



**West Lothian  
Council**

# **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)**

**2021-2026**

**December 2020**

## Contents

<b>1.Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.Progress since the last SHIP .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.Prioritising the SHIP programme .....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 RSL Programme.....	8
4.2 West Lothian Council Future Sites .....	16
4.3 Other Sites .....	17
4.4 Open Market Acquisitions .....	17
4.5 Summary of Investment .....	18
4.6 Housing Infrastructure Fund Projects .....	18
4.7 Private Sector Projects (Loan Funded) .....	19
<b>5.The Economic Climate .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6.Investment in Affordable Housing .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>7.Development Constraints .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>8.Collaboration across the Housing Market Area.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>9.Partnership Process for producing the SHIP .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>10.Investment Outcomes .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>11.Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>12.Specialist Housing Provision .....</b>	<b>23</b>
12.1 Wheelchair Accessible Housing .....	23
<b>13.Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>14.Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>15.Welfare Reform .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>16.Fuel Poverty and Climate Change.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>17.Private Sector House Condition.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>18.Strategic Environmental Assessment .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>19.Equalities.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>20.Conclusion .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>21.Appendices to the SHIP Submission (not attached) .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>22.References .....</b>	<b>26</b>

## **1. Executive Summary**

West Lothian Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) identifies priorities for investment over a 5-year period from 2020 – 2025.

The core funding is already in place to deliver:

- The current West Lothian Council New Build Programme of 1000 homes. This started on site in summer 2013 and will be completed in 2020. Twenty-two sites have been fully completed. One is under construction and the final site will commence in 2020/21.
- The programme of RSL development in West Lothian continues to deliver new build housing with 110 homes completed in 2019/20.
- In 2017, West Lothian Council committed to deliver 3,000 affordable homes between 2012 and 2022. The new homes are being built by both WLC and RSLs.
- 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.

## **2. 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, in this case, 2021–2026. This SHIP has been developed in line with revised guidance issued by the Scottish Government.

The SHIP informs the Local Development Plan (LDP) through identifying sites that can be developed for affordable housing.

West Lothian Council's SHIP sets out the affordable housing investment priorities for the area as identified in the new Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022. It demonstrates how these investment priorities will be delivered and the resources required. The SHIP sets out the national and local context by identifying the 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.

### **Covid-19 Pandemic Summary**

The Covid-19 Pandemic has had a major impact on site starts, completions and spend for both WLC and RSL projects. Sites were closed between March and July 2020. It has yet to be determined what the longer term impacts will be both for affordable housing and for market housing.

Throughout the lockdown period, although on site construction stopped, RSLs and the council continued to identify future sites and undertake feasibility work which has enabled some new sites to be brought into the SHIP for 2021 to 2026.

A number of factors that may impact on progress over the long term as a result of the Pandemic are listed below;

- Supply chain issues
- Social distancing measures on building sites
- Uncertainty over delivery programmes
- Workforce availability
- Developer capacity to deliver
- Potential risk of property crash and impact on affordable housing sites coming forward.

There is also the challenge of Brexit and the impact that will have on construction in terms of the labour market.

There has been a significant impact on homelessness due to the Pandemic with numbers increasing.

### **Strategic Context**

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022 was approved by the Council Executive in October 2017. The LHS contains a target of 3,000 affordable homes being delivered between 2012 and 2022. More than 2,100 homes have been constructed or acquired and a further 290 homes are under construction.

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

There is an identified need for quality affordable housing in West Lothian.

- As at December 2020 there were 9,406 applicants on the Common Housing Register for social rented housing, of these, 1,690 were transfer applicants. Some RSLs operating in West Lothian also hold their own waiting lists.
- In April 2012, the council abolished the priority need test in relation to homelessness applications and revised operational processes accordingly.
- Homeless presentations have increased and there has been increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation to provide emergency accommodation for homeless households. The pressure on homelessness households has increased because of Covid 19.
- The council submitted the update Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to Scottish in June 2020 and work continues on the implementation of the actions identified.
- A need for new accommodation has been identified specifically for young people requiring housing support and initial feasibility work is underway to consider the type of accommodation required. A site has been identified in Livingston.
- The council's allocation policy is being reviewed and it is anticipated that a new policy will come into place in 2021.

