



**WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL**

**Submission of Strategic Housing  
Investment Plan (SHIP)  
2010-15 (Draft)**

**November 2009**

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## **1. Background**

Local Authorities are required to produce a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to supplement their Local Housing Strategy. The purpose of the SHIP is to set out how the investment in affordable housing will be directed over a five-year period 2010–2015. This is the third SHIP that West Lothian Council has produced and it has been developed in line with revised guidance issued by the Scottish Government in August 2009.

West Lothian Council's SHIP sets out the affordable housing investment priorities for the area as identified in the Local Housing Strategy and subsequent update reports. The SHIP sets out the national and local context by identifying West Lothian Council's investment priorities; the approach being taken to the delivery of these priorities, outlines potential risks and constraints and how these can be mitigated.

### Strategic Context

In the last year, there has been significant change in the housing market. Changes in the housing market are highly influential in the ability to deliver the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy and these changes are explained in more detail throughout the SHIP.

### Single Outcome Agreement

The Single Outcome Agreement 2008–11 set out the key priorities for West Lothian in relation to affordable housing. The housing developments that are proposed in this SHIP will assist in achieving many of these outcomes. Further information on these outcomes is noted at Section 10.

### Local Housing Strategy (LHS)

West Lothian Council may commence the development of a new Local Housing Strategy in 2010. The Lothian Housing Needs Study has been updated and a combined study for the whole of the SESplan area is also being produced. These studies provide key information on housing need and demand in the area and assist in the development of the SHIP, the Local Housing Strategy and the SESplan. The studies have been developed in line with the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment Guidance.

### Finalised West Lothian Local Plan

The housing land allocated in the Finalised West Lothian Local Plan will yield over 23,000 houses (5,000 of these will be for affordable housing) and it is estimated that it will take around 20 years to build out all the sites. However, the number of house completions in West Lothian has been reduced by approximately half as a consequence of the current economic downturn. Completions have slowed down considerably and over the next few years any recovery is likely to be gradual.

## 2. Executive Summary

West Lothian Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) identifies priorities for investment over a 5-year period from 2010 to 2015.

There is significant investment in social housing in West Lothian by both the Scottish Government and West Lothian Council. This has provided a sizeable development programme for both RSLs and West Lothian Council.

The core funding is already in place to deliver the following:-

- The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Investment Programme (AHIP) will deliver approximately 500 units by 2011
- West Lothian Council New build Phase 1 of 248 units will be completed in 2010
- West Lothian Council New build Phase 2 (477 units) will be completed by 2012

In addition to the current programmes, a number of potential development opportunities have been identified should additional funding from the Scottish Government be made available over the next 5 years.

Council RSL partners have projected potential development opportunities for an additional 610 units.

Nature of Development	Total anticipated units by 2014/15
West Lothian Affordable Housing Investment Programme	500
West Lothian Council New build	775
Future Potential RSL Developments	610
Total	1885

### 2.1 Sub-Areas of West Lothian

The 2005 local plan defines a split in West Lothian into two sub-areas; North (A) and South (B). These reflect broadly equal division of the district both in terms of land supply and future planned housing development.

Both areas have distinct community planning areas and include the growth of Core Development Areas. All future funding submissions by development partners will be categorised on the basis of their relative zones and anticipated housing demand.

### 2.2 Prioritising the SHIP programme

There are three strands of affordable housing delivery: -

- The Council's new build programme,
- RSL programme funded by the Scottish Government
- The Council's Affordable Housing Policy.

#### **New Build Council Housing**

The Council's new build programme is planned to deliver 775 houses by 2012. The first phase commenced in November 2008 on the following sites:-

<b>Sites</b>	<b>Houses</b>	<b>Completed as at Nov 2009</b>
Playing Fields, Boghall, Bathgate	68	32
Peel House, Livingston	44	20
Dixon Terrace, Whitburn	49	8
Wester Inch, Bathgate	87	13
<b>Totals</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>73</b>

The first phase is anticipated to be complete by the June 2010. This is at least 6 months ahead of schedule.

