

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver's coat of arms. The crest includes a crown with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a grizzly bear), and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'A NE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 6

Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 -29

Falkirk Council

Title: Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 -29

Meeting: Executive

Date: 17 October 2023

Submitted by: Director of Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024 -29 which sets out our strategic investment priorities to meet housing need and demand over the next 5 years. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan supports the Council Plan “Supporting stronger and healthier communities” by providing good quality affordable housing and delivering services that meet the needs of those who live in them.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Executive:

- (1) Approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-29 (Appendices 1 and 2) to be submitted to Scottish Government.**
- (2) Note that officers will adapt the Strategic Housing Investment Plan to maximise available resources and the supply of affordable housing as required throughout the year.**

3. Climate Change Implications

- 3.1 Through the high standard of energy efficiency required in new build housing, and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, projects in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Climate change is a priority in our Local Housing Strategy, Council new build programme and Housing Investment Programme. Registered Social Landlord partners are also prioritising climate change in their own future plans.
- 3.2 From 1 April 2024 building warrant applications for new homes will be required to include zero direct emissions heating systems. This change is being introduced earlier, 1 December 2023, for projects applying for Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant (those in the Strategic Housing

Investment Plan). Projects will be prohibited from installing direct emissions heating systems unless a valid building warrant is already in place prior to that date or there are compelling reasons why this would not be appropriate.

4. Background

- 4.1 The annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan sets out our strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over the next 5 years.
- 4.2 The Scottish Government provides Councils with an indication of grant funding (the 'Resource Planning Assumption') to deliver the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. The Resource Planning Assumption for 2023-24 is £12.550m. Delivering the affordable housing programme across the area requires the Council, as Strategic Housing Authority, to work closely with Registered Social Landlords to distribute the funding across eligible projects, to achieve a robust and balanced programme.
- 4.3 Sites in the programme are either owned by the Council (General Fund or Housing Revenue Account), purchased by a Registered Social Landlord, or made available through Affordable Housing Policy as part of the Council's Local Development Plan. This requires private developer sites planning to build more than 20 homes to deliver a proportion of affordable housing (discussed more fully below). The programme also includes the Buy Back scheme.
- 4.4 The increased construction costs experienced through Brexit and the Covid pandemic have continued and are now being further exacerbated by increasing-inflation. We are trying to deliver projects as close to budget as possible, with 'value engineering' taking place to scrutinise specifications and costings. Savings have been identified through this process for future sites.
- 4.5 The context of the housing market impacts on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan. Information from the Registers of Scotland indicates that from quarter 3 2022-23 to quarter 1 2023-24, there has been a 13% fall in the number of house sales in Falkirk Council area. This has reduced the number of homes available to purchase through the Buy Back Scheme in 2023.

5. Progress and Achievements – 2022-23 Programme

- 5.1 Falkirk's strong affordable housing programme, and particularly progress on the Council new build site at Woodend Farm, enabled us to spend our full Resource Planning Assumption of £12.586m and an additional £2.738m (22%) grant. This took the total spend to £15.324m in 2022-23.

Table 1: Affordable housing delivered 2022-23

Type of affordable housing	No. units
Council new build	0
Registered Social Landlord new build	48
Council buybacks	83
Registered Social Landlord buy backs	20
Scottish Government First Home Fund*	2*
Scottish Government Open Market Shared Equity	0
Scottish Government New Supply Shared Equity	11
TOTAL	164

*This initiative has now ended. The 2 units recorded are the final completions for this scheme

- 5.2 Table 1 shows the affordable homes provided across the area in 2022-23. This included 59 new builds, 103 Buy Backs and 2 completions from the Scottish Government's now closed First Home Fund, a low-cost home ownership initiative. To encourage Open Market Shared Equity purchases, we will publicise this scheme more widely, as set out in the Local Housing Strategy 2023/28.
- 5.3 The Council's Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Policy, supported by Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant funding, delivered 11 low-cost home ownership houses, for people who would otherwise be unable to afford a new property. All 11 houses were sold on a shared equity basis to local people, 5 of whom were key workers and 8 of whom were first time buyers. Affordability assessments were carried out and people purchased between a 60% and 80% share of their property, with the remaining equity share held by the Scottish Government.
- 5.4 Throughout 2022-23, we collaborated with Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership to deliver accommodation and services that will support people in their own homes. This helps to reduce cost and demand for social care. The Health and Social Care Partnership contributed to the Council new build site at Oakbank, which will deliver specialist housing provision.
- 5.5 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment highlights an acute need for larger properties and full wheelchair accessible and ambulant properties. Through the 2022-23 Buy Back programme, the Council purchased 5 four-bedroom properties and one bungalow, to help meet this need.

6. Future Programme – Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-29

Funding Arrangements

- 6.1 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan is adaptable and may change in response to factors such as, changing financial resources, economic changes, housing need and demand and market variations. This means that projects will be brought forward, deferred, added or removed as necessary.

6.2 Scottish Government requires the Strategic Housing Investment Plan to be submitted by 27 October 2023. The plan must include an auditable decision-making process. To achieve this, we applied a scoring matrix which takes account of the Council's priorities, including:

- strategic direction from the Local Housing Strategy
- particular strategic priorities such as regeneration and town centre development
- assessment of housing need
- project deliverability
- size, tenure and house type
- number of wheelchair accessible units
- sustainability and energy efficiency

6.3 Table 2 shows the Resource Planning Assumptions for 2024/25 and 2025/26. We have not yet been advised of the amounts for subsequent years and will plan on the basis that the budget will be maintained at 2025/26 levels or higher.

