



# WEST LoTHIAN LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2023 TO 2028

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



## **Foreword**

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

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

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

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

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



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Executive Councillor, Housing Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Overview

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

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

### 1.2 Strategic Vision and outcomes

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

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

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

#### LHS Themes 2023-2028

1.	<b>Housing Delivery</b>
2.	<b>Private Rented Sector</b>
3.	<b>Placemaking</b>
4.	<b>Preventing and Addressing Homelessness</b>
5.	<b>Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision</b>
6.	<b>Climate Change Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency</b>

<b>7.</b>	<b>House Condition (private and social rented sector)</b>
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Eleven specific outcomes have been identified to be achieved through the LHS 2023-28, linking to the seven priorities above. The actions to be taken to achieve these outcomes are outlined within the LHS Outcome and Action Plan.

### **LHS Outcomes 2023-2028**

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

### **1.3 Local Strategic Planning Framework**

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





## 1.4 LHS Governance

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

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

## 1.5 What has changed since 2017

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

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

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

## 1.6 Progress and Achievements

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

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

<b>LHS 2017-2022 Summary of progress against key outcomes</b>	
<b>Outcome 'What we said we would do'</b>	<b>Summary of progress 'What we did'</b>
Our communities continue to be attractive, safe places to live and work	and RSLs. Between 2017/18 and 2020/21, the council had the third highest number of completions of any local authority in Scotland <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/</a> Bathville, Armadale regeneration work was completed. Deans South regeneration is underway with one site complete, one nearing completion and plans at an advanced stage for 128 new homes for Wheatley Group East Over the last 5 years, 117 places for training, apprenticeships or work placements have been provided as a result of the new build council housing programme
Promote regeneration and sustainability to enhance communities	
New build affordable housing will continue to be a council priority	
Maximise employment opportunities through housing investment	
<b>Theme 2 - Preventing and Addressing Homelessness</b>	
Improving Housing Options to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place	The Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan is in place with focus on shifting further to a housing options prevention approach with a 19% decrease in homeless presentations between 2020/21 and 2021/22. There is a range of new build housing being provided by the council and the RSLs in high demand areas with focus on sustainability and housing mix based on identified need. Housing support is in place for a range of client groups, including statutory homeless. The development of the Housing First approach has enabled greater tenancy sustainment for a number of people. High levels of tenancy sustainment achieved in West Lothian. This has increased from 87% in 2018/19 to 91% in 2021/22
Promoting sustainable communities by ensuring that, where possible, housing need can be met in a planned manner	
Ensure there is access to a range of housing support.	
<b>Theme 3 - Independent Living and Specialist Provision</b>	
Ensure that accommodation is planned and available for people with a wide range of needs	Since 2017/18 146 wheelchair units have been completed by the council and RSLs. A new development of 16 homes for people with complex needs has been completed. RSLs continue to develop accessible housing and there will be further development of specialist accommodation by an RSL in 2022/23 in Livingston. Support packages and housing adaptations continue to be available to people who meet the required criteria. Support models have been reviewed by Social Policy. Through the development of strategic commissioning plans, joint working with NHS Lothian, Social Policy and Housing has enabled people to access housing for independent living through a range of models including core & cluster.
Enable people to live independently where they choose to do so. Ensure that housing support is available to those people who need it	
Enable integration of health, social care and housing solutions for people to live independently for as long as they are able to do so	
<b>Theme 4 - Private Rented Accommodation</b>	
The private sector in West Lothian provides good quality housing options for people	The West Lothian Landlords forum continues to provide advice to landlords to encourage best practice in private rented housing. The number of tenancies in the Private Sector Leasing Scheme has increased from 29 to 101. Landlord forums have continued with focus on responsibilities through the new private rented tenancy.
Landlords are informed of their responsibilities	
Improved Tenant Satisfaction with the sector	
<b>Theme 5 - House Condition</b>	
Improve stock condition across all tenures	There has been major investment by the council and RSLs between 2017 and 2022 to meet both the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. The council has commenced a stock condition survey and RSLs in West Lothian are also undertaking house condition surveys. Properties in West Lothian are in better condition than the Scottish average with 58% regarded as having some disrepair compared to the Scottish average of 71% according to the Scottish House Condition survey 2017-19. 89.84% of council housing stock meets SHQS this is ranked 4 <sup>th</sup> of 26 local authorities with housing stock in Scotland
<b>Theme 6 - Fuel Poverty and Climate Change</b>	



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

## 1.7 Key Issues and Challenges

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

- Economic Challenges - both the council and NHS Lothian are facing significant financial challenges over the next five years;
- Poverty and the consequences of the cost of living crisis - including increases in inflation, energy costs and mortgage interest rates and an understanding of the impact on the affordability of housing in West Lothian;
- Growth and change in Demographics - West Lothian's population is growing. Between 2018 and 2028 the population is projected to increase from 182140 to 192,812, 5.9%. Over the same period, there is a projected increase of the over 75 population from 12,406 to 17289, an increase of 39.4%. These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services;
- These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services;
- Health inequalities - there are significant differences in health outcomes between some communities and individuals with an 8-10-year gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived in West Lothian;
- Long Term Conditions and Complex Needs - almost one in four people in West Lothian are living with one or more long term conditions which affects their wellbeing;
- Competing housing demands for investment – meeting statutory requirements on house condition as well as providing new homes when resources are limited. This is also an issue for RSLs and
- Homeless prevention duty will increase demand on homelessness prevention and the removal of local connection is also highly likely to impact on demand given West Lothian's location to Edinburgh City Council

## 2.0 Consultation and Engagement

### 2.1 Consultation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 2.2 Customer Feedback

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

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

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

### 2.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

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

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

- age,
- disability
- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex

- sexual orientation

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



### 3.0 Local Context

#### 3.1 Population and Local Demographics

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

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

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

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

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

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

Source: [https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table\\_pop\\_proj\\_age](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table_pop_proj_age)

West Lothian is also projected to have the 10th highest number of households in 2028, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The number of households is projected to increase from 77,953 households to 85,634 households (9.9%) between 2018 and 2028. This is the 4th highest percentage change in household numbers out of the 32 council areas in Scotland, with Midlothian having the highest percentage change in household numbers and a national percentage change of 4.9%.

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

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

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

### 3.2 West Lothian Economic Context

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

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

- Almost 25% of children experience relative poverty
- 73.5% of working age adults are in work<sup>4</sup>
- 18% of employees earn below the Living Wage
- 19% of resident experience fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)
- 9% of residents experience extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)

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

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

Summary Statistics	
Population (1)	183,100
Area (2)	42,733 hectares

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

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

### 3.3 West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

### 3.4 Child Poverty in West Lothian

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **3.5 Housing Tenure and Benefits**

The pattern of housing tenure in West Lothian is generally similar to that for Scotland for social rented housing with a lower level of private rented accommodation and higher level of owner occupation. Generally, private rented is highest in cities where there is a large student resident

population or market for young people. Nevertheless, in West Lothian the private rented sector has increased from 4% of households in 2008 to 11% in 2019. The incidence of poverty amongst private rental residents has been noted at UK and Scottish level research. Increased rental levels mean that for working households on a modest net income of £20,000 might be paying 50% of that income towards housing costs.

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

#### Housing Tenure and Economic Status

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

Source: Census 2011

### 3.6 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

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

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

### 3.7 Housing Stock in West Lothian

In 2021 there was estimated to be 82,591 homes in West Lothian, this is an increase of 3,479 homes since 2017. West Lothian had the 10th highest number of dwellings in 2021, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. The stock profile has remained relatively unchanged over time with older housing being located in areas such as the east of West Lothian and older town centres. Around 78% of dwellings are provided as houses and the remainder as flats. The highest proportion of dwellings in West Lothian are terraced at 32.6%, with semi-detached being the lowest at 20.8%. Comparison of dwelling types in Scotland shows that West Lothian has a lower proportion of flats (22.3%) compared to the national position (37.7%).

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



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

Source [https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table\\_dwell](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#table_dwell)

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

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

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

## 4.0 Theme 1 - Housing Delivery

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

### 4.1 Context

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

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

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

\*[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/52193/2022-2027-SHIP/pdf/2022-02-07\\_Council\\_Executive\\_SHIP\\_Report\\_and\\_appendix.pdf?m=637801937204070000](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/52193/2022-2027-SHIP/pdf/2022-02-07_Council_Executive_SHIP_Report_and_appendix.pdf?m=637801937204070000)

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

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

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

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

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

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

It should be noted that the preparation of LDP 2 is being done within the context of a new regulatory regime introduced by The Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act which makes substantive changes to the process for preparing development plans in Scotland and with the overarching aim of making them more effective, with greater community involvement and a heightened focus on delivery.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is a continuing need for affordable housing in West Lothian. Despite the increase in numbers of affordable homes built between 2017 and 2022, the number of applicants for affordable housing has also increased. In recent years, the majority of new affordable homes have been developed on sites that have come through the affordable housing policy with most

council sites being developed. The current imbalance between housing supply and demand for affordable housing means that there is a strong case to review the priorities.

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

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

#### West Lothian Common Housing Register Applications

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

#### West Lothian Common Housing Register Applications Preferred Area

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

Source: WLC records

In addition to those areas currently identified as Priority 1 demand on the Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance (SG), analysis of the West Lothian CHR shows that Bathgate is also in very high demand whilst there is considerable demand in most of the other areas. It is therefore necessary to consider as part of the development of the new West Lothian LDP, whether an increase in the percentage of affordable housing required on sites in West Lothian would assist in increasing the overall supply of affordable housing.



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

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

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

#### 4.2 Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3

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

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

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

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

##### Existing Housing Need from HNDA

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

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

#### HNDA Housing Estimates for Steady Growth Scenario in West Lothian

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

### 4.3 HNDA 3 Specialist Provision

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

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

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

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

### 4.4 Housing Supply Target

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

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

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

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

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

Indicative Affordable Housing Supply Targets LHS 2023-2028

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

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

#### 4.5 New Housing Supply

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

West Lothian Council remains committed to expanding housing supply and work is underway with an approved council housing programme for a further 380 new council homes and up to 1,200 affordable homes delivered by Registered Social Landlords in West Lothian. All new affordable homes support the Scottish Government's carbon reduction targets, sustainable design and placemaking principles. Housing for Varying Needs and Secured by Design are adopted as minimum design standards. West Lothian Council has approved £21.9 million for the acquisition of former local authority properties on the open market to supplement the affordable housing programme and support regeneration. The council will continue to support applications that meet required criteria under the Scottish Government Mortgage to Rent

Scheme and in addition, the council will include houses purchased through the Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Programme in the overall housing supply target.