Work has commenced on a new Housing Need and Demand Assessment during 2020. The six South East Scotland Councils are working collaboratively on this through the South East Scotland Housing Forum. The HNDA3 Core Project Team will be accountable to the Regional Housing Board of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

In September 2018, the council adopted the West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP). The LDP was prepared within the context of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP1) for Edinburgh and South East Scotland. SDP 1 identified a requirement for 18,010 housing units across all tenures. To deliver this the spatial strategy set out in the LDP continues to support development in the core development areas (Winchburgh, Calderwood, Mossend and Armadale) and other strategic sites such as Heartlands (Whitburn). To assist in meeting housing requirements, the LDP and associated Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing sets out requirements for affordable housing provision in some areas, the requirement for affordable housing is set at 25%.

A timetable for preparation of a new LDP (LDP2) has been prepared but is subject to change. This is in the absence of a new SDP and requirements under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which removes requirements to prepare strategic development plans and introduces regional spatial strategies. In addition, future housing land requirements for West Lothian are to be informed by a new National Planning Framework (NPF4) which is to be prepared for Scottish Government.

### **3. Progress since the last SHIP**

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

Good progress is being made towards achieving the new build house programmes since 2013 with 28 sites completed totalling 1461 new homes. At September 2020 58 council houses are currently under construction, 33 homes at Brucefield, Livingston, 22 homes at Standhill in Bathgate and 3 at Bathville, Armadale.

Two developments of 29 homes per site are planned at Deans South and Eagle Brae, Livingston, a development of 69 houses is planned at Mossend, West Calder, a development of 20 houses is planned at Eliburn, Livingston and a further 86 open market acquisitions have been budgeted for. Site starts at Eagle Brae, Deans South, Mossend and Eliburn are anticipated in 2020/21.

Additional sites have been identified in Bathgate as the site at Guildiehaugh cannot be developed within the timescale of 2022 and all sites have been included in the SHIP.

Pre- construction work is underway in regard to the provision of housing specifically for young people requiring support. at a site at Deans in Livingston. A conversion of an existing building in Bathgate (Hopetoun Street) will also be undertaken to provide mainstream accommodation.

A project for people with complex care needs is being developed in Pumpherston. This will comprise 16 houses for people requiring support and is being led by the council's Social Policy team.

## RSL Housing

The RSL sites noted below are now back under construction following lockdown.

Site	RSL	Number of Units	Estimated Completion
Almondvale, Livingston	West Lothian Housing Partnership	146	Dec 21
Jarvey Street, Bathgate	West Lothian Housing Partnership	42	March 21
Cloverbank, Livingston	Almond Housing Association	12	October 20
Polbeth Farm	Almond Housing Association	25	August 21
West Main Street Armadale	Places for People	27	October 20
Quentin Court, Livingston	Places for People	18	March 21
<b>Total</b>		<b>270</b>	

The site for 23 units at Brotherton Farm, Livingston was completed in 2020/21.

### a) Homes for West Lothian Partnership

The Homes for West Lothian Partnership has been set up to engage with RSLs operating in West Lothian. The purpose of this is to increase the supply of affordable housing. The RSLs that have agreed to be involved in the Partnership are;

- ARK Housing Association
- Wheatley Group (West Lothian Housing Partnership and Dunedin Canmore Housing)
- Places for People and Castle Rock /Edinvar
- West Lothian Development Alliance (Almond Housing Association, Horizon
- Housing Association, Weslo Housing Management)
- Bield Housing and Care
- Hanover Housing Association
- Cairn Housing Association
- Trust Housing Association
- Link Housing Association
- Home Group

Three meetings have taken place in 2020 and discussions are ongoing with RSLs so that more affordable housing development in West Lothian can be agreed and supported.