The second phase will include the following sites

<b>SITE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>CAPACITY</b>
Dixon Terrace - Phase II	Whitburn	58
Bathgate (Housing with Care)	Bathgate	30
Individual Units at Respite Centre	Uphall	7
*Eliburn East 24	Livingston	(50)
Inveralmond CHS Playing Field	Livingston	90
Little Boghead 6	Bathgate	150
Alderston Road, West	Livingston	35
Uphall Station Former Infant School site	Uphall Station	16
Ferrier Crescent/Marches Drive	Armadale	16
Ladeside Avenue	Blackburn	10
<b>Additional site(s) to be identified</b>	To be agreed	65
<b>Total</b>		<b>477</b>

\*Funding for Eliburn East 24 has been secured as part of phase 1. An additional site will be required for all 477 units to be built.

### **RSL Programme**

In the 2009 SHIP we have prioritised sites according to when they will become available for affordable housing development and the extent to which they will enable the Council to meet strategic objectives. The SHIP has been developed to allow flexibility and ensures that we can bring sites forward if additional resources become available. A planned programme of RSL sites is now in place for a total of **500 units** to be built by 2015. The sites that will be prioritised are those that are already have planning consent pending and are identified as “green” status projects.

Research for the Homelessness Strategy identified that the two areas of highest demand for housing are Livingston and Bathgate. Consideration will be given to prioritising developments in these areas but this will be dependent upon land availability and site constraints.

One aspect of the economic downturn has been the willingness of the private house building sector to examine the opportunities to provide surplus speculative built housing to the RSL sector. In 2009, over 80 RSL units were secured from this route.

### **Affordable Housing Policy**

The Affordable Housing Policy will continue to be promoted by the Council as a mechanism for affordable housing to be provided. However, it is likely that the Policy will be reviewed in light of any revisions to PAN 74.

## **2.3 Key issues for the delivery of the SHIP programme**

The key issues in relation to ability to deliver affordable housing in West Lothian are:

- There is significant investment required in infrastructure to enable developments to proceed. Current constraints include primary and secondary school provision and upgrading of motorway junctions. These were highlighted in previous SHIPs and they remain a challenge to overcome in relation to the development of a number of sites.
- Identifying sources of funding for RSL contributions to assist with the cost of infrastructure works.
- Future availability of Scottish Government Affordable Housing investment resources to support planned development
- A significant reduction in the level of Council house sales resulting in reduced receipts with a consequent impact on prudential borrowing and our ability to fulfil our commitment of 775 new build Council homes.
- The ability of the West Lothian Council Affordable Housing Policy to deliver units through the current and future planning policy, particularly in light of the economic slowdown.
- The slow down of development in the Core Development Areas.
- The inability of people to obtain credit is resulting in fewer house sales resulting in greater pressure on the affordable housing supply.
- The economic downturn presents opportunities for the Council and RSLs to acquire sites and “off the shelf” housing that would not otherwise have been available.

## **2.5 The Economic Climate**

The economic downturn has had a major impact on the supply of new build private housing in 2008/09. Developers have been reluctant and unable in many cases to commence construction on new build sites. There has been a major reduction in private sector house starts reducing from 916 in 2007 to 477 in 2008. Private sector completions have also reduced from 963 in 2007 to 451 in 2008. House prices have fallen by 6.4% since September 2008 and the number of sales has fallen by 57%. The range of available mortgage products is limited especially for first time buyers and those with low deposits making access to the housing market difficult for many households. In contrast, Housing Association new build starts have risen from 94 in 2007 to 138 in 2008 and completions too have risen from 49 in 2007 to 153 in 2008.

There is likely to be significant pressure on Government finances over the coming years. There has been a significant reduction in the government’s Housing and Regeneration budget. There will no longer be 5 year resource planning assumptions making a greater degree of uncertainty over development programmes in the short to medium term. The SHIP has been developed to take account of the likely levels of funding available for new build affordable housing.

### 3. Progress since the Last SHIP

Since the 2008 SHIP, there has been progress in the delivery of affordable housing.

As noted above, construction has commenced on the first phase of Council house new build with 248 houses being constructed. Government funding of £3.73m was secured and this allowed the Council to bring forward an additional 50 units from phase 2. To date, 73 houses have been completed and handed over with a further 119 to be handed over by the end of 2009/10. We anticipate that Boghall, Peel and Dixon Terrace sites will be completed before the end of 2009/10. The remaining 56 units at Wester Inch will be completed by June 2010. The second phase of new build of up to 477 units has been tendered and work will commence on site in 2010.