### **Housing Delivery Issues**

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

### **Priorities**

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

### **Actions**

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

## 5.0 Theme 2 - Private Rented Sector

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

### 5.1 Private Rented Sector in West Lothian

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

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

Source: WLC records

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

- Established Practitioner Forum – sharing, encouraging and developing best practice by private landlords

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

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

### **Private Rents in West Lothian**

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

### **5.2 Understanding the Private Rented Sector in West Lothian**

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

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

- Size of properties - In 2022 and 2020, 51% of the respondents said their properties were 2 bedrooms.
- Over all three years of the survey, the highest number of properties held by landlords were in Livingston. The second highest numbers reported varied over the years of the survey but in 2022 it was Linlithgow and in 2021 and 2020 it was Bathgate.
- In all three years of the survey, the majority of respondents said their rent levels were between £500 and £600 per month.
- In each of the three years, it was only the minority of landlords that intended to raise rents, 22% in 2022, 24% in 2021 and 11% in 2020.

### 5.3 Private Rented Housing Standards and Quality

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

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

#### Repairing Standard Enquiries

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

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

### 5.4 Houses of Multiple Occupation

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

### 5.5 Private Sector Leasing (PSL)

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



Resources may have to be reviewed to ensure that the PSL continues to flourish in West Lothian.

### **Current Private Rented Sector Issues**

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

### **Current Priorities**

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

### **Key Actions**

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

## 6.0 Theme 3 - Place Making and Communities

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

## 6.1 Background

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **6.2 Understanding Community Needs**

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

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

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

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

## **6.3 Tenant Engagement on Place Making**

As part of the LHS consultation and engagement process a session was carried out with the council's tenants' panel in April 2022 to understand tenant's view on successful Place Making. The full outcome of the session is provided as part of the LHS Supporting Documents Section. The panel identified that good transport links, well maintained quality open space and access to local shops and health services were what mattered for place making. To achieve better places over the next five years the LHS will focus on;

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

#### **6.4 Vacant, Brownfield and Derelict Land**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **6.5 Conversions of existing buildings**

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

#### **6.6 Self-Build and Custom-Build**

The council recognises the important role that self and custom build housing can play in providing homes, sustaining communities and supporting smaller building companies in both rural and urban areas. Self-build, or on a larger scale, custom build can be individually driven, collective, or community led, providing viable options for a range of households. It can be an affordable option for housing delivery, with the flexibility to support the development of

accessible housing. Developers of custom-build projects work with individuals or groups of individuals to provide new housing, using a range of different models and approaches.

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

## **6.7 Empty Homes**

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

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

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

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

## **6.8 Town Centres**

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

## **6.9 Compulsory Purchase**

Where negotiations with landowners has not enabled land required to be acquired by the council on a voluntary basis, local authorities have a number of legislative powers to acquire land compulsory via a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) including those granted under the under s.189 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. These powers can be used where there are areas of housing in a state of disrepair and where the land is required to enable planning/regeneration proposals to be delivered to improve housing conditions.

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

## **6.10 Community Safety and Place Making**

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

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

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

One of the areas that a connected partnership can assist with is developing the ethos of place making. Our physical environment can have a significant impact on our health. It influences what we do, the way we move, and how we interact with people and places. The places we live can help us and be places that support our physical, social and mental wellbeing and prevent negative issues such as inactivity, obesity, air quality and a variety of other physical and mental health challenges. Healthy Place Making and nurturing sustainable places will help provide a better balance. West Lothian Community Safety Partners want to promote the development of healthy places and together our planners, developers, designers, and a range of other professionals consider how policy and practice can positively influence health. In turn, this helps us all better understand the impact of the built and natural environment on our wellbeing and explore opportunities to make our places healthier. We need to work together, with communities, to help maintain these safe places and keep them free from litter, damage, fly-tipping, deliberate fire-raising, vandalism and antisocial behaviours. Community Safety



Partners aim to promote the value of a consistent set of place and wellbeing outcomes when delivering places that enable wellbeing and support Scotland's 20-minute neighbourhood ambition.

### **Issues**

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

### **Priorities**

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

### **Key Actions**

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

## 7.0 Theme 4 - Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

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

### 7.1 Preventing and Addressing Homelessness

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

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

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

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

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

## **7.2 Profile of Homeless Applicants**

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

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

## **7.3 Prison Discharge**

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

## **7.4 Youth Homelessness**

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

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

consistently higher than the national average and one of the key priorities for the West Lothian R RTP with increased focus on this area for 2022/23 onwards.

#### Homeless Applications by 16-25 years olds

Year	West Lothian Applicants (16-25 years)	West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16- 25 years	National % of Homeless Applicants 16 – 25 years
2018/19	472	31.1%	24%
2019/20	473	32.2%	23.3%
2020/21	478	32.7%	25.2%
2021/22	397	33.4%	25%
2022/23	405	32%	TBC in Summer 23/24

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

### 7.5 Domestic Abuse

Legislation has been passed giving more powers to police and courts to protect people at risk of domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Bill will enable police and courts to ban suspected abusers from re-entering the home and from approaching or contacting the person at risk for a period of time to enable them to consider their longer-term options around safety and housing. The Bill will also allow social landlords to end or transfer the tenancy of a perpetrator of domestic abuse to the victim. Together, these measures should reduce the risk that victims of domestic abuse end up having to become homeless in order to escape their abuser.

The Living In Safe Accommodation service (LISA) in West Lothian aims to keep women and children safe in their own homes and provide multiple housing options to support women. In 2021/22 the LISA project supported 172 women during the first three quarters, this is an increase of 18% on the previous period in 2020/21. Through the revised Allocations Policy domestic abuse applications are now allocated higher point levels. This has had a positive impact on the families supported by DASAT as it reduces the number of housing moves required and in turn reduces the disruption to children’s education whilst improving access to child care and employment.

### 7.6 Tenancy Sustainment and Repeat Homelessness

West Lothian traditionally benefits from a high rate of sustainability and achieves positive outcomes by offering high standards of permanent accommodation and appropriate housing support where required. Tenancy sustainment for homeless applicants remained high in 2022/23 at 94% with an increase of 3% from 2021/22. West Lothian has traditionally had a low level of repeat homeless and this continued during the period 2021/22 to 2022/23 when repeat homelessness decreased by 25%.

Whilst high sustainment is positive this also means that there is less turnover of lettable properties and has a knock-on effect on stock turnover. This, coupled with sustained high demand for affordable social housing, causes pressures in homeless services.

### 7.7 Housing Support

In 2022/23 almost 64% of homeless households had no support needs compared to 57% in 2021/22. For those households who do have a support need mental health issues remain the most prevalent need. Some caution should be applied to this data as this is established from the homeless assessment. At this point the applicant may not provide details of any support needs, this may be established at a later date once a relationship with the officer has been formed. Work is underway to finalise a new support recording framework which will provide more accurate recording of support needs once a relationship with an officer has been formed and a support assessment undertaken. In line with RRTP guidance estimates of support needs have been made using three categories, no/low support needs, medium support needs and SMD/ Complex needs. The table below shows the results.

*Homeless Support Need Summary (2018/19 – 2021/22)*

Support Needs	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
No/Low Support Needs - 0	904	821	779	676	789
Medium Support Needs – 1	363	398	371	295	230
SMD/Complex Needs – 2+	246	250	312	214	204
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>1,462</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>1,223</b>

Source: HL1

A Homeless Health Team exists in West Lothian providing mental health support to people in West Lothian aged 16 and over and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and not engaging with any other mental health services for high support. During 2021/22 the team received 127 referrals. Referrals can be made to the service by Housing Services, Criminal Justice, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Team (DASAT), GP's, Health Visitor, ACAST, Consultant Psychiatrist or friends and family along with self-referrals.

## **7.8 Temporary Accommodation**

The council also offers temporary accommodation and supported temporary accommodation for homeless applicants with medium to high support needs. To try and alleviate the reliance on the use of B&B accommodation and meet the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order, there has been an increase in the provision of dispersed temporary accommodation since 2019 from a capacity of 638 units to 775 units across West Lothian. Despite this there has been a continued rise in the use Bed & Breakfast of accommodation over the last 4 years.

Pre COVID-19 there had been progress with low rates in the use of B&B accommodation, number of cases in breach of unsuitable accommodation, and implementation of sharing spaces. The changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order by the Scottish Government, which came into force in October 2021 have had significant implications for the RRTP.

To improve the temporary accommodation available for young people, the council is committed building new, purpose built supported housing specifically for young people. The intention is for the facility to provide self-contained accommodation with on-site support for 12

young people plus outreach support and self-contained accommodation for a further 16 young people nearby. The accommodation will be situated close to local support services, training, education and employment opportunities as well as amenities and transport links.

### **7.9 West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Priorities and LHS Outcomes**

The West Lothian RRTP sets out the vision, strategic direction and detailed action plan for the delivery of a rapid rehousing approach to homelessness. Through a partnership vision of “Working Together”, West Lothian Council, West Lothian IJB, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the voluntary sector, aim to reduce homelessness through early intervention and prevention. The council developed and agreed with partners the first RRTP in 2019 with updates agreed and submitted to the Scottish Government in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

The RRTP was re-engineered for 2022/23 due to the challenges caused by the pandemic as well as the support of additional funding by the council aimed specifically at homeless prevention. To take account of the severity of the challenges faced alongside the revised modelling assumptions. A new action plan has been approved for 2023/24 to ensure there is a more collaborative and targeted focus on key priorities which will have the greatest impact in reducing pressures across homelessness services and striving to achieve rapid rehousing.

### **7.10 Challenges to addressing homelessness in West Lothian**

The wider economic context of high levels of low paid and insecure jobs, rises in energy costs and inflation will continue to push households into material poverty and the demand for affordable housing locally remains high. The imbalance between demand for affordable social housing compared to supply, remains the greatest challenge for the addressing homelessness in West Lothian.

The pandemic has and continues to have a significant impact on the achievements of the RRTP affecting the level of social lets available and increasing the number of homeless people awaiting permanent outcomes. Turnover rates of social housing stock continue to remain low with high tenancy sustainability. The council and its partners continue to face challenges in meeting peoples housing needs due to the significant imbalance between demand and supply of affordable social housing.

The full implementation of the Homeless Persons (Unacceptable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2020 has also placed the council under further pressure to comply with these legal requirements due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the imbalance that is faced between the demand and supply of affordable social rented housing despite an ambitious RRTP action plan which aims to reduce demand and improve supply. Whilst measures are being taken as part of the RRTP actions to mitigate B&B use, the demand for B&B accommodation is likely to remain for the duration of the RRTP. This brings considerable risks to the council, not only due to breaching the UAO but also the potential financial ramifications from advocates who pursue damages for claimants under the Equalities Act which will place further strain on council budgets.

The continued high rate of homeless applications from young people also remains a key challenge and more targeted work is required to prevent young people from becoming homeless. This will be a key focus of the RRTP in 2023/24 onwards with improved joint working across the partnership. The removal of Local Connection powers will also have an impact on the homeless demand and subsequent duty to provide settled accommodation. It is difficult to predict the extent of this impact but potentially due to similar pressures in neighbouring Local Authorities, and cost of housing, there is likely to be a rise in the number of people coming to West Lothian who will be entitled to homeless assistance.