### b) Shared Equity Programmes

Many people have been assisted through the Open Market Shared Equity Programme (OMSE). In 2018/19 in West Lothian, there were 248 purchases with Scottish Government support of £10.2 million. Demand for this programme remains high. This programme has assisted a number of homeowners in Deans South, Livingston to purchase new property.

In 2019, Scottish Government altered the criteria by changing the arrangements for OMSE purchasers in West Lothian. There were 24 purchased through the OMSE during 2019/20.

The Scottish Government's Help to Buy (Scotland) scheme in West Lothian has assisted 390 purchasers between 2016/17 and 2018/19 with loans amounting to £10.55 million.

### **c) Other Tenures**

RSLs have given greater consideration to Mid Market Rent in West Lothian. West Lothian Housing Partnership and Places for People have identified sites for 279 units for mid market rent. Places for People propose to build 19 units for shared equity at Calderwood.

### **d) Further Joint Working**

Over a 10 - year period from 2012 to 2022, the aim will be to deliver 3,000 affordable homes with the majority being council houses. The council and RSL partners, through Homes for West Lothian Partnership is contributing to the delivery of this scale of housing.

The following projects have been identified as a priority;

- Deans South, Livingston – A scheme for comprehensive redevelopment is currently under consideration. Council Executive has approved the sale of land to Springfield Properties PLC who intend to develop the site and deliver 127 houses for social rent in partnership with the West Lothian Housing Partnership. Further detailed engagement will be ongoing to decide the agreed delivery method.
- Core Development Areas. Progress is being made on the Core Development Areas (CDAs) in at Winchburgh, Calderwood, Mossend and Armadale. Developers have approached RSLs to discuss opportunities for development in the CDAs. In the current SHIP, four large CDA sites are included. These sites will be able to deliver up to 395 homes.
- Work will commence in November 2020 at a site in Calderwood for 69 units by Home Group. Three sites for 172 units at the Calderwood CDA in East Calder have also been made available and are proposed for development by Places for People/Castle Rock Edinvar.
- City Deal – Funding has been secured for investment in the Winchburgh CDA to support the development of new secondary school provision. Three sites have also been identified at Winchburgh and two of these will be developed by West Lothian Housing Partnership. Two sites at Winchburgh were completed in 2018/19 providing 96 affordable homes. One for the council and the other for West Lothian Housing Partnership.
- Priority will continue to be given to affordable housing delivery in the CDAs over the next five years.

## **4. Prioritising the SHIP programme**

There are three strands of future social housing provision:

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

## Priorities for Funding

The draft Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 identified priorities for affordable housing investment. These are noted below.

<b>Area Priority for Investment</b>
<b>Priority 1:</b> Broxburn, East Livingston & East Calder, Linlithgow, Livingston North, Livingston South, Uphall and Winchburgh
<b>Priority 2:</b> Armadale & Blackridge, Bathgate, Whitburn & Blackburn.
<b>Priority 3:</b> Fauldhouse & Breich Valley.

The priorities reflect the approach to housing development set out in the West Lothian Local Development Plan, specifically policy HOU4. Funding allocations will be based on best value principles.

The priority for the SHIP programme is to develop those sites that already have a funding commitment. The council will continue to give priority to sites in West Lothian in high demand areas and Core Development Areas.

The redevelopment of Deans South, Livingston is a key priority over the next five years. The new build council housing site for 54 units is complete. A site for 29 homes will be developed commencing 2020/21. It is important to prioritise the remainder of the Deans South estate for investment so that the site can be fully developed.

### 4.1 RSL Programme

RSLs in West Lothian have identified sites for homes for development over the period 2021-2026. The sites are noted at table 1.

The priority has been determined on the basis of location and the sites being capable of development over the short term. Further consideration will be given to sites that can be brought into the programme in the longer term.

The majority of RSL sites are in either Priority 1 or Priority 2 areas. The SHIP has been developed to allow flexibility and ensures that sites can come forward should additional resources become available.