Table 2: Falkirk Council Grant Resource Planning Assumptions

Year	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
RPA	£12.594m	£12.802m	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc
RPA + 25%	£15.743m	£16.003m	Tbc	Tbc	Tbc

6.4 Scottish Government guidance requests that all local authorities prepare the programme on the basis of Resource Planning Assumption +25%. This over-programming helps ensure that spend and units are delivered. If it becomes clear throughout the year that an authority will not spend the Resource Planning Assumption amount, which is not uncommon, the Scottish Government will deduct the anticipated slippage and divert it to another local authority with capacity to spend before the end of the financial year.

6.5 Falkirk is in a good position to respond to and initiate work on other sites if this opportunity arises. We have developed a 'shadow' programme of sites to progress if planned project timescales slip (Appendix 1).

Projects

6.6 Appendix 1 outlines the proposed delivery programme across the 5 years which offers a balance between Council and Registered Social Landlord provision. Table 3 shows homes being delivered by Falkirk Council and Registered Social Landlords. The Council has nomination rights to between 50% and 100% on Registered Social Landlord provision in the programme.

Table 3: Proposed Projects for Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-29

Type	No. units	%	No. units	%
Council New Build social rent	322	24%	722	54%
Council Buybacks social rent	400	30%		
RSL* New Build/Reconfigure social rent	499	37%	524	39%
RSL* Buybacks social rent	25	2%		
Other tenures	100	7%	100	7%
Total	1,346	100%	1,346	100%

** Registered Social Landlord*

- 6.7 The Local Housing Strategy aims for 5% of properties to be fully wheelchair accessible. Table 4 shows the breakdown of new build homes. Almost 1/3 of the wheelchair properties are larger (3+ bedrooms) to help meet the acute need for that client group.

Table 4: Proposed Council and RSL* New Build Property Types

	No.	%	No.	%		
Property type	Council		RSL*		Total	%
General needs	212	66%	516	86%	728	79%
Ambulant	82	25%	55	9%	137	15%
Wheelchair	28	9%	28	5%	56	6%
Total	322	100%	599	100%	921	100%

** Registered Social Landlord*

- 6.8 We are looking at opportunities with the Greener Grangemouth Masterplan, which involves town centre living and healthy net zero neighbourhoods. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan includes proposals for housing regeneration in Grangemouth, including Falkirk Council's housing stock and some new build as well as refurbishment of existing properties. We are developing proposals for an area identified for redevelopment and discussions with tenants, residents and stakeholders will take place over the next 6 months.
- 6.9 The Buy Back Scheme helps to meet housing demand and provide a steady supply of lets, particularly when there is a gap in newbuild completions. The average cost per unit has almost doubled to £110,749 in 2022-23 compared to £56,935 when the Scheme was introduced in 2013-14. The Housing Investment Programme currently provides £8.5m to help meet the target to purchase 80 properties. Paragon Housing Association aims to purchase 5 properties per year using around £400k of its funding.
- 6.10 Affordable housing can be delivered in a range of ways other than social rent. This 5-year programme includes a small proportion (7%) of mid-market rent and shared equity units on Affordable Housing Policy sites. These types of affordable housing help meet the range of housing need and help people to

move on from social rented homes. This approach is particularly beneficial in larger sites to offer mixed tenure types.

- 6.11 Falkirk Council's Affordable Housing Policy requires private housing sites over 20 homes to provide a percentage of the homes as affordable housing. This is an important way to provide affordable housing, as it is difficult for Registered Social Landlords to compete against developers on market housing sites. There are 10 Affordable Housing Policy sites in the 2024/29 Strategic Housing Investment Plan. This accounts for 325 of the 921 total newbuild units in the programme (35%), and over half of the total Registered Social Landlord newbuild homes (54%)
- 6.12 Our Affordable Housing Policy site priority is to work with a Registered Social Landlord to deliver affordable housing units on site. Social rent, mid-market rent and shared equity are all forms of affordable housing that require grant support. Due to pressures on funding, if grant is not available to fund delivery of these units, officers in Housing and Planning will negotiate an alternative. This could include taking a commuted sum which will then be re-invested in affordable housing in the local area. Appendix 1 shows that £1.622m of Affordable Housing Policy commuted sums is earmarked in 2025/26 to support developments in Denny and Bo'ness.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

- 6.13 The Council received an increased offer of grant totalling £2,396,728 from the Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund on 15 December 2021. The purpose of this fund is to unlock housing sites where the scale and nature of infrastructure costs makes affordable housing sites too expensive to deliver.
- 6.14 The grant funding will support the required improvements to the A803/ M80 junction 7, which must be carried out before the major housing sites in Banknock and Dennyloanhead can be built. Conditions of the grant include the completion of the road infrastructure works and delivery of around 265 affordable homes. Delays in progressing these sites will impact on costs as new build costs continue to rise.
- 6.15 Place Services are preparing the detailed design, tender and legal documentation to progress the project and are liaising with the project partners. This is a complex project and projected costs have increased since the funding was agreed in 2021.

7. Consultation

- 7.1 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan links to the Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy.

