

Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016

Housing Issues Paper 11 May 2011

Summary of Consultation Responses

1. Housing Need and Demand

Is there sufficient land, in the right locations, for

1) private housing

2) affordable housing?

The HNDA and SDP Proposed Plan have concluded that there is not considered to be a shortfall in the quantity of land available for private housing. The provision of housing is more immediately likely to be affected by the economic downturn affecting developers and house-buyers rather than the sufficiency of the land supply. FP

There appears to be an adequate supply of land. Availability of funding is the issue and therefore the onus is on the better use of existing stock. ES

In terms of the affordable sector, the HNDA and Proposed Plan also consider that there is no shortfall to be addressed overall, although there may be a requirement to provide additional housing in the Clydebank area. As in the private sector, it is not the sufficiency of land which is likely to constrain new housing provision in the foreseeable future but the current funding system. The Local Housing Strategy will further consider the level of need for affordable housing and how it can be met by means other than new build. FP

Sufficient land is available. C

Why is there a large scale building programme of medium to high end private housing when there is already a glut of this type of accommodation for sale in the area, especially during a stagnating housing market? SM

Is the available land in regeneration areas? We shouldn't miss out on opportunities outwith these areas. DHA

More local HNDA analysis is needed and this will inform the Park Authority's Local development Plan. Gartocharn experiences similar pressures and issues in common with rural Stirling communities and housing needs in this locality are masked by its inclusion within the wider Vale of Leven sub-area. The NPA will be carrying out further local analysis here. NPA

89% of the Citizens' Panel agreed more affordable housing is needed in West Dunbartonshire, while only 42% agreed more private housing is needed (and only 8% strongly agreed). CP

How do we best meet the needs of an increasingly ageing population?

The Local Development Plan will support new housing in locations and of a suitable design which will be suitable for all needs. Making adaptations to the existing housing stock, however, might be the most cost effective way of achieving this goal. FP

Agreement that this will be a significant factor for future resource planning and the Council's response to dealing with this through the Local housing Strategy is welcomed. The LHS will be used to inform the Park Authority Local Plan. NPA

What should our strategy be to access the Government's Innovation and Investment Fund?

The experience gathered from the first round of bids for this fund will help to form a successful strategy. Given that the fund is to be bid for on an annual basis it will be important to ensure sites are available which can be brought forward very quickly; working in partnership with other providers may help to achieve this. FP Restricted funding for new build highlights the importance of using existing stock as effectively as possible. LHA

How big a role is there for:

- *Low cost home ownership?*
- *Mid-market rent housing?*
- *An expansion of the private rented sector?*

As a general point, tenure is becoming more 'blurred at the edges'.

The HNDA methodology linked the potential requirement for intermediate housing products with the affordable housing requirement and suggested that there may not be a requirement for any intermediate housing in West Dunbartonshire. In terms of provision there has been limited LCHO, and mid-market rent is an unknown quantity. FP

Rents in the PRS are too high. D

MMR may have a role for more mobile people. D

Mixed tenure is to be encouraged. V

There would be demand for shared equity. V

Concern over high PRS rents. CCF

Would not like new houses being built going to rogue landlords. D

Agree that more LCHO should be available. SM

Opposition to expansion of the PRS. SM

Growth of PRS provides an opportunity to assist in discharge of homelessness responsibilities. LHA

An increase in rental values has been recorded in WD. LHA

Discussions have taken place between WDC and Link HA over the management of a PRS leasing scheme. LHA

It is uncertain if there is demand for MMR in WD but the Council should use its local market knowledge to consider further. LHA

DHA is supportive of exploring the potential for MMR. DHA

Delivery through housing associations is under pressure in the current economic climate. Affordable housing products such as LCHO, MMR and an expansion of the PRS are being considered for the NP area. NPA

Which of the HNDA results gives the most reliable affordable housing needs projection for West Dunbartonshire?

