues.

West Lothian was the location for the UK's first Housing First for Youth model which was implemented in 2017 by a partnership involving Rock Trust, Almond Housing Association and the Housing First Europe Hub. The innovative model was initially established as a test of change and aimed to meet the needs of care experienced young people with higher levels of support needs to prevent homelessness. The model provided 17 places in 2022/23.

7.2 Profile of Homeless Applicants

Between 2020/21 and 2021/22, there has been decrease in numbers across all age groups which correspond to the overall decrease in homeless presentations. Considered proportionately, the percentage of young people (16-25 years of age) presenting has reduced from 36.2% in 2020/21 to 33.4% in 2021/22, compared to an increase of 2.3% in homeless application from those aged 26 and over. The largest group of applicants continues to be from 26 – 59-year olds reaching 63.1% of all applicants in 2021/22 compared to 60.8% in 2020/21. The 18-25s year old age group remains the second largest group of applicants accounting for 27.1% in 2021/22 compared to 30.4% in 2020/21.

Homeless applications from single people mainly single men in West Lothian continue to make up the vast majority of applications. In 2022/23 homeless applications by single people accounted for 62% of all homeless applications compared to 70% during 2021/22. Single parents make up the second largest group of applicants consisting of 25% in 2022/23 compared to 20% in 2021/22.

7.3 Prison Discharge

The council continues to work with prisoners prior to release to discuss their housing options and works in partnership with the Scottish Prison Service and Criminal Justice to prevent homelessness in line with the national approach. There has been a 65.2% percentage decrease in prison leavers presenting as homeless since 2020/21, this equates to a reduction of 15 applications.

7.4 Youth Homelessness

West Lothian has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness in Scotland and has a history of significant numbers of homeless presentations by young people. It is recognised however that the reported figures underestimate the true picture of youth homelessness as many young people who may be “sofa surfing” do not approach the council for assistance.

The table below provides information on applications aged 16-25 years old. Whilst the number of young people has reduced by 17% from 478 in 2020/21 to 397 in 2021/22, the proportion of applications from young people is slightly up by 0.7%. Although the percentage of overall

applications from young people has been relatively similar over the years it remains consistently higher than the national average and one of the key priorities for the West Lothian RRTTP with increased focus on this area for 2022/23 onwards.

Homeless Applications by 16-25 years olds

Year	West Lothian Applicants (16-25 years)	West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16- 25 years	National % of Homeless Applicants 16 – 25 years
2018/19	472	31.1%	24%
2019/20	473	32.2%	23.3%
2020/21	478	32.7%	25.2%
2021/22	397	33.4%	25%
2022/23	405	32%	TBC in Summer 23/24

Source: Scottish Government West Lothian specific HL1 annual reports & Scottish government Homeless annual statistics publications, supplementary tables and charts

7.5 Domestic Abuse

Legislation has been passed giving more powers to police and courts to protect people at risk of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill will enable police and courts to ban suspected abusers from re-entering the home and from approaching or contacting the person at risk for a period of time to enable them to consider their longer-term options around safety and housing. The Bill will also allow social landlords to end or transfer the tenancy of a perpetrator of domestic abuse to the victim. Together, these measures should reduce the risk that victims of domestic abuse end up having to become homeless in order to escape their abuser.

The Living In Safe Accommodation service (LISA) in West Lothian aims to keep women and children safe in their own homes and provide multiple housing options to support women. In 2021/22 the LISA project supported 172 women during the first three quarters, this is an increase of 18% on the previous period in 2020/21. Through the revised Allocations Policy domestic abuse applications are now allocated higher point levels. This has had a positive impact on the families supported by DASAT as it reduces the number of housing moves required and in turn reduces the disruption to children's education whilst improving access to child care and employment.

7.6 Tenancy Sustainment and Repeat Homelessness

West Lothian traditionally benefits from a high rate of sustainability and achieves positive outcomes by offering high standards of permanent accommodation and appropriate housing support where required. Tenancy sustainment for homeless applicants remained high in 2022/23 at 94% with an increase of 3% from 2021/22. West Lothian has traditionally had a low level of repeat homeless and this continued during the period 2021/22 to 2022/23 when repeat homelessness decreased by 25%.

Whilst high sustainment is positive this also means that there is less turnover of lettable properties and has a knock-on effect on stock turnover. This, coupled with sustained high demand for affordable social housing, causes pressures in homeless services.

7.7 Housing Support

In 2022/23 almost 64% of homeless households had no support needs compared to 57% in 2021/22. For those households who do have a support need mental health issues remain the most prevalent need. Some caution should be applied to this data as this is established from the homeless assessment. At this point the applicant may not provide details of any support needs, this may be established at a later date once a relationship with the officer has been formed. Work is underway to finalise a new support recording framework which will provide more accurate recording of support needs once a relationship with an officer has been formed and a support assessment undertaken. In line with RRTP guidance estimates of support needs have been made using three categories, no/low support needs, medium support needs and SMD/ Complex needs. The table below shows the results.

Homeless Support Need Summary (2018/19 – 2021/22)

Support Needs	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No/Low Support Needs - 0	904	821	779	676	789
Medium Support Needs – 1	363	398	371	295	230
SMD/Complex Needs – 2+	246	250	312	214	204
Total	1,516	1,469	1,462	1,185	1,223

Source: HL1

A Homeless Health Team exists in West Lothian providing mental health support to people in West Lothian aged 16 and over and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and not engaging with any other mental health services for high support. During 2021/22 the team received 127 referrals. Referrals can be made to the service by Housing Services, Criminal Justice, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Team (DASAT), GP's, Health Visitor, ACAST, Consultant Psychiatrist or friends and family along with self-referrals.

7.8 Temporary Accommodation

The council also offers temporary accommodation and supported temporary accommodation for homeless applicants with medium to high support needs. To try and alleviate the reliance on the use of B&B accommodation and meet the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, there has been an increase in the provision of dispersed temporary accommodation since 2019 from a capacity of 638 units to 775 units across West Lothian. Despite this there has been a continued rise in the use Bed & Breakfast of accommodation over the last 4 years.

Pre COVID-19 there had been progress with low rates in the use of B&B accommodation, number of cases in breach of unsuitable accommodation, and implementation of sharing spaces. The changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order by the Scottish Government, which came into force in October 2021 have had significant implications for the RRTP.

To improve the temporary accommodation available for young people, the council is committed building new, purpose built supported housing specifically for young people. The

intention is for the facility to provide self-contained accommodation with on-site support for 12 young people plus outreach support and self-contained accommodation for a further 16 young people nearby. The accommodation will be situated close to local support services, training, education and employment opportunities as well as amenities and transport links.

7.9 West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Priorities and LHS Outcomes

The West Lothian RRTP sets out the vision, strategic direction and detailed action plan for the delivery of a rapid rehousing approach to homelessness. Through a partnership vision of “Working Together”, West Lothian Council, West Lothian IJB, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the voluntary sector, aim to reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention. The council developed and agreed with partners the first RRTP in 2019 with updates agreed and submitted to the Scottish Government in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The RRTP was re-engineered for 2022/23 due to the challenges caused by the pandemic as well as the support of additional funding by the council aimed specifically at homeless prevention. To take account of the severity of the challenges faced alongside the revised modelling assumptions. A new action plan has been approved for 2023/24 to ensure there is a more collaborative and targeted focus on key priorities which will have the greatest impact in reducing pressures across homelessness services and striving to achieve rapid rehousing.

7.10 Challenges to addressing homelessness in West Lothian

The wider economic context of high levels of low paid and insecure jobs, rises in energy costs and inflation will continue to push households into material poverty and the demand for affordable housing locally remains high. The imbalance between demand for affordable social housing compared to supply, remains the greatest challenge for the addressing homelessness in West Lothian.

The pandemic has and continues to have a significant impact on the achievements of the RRTP affecting the level of social lets available and increasing the number of homeless people awaiting permanent outcomes. Turnover rates of social housing stock continue to remain low with high tenancy sustainability. The council and its partners continue to face challenges in meeting peoples housing needs due to the significant imbalance between demand and supply of affordable social housing.

The full implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unacceptable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2020 has also placed the council under further pressure to comply with these legal requirements due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the imbalance that is faced between the demand and supply of affordable social rented housing despite an ambitious RRTP action plan which aims to reduce demand and improve supply. Whilst measures are being taken as part of the RRTP actions to mitigate B&B use, the demand for B&B accommodation is likely to remain for the duration of the RRTP. This brings considerable risks to the council, not only due to breaching the UAO but also the potential financial ramifications from advocates who

pursue damages for claimants under the Equalities Act which will place further strain on council budgets.

The continued high rate of homeless applications from young people also remains a key challenge and more targeted work is required to prevent young people from becoming homeless. This will be a key focus of the RRTP in 2023/24 onwards with improved joint working across the partnership. The removal of Local Connection powers will also have an impact on the homeless demand and subsequent duty to provide settled accommodation. It is difficult to predict the extent of this impact but potentially due to similar pressures in neighbouring Local Authorities, and cost of housing, there is likely to be a rise in the number of people coming to West Lothian who will be entitled to homeless assistance.

7.11 Partnership Working

Delivery of the RRTP remains dependent on effective partnership working at a local level. During 2021/22 partners considered and agreed linking the two working groups Housing Support and Housing First Working group and the Health and Wellbeing Working Group together. With an increased focus on Youth Homelessness in 2022/23 services also agreed to the creation of a new working group to specifically focus on this area. This new working group comprises of representatives from across council services, partner and third sector agencies. Working groups report to the RRTP Board on a quarterly basis on relevant RRTP actions and performance.

Issues

- Record numbers of homeless households and people living in temporary accommodation.
- Insufficient supply of affordable housing to meet housing demand.
- Very high rates of Youth homelessness in West Lothian
- Access to the housing system can be difficult for some households
- Support for people who require it is not always available

Priorities

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Continue to increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation
- Increase the prevention of youth homelessness through a multi-agency early intervention and targeted approaches to prevent youth homelessness;
- Deliver a new build supported accommodation unit and dispersed temporary accommodation for young people;
- Develop specialist housing options provision for targeted groups a risk of homelessness
- Improve housing support provisions

Key Actions

- Renew focus on housing options advice as part of Housing Options interview through introduction of Housing Options plans and information packs for applicants

- Develop early intervention model to prevent homelessness in secondary schools
- Maximise the contribution of the private sector and establish a West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership
- Develop and increase partnership with Private Rented Sector (PRS) and raise awareness of the tenant find service, with an aim of increasing access to available properties to reduce and prevent homelessness
- Increase dispersed temporary sharing spaces by additional 30 properties
- Completion of 383 new affordable council houses targeted over the period 2023 to 2028
- Increase allocation to homeless households to reduce backlog of existing applications
- Deliver new build supported accommodation for young people
- Quantify the residential accommodation requirements for adults where housing in the community would not be suitable including addictions and mental health
- Review and reconfigure support services to deliver medium to high level support and ensure statutory support duty is met.
- Review and implement wider approach to Housing Options with area offices and RSL partners
- Develop a choice based letting approach required for the new housing management system
- Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First Service for Young People in partnership with Social Policy through a new long term funding model
- Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for people accessing health and social care services.

8.0 Theme 5 - Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision

LHS Strategic Outcome:	5.1 Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need
National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer • People as far as possible including those with disabilities or long-term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community • People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected • Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services • Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities
West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve health and wellbeing - West Lothian is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enhance their mental and physical health and well being • Creating affordable and Sustainable Housing – everyone has access to appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing that meets their needs
<p>Context: It has long been recognised that Housing has an important influence on people's health and wellbeing and can assist in the contribution towards a number of national health and well-being outcomes. In West Lothian the LHS has recognised the contribution that joint working with Health and Social Care can have in the delivery of quality housing, specialist housing provision and other housing related services and the impacts these have on health improvements, well-being and the reduction of health inequalities.</p> <p>The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 is the legal framework underpinning health and social care integration in Scotland and brings these areas together into a single, integrated system. Local authorities and health boards are required by law to work together to plan and deliver adult community health and social care services, including service for older people.</p> <p>West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) is responsible for the local joint commissioning, resources and operational oversight for a substantial range of adult community health and social care services, including older people. This approach ensures adult services are built around the needs of patients and service users, and support service redesign with a focus on preventative and anticipatory care in communities.</p> <p>In accordance with Scottish Government guidance, the LHS includes information on how the council's Housing services will work with West Lothian IJB to deliver the outcomes in its Strategic Commissioning Plan that has been informed by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment including requirements for any specialist housing provision.</p>	

8.1 West Lothian IJB Strategic Planning and Housing

At the heart of integration of Health and Social Care is strategic planning and West Lothian IJB's current Strategic Plan is in place for 2019 to 2023. West Lothian IJB's vision is *"To increase wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across all communities in West Lothian"* An integral part of the Strategic Plan is a Housing Contribution Statement which explains the way in which housing and related services in West Lothian support improvement in health and social care outcomes. Listed below are the Strategic commissioning plans in place for each care groups: The plans set out the range of actions to be taken forward to develop health and social care services across West Lothian during the period 2019 to 2023, including Housing related activity.