- 7.2 We work closely with our affordable housing providers, with Planning colleagues, and all Strategic Housing Investment Plan projects are sent to Scottish Water for consideration.
- 7.3 Consultation is undertaken on individual sites as part of the Planning process. Developing partners, Council new build team and Registered Social Landlords carry out consultation on each site with tenants, residents and communities.

8. Implications

Financial

- 8.1 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan is funded through a combination of Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant, Falkirk Council's Housing Revenue Account, Registered Social Landlord private finance, Second Homes Council Tax and Affordable Housing Policy commuted sums.

Resources

- 8.2 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan will be delivered from existing resources.

Legal

- 8.3 There are no legal implications anticipated.

Risks

- 8.4 The national review of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant resulted in a 16.9% increase in the amount of grant funding for each unit. However, the overall grant did not increase. This places additional strain on finances and there is a risk that fewer units receive grant funding.
- 8.5 Scottish Government requires us to over-programme our Resource Planning Assumption by 25%, however this additional 25% funding is not guaranteed and there is a risk that this is not available. For 2023/24 this equates to circa £3m. If this additional funding is not available from Scottish Government the programme is over committed and alternative options will need to be considered, such as other funding options, reprofiling spend in the programme over the years or modifying the programme.
- 8.6 A substantial part of the programme comprises of private sites which are required to deliver a percentage of affordable housing. These sites provide affordable, mixed tenure developments but present a risk to the programme as timescales are driven externally. Whilst officers work hard to ensure affordable housing agreement sites are completed on time, and any gaps are covered by other projects, there is a risk of slippage to the programme.

- 8.7 For the proposed housing sites in Banknock and Dennyloanhead there is a risk of delay or a shortfall in funding required to complete the required road infrastructure works, as detailed in paragraph 6.13 of this report. This could jeopardise delivery of the affordable housing proposed for the area as construction costs and inflation continues to rise and the number of units that can be funded by grant is reduced. This could result in substantial gaps in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, which would have to be filled with alternative projects to meet the conditions of the HIF funding to deliver affordable housing.

Equalities

- 8.8 The Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) for the new Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 has been completed and has been approved. No significant issues were identified from this. The Strategic Housing Investment Programme will positively impact upon those with particular housing need.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 8.9 A Strategic Environmental Assessment was submitted for the new Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028, and feedback again indicated that the Strategy is not likely to have significant environmental effects.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 This report sets out a balanced programme over the next 5 years of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, which will deliver a range of affordable housing sites to help meet our housing need priorities. There are various challenges to be met and successful delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan requires strong partnership working to utilise the resources available, including Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant, to maximum effect.

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Date: 08/10/2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of Strategic Housing Investment Plan Projects and Shadow Programme 2024-29

Appendix 2 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-29 document

Appendix 3 - Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers:-

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- None

Strategic Housing Investment Plan - 2024-2029 Programme

Provider	Project Name	Total Units	General needs	ambulant	Wheel-chair	Total Grant	Grant pre-2024/25	Projected Grant 2024/25	Projected Grant 2025/26	Projected Grant 2026/27	Projected Grant 2027/28	Projected Grant 2028/29
FC	Haugh Gardens	40	28	12	0	£3,370,280	£1,635,665	£1,734,615				
FC	Banknock South	106	69	27	10	£10,155,264					£4,035,935	£6,119,329
FC	Former Denny High School Ph1	137	105	22	10	£13,125,199	£2,000,000		£1,417,140	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£4,708,059
FC	King Street, Stnhseuir	21	0	17	4	£2,112,904				£430,000	£1,000,000	£682,904
FC	Regeneration Project	8	2	4	2	£988,426					£988,426	
FC	Larbert Nursery	10	8	0	2	£1,106,277					£350,000	£756,277
Cairn	Adam Grossert Court	52	0	47	5	£2,444,000			£1,000,000	£1,444,000		
Cairn	Bank Street, Falkirk	44	44			£3,666,793			£500,000	£1,000,000	£2,166,793	
CRE	Crawfield Rd Ph 1	34	32		2	£3,624,676		£2,085,025	£1,539,651			
CRE	Crawfield Rd Ph 2	34	32		2	£3,171,502				£1,110,026	£2,061,476	
CRE	Reddingmuirhead	23	23			£2,339,169		£701,751	£1,637,418			
CRE	The Drum, Bo'ness	32	30	2		£3,207,832		£1,122,741	£2,085,091			
Kingdom	Kilsyth Road, Banknock Ph1	30	24	6		£2,760,000					£500,000	£2,260,000
Kingdom	Rosebank North, Dunipace Ph2	13	11	0	2	£1,196,000			£1,196,000			
Tbc	Canalside, Reddingmuirhead	40	40			£3,680,000		£2,680,000	£1,000,000			
Link	Rosemead Terrace, California	39	35	0	4	£4,544,755		£1,000,000	£3,544,755			
Link	MyDub Farm Ph2	36	32		4	£4,089,500		£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£2,089,500		
Link	Cedar Cres, West Quarter	17	16		1	£2,023,911	£300,000	£1,723,911				
Loretto	Carron Road	82	80		2	£9,285,000				£4,785,000	£4,500,000	
Loretto	Dennyloanhead Ph1	41	39		2	£4,668,098				£400,000	£2,268,098	£2,000,000
Loretto	Dennyloanhead Ph2	44	42		2	£5,016,000						£4,000,000
Kingdom	Kilsyth Road, Banknock Ph2	38	36		2	£1,900,000						£1,000,000
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000		£3,600,000				
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000			£3,600,000			
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000				£3,600,000		
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000					£3,600,000	
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000						£3,600,000
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000		£225,000				
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000			£225,000			
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000				£225,000		
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000					£225,000	
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000						£225,000
Totals		1346	1153	137	56	£107,600,586	£3,935,665	£15,873,043	£18,745,055	£17,583,526	£24,195,728	£25,351,569
			86%	10%	4%	*minus commuted sum			£1,622,375			
									£17,122,680			

