

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability

Housing and Communities Committee: 7 February 2017

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**Subject: More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire – West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy**

#### **1. Purpose**

**1.1** This report sets out the new refreshed More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire – West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy which covers the period 2018-2023.

#### **2. Recommendations**

**2.1** It is recommended that the Housing and Communities Committee:

- i) Approve the draft More Homes Better Homes West Dunbartonshire – West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy as set out on Appendix 1 of this report; and
- ii) Notes that an update on progress in implementing the Strategy will be provided on an annual basis to the Housing and Communities Committee.

#### **3. Background**

**3.1** West Dunbartonshire Council's 2012/13 Assurance and Improvement Plan (AIP) Update based on Audit Scotland's shared risk assessment identified 'housing maintenance and assets' as a 'significant scrutiny risk' for the council in 2012/13 and the concern of achieving the SHQS by 2015. A new Housing Asset Management Strategy 2013-2018 was developed and this was identified as a key strength following the Scottish Housing Regulators Inquiry in March 2013.

**3.2** The end of the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2013-2018 approaches and the Action Plan is complete. An updated Strategy has been in development since summer 2017. Key achievements of the previous strategy include:

- Construction of 121 new build council homes across the Authority with £5.3m of external funding and £8.8m committed from the Housing Revenue Account. Providing sector leading energy efficient, modern homes of the type and size needed for households in West Dunbartonshire and delivered within target;

- Meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard(SHQS) by the statutory target date of 31 March 2015. An investment programme of over £85m was in place to meet the standard and carry out capital works to improve all stock and contribute to area based housing regeneration;
- Demolition of 665 properties of surplus stock that were a drain on the Housing Revenue Account and were no longer fit for purpose and had no demand; and
- Developed and implemented a West Dunbartonshire Affordable Housing Design Standard, which was the first of its kind within a Scottish local authority.

#### **4. Main Issues**

**4.1** Following an extensive consultation period the Draft West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy has been developed and is attached at Appendix 1.

**4.2** The West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy established the following objectives to meet the key aims of the strategy:

- Manage the housing stock across all relevant departments to a high standard whilst meeting and aiming to exceed all specified standards
- Identify housing stock that requires intervention and carry out appropriate actions to address this
- Build quality affordable accommodation of the right size and type that is energy efficient and meets needs, including particular needs
- Ensure all actions contained in the Housing Asset Management Strategy provide best value for existing tenants and future customers and are affordable to the HRA

**4.3** Some of the key actions that will achieve the objectives include:

- Maintain and exceed the SHQS and review the West Dunbartonshire Standard
- Continue to identify any key risk stock and ensure appropriate intervention
- Examine the need for designated elderly accommodation in line with socio-economic projections
- Build over 300 new council homes in the next 5 years
- Review lock ups and carry out an options appraisal of the garage sites to assess viability of sites

**4.4** The new West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Plan 2018-2023 has raised the ambition for council housing in this area. It will continue to improve and futureproof Council housing for generations and assist with meeting our ambition to be one of Scotland's leading social housing providers. The main focus of the Strategy extends beyond meeting the SHQS as before.

It focuses on priorities that include new Council house building, the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH), maintaining the SHQS and delivering excellence. There are a number of factors that make the focus of this Strategy different to the previous one including the ending of the Right to Buy and the increased subsidy levels for Council's to build new social housing.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no people implications arising from the information presented in this report.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

### Financial

- 6.1** There are no immediate financial implications arising directly from this report and it is anticipated that the implementation of the Strategy will be delivered within existing resources. The agreed HRA Capital Plan approved by Council in February 2017 supports the objectives of the Housing Asset Management Strategy.
- 6.2** The impacts of delivering the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy will be continually reviewed and assessed within the Council's HRA Business Plan Model. Those which require additional investment will be reported to future meetings of the Housing and Communities Committee.

### Procurement

- 6.3** There are no procurement implications arising directly from this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** There are risks associated with not meeting legislative requirements that are part of the strategy including meeting the 2020 and 2025 targets set by the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). Also there is a risk of the Council and its developing Housing Association partners not providing around 1000 new affordable homes that would affect national targets. However, all risks will be managed within the Action Plan and progress or lack of, will be reported to the Housing and Communities Committee along with plans to mitigate risks.
- 7.2** There also remains risk around affordability of ongoing investment in Council housing through external factors such as interest rates increases and new statutory requirements however this will be mitigated through our ongoing financial modelling and strategic assessment which consider the affordability of capital investment plans including the investment for new council housing.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in November 2017 and approved. No negative impacts were identified for the protected characteristic groups and the conclusion was that the strategy should impact favourably on all tenants as the long term objective is to ensure that there is sufficient good quality housing stock to address all types of housing need.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** There was an 8 week consultative period for the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy. This included a survey consulting on the main objectives of the Strategy. A total of 32 community responses to the survey were received and all comments have been taken into consideration when preparing the final draft of the Strategy.

**9.2** A group session was also held in Dalmuir CE Centre on 6 November 2017. This provided the opportunity to speak in depth about the Strategy and its objectives and the final draft has been influenced by the discussions that took place.

**9.3** The Council has established a Better Homes West Dunbartonshire Delivery Group which comprises of key officers from across Council departments, this group assisted in the development of the strategy including agreement of the draft attached as Appendix 1 of this report.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** In addition, the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy sits within the Council's Asset Management Framework and will contribute to the objectives within the Council's Local Housing Strategy.

**10.2** The ongoing implementation of the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy contributes greatly to all five strategic priorities.

**Peter Barry**

**Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1: More Homes Better Homes West  
Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy

**Background Papers:** Housing and Communities Committee Report: Housing  
Asset Management Strategy 2013-2018 Annual Progress  
Report: 3 August 2016

Equalities Impact Assessment, December 2017

**Wards Affected:** All