- Mental Health,
- Learning Disability,
- Physical Disability,
- Alcohol and Drugs Partnership,
- Older People,

Source: All Commissioning Plans are included in the West Lothian Strategic Plan 2019-2023 <https://westlothianhscp.org.uk/article/43932/West-Lothian-IJB-Strategic-Plan-2019-23>.

The key areas of progress to note are:

- Re provisioning of supported housing for mental health by RSLs through providing housing in the community with visiting support and care. This includes, new models of accommodation with care and support needs for people with mental health issues with 16 new tenancies provided by RSLs and a further 8-10 specialist core tenancies identified as being required;
- Housing for 16 people with Learning Disabilities and associated complex care needs in construction phase and due for completion in March 2023;
- Housing Needs assessment complete for people with Learning Disabilities with 30 units required for people with learning disabilities and options such as further core and cluster accommodation being considered;
- 12 Housing First Tenancies for people with mental health/addictions and 5 for young homeless people commenced in 2020.
- Improvements in joint working have been achieved through Housing representation in the IJB Strategic Planning Group and Commissioning Plan Boards whilst Health and Social Care are represented on the West Lothian RRTP Board and have attended the Homes for West Lothian Partnership
- The council is considering the development of the West Lothian Standard to encourage mainstreaming of accessible housing across all tenures. This approach would assist in increasing housing provision for people with physical disability. Wheelchair targets of 10-15% of all housing have been set in discussion with the Physical Disability Commissioning Board.

West Lothian IJB has developed a new Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2028 which will focus on ensuring more care is provided in the community to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and support people to return home or to a homely setting wherever possible at the earliest opportunity. The emphasis will be on planned care and avoidance of crisis care.

The seven strategic aims of the plan are:

- Take a Home First approach with co-ordinated care, support and treatment as close to home as it can be;
- Deliver planned care whenever possible;
- Enable access to timely information, advice and support enabling people to make decisions about their own wellbeing;
- Take a rights-based approach which places people at the centre;
- Involve citizens, communities, staff carers, and other stakeholders as experts;
- Improved outcomes for people through more seamless partnership working, and
- Drive improvement in service delivery through transformation.

To achieve the above aims, the strategic priorities outlined below have been set for the duration of the plan.

West Lothian IJB Strategic Plan Priorities

Improving Health Inequalities in Partnership	A “home first” approach	Enabling good care and treatment
Focus on prevention and self-management Supporting people to make informed choices Working with communities in partnership with others to maximise impact Alignment with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and locality priorities Wider determinants	Investment in early intervention A human-rights based approach Self-management care and treatment provided as close to home as possible Planned care rather than crisis care Specialist care in the right place	Supporting our workforce to deliver high quality care Improvement through transformation including digital Support for carers Managing financial resources effectively through clear investment and disinvestment Sustainable service delivery

8.2 Health and Wellbeing Partnership

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership is a subgroup of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board. It brings partners together from across the CPP to work together to take forward the inequalities and prevention agenda at a strategic level by embedding a preventative focus in the core work of the CPP and providing a platform for preventative efforts to be developed across the partnership. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership ensures health inequalities and prevention is taken forward as a shared priority as part of a wider ‘whole system’ CPP approach to issues such as poverty, housing, education, employment and transport.

Given the growing evidence base about how the interactions between people and place shape health and wellbeing, the Health and Wellbeing Partnership will focus on three key objectives to ensure West Lothian is a place where everyone can enhance their mental and physical health and wellbeing. These are:

- Develop a preventative approach to population level mental wellbeing (including the importance of the natural and social environment)
- Develop a preventative approach around alcohol (tackling availability, environment, culture and attitudes)
- Take a whole systems approach to improving the food and physical activity environment.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership will develop the above to improve health and wellbeing, and ensure connectivity with other interlinked priority areas, including, creating skills and jobs, creating affordable and sustainable housing, and creating net zero carbon communities.

8.3 Legislative Requirements for the Provision of Specialist and Accessible Housing

The Equalities Act 2010 makes provision to ensure that no person who identifies with a Protected Characteristic faces discrimination. Provision of housing for people with particular needs must therefore be a key consideration in all affordable housing developments.

The need for specialist housing provision has been identified in West Lothian through the recently completed Strategic Needs Assessment which has informed the new IJB Strategic Plan. The delivery of specialist housing provision will be identified as the new commissioning plans are developed in 2023 and will be subsequently reflected in the annual LHS update

Through Homes for West Lothian Partnership there is regular discussion between RSLs and the council about specialist housing provision. Social Policy colleagues have attended the meetings to outline the need for specialist accommodation. Due consideration is given to the suitability of sites for specialist housing and where appropriate these sites are included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

8.4 Review of Housing for Varying Needs and Specialist Housing Provision.

There will always be a need for specialist housing provision for particular client groups in various forms with the appropriate levels of support and funding. A review of Housing for Varying Needs that is being undertaken by More Homes Division at the Scottish Government and based on the outcome of this review, the council will consider the implications for future standards of accessible housing across all tenures.

8.5 The Need for Accessible and Specialist Housing Provision:

Growth in the older population will be the most significant population growth influencing policy in West Lothian with the 65-74 age groups expected to increase by 19% by 2028 and persons aged 75 and over increasing by 39%. This is compared to the Scottish average growth of 14.4% in the 65 to 75 population and 25.4% increase in those aged over 75 during the same time period. Almost one in five people living in West Lothian are living with a long-term condition that affects their wellbeing. These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services. A long-term condition is any condition which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months and can have a significant impact on quality life and ability to carry out day to day activities.

In terms of overall population health, almost three quarters (73.8%) of people in West Lothian rate their general health as “very good” or “good”, and 5.3% rate their general health as “bad” or “very bad”. Within the 2011 Census, the presence of one or more long term condition increased significantly with age and had a direct impact on the person’s perception of their

general health, with only 5.6% of those over 85 years reporting they were in “very good health”. The number of carers in West Lothian, is, similar to the national average and has not changed since the 2001 Census. There has, however, been a significant increase (35%) in the amount of care provided with nearly 7,800 people providing unpaid care for 20 or more hours a week, and 4,600 of these for 50 hours or more.

As part of the development of HNDA3 significant research was done on the need for specialist housing provision. To understand the scale of the issue, statistics were reviewed in relation to health and housing from the Scottish Household Survey 2019, which indicates there has been an increase in the number of households with a long term sick or disabled person in West Lothian in the 10-year period 2007/09 to 2017/19. People living in social rented housing appear to be more limited in their activities than those living in other tenures. In West Lothian 66% of households in the social rented sector contain someone with a limited condition or illness compared to 43% in the social rented sector in Scotland.

The key findings of Horizon Housing Association’s three key publications; Minding The Step (2012), Still Minding The Step (2018) and Still Minding The Step Infographic (2019) provide further evidence for the need for accessible housing and are still of significance to current and future policy around accessible housing.

Analysis for HNDA3, provides useful information about the need for accessible housing in West Lothian estimating that of the 2806 wheelchair user households, 750 require wheelchair housing. This is 1 % of the household population in West Lothian and is the same position for Scotland.

Households with wheelchair users.

	Households Total	Wheelchair user Households	Households req. wheelchair housing	Households req. wheelchairs %
West Lothian	77,953	2,806	750	1%

Source: HNDA 3 [SES Regional Planning — The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal \(esescityregiondeal.org.uk\)](https://www.esescityregiondeal.org.uk)

Number of wheelchair users in Social Housing

	All self-contained Social Housing	Number of wheelchair units	% of self-contained social housing
West Lothian	21,037	267	1.2%
Scotland	600,044	6,284	1%

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator 2020 stock by provision type and local authority area at 31st March 2019

It should be noted that there is a fundamental gap in understanding private sector accessible and wheelchair housing with no robust data being available. With future new tenure neutral quality and accessible standards, more robust information should become available.

8.6 Wheelchair Accessible Housing Targets

The previous wheelchair target for affordable housing of 30 per annum was achieved with the council and RSLs providing 146 wheelchair accessible properties between 2017/18 and 2021/22. It is proposed that a minimum of 10% of new build homes should be wheelchair accessible over the duration of this LHS. For market housing, further engagement with

developers will be required through consultation on the next Local Development Plan. This is aimed to align with the proposed West Lothian Standard and with the possibility of changes to planning requirements that would support a target being set. An initial target of 20 homes per annum in the market sector is proposed, which may be subject to review on development of LDP2.

8.7 Aids and Adaptations

In January 2023 following consultation in 2022, Scottish Government issued updated Guidance on the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations. The Scottish Government acknowledge issues with equity of access, and the need to remove barriers which prevent responsive service provision, and the ability to help people to self-manage and make their own choices. The key actions included in the new guidance relating to adaptation and housing solutions are;

- A national Adapting for Change Action Plan should be devised to compliment other policy work, and assist partnerships to drive forward the changes recommended from the original Adapting for Change report by the Adaptations Working Group.
- To assist with the practical implementation of the Adapting for Change recommendations, partnerships should implement Housing Solutions change programmes which assist all relevant partners to develop local Protocols, and deliver training programmes, which effectively promote:
 - Early intervention with full exploration of rehousing opportunities; 99 - Better planning for the delivery of barrier-free housing and an inclusive design/living approach;
 - Robust joint governance, which provides a clear strategic direction and supports priority setting;
 - Joint finance arrangements which help streamline service improvements (e.g. pooled budgets)
 - Equity in the system, applying a 'tenure neutral' approach;
 - To address barriers in the system, removing the requirement for grant assistance for owner occupiers and providing 100% funding for the assessed adaptations;
 - Removing the need for occupational therapists to provide an assessment for standard adaptations in housing association properties e.g. shower provision and encouraging 'direct access' arrangements
 - Maximising procurement and recycling benefits to help deliver efficiencies.

It will be important to ensure that resources continue to be made available throughout any changes that are made in order that people can access the adaptations they require when they need them. Increased collaborative working between health, social care and housing will be required, including resource reallocation to ensure a successful change in approach to the provision of adaptations.

8.8 Adaptations and the Scheme of Assistance

The council's Scheme of Assistance (SOA), was reviewed in 2019 with an emphasis since then on providing advice and support for adaptations to support people with disabilities to remain in their homes. The council funds adaptations to council owned stock and to privately rented and owner-occupied stock through the Scheme of Assistance. Where the council is required (under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 or associated legislation) to fund adaptations by a grant this is known as a mandatory grant.

RSLs receive "Stage 3" funding from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme to fund own stock adaptations which also require an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment. RSL's can also access "Stage 2" funding to incorporate specific adaptations into new build properties to suit individual tenants' needs. This ensures that adaptations are undertaken at an early stage, avoiding abortive work and unnecessary additional costs.

All adaptations are assessed as part of a needs assessment, but where those are not funded by mandatory grant, the council may use its discretion to provide a grant to private home owners, or to fund the adaptation as part of an individual's care plan. The council funds at least 80% of the cost of an adaptation following assessment. Mandatory Grant funded adaptations are wet floor showers/bathroom extensions, through lifts, stair lifts, widening doors, closomats and ramps.

In addition to improving the life of individuals, adaptations contribute greatly to improving the condition of housing stock across West Lothian. The national review of adaptations being undertaken by the Scottish Government along with the council's (through the proposed introduction of a new West Lothian Standard), proposes to review the type of adaptations being carried out by both the council and RSL partners with a view to improving the quality of the adaptation and in turn, housing quality generally.

The council is committed to ensuring that tenants, private tenants and owner occupiers are able to remain in their own home as long as possible. The council funds adaptations to its own stock through the HRA following an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment.

In the longer term, the building of fully accessible, adaptable and flexible new homes will reduce the need for adaptations to existing dwellings. However, there will still require to be adaptations to existing housing stock in the short and medium term along with adaptations to meet particular individual needs.

8.9 Specialist Housing Provision for Older People and Adults

There is a range of specialist housing provision for older people and adults in West Lothian as well as care home provision. The West Lothian Common Housing Register shows a high demand for housing for older people with 2,623 applications for sheltered housing and 71 applications for housing with care.