Shadow Programme 2024-2029						
Provider	Project Name	Total Units	General needs	ambulant	Wheel-chair	Total Grant
FC	Seabegs Road	31	27	2	2	£3,308,662
CRE	Vellore Rd, Maddiston	40	40			£3,781,000
CRE	Grangemouth Road, Falkirk	20	16	2	2	£2,034,060
Tbc	Bridge St, Bonnybridge	60	56		4	£5,758,500
Tbc	The Castings, Falkirk	8	7	1		£767,860
Tbc	Carradale Avenue	29	27	2		£2,866,189
Totals		188	173	7	8	£18,516,271

KEY	
	Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Policy site
x	Linked to Housing Infrastructure Fund
*	Affordable Housing Policy commuted sums used for Denny and Bo'ness
FC	Falkirk Council
CRE	Castle Rock Edinvar

Falkirk's Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029



New houses built by Falkirk Council at Persia Court

Contents

Introduction

Role of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

Strategic Links

The Falkirk Plan
The Council Plan
Local Housing Strategy
Local Development Plan
Regeneration

Housing Needs

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment
Housing Supply Target

Funding

Scottish Government Grant
Council Tax – Second Homes and Empty Homes
Commuted Sums

The SHIP Process

Preparing the SHIP
Summary of Methodology

Housing Supply

Summary of Programme Delivery 2022-2023
Summary of SHIP Programme 2024-2029
Specialist Housing
Buy Backs
Housing Infrastructure Fund

Other Priority Areas

Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
Empty Homes
Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Gypsy Travellers
Child Poverty
Place Making
Procurement and Alternative Construction Methods
Equalities
Strategic Environment Assessment

Consultation and Collaboration

Development Partners
Falkirk Council Planning Team
Scottish Water
Strategic Housing Group
Housing Contribution Steering Group
Tenants and Residents

Monitoring

Appendices

1. Summary of Scottish Government SHIP Guidance
2. SHIP project proforma
3. Scoring framework
4. SHIP 2024-2029 Summary of Projects
5. Map of SHIP Projects 2024-2029
6. List of Abbreviations

1. Introduction

Having a safe and comfortable place to stay, that meets your needs, is fundamental to a person's quality of life. Providing people with suitable housing is a key priority for Falkirk Council and we work closely with Partners to deliver additional housing to help meet the needs of local people.

2. Role of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the local authority's strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over the next 5 years. These strategic investment priorities are aligned with the priorities and outcomes set out in the Council's over-arching Local Housing Strategy.

The SHIP is the key document for:

- Identifying proposed strategic affordable housing projects which require Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding support, as well as any which are expected to be delivered without Scottish Government funding
- Setting out the estimated resources available and how they will be used, which forms the basis for the Programme Agreement between the Council and the Scottish Government
- Reflecting alignment with policies and outcomes set out in the LHS
- Reinforcing the role of the Council as the strategic housing authority

The Scottish Government has produced Guidance to assist with the development of the SHIP, and a summary of requirements from the Guidance is set out in Appendix 1.

It is particularly important that the wider strategic context is considered when making plans for the future programme, in light of the significant pressures the sector has had to respond to over the last three years – a global pandemic, Brexit, a cost-of-living crisis and the war in Ukraine. This has created a particularly challenging environment which has required close joint working with our partners to deliver the affordable housing programme.

3. Strategic Links

There are strong links between Falkirk Council's strategic documents, and these are outlined in section one of the Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028 and summarised below.

The Scottish Government's first long-term national housing strategy [Housing to 2040](#) sets out the vision and route map for homes and communities over the long term. Housing is now within a post pandemic context of rebuild and recovery in a fairer and greener way, underpinned by the principles of social justice, equality and human rights.

Housing to 2040 is centred on four key themes, which have informed our new Local Housing Strategy and the SHIP:

1. More homes at the heart of great places
2. Affordability and choice
3. Affordable warmth and zero emissions
4. Improving the quality of all homes

The Falkirk Plan 2021-30

The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP), known locally as [The Falkirk Plan 2021 - 2030](#), sets out priorities for the Community Planning Partnership and describes how it will work together with communities.

The Falkirk Plan themes which relate closest to the LHS and the SHIP are shown in the following table:

Table 1: Falkirk Plan Themes

Falkirk Plan Theme	Local Housing Strategy Priority
Working in partnership with communities	Priority 2 - Creating sustainable communities
Poverty	Priority 1 - Supply of housing is increased. Priority 5 - Sustainable housing, fuel poverty and climate change
Economic recovery	Priority 1 - Supply of housing is increased.

Falkirk Council Plan 2022-27

The Falkirk Council Plan 2022-27 sets out what we aim to achieve over the next 5 years.