### **7.11 Partnership Working**

Delivery of the RRTP remains dependent on effective partnership working at a local level. During 2021/22 partners considered and agreed linking the two working groups Housing Support and Housing First Working group and the Health and Wellbeing Working Group together. With an increased focus on Youth Homelessness in 2022/23 services also agreed to the creation of a new working group to specifically focus on this area. This new working group comprises of representatives from across council services, partner and third sector agencies. Working groups report to the RRTP Board on a quarterly basis on relevant RRTP actions and performance.

#### **Issues**

- Record numbers of homeless households and people living in temporary accommodation.
- Insufficient supply of affordable housing to meet housing demand.
- Very high rates of Youth homelessness in West Lothian
- Access to the housing system can be difficult for some households
- Support for people who require it is not always available

#### **Priorities**

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Continue to increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation
- Increase the prevention of youth homelessness through a multi-agency early intervention and targeted approaches to prevent youth homelessness;
- Deliver a new build supported accommodation unit and dispersed temporary accommodation for young people;
- Develop specialist housing options provision for targeted groups a risk of homelessness
- Improve housing support provisions

#### **Key Actions**

- Renew focus on housing options advice as part of Housing Options interview through introduction of Housing Options plans and information packs for applicants
- Develop early intervention model to prevent homelessness in secondary schools
- Maximise the contribution of the private sector and establish a West Lothian Empty Homes Partnership



- Develop and increase partnership with Private Rented Sector (PRS) and raise awareness of the tenant find service, with an aim of increasing access to available properties to reduce and prevent homelessness
- Increase dispersed temporary sharing spaces by additional 30 properties
- Completion of 383 new affordable council houses targeted over the period 2023 to 2028
- Increase allocation to homeless households to reduce backlog of existing applications
- Deliver new build supported accommodation for young people
- Quantify the residential accommodation requirements for adults where housing in the community would not be suitable including addictions and mental health
- Review and reconfigure support services to deliver medium to high level support and ensure statutory support duty is met.
- Review and implement wider approach to Housing Options with area offices and RSL partners
- Develop a choice based letting approach required for the new housing management system
- Evaluate and seek to sustain the Housing First Service for Young People in partnership with Social Policy through a new long term funding model
- Identify triggers of homelessness and referral process for people accessing health and social care services.

## 8.0 Theme 5 - Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision

<b>LHS Strategic Outcome:</b>	<b>5.1</b> Housing responses for specialist housing provision will be determined based on need
<b>National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer</li> <li>• People as far as possible including those with disabilities or long-term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community</li> <li>• People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected</li> <li>• Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services</li> <li>• Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities</li> </ul>
<b>West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improve health and wellbeing</b> - West Lothian is a place where everyone has the opportunity to enhance their mental and physical health and well being</li> <li>• <b>Creating affordable and Sustainable Housing</b> – everyone has access to appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing that meets their needs</li> </ul>

**Context:** It has long been recognised that Housing has an important influence on people’s health and wellbeing and can assist in the contribution towards a number of national health and well-being outcomes. In West Lothian the LHS has recognised the contribution that joint working with Health and Social Care can have in the delivery of quality housing, specialist housing provision and other housing related services and the impacts these have on health improvements, well-being and the reduction of health inequalities.

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 is the legal framework underpinning health and social care integration in Scotland and brings these areas together into a single, integrated system. Local authorities and health boards are required by law to work together to plan and deliver adult community health and social care services, including service for older people.

West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) is responsible for the local joint commissioning, resources and operational oversight for a substantial range of adult community health and social care services, including older people. This approach ensures adult services are built around the needs of patients and service users, and support service redesign with a focus on preventative and anticipatory care in communities.

In accordance with Scottish Government guidance, the LHS includes information on how the council’s Housing services will work with West Lothian IJB to deliver the outcomes in its Strategic Commissioning Plan that has been informed by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment including requirements for any specialist housing provision.

## 8.1 West Lothian IJB Strategic Planning and Housing

At the heart of integration of Health and Social Care is strategic planning and West Lothian IJB's current Strategic Plan is in place for 2019 to 2023. West Lothian IJB's vision is *"To increase wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across all communities in West Lothian"* An integral part of the Strategic Plan is a Housing Contribution Statement which explains the way in which housing and related services in West Lothian support improvement in health and social care outcomes. Listed below are the Strategic commissioning plans in place for each care groups: The plans set out the range of actions to be taken forward to develop health and social care services across West Lothian during the period 2019 to 2023, including Housing related activity.

- Mental Health,
- Learning Disability,
- Physical Disability,
- Alcohol and Drugs Partnership,
- Older People,

Source: All Commissioning Plans are included in the West Lothian Strategic Plan 2019-2023 <https://westlothianhscp.org.uk/article/43932/West-Lothian-IJB-Strategic-Plan-2019-23>.

The key areas of progress to note are:

- Re provisioning of supported housing for mental health by RSLs through providing housing in the community with visiting support and care. This includes, new models of accommodation with care and support needs for people with mental health issues with 16 new tenancies provided by RSLs and a further 8-10 specialist core tenancies identified as being required;
- Housing for 16 people with Learning Disabilities and associated complex care needs in construction phase and due for completion in March 2023;
- Housing Needs assessment complete for people with Learning Disabilities with 30 units required for people with learning disabilities and options such as further core and cluster accommodation being considered;
- 12 Housing First Tenancies for people with mental health/addictions and 5 for young homeless people commenced in 2020.
- Improvements in joint working have been achieved through Housing representation in the IJB Strategic Planning Group and Commissioning Plan Boards whilst Health and Social Care are represented on the West Lothian RRTP Board and have attended the Homes for West Lothian Partnership
- The council is considering the development of the West Lothian Standard to encourage mainstreaming of accessible housing across all tenures. This approach would assist in increasing housing provision for people with physical disability. Wheelchair targets of 10-15% of all housing have been set in discussion with the Physical Disability Commissioning Board.

West Lothian IJB has developed a new Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2028 which will focus on ensuring more care is provided in the community to reduce avoidable hospital admissions and support people to return home or to a homely setting wherever possible at the earliest opportunity. The emphasis will be on planned care and avoidance of crisis care.

The seven strategic aims of the plan are:

- Take a Home First approach with co-ordinated care, support and treatment as close to home as it can be;
- Deliver planned care whenever possible;
- Enable access to timely information, advice and support enabling people to make decisions about their own wellbeing;
- Take a rights-based approach which places people at the centre;
- Involve citizens, communities, staff carers, and other stakeholders as experts;
- Improved outcomes for people through more seamless partnership working, and
- Drive improvement in service delivery through transformation.

To achieve the above aims, the strategic priorities outlined below have been set for the duration of the plan.

#### *West Lothian IJB Strategic Plan Priorities*

<b>Improving Health Inequalities in Partnership</b>	<b>A “home first” approach</b>	<b>Enabling good care and treatment</b>
Focus on prevention and self-management Supporting people to make informed choices Working with communities in partnership with others to maximise impact Alignment with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and locality priorities Wider determinants	Investment in early intervention A human-rights based approach Self-management care and treatment provided as close to home as possible Planned care rather than crisis care Specialist care in the right place	Supporting our workforce to deliver high quality care Improvement through transformation including digital Support for carers Managing financial resources effectively through clear investment and disinvestment Sustainable service delivery

## **8.2 Health and Wellbeing Partnership**

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership is a subgroup of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board. It brings partners together from across the CPP to work together to take forward the inequalities and prevention agenda at a strategic level by embedding a preventative focus in the core work of the CPP and providing a platform for preventative efforts to be developed across the partnership. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership ensures health inequalities and prevention is taken forward as a shared priority as part of a wider ‘whole system’ CPP approach to issues such as poverty, housing, education, employment and transport.

Given the growing evidence base about how the interactions between people and place shape health and wellbeing, the Health and Wellbeing Partnership will focus on three key objectives to ensure West Lothian is a place where everyone can enhance their mental and physical health and wellbeing. These are:

- Develop a preventative approach to population level mental wellbeing (including the importance of the natural and social environment)
- Develop a preventative approach around alcohol (tackling availability, environment, culture and attitudes)
- Take a whole systems approach to improving the food and physical activity environment.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership will develop the above to improve health and wellbeing, and ensure connectivity with other interlinked priority areas, including, creating skills and jobs, creating affordable and sustainable housing, and creating net zero carbon communities.

### **8.3 Legislative Requirements for the Provision of Specialist and Accessible Housing**

The Equalities Act 2010 makes provision to ensure that no person who identifies with a Protected Characteristic faces discrimination. Provision of housing for people with particular needs must therefore be a key consideration in all affordable housing developments.

The need for specialist housing provision has been identified in West Lothian through the recently completed Strategic Needs Assessment which has informed the new IJB Strategic Plan. The delivery of specialist housing provision will be identified as the new commissioning plans are developed in 2023 and will be subsequently reflected in the annual LHS update

Through Homes for West Lothian Partnership there is regular discussion between RSLs and the council about specialist housing provision. Social Policy colleagues have attended the meetings to outline the need for specialist accommodation. Due consideration is given to the suitability of sites for specialist housing and where appropriate these sites are included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

### **8.4 Review of Housing for Varying Needs and Specialist Housing Provision.**

There will always be a need for specialist housing provision for particular client groups in various forms with the appropriate levels of support and funding. A review of Housing for Varying Needs that is being undertaken by More Homes Division at the Scottish Government and based on the outcome of this review, the council will consider the implications for future standards of accessible housing across all tenures.

### **8.5 The Need for Accessible and Specialist Housing Provision:**

Growth in the older population will be the most significant population growth influencing policy in West Lothian with the 65-74 age groups expected to increase by 19% by 2028 and persons aged 75 and over increasing by 39%. This is compared to the Scottish average growth of 14.4% in the 65 to 75 population and 25.4% increase in those aged over 75 during the same time period. Almost one in five people living in West Lothian are living with a long-term condition that affects their wellbeing. These changes will result in more demand for health and social care services. A long-term condition is any condition which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months and can have a significant impact on quality life and ability to carry out day to day activities.

In terms of overall population health, almost three quarters (73.8%) of people in West Lothian rate their general health as “very good” or “good”, and 5.3% rate their general health as “bad” or “very bad”. Within the 2011 Census, the presence of one or more long term condition increased significantly with age and had a direct impact on the person’s perception of their general health, with only 5.6% of those over 85 years reporting they were in “very good health”.

The number of carers in West Lothian, is, similar to the national average and has not changed since the 2001 Census. There has, however, been a significant increase (35%) in the amount of care provided with nearly 7,800 people providing unpaid care for 20 or more hours a week, and 4,600 of these for 50 hours or more.