**Table 1**

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>
Almond Housing Association	Mill Centre Blackburn Phase 1	20									
Almond HA	Blackburn Community Centre					17					
Almond HA	Carmondean			6							
Almond HA	Stoneyburn Gap Sites	18									
Almond HA	Glendevon Park Winchburgh	16									
Almond HA	Armadale CDA					60					
Almond HA	East Calder					36					
Almond HA	Linlithgow									30	
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>113</b>				<b>30</b>	

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>
Almond HA	Willowdean, Bridgend	32									
Almond HA	Langside Farm, Polbeth					30					
Almond HA	Race Road Bathgate	40									
Almond HA	Sydney Street Livingston	13									
Almond HA	Appleton Drive Livingston	38									
Almond HA	Simpson Avenue Bathgate			19							
Almond HA	Kirknewton			12							
Almond HA	Gavieside					50					
Almond HA	Langside Gardens Polbeth			16							
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>123</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>80</b>					

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Raw Holdings East Calder	38	26								
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Gavieside			125							
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Gavieside							110	50		
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Deans South, Livingston	127									
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Winchburgh Site BB	53	32								
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>125</b>				<b>110</b>	<b>50</b>		

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Winchburgh Site 0	20									
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Blackness Road Linlithgow	8	6								
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Preston Farm Linlithgow	8	7								
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Linkston Way Bathgate	59									
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Sibbalds Brae Bathgate	28									
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Raw Holdings	45	34								
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>47</b>								

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/ SE</b>
Castle Rock Edinvar	Calderwood site CWB	34									
Places for People	Calderwood site CWB		32								
Castle Rock Edinvar	Calderwood site CWC & OSD			32							
Places for People	Calderwood Site CWC & OSD				17						
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>						

<b>RSL/WLC</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>25/26</b>
		<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/SE</b>	<b>Social Rent</b>	<b>MMR/SE</b>
Castle Rock Edinvar	Calderwood Site LKG					57					
Castle Rock Edinvar	Hunter's Rd Livingston	12	16								
Places for People	Murieston		28								
Castle Rock Edinvar	Kettlestoun Mains, Linlithgow	30	10								
Castle Rock Edinvar	Gregory Road Livingston	33	20								
Castle Rock Edinvar	Simpson Parkway Livingston	20	10								
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>84</b>			<b>57</b>					

RSL/WLC	Site	21/22	21/22	22/23	22/23	23/24	23/24	24/25	24/25	25/26	25/26
		Social Rent	MMR/ SE	Social Rent	MMR/ SE	Social Rent	MMR/ SE	Social Rent	MMR/ SE	Social Rent	MMR/ SE
Cairn Housing Association	Craiginn Terrace, Blackridge	27									
Cairn Housing Association	Fauldhouse Road, Longridge	53									
Ark Housing Association	Crusader Rise, Livingston	20									
Home Group	Calderwood	69									
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>169</b>									
<b><u>Grand Total</u></b>	<b><u>1749</u></b>										

## 4.2 West Lothian Council Future Sites

The sites in table 2 are identified for future development by WLC.

**Table 2**

Site	Number of Units	Tenure	Timescale for Approval
Mid Street, Bathgate (former swimming pool)	5	Social Rent	2020/21
Marjoribanks Street, Bathgate (former community centre)	6	Social Rent	2020/21
Wester Inch HBA 23, Bathgate	59	Social Rent	2021/22
Cawburn Road, Pumpherston (Specialist Provision)	16	Social Rent	2020/21
Deans, Livingston (supported housing)	16	Social Rent	2020/21
Eliburn, Livingston	20	Social Rent	2020/21
Murieston, Livingston	42	Social Rent	2020/21
Mossend, West Calder	69	Social Rent	2020/21
Wester Inch HBA 23, Bathgate	40	Social Rent	2023/24
Guildiehaugh, Bathgate	100	Social Rent	2023/24
Trim Track, Livingston	40	Social Rent	2023/24
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>		



### 4.3 Other Sites

A number of other sites have been included in the programme. The housing provider for these homes will be confirmed in due course.