The vision for the area is ***Strong communities where inequalities are reduced, and lives are improved***

2 of the 3 priorities link directly with delivering the Strategic Housing Investment Plan

- Supporting stronger and healthier communities
- Supporting a thriving economy and green transition

Local Housing Strategy

The new draft Local Housing Strategy for 2023-2028¹ includes the same priorities as Local Housing Strategy 2027-2022, with the addition of a seventh priority relating to the private rented sector. This was included to take account of changes in the housing system and in response to consultation feedback. The priorities are:

1. Increasing housing supply
2. Creating sustainable communities
3. Improving access to housing
4. Providing housing and support to vulnerable groups
5. Tackling fuel poverty, energy efficiency and climate change
6. Improving housing conditions
7. Creating a sustainable private rented sector

The Local Housing Strategy is kept under regular review and is updated annually to take account of national legislative and local policy changes. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) annual update is considered by Council Executive and submitted to Scottish Government.

¹ The draft LHS 2023-28 is being presented to the Executive committee on 17 October 2023

Local Development Plan

The [Local Development Plan 2](#) (LDP) is the statutory document guiding future development locally over 2020-2040. It was adopted on 07 August 2020 and contains a vision for the area. It is the spatial strategy detailing how and where the area will grow and develop, along with detailed policies and proposals indicating where development should or should not take place. The Local Development Plan provides the criteria used to assess planning applications.

The vision is: *“The Place to be, a dynamic and distinctive area at the heart of central Scotland characterised by a network of thriving communities set in a network of high-quality green spaces and a growing economy which is of strategic importance in the national context, providing an attractive, inclusive and place in which to live, work, visit and invest.”*

The Local Development Plan aims to deliver sustainable safe communities, to stimulate the local economy and to protect the built, historic, and natural environment by promoting appropriate development and future growth. The Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan are closely linked, particularly through housing supply (LHS priority 1) and creating sustainable communities (LHS Priority 2). The Housing Need and Demand Assessment estimates the number of additional housing units required to meet existing and future housing need and demand, which dovetails with the Local Development Plan, which looks at projections of future need and ensuring there is adequate land supply available to provide for those needs. Details of the Housing Supply Target are included in the Housing Needs section below.

Falkirk Council’s approach to Place Making for new and existing neighbourhoods is set out in the Local Development Plan.

National Planning Framework 4

The National Planning Framework (NPF4) sets out a vision for what Scotland, could and should look like in 2050. This includes national planning policies and provides a plan for future development in Scotland. It links to addressing climate change and focuses on achieving outcomes around net-zero emissions, wellbeing economy, resilient communities and better greener places. The development plan supports proposals for a range of new homes that improve affordability and choice subject to identified need and a register of people interested in self-build is being developed. NPF4 now forms part of the Development Plan alongside the Local Development Plan.

The new LHS 2023-2028 has been informed by the concepts and aims set out in the NPF4, such as the 20-minute neighbourhood, use of Place Principle, and appropriate development, prioritising brownfield development over release of greenfield land and support for town centre living.

Both private developers and developing affordable housing landlords are encouraged to consult with Planning colleagues as early as possible. Housing is consulted on new and proposed Planning applications which provides an opportunity at an early stage in the development to advise the developer what is expected as part of the affordable housing provision on the site. Feedback from Registered Social Landlords emphasised the value in developers being given a clear and early message developers are given a clear and early message at the outset that a mix of affordable housing units will be sought, including the requirement to deliver full wheelchair standard properties. We have been addressing this with developers over the past year and taking a combined approach with Housing and Planning officers liaising with the developers together. The resulting negotiations/requirements are then fed through to the section 75 legal agreements.

Affordable Housing Policy

Ensuring that new housing in the area is inclusive and provides opportunities for local people to access new affordable homes is an essential part of the Local Development Plan strategy, which aims to deliver 530 homes per annum over the period 2017-2030, of which 244 are to be affordable. Affordable housing will be delivered in a number of ways in the Falkirk area. Some will be developed by social rented landlords such as the Council and Registered Social Landlords on standalone sites unconnected with any private development. Some affordable housing will be delivered through buying back stock previously sold under the Right to Buy and by reconfiguring existing stock. A significant proportion is expected to be delivered in conjunction with private development through the provisions of the Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Policy, which requires a proportion of units on developments with more than 20 units to be affordable. The delivery of such affordable housing will contribute to addressing the priorities set out in the Council's Local Housing Strategy.

Supplementary Guidance for the Affordable Housing Policy provides guidance on affordable housing requirements within private housing sites. This now considers the all-tenure wheelchair accessible housing target contained within the Local Housing Strategy, so the target for new-build wheelchair accessible housing now applies to all tenures and is considered on a site-by-site basis.

The Housing Land Audit estimates the number of houses to be built each year in the council area. The following table highlights the number of sites with more than 20 units which are subject to the affordable housing policy during the timescale of the SHIP and estimates that there are potentially 1,154 units of affordable housing that could be delivered during this time.

Table 2: Affordable Housing Policy sites programmed to deliver 2024-2029

Area	Total No. Sites	Potential AH Units
Bo'ness	5	141
Falkirk	7	226
Grangemouth	0	0
Denny & Bonnybridge	14	481
Stenhousemuir, Larbert & Rural North	3	27
Braes & Rural South	13	279
Total	42	1,154

Source: Housing Land Audit

There are 10 Affordable Housing Policy sites in the 2024-29 SHIP, accounting for 325 of the 921 total newbuild units in the programme (35%). When compared to the total number of Registered Social Landlord newbuild units in the programme (599) the Affordable Housing Policy sites account for over half of the units (54%).