#### RSL Completions

In 2008/09 119 units RSL new build affordable units were completed. The housing market downturn in 2008 provided opportunities for RSLs to purchase sites from private developers. More than 80 units have been purchased by RSLs since 2008/09 for affordable housing and shared equity projects. This has proved beneficial for both the RSLs in gaining quality housing stock and the developers in helping to sustain business in difficult economic times. Various opportunities for site acquisition are also being pursued and these are noted in the attached SHIP appendices.

#### RSL Completions 2008/09

RSL	Site	No of units (rent)	No of units (LCHO)	Total
WLSA	Eliburn EN2D Livingston	33		33
WLSA	Eliburn EE11 Livingston	24		24
WLSA	Eliburn E11, Livingston		8	8
WLSA	Bridgend Park, Bathgate	18		18
WLSA	Glenalmond Court, Broxburn	28		28
WLSA	Glenalmond Court, Broxburn		4 (homestake)	4
WLSA	Mallace Ave, Armadale		4 (shared equity)	4
Total				119

West Lothian home owners have been assisted through the Open Market Shared Equity Programme with over 124 receiving assistance to purchase property in 2008/09. Demand for this assistance remains high.

The preferred partner agreement 2003 –2008 with WLSA and Places for People is now at an end. In 2010, Housing Investment Division in consultation with West Lothian Council will begin the selection process for preferred partners. This will involve an assessment process for RSLs wishing to lead on development in West Lothian.

#### Local Housing Strategy

A new local housing strategy is likely to be developed in 2010 and the targets for affordable housing will be revisited.

## **4 The Need for Affordable Housing in West Lothian**

According to the Lothian Housing Needs Assessment update,

“The West Lothian market is pressured, especially in the social rented sector, which is currently broadly in balance, but is projected to move to significant excess need/demand by year 10.”

There is an identified need for quality affordable housing in West Lothian and the Local Authority is committed to meeting the targets set by Government, particularly in relation to the abolition of priority need by 2012.

- In September 2009 there were 9,140 households on the waiting list for social rented housing.
- In 2008/09 499 of 715 Council lets were allocated to homeless people.
- In 2008/09 there were 1751 homeless presentations
- In 2008/09 79% of households presenting as homeless were assessed as priority need
- As at March 31 2009 there were 370 households in temporary accommodation
- On 31 March 2009, there were 174 households with children in temporary accommodation
- The turnover of Council housing has reduced significantly since 1999. There has been a marked decline in total lets from 1,287 in 1999/2000 to 715 in 2008/09.
- Only 2% of the properties that were available for let had 4 or 5 bedrooms
- Between 1980 and 2009 West Lothian local authority stock reduced by 61% from 33,424 to 12,475

### **4.1 Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011**

A new Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011 was launched in October 2008 and the strategy aims to address homelessness in West Lothian in two ways through prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation. The Council is committed to meeting the 2012 target .

In relation to the provision of accommodation the aim is to:-

“Ensure the provision of appropriate temporary and permanent accommodation for households who are homeless, which meets their needs”

An accommodation plan has been developed with four key objectives

- Make the most efficient and effective use of current accommodation resources
- Improve the range and quality of temporary accommodation options including dispersed self-contained homes
- Improve access to permanent accommodation for households who are homeless which meets their needs.
- Improve the health and well-being of homeless applicants.

The Homelessness Strategy identifies five key actions to address housing supply.

- Continue to expand the supply of dedicated supported accommodation



- Work in partnership with others to ensure the continued increase in supply of accommodation
- Increase the supply of temporary accommodation in partnership with the private rented sector in order to maximise the supply of social rented housing available for permanent use
- Increase the supply of hostel accommodation in West Lothian with the aim of providing two new hostels.
- Increase the number of households that are successfully housed by Registered Social Landlords

Detailed research was commissioned to establish the accommodation requirement for meeting the 2012 target. From the research, a total shortfall of 847 permanent units and a shortfall of 306 temporary units was identified for the period 2008-2011. The shortfall in accommodation means that the 2012 target will not be met unless housing supply increases to meet the identified shortfall. The interim target fell slightly short by 4%.

The refurbishment of Strathbrock Lodge to form Strathbrock Family Centre Unit provides 8 units of accommodation for family support. This accommodation is for families facing domestic situations that mean they are not able to live in their own homes. There are 1,2 and 3 bedroom properties. In addition, one property is provided for households that have a family member with a disability.