Specialist Older Housing Provision in West Lothian

Type of Provision	Number of Places
Sheltered Housing - Older People	310
Very Sheltered housing – Older People	215
Amenity Housing - Older People	543
Total	1,068

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator stock by provision and type 2019

Specialist Housing and Care Home Provision for Adults

Type of Provision	Number of Places
Learning Disability/Autism/Physical Disability	33
Mental Health Support	160

Source: West Lothian records

8.10 Mental Health and Housing

Housing and Mental Health Services are working together to review the existing provision for people with very high levels of needs associated with mental illness. Work will be done to scope out the existing provision and identify where there are gaps before considering how to develop services to meet those gaps. This is likely to include the needs of people who may otherwise remain hospitalised for extended periods in mental health wards, those placed in out of area supported housing or those in mainstream housing who are really struggling to safely maintain their tenancies, despite support to do so.

The provision for people who experience harmful use of drugs or alcohol will also be reviewed. There is a review of the provision for people with Alcohol Related Brain Disorder to see if people can be supported in more independent accommodation instead of having to move to care homes, often out of area. Alongside these, consideration will be given to identifying opportunities to provide some form of safe overnight space for people who are too vulnerable to return to their homes due to their mental health or to intoxication, but do not need admission to hospital.

New ways of working will be developed including further upstream before people become homeless or need alternate housing. This will include, developing new pathways for early identification of people at risk of becoming homeless, where it may be possible to intervene and prevent this, or address this rapidly. This will focus on those people who may benefit from health or social care interventions, including identifying people who are in hospital and have housing needs earlier in their admission.

8.11 Strategic Needs Assessment

A Strategic Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2022 to inform the new West Lothian IJB Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028. This along with consultation with IJB partners has identified the following gaps and work required in relation to the role of Housing and the provision of specialist housing.

- The role of Housing in the new 'Home First' approach identified as one of the three priorities of the IJB for 2023-2028 to avoid hospital admission and reduce delayed discharges;
- Gaps in specialist housing provision for people with long term neurological conditions;
- The Coming Home Agenda and the need to re provision people with learning disabilities and mental health issues from hospital or out of area placements into community settings;
- Compared to the national position West Lothian has an under provision of care homes for older people and adults. There are two current planning applications for care homes for older people in Livingston and Linlithgow.
- Individuals with high tariff care and support needs who cannot be sustain safely in the community in individual tenancies;
- Individuals with high tariff support needs where group living is not appropriate;
- Prevention of homelessness for people with addictions who are in recovery but do not have a permanent home
- Lack of suitable accommodation options for people with Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD) who are under 65 years of age - only facility is Milestone House, nursing home care or out of area placements

Future needs will be identified through the IJB Commissioning plans with consideration to be given to complex care cases housed in the community, repatriation from out of area placements meeting assisting with Home First principles, moving from long stay hospital settings, and the "Coming Home" agenda.

8.12 Veterans Housing

Consideration of the housing needs of Veterans is provided in a number of ways in West Lothian

- The West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc>
- Service Leavers Guide to West Lothian
- Provisions within West Lothian Council's Housing Allocation Policy
- Housing provision by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
- Information on the council's web page with links to enable access to housing for Veterans.

The most recent Scottish Government data on homelessness applications to local authorities shows that 2.4% of applicant households had a member who was previously in the Armed Forces. In March 2023 there were 10,4768 applicants on the Common Housing Register for housing, of these 18 have identified as leaving the Armed Forces. Personnel being discharged from the Armed Forces and Veterans are provided with a range of housing options advice and assistance relating to access to social rented housing, private rented housing and home ownership

The council works with a number of organisations, including the Scottish Veteran Housing Group and the Scottish Veteran Residence, to assist personal who are being discharged from the armed service to find accommodation as well as veterans who have left the service.

Housing Option advice and assistance is provided and the council works with veterans along with other appropriate agencies making referrals as necessary to Health and Social Care, employment, education and financial advice.

8.13 Gypsy/Travellers

In 2020, Scottish Government published. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-scotland/documents/>

The key findings in relation to Accommodation were:

- Gypsy/Travellers are not a homogenous group and have differing cultural needs and practice varying degrees of nomadism. A 'one-size fits all' approach to accommodation is therefore not appropriate and unlikely to work in practice with needs likely to change over an individual's life course
- There is limited available evidence on the current population, specific accommodation aspirations and travel patterns of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland
- There is no agreed methodology for understanding Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs, but evidence suggests that, particularly when attempting to meet aspirations, a degree of collaboration with the local Gypsy/Traveller population is key
- Accommodation preferences of Gypsy/Travellers are diverse, and influenced by a number of factors, including privacy, proximity to family, access to services and health considerations

The council recognises the right of the gypsy/traveller community to travel and continue their traditional way of life. According to the 2001 Census 79 people in West Lothian self-identified as White Gypsy/Travellers, the figure for Scotland was 4,212.

Since 2017 the council has chosen to direct resources to improving outreach services as a more effective means of supporting and serving the needs of the travelling communities. Council Services including Housing, Planning, Social Policy, Education and Environmental Health work collaboratively to address the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community. They provide advice and assistance to Gypsy/Travellers.

There is a general view that the Gypsy/Travellers travel through West Lothian moving on to other areas.

8.14 Travelling Show People

There are an estimated 2,000 Travelling Show People in Scotland but data is unavailable to indicate numbers in South East Scotland and specifically West Lothian. (Ref: Evidence Review Accommodation Needs Gypsy/Travellers – Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Research Communities Analysis Division October 2020.) There is a show peoples' site at Greendykes Road, Broxburn.

The West Lothian Local Development Plan notes that proposals for small privately-owned sites to accommodate gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, whether transit or permanent will be supported provided they meet the criteria set out with the LDP.

8.15 Asylum Seekers / Refugees

Between 2017 and 2022, West Lothian Council housed refugees from Afghanistan and Syria.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Year	Number of Refugees Housed
2018	3
2019	1
2020	0
2021	0
2022	1

Source: West Lothian data.

There is a partnership approach with RSLs and third sector organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers. Consideration is being given to the requirements of Ukrainian people who have come to the area.

8.16 Ukrainian Resettlement

Since the war began in the Ukraine, more than 100 households have moved to West Lothian. A collaborative approach is being taken by the council and its partners to support the resettlement of Ukrainians in West Lothian.

A range of housing options have been made available, including support by host families, provision of hotel accommodation and provision of private rented housing and social rented housing.

Funding has been allocated by the UK Government, Scottish Government and West Lothian Council to provide support to families who resettle in West Lothian. The type of support includes housing advice, welfare advice, adult learning, provision of interpreters and access to employment.

The council and its partners will continue to consider the housing and support requirements to people resettling in West Lothian from the Ukraine to ensure appropriate support is available.

Issues

- There is uncertainty over the ability to capital and revenue fund both new build and existing specialist provision at a time when the council is being required to meet new accessible and sustainable legislation for new and existing stock
- It is unclear how to ensure the private sector contributes to the provision of accessible and wheelchair housing supply
- There is a small but challenging gap in meeting the accommodation needs of complex care/high tariff customers who have difficulty sustaining a tenancy in the community due to risks to themselves or the wider community

- There are issues in terms of funding required to adapt existing housing to meet complex care needs for those who can be rehoused in the community
- The early intervention and prevention agenda is a key priority of all public sector bodies at a time when resources in hospitals and care homes are being stretched and not appropriately used.
- There are challenges with quantifying the requirements for specialist provision

Priorities

- More accessible and specialist provision is likely to be required over the next five years
- There is a need to consider embedding accessible housing in all new housing developments and develop a tenure neutral approach
- Improved collaboration between health and social care is necessary to understand how these gaps can be identified and met and a joint understanding of the service redesign or new models of housing required. This includes more collaboration with NHS in relation to available sites that could be suitable for specialist housing provision.

Key Actions

- Work with the IJB on housing input to Delivery Plans for specialist housing for client groups
- Prioritise care and housing support to ensure that people can live independently
- Improve understanding of the housing and support needs of Gypsy/Travellers in West Lothian
- Prioritise adaptations to ensure people can live independently
- Develop the West Lothian Standard, considering tenure neutral design in new housing

9.0 Theme 6 - Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

LHS Strategic Outcome:	6.1 We will work in partnership to reduce the impact of climate change in West Lothian in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy. 6.2 Minimise the number of households in fuel poverty
National Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally. • We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone who lives, works and delivers services in West Lothian builds a sustainable, nature rich, net zero community. • Developing a partnership approach to achieving net zero carbon • Developing nature based solutions, carbon off-setting and energy generation.

Climate Change Context

The world is in the midst of a Climate Emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at an international, national and local level in order to safeguard the planet for future generations. Scotland's climate is already changing. The warmest 10 years on record have all been since 1997 and climate projections for the next century indicate that the climate trends observed over the last century will continue and intensify over the coming decades. The degree of changes that will be experienced will depend very much on how successful we are in reducing emissions globally.

Energy Efficiency

The council and RSLs are faced with competing priorities in regard to meeting enhanced energy efficiency standards for existing social housing and higher standards for energy efficient new build housing. This sits within an environment of rising construction and maintenance costs means that there is a significant challenge to meeting standards on EESSH2 and enhanced energy efficiency standards for new build housing. Improved energy efficiency standards and build quality means less fuel poverty and better health outcomes.

Fuel Poverty

The impact of the cost of living increase is of major concern in West Lothian. In October 2022 inflation rose to 11.1%, with a reduction of 0.7% to 10.4% in February 2023. Communities and services are in a phase of recovery post Covid and real term cuts in earned and benefit income have combined to create a precarious financial situation for many households. The main drivers behind the rapidly rising cost of living are:

- Rising oil and gas prices leading to higher domestic energy bills and average petrol prices at an all-time high
- Disruption to global supply chains due to industry shut downs during the pandemic having an impact on the production of consumer goods
- Wage growth that does not keep pace with the rate of inflation
- Real terms cuts to social security benefits

9.1 Climate Change Legal & Policy Drivers

In a drive towards a low carbon future, the Scottish Government set out ambitious emission reduction targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The targets were amended and updated in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, with the new goal of reducing Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040. While challenging, these targets present Scotland with significant social and economic opportunities, and require a range of actions across society and the economy.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on all public bodies to contribute to emission reduction targets, deliver programmes to increase resilience against Climate Change and to act in a 'Sustainable' way. Under the act, the council is identified as a 'Major Player' due to its size and influence and, therefore, must submit a mandatory climate change report to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, detailing our progress in mitigating and adapting to climate change and outlining the actions undertaken and planned to reduce the council's environmental impacts. This strategy will be underpinned by a suite of actions which will support delivery and allow for more effective reporting.

In Scotland's latest climate plan - 'Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032 (RPP3)', further expectations are placed on the public sector to increasingly demonstrate how its own operations are driving down emissions. RPP3 sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032.

9.2 West Lothian's Climate Change Strategy

West Lothian Council declared a Climate Change emergency in September 2019.

"Council recognises that the world is in the midst of a climate emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations.

Council further agrees that having more environmentally progressive policies can lead to improved health, high quality jobs and more sustainable communities.

Council notes that West Lothian Council signed the Climate Change Declaration in 2007. Council further notes the significant work to date to make West Lothian a more environmentally friendly and sustainable place to live and work, and that the Council's agreed carbon reduction targets are already being exceeded."

This provides a framework for the council's actions as a public sector organisation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the unavoidable impacts of changing weather patterns through the period 2021-2026 while also considering the pathway to achieving a net-zero West Lothian by 2045 at the latest.

The strategy commits the council to achieving a number of targets that aim to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions and ensuring that West Lothian is well adapted and prepared for changing weather patterns brought about by climate change. Some of the key activity includes;

- Ensuring that climate change and sustainability understanding and action is embedded in all core corporate and business planning processes across the council
- Prioritising the implementation of climate change actions and projects and removing obstacles to successful implementation
- Promoting a culture of low carbon and sustainable behaviour within the council as a whole and amongst staff at all levels
- Supporting the council's budget strategy through reducing the cost and impact of the council's use of resources, including water, energy, and transport fuel.

West Lothian Climate Change Strategy Outcomes and Housing Related Actions

Theme	Outcome
Energy	We will continue to reduce the council's own carbon footprint and encourage and support others in West Lothian to reduce theirs. The council will investigate the implementation of strict energy efficiency standards recommended in The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report "Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament" and report our findings in 2022. The standards state that homes must achieve 'ultra-high' levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m ² /year, a figure similar to the space heating demand of a Passivhaus building. The Council will produce a revised and updated Employer Requirements Design Guide for council Housing in 2022/23 as part of the council's pathway to net-zero.
Transport	We encourage sustainable transport and active travel by implementing measures to help people make smarter, sustainable travel choices, supported by low emission transport networks & infrastructure while further reducing our own fleet emissions.
Waste	We encourage householders and businesses to make the right choices when disposing of waste and will support the drive for sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the residents of West Lothian.
Adaptation, Resilience & Biodiversity	We will continue to build a resilient and well adapted West Lothian where natural ecosystems are protected, sustainably used and strengthened while services, communities and places are adapting to cope with climate change impacts (including land use, buildings and infrastructure)
Land Use and Management	We understand the scope and benefits of local carbon offsetting and manage our publicly owned land assets in a way that contributes to our path to net-zero.
Embedding Climate Action	We embed climate action in our policies and practices across the council and create a culture of sustainability and resource efficiency

9.3 Biodiversity and Climate Change

The provision of high-quality green spaces is an important aspect of housing development. This is a key consideration when developing new affordable housing. A number of the more recent council housing developments have provided a range of open spaces including pocket

parks. As part of the climate change strategy, there will be an emphasis on 'pocket parks' and other green spaces to improve access to nature. The '20-minute neighbourhood' approach being developed through National Planning Framework 4 the aim is to deliver positive effects for biodiversity from development.