**Table 3**

Site	Number of Units	Tenure	Timescale for Approval
Charlesfield, Livingston	35	Social Rent	2021/22
Bangour	201	Social Rent/MMR	2020/21
Winchburgh Site O phase 2	55	Social Rent	2021/22
<b>Total</b>	<b>291</b>		

### 4.4 Open Market Acquisitions

It is also proposed that there will be a total of 100 homes purchased from the open market to increase affordable housing supply in West Lothian over the period of this SHIP. There were 35 open market purchases in 2019/20. Almond have proposals for 20 Open Market purchases in the SHIP period.

#### 4.5 Summary of West Lothian Council Affordable Housing Investment

**Table 4**

	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
Scottish Government Grants	3,120	14,151	0
Developer Contributions	250	250	300
Council Tax on Second Homes	80	75	70
Capital Receipts	100	100	100
Borrowing	8,250	30,374	2,839
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,800</b>	<b>44,950</b>	<b>3,309</b>

The above table is based on current Resource Planning Assumptions (West Lothian Council allocation) and it is anticipated that the future RPA should be available during 2020/21 for future years.

#### 4.6 Housing Infrastructure Fund Projects

As part of the SHIP, projects that require infrastructure funding can be included. Projects for the council or an RSL may be supported by Scottish Government grant, private sector projects may be supported by loans. Scottish Government has shortlisted the Heartlands development in Whitburn as potentially being suitable for an infrastructure loan. The council has identified projects at Deans South, Livingston that will require infrastructure investment to support the development of the whole Deans South area, including the 29 new build council homes. The Wester Inch site also requires significant infrastructure investment to enable the site to be developed.

**Table 5**

<b>WLC Projects (Grant Funded)</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Infrastructure Requirement</b>	<b>Amount of Grant Funding Required £'000</b>
Deans South, Livingston	165	Service diversions, provision of utilities and land remediation. Off-site drainage attenuation	1,000
Wester Inch	59	Service diversions and road access	500
Guildiehaugh, Bathgate	100	Service diversions, provision of utilities and land remediation.	625

**4.7 Private Sector Projects (Loan Funded)**

One private sector housing project has been identified for £26 million of infrastructure loan funding.

**Table 6**

<b>Private Sector Projects (Loan Funded)</b>			
<b>Site</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Infrastructure Requirement</b>	<b>Amount of Loan Funding Required £'000</b>
Winchburgh CDA	2,950	Motorway Junction; rail station; land remediation; utilities	26,000

The list of potential projects to be considered for bids to the Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund will be kept under review.

## 5. The Economic Climate

The housing market has shown signs of improvement in recent years. Many of the sites that were stalled are now starting to pick up with development continuing on a number of sites, particularly in the Core Development Areas. There were 683 private sector completions in 2019/20.

According to the Registers of Scotland, the average house price in West Lothian in July 2019 was £188,382 and in July 2020 had risen to £191,959. The average house price in July 2020 in Scotland was £187,382.

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic is likely to have a significant effect on the housing market over the coming year.

## 6. Investment in Affordable Housing

The table below shows Scottish Government historic investment levels in West Lothian (for both RSLs and WLC) between 2013/14 and 2019/20

**Table 7**

Year	Actual Expenditure (£'000)
2013/14	887
2014/15	4,614
2015/16	10,347
2016/17	10,429
2017/18	10,950
2018/19	13,084
2019/20	16,194

**Table 8: Future Resource Planning Assumptions**

Year	Indicative Planning Figure (£'000)	Affordable Housing Supply Programme indicative planning figures including slippage (£'000)
2020/21	14,690	18,360

### West Lothian Council's Investment in new housing supply

West Lothian Council is highly committed to partnership in the delivery of Local Housing Strategy outcomes. This is demonstrated through the provision of new build council housing and direct assistance to RSLs to enable their development proposals to proceed. Scottish Government direct funding remains important across the range of projects.

