



SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2012 – 2017

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to the Panel on the finalised West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2012-17 and to seek any further comments on the draft.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The panel is invited to note the outcome of the recent consultation and agree that the West Lothian Local Housing Strategy should be submitted to Council Executive on 21st February 2012 for approval and thereafter formal submission to Scottish Government. A Summary of the LHS is appended and the full version is available at <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/downloadaddoc/1799479/2324734/LHSfull2011>.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs Being honest, open and accountable Providing equality of opportunities Developing employees Making best use of our resources Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires that the Council produces a Local Housing Strategy. A Strategic Environmental Assessment pre-screening report for the Local Housing Strategy has been submitted to Scottish Government. An Equality Impact Assessment was conducted on the Draft Local Housing Strategy. The recommendations have been taken on board in developing the final LHS. A Health Impact Assessment has also been carried out on the draft LHS.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	N/A
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Performance indicators have been included in the LHS.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The Local Housing Strategy has strong links with the Single Outcome Agreement. The main outcomes it links to are Outcomes 7, 8, 9, 10,11 12 and 13.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Resources will be required to implement the strategy and a resource plan will be developed, primarily through the Housing Capital Programme.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	May 2011, November 2011
VIII	Other consultations	Consultation has taken place with a number of stakeholders. The Tenants' Editorial Panel was consulted on the content of the Draft Local Housing Strategy. The Local Housing Strategy has been developed with input of officers from a range of Council Services including Social Policy and Environmental Services

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to develop and publish a Local Housing Strategy (LHS). It is the main housing planning document for the council and supports the council's single outcome agreement with central government. The LHS sets out the Council's strategic direction to help meet housing need and demand and prioritise investment in housing and related services across the local authority area. The West Lothian Local Housing Strategy covers all housing and housing need across the area. It relates to home-owners, Council and Housing Association Tenants as well as tenants of private landlords. It covers previously separate strategies on Homelessness, Housing Support and Fuel Poverty. It has a close relationship with council planning policies and in particular the council's Affordable Housing Policy. The Panel will recall that the six key themes agreed for the Strategy are Meeting Housing Need and Demand, Housing Options, Independent Living, Improving Communities, House Condition, Fuel Poverty and Climate Change.

Progress

Since the last report to the Panel in November 2011, further consultation on the Local Housing Strategy has taken place.. The Draft Local Housing Strategy was made available on the Council's website from 8th November 2011 to 9th January 2012. A number of comments were received that have been analysed and taken account of in the finalised LHS. In addition, meetings have taken place with a range of groups and organisations and a seminar was held with Housing Associations in December. Scottish Government provided a number of comments on the draft Local Housing Strategy and these too have helped to inform the finalised LHS. The comments from this consultation exercise are set out in appendix 1.

Consultation on the LHS

The draft Local Housing Strategy was available on the Council's website for consultation from 8th November 2011 to 9th January 2012. It was also available through the Communities of Practice website. Comments were received from a range of individuals, organisations and groups. The majority of comments were supportive of the assessment, conclusions, recommendations and proposed outcomes identified in the Local Housing Strategy.

A Health Impact Assessment was also carried out on the Local Housing Strategy. This has helped to inform some of the linkages between services and identify the impact of the Strategy on the health and well being of a number of groups of people.

As noted above, an Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out and the LHS was discussed at the Wider Disability Forum where a number of significant points were raised. The draft LHS was issued to the, Gender Forum Race Equality Forum and to the LGBT Forum.

Proposed Outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy

As a result of the consultation and research eight desirable outcomes have been identified and supported from the LHS. These outcomes link to West Lothian Council's single outcome agreement and will be worked towards over the next five years;

- People in West Lothian can find a suitable place to live and have quality housing options available to them
- Homelessness is prevented in West Lothian as far as possible. Effective advice and support is put in place for people who become homeless.
- People living in West Lothian can access the appropriate range of care and support services enabling them to live independently in their own homes where they choose to do so.
- Our communities are attractive, safe places to live and work.
- House Condition in West Lothian is improved: In the social rented sector this will be achieved by investment by the Council and by Registered Social Landlords in the housing they own and manage. In the private sector, the Council will encourage home owners to take responsibility for repair and maintenance of their property.
- People in West Lothian live in energy efficient housing.
- People facing fuel poverty can access the help and support they need.
- Improve sustainability of existing housing

Proposed Recommendations of the Local Housing Strategy

To achieve these outcomes, the following recommendations are made in the Local Housing Strategy.

- At least 1000 new affordable homes will be built between 2012-2017

- The Council and its partners will continue to provide housing options for people facing homelessness and provide the necessary support.
- People in West Lothian can access a range of support to live independently where they choose to do so.
- We want people to have pride in their communities and will continue to support Community Safety services, regeneration projects and new build community facilities.
- The Council and Housing Associations will continue to work towards meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for their houses by 2015.
- The Council will continue to provide advice and information to owners in regard to the repair and maintenance of their property
- The Council will develop its approach to the private sector to enable regulation to be used effectively
- Services will continue to be provided to assist those people facing fuel poverty with appropriate signposting to energy advice and information. Projects will be developed that are appropriate for West Lothian that aim to reduce carbon emissions.

Next Steps

It is proposed that the Local Housing Strategy will be submitted to the Council Executive on 21st February 2012 for approval. Thereafter the Local Housing Strategy will be submitted to Scottish Government by the end of February. It will be the subject of peer review managed by Scottish Government. The Local Housing Strategy will be reviewed and updated on annual basis.

E. CONCLUSION

The Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 sets out the key, outcomes and recommendations for housing and related services for the next 5 years. The Local Housing Strategy will be submitted to Scottish Government and then reviewed on annual basis to monitor the actions and progress towards outcomes identified.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Report to Services for the Community Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panel November 2011 Draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 consultation

<http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Db%97p%7D%8D>

Draft West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017.

Report to Services for the Community Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panel June 2011 Development of a new Local Housing Strategy 2011

<http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Db%8Fn%7B%http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25093503/128C>

Report to Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel September 2010 Development of a new Local Housing Strategy

<http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Db%94m%7C%8B>

Scottish Government and Cosla Local Planning Strategies- Supporting Improvement

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25093503/12>

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2003-2008

West Lothian Local Housing Strategy Update 2007

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010)

South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Proposed Plan

http://www.sesplan.gov.uk/docs/Proposed_Plan_Package.pdf

South East Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment

http://www.sesplan.gov.uk/docs/supporting_docs/sesplan_hnda.PDF

Appendices/Attachments: two

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