According to the research, demand for accommodation in Livingston and Bathgate will far exceed supply and the greatest demand will be for one-bedroom properties.

The provision of funding for projects identified in the SHIP is critical to meeting the shortfall in supply and to meeting the aims of the Homelessness Strategy.

The Council has developed its own Private Sector Leasing Scheme. This was launched in Sept 2008. The purpose of the scheme was to procure 143 homes over 12 months to meet the Council's statutory obligations on homelessness and to prepare for the abolition of priority need in 2012. The scheme had a high level of interest initially but take up of the scheme has been slow with 22 properties on the scheme. A further 77 application packs have been sent out and a new publicity campaign has been launched.

#### **4.2 Meeting the requirements for people with particular housing needs.**

The Council is aware of the needs of particular client groups, including older people, people with learning disabilities and people with physical disabilities.

The target of 100 homes for people with particular needs identified in the Local Housing Strategy 2003-2008 and is well on the way to being met.

The Council in partnership with RSLs continues to develop housing with care to replace some existing residential care home and sheltered housing developments. The type of housing developed by Housing Associations takes into account changes in policy and client demand. In recent years, this has resulted in a move away from the traditional model of sheltered housing towards housing that enables people to remain in their homes for longer and to facilitate adaptations if required.

All new build Council housing will be constructed to Housing for Varying Needs standard. In the first phase of the new build 17 homes have been specifically designed for wheelchair users. In the second phase a minimum of 42 homes will be built specifically for wheelchair users, this includes 7 units specifically for people with a profound physical disability to be constructed at Uphall Respite Centre. Redevelopment is also planned for Norvell Lodge at Boghall in Bathgate to convert the existing sheltered housing to Housing with Care. This will improve the facilities for residents. Rosemount Court in Bathgate is also proposed for redeveloped. This proposal is that a campus type arrangement will be developed that will include new build Council housing, a new day care facility for older people and specific dementia accommodation for older people.

Hanover Housing Association are in the process of building 6 units that will be wheelchair accessible and are due for completion in Jan 2010.

RSLs have submitted development proposals for 114 units for particular needs to be included in this SHIP.

### **Older People**

In 2009, a report was commissioned to review the services for older people in West Lothian. The report identifies high projected growth rates in the numbers of older people in West Lothian. Between 2010 and 2030 the number of 65-74 year olds will grow by 54% in West Lothian (compared to a Scottish growth rate of 39%). The numbers of 75-84 year olds will grow by 90% (Scotland 50%); and the numbers of people aged 85 and over will grow by 193% (Scotland,109%). The report notes that an ageing population will contribute to the growing number of single person households and will bring more pressure to provide suitable affordable houses capable of supporting and sustaining people with disabilities and long term medical conditions. The report notes that currently 11.5% of applicants on the Council's waiting list are over 65.

(Source: Review of the Services for Older People in West Lothian report by Archie Fairley (Consultancy and Research))

### **Housing Support**

Despite the removal of ring fencing, housing support still provides a valuable contribution to the Single Outcome Agreement. Housing support covers a range of outcomes including;

- 2012 homeless target
- Young People Leaving Care
- Independent Lives of Older People
- Housing for people with addictions
- Housing for people with mental health problems

## **4.4 Energy Efficiency and Environmental Standards**

The Council seeks to ensure that all new build housing is energy efficient. The Council's own new build programme seeks to achieve a SAP rating of 100. The developers have been asked to provide submissions that will contribute to an extra 15% reduction in carbon emissions beyond 2007 building regulations and are required to set out a statement to demonstrate how this will be achieved. The developers have also been required to set out their proposals for flood prevention. In relation to sound transmission, the new housing should meet the 2010 draft for changes to the building standards in relation to noise.

Fuel Poverty – the 2001 Housing Act sought to remove fuel poverty by 2016. West Lothian Council continues to support this objective through the provision of information and signposting to relevant agencies such as Changeworks, the Advice Shop and the Energy Savings Trust.

## **4.5 Private Sector House Condition**

The condition of houses in the private sector in West Lothian is generally good. The Council is in the course of developing a Scheme of Assistance to provide information, advice and access to practical assistance to enable homeowners fulfil their responsibility of maintenance and repair of their property.