The approved Housing Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 includes £60.059 million for new housing supply and the council has delivered 1461 new build council homes between 2012 and 2020 (to September). The Scottish Government provided £5.036 million to support new build council housing and open market acquisitions in 2019/20

In 2019/20 £200,000 from Developers' contributions was used to support the new build council housing programme.

## **Other Funding**

Funding from a Charitable Trust has been identified to support a project in West Lothian. The funding supports a development at Polbeth by Almond Housing Association. This is particularly beneficial to the area and frees up other funding for additional projects. Work started on site in August 2020.

## **7. Development Constraints**

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

The City Deal Fund is being used to support new schools at Winchburgh.

Scottish Government has also launched the Housing Infrastructure Fund to accelerate new build development. Bids have been made for additional grant or loan funding to support projects that have stalled or can be brought forward. A number of projects have been identified as candidate projects to be considered for support by the Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund. These are identified in the SHIP tables. RSLs and developers were made aware of the fund and the SHIP sets out those projects which would benefit from additional funding to support their delivery.

While there continues to be funding constraints, it is clear that RSLs are having some success identifying projects. Challenges remain in regard to the availability of private finance for RSLs but some larger RSLs have managed to secure bond funding. In addition, there is opportunity for front funding the purchase of development sites should this be required. The majority of RSL projects coming forward in this SHIP are likely to be for social rent rather than mid market rent or shared equity. RSLs have identified homes for 269 mid market rent and 19 homes for shared equity. This is an increase on previous years and demonstrates the willingness to support the development of tenures other than social rent.

Constraints identified by RSLs include abnormal costs, demolition and site clearance and developer contributions. To assist in trying to overcome these constraints, the council will continue to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders in relation to the provision of infrastructure.

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

West Lothian is a member of the South East Scotland Housing Forum. This group includes representation from housing and planning from the six SESPLAN member councils and Scottish Government. The group collaborated successfully to produce HNDA2 and has now commenced work on HNDA3.

Homes for West Lothian Partnership was set up in 2018 to engage with RSLs operating in West Lothian. The purpose of this is to create a coordinated strategy of land assembly, finance, construction planning and targeted provision of homes based on need to increase the supply of affordable housing. Three meetings have been held with RSLs and all have been invited to contribute to the SHIP. Joint working with RSLs and the voluntary sector continues in relation to the development of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to address homelessness in West Lothian.

## **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 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 discuss their input. Meetings were held with the West Lothian Development Alliance, the Wheatley Group, Places for People, and Home Group. The key points discussed were in relation to identifying potential development opportunities and overcoming constraints to development including funding requirements and infrastructure. With increased level of grant funding anticipated over the period of the SHIP there is a potential to support a variety of housing providers.

- **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.

- **West Lothian Council Service Areas**

West Lothian Council Service Areas including, Planning, Legal Services, Finance and Property Services and Housing 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.

There is ongoing liaison with Social Policy to identify requirements for specialist housing provision in West Lothian.

We have worked closely with Social Policy in relation to the design of the new build houses to ensure that they are future proofed and limit the need for adaptations in the longer term. There is increasing engagement through the Commissioning Plans to identify future requirements for specialist housing provision. This will also be picked up through work done in relation to HNDA3.

- **Government Assistance**

The council welcomes the government funding to assist the provision of housing either through its own new build programme or to fund RSLs for site acquisition/off the shelf purchase. This funding has enabled significant numbers of affordable housing to be completed. In 2018/19 West Lothian Council had the highest number of completions of new build council houses of any council in Scotland. The council has endeavoured to make best use of the sites identified to develop council housing that will optimise the use of the sites to meet a variety of housing needs.

## **10. Investment Outcomes**

There are several key outcomes to be achieved in the course of the 5 year period of this SHIP:

- Completion of an agreed number of RSL homes through the Strategic Local Programme (SLP).
- Complete the development of the current council new build programme.

- A further programme of new council house building.
- Maximise employment and training opportunities through the provision of new build housing.
- To assist with the provision of new infrastructure by making appropriate developer contributions through new build programmes.
- Development of a new Local Housing Strategy

## 11.Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan

In West Lothian 99.9% of council stock currently meets SHQS and the majority of RSL stock is compliant.