The final HNDA, which received its 'robust and credible' status in June 2011, published the results for the method consistent with Government guidance and indicates a surplus of affordable housing in the 2008-16 period for West Dunbartonshire. This however masks a potential shortfall in the Clydebank sub-area. Whilst the HNDA does refer to an alternative methodology which indicates a much higher level of need for West Dunbartonshire, it was agreed by the members of the HMP not to adopt this approach as the main conclusion of the HNDA, and these results are not published in the SDP Proposed Plan.

Instigating research into the reasons for housing re-lets would help to develop a greater understanding of the results which mainly differed in this regard, but this has not been possible within the current timescale. FP

The Local Housing Strategy will have to decide what level of need it will address and how it will establish Housing Supply Targets. FP

Clydebank may have a Glasgow "overspill" role to play in terms of private housing. C

There is not enough SR housing to meet demand. D

People in Clydebank have to move Glasgow for suitable housing. CCF

Agree with concerns that GCVHNDA results may not reflect the match between type of housing supply and actual demand. LHA

How big an issue is affordability in West Dunbartonshire?

Affordability is less of an issue in West Dunbartonshire than many other authorities due to the relatively low house prices in the existing stock and the high percentage of social rented stock. FP

Private housing is not affordable. D

PRS rents are too high. D & CCF

There is a need for affordable housing in the Council area of the national Park. NPA

Should WDC apply for Pressured Area Status in respect of particular areas or house types?

If this can now be more targeted, it would be a way of protecting the 'loss' of house types which are most in demand, eg for example those suitable for older people. FP

There were mixed views on introducing further restrictions to the RtB. C

PAS should have been brought in 20 years ago. D

There should be further restrictions on the RtB. D

WDC should work with RSLs to pursue PAS. D

PAS is a good idea. V

We should apply for PAS to protect both RSL and Council stock. DHA

WDC should support RSLs that apply for an extension to the RtB exemption period. DHA

Mention of promoting PAS in the National Park is welcomed. NPA

Recommends the Council applies for PAS in respect of Gartocharn. NPA

How can the supply of rented housing be improved?

New supply will be limited due to restricted public funding, the new funding procedures, and the current reduction in private sector development. The issue may be one of concentrating resources on improving the quality and appropriateness of stock, and management issues, rather than increasing absolute numbers. FP

The need for an affordable housing policy in the emerging Local Development Plan will be considered. FP

Support was expressed for the proposed Council new build programme. CCF
If the Council was building for sale, the houses should be the subject of a "priority purchase" scheme. D

WDC should develop an affordable housing policy. DHA

An affordable housing policy applies within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park and this is supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing. NPA

The Council should direct some funding towards Gartocharn. NPA

Can the Council and housing providers support new supply by contribution of assets such as land or reserves?

There is a need to consider more innovative ways of providing new housing. However, providers still have to fund such schemes; for instance, RSLs have recently been offered unsold stock by private developers, but not been able to fund any acquisition. Any such land or housing provided this way must still be in the right location and appropriate to the needs of the community. FP

The Council could consider contributing land assets but overall this will have a limited effect as it will reduce the income of the Council to support other areas of need. In addition, a number of sites which the Council has available are ring fence in the PPP project and cannot be sold at less than the market value. ES

The large number of RSLs operating in WD is noted. Could there be economies of scale from merging some or all of the RSLs given the relatively small geographical area which they serve? ES

The Council can support new supply through contribution of land and reserves. In particular, a site at Carrochan Road, Balloch lends itself to the provision of affordable and open market housing. NPA

How should we set house supply targets?

This is an issue which needs to be discussed jointly with the authorities within the GCV, so that the targets are clearly aligned with the results in the HNDA. The targets published in the Local Housing Strategy will be reflected in the Local Development Plan. FP

Caution should be exercised over the setting of house supply targets. The LHS should consider and reflect on local need when identifying supply targets. NPA

How should we promote Housing for Varying Needs standards in all new housing?

A policy will be included in the Local Development Plan or associated Supplementary Planning Guidance that ensures all new housing should comply with Housing for Varying Needs Standards. FP
We should promote barrier free housing. SM
The LHS should promote these standards in conjunction with the local plan. NPA

2. Promoting Good Quality Housing

Should regeneration remain the main focus for our housing investment strategy?