As part of the development of HNDA3 significant research was done on the need for specialist housing provision. To understand the scale of the issue, statistics were reviewed in relation to health and housing from the Scottish Household Survey 2019, which indicates there has been an increase in the number of households with a long term sick or disabled person in West Lothian in the 10-year period 2007/09 to 2017/19. People living in social rented housing appear to be more limited in their activities than those living in other tenures. In West Lothian 66% of households in the social rented sector contain someone with a limited condition or illness compared to 43% in the social rented sector in Scotland.

The key findings of Horizon Housing Association’s three key publications; Minding The Step (2012), Still Minding The Step (2018) and Still Minding The Step Infographic (2019) provide further evidence for the need for accessible housing and are still of significance to current and future policy around accessible housing.

Analysis for HNDA3, provides useful information about the need for accessible housing in West Lothian estimating that of the 2806 wheelchair user households, 750 require wheelchair housing. This is 1 % of the household population in West Lothian and is the same position for Scotland.

Households with wheelchair users.

	Households Total	Wheelchair user Households	Households req. wheelchair housing	Households req. wheelchairs %
West Lothian	77,953	2,806	750	1%

**Source:** HNDA 3 [SES Regional Planning – The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal \(esescityregiondeal.org.uk\)](http://esescityregiondeal.org.uk)

Number of wheelchair users in Social Housing

	All self-contained Social Housing	Number of wheelchair units	% of self-contained social housing
West Lothian	21,037	267	1.2%
Scotland	600,044	6,284	1%

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator 2020 stock by provision type and local authority area at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019

It should be noted that there is a fundamental gap in understanding private sector accessible and wheelchair housing with no robust data being available. With future new tenure neutral quality and accessible standards, more robust information should become available.

## 8.6 Wheelchair Accessible Housing Targets

The previous wheelchair target for affordable housing of 30 per annum was achieved with the council and RSLs providing 146 wheelchair accessible properties between 2017/18 and 2021/22. It is proposed that a minimum of 10% of new build homes should be wheelchair accessible over the duration of this LHS. For market housing, further engagement with developers will be required through consultation on the next Local Development Plan. This is aimed to align with the proposed West Lothian Standard and with the possibility of changes to

planning requirements that would support a target being set. An initial target of 20 homes per annum in the market sector is proposed, which may be subject to review on development of LDP2.

### **8.7 Aids and Adaptations**

In January 2023 following consultation in 2022, Scottish Government issued updated Guidance on the Provision of Equipment and Adaptations. The Scottish Government acknowledge issues with equity of access, and the need to remove barriers which prevent responsive service provision, and the ability to help people to self-manage and make their own choices. The key actions included in the new guidance relating to adaptation and housing solutions are;

- A national Adapting for Change Action Plan should be devised to compliment other policy work, and assist partnerships to drive forward the changes recommended from the original Adapting for Change report by the Adaptations Working Group.
- To assist with the practical implementation of the Adapting for Change recommendations, partnerships should implement Housing Solutions change programmes which assist all relevant partners to develop local Protocols, and deliver training programmes, which effectively promote:
  - Early intervention with full exploration of rehousing opportunities; 99 - Better planning for the delivery of barrier-free housing and an inclusive design/living approach;
  - Robust joint governance, which provides a clear strategic direction and supports priority setting;
  - Joint finance arrangements which help streamline service improvements (e.g. pooled budgets)
  - Equity in the system, applying a 'tenure neutral' approach;
  - To address barriers in the system, removing the requirement for grant assistance for owner occupiers and providing 100% funding for the assessed adaptations;
  - Removing the need for occupational therapists to provide an assessment for standard adaptations in housing association properties e.g. shower provision and encouraging 'direct access' arrangements
  - Maximising procurement and recycling benefits to help deliver efficiencies.

It will be important to ensure that resources continue to be made available throughout any changes that are made in order that people can access the adaptations they require when they need them. Increased collaborative working between health, social care and housing will be required, including resource reallocation to ensure a successful change in approach to the provision of adaptations.

### **8.8 Adaptations and the Scheme of Assistance**

The council's Scheme of Assistance (SOA), was reviewed in 2019 with an emphasis since then on providing advice and support for adaptations to support people with disabilities to



remain in their homes. The council funds adaptations to council owned stock and to privately rented and owner-occupied stock through the Scheme of Assistance. Where the council is required (under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 or associated legislation) to fund adaptations by a grant this is known as a mandatory grant.

RSLs receive “Stage 3” funding from the Scottish Government’s Affordable Housing Supply Programme to fund own stock adaptations which also require an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment. RSL’s can also access “Stage 2” funding to incorporate specific adaptations into new build properties to suit individual tenants’ needs. This ensures that adaptations are undertaken at an early stage, avoiding abortive work and unnecessary additional costs.

All adaptations are assessed as part of a needs assessment, but where those are not funded by mandatory grant, the council may use its discretion to provide a grant to private home owners, or to fund the adaptation as part of an individual's care plan. The council funds at least 80% of the cost of an adaptation following assessment. Mandatory Grant funded adaptations are wet floor showers/bathroom extensions, through lifts, stair lifts, widening doors, closomats and ramps.

In addition to improving the life of individuals, adaptations contribute greatly to improving the condition of housing stock across West Lothian. The national review of adaptations being undertaken by the Scottish Government along with the council’s (through the proposed introduction of a new West Lothian Standard), proposes to review the type of adaptations being carried out by both the council and RSL partners with a view to improving the quality of the adaptation and in turn, housing quality generally.

The council is committed to ensuring that tenants, private tenants and owner occupiers are able to remain in their own home as long as possible. The council funds adaptations to its own stock through the HRA following an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment.

In the longer term, the building of fully accessible, adaptable and flexible new homes will reduce the need for adaptations to existing dwellings. However, there will still require to be adaptations to existing housing stock in the short and medium term along with adaptations to meet particular individual needs.

### **8.9 Specialist Housing Provision for Older People and Adults**

There is a range of specialist housing provision for older people and adults in West Lothian as well as care home provision. The West Lothian Common Housing Register shows a high demand for housing for older people with 2,623 applications for sheltered housing and 71 applications for housing with care.

*Specialist Older Housing Provision in West Lothian*

<b>Type of Provision</b>	<b>Number of Places</b>
Sheltered Housing - Older People	310
Very Sheltered housing – Older People	215

Amenity Housing - Older People	543
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,068</b>

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator stock by provision and type 2019

### Specialist Housing and Care Home Provision for Adults

Type of Provision	Number of Places
Learning Disability/Autism/Physical Disability	33
Mental Health Support	160

Source: West Lothian records

## 8.10 Mental Health and Housing

Housing and Mental Health Services are working together to review the existing provision for people with very high levels of needs associated with mental illness. Work will be done to scope out the existing provision and identify where there are gaps before considering how to develop services to meet those gaps. This is likely to include the needs of people who may otherwise remain hospitalised for extended periods in mental health wards, those placed in out of area supported housing or those in mainstream housing who are really struggling to safely maintain their tenancies, despite support to do so.

The provision for people who experience harmful use of drugs or alcohol will also be reviewed. There is a review of the provision for people with Alcohol Related Brain Disorder to see if people can be supported in more independent accommodation instead of having to move to care homes, often out of area. Alongside these, consideration will be given to identifying opportunities to provide some form of safe overnight space for people who are too vulnerable to return to their homes due to their mental health or to intoxication, but do not need admission to hospital.

New ways of working will be developed including further upstream before people become homeless or need alternate housing. This will include, developing new pathways for early identification of people at risk of becoming homeless, where it may be possible to intervene and prevent this, or address this rapidly. This will focus on those people who may benefit from health or social care interventions, including identifying people who are in hospital and have housing needs earlier in their admission.

## 8.11 Strategic Needs Assessment

A Strategic Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2022 to inform the new West Lothian IJB Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028. This along with consultation with IJB partners has identified the following gaps and work required in relation to the role of Housing and the provision of specialist housing.

- The role of Housing in the new 'Home First' approach identified as one of the three priorities of the IJB for 2023-2028 to avoid hospital admission and reduce delayed discharges;
- Gaps in specialist housing provision for people with long term neurological conditions;
- The Coming Home Agenda and the need to re provision people with learning disabilities and mental health issues from hospital or out of area placements into community settings;

- Compared to the national position West Lothian has an under provision of care homes for older people and adults. There are two current planning applications for care homes for older people in Livingston and Linlithgow.
- Individuals with high tariff care and support needs who cannot be sustain safely in the community in individual tenancies;
- Individuals with high tariff support needs where group living is not appropriate;
- Prevention of homelessness for people with addictions who are in recovery but do not have a permanent home
- Lack of suitable accommodation options for people with Alcohol Related Brain Damage (ARBD) who are under 65 years of age - only facility is Milestone House, nursing home care or out of area placements

Future needs will be identified through the IJB Commissioning plans with consideration to be given to complex care cases housed in the community, repatriation from out of area placements meeting assisting with Home First principles, moving from long stay hospital settings, and the “Coming Home” agenda.

### **8.12 Veterans Housing**

Consideration of the housing needs of Veterans is provided in a number of ways in West Lothian

- The West Lothian Armed Forces Covenant <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc>
- Service Leavers Guide to West Lothian
- Provisions within West Lothian Council’s Housing Allocation Policy
- Housing provision by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)
- Information on the council’s web page with links to enable access to housing for Veterans.

The most recent Scottish Government data on homelessness applications to local authorities shows that 2.4% of applicant households had a member who was previously in the Armed Forces. In March 2023 there were 10,4768 applicants on the Common Housing Register for housing, of these 18 have identified as leaving the Armed Forces. Personnel being discharged from the Armed Forces and Veterans are provided with a range of housing options advice and assistance relating to access to social rented housing, private rented housing and home ownership

The council works with a number of organisations, including the Scottish Veteran Housing Group and the Scottish Veteran Residence, to assist personal who are being discharged from the armed service to find accommodation as well as veterans who have left the service. Housing Option advice and assistance is provided and the council works with veterans along with other appropriate agencies making referrals as necessary to Health and Social Care, employment, education and financial advice.

### **8.13 Gypsy/Travellers**

In 2020, Scottish Government published. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-scotland/documents/>

The key findings in relation to Accommodation were:

- Gypsy/Travellers are not a homogenous group and have differing cultural needs and practice varying degrees of nomadism. A 'one-size fits all' approach to accommodation is therefore not appropriate and unlikely to work in practice with needs likely to change over an individual's life course
- There is limited available evidence on the current population, specific accommodation aspirations and travel patterns of Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland
- There is no agreed methodology for understanding Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs, but evidence suggests that, particularly when attempting to meet aspirations, a degree of collaboration with the local Gypsy/Traveller population is key
- Accommodation preferences of Gypsy/Travellers are diverse, and influenced by a number of factors, including privacy, proximity to family, access to services and health considerations

The council recognises the right of the gypsy/traveller community to travel and continue their traditional way of life. According to the 2001 Census 79 people in West Lothian self-identified as White Gypsy/Travellers, the figure for Scotland was 4,212.