There will be a refresh of the council's New Build Housing Design Guide with the aim to reduce the impact of the service and tenants through a variety of measures including community allotments and orchards for new build developments and land within existing housing developments which will improve community wellbeing, reduce CO2 emissions and assist in reducing food poverty. The following actions will be progressed alongside this review:

- Promote domestic composting by providing facilities for each new house either individually or within a community allotment
- Run a pilot domestic composting project across existing housing stock as part of the tenant environmental project programme
- Improved cycling lanes and public transport and non-car methods of travel within new developments in line with West Lothian Active Travel Policy
- Education of the tenants and residents regarding the benefits of renewables/retrofits (cost, health and wellbeing) and how to best use new technologies within the new properties to achieve optimum performance.

As part of West Lothian's climate change strategy, the council will explore voluntary developers' contributions to offset carbon emissions from development sites and support tree planting on council owned sites and landholdings that contribute towards the West Lothian Climate Forest and carbon sequestration.

9.4 Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)

The Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 came in to force on 21 May this year and sets out a duty for local authorities to prepare, publish and update:

- a) a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES), and
- b) a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Delivery Plan.

The first LHEES and its associated delivery plan must be published by 31 December 2023 and is to be updated every 5 years. LHEES are core to the principle of a place based, locally-led and tailored approach to the heat transition. These local Strategies will underpin an area-based approach to heat and energy efficiency planning and delivery, setting out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving their energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. For each local authority area, the Strategies should:

- set out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to meet national and local objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones, and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone; and
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

Accompanying the Strategies will be Delivery Plans, which are to be developed in partnership with key stakeholders and provide a strong basis for action for local communities, government,

investors, developers and wider stakeholders, pinpointing areas for targeted intervention and early, low-energy measures.

In practice, a local heat and energy efficiency strategy should identify what needs to be done to change buildings and relevant local infrastructure (relating to heat networks, or from a demand perspective relating to other utility networks) to fulfil the Scottish Government's objectives and local priorities relating to heat and energy efficiency in buildings. These interventions might occur at building level or in energy supply networks or in a combination of both.

For each LHEES Consideration, it is proposed that spatial zones are generated to visualise potential pathways to decarbonise the building stock at a local authority level (Strategic Zones) and at a delivery level (Delivery Areas). These will be used to guide the design of policy levers such as advice, funding programmes and regulation which will give further direction and clarity to delivery routes and timescales. These may include any regulatory requirements to improve the energy performance of existing buildings or reduce emissions associated with their heat supply.

9.5 Developing WLC approach to the LHEES

The council has an obligation under the Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 to prepare, publish and update a LHEES, with the first iteration of the Strategy to be published by December 2023. Multi-year funding has now been confirmed, with £75,000 allocated to 2022/23 to take forward the initial development.

West Lothian Council aims to work collaboratively with partners to develop the LHEES. This will involve the identification of a Senior Responsible Officer and a lead serviced as well as development of a LHEES working group with relevant council teams represented. It will also require the engagement of a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to take forward development of the initial LHEES document.

The Council will develop a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy by 2023, building on the experiences from the work undertaken in the phase 2 pilot and in line with Scottish government guidance.

9.6 Energy Efficiency

Energy efficient buildings reduce the demand for heat. It is important to ensure that demand for heat in our homes is as low as possible, to meet our fuel poverty obligations and to protect consumers from high energy costs and cold homes. In 2019, 45% of Scotland's homes were rated EPC C or better, with social housing generally more energy efficient (56% EPC C or better) than the private sector (41%). By 2045, Scottish Government have set a target that emissions of greenhouse gases from heating our homes and buildings will have all but disappeared, with demand for energy reduced and space and water heating provided by zero emissions alternatives. Improving the energy performance of buildings is essential to unlock the rollout of zero emissions heating.

9.7 Alternative Heating Sources for New Build and Existing Stock

Although significant headway has been made in the decarbonisation Scotland's homes and businesses (this figure represents a 24% reduction in emissions from 1990 the base reporting year for carbon dioxide emissions, Scotland cannot meet its legislated climate change targets unless virtually all emissions from heating (and cooling) buildings are eliminated. This means, in effect that by 2045, zero emissions heating will need to be deployed across Scotland's building stock. Through the use of zero direct emissions at point of use heating systems - coupled with very high levels of energy efficiency in new homes – West Lothian Council have the opportunity to greatly reduce our emissions, and move towards our net zero carbon targets.

For all future new build council houses it is recommended that the initial specification for the heating system should be for a system which produces zero direct emissions at the point of use or low carbon alternative. An A- Rated Boiler system should only be considered where current infrastructure does not allow for a non-fossil fuel system to be installed. The costs of transitioning from fossil fuels for heating to low carbon and renewable sources will be a particular challenge and cognisance will need to be taken of this and officers will continue to work with the Scottish Government and others to identify potential funding streams.

It is important to address the likelihood that the capital and running costs of zero direct emissions heating may be higher than for the high greenhouse gas emitting systems they replace. This illustrates the importance of the need to reduce the demand for heat energy as far as possible within the fabric of the building. Feasibility work is underway and costs will be reported once determined.

9.8 Off Gas Grid Areas

Since 2017, 89 WLC homes have had air source heat pumps installed in “off gas” grid areas in West Lothian. This has been beneficial both for the tenants and for the council to gain an understanding of these systems. There are also significant benefits in terms of reduction of emissions.

At Cawburn Road, a development of 16 homes for people with complex needs has been completed. The heating on this development is powered by ground source heat pumps. This is the first housing development with this system in West Lothian. RSLs are also considering the use of air source heat pumps at a number of developments.

9.9 Energy Standards for New Build Council Housing

Emissions from buildings are responsible for approximately 20% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficient buildings reduce the demand for heat. Regardless of which system supplies a building's heating requirements, it is important that action is taken to limit the amount of energy that needs to be delivered to a new home to meet the heating demand to the best levels practicable.

It is important to ensure that demand for heat in our housing stock is as low as possible, to meet our fuel poverty obligations and to protect consumers from high energy costs and cold homes. The Scottish Government are reviewing the energy standards which are included in Building Regulations. These will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings and include measures in support of the move to low carbon and renewable heat.

The council will make a strong commitment to ensuring that our future new build housing stock is as energy efficient as possible. It is proposed that all new build council housing stock are designed and constructed to meet the requirements to achieve an A – Rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in terms of both the building's 'energy efficiency rating', and the building's 'environmental impact rating', which shows the buildings CO2 emissions. In addition to this it is proposed that all future new build council housing stock should meet all 8 standards to achieve the current Scottish Building Standards “Silver” Plus Standard.

9.10 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

In some of the most recent new build council housing developments, infrastructure has been provided to enable householders to charge their electric vehicles. The aim will be to make this standard as far as possible given the limitations on energy capacity. Electric vehicle owners with off-street parking are able to access funding for their own charge point and should be encouraged to do so where possible. New developments will also be required to adopt new building standards which set out the number of EV charge points in new developments <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/electric-vehicle-charge-points-for-new-buildings/>

9.11 Meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing in West Lothian Council Housing Stock

The Scottish Government Guidance for Social Landlords on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) was introduced in March 2014 and encouraged landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. The first milestone for social landlords to meet for social rented homes was 31 December 2020. A second milestone was confirmed in June 2019, for social rented houses to meet by December 2032 (ESSH2). Decarbonising the existing housing stock and meeting the ESSH2 milestones will present significant challenges for the Council. It should be noted that as with the council's non-domestic buildings the existing council housing stock, at least in the short to medium term, is unlikely to reach a net zero-carbon position and that there will be a requirement to offset some emissions to achieve net-zero.

The Housing Capital Investment Programme will focus on the elements in the route map below to meet the ESSH2 standards. As time moves forward and as innovations in technology allow, further solutions may be investigated. Solutions to be explored will be around heat recovery technology, such as waste water, flue gas, and ventilation. Other elements which will be explored include floor insulation, Internal Wall Insulation where technically feasible, and provision of LED light bulbs and lighting.

Route Map to ESSH2 for Council Housing

Year	Lofts	Walls	Heating	Windows & Doors
2025	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system	All are double glazed
2032	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors

2040	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors
2045	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system – low carbon solution	Triple glazed windows High performance doors

9.12 Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS:ABS)

The council's HEEPS:ABS continues to be the main tool available for providing energy efficiency measures to the owner-occupier and private rented sector and we will continue to allocate housing capital programme funding to council owned properties included in an Area Based Scheme.

As the HEEPS:ABS is a Scottish Government initiative and budget allocations are determined by them on an annual basis it is not possible to detail the yearly approach to the Area Based Schemes for the period of the LHS as future budget levels are unknown. A key action for this LHS will be to maximise available funding sources for Area Based Schemes from both the Scottish Government as well as utility companies.

Any HEEPS: ABS funding the council receives is used to support home owners. The main focus of HEEPS: ABS is to address and reduce levels of fuel poverty, and officers assess the streets proposed to be included to determine the most vulnerable households to fuel poverty; this is based on information from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Register, Council Tax Banding and Home Analytics.

9.13 Fuel Poverty in West Lothian

According to the Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019, A household is in fuel poverty if:

- (a)** the fuel costs necessary for the home in which members of the household live are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income, and
- (b)** after deducting such fuel costs, benefits received for a care need or disability (if any) and the household's childcare costs (if any), the household's remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living for members of the household.

Targets for fuel poverty were set in 2019 as part of the above Act. The target is that by 2040, as far as reasonably possible no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty and, in any event:

- (a)** no more than 5% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty,
- (b)** no more than 1% of households in Scotland are in extreme fuel poverty,

(c) the median fuel poverty gap of households in Scotland in fuel poverty is no more than £250 adjusted in accordance with section 5(5) to take account of changes in the value of money.

Source: Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019

The Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-19 (published in 2021) estimated that 14,000 households in West Lothian were in fuel poverty, this is 18% of all households. This compares with 15,000 in 2016-2018. However, the recent rises in energy costs means that numbers of households currently in fuel poverty are likely to be considerably higher and the numbers will increase further without significant interventions.

Many people are now working from home and for some people there have been extended periods of home schooling. More and more appliances require more and more charging.

Under current plans gas boilers will stop being fitted in new build homes from 2024. This means the majority of homes in this area will move to electric heating. This is more energy efficient (in terms of Kilowatts used) and better for carbon emissions, however the costs are higher with electricity than gas, therefore a fabric first approach is key to ensure the level of insulation within houses is sufficient to mitigate the higher costs.

All rented properties, regardless of tenancy period, will need to have an EPC of at least band C by 31 March 2025. This should mean properties are more energy efficient.

Some gas alternatives for heating are being trialled including a Hydrogen blended gas. With the recent price cap increase it may be the case that rather than electricity costs reducing to take over from gas it will be gas costs that rise until they meet the cost of electricity. It is unlikely that position on fuel poverty will improve anytime soon.

9.14 The Impact of Fuel Poverty

Socio-economic factors play a key role in the individual experience of the cost of living crisis. Those groups that will be disproportionately affected includes:

- Low income households – among the worst affected households are those on low incomes. Lower income households spend disproportionately on energy costs. The Institute of Fiscal Studies research indicates that the poorest tenth of households require 4.8% of their budget for gas, and the worst off tenth of this group spend an average of 12%, meaning the increase in energy prices will affect the lowest income groups substantially more than others.
- Families - Research conducted by Loughborough University and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that families are spending in the region of an extra £120 on energy bills each month.
- People with a disability or long-term health condition who face higher energy bills - On average, the extra costs including food, energy and specialist items incurred by a disabled person is the equivalent of half their income.

Minority Ethnic Groups - The new Economics Foundation thinktank recently stated that people from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority households may feel the impact of the rising cost

living more acutely than white households. This may be attributed to the fact that BAME households tend to be larger and with a higher proportion of younger household members, resulting in higher living costs.