Yes, regeneration remains a principle corporate theme for West Dunbartonshire. The regeneration of existing areas has wider benefits than those purely associated with housing, and may be a cost-efficient way of improving the quality and suitability of the existing stock. FP

Concern over previous failed regeneration projects. C

Regeneration should be the priority. D & V

Yes, but learn from previous failed projects. CCF

Agree that regeneration should be the priority, especially given HNDA findings.

LHA

While the HNDA results point towards regeneration being the priority for the Council, in the absence of more local housing needs studies, areas of localised need may be missed. The Council should also target areas of localised housing need. NPA

The focus of the current LHS should be on meeting the SHQS. ES

There should be a reference to the impact if the stock transfer does not proceed.

ES

Almost all Panel members (96%) agreed that the Council should give the regeneration of its estates a high priority (with 54% "strongly agreeing"). There was also strong support for concentrating any new housing development on brownfield sites (88%). Indeed, the provision of more affordable housing is by quite a margin the overall top priority for the Local Development Plan.

CP

How can we help all sectors meet the SHQS?

Easier PS grant availability for o/os. CCF

There should be a focus on meeting the SHQS within a broader regeneration context. LHA

There is a problem in mixed tenure estates with owners not being able, or willing to pay their share. V

More awareness of payment options for owners. V

There was strong support for the idea that more should be done to encourage owners to contribute to repairs and investment in their properties. SM

Can Council/RSL properties be brought up to a higher NHER standard than is required by the SHQS?

Responsibility should remain with Building Standards Section rather trying to exceed National Standards given the current funding issues unless these can be achieved without additional cost. ES

Are there opportunities to develop CHP projects?

Mixed view expressed on district heating schemes. V

Are we making best use of CESP and similar initiative funding opportunities?

Seek to maximise access CESP type schemes. V

There was strong support for fuel poverty measures being a priority for the Council. SM

Low compliance with energy efficiency elements of the SHQS suggest efforts to access CESP opportunities should be maximised. LHA

Should a landlord accreditation scheme be developed in West Dunbartonshire?

How can we ensure that all developers build to the highest levels of sustainability?

The Local Development Plan can incorporate a policy, or Supplementary Planning Guidance, which requires all developers to build to the highest level of sustainability. This will be linked to the need to meet the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act. FP

The concept of Secure by Design should be supported and extended to the private sector. DHA

There is role for the LHS but the local plan and its development strategy will be the key statutory driver. NPA

How will energy efficiency measures contained in the LHS be monitored?

This issue has also been raised in relation to planning/building standards requirements for energy efficiency in new dwellings. FP

Energy Performance Certificate data may be helpful in monitoring progress in this area. LHA

Support noted for energy efficiency and sustainable development principles. NPA

3. Homelessness

How can we prevent households becoming homeless?

Provide good quality information and advice at an early stage. SM

Make referrals to specialist support agencies. SM

How can we develop a housing options approach to help prevent homelessness?

Sometimes allocations policies can contribute to homelessness problems. V

There should be more of an emphasis on developing and implementing a Housing Options approach, similar to the North Ayrshire Housing Register model. DHA.

What impacts will welfare reform have in terms of homelessness?

Concern expressed about negative impact. C, D, V, CCF

Would like to see an assessment of the potential impact of the welfare reforms on access to housing, sustainability, etc DHA

Given the welfare reforms it is likely that there will increased pressure in this area over the next few years. ES

How can we improve how we provide temporary accommodation?

Need to recycle temp accommodation. C

Need to check who is living in temp houses. C

Current model is not working – we need to move to more supported accommodation. C

Too quick a turnaround of tenancies unsettles communities. C

Too many temporary units. D

Provide 24 hour supported accommodation as part of a range of measures including shared tenancies. SM

This accommodation should be spread among longer term tenancies to encourage a more long term outlook. Some blocks should be retained for tenants needing more support and supervision until they are able to move to more permanent accommodation. ES

Alternatives (Community Drug Project) recognised that there were many housing related barriers experienced by clients leaving prison and moving into homeless accommodation. Whilst in prison, and with support from Alternatives Prison Through-care Service, the clients drug intake was reduced, however, once they moved from prison to homeless accommodation those same clients became significantly at risk of overdose.