Since 2017 the council has chosen to direct resources to improving outreach services as a more effective means of supporting and serving the needs of the travelling communities. Council Services including Housing, Planning, Social Policy, Education and Environmental Health work collaboratively to address the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community. They provide advice and assistance to Gypsy/Travellers.

There is a general view that the Gypsy/Travellers travel through West Lothian moving on to other areas.

#### **8.14 Travelling Show People**

There are an estimated 2,000 Travelling Show People in Scotland but data is unavailable to indicate numbers in South East Scotland and specifically West Lothian. (Ref: Evidence Review Accommodation Needs Gypsy/Travellers – Scottish Government Housing and Regeneration Research Communities Analysis Division October 2020.) There is a show peoples' site at Greendykes Road, Broxburn.

The West Lothian Local Development Plan notes that proposals for small privately-owned sites to accommodate gypsies, travellers and travelling show people, whether transit or permanent will be supported provided they meet the criteria set out with the LDP.

#### **8.15 Asylum Seekers / Refugees**

Between 2017 and 2022, West Lothian Council housed refugees from Afghanistan and Syria.

## Asylum Seekers and Refugees Households

Year	Number of Asylum Seekers and Refugee Households Accommodated
2018	3
2019	1
2020	0
2021	0
2022	1

Source: West Lothian data.

There is a partnership approach with RSLs and third sector organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers. Consideration is being given to the requirements of Ukrainian people who have come to the area.

### 8.16 Ukrainian Resettlement

Since the war began in the Ukraine, more than 100 households have moved to West Lothian. A collaborative approach is being taken by the council and its partners to support the resettlement of Ukrainians in West Lothian.

A range of housing options have been made available, including support by host families, provision of hotel accommodation and provision of private rented housing and social rented housing.

Funding has been allocated by the UK Government, Scottish Government and West Lothian Council to provide support to families who resettle in West Lothian. The type of support includes housing advice, welfare advice, adult learning, provision of interpreters and access to employment.

The council and its partners will continue to consider the housing and support requirements to people resettling in West Lothian from the Ukraine to ensure appropriate support is available.

### Issues

- There is uncertainty over the ability to capital and revenue fund both new build and existing specialist provision at a time when the council is being required to meet new accessible and sustainable legislation for new and existing stock
- It is unclear how to ensure the private sector contributes to the provision of accessible and wheelchair housing supply
- There is a small but challenging gap in meeting the accommodation needs of complex care/high tariff customers who have difficulty sustaining a tenancy in the community due to risks to themselves or the wider community
- There are issues in terms of funding required to adapt existing housing to meet complex care needs for those who can be rehoused in the community
- The early intervention and prevention agenda is a key priority of all public sector bodies at a time when resources in hospitals and care homes are being stretched and not appropriately used.
- There are challenges with quantifying the requirements for specialist provision

## **Priorities**

- More accessible and specialist provision is likely to be required over the next five years
- There is a need to consider embedding accessible housing in all new housing developments and develop a tenure neutral approach
- Improved collaboration between health and social care is necessary to understand how these gaps can be identified and met and a joint understanding of the service redesign or new models of housing required. This includes more collaboration with NHS in relation to available sites that could be suitable for specialist housing provision.

## **Key Actions**

- Work with the IJB on housing input to Delivery Plans for specialist housing for client groups
- Prioritise care and housing support to ensure that people can live independently
- Improve understanding of the housing and support needs of Gypsy/Travellers in West Lothian
- Prioritise adaptations to ensure people can live independently
- Develop the West Lothian Standard, considering tenure neutral design in new housing

## 9.0 Theme 6 - Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

<b>LHS Strategic Outcome:</b>	<p><b>6.1</b> We will work in partnership to reduce the impact of climate change in West Lothian in line with the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> Minimise the number of households in fuel poverty</p>
<b>National Outcome:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally.</li> <li>• We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment</li> </ul>
<b>LOIP Outcome:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone who lives, works and delivers services in West Lothian builds a sustainable, nature rich, net zero community.</li> <li>• Developing a partnership approach to achieving net zero carbon</li> <li>• Developing nature based solutions, carbon off-setting and energy generation.</li> </ul>

### Climate Change Context

The world is in the midst of a Climate Emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at an international, national and local level in order to safeguard the planet for future generations. Scotland's climate is already changing. The warmest 10 years on record have all been since 1997 and climate projections for the next century indicate that the climate trends observed over the last century will continue and intensify over the coming decades. The degree of changes that will be experienced will depend very much on how successful we are in reducing emissions globally.

### Energy Efficiency

The council and RSLs are faced with competing priorities in regard to meeting enhanced energy efficiency standards for existing social housing and higher standards for energy efficient new build housing. This sits within an environment of rising construction and maintenance costs means that there is a significant challenge to meeting standards on EESSH2 and enhanced energy efficiency standards for new build housing. Improved energy efficiency standards and build quality means less fuel poverty and better health outcomes.

### Fuel Poverty

The impact of the cost of living increase is of major concern in West Lothian. In October 2022 inflation rose to 11.1%, with a reduction of 0.7% to 10.4% in February 2023. Communities and services are in a phase of recovery post Covid and real term cuts in earned and benefit income have combined to create a precarious financial situation for many households. The main drivers behind the rapidly rising cost of living are:

- Rising oil and gas prices leading to higher domestic energy bills and average petrol prices at an all-time high
- Disruption to global supply chains due to industry shut downs during the pandemic having an impact on the production of consumer goods
- Wage growth that does not keep pace with the rate of inflation
- Real terms cuts to social security benefits

## 9.1 Climate Change Legal & Policy Drivers

In a drive towards a low carbon future, the Scottish Government set out ambitious emission reduction targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The targets were amended and updated in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, with the new goal of reducing Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040. While challenging, these targets present Scotland with significant social and economic opportunities, and require a range of actions across society and the economy.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on all public bodies to contribute to emission reduction targets, deliver programmes to increase resilience against Climate Change and to act in a 'Sustainable' way. Under the act, the council is identified as a 'Major Player' due to its size and influence and, therefore, must submit a mandatory climate change report to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, detailing our progress in mitigating and adapting to climate change and outlining the actions undertaken and planned to reduce the council's environmental impacts. This strategy will be underpinned by a suite of actions which will support delivery and allow for more effective reporting.

In Scotland's latest climate plan - 'Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032 (RPP3)', further expectations are placed on the public sector to increasingly demonstrate how its own operations are driving down emissions. RPP3 sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032.

## 9.2 West Lothian's Climate Change Strategy

West Lothian Council declared a Climate Change emergency in September 2019.

*"Council recognises that the world is in the midst of a climate emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations.*

*Council further agrees that having more environmentally progressive policies can lead to improved health, high quality jobs and more sustainable communities.*

*Council notes that West Lothian Council signed the Climate Change Declaration in 2007. Council further notes the significant work to date to make West Lothian a more environmentally friendly and sustainable place to live and work, and that the Council's agreed carbon reduction targets are already being exceeded."*

This provides a framework for the council's actions as a public sector organisation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the unavoidable impacts of changing weather patterns through the period 2021-2026 while also considering the pathway to achieving a net-zero West Lothian by 2045 at the latest.

The strategy commits the council to achieving a number of targets that aim to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions and ensuring that West Lothian is well adapted and prepared for changing weather patterns brought about by climate change. Some of the key activity includes;



- Ensuring that climate change and sustainability understanding and action is embedded in all core corporate and business planning processes across the council
- Prioritising the implementation of climate change actions and projects and removing obstacles to successful implementation
- Promoting a culture of low carbon and sustainable behaviour within the council as a whole and amongst staff at all levels
- Supporting the council's budget strategy through reducing the cost and impact of the council's use of resources, including water, energy, and transport fuel.

### West Lothian Climate Change Strategy Outcomes and Housing Related Actions

Theme	Outcome
Energy	We will continue to reduce the council's own carbon footprint and encourage and support others in West Lothian to reduce theirs. The council will investigate the implementation of strict energy efficiency standards recommended in The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report "Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament" and report our findings in 2022. The standards state that homes must achieve 'ultra-high' levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m <sup>2</sup> /year, a figure similar to the space heating demand of a Passivhaus building. The Council will produce a revised and updated Employer Requirements Design Guide for council Housing in 2022/23 as part of the council's pathway to net-zero.
Transport	We encourage sustainable transport and active travel by implementing measures to help people make smarter, sustainable travel choices, supported by low emission transport networks & infrastructure while further reducing our own fleet emissions.
Waste	We encourage householders and businesses to make the right choices when disposing of waste and will support the drive for sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the residents of West Lothian.
Adaptation, Resilience & Biodiversity	We will continue to build a resilient and well adapted West Lothian where natural ecosystems are protected, sustainably used and strengthened while services, communities and places are adapting to cope with climate change impacts (including land use, buildings and infrastructure)
Land Use and Management	We understand the scope and benefits of local carbon offsetting and manage our publicly owned land assets in a way that contributes to our path to net-zero.
Embedding Climate Action	We embed climate action in our policies and practices across the council and create a culture of sustainability and resource efficiency

### 9.3 Biodiversity and Climate Change

The provision of high-quality green spaces is an important aspect of housing development. This is a key consideration when developing new affordable housing. A number of the more recent council housing developments have provided a range of open spaces including pocket parks. As part of the climate change strategy, there will be an emphasis on 'pocket parks' and other green spaces to improve access to nature. The '20-minute neighbourhood' approach

being developed through National Planning Framework 4 the aim is to deliver positive effects for biodiversity from development.

There will be a refresh of the council's New Build Housing Design Guide with the aim to reduce the impact of the service and tenants through a variety of measures including community allotments and orchards for new build developments and land within existing housing developments which will improve community wellbeing, reduce CO2 emissions and assist in reducing food poverty. The following actions will be progressed alongside this review:

- Promote domestic composting by providing facilities for each new house either individually or within a community allotment
- Run a pilot domestic composting project across existing housing stock as part of the tenant environmental project programme
- Improved cycling lanes and public transport and non-car methods of travel within new developments in line with West Lothian Active Travel Policy
- Education of the tenants and residents regarding the benefits of renewables/retrofits (cost, health and wellbeing) and how to best use new technologies within the new properties to achieve optimum performance.

As part of West Lothian's climate change strategy, the council will explore voluntary developers' contributions to offset carbon emissions from development sites and support tree planting on council owned sites and landholdings that contribute towards the West Lothian Climate Forest and carbon sequestration.

#### **9.4 Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)**

The Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 came in to force on 21 May this year and sets out a duty for local authorities to prepare, publish and update:

- a) a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES), and
- b) a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Delivery Plan.

The first LHEES and its associated delivery plan must be published by 31 December 2023 and is to be updated every 5 years. LHEES are core to the principle of a place based, locally-led and tailored approach to the heat transition. These local Strategies will underpin an area-based approach to heat and energy efficiency planning and delivery, setting out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving their energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. For each local authority area, the Strategies should:

- set out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to meet national and local objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones, and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone; and
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

Accompanying the Strategies will be Delivery Plans, which are to be developed in partnership with key stakeholders and provide a strong basis for action for local communities, government, investors, developers and wider stakeholders, pinpointing areas for targeted intervention and early, low-energy measures.