The Scheme of Assistance will be implemented by April 2010. As part of the development of the Local Housing Strategy a strategy will be developed for dealing with properties that are below the tolerable standard. This is likely to involve the provision of practical assistance to homeowners.

#### **4.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The environmental impact arising from the building of affordable housing will be assessed and addressed through the Local Housing Strategy and planning process. A Strategic Environmental Assessment pre-screening report was undertaken and has determined that a full assessment is not required for the SHIP because it is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.

#### **4.7 Equalities**

West Lothian Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination and the Authority follows strict corporate guidelines which governs the manner in which these areas are approached. An equalities impact assessment is being carried out for the SHIP and this will be made available on completion. Both the Council and RSL specify that all new build housing will be constructed to housing varying needs standards.

## 5. Affordable Housing Investment Programme

The table below shows investment levels in West Lothian over the past six years and Scottish Government Funding in West Lothian :-

Year	Actual/Projected Expenditure (£M)
2003/04	5.03
2004/05	7.34
2005/06	6.10
2006/07	10.71
2007/08	10.22*
2008/09	8.279
2009/10	10.00
2010/11	7.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>47.08</b>

Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the allocation of funding for affordable housing, the main reason for this is the close partnership working between RSLs, the Council and Scottish Government.

The RSLs have been able to deliver substantial development programmes, the Council has supported development through the provision of funding and land and Scottish Government Housing Investment Division been willing to provide funding and support for the majority of the projects that are proposed.

### West Lothian Council funding contribution to support RSL development

West Lothian Council has contributed over £4.615million to help support the development of RSL housing. This has levered in £18.5m of HAG from 2004/05 to 2008/09. WLC's funding has led to an additional 140 units being approved which would not otherwise have been provided.

### 5.1 Open Market Shared Equity Programme and Homestake

In 2008/09 124 purchasers in West Lothian were assisted through to buy property through the open marked shared equity programme and 14 purchasers received assistance through Homestake.

### 5.2 Mid Market Rent

In this SHIP we have not included any units for Mid Market Rent. However, we do foresee a potential demand for this tenure. We consider that the likely demand for this tenure will be location specific, particularly in the main settlements of Linlithgow, Livingston and Bathgate. Further research will be undertaken on the demand for this type of housing with a view to proposals being more fully developed for possible inclusion in 2011 SHIP.

### 5.3 Planning Approach to securing Affordable Housing Provision

The Council continues to make efforts to progress section 75 agreements through its Affordable Housing Policy.

The affordable housing policy has delivered little in the way of land for social rented units since the policy was introduced. The new build Council housing development at Wester Inch, in Bathgate is the first significant result of the policy producing outcomes in line with its objectives. A further site for affordable housing has also been secured at Blackridge. In the short to medium term, the potential for

delivery of affordable housing through this route is likely to be severely curtailed due to the slowdown in the housing market.

The Affordable Housing Policy will continue to be promoted by the Council as a mechanism for affordable housing to be delivered. However, in light of the slowdown in private sector house construction, it is difficult to ascertain an accurate assessment of affordable units, which could be delivered through this route. The policy will be reviewed to take into account forthcoming Scottish Government revision to PAN 74.

The West Lothian Local Plan 2005 identifies three Core Development Areas (CDAs) which have an estimated capacity for 12,000 new homes. The level of affordable housing in these areas is set at 25%.

- Land for up to 2,000 houses in Armadale
- Land for more than 5,000 houses in Broxburn/Uphall & Winchburgh East area
- Land for up to 5,000 houses in Livingston and Almond Valley (East Calder) area.

Given the down turn in the housing market, the timescale for development in the Core Development Areas has slipped. It is unlikely that any development will commence in these areas prior to 2012/13.

## **6 Development Constraints**

The key development constraints centre on the provision of funding for infrastructure such as primary and secondary schools and provision of motorway junctions.

The opportunity to fund infrastructure through planning gain has been curtailed at least in the short term due to the reduction in private sector house construction. This is particularly significant in the Core Development Areas. It is envisaged that development in these areas is likely to be delayed by at least 2 years due to the credit crunch and the slowdown of private housing development.

Other constraints identified by RSLs include abnormal costs, demolition and site clearance and properties in private ownership (particularly relevant to Deans South).