9.15 Mechanisms for Tackling Fuel Poverty

West Lothian Advice Shop Energy Advice provide advice on alleviating fuel poverty. The advice and information offered, like all the services offered by the Advice Shop, is free to all residents of West Lothian including home owners, private tenants and landlords. They provide help and guidance on all aspects of domestic fuel related issues:

- Tariff comparisons – better deals mean lower costs but these are currently very restricted.
- Energy Efficiency Advice – to decrease fuel costs
- Fuel Grants – one-off payments of £100 are currently being administered to households experiencing fuel poverty or at risk of disconnection from supply. To date over 1400 households have been supported with grants totalling £147, 975
- A new fuel grant was launched in Summer 2022 to households with a disabled family member where they have been disproportionately impacted by rising energy costs due to extra costs such as mains powered equipment or the need to keep heating at a constant level.
- Simple online application forms to apply for support through cash payments including energy grants.
- Grant/Loans for Energy Efficient Upgrades – to increase energy efficiency
- Help from External Partners – to apply for grants and fuel vouchers
- Budgeting Advice – help clients better manage their money/prioritise
- Benefit Health Checks – income maximisation/benefit entitlement advice
- Income/Expenditure forms – to show suppliers affordability when negotiating payment plans

Whilst many of these mechanisms worked well in the past, energy prices are rising so quickly that they are limited in what they can achieve. Going forward, the focus will be on making homes as energy efficient as they can be and encouraging people at risk of fuel poverty to access any funding and support available.

Issues

- WLC will require to coordinate the development of Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) by 2023, this will require a range of partners to be involved.
- Competing priorities for funding for energy efficiency measures (meeting EESSH2) and increasing costs of new build council housing that should be as energy efficient as possible.
- Meeting the timescales for EESSH 2 (2032) and net zero (2045) for all WLC housing
- Open space in new housing developments should be high quality, promote biodiversity and be well maintained.
- Major increase in fuel costs will result in more people in fuel poverty.
- Time limits on the energy price cap for both domestic and business use.

Priorities

- Engagement with partners to develop an LHEES
- Design guide will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that new council homes meet required standards on energy efficiency.
- Consider opportunities for biodiversity in council new build developments including allotments and orchards
- Ensure people at risk of fuel poverty receive advice and assistance
- Securing funding to meet required targets and standards
- Continue commitment to assist households at risk of fuel poverty

Actions

- West Lothian Council will develop a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy during 2023
- Improve community wellbeing through provision of allotments and orchards in new council development
- The council will continue to invest in housing stock to meet EESSH2 by 2032.
- The Anti-Poverty Strategy will be reviewed during 2023. This will give an opportunity for partners to carry out consultation with service users to shape anti-poverty activity going forward
- The council will produce a revised and updated Employers Requirement Design Guide for council housing as part of the council's pathway to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions

10 Theme 7 - House Condition

LHS Strategic Outcome:	7.1 House condition will be improved in the social and private rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations.
National Outcome:	Ensuring quality in all of the housing stock in West Lothian contributes toward the following National Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe • We are healthy and active • We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally • We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment • We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
LOIP Outcome:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a partnership approach to achieving net zero carbon • Developing nature based solutions, carbon off-setting and energy generation.
Context The Council and RSLs are bound by statutory requirements to meet house condition standards in relation to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2). Home owners and Private Landlords have responsibility for repair and maintenance of their homes. Whilst there are small pockets of poor condition in some private sector housing, house condition in West Lothian compares favourably with the Scottish average.	

10.1 Introduction

The provision of high quality, warm, affordable homes contributes toward achieving better outcomes for the population of West Lothian, going well beyond the direct “bricks and mortar” and physical benefits.

Holding robust stock condition data is one strand in West Lothian Council’s Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 -2027/28 (and partner RSLs plans), to ensure an understanding of both the internal and external condition and type of social rented housing stock. This will enable the Council and it’s RSL partners to:

- (i) Prioritise investment in the existing housing stock to ensure good quality, warm, secure and sustainable homes
- (ii) Inform cyclical maintenance and compliance programmes (including gas maintenance, gas safety, electrical compliance, gutter cleaning/repair, landscape maintenance/improvements) to ensure safe, attractive homes and neighbourhoods

- (iii) Remove pressure on responsive repairs and adaptation budgets through a planned and innovative approach to component replacement
- (iv) Ensure continued compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- (v) Assist compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH 2) and the council's net zero Carbon Reduction strategy
- (vi) Inform 30-year Life Cycle Costs (LCC) and in turn the Capital Investment budget, longer-term scenario and business planning
- (vii) Improve the quality of housing across all tenures, through extension of improvement schemes to owner occupiers and factored owners
- (viii) Inform the council's future Asset Management Strategy, including the acquisition, stock disposal, remodelling and regeneration strategy.

West Lothian Council has a programme of stock condition surveys of the council's stock by with the planned rolling programme of surveys/updates spanning 5 years.

In addition, officers within the council are trained to carry out Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's). This approach serves to build detailed understanding of the council assets in terms of quality and compliance with both SHQS and EESH 2.

10.2 Housing Stock Profile

The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS), published on an annual basis, provides data on stock condition across Scotland based upon a three-year rolling programme of surveys. The SHCS is now part of the National Household survey linking experiences of residents with property condition. The SHCS examines house condition in terms of the extent of disrepair - Any disrepair, Critical disrepair, Extensive disrepair, Urgent disrepair, Below Tolerable Standard and compliance with SHQS. The survey also considers a range of other factors including adaptations.

It should however be noted that due to the relatively small sample sizes, the data contained within the study requires to be treated with caution.

As recognised by the SHCS, the age of construction and build form of a dwelling has consequences for energy performance, house condition (especially in mixed tenure flats), heating affordability and potential for improvement.

As at 31st March 2023 West Lothian Council owned 14,243 self-contained properties that are within the scope of both SHQS and EESH. This relates to 5,301 flats (37%), including 3,882 "4-in a block" flats and 8,942 houses (63%). On average, 36% of Scottish households were living in flats and 64% living in houses as per the SHCS 2017-2019.

National average figures from the SCHS 2017-2019 state that over two thirds of Scotland's dwellings were built after 1945 (70%), however, the figure reported for West Lothian in the SHCS was 88%. Approximately 83% of the Council's own stock is over 40 years old having been built before 1980.

With respect to construction type, West Lothian Council owns a number of properties that are of a “non-traditional” housing type which has implications for meeting compliance measures, especially EESSH 2 (see section on EESSH compliance).

The overall condition of housing stock in West Lothian continues to perform well in relation to the Scottish average with owner occupied housing, social rented housing and private rented housing showing levels of disrepair below the Scottish average according to the Scottish House Condition survey 2017-2019

10.3 Private Housing and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

Although the SHQS applies only to the social rented sector, it can be used as a measure of quality across all tenures. According to the SHCS, 33% of the total housing stock in West Lothian is non-compliant with the SHQS compared to a Scottish average of 41%. 35% of owner-occupied housing stock is non-compliant, compared to 41% average for Scotland. For private rented housing 21% of the housing stock is non-compliant compared to 52% average for Scotland.

For the duration of this Local Housing Strategy, West Lothian Council will focus on completing the stock condition survey programme on council housing stock, including external and common areas. This enables data to be gathered on the external condition of owner-occupied properties in mixed tenure blocks. This information is used to inform common factoring repairs/improvements and external wall insulation programmes. The Council will also work closely with partner RSL's to share data on stock condition including survey status/results and compliance with both SHQS and EESSH, for stock located within West Lothian.

In relation to private housing, the council will rely in the short term on data produced by the SHCS and in the medium term the future monitoring measures introduced with respect to the proposed new tenure neutral Housing Quality Standard.

With grant assistance from the Scottish Government, the Council and RSL's also operate an Open Market Acquisition Scheme (OMAS) which involves purchasing properties on the open market and where required bringing them up to council standards. This not only contributes to increasing housing supply but improving housing condition across all sectors while consolidating social landlord and council ownership in key areas.

10.4 Below Tolerable Standard Housing

According to the SHCS 2017-2019, in West Lothian, 2% of the housing stock is below the tolerable standard (BTS). This is the same as the Scottish average and the Council has statutory powers to enforce owners to address stock which is below BTS.

There are five closing orders served on properties and a further 3 which have works notices for repairs. The properties are located in a number of settlements throughout West Lothian.

There are also pockets of disrepair in some settlements including Blackburn, Bathgate and Fauldhouse, where the responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the properties lies with private owners and where the council may be in the minority in terms of ownership.

To ensure compliance with Section 85(1) (duty to close, demolish or improve houses which do not meet the tolerable standard) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (c. 26), West Lothian Council's has a mechanism with respect to BTS stock. The aim is to work with owners to try and achieve an agreed solution, utilise the Tenant Management Scheme (TMS) to agree to implement much needed repairs, use statutory powers including repair, demolition notices (where there are immediate Health and Safety concerns), sale of land/property, rehousing of residents and as a last resort use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers (CPO), where agreement cannot be reached with owners. The 46 homes at Deans South in Livingston were sold to a private developer and await demolition pending agreement with the other owners in the estate.

With regard to the private rented sector more research requires to be done on house condition. Enquiries with respect to the "Repairing Standard" have however increased between 2020 and 2021 with 50 enquiries in 2020 and 81 enquiries in 2021. The enquiries mainly related to leaks, roof repairs, dampness/condensation, heating, wear and tear, electrical and external render.

10.5 The Scheme of Assistance

Homeowners have responsibility for maintaining and repairing their properties. Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 2006 replaced the system of improvement and repair grants set out in the 1987 and 2001 Housing (Scotland) Acts. The 2006 Act provided councils with powers to help owners repair, maintain, improve and adapt their homes by providing information, advice and practical help. A suite of leaflets is available on the council's website to provide information on key aspects of disrepair and how to deal with them. Furthermore, the council contributes to the "Under One Roof" national website which has been developed by the Scottish Housing Network to provide information to owners on how to maintain and improve their buildings.

The Scottish Government provides grant assistance to help homeowners and private rented tenants with mobility issues to adapt their properties in order to help them remain in their own homes for as long as possible. Examples of adaptations include stair lifts, wet floor showers and ramp access to front/rear doors.

Further information on the Scheme of Assistance can be found on the council's website <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/44705/Scheme-of-Assistance>

10.6 Tenement Management Scheme

The Council currently offers advice and assistance to owners to help them to repair and maintain their homes and common areas. In 2021, there was a further review of the SOA to consider the use of the Tenement Management Scheme (TMS), under the Tenements

(Scotland) Act 2014 to manage common repairs proposed by the Council in mixed tenure tenements (two or more flats).

The TMS can be used where there are gaps or conflicts in title deeds with respect to common repairs and maintenance and enables decisions (via a meeting and vote) to be taken on a range of issues where title deeds are unclear including repairs (including door entry systems), how works are procured and how costs are apportioned between owners. The TMS can be used by a local authority as an owner for works not covered by a factoring agreement where there is lack of clarity in title deeds. Once a scheme decision is made, owners become responsible for the cost of carrying out any maintenance or repairs needed.

While a vehicle for the council, as an owner, to obtain agreement of other owners on repairs and maintenance, the TMS is closely linked to factoring arrangements across West Lothian. The Council is seeking to undertake a comprehensive review of its factoring service in West Lothian Council and understand the full position across West Lothian with respect to factoring, recognising that high quality well managed factoring services can greatly contribute toward improving housing quality, especially in mixed tenure blocks.

The number of properties that are likely to require to revert to the TMS is relatively small, however West Lothian Council proposes to use the scheme in key areas to undertake repairs and maintenance and improve housing quality where the title deeds are silent or unclear on the areas outlined. Where an owner is unable or unwilling to pay their legal share or where that owner cannot be found, the Council in its capacity as an owner can pursue the debt under a TMS.

Implementation of the TMS in key areas, and the review of the Council's factoring service including agreements with owner occupiers, will assist in improving housing quality and the standard of services to owner occupiers across West Lothian. However, given the changes to the Scheme of Assistance and wider financial pressures on individuals and families, it is likely to be more difficult to obtain owner agreement to participate in common repair/improvement schemes.

10.7 Housing Renewal Area

Following consultation, a local authority can declare a Housing Renewal Area (HRA) if it concludes that a significant number of houses in the area are substandard. If declared, an HRA action plan must be developed to improve the area. If an HRA is declared, the local authority has powers to serve notices to home owners, ordering them to bring their properties up to a reasonable standard or, in some cases, demolish them. As part of the HRA action plan, local authorities should also include information about compensation and help available through the Scheme of Assistance.

At present, amenity powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 are not applicable as West Lothian has no Housing Renewal Areas. Owners can be excluded from the housing renewal

areas if the work can proceed without them. The Council has limited power to intervene in cases where homes and gardens are untidy, but options include:

- Contacting West Lothian Council's planning enforcement department and having a Planning Amenity Notice Served on a property.
- Contacting WLC's Planning Enforcement under the High Hedges legislation.
- If the property is empty, the Council may be able to provide advice to the owner to bring it back into use.