Discussions between Alternatives, West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Services and West Dunbartonshire Council Addiction services have led to a proposal for the future provision of supported accommodation for up to 40 individuals (in a year) who are considered as statutory homeless and who wish to attain abstinent recovery from drug addiction. Additional to that is the proposed establishment of 4 homeless satellite flats, with some housing support, which will allow individuals to move from fully supported accommodation to a more independent means of living. WDCHCP

What more can be done to provide a sustainable solution for homeless households?

The HNDA took current (Backlog) need into account when assessing housing requirements for all tenures, and so for the first time this element has been considered consistently across GCV. FP

Support expressed for a variety of measures including, family mediation, furnished/part furnished accommodation, furniture packs, home starter packs and other housing support. SM

A systematic approach and coordinated approach to tenancy sustainment is key to reducing homelessness, particularly repeat presentations. LHA
Resources should be targeted at repeat applicants. ES

How do we address the particular WDC issues of young person's homelessness and in particular the high incidence of young women becoming homeless?

More options needed to be provided to stop the revolving door syndrome. CCF
There was also a hidden homelessness problem of young men "sofa surfing".
CCF

There should be better connections with the education system. CCF
Basic information should be available at school to help prevent homelessness.
ES

How do we ensure people can have access to housing support services?

How can RSLs play a bigger role in meeting the needs of homeless people?

Link HA is keen to increase the proportion of homeless lets in West Dunbartonshire and is in discussion with the Council over the matter. LHA
There is an implication that RSLs aren't being as supportive / responsive as they should be. This should be discussed further with the RSLs. DHA

4. Sustainable and Supportive

What are our tenants' priorities for the improvement of housing services?

Concern that vacant Housing Officer posts were not being filled. C
Better joint working between Council and police. C
Public Reassurance Officers should be more conspicuous. D
Estate management and repairs service need to be improved. V
Tenants value a strong local presence. LHA

What more can be done to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour?

People are unsure where to report anti-social behaviour. D
There should be a more visible presence and enforceable policies. SM
There should be fairness in respect of ASBOs and we shouldn't just act on behalf of those who shout the loudest. SM
Create jobs and quality affordable housing. SM
Link HA's close working relationship with the ASB team and the police has proved effective. LHA
Reinstatement of community wardens could assist. LHA

How can we encourage the growth of safer and stronger communities?

The continued regeneration of existing communities will help to grow safer and stronger communities, as will ensuring the best design and layout of new housing within these areas and environmental improvements. FP

There should be a reference to RSLs wider role programme and how this can support sustainable communities. DHA

The use of appropriate design, green spaces and networks, transport and pedestrian routes, and appropriate location of community facilities, employment and housing all contributes to sustainable communities. LPA

More emphasis should be placed on improving external hard and soft landscaping. Having well lit and maintained car parks and paths etc can have a dramatic effect on the attractiveness of an area and on community safety. This can be especially beneficial for elderly residents. ES

Are we addressing the housing needs of all the groups within our communities?

The HNDA provides an overview of the main issues to be considered in addressing the housing requirements of various household groups. In the consultation process for the Local Development Plan the need for better provision for older people was a recurring theme. FP

Allocation policies do not address the housing needs of all groups within our communities. SM

The Allocation policy has put drug users into areas where they are taunted by neighbours. SM

We should mention the steps being taken to develop a CHR. DHA

There may a case for a review of the allocation policy to allow for more flexibility, including for example, incentives to free up larger properties and keeping ground floor properties for people with mobility problems. DHA

The Park Authority will look to the Council to consider the needs of all groups and advise on housing planning applications within the Council part of the Park in respect of meeting any specialised needs. NPA

How can we involve greater involvement in all our communities?