In addition, as with private developers, RSLs are expected to meet their obligations in relation to contributions towards the cost of infrastructure. Our preferred partners report significant difficulty in securing funding to meet the requirement for development contributions.

The requirement to fund developers' contributions, the reduction in the amount of Housing Association Grant available coupled with the reduction in the availability of credit for private finance has a significant detrimental effect on the ability of RSLs to deliver on affordable housing projects.

To assist in overcoming some of these constraints, the Council will continue to work in partnership in relation to the provision of infrastructure and local services. The Council will continue to support the introduction of a Community Infrastructure Fund by the Scottish Government

## **7. West Lothian Council's contribution to assisting the delivery of LHS outcomes**

West Lothian Council is highly committed to the delivery of LHS outcomes. This is demonstrated in two ways, through the provision of Council new build housing and direct assistance to RSLs to enable their development proposals to proceed.

The first phase of the Council programme will be for 248 houses with an estimated completion date of November 2010. To date 73 units have been completed and made available for let. The Council has used prudential borrowing to fund the first phase of the development with an estimated project cost in excess of £20million. A second phase of a maximum of 477 units is planned to go on site in January 2010 with completion in 2012. This too will be funded through prudential borrowing with an estimated total project cost in excess of £40million. (See page 5)

## **8. Collaboration Across the Housing Market Area**

The recently updated Local Housing Needs and Demand Update is the result of collaboration with The City of Edinburgh Council, East Lothian Council, and Midlothian Council. This has enabled an agreed understanding of housing need and demand in the Lothians which will assist in the development of the Local Housing Strategy in 2010.

The development of the South East Scotland Development Plan (SESPlan) to replace the Structure Plan, involves collaboration with the Lothian authorities, Fife Council and Scottish Borders Council. This will enable key planning policies to be agreed across the Housing Market Area. A Housing Needs and Demand Assessment has been prepared for the whole SESPlan area. This is to be used to inform the Main Issues report of the SESPlan.

## **9. Partnership Process for producing the SHIP**

West Lothian Council continue to consult with key partners to develop and deliver quality affordable housing. There are regular updates on progress on towards meeting the Local Housing Strategy objectives with stakeholders.

Noted below is a breakdown of the partners involved in the delivery of affordable housing in West Lothian

### **RSLs**

West Lothian Council and RSL development partners have an ongoing dialogue in relation to the delivery of affordable housing. In regard to the development of the SHIP the RSL partners were invited to meetings to enable their input to the SHIP.

Meetings were held with Places for People, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and West Lothian Strategic Alliance and Hanover Housing Association. The key points discussed were in relation to identifying potential development opportunities and overcoming constraints to development including funding requirements and infrastructure.

### **Private Developers**

West Lothian Council maintains regular dialogue with private developers in determining the most appropriate affordable housing contribution whilst taking significant factors into account for each individual development site.

A wide range of private developers expressed interest in West Lothian Council's new build programme and the procurement process for the second phase is almost complete. The first phase of the new build is being constructed by Gladedale Partnerships.

Opportunities for the Council and RSL partners to consider developers' "off the shelf" housing and/or site acquisition will continue to be considered and further discussion will take place with Housing Investment Division in this regard. In 2008/09 over 80 units were acquired "off the shelf" by RSLs operating in West Lothian for housing for rent or shared equity. This has been of significant benefit to both the RSLs and private developers sustaining business in difficult economic times.

### **West Lothian Community Health & Care Partnership**

The Council's Social Policy Teams influence partners in meeting the demands of more vulnerable sections of the community through direct provision of new build properties (e.g. Housing with Care). The close relationship with NHS Lothian provides an opportunity for joint funding of projects to enable more efficient investment by public authorities.

### **West Lothian Council Departments**

West Lothian Council Departments including, Planning, Legal Services, Property Services and Housing Management maintain a close working relationship to deliver affordable housing and to develop a strategic approach to provision. This assists in the speed of delivery of development and the quality of housing provided.

### **Government Assistance**

In order to implement West Lothian's plans for growth, the Scottish Government must assist in the upfront funding of infrastructure. This is particularly important as in the short term at least developers' contributions toward the cost of infrastructure has been reduced because of the slowdown in private sector house construction.