Joint working between Housing, Planning and Legal has improved the processes involved in negotiating and agreeing the legal agreement (section 75) required to ensure provision of affordable housing on a specific site. An Affordable Housing Agreement template has been drawn up to ensure there is a clear and detailed record of the Affordable Housing to be delivered. If the developer reneges on that agreement once construction is underway, there is an option to place interdicts/stopping orders on sites.

Developer contributions

Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions (Supplementary Guidance 13) includes information on the type of contributions that may be required from developers for new developments, the circumstances in which they will be sought and how the amounts payable will be calculated. This helps landowners and developers establish the contribution requirements for specific sites or general locations, so that the cost implications can be considered before the planning application is submitted or the land is purchased.

The guidance considers it is fair, reasonable and legitimate to seek contributions from social housing in order to fund supporting infrastructure which is needed to make development acceptable in planning terms. It is accepted, however, that for social rented housing, developers' profit is not relevant, and that viability is dependent on budget and external grant funding. A Viability Statement can therefore be submitted to request a reduction in developer contributions if the site is at risk of not being financially viable, or if the site is of a type that can reasonably expect that there will be no demand for specific types of provision.

There had historically been an issue around how affordable housing providers evidence viability on housing development sites where a range of Developer Contributions are required. A small working group of Falkirk Council Planning, Housing Strategy and Development officers and officers from The Wheatley Group and Link Housing Association met last year to look at improving the processes around assessing affordable housing site developer contribution requirements and site viability. A viability template for social/affordable landlords has now been developed and already been used to help demonstrate a reduction in developer contributions on a Council-owned site in the SHIP.

Regeneration

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, looking particularly at areas in the worst 20%, provides evidence for the need for housing regeneration across the area. As highlighted in the LHS 2023-2028, we will agree what action is needed to set future housing regeneration priorities, taking account of place-making and a range of criteria including:

- Land availability, taking account of constraints set out in the Local Development Plan
- Housing turnover and demand
- Environmental considerations
- Energy efficiency
- Community consultation and feedback
- Tenure mix and options
- Connectivity

This SHIP includes proposals for regeneration in Grangemouth, relating to Falkirk Council's housing.

Town Centres

Addressing the condition of our town centres is a corporate priority for the Council. Town centres form the heart of communities, providing a sustainable focus for shopping, business, leisure, services and community life, and shaping the area's sense of place. Council Planning Policy strongly supports the health and vitality of town centres through the 'town centre first' principle, which seeks to prioritise town centres as the first choice for uses which generate significant footfall. Falkirk Council is pursuing a programme of town centre regeneration.

The Council's Town Centre Development Framework Masterplan will set a place making framework for change as the town centre evolves over the next 10 to 20 years, and Cairn site at Bank Street in Falkirk will aim to sit well within that Masterplan. The Council has already completed several successful town centre

regeneration projects across the area in recent years, but further regeneration activity is required over the long-term, involving the Council, private sector and other Partners.

The LHS 2023-2028 highlights that town centres face economic and social challenges requiring adaptation and continued investment. It includes actions to prioritise town centre sites for housing and to explore the conversion of empty shops, where viable and in areas of housing need. This is reinforced by Planning policy, which supports the health and vitality of town centres through the “town centre first” principle, which seeks to prioritise town centres as the first choice for uses which generate footfall. We have taken these into account in the review of the SHIP project scoring methodology and have given increased priority to town centre sites. Four of the projects in the proposed SHIP lie within town centre boundaries defined within the Local Development Plan.

Greener Grangemouth

This is a community led ‘Just Transition’ programme which addresses local need by strengthening community wellbeing, quality of place, community wealth, and community capacity and skills to benefit from the transition to net zero at Scotland’s core manufacturing cluster. Greener Grangemouth will be organised as a local ‘place programme’, supported by an advisory group and a capital investment of £10million and a revenue budget of £2million over 10 years.

At neighbourhood level, there is an allowance for improving safe routes and spaces and to support community facilities to reach net zero. Using a partnership approach, the project will look at Town Centre Living and Healthy Net Zero Neighbourhoods, considering potential housing models to deliver on specialist housing and sustainable design.

4. Housing Needs

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) estimates the number of additional homes that are needed to meet existing and future housing need and demand. It also provides a robust, shared and agreed evidence-base for housing policy and land use to ensure that both the Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan are based upon a common understanding of existing and future housing requirements. Falkirk Council’s [HNDA](#) was considered to be Robust and Credible by the Scottish Government in December 2022.

The table below shows the estimated annual average number of units needed over the next 20 years. For the 5 years between 2022 and 2026, there is an estimated annual need for 466 housing units - 224 affordable and 242 market. This equates to 2,328 units in total - 1,120 affordable and 1,208 private units.