In practice, a local heat and energy efficiency strategy should identify what needs to be done to change buildings and relevant local infrastructure (relating to heat networks, or from a demand perspective relating to other utility networks) to fulfil the Scottish Government's objectives and local priorities relating to heat and energy efficiency in buildings. These interventions might occur at building level or in energy supply networks or in a combination of both.

For each LHEES Consideration, it is proposed that spatial zones are generated to visualise potential pathways to decarbonise the building stock at a local authority level (Strategic Zones) and at a delivery level (Delivery Areas). These will be used to guide the design of policy levers such as advice, funding programmes and regulation which will give further direction and clarity to delivery routes and timescales. These may include any regulatory requirements to improve the energy performance of existing buildings or reduce emissions associated with their heat supply.

### **9.5 Developing WLC approach to the LHEES**

The council has an obligation under the Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (Scotland) Order 2022 to prepare, publish and update a LHEES, with the first iteration of the Strategy to be published by December 2023. Multi-year funding has now been confirmed, with £75,000 allocated to 2022/23 to take forward the initial development.

West Lothian Council aims to work collaboratively with partners to develop the LHEES. This will involve the identification of a Senior Responsible Officer and a lead serviced as well as development of a LHEES working group with relevant council teams represented. It will also require the engagement of a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to take forward development of the initial LHEES document.

The Council will develop a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy by 2023, building on the experiences from the work undertaken in the phase 2 pilot and in line with Scottish government guidance.

### **9.6 Energy Efficiency**

Energy efficient buildings reduce the demand for heat. It is important to ensure that demand for heat in our homes is as low as possible, to meet our fuel poverty obligations and to protect consumers from high energy costs and cold homes. In 2019, 45% of Scotland's homes were rated EPC C or better, with social housing generally more energy efficient (56% EPC C or better) than the private sector (41%). By 2045, Scottish Government have set a target that emissions of greenhouse gases from heating our homes and buildings will have all but disappeared, with demand for energy reduced and space and water heating provided by zero emissions alternatives. Improving the energy performance of buildings is essential to unlock the rollout of zero emissions heating.

### **9.7 Alternative Heating Sources for New Build and Existing Stock**

Although significant headway has been made in the decarbonisation Scotland's homes and businesses (this figure represents a 24% reduction in emissions from 1990 the base reporting

year for carbon dioxide emissions, Scotland cannot meet its legislated climate change targets unless virtually all emissions from heating (and cooling) buildings are eliminated. This means, in effect that by 2045, zero emissions heating will need to be deployed across Scotland's building stock. Through the use of zero direct emissions at point of use heating systems - coupled with very high levels of energy efficiency in new homes – West Lothian Council have the opportunity to greatly reduce our emissions, and move towards our net zero carbon targets.

For all future new build council houses it is recommended that the initial specification for the heating system should be for a system which produces zero direct emissions at the point of use or low carbon alternative. An A- Rated Boiler system should only be considered where current infrastructure does not allow for a non-fossil fuel system to be installed. The costs of transitioning from fossil fuels for heating to low carbon and renewable sources will be a particular challenge and cognisance will need to be taken of this and officers will continue to work with the Scottish Government and others to identify potential funding streams.

It is important to address the likelihood that the capital and running costs of zero direct emissions heating may be higher than for the high greenhouse gas emitting systems they replace. This illustrates the importance of the need to reduce the demand for heat energy as far as possible within the fabric of the building. Feasibility work is underway and costs will be reported once determined.

### **9.8 Off Gas Grid Areas**

Since 2017, 89 WLC homes have had air source heat pumps installed in “off gas” grid areas in West Lothian. This has been beneficial both for the tenants and for the council to gain an understanding of these systems. There are also significant benefits in terms of reduction of emissions.

At Cawburn Road, a development of 16 homes for people with complex needs has been completed. The heating on this development is powered by ground source heat pumps. This is the first housing development with this system in West Lothian. RSLs are also considering the use of air source heat pumps at a number of developments.

### **9.9 Energy Standards for New Build Council Housing**

Emissions from buildings are responsible for approximately 20% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficient buildings reduce the demand for heat. Regardless of which system supplies a building's heating requirements, it is important that action is taken to limit the amount of energy that needs to be delivered to a new home to meet the heating demand to the best levels practicable.

It is important to ensure that demand for heat in our housing stock is as low as possible, to meet our fuel poverty obligations and to protect consumers from high energy costs and cold homes. The Scottish Government are reviewing the energy standards which are included in Building Regulations. These will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings and include measures in support of the move to low carbon and renewable heat.

The council will make a strong commitment to ensuring that our future new build housing stock is as energy efficient as possible. It is proposed that all new build council housing stock are designed and constructed to meet the requirements to achieve an A – Rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in terms of both the building's 'energy efficiency rating', and the building's 'environmental impact rating', which shows the buildings CO2 emissions. In addition

to this it is proposed that all future new build council housing stock should meet all 8 standards to achieve the current Scottish Building Standards “Silver” Plus Standard.

### 9.10 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

In some of the most recent new build council housing developments, infrastructure has been provided to enable householders to charge their electric vehicles. The aim will be to make this standard as far as possible given the limitations on energy capacity. Electric vehicle owners with off-street parking are able to access funding for their own charge point and should be encouraged to do so where possible. New developments will also be required to adopt new building standards which set out the number of EV charge points in new developments <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/electric-vehicle-charge-points-for-new-buildings/>

### 9.11 Meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing in West Lothian Council Housing Stock

The Scottish Government Guidance for Social Landlords on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) was introduced in March 2014 and encouraged landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. The first milestone for social landlords to meet for social rented homes was 31 December 2020. A second milestone was confirmed in June 2019, for social rented houses to meet by December 2032 (EESH2). Decarbonising the existing housing stock and meeting the EESH2 milestones will present significant challenges for the Council. It should be noted that as with the council’s non-domestic buildings the existing council housing stock, at least in the short to medium term, is unlikely to reach a net zero-carbon position and that there will be a requirement to offset some emissions to achieve net-zero.

The Housing Capital Investment Programme will focus on the elements in the route map below to meet the EESH2 standards. As time moves forward and as innovations in technology allow, further solutions may be investigated. Solutions to be explored will be around heat recovery technology, such as waste water, flue gas, and ventilation. Other elements which will be explored include floor insulation, Internal Wall Insulation where technically feasible, and provision of LED light bulbs and lighting.

#### Route Map to EESH2 for Council Housing

Year	Lofts	Walls	Heating	Windows & Doors
2025	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system	All are double glazed
2032	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors
2040	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors

2045	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system – low carbon solution	Triple glazed windows High performance doors
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### 9.12 Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS:ABS)

The council's HEEPS:ABS continues to be the main tool available for providing energy efficiency measures to the owner-occupier and private rented sector and we will continue to allocate housing capital programme funding to council owned properties included in an Area Based Scheme.

As the HEEPS:ABS is a Scottish Government initiative and budget allocations are determined by them on an annual basis it is not possible to detail the yearly approach to the Area Based Schemes for the period of the LHS as future budget levels are unknown. A key action for this LHS will be to maximise available funding sources for Area Based Schemes from both the Scottish Government as well as utility companies.

Any HEEPS: ABS funding the council receives is used to support home owners. The main focus of HEEPS: ABS is to address and reduce levels of fuel poverty, and officers assess the streets proposed to be included to determine the most vulnerable households to fuel poverty; this is based on information from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Register, Council Tax Banding and Home Analytics.

### 9.13 Fuel Poverty in West Lothian

According to the Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019, A household is in fuel poverty if:

- (a) the fuel costs necessary for the home in which members of the household live are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income, and
- (b) after deducting such fuel costs, benefits received for a care need or disability (if any) and the household's childcare costs (if any), the household's remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living for members of the household.

Targets for fuel poverty were set in 2019 as part of the above Act. The target is that by 2040, as far as reasonably possible no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty and, in any event:

- (a) no more than 5% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty,
- (b) no more than 1% of households in Scotland are in extreme fuel poverty,
- (c) the median fuel poverty gap of households in Scotland in fuel poverty is no more than £250 adjusted in accordance with section 5(5) to take account of changes in the value of money.

**Source: Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019**

The Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-19 (published in 2021) estimated that 14,000 households in West Lothian were in fuel poverty, this is 18% of all households. This compares

with 15,000 in 2016-2018. However, the recent rises in energy costs means that numbers of households currently in fuel poverty are likely to be considerably higher and the numbers will increase further without significant interventions.

Many people are now working from home and for some people there have been extended periods of home schooling. More and more appliances require more and more charging.

Under current plans gas boilers will stop being fitted in new build homes from 2024. This means the majority of homes in this area will move to electric heating. This is more energy efficient (in terms of Kilowatts used) and better for carbon emissions, however the costs are higher with electricity than gas, therefore a fabric first approach is key to ensure the level of insulation within houses is sufficient to mitigate the higher costs.

All rented properties, regardless of tenancy period, will need to have an EPC of at least band C by 31 March 2025. This should mean properties are more energy efficient.

Some gas alternatives for heating are being trialled including a Hydrogen blended gas. With the recent price cap increase it may be the case that rather than electricity costs reducing to take over from gas it will be gas costs that rise until they meet the cost of electricity. It is unlikely that position on fuel poverty will improve anytime soon.

#### **9.14 The Impact of Fuel Poverty**

Socio-economic factors play a key role in the individual experience of the cost of living crisis. Those groups that will be disproportionately affected includes:

- Low income households – among the worst affected households are those on low incomes. Lower income households spend disproportionately on energy costs. The Institute of Fiscal Studies research indicates that the poorest tenth of households require 4.8% of their budget for gas, and the worst off tenth of this group spend an average of 12%, meaning the increase in energy prices will affect the lowest income groups substantially more than others.
- Families - Research conducted by Loughborough University and funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that families are spending in the region of an extra £120 on energy bills each month.
- People with a disability or long-term health condition who face higher energy bills - On average, the extra costs including food, energy and specialist items incurred by a disabled person is the equivalent of half their income.

Minority Ethnic Groups - The new Economics Foundation thinktank recently stated that people from Black, Asian and other ethnic minority households may feel the impact of the rising cost living more acutely than white households. This may be attributed to the fact that BAME households tend to be larger and with a higher proportion of younger household members, resulting in higher living costs.