At Deans South, a number of blocks have now been demolished to make way for new build council housing. 54 council homes have been completed and a further 29 are planned for another site in Deans South.

## 12. Specialist Housing Provision

New Developments of specialist housing provision are planned.

- Cawburn Road, Pumpherston for 16 homes for people with complex care needs;
- Supported housing at Deans Livingston 12 flats in one unit and 16 mainstream flats;
- Conversion of a block at House at Bathgate into four self- contained flats;
- Cairn Housing Association will develop bungalows at Blackridge;
- West Lothian Housing Partnership has developed amenity housing for older people at Whitburn and are planning more in Livingston.

The new build council housing programme has provided in excess of 140 bungalows including one- bedroom bungalows so that there is a wider range of house types available for people with disabilities. Occupational Therapy staff were involved in developing the housing design and mix and there has also been input from staff from NHS Lothian.

### 12.1 Wheelchair Accessible Housing

Targets for wheelchair accessible housing were set out in the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022. A target of 30 wheelchair accessible homes per annum was set over the duration between 2017/18 and 2021/22. Targets for wheelchair housing across all tenures are being considered.

Table 9 - Wheelchair accessible house completions

Provider	Wheelchair Bungalow Completions			
	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
WLC	16	30	41	60
WLDA	0	6	0	1

RSLs and WLC have submitted proposals in the SHIP for at least 136 homes that would be suitable for wheelchair users and 201 homes that could be suitable for older people. RSLs are also considering models of housing for older people including the use of technology.

Funding for adaptations continues to be supported through the HRA for council tenants and through Scottish Government grant for homeowners, private tenants and through Scottish Government grants to RSLs.

ARK Housing Association have indicated they may consider development of a site in Livingston, West Lothian for specialist housing in the future.

### **13. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**

The West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) was updated in June 2020 and submitted to Scottish Government. The RRTP actions include;

- Improving access to affordable housing options and reducing the length of stay in temporary accommodation by improving flow through the system and diverting away from use of bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Developing a Housing First service to enable people with multiple and complex needs to be housed in permanent accommodation.
- Engagement with RSLs to increase lets to homeless households.

As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic there has been an unprecedented demand from homeless households for accommodation. The initial focus through Spring 2020 was in relation to providing accommodation for rough sleepers. There has been an increase in housing demand from households facing domestic violence and households dispute. Increases too in households struggling with affordability and from young people being asked to leave. This has been exacerbated by an increase in demand and decrease in permanent lets as a result of Covid-19.

During 2021 the aim will be to continue to strengthen homelessness prevention by improving Housing Options offering across all partners and by greater engagement with the private sector. The council will continue to maximise the lets to homeless through achieving agreed targets and expand our Housing First provision.

An increase in homeless presentations is projected for 2020/21 due to the Pandemic; this is due to the reduction in letting of void properties during lockdown as well as the closure of the construction industry.

The SHIP aims to support the actions of the RRTP in the following ways:

- Increasing the supply of permanent accommodation.
- Supporting RSL development.
- Prioritising support for new build affordable housing in areas of high demand.

### **14. Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017**

In June 2019, Council Executive approved the Local Child Poverty Action Report. The average level of child poverty in West Lothian is 22% which is comparable to the Scottish Level. The report describes actions taken to address child poverty. The report links directly to the Community Planning Partnership Anti-Poverty strategy 2018-2023. A key outcome included in the Anti-Poverty strategy is to *“increase the number of people who live in warm affordable homes”*. This will be measured by the number of new homes completed annually in West Lothian. This relates directly to the target of 3,000 affordable homes built between 2012 and 2022 which is included in both this SHIP and the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022.



## **15.Welfare Reform**

West Lothian Council has developed an anti-poverty strategy that sets out a series of actions to support people affected by welfare reform and those at risk of poverty. The Scottish Government's Discretionary Housing Payment is being used in West Lothian to assist with housing costs and in particular to mitigate the effects of the removal of the spare room subsidy.