In addition to the policy for declaring a HRA if there are areas of concern where engagement with owners has not enabled land to be acquired through agreement, the Council can intervene by using CPO powers, as a last resort.

It is recognised that stock condition in the private sector is complex. The Council will continue to use the statutory powers available while working with all agencies, RSL partners, private developers, landlords and individual owners to reach a solution to areas that are of concern in terms of both house and environmental condition.

10.8 Scottish Housing Quality Standard

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard attainment is continually reviewed as stock condition changes over time and as further data is gathered through the rolling programme of stock condition surveys, compliance is continually verified.

At 31st March 2022, the total self-contained stock owned and managed by West Lothian Council was 14,027 units. Compliance with SHQS was 89.84%, compared with the Scottish average performance in 2021/22 of 74.26% of self-contained stock meeting the SHQS standard. In 2021/22, West Lothian Council (WLC) was ranked 4 out of 26 Scottish local authorities in terms of SHQS compliance - an improvement of 16 places from 2020/21.

Of the 1,425 council homes not meeting SHQS as at 31st March 2022, 306 properties were exempt from SHQS. A total of 864 properties were in abeyance from SHQS - and a total of 255 properties failed SHQS, and these related to Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

The Council aims for as close as possible to 100% SHQS compliance, with a target figure taking account of exemptions to end March 2023 of 99.65%. The focus in the timeframe of the Local Housing Strategy is on tackling the abeyances and failures through West Lothian Council Housing Capital Investment Programmes of work, with emphasis on a fabric first approach, including heating and energy efficiency measures.

10.9 Planned Investment in WLC housing

The five year Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 will see total investment of £157.972 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.

Planned Investment in WLC Housing

Investment Area	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
New Housing Supply	2,105	11,085	11,585	1,735	735	27,245
Major Refurbishment	182	0	0	0	400	582
Major Elemental Upgrades	5,492	6,781	5,025	6,368	6,873	30,539
Planned Programmes	7,906	8,302	8,716	9,153	9,610	43,687
Environmental Upgrading	275	289	303	319	334	1520
Statutory Compliance	10,542	10,062	10,566	11,093	11,649	53,912
Miscellaneous	90	94	97	101	105	487
Total Expenditure	26,592	36,613	36,292	28,769	29,706	157,972

The proposed programme will see continued investment to increase housing supply, while external upgrading will continue in areas identified with greatest need and an increasing emphasis will be placed on the new requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2).

The Housing Capital Investment Programme forms a key part in the Council's longer term Asset Management Strategy. Investment plans will continue to be updated annually to reflect actual costs and to link financial planning to longer term business planning.

Issues

- Some stock will require significant levels of investment to meet standards
- Competing priorities between investment in existing housing stock and new build affordable housing
- Quality of owner occupied and private rented stock especially in mixed tenure communal flats
- Limited West Lothian specific data on stock condition.

Priorities

- Complete WLC house condition survey
- Develop and refine 30-year LCC and planned maintenance programmes
- Continue to deliver planned and cyclical improvements
- Deliver improvements to meet EESH 2
- Continue to work with the Tenants Panel and improve levels of customer satisfaction
- Continue to use SHCS as reference for all tenures and work with RSL partners to gather and report on West Lothian specific condition, SHQS and EESH data.

Key Actions:

- Continue to ensure all social rented homes continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- Improve stock condition in mixed tenure blocks and estates
- Ensure owners and private landlords are fully informed and engaged over repairs and maintenance issues and responsibilities
- Work with our RSL partners to continue to improve data gathering and intelligence regarding stock condition across West Lothian
- Review WLC factoring service policies and procedures

11.0 Key Partners

- West Lothian Tenants and Residents
- Council Teams - Social Policy, Finance and Property Services, Operational Services, Corporate Services, Education Services, Planning and Economic Development
- RSL partners
- Local Equality Groups
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scotland's Housing Network (SHN)
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- Care Inspectorate
- Community Councils
- Disability West Lothian
- NHS Lothian
- Other Local Authorities
- Bethany Christian Trust
- Women's Aid
- Cyrenians
- Family Law Centre
- Health and Social Care Partnership
- Home Aid
- Hubco East
- Jobcentre plus
- Open Door
- Richmond Fellowship
- SAMH
- Scottish Futures Trust
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Housing Regulator
- Scottish Prison Service
- The Rock Trust
- Tenant Participation Advisory Service
- Tenants Information Service
- Victim Support
- West Lothian Community Councils
- West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Services
- West Lothian Equality Groups
- West Lothian Housing Providers' Forum
- West Lothian Youth Action Project
- West Lothian Youth Inclusion Project

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Section 2

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Section 3

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Section 4 – Housing Delivery

Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/>
 The Planning Scotland Act 2019 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>
 West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/LDP>
 West Lothian Local Development Plan <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/69788/>
 Local-Development-Plan-LDP-2

West Lothian Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance 2018

https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/34907/SG-Supplementary-Guidance-Affordable-Housing-Amended-and-Adopted-May-2019/pdf/Affordable_Housing_SG_May_2019.pdf?m=637075142877370000

Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 [SES Regional Planning — The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal \(esescityregiondeal.org.uk\)](https://www.esescityregiondeal.org.uk)

Section 5 – Private Rented Sector in West Lothian

The Assured Tenancy Regime (1989) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/50/contents>

Housing in Multiple Occupation (2000) The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Housing in Multiple Occupation) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2000/177/contents/made>

Landlord Registration (2004 Anti-Social Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/8/contents>

The Repairing Standard (2007) – Housing Scotland Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/1/contents>

Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/14/contents>

Tenancy Deposit Schemes (2011) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2011/176/contents/made>

Regulation of Property Factors (2012) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/code-of-conduct-for-property-factors-2021/>

Housing and Property Chamber Tribunal (2016) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/328/made>

Private Residential Tenancy (2017) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/19/contents>

Regulation of Letting Agents (2018) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2016/9780111030912>

Private sector rent statistics: 2010 – 2021 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-2021/pages/28/>

Section 6 – Placemaking

Scottish Planning Policy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>

Creating Places <https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-places-policy-statement-architecture-place-scotland/>

Designing Streets <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/corporate-report/2010/03/designing-streets-policy-statement-scotland/documents/0096540-pdf/0096540-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/0096540.pdf>

This is further referenced in West Lothian Supplementary Guidance Residential Design Guide (adopted 2019). https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/49587/SG-Supplementary-Guidance-Residential-Development-Guide-Adopted-April-2019/pdf/SG_Supplementary_Guidance_Residential_Development_Guide_Adopted_October_2019.pdf?m=637618588645030000

https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/49587/SG-Supplementary-Guidance-Residential-Development-Guide-Adopted-April-2019/pdf/SG_Supplementary_Guidance_Residential_Development_Guide_Adopted_October_2019.pdf?m=637618588645030000

Section 7- Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014

Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ending-homelessness-together-updated-action-plan-september-2020/>

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group,

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/244558/preventing-homelessness-inscotland.pdf>

Youth Homeless Prevention Pathway March 2021.

<https://www.awayhomescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2021/03/YHPP-for-All-Young-People-1.pdf>

West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019/20 – 2023/24.

Section 8: Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/9/contents/enacted>

West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2019-2023

<https://westlothianhscp.org.uk/article/43932/West-Lothian-IJB-Strategic-Plan-2019-23>

Independent Review of Adult Social Care in Scotland published in 2021

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/independent-review-of-adult-social-care/>

Scottish Household Survey 2007-09 and 2017-2019

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-household-survey/>

Minding The Step (2012), Still Minding The Step (2018) and Still Minding The Step Infographic (2019)

<https://www.horizonhousing.org/media/1522/still-minding-the-step-full-report.pdf>

Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 [SES Regional Planning — The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal \(esescityregiondeal.org.uk\)](https://www.esescityregiondeal.org.uk)

Scottish Government House Condition Surveys 2015-17, 2016-18 and 2017-19

West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc>

Evidence Review Accommodation Needs Gypsy/Travellers

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-scotland/documents/>

Section 9: Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018–2032

The Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019

The Heat in Buildings Strategy 2021

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH 1&2)

The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017 (update due in 2022)

The National Planning Framework (NPF4)

Hydrogen Policy Statement 2020

Housing to 2040 (2021)

Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019

The Planning (Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent Procedure) (Scotland)

Regulations 2015

West Lothian Climate Change Strategy <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/43913/Climate-Change-what-is-West-Lothian-Council-doing#:~:text=As%20part%20of%20our%20response,and%20net%2Dzero%20by%202045.>

Section 10: House Condition

West Lothian Council's Housing Asset Management Plan 2023-28

Scottish Housing Quality Standard

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/social-housing/improving-standards/>

The Energy Efficiency Standard on Social Housing

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/home-energy-and-fuel-poverty/energy-efficiency-in-social-housing/>

Tolerable Standard <https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-repairs/tolerable-standard>

13.0 Legislation and National Outcomes

Relevant Legislation

Statutory Requirements
Equality Act 2010 and Equality Act 2010 Specific Duties (Scotland) Regulations 2012, 2015 and 2016
Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and (EESH2
Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2006
Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2014 and 2015
Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014
Social Housing to meet Scottish Housing Quality Standard
Fuel Poverty (Scotland) Act 2019
Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 Section 10
Homeless etc Scotland Act 2003

Private Rented Sector Regulatory Framework
Regulation of Letting Agents (2018)
The Assured Tenancy Regime (1989)
Housing in Multiple Occupation (2000)
Landlord Registration (2006)
The Repairing Standard (2007)
Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011
Tenancy Deposit Schemes (2012)
Regulation of Property Factors (2012)
Housing and Property Chamber Tribunal (2016)
Private Residential Tenancy (2017)
Regulation of Letting Agents (2018)

National Outcomes and Targets – links to the LHS

Housing and Regeneration Outcomes Framework
The Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan (2021-2025)
National Planning Framework
Housing to 2040
A Scotland for the future: Opportunities and Challenges of Scotland's changing population
National Well Being Outcomes
A Place to Stay, A Place Called Home: A Strategy for the Private Rented Sector in Scotland
New Deal for Tenants
Ending Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
Affordable Housing Supply Programme
Age, Homes and Community: A strategy for Housing Scotland's Older People 2019-2021
Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
Scottish Government Sustainable Housing Strategy
More Homes Division Guidance Note 2019/20 Wheelchair Accessible Housing Standards
Fairer Scotland Action Plan
Race Equality Framework and Action Plan (2016 to 2030)
Scottish Strategy for Autism Outcomes and Priorities 2018-2021
Every Child, Every Chance – the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan
The Fairer Scotland Duty
Public Health Reform
Scottish Planning Policy
Realising Scotland's Full Potential in a Digital World: a Digital Strategy for Scotland
Draft heat in Buildings Strategy: Achieving net zero emissions in Scotland's Buildings

Local Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028

Outcome & Action Plan

Theme 1 - Housing Delivery				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 1.1 Working in partnership we will increase housing supply in West Lothian between 2023/24 and 2027/28.				
1.1.1 Commit to a delivery plan for new affordable housing	1,230 affordable homes built between 2017 and 2022	Number of affordable homes completed	Minimum of 1,580 affordable homes delivered by 2028	WLC/RSL's
1.1.2 Private Sector Homes to be delivered.	4,273 Homes built between 2017 and 2022	Number of private sector homes delivered	Housing Supply Targets to be developed through the next Local Development Plan (LDP2)	WLC
1.1.3 Continue the Open Market Acquisition programme	208 purchased 2017-2022	Number of open market acquisitions	Purchases to be reviewed annually in light of market conditions Current Target 38 by 2028	WLC
Outcome 1.2 Accessible housing is made available by private developers and affordable housing providers				
1.2.1 Agree specialist Housing Supply Targets including wheelchair supply targets	146 wheelchair accessible homes built by WLC & RSL between 2017 and 2022	Number of specialist housing units provided for specialist housing	Review in line with IJB Delivery Plans 10-15% of all new housing to be wheelchair accessible	WLC

Theme 1 - Housing Delivery Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Provide an updated Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29	Dec 2023	WLC/RSL's
Provide an updated Open Market Acquisition Policy and Procedures	Feb 2024	WLC
Review and develop new Affordable Housing Policy in line with new Local Development Plan (LDP2)	Sept 2026	WLC

Theme 2 - Private Rented Sector				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 2.1 Working with private sector landlords to ensure the sector provides good quality housing options for people in West Lothian				
2.1.1 Review of Private Sector Lease (PSL) Agreements	PSL is in place currently	New PSL lease agreements in place	New PSL lease agreements are in place 2023	WLC
2.1.2 Encourage landlords who have larger properties to participate in PSL	33 PSL properties are 3 & 4 bedrooms	Number of larger properties that are taken on through PSL	Increase number of larger properties that have been leased under PSL by 2028	WLC