#### **9.15 Mechanisms for Tackling Fuel Poverty**

West Lothian Advice Shop Energy Advice provide advice on alleviating fuel poverty. The advice and information offered, like all the services offered by the Advice Shop, is free to all

residents of West Lothian including home owners, private tenants and landlords. They provide help and guidance on all aspects of domestic fuel related issues:

- Tariff comparisons – better deals mean lower costs but these are currently very restricted.
- Energy Efficiency Advice – to decrease fuel costs
- Fuel Grants – one-off payments of £100 are currently being administered to households experiencing fuel poverty or at risk of disconnection from supply. To date over 1400 households have been supported with grants totalling £147, 975
- A new fuel grant was launched in Summer 2022 to households with a disabled family member where they have been disproportionately impacted by rising energy costs due to extra costs such as mains powered equipment or the need to keep heating at a constant level.
- Simple online application forms to apply for support through cash payments including energy grants.
- Grant/Loans for Energy Efficient Upgrades – to increase energy efficiency
- Help from External Partners – to apply for grants and fuel vouchers
- Budgeting Advice – help clients better manage their money/prioritise
- Benefit Health Checks – income maximisation/benefit entitlement advice
- Income/Expenditure forms – to show suppliers affordability when negotiating payment plans

Whilst many of these mechanisms worked well in the past, energy prices are rising so quickly that they are limited in what they can achieve. Going forward, the focus will be on making homes as energy efficient as they can be and encouraging people at risk of fuel poverty to access any funding and support available.

### **Issues**

- WLC will require to coordinate the development of Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) by 2023, this will require a range of partners to be involved.
- Competing priorities for funding for energy efficiency measures (meeting EESSH2) and increasing costs of new build council housing that should be as energy efficient as possible.
- Meeting the timescales for EESSH 2 (2032) and net zero (2045) for all WLC housing
- Open space in new housing developments should be high quality, promote biodiversity and be well maintained.
- Major increase in fuel costs will result in more people in fuel poverty.
- Time limits on the energy price cap for both domestic and business use.

### **Priorities**

- Engagement with partners to develop an LHEES
- Design guide will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that new council homes meet required standards on energy efficiency.
- Consider opportunities for biodiversity in council new build developments including allotments and orchards
- Ensure people at risk of fuel poverty receive advice and assistance



- Securing funding to meet required targets and standards
- Continue commitment to assist households at risk of fuel poverty

### **Actions**

- West Lothian Council will develop a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy during 2023
- Improve community wellbeing through provision of allotments and orchards in new council development
- The council will continue to invest in housing stock to meet EESSH2 by 2032.
- The Anti-Poverty Strategy will be reviewed during 2023. This will give an opportunity for partners to carry out consultation with service users to shape anti-poverty activity going forward
- The council will produce a revised and updated Employers Requirement Design Guide for council housing as part of the council's pathway to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions

## 10 Theme 7 - House Condition

<b>LHS Strategic Outcome:</b>	<b>7.1</b> House condition will be improved in the social and private rented sector through the requirement to meet statutory obligations.
<b>National Outcome:</b>	Ensuring quality in all of the housing stock in West Lothian contributes toward the following National Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe</li> <li>• We are healthy and active</li> <li>• We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally</li> <li>• We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment</li> <li>• We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination</li> </ul>
<b>LOIP Outcome:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a partnership approach to achieving net zero carbon</li> <li>• Developing nature based solutions, carbon off-setting and energy generation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Context</b></p> <p>The Council and RSLs are bound by statutory requirements to meet house condition standards in relation to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH2). Home owners and Private Landlords have responsibility for repair and maintenance of their homes. Whilst there are small pockets of poor condition in some private sector housing, house condition in West Lothian compares favourably with the Scottish average.</p>	

### 10.1 Introduction

The provision of high quality, warm, affordable homes contributes toward achieving better outcomes for the population of West Lothian, going well beyond the direct “bricks and mortar” and physical benefits.

Holding robust stock condition data is one strand in West Lothian Council’s Housing Asset Management Plan 2023/24 -2027/28 (and partner RSLs plans), to ensure an understanding of both the internal and external condition and type of social rented housing stock. This will enable the Council and it’s RSL partners to:

- (i) Prioritise investment in the existing housing stock to ensure good quality, warm, secure and sustainable homes
- (ii) Inform cyclical maintenance and compliance programmes (including gas maintenance, gas safety, electrical compliance, gutter cleaning/repair, landscape maintenance/improvements) to ensure safe, attractive homes and neighbourhoods
- (iii) Remove pressure on responsive repairs and adaptation budgets through a planned and innovative approach to component replacement

- (iv) Ensure continued compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- (v) Assist compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH 2) and the council's net zero Carbon Reduction strategy
- (vi) Inform 30-year Life Cycle Costs (LCC) and in turn the Capital Investment budget, longer-term scenario and business planning
- (vii) Improve the quality of housing across all tenures, through extension of improvement schemes to owner occupiers and factored owners
- (viii) Inform the council's future Asset Management Strategy, including the acquisition, stock disposal, remodelling and regeneration strategy.

West Lothian Council has a programme of stock condition surveys of the council's stock by with the planned rolling programme of surveys/updates spanning 5 years.

In addition, officers within the council are trained to carry out Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's). This approach serves to build detailed understanding of the council assets in terms of quality and compliance with both SHQS and EESH 2.

## **10.2 Housing Stock Profile**

The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS), published on an annual basis, provides data on stock condition across Scotland based upon a three-year rolling programme of surveys. The SHCS is now part of the National Household survey linking experiences of residents with property condition. The SHCS examines house condition in terms of the extent of disrepair - Any disrepair, Critical disrepair, Extensive disrepair, Urgent disrepair, Below Tolerable Standard and compliance with SHQS. The survey also considers a range of other factors including adaptations.

It should however be noted that due to the relatively small sample sizes, the data contained within the study requires to be treated with caution.

As recognised by the SHCS, the age of construction and build form of a dwelling has consequences for energy performance, house condition (especially in mixed tenure flats), heating affordability and potential for improvement.

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 West Lothian Council owned 14,243 self-contained properties that are within the scope of both SHQS and EESH. This relates to 5,301 flats (37%), including 3,882 "4-in a block" flats and 8,942 houses (63%). On average, 36% of Scottish households were living in flats and 64% living in houses as per the SHCS 2017-2019.

National average figures from the SCHS 2017-2019 state that over two thirds of Scotland's dwellings were built after 1945 (70%), however, the figure reported for West Lothian in the SHCS was 88%. Approximately 83% of the Council's own stock is over 40 years old having been built before 1980.

With respect to construction type, West Lothian Council owns a number of properties that are of a "non-traditional" housing type which has implications for meeting compliance measures, especially EESH 2 (see section on EESH compliance).

The overall condition of housing stock in West Lothian continues to perform well in relation to the Scottish average with owner occupied housing, social rented housing and private rented housing showing levels of disrepair below the Scottish average according to the Scottish House Condition survey 2017-2019

### **10.3 Private Housing and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard**

Although the SHQS applies only to the social rented sector, it can be used as a measure of quality across all tenures. According to the SHCS, 33% of the total housing stock in West Lothian is non-compliant with the SHQS compared to a Scottish average of 41%. 35% of owner-occupied housing stock is non-compliant, compared to 41% average for Scotland. For private rented housing 21% of the housing stock is non-compliant compared to 52% average for Scotland.

For the duration of this Local Housing Strategy, West Lothian Council will focus on completing the stock condition survey programme on council housing stock, including external and common areas. This enables data to be gathered on the external condition of owner-occupied properties in mixed tenure blocks. This information is used to inform common factoring repairs/improvements and external wall insulation programmes. The Council will also work closely with partner RSL's to share data on stock condition including survey status/results and compliance with both SHQS and EESSH, for stock located within West Lothian.

In relation to private housing, the council will rely in the short term on data produced by the SHCS and in the medium term the future monitoring measures introduced with respect to the proposed new tenure neutral Housing Quality Standard.

With grant assistance from the Scottish Government, the Council and RSL's also operate an Open Market Acquisition Scheme (OMAS) which involves purchasing properties on the open market and where required bringing them up to council standards. This not only contributes to increasing housing supply but improving housing condition across all sectors while consolidating social landlord and council ownership in key areas.

### **10.4 Below Tolerable Standard Housing**

According to the SHCS 2017-2019, in West Lothian, 2% of the housing stock is below the tolerable standard (BTS). This is the same as the Scottish average and the Council has statutory powers to enforce owners to address stock which is below BTS.

There are five closing orders served on properties and a further 3 which have works notices for repairs. The properties are located in a number of settlements throughout West Lothian.

There are also pockets of disrepair in some settlements including Blackburn, Bathgate and Fauldhouse, where the responsibility for the repair and maintenance of the properties lies with private owners and where the council may be in the minority in terms of ownership.

To ensure compliance with Section 85(1) (duty to close, demolish or improve houses which do not meet the tolerable standard) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (c. 26), West Lothian Council's has a mechanism with respect to BTS stock. The aim is to work with owners to try and achieve an agreed solution, utilise the Tenant Management Scheme (TMS) to agree to implement much needed repairs, use statutory powers including repair, demolition notices (where there are immediate Health and Safety concerns), sale of land/property, rehousing of residents and as a last resort use of Compulsory Purchase Order powers (CPO), where agreement cannot be reached with owners. The 46 homes at Deans South in Livingston were sold to a private developer and await demolition pending agreement with the other owners in the estate.

With regard to the private rented sector more research requires to be done on house condition. Enquiries with respect to the "Repairing Standard" have however increased between 2020 and 2021 with 50 enquiries in 2020 and 81 enquiries in 2021. The enquiries mainly related to leaks, roof repairs, dampness/condensation, heating, wear and tear, electrical and external render.

### **10.5 The Scheme of Assistance**

Homeowners have responsibility for maintaining and repairing their properties. Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 2006 replaced the system of improvement and repair grants set out in the 1987 and 2001 Housing (Scotland) Acts. The 2006 Act provided councils with powers to help owners repair, maintain, improve and adapt their homes by providing information, advice and practical help. A suite of leaflets is available on the council's website to provide information on key aspects of disrepair and how to deal with them. Furthermore, the council contributes to the "Under One Roof" national website which has been developed by the Scottish Housing Network to provide information to owners on how to maintain and improve their buildings.

The Scottish Government provides grant assistance to help homeowners and private rented tenants with mobility issues to adapt their properties in order to help them remain in their own homes for as long as possible. Examples of adaptations include stair lifts, wet floor showers and ramp access to front/rear doors.

Further information on the Scheme of Assistance can be found on the council's website <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/44705/Scheme-of-Assistance>

### **10.6 Tenement Management Scheme**

The Council currently offers advice and assistance to owners to help them to repair and maintain their homes and common areas. In 2021, there was a further review of the SOA to consider the use of the Tenement Management Scheme (TMS), under the Tenements (Scotland) Act 2014 to manage common repairs proposed by the Council in mixed tenure tenements (two or more flats).

The TMS can be used where there are gaps or conflicts in title deeds with respect to common repairs and maintenance and enables decisions (via a meeting and vote) to be taken on a range of issues where title deeds are unclear including repairs (including door entry systems),

how works are procured and how costs are apportioned between owners. The TMS can be used by a local authority as an owner for works not covered by a factoring agreement where there is lack of clarity in title deeds. Once a scheme decision is made, owners become responsible for the cost of carrying out any maintenance or repairs needed.