Table 3: Annual average need for new build additional housing 2022-2041

Year	2022-2026	2027-2031	2032-2036	2037-2041	20 yr. total	20 yr. pa
Social Rent	131	117	75	66	1,946	97
Below Market Rent	93	77	78	67	1,579	79
Private Rented Sector	80	69	66	61	1,378	69
Buyers	162	139	137	122	2,801	140
Total	466	402	356	317	7,703	385

Source HNDA

The HNDA findings show a growing need from people with physical disabilities across all age groups. This means that a growing number of properties will require disabled adaptations and we will continue to give a high priority to wheelchair housing in the SHIP. There is an acute need for larger accommodation including wheelchair properties for families which impacts significantly on the amount of time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.

As discussed later, the scoring of projects for the SHIP was amended to add greater weight to findings set out in the HNDA, particularly an acute need for properties with four or more bedrooms and wheelchair properties.

People with complex needs

The Falkirk HNDA identified that there is a need for housing, support and care options for younger people with community care needs and are currently housed out-with the Falkirk Council area, as there are no suitable accommodation options locally.

Table 4: People under 65 housed out-with Falkirk Council area in February 2023

Care Group	Client numbers
Learning Disability	28
Mental Health	31
Physical disability	21
Other	12
Total	92

Source: Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership

During 2022-2023, we have increased collaboration with the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership to work towards identifying opportunities in the programme to deliver accommodation and services that will help with the growing pressures and increasing costs of providing support to people in their own homes. The Health and Social Care Partnership has contributed to the Council new build site at Oakbank, which will deliver specialist housing provision.

We have been working with colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership to explore the needs of people with complex needs. A risk register has been established to capture information relating to client needs for housing, care and support. We identified in the HNDA that there is a need for more core and cluster-type accommodation, similar to the core and cluster Dunipace project recently developed by Kingdom and Kingdom Care.

Recognising the importance of suitable housing and care packages for people with complex needs and the challenges in delivering these, a new multi-disciplinary 'Coming Home' team has been set up to help co-ordinate this crucial area. A working group will oversee progress in this initiative.

Housing Supply Targets

The number and type of additional units that are required is outlined in the Housing Supply Target, which is a policy-based interpretation of the HNDA outputs for the number of homes that may be delivered in the local authority area. They take account of a range of factors, as set out in Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Government HNDA Guidance. While it is expected that there is a clear alignment between the HNDA and the Housing Supply Target, the two are not the same and are not expected to match. The Housing Supply Target will set out the estimated level of additional housing that will likely be delivered on the ground, over the period of the plan.

The LHS targets for Falkirk are detailed in the table below. These will be confirmed following approval and publication of the draft LHS 2023-2028.

Table 5: Housing Supply Target 2023-2028

Tenure	Per Year	2023-28 Total
Affordable	180 – 225	900 - 1,125
Private	295 – 340	1,475 - 1,700
Total	520	2,600

The LHS 2017-22 includes a target to provide 5-10% of properties to full wheelchair standard, where possible. .

The new LHS 2023-28 proposes that the SHIP will look to deliver the following targets:

- 5% of units to full wheelchair standard
- 5% of units to ambulant disabled standard
- 5% of units to be 4 bedrooms or more

New build homes are required to meet specific standards as specified in the “Housing for Varying Needs Standard. The specifications for the “Housing for Varying Need” are currently under review.

Proposals to deliver against these targets are discussed in the section 7 on Housing Supply.

5. Funding

SHIP funding comes from the following funding sources:

- the Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant provided by the Scottish Government (the allocation is referred to as the Resource Planning Assumption)
- the Council’s Housing Revenue Account, specified in the Housing Investment Programme which are presented to Council every year,
- private finance raised by the Registered Social Landlords
- the Council’s reduction in discount for second and empty homes Council Tax fund - at 31/3/23 the balance in this fund was £905,336.
- commuted sums collected from the Affordable Housing Policy, which were £1,622,375 at 31/08/23. The use of this fund is legally restricted to the same area as the housing site from which the contribution arose. This means that £528,670 and £1,093,705 are available to support affordable housing provision in the Bo’ness and Denny/Bonnybridge areas respectively. This has been earmarked in the 2025/26 programme for sites in these areas, but this may change depending on site progress and opportunities to draw in funding from elsewhere.
- contributions from the Health and Social Care Partnership to projects with specialist provision, which will help meet the growing pressures and increasing costs of providing support to people in their own homes.

Scottish Government Grant

Delivering new housing is not a quick process and sites take several years of planning which can mean that costs rise before they are complete. Councils are given an indication of future grant allocations from the Scottish Government through annual Resource Planning Assumptions. The annual Affordable Housing Supply

Programme budget must, however, be spent in that financial year - any slippage or underspend cannot be carried forward to the next year. It is important, therefore, that the Programme is realistic, and Scottish Government Guidance highlights that SHIPs should have an emphasis on deliverability.

Table 6: Resource Planning Assumptions - Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant

Year	RPA*
2024-2025	£12.594m
2025-2026	£12.802m
2026-2027	To be confirmed
2027-2028	To be confirmed
2028-2029	To be confirmed

**Resource Planning Assumption*

The table above sets out the Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs) for Falkirk Council. This is the estimated Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant allocation from the Scottish Government. In 2022-23 the Council received £15.324m in grant funding which is 22% more than the Resource Planning Assumption for the year. The Resource Planning Assumption for 2023-24 is £12.550m.

Scottish Government Grant Benchmarks

Resource Planning Assumptions provide grant support at benchmark rates for each affordable home built. In June 2023, the Scottish Government increased the basic 3-person equivalent benchmark grant for a social rented new build home to £83,584 for council homes and £91,182 for housing associations. Additional funding is available to assist with added components such as greener homes, balconies, and fire suppressant systems.