Theme 2 – Private Rented Sector Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Develop a landlord accreditation scheme	June 2023	WLC

Theme 3 - Placemaking				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 3.1 With our Partners we will ensure that our communities are great places to live and work				
3.1.1 Identify further future affordable housing sites through the forthcoming Local Development Plan (LDP2)	LDP sites identified in current plan	Affordable housing sites to be included to meet identified need through HNDA3	Affordable Housing Sites agreed for inclusion in LDP2	WLC
3.1.2 Develop housing on vacant/derelict land including public sector land.	New	Number of affordable homes built on vacant/derelict land	Increase the number of units on vacant/derelict land in line with sites identified in the LDP2	WLC
3.1.3 Bring empty homes back into use	New	Number of homes brought back into use	In line with development of the Empty Homes Strategy 2023/24.	WLC

Theme 3 – Placemaking Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Develop an Empty Homes Strategy	March 2024	WLC
Develop a self-build and custom build register	Sept 2026	WLC

Theme 4 – Preventing and Addressing Homelessness				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 4.1 Homelessness is reduced through a focus on prevention, early intervention and housing options				
4.1.1 Renew focus on housing options advice as part of Housing Options interview through introduction of Housing Options plans and information Packs for applicants.	1,188 homeless presentations 2021/22	10% reduction in homeless demand 2022/23 & 2023/24 (HQSHOM006_9b) • 80% of prevention cases achieve a positive outcome to avoid homelessness (HQSR RTP025_9)	March 2024	WLC
4.1.2 Develop early intervention model to prevent homelessness in secondary schools	New	Early intervention model in place an engagement with schools	March 2024	WLC
Outcome 4.2 People in housing need are given a range of housing solutions to find a settled home				
4.2.1 Maximise the contribution of the private sector and establish a West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership	100 PSL Tenancies	Number of PSL tenancies	110 PSL Tenancies by 2023/24 West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership to be established in 2024	WLC
4.2.2 Develop and increase partnership with PRS and raise awareness of the tenant find service, with an aim of increasing access to available properties to reduce and prevent homelessness	Current number of landlords using tenant find services	Number of landlords using tenant find services.	March 2024	WLC
4.2.3 Increase dispersed temporary sharing spaces by additional 30 properties	Current number of sharing spaces	Number of sharing spaces	30 by end of March 2024	WLC

Theme 4 – Preventing and Addressing Homelessness				
Outcome 4.3 People who experience homelessness find a settled home as quickly as possible				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
4.3.1 Completion of the 383 new affordable council houses targeted over the period 2023 - 2028	38 new council homes completed 2021/22	WLC New affordable homes	383 by end of 2027/28	WLC
4.3.2 Increase allocation to homeless households to reduce backlog of existing applications	Current % allocation to homeless households	% allocation to homeless households	65% by end of 2023/24 for WLC & 59% for RSLs as per RRTP	WLC
4.3.3 Deliver new build supported accommodation for young people	New	New build development in place	28 new flats completed by end of 2025/26 with associated support	WLC
Outcome 4.4 People are offered a range of housing options with access to the required services and support options				
4.4.1 Quantify the residential accommodation requirements for adults where housing in the community would not be suitable including addictions and mental health.	New	Number of cases identified.	March 2024	WLC
4.4.2 Review and reconfigure support services to deliver medium to high level support and ensure statutory support duty is met.	In 2021/22, 25% of homeless households had medium support needs and 18% had high support needs	% of households with medium or high support needs receiving support.	July 2023	WLC

Theme 4 – Preventing and Addressing Homelessness Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Review and implement wider approach to Housing Options with area offices and RSL partners	March 2024	WLC/RSL's
Develop a choice based letting approach required for the new housing management system	March 2025	WLC
Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First Service for Young People in partnership with Social Policy through a new long term funding model	March 2024	WLC
Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for people accessing health and social care services	March 2024	WLC / IJB

Theme 5 – Specialist Provision and Integration				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 5.1 Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need				
5.1.1 Work with IJB on housing input to Delivery plans for specialist housing for client groups	New	To be determined in line with Delivery Plans	Increased specialist housing provision by end 2028	WLC
5.1.2 Prioritise care and housing support to ensure that people can live independently	New	Number of people receiving support at home	To be developed in line with delivery plans.	WLC
5.1.3 Improve understanding of the housing and support needs of Gypsy/Travellers in West Lothian	New	Support & guidance in place for Gypsy/Travellers in West Lothian	Support & Guidance in place by end of 2024	WLC
5.1.4 Prioritise adaptations to ensure that people can live independently	13.80 days as per ARC return 2021/22	The average time taken to complete adaptations	To be developed in line with delivery plans	WLC

Theme 5 – Specialist Provision and Integration Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Develop the West Lothian Standard considering tenure neutral design in new housing	Dec 2024	WLC

Theme 6 – Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 6.1 We will work in partnership to reduce the impact of climate change in West Lothian in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy				
6.1.1 West Lothian Council will develop on Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy during 2023	New	LHEES in place	LHEES published December 2023	WLC
6.1.2 Improve community wellbeing through provision of	New	Number of Opportunities for Community allotments identified	New allotment opportunities identified and in place.	WLC

Theme 6 – Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty				
allotments and orchards in new council development				
6.1.3 The Council will continue to invest in housing stock to meet EESSH2 by 2032	93.7% homes compliant with EESSH	In line with development of EESSH2 criteria	96.5% by end of 2027/28	WLC
Outcome 6.2 Minimise the number of households in fuel poverty				
6.2.1 The anti-poverty strategy will be reviewed during 2023. This will give an opportunity to shape anti-poverty activity going forward.	New	Indicators to be developed following review of the anti-poverty strategy	Anti-poverty activity to be developed during the course of the LHS	WLC

Theme 6 – Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty	Timescale	Lead
The council will produce a revised and updated Employer Requirements Design Guide for council housing as part of the council's pathway to net-zero direct greenhouse gas emissions	Dec 2024	WLC

Theme 7 – House Condition				
Action	Baseline	Indicator or Measure	Target	Lead
Outcome 7.1 House condition will be improved in the social and private rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations				
7.1.1 Continue to ensure all social rented homes continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	89.84%	Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)	Will be reviewed annually - 2% improvement each year	WLC
7.1.2 Improve stock condition in mixed tenure blocks and estates	New	Scottish House Condition Survey	To be developed	WLC
7.1.3 Ensure owners and private landlords are fully informed and engaged over repairs and	New	Scottish House Condition Survey	Ongoing through Landlords forums and advice from Private Sector Team and Building Standards Team	WLC

Theme 7 – House Condition				
maintenance issues and responsibilities.			End of 2027/28	
7.1.4 Work with our RSL partners to continue to improve data gathering and intelligence re stock condition across West Lothian.	New	Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)	Improved stock condition information by end of 2027/2028	RSL's

Theme 7 – House Condition Development Areas	Timescale	Lead
Review WLC factoring service policies and procedures	Mar 2025	WLC

Appendix 3



Integrated Relevance Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal			
Policy Title (include budget reference number if applicable)		West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028	
Service Area (detail which service area and section this relates to)		Corporate – Housing Customer & Building Services	
Lead Officer (Name and job title)		Gillian Edwards, Planning & Coordination Officer	
Other Officers/Partners involved (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)		Gillian Edwards	
Date relevance assessed		1 May 2023	
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
YES	Yes	NO	
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: <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>			
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)			
Age - Older people, young people and children		√	
Disability - people with disabilities/long standing conditions		√	
Gender reassignment - Trans/Transgender Identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth		X	
Marriage or Civil Partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership		x	

Pregnancy and Maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	x
Race - people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	√
Religion or Belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	√
Sex - Gender Identity - women and men (girls and boys) and those who self-identify their gender	x
Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	x
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	X
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	
Signed by Lead Officer	
Designation	
Date	
Counter Signature (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	
Date	

- **No assessment required – process ends**
- **Include** a detailed summary of the decision rationale in any council reports and include a copy of the IRA with the background papers.
- **Full Assessment required – continue to Full Assessment Form**

Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028	
Details of others involved	
Date assessment conducted	
2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes) including the context within which it will operate.	
<p>The Housing Scotland Act 2001 requires that all Local Authorities submit a Local Housing Strategy every five years. The Local Housing Strategy is the key strategic document for housing and covers all tenures. It spans a wide range of policy areas which impact on a broad spectrum of the community. An EQUIA is necessary as individual groups may be potentially adversely or positively affected by aspects of the strategy.</p> <p>The content and structure of the LHS is set out in guidance provided by the Scottish Government in the Local Housing Strategy Guidance issued in 2019. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce an LHS which sets out its strategy, key development priorities and how the council plans for the delivery of housing and related services. The LHS reinforces the council as the strategic housing authority and sets how investment priorities will be delivered council-wide. It also informs the Scottish Government and other stakeholders of the housing investment decisions made by the council.</p> <p>The strategy sets out how investment in housing and related services will be delivered over a five year period to achieve outcomes in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Delivery • Private Rented Sector • Place Making and Communities • Preventing and Addressing Homelessness • Specialist Provision and Health and Social Care Integration • Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty • House Condition <p>The LHS is developed in consultation with key stakeholders. These stakeholders include other departments in WLC, RSL partners, members of the public and the council's own tenants.</p> <p>All of these key priorities are underpinned by the council's strategic and policy commitments on equalities of opportunities for the people of West Lothian.</p>	

The proposed LHS outcomes that are listed below have been developed in consultation and in line with the priorities identified.

- Working in partnership we will increase affordable housing supply in West Lothian between 2023/24 and 2027/28;
- The private sector in West Lothian provides good quality housing options for people;
- Our Communities are great places to live and work;
- Homelessness is addressed through a focus on early intervention, prevention and housing options;
- Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need;
- Through partnership working, the impact of Climate change in West Lothian is mitigated in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy;
- New build council housing will move towards net zero over the duration of the Local Housing Strategy;
- The number of households in fuel poverty will be minimised; and
- House condition will be improved in the social rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations.

3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (People with Protected Characteristics) may have in relation to this policy

Age	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people It should have a positive impact on older people providing more choice of housing that will meet their needs.</p> <p>The housing needs of older people are addressed in the LHS and through work being done on the IJB Strategic Plan. The aim is to enable people to live in their homes for as long as they are able to do so with the support they need.</p> <p>Part of this support will include provision of housing that is accessible, including wheelchair accessible. Housing specifically for over 55s is being proposed by RSLs through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.</p> <p>Private sector housing providers will be encouraged to provide a broader range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of the community.</p> <p>There is an ongoing commitment from WLC and RSLs to provide adaptations to homeowners, WLC tenants and RSL tenants to enable people to live in their homes should their needs change due to disability.</p> <p>There is specific consideration of the needs of young homeless people as evidenced by the council's commitment to develop housing for that group as well as the work of other providers such as the Rock Trust and Open Door.</p> <p>How do you know that?</p> <p>Increasing the number of accessible homes should impact positively on older people. The provision of the Home First service by Social Policy will enable people to receive support in their homes and housing should be provided that is appropriate to that level of care & support.</p> <p>West Lothian has one of the highest levels of youth homelessness in Scotland. Providing homes and support for young people will assist in meeting an identified need for housing for this group in West Lothian.</p>
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Disability	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people? Provision of affordable homes for people with disabilities is a key objective of the Local Housing Strategy and aligns with proposals by both the council and RSLs as included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.</p> <p>Sites have been identified for people with disability including learning disability and physical disability. This should have a positive impact and create greater choice of accommodation. It is estimated that around 300 homes could be built for people with particular needs over the next 5 years.</p> <p>How do you know that? There is an ongoing commitment from WLC and RSLs to provide adaptations to homeowners, WLC tenants and RSL tenants to enable people to live in their homes should their needs change due to disability.</p> <p>The council's website includes an accessibility facility to assist those with hearing, sight, dyslexia impediments as well as the opportunity to translate documents, including the LHS on request.</p>
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people? We do not consider there to be specific gender reassignment equality impacts that apply to the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy.</p> <p>How do you know that? Access to housing that is provided through is subject to the council Allocation Policy and to those of RSLs, all of which are regulated by the Scottish Government and which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation and good practice</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people? No effects on this group over and above any other..</p> <p>How do you know that? There are no specific marriage or equality issues that apply to the LHS.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people? The provision of a range of house types to meet housing need is a key theme of the LHS and this is relevant to the provision of family housing.</p>