A key challenge for the council and other providers is to provide smaller houses for people to move to while ensuring that there is a sufficient range of house types and sizes available for applicants and tenants not affected by welfare reform.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has required a major effort from both the council and the Third Sector to assist people facing financial and health issues. Changes have been made to enable greater online support including welfare and benefits advice as well as support for health and care needs.

## **16.Fuel Poverty and Climate Change**

The Local Housing Strategy outlines the council's approach to reducing fuel poverty and tackling emissions that contribute to climate change. The council provides advice and information on fuel poverty via the Advice shop and signposts individuals to agencies such as the Home Energy Scotland.

For 2020/21 the council will be investing over £1.2million to improve the energy efficiency of 181 council houses. Both sources of funding will be used to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock in West Lothian and help tackle fuel poverty. Particular focus will be on targeting areas with high levels of deprivation.

The council seeks to ensure that all new build housing is energy efficient and 87% of West Lothian Council Housing stock currently meets the Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing (ESSH).

The heating for the complex care unit at Cawburn Road will be from renewable energy through a ground source heat pump. This will attract funding from Scottish Government.

There are 26 sites identified in the SHIP by RSLs that meet greener standards.

## **17.Private Sector House Condition**

The condition of houses in the private sector in West Lothian is generally good. The council's Scheme of Assistance has been reviewed to provide information, advice and access to practical assistance to enable homeowners to fulfil their responsibility of maintenance and repair of their property and to provide grant support to home owners whose homes need adapted to suit the needs of a disabled person.

The revised Scheme of Assistance was approved by the Council Executive in June 2019. The council has given a commitment to develop its approach to private sector housing over the coming years in order to improve house condition and this will include enforcement activity where necessary. Environmental Health has developed a Trusted Traders scheme. Work continues in relation to bringing private sector empty homes back into use.

## **18.Strategic Environmental Assessment**

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 effect. Most of the sites that are included in the SHIP are allocated for housing in the West Lothian Local Plan and/or the West Lothian Local Development Plan which has been the subject of a full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

## **19. 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 relevance assessment has been carried out for the SHIP and this will be made available. Both the council and RSLs specify that all new build housing will be constructed to housing varying needs standards.

## **20. Conclusion**

This SHIP illustrates a range of approaches to the provision of affordable housing. The council's new build programme has delivered large number of new homes in a relatively short timescale with low levels of subsidy to meet the housing needs of people in West Lothian.

Partner RSLs continue to provide much needed affordable housing in settlements across West Lothian helping to sustain investment in communities in difficult economic times. RSLs are identifying development opportunities and making use of the funding available in a variety of ways to include a mix of both social rented and intermediate tenures. The council continues to work closely with housing association partners in a variety of areas including the common housing register, homelessness, support provision as well as housing development.

## **21. Appendices to the SHIP Submission (not attached)**

1. SHIP Templates
2. Integrated Impact Assessment
3. Strategic Environmental Assessment pre- screening report

## **22. References**

Guidance on Preparing Strategic Housing Investment Plans  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/affordable-housing-supply-guidance-notes/>  
West Lothian Council Housing Land Audit 2018  
West Lothian Local Development Plan  
[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/27735/Adopted-West-Lothian-Local-Development-Plan/pdf/West\\_Lothian\\_Local\\_Development\\_Plan\\_-\\_Adopted\\_final.pdf](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/27735/Adopted-West-Lothian-Local-Development-Plan/pdf/West_Lothian_Local_Development_Plan_-_Adopted_final.pdf)  
West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022  
[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/18527/West-Lothian-Councils-Local-Housing-Strategy-2017-2022/pdf/West\\_Lothian\\_Local\\_Housing\\_Strategy\\_2017-221.pdf](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/18527/West-Lothian-Councils-Local-Housing-Strategy-2017-2022/pdf/West_Lothian_Local_Housing_Strategy_2017-221.pdf)  
Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/>

November 2020