The Council would welcome additional funding to assist in the provision of housing either through its own new build programme or to fund RSLs for site acquisition/off the shelf purchase. This would greatly assist in the development of sustainable and balanced communities.

The Council successfully secured £3.73 million to help support the first phase of new build Council housing. The second phase of new build will also require significant investment and up to £11.9m is being sought to support the construction of 477 units in the second phase. (Another option of funding of £6m has been put forward that will help to meet the potential shortfall from house sales receipts). The reduction in affordable housing contributions due to the downturn coupled with the reduction in receipts from house sales has a significant impact on the Council's ability to fund the second phase of new build. Therefore, Government funding is required to supplement prudential borrowing.

## 10. Links to other Strategies or Plans

### Single Outcome Agreement

West Lothian's single outcome agreement 2009 was agreed in May 2009. The Single Outcome Agreement is based on 15 national outcomes and 12 priority local outcomes.

The main outcome that relates to the provision of affordable housing is National Outcome – 10 “we live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services we need”. West Lothian Council has developed two local outcomes in relation to this national outcome.

Local Outcome A – “All people in West Lothian live in balanced, well-designed, sustainable communities where they can access the high quality amenities and services they need.”

The key measurements are ;

- % of Council stock meeting SHQS.
- Numbers of affordable housing built in West Lothian
- Number of new homes completed

With the exception of new homes completed, all of these targets are being achieved or exceeded

Local Outcome B – “Fewer people in West Lothian are homeless, but people who become homeless are accommodated safely and supported as soon as possible”

The key measurements are;

- Number of homeless presentations in West Lothian
- Proportion of homeless presentations achieving a permanent outcome

Homeless presentations increased between 2008 and 2009 but there has been an increase in the proportion of homeless presentations achieving a permanent outcome over the period.

In relation to housing support the following local outcome has been developed :-

“People in West Lothian stay independently in their own homes for as long as possible, where it meets their needs, is based on choice and is safe for them and their carers.

The key measurements are;

- Number of households receiving telecare
- % of people aged 65+ with intensive needs receiving care at home

There has been a marked increase since 2006/07 in both of these areas.

The development of sites included in the SHIP is critical to the achievement of these outcomes. The development of high quality housing for rent and shared equity over the next five years will assist in meeting the identified challenges on development, homelessness and supporting people. Specifically, all houses constructed will meet Housing for Varying Needs standards.

### West Lothian Local Housing Strategy

A new local housing strategy may be developed in the course of 2010. This SHIP will be a starting point for the delivery of outcomes in the new strategy.

### Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan

It is currently estimated that the majority of the Housing stock in West Lothian will meet SHQS by 2015.

A ten-year plan to comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 is in place. As part of the new local housing strategy, consideration will be given to the options for stock that will not meet SHQS and this may result in regeneration proposals being developed.

## **11. Investment Outcomes**

There are several key outcomes we want to achieve in the course of the 5 year period of this SHIP

- New build RSL housing of 500 units.
- Completion of current phases of new build Council housing.
- Delivery of permanent accommodation to meet the needs of homeless people arising from the abolition of priority need in 2012.
- Maximise employment and training opportunities through the provision of new build housing. The new build Council housing has resulted in training places for 30 Council apprentices. Key targets of 10% of local people employed and 25% of local suppliers have been exceeded.
- Both RSL development and Council new build provide investment for other Council services through developer contributions. This has been particularly significant when there is limited activity in private sector house construction.
- Developing the case for continued investment at existing or higher levels in affordable housing in West Lothian.

## **12 Conclusion**

This SHIP illustrates a range of approaches to the provision of affordable housing. The Council's new build programme is delivering a large number of new homes in a relatively short timescale with low levels of subsidy. Our partner Housing Associations continue to provide much needed affordable housing in settlements across West Lothian helping to sustain investment in communities in difficult economic times. The open market shared equity scheme has been particularly successful in West Lothian assisting owners to purchase property and helping to support the housing market. The future provision of affordable housing is a lot less clear due to the constraints on government finance.

**12. SHIP Templates**

### 13 Sources

Guidance on Preparing Strategic Housing Investment Plans  
(Housing Investment Division, Scottish Government)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuild>

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Lothian Housing Needs Study Update 2008

West Lothian Council Draft Housing Land Audit 2009

West Lothian Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011

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West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2003-2008