	<p>How do you know that?</p> <p>Access to housing that is provided through the Common Housing Register is subject to the council Allocation Policy and to those of RSLs, all of which are regulated by the Scottish Government and which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation and good practice. Housing need and demand for family housing is taken into account on all sites when planning new affordable housing.</p>
Race	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</p> <p>In planning for new housing, the council and its partners have and will continue to take account of issues relating to ethnic minorities. These include particular demand issues, such as household size and age distribution as well as accessibility for these groups where language and communication may be an issue. The council and RSL partners are committed to providing housing and support for asylum seekers and refugees.</p>
	<p>How do you know that?</p> <p>The Allocation Policy, which was approved in 2020 has been Equality Impact Assessed to ensure that no particularly minority group is disadvantaged through the delivery of the new Council Housing. Support has been provided to asylum seekers and refugees by both RSLs and the council. This is evidenced by recent provision by an RSL partner for Ukrainian resettlement and previously by WLC and RSL partners for Syrian refugees.</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</p> <p>There are no specific religion or belief, equality issues that apply to the Local Housing Strategy.</p>
	<p>How do you know that?</p> <p>Access to housing that is provided through the LHS will be subject to the West Lothian Council Allocation Policy and to those of RSLs, all of which are regulated by the Scottish Government and which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation and good practice</p>
Sex	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</p> <p>There are no specific sex equality issues that apply to the Local Housing Strategy</p>
	<p>How do you know that?</p> <p>Access to housing that is provided through the LHS will be subject to the Allocation Policy and to those of RSLs, all of which are regulated by the Scottish Government and which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation and good practice</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</p> <p>There are no specific sexual orientation equality issues that apply to the LHS</p>

	<p>How do you know that?</p> <p>Access to housing that is provided will be subject to allocations policies developed by RSLs and the Council all of which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation.</p>
<p>4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy</p> <p>Vulnerable groups may include the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed • Single parents and vulnerable families • People on benefits • Those involved in the criminal justice system • People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas) • People who live in rural areas • pensioners • Looked After Children • Carers including young carers • People misusing services • Others e.g. veterans, students • Single adult households • People who have experienced the asylum system • Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness • Homeless people • People with low literacy/numeracy • People with lower educational qualifications • People in low paid work • People with one or more Protected Characteristic 	
<p>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</p> <p>The provision of affordable housing should have a positive impact on all groups listed. Additional housing supply will mean that people who are facing poverty or disadvantage will have the opportunity to access new housing. The housing will be energy efficient in order to reduce the impact of fuel poverty.</p> <p>Access to housing that is provided by the council and Registered Social Landlords will be subject to allocations policies developed by RSLs and the council all of which are themselves subject to relevant equalities legislation.</p> <p>There are 35 datazones in West Lothian in the 20% most deprived areas. New affordable housing sites are mostly located in the main settlements of West Lothian or in the CDAs to ensure connectivity and access to amenities including public transport.</p> <p>The provision of smaller houses may be cheaper to heat and also assist people to down size and free up larger homes. However, there will also be a need for housing for larger families and it is important to consider affordability for this group too.</p> <p>There will be ongoing links with the anti-poverty strategy and Community Wealth Building to ensure that the LHS aligns with anti-poverty aims and objectives.</p> <p>Access to more affordable housing should assist in addressing homelessness and improve status for some people. Affordable housing is integrated into new build private housing through implementation of the Affordable Housing Policy.</p> <p>Provision of gardens or allotments may assist in providing healthy food options for people.</p> <p>Consideration given to Place Making through site selection and planning application. Good quality open spaces can encourage physical activity. Life skills may be enhanced if developers can take on a local workforce and provide training.</p> <p>Wellbeing and mental health should be improved by a better environment.</p>	

How do you know that?

Affordability is a key criteria when determining rent levels for social rent. The council and RSLs undertake affordability assessments with new tenants to ensure they understand the costs involved in housing. Referrals will be made to agencies to ensure prospective tenants can access the relevant benefits. Some RSLs also provide starter packs for people who have been homeless. New build homes are required to have high standards of energy efficiency which means that they should be more affordable to heat.

Moving towards more energy efficient housing for the social rented sector should enable greater affordability for tenants in relation to energy bills. With a commitment to net-zero for future new build, there should be a reduced impact on the environment.

As part of the placemaking strategy, greater consideration will be given to accessibility of housing sites including access to public transport.

5. Action Plan**What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion****Actioner Name**

Gillian Edwards

Action Date

Annual review of the LHS

What is the issue?

There will be a need for ongoing monitoring of the Local Housing Strategy to ensure that the key actions on each of the themes are undertaken. The actions identified include some that are specifically themed round equalities

- In conjunction with RSL partners, and with support from Scottish Government we will deliver new affordable homes
- We will continue to work closely with colleagues in Health and Social Policy and RSL partners to deliver housing options suitable for people with a range of needs;
- We will aim to meet the requirements of EESSH2 by 2032, with all council homes meeting band D energy efficiency standard by 2025; This will impact on people at risk of fuel poverty
- We will ensure all future new build council houses have heating systems which produce zero direct emissions at the point of use or will have a low carbon alternative;
- We will review the stock condition of WLC housing and consider investment priorities; and
- Our RSL partners will continue investment in their housing stock to meet statutory requirements.

What action will be taken

Reporting on the LHS actions to Housing Services PDSP annually.

Cross referencing reports on all the main strategies and plans are captured that are related to housing activity. This will include the LOIP, the RRTP, the SHIP, the LDP and the IJB Strategic Plan.

There will be ongoing engagement with groups to support the development of the LHS. This will include the Tenants' Panel, Disability West Lothian and Homes for West Lothian Partnership.

Progress against action**Action completed****Date completed**

6. Details of consultation and involvement

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process

- a. State which groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b. Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c. Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

The draft version of the Local Housing Strategy was made available on the Council's website for consultation from April to June 2022. There were over 600 responses. A link was also available through the Council's Facebook page and Twitter, and comments were encouraged.

Comments were received from a range of individuals, organisations and groups. The majority of comments were supportive of the outcomes identified in the Local Housing Strategy. Consultation has also been undertaken with:

- West Lothian Tenants' Panel
- Council Teams - Social Policy, Finance and Property Services, Operational Services, Corporate Services, Education Services, Planning and Economic Development
- The Advice Shop
- RSL partners
- Homes for West Lothian Partnership
- Community Councils
- Disability West Lothian
- Race Equality Forum
- NHS Lothian
- Other Local Authorities
- Integration Joint Board
- Private Developers
- Scottish Government
- Voluntary Sector Gateway

The feedback received through meetings has informed the LHS to consider the key actions from an equalities perspective. This is demonstrated through consideration of development of affordable housing that meets the needs of a wide range of households. That the housing provided aims to be affordable and that consideration is given to energy efficiency both in new and existing homes. There is opportunity for ongoing engagement with a wider range of organisations and groups. The role of the voluntary sector is likely to become more important over the course of the LHS and an emphasis on a collaborative approach will be required to deliver the key actions and outcomes.

There is a need for further engagement with Gypsy/Travellers on their housing options. This will be addressed over the duration of the LHS.

7. Data and Information

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

(Information can include, for example, surveys, databases, focus groups, in-depth interviews, pilot projects, reviews of complaints made, user feedback, academic publications and consultants' reports)

- a. What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?**
- b. What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (Describe the information and the conclusions, and state where the information can be found).**
 - (i) Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical data)**
 - (ii) Qualitative – (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)**
- c. Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan Section), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.**
- d. Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.**

The LHS is informed by the West Lothian Local Development Plan, the new Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, the new IJB Strategic Plan, New Corporate Plan, the Asset Management Plan, the RRTP, the South East Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2022 and Scottish Government LHS guidance. There is consistency in regard to the proposed objectives of the LOIP, the LHS and the RRTP.

Housing Delivery

Scottish Government has set a target of 110,000 affordable homes between 2022 and 2032. Of these 70% are to be for social rent. An affordable housing supply target of 3000 homes between 2022 and 2032 has been set by the current council administration.

Tenants are consulted on a regular basis in relation to new build council housing and discuss house types and sites. Feedback on current new build council housing is received from tenants who live in the new homes. This informs future housing development in terms of size, layout, house type and location of homes.

A survey was undertaken in April 2022 to inform the LHS and from that the key themes were identified. There has been involvement from the Disability West Lothian in relation to examining new build council housing specifically for wheelchair users. This will inform future housing design.

Specialist Provision and Health & Social Care Integration

There has been consultation with Social Policy in relation to the housing requirements for people with learning disability. A need for specialist accommodation for people with learning disabilities has been identified and this is due for completion in March 2023. Work is ongoing to identify the requirements of other client groups that require specialist housing in conjunction with Social Policy and the Integration Joint Board. There is further work required to ascertain the needs of people coming out of hospital to meet the objectives of "Coming Home".

The accommodation options of Gypsy/Travellers will be further investigated over the duration of the LHS.

There has been ongoing consultation with a range of groups that support people with particular needs. This has helped to gain an understanding of a range of ways to improve the housing of people with disabilities including use of specialist equipment. A new programme of council house building will provide housing to meet a range of needs and RSLs will be encouraged to provide housing that will also meet the needs of a range of households.

Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

There is a proposal to build housing for young people to enable them to gain the skills they need to sustain tenancies. There is high demand for both smaller and larger properties and this will be considered in discussion with RSL partners when developing the housing mix for sites. Developers will be encouraged to provide a broader range of house types to meet the needs of the community.

Placemaking

Through engagement with Public Health Scotland representatives and the Planning Team, there has been consideration of placemaking principles with the aim of increasing collaborative working to ensure that sustainable places are developed. Future projects identified by RSLs include more than 300 properties for specialist accommodation including those for older/ambulant disabled people.

RSLs will provide a greater proportion of affordable housing over the duration of the new LHS with housing being built in a number of communities. More housing will be built alongside private sector development as there is a greater reliance on sites coming forward through the affordable housing policy. It will be important to ensure that the affordable and private housing is integrated as far as possible. As part of the next Local Development Plan, consideration will be given to reviewing the Affordable Housing Policy with a view to encouraging a wider range of house types and sizes to be built on sites.

House Condition

The commitment to improving housing condition in the Social Rented sector to meet statutory standards will mean that homes are more energy efficient. Further standards may be applied to private sector housing in the future as building regulations change.

8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- a. **How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.**
- b. **How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.**
- c. **Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).**
- d. **If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.**
- e. **Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.**

There are significant resource challenges in meeting the outcomes of the LHS.

- Inflationary pressures on the provision of new build housing
- Higher borrowing costs
- High costs of improving existing homes
- Increase in energy costs meaning more people will be at risk of fuel poverty

The council and its partners will aim to address these challenges through collaborative working, ensuring that projects are delivered that provide value for money and maximising the available funding through grants and other sources of funding.

The LHS will be reviewed every year to highlight any issues in meeting the outcomes and considering where they can be altered if required to meet emerging issues over the duration of the strategy.

9. Monitoring and Review

- a. How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- b. What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- c. How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- d. When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- e. Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?

Please detail below

- There is ongoing monitoring of the LHS with annual reporting to Housing Services PDSP.
- Many of the key actions are reported through other performance monitoring routes such as ARC returns.
- The Scottish Housing Regulator and internal council reporting on performance targets.
- The LHS will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the relevance of the key actions and outcomes.
- A new LHS will be developed in 2027/28
- The Housing Strategy & Development Team will be responsible for ongoing monitoring and review of the LHS.

10. Recommendation and Reasoning

- ☐ Implement proposal with no amendments
- ☒ Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined above)
- ☐ Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality, poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage

Reason for Recommendation

Signed by Lead Officer	
Designation	
Date	
Counter Signature (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	
Date	

- **Equality impact assessment completed**
- **Final assessment must be published on the council website once the decision to implement has been agreed:**
[Council EQIA Publication Page](#)
- **Link must be included in “Background References” section of committee/management reports**

Item		Purpose	Responsible Officer
2023			
Housing Services PDSP- 01/06/2023 (AGENDA SETTING 09/05/23)			
1	Housing Need	Housing Need Improvement Programme & Sharing Spaces (presentation)	Sarah Kelly
2	Housing Need	Q4 Turnover Report	Sarah Kelly
3	Housing Need	RRTP Update	Sarah Kelly
4	Performance & Change	Q4 Performance Report	Kirsty Weir
5	Performance & Change	CIH Scotland's Housing Festival 2023- A Review	Kirsty Weir
6	Housing Strategy & Development	Affordable Housing Delivery Programme	Marjory Mackie
7	Housing Strategy & Development	2023/24 to 2032/33 Housing Asset Management Plan	Marjory Mackie
8	Housing Strategy & Development	Draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28	Marjory Mackie
RECESS			
Housing Services PDSP- 24/08/2023 (AGENDA SETTING 08/08/2023)			

Housing Services PDSP- 21/09/2023 (AGENDA SETTING 07/09/2023)			
1	Performance & Change	Annual Return on the Charter & Annual Assurance Statement	Kirsty Weir
Housing Services PDSP- 23/11/2023 (AGENDA SETTING 09/11/2023)			
2024			