Garden scheme should be more frequent. C

Overall there is a feeling of apathy over drink/drug problems in WD. V

Trust people. Listen to them. Act on what they tell us. Disband the WDCPP. SM

Support and encourage residents' committees. SM

Need to organise meetings which include everyone, not just the few who attend everything. SM

Involvement of tenants and the broader community including schools, from the start of any project is essential. LHA

Improvements to the external landscaping and involving community groups with ongoing maintenance or community allotments and play areas can enhance community spirit and reduce vandalism and anti social behaviour. ES

5. Addressing Particular Housing Needs

Have we got it right about the key priority areas for the provision of housing support services? Are there any gaps?

The Council should adopt the Liverpool Care Pathway in respect of palliative care. V

Some people remain isolated and excluded in their own homes, despite support arrangements. C

There should be better access to respite care. SM

There is a clear role in RSLs assisting WDC in terms of meeting the needs of different client groups. DHA

The reduction in capital expenditure creates challenges which should encourage a more collaborative approach between partners and more remote rural communities to meeting care and advocacy needs. DHA

The ageing population and decreasing population present challenges for the years ahead. ES

What does the reshaping of services for the elderly mean for housing provision?

Support was expressed for sheltered housing models. C

There are not enough care homes. C

The Westbridgend multi-storey flats provide a good model which could be replicated elsewhere. D

Strong support for housing with warden support. SM

There should be better access to car at home and more support should be given to carers. SM

The supply of accessible housing is a key issue for WD. LHA

A range of targeted housing related measures will be required to achieve this, including low level support and use of Care and Repair / Small Repairs services. LHA

Retirement type housing which includes a concierge, but not housing support services could be considered. LHA

Extra care housing is a more efficient way of meeting the needs of elderly people. LHA

Support expressed for an increased provision of integrated community care services. NPA

The difficulties in the private care market caused by the loss of Southern Cross are noted. As well as care packages, provision of suitable accommodation is needed. Conditions could be put any disposals of land for housing requiring a proportion being allocated for elderly/special needs. Alternatively in any WDC new build schemes a larger proportion could be aimed at this sector and for existing stock the allocations policy could be amended to ensure that any suitable properties are restricted to these groups. ES

It is clear that more people will have to receive more support to stay in their homes longer and therefore stock should to be targeted at this group. ES

Can we provide services to out of sector clients more cost effectively?

How should housing respond to the demographic changes in respect of clients with learning difficulties?

Concern was expressed that cuts were already impacting on services to people with learning difficulties. CCF

How can we more efficiently allocate social rented houses to better meet the needs of the elderly and people with particular needs?

It's a big challenge to meet the housing needs of all the people across the authority who have special needs. V

How can we make better use of adaptations and new technologies to maintain people in their own homes for longer?

Better coordination between WDC and RSLs over aids and adaptations should be encouraged. D

Strong support for better access to aids and equipment. SM

We need to have a more strategic approach to how we deal with aids and adaptations and RSLs should be a key partner. DHA

There should be an increased use of technological developments which enhance remote care monitoring in the home, aligned with integrated community care services. NPA

Is there a need for the second site for Gypsy/Travellers?

The HNDA considers the supply and demand for pitches for Gypsy/Traveller households. The current site in West Dunbartonshire is considered to be popular and stable, with a low turnover and a significant waiting list. Across the GCV as a whole there is seen to be a need for 23 additional pitches, although this may be an under-estimate. Cross boundary cooperation between GCV authorities should be promoted as good practice in planning future provision. The Local Development Plan will have to reflect any change in proposed future provision, and talks are continuing with the Gypsy/Traveller community in relation to the provision of additional pitches. FP

If a planning application came forward within the Council area of the Park, advice would be sought from the Council in determining the application. NPA

We should ensure that any second site is for short term use only. ES

How can housing services better respond to equalities issues?

We need to have better information about the housing needs of the BME population. C

Key

C	Clydebank Consultation Event
D	Dumbarton Consultation Event
V	Vale of Leven Consultation Event

CCF	Clydebank Community Forum
CP	West Dunbartonshire Citizens' Panel
DHA	Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd
LHA	Link Housing Association Ltd
FP	WDC Forward Planning
NPA	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority
SM	Survey Monkey
DDCHCP	West Dunbartonshire Community Health and Care Partnership