While a vehicle for the council, as an owner, to obtain agreement of other owners on repairs and maintenance, the TMS is closely linked to factoring arrangements across West Lothian. The Council is seeking to undertake a comprehensive review of its factoring service in West Lothian Council and understand the full position across West Lothian with respect to factoring, recognising that high quality well managed factoring services can greatly contribute toward improving housing quality, especially in mixed tenure blocks.

The number of properties that are likely to require to revert to the TMS is relatively small, however West Lothian Council proposes to use the scheme in key areas to undertake repairs and maintenance and improve housing quality where the title deeds are silent or unclear on the areas outlined. Where an owner is unable or unwilling to pay their legal share or where that owner cannot be found, the Council in its capacity as an owner can pursue the debt under a TMS.

Implementation of the TMS in key areas, and the review of the Council's factoring service including agreements with owner occupiers, will assist in improving housing quality and the standard of services to owner occupiers across West Lothian. However, given the changes to the Scheme of Assistance and wider financial pressures on individuals and families, it is likely to be more difficult to obtain owner agreement to participate in common repair/improvement schemes.

### **10.7 Housing Renewal Area**

Following consultation, a local authority can declare a Housing Renewal Area (HRA) if it concludes that a significant number of houses in the area are substandard. If declared, an HRA action plan must be developed to improve the area. If an HRA is declared, the local authority has powers to serve notices to home owners, ordering them to bring their properties up to a reasonable standard or, in some cases, demolish them. As part of the HRA action plan, local authorities should also include information about compensation and help available through the Scheme of Assistance.

At present, amenity powers under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 are not applicable as West Lothian has no Housing Renewal Areas. Owners can be excluded from the housing renewal areas if the work can proceed without them. The Council has limited power to intervene in cases where homes and gardens are untidy, but options include:

- Contacting West Lothian Council's planning enforcement department and having a Planning Amenity Notice Served on a property.
- Contacting WLC's Planning Enforcement under the High Hedges legislation.

- If the property is empty, the Council may be able to provide advice to the owner to bring it back into use.

In addition to the policy for declaring a HRA if there are areas of concern where engagement with owners has not enabled land to be acquired through agreement, the Council can intervene by using CPO powers, as a last resort.

It is recognised that stock condition in the private sector is complex. The Council will continue to use the statutory powers available while working with all agencies, RSL partners, private developers, landlords and individual owners to reach a solution to areas that are of concern in terms of both house and environmental condition.

### 10.8 Scottish Housing Quality Standard

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard attainment is continually reviewed as stock condition changes over time and as further data is gathered through the rolling programme of stock condition surveys, compliance is continually verified.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the total self-contained stock owned and managed by West Lothian Council was 14,027 units. Compliance with SHQS was 89.84%, compared with the Scottish average performance in 2021/22 of 74.26% of self-contained stock meeting the SHQS standard. In 2021/22, West Lothian Council (WLC) was ranked 4 out of 26 Scottish local authorities in terms of SHQS compliance - an improvement of 16 places from 2020/21.

Of the 1,425 council homes not meeting SHQS as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 306 properties were exempt from SHQS. A total of 864 properties were in abeyance from SHQS - and a total of 255 properties failed SHQS, and these related to Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH).

The Council aims for as close as possible to 100% SHQS compliance, with a target figure taking account of exemptions to end March 2023 of 99.65%. The focus in the timeframe of the Local Housing Strategy is on tackling the abeyances and failures through West Lothian Council Housing Capital Investment Programmes of work, with emphasis on a fabric first approach, including heating and energy efficiency measures.

### 10.9 Planned Investment in WLC housing

The five year Housing Capital Investment Programme for 2023/24 to 2027/28 will see total investment of £157.972 million, with significant resources invested in the creation of new homes and a strong focus on the maintenance of quality standards across the housing stock.

Planned Investment in WLC Housing

<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
New Housing Supply	2,105	11,085	11,585	1,735	735	<b>27,245</b>

<b>Investment Area</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Major Refurbishment	182	0	0	0	400	<b>582</b>
Major Elemental Upgrades	5,492	6,781	5,025	6,368	6,873	<b>30,539</b>
Planned Programmes	7,906	8,302	8,716	9,153	9,610	<b>43,687</b>
Environmental Upgrading	275	289	303	319	334	<b>1520</b>
Statutory Compliance	10,542	10,062	10,566	11,093	11,649	<b>53,912</b>
Miscellaneous	90	94	97	101	105	<b>487</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>26,592</b>	<b>36,613</b>	<b>36,292</b>	<b>28,769</b>	<b>29,706</b>	<b>157,972</b>

The proposed programme will see continued investment to increase housing supply, while external upgrading will continue in areas identified with greatest need and an increasing emphasis will be placed on the new requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2).

The Housing Capital Investment Programme forms a key part in the Council's longer term Asset Management Strategy. Investment plans will continue to be updated annually to reflect actual costs and to link financial planning to longer term business planning.

### Issues

- Some stock will require significant levels of investment to meet standards
- Competing priorities between investment in existing housing stock and new build affordable housing
- Quality of owner occupied and private rented stock especially in mixed tenure communal flats
- Limited West Lothian specific data on stock condition.

### Priorities

- Complete WLC house condition survey
- Develop and refine 30-year LCC and planned maintenance programmes
- Continue to deliver planned and cyclical improvements
- Deliver improvements to meet EESH 2
- Continue to work with the Tenants Panel and improve levels of customer satisfaction
- Continue to use SHCS as reference for all tenures and work with RSL partners to gather and report on West Lothian specific condition, SHQS and EESH data.

### Key Actions:

- Continue to ensure all social rented homes continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)



- Improve stock condition in mixed tenure blocks and estates
- Ensure owners and private landlords are fully informed and engaged over repairs and maintenance issues and responsibilities
- Work with our RSL partners to continue to improve data gathering and intelligence regarding stock condition across West Lothian
- Review WLC factoring service policies and procedures

## 11.0 Key Partners

- West Lothian Tenants and Residents
- Council Teams - Social Policy, Finance and Property Services, Operational Services, Corporate Services, Education Services, Planning and Economic Development
- RSL partners
- Local Equality Groups
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scotland's Housing Network (SHN)
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- Care Inspectorate
- Community Councils
- Disability West Lothian
- NHS Lothian
- Other Local Authorities
- Bethany Christian Trust
- Women's Aid
- Cyrenians
- Family Law Centre
- Health and Social Care Partnership
- Home Aid
- Hubco East
- Jobcentre plus
- Open Door
- Richmond Fellowship
- SAMH
- Scottish Futures Trust
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Housing Regulator
- Scottish Prison Service
- The Rock Trust
- Tenant Participation Advisory Service
- Tenants Information Service
- Victim Support
- West Lothian Community Councils
- West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Services
- West Lothian Equality Groups
- West Lothian Housing Providers' Forum
- West Lothian Youth Action Project
- West Lothian Youth Inclusion Project

## 12.0 References

### Section 1

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 [www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2001/10/content](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2001/10/content)  
Registers of Scotland <https://www.ros.gov.uk/https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics>  
Scottish Government National Outcomes: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes>  
National Health and Well Being Outcomes: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-health-wellbeing-outcomes-framework/>  
West Lothian Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) LOIP  
West Lothian Corporate Plan 2023-2028  
Draft West Lothian Outcomes Improvement Plan 2023 -2028  
Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2023-2028  
Housing Customer and Building Services Management Plan 2022-2023  
Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023-2028  
West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2022/23  
West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018  
West Lothian Anti- Poverty Strategy 2023-2028 <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/44745/West-Lothian-Anti-Poverty-Strategy>  
West Lothian Climate Change Strategy  
Private Rent Sector Statistics <https://www.gov.scot/publications/private-sector-rent-statistics-scotland-2010-2020/pages/28/>  
Scottish Government Housing Statistics stock by Tenure <https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-stock-by-tenure/>

### Section 2

Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

### Section 3

National Registers of Scotland: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html>  
<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/households/household-projections>  
West Lothian Anti- Poverty Strategy 2023-2028 <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/44745/West-Lothian-Anti-Poverty-Strategy> <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/44745/West-Lothian-Anti-Poverty-Strategy>  
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West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report 2021/22  
Local Child Poverty Action Report 2021-2022  
Housing Stock [https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#dwell\\_num\\_plots5](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/west-lothian-council-profile.html#dwell_num_plots5)  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-stock-by-tenure/>  
Scottish Housing Regulator <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/>

### Section 4 – Housing Delivery

Housing statistics quarterly update: new housebuilding and affordable housing supply  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/housing-statistics-for-scotland-new-house-building/>  
The Planning Scotland Act 2019 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/contents/enacted>  
West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/LDP>  
West Lothian Local Development Plan <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/69788/>  
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## **Section 5 – Private Rented Sector in West Lothian**

The Assured Tenancy Regime (1989) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/50/contents>  
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The Repairing Standard (2007) – Housing Scotland Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/1/contents>  
Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/14/contents>  
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## **Section 6 – Placemaking**

Scottish Planning Policy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/>  
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## **Section 7- Preventing and Addressing Homelessness**

Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014  
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## **Section 8: Health and Social Care Integration and Specialist Provision**

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/9/contents/enacted>  
West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2019-2023 <https://westlothianhscp.org.uk/article/43932/West-Lothian-IJB-Strategic-Plan-2019-23>  
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<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wlafcc>

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/evidence-review-accommodation-needs-gypsy-travellers-scotland/documents/>

### **Section 9: Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change**

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019

Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018–2032

The Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019

The Heat in Buildings Strategy 2021

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH 1&2)

The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017 (update due in 2022)

The National Planning Framework (NPF4)

Hydrogen Policy Statement 2020

Housing to 2040 (2021)

Tenements (Scotland) Act 2004

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland 2019

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### **Section 10: House Condition**

West Lothian Council's Housing Asset Management Plan 2023-28

Scottish Housing Quality Standard

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The Energy Efficiency Standard on Social Housing

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/home-energy-and-fuel-poverty/energy-efficiency-in-social-housing/>

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## 13.0 Legislation and National Outcomes

### Relevant Legislation

<b>Statutory Requirements</b>
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Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) and (EESH2)
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Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
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<b>Private Rented Sector Regulatory Framework</b>
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The Assured Tenancy Regime (1989)
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The Repairing Standard (2007)
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## National Outcomes and Targets – links to the LHS

Housing and Regeneration Outcomes Framework
The Draft Infrastructure Investment Plan (2021-2025)
National Planning Framework
Housing to 2040
A Scotland for the future: Opportunities and Challenges of Scotland's changing population
National Well Being Outcomes
A Place to Stay, A Place Called Home: A Strategy for the Private Rented Sector in Scotland
New Deal for Tenants
Ending Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan
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