These grant rates are flexible, so that projects may be eligible for a higher grant award per property following a detailed assessment of project viability and development costs.

Any increase to the benchmark grant is met from the Council's Resource Planning Assumption. If there is no increase in the Resource Planning Assumption for that year, grant issued above benchmark will reduce the number of new affordable homes being delivered, as the level of grant for each property increases.

Council Tax - Second Homes and Empty Homes

At 31/03/23 the balance in the reduction in discount for second and empty homes Council Tax fund was £905,336.

Falkirk Council's Housing Investment Programme is funded mainly from rents and borrowing. This is repaid over several years by the Housing Revenue Account as loans charges. A sum of £250k was transferred from 2009 - 10 to 2021-22 used for CNB loan charges. A report to Policy and Resources Committee on New Affordable Housing in 2012 set out that £173k would be transferred to Kingdom Housing Association for their Overton project. In more recent years Link Housing Association received £140,000 for the project at Lewis Road, Polmont and for the specialist town centre project at Williamson Street, Falkirk.

Over the course of the 2017-2022 LHS, £1.25 million was allocated to Council New Build.

Commuted Sums

The Local Development Plan's Affordable Housing Policy HC03 (discussed more fully above) allows, as a last resort, for commuted payments to be accepted in lieu of delivery of affordable homes on site. The use of all Developer Contributions is monitored and agreed by the Planning Obligations Group, led by Falkirk Council's Place Services.

On 31 August 2023, there was £1,622,375 available for Affordable Housing in the Commuted Sum budget. The Scottish Government's planning guidance Circular 3/2012 (updated in November 2020) sets out the tight rules for spending this money, on affordable housing in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Supplementary Guidance. The use of this fund is also legally restricted to the same area as the housing site from which the contribution arose. This means that £528,670 and £1,093,705 are available to support affordable housing provision in the Bo'ness and Denny/Bonnybridge areas respectively. This has been earmarked in the 2025/26 programme for sites in these areas, but this may change depending on site progress and opportunities to draw in funding from elsewhere.

Tender prices for social housing in Scotland fell 4.4% in quarter 1 of 2023, compared with quarter 4 of 2022 but were still well above the price levels in the same quarter a year earlier (up 3.4%, compared with quarter 1 of 2022).

6. The SHIP Process

Even on a straight-forward site, it takes several years to complete a housing development. The SHIP programme is fluid and adaptable and may change in response to a range of factors including, but not limited to, financial resources, economic changes, housing need and demand and market variations. This means that projects might be brought forward, deferred, added or removed as necessary. There are invariably a number of challenges to be overcome and delivering the programme of sites included in the SHIP requires strong collaboration between the parties involved.

Some of the challenges in the development journey and mitigation currently include:

- The increasing price of tender returns - *specifications are being scrutinised for efficiencies and savings, and value engineering taking place on projects where tender returns are high*
- Ongoing supply issues due to Covid and Brexit – *long lead times are being factored into projects and suitable alternatives sought where possible*
- Affordable housing policy sites dependent on the wider housing market and developer timescales - *an Affordable Housing Agreement template has been drawn up to ensure there is a clear record of the Affordable Housing to be delivered and the risks to the overall site of timescales slipping*
- Unrealistic owner expectations of land value and over-paying for land– *we are making developers aware that inflated land costs cannot be recouped via the affordable housing. Providers work hard with agents and landowners to raise awareness of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding process*
- Sites not in the ownership of the developer - *the proforma and scoring for projects has been adjusted to reward sites where ownership is already obtained or very likely to be.*
- Abnormal site ground conditions – *site investigations must be done up front and abnormalities deducted from land cost. Flexibility exists to increase grant if the site merits it*
- Stricter requirements for surface water drainage from Scottish Water - *Scottish Water is consulted on SHIP sites to ensure any issues are highlighted and scoring adjusted if appropriate. The Council's flood prevention officer can offer advice to the providers.*

All stakeholders are committed to working together to deliver the projects within the SHIP and to overcome challenges and constraints. A key forum for discussion on national and local issues is our Tripartite meeting - a quarterly forum for development issues and risks to be identified, and solutions sought where possible. This group includes representatives from the Scottish Government, Falkirk Council Strategic Housing and Planning teams and providers - the Council's New Build team and developing Registered Social Landlords.

Guest members are invited to attend Tripartite meetings as necessary, to discuss specific issues which impact on the development process, such as the local application of the National Guidance on car parking standards and the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy.

A regular SHIP review meeting is also held between the Council's SHIP lead officer and individual Providers, to discuss projects in more detail and to ensure that projects are progressing, take action where obstacles are found and adjust the programme if required.

Preparing the SHIP

In preparing the SHIP, we work closely with partners to consider potential constraints that may affect the delivery of projects, and this is built into the assessment scoring (see below). Significant development work is carried out by all partners involved in the SHIP to identify 'pipeline' projects that will come to fruition in future years. It is important to identify future potential projects but those which are at an earlier stage, or which have constraints to be identified/overcome, are placed in the later years of the SHIP.

Summary of Methodology

Every year the Council's Strategy and Development Team invites the Providers to submit proposals for sites to be included in the SHIP for the next 5 years. This involves completion of a proforma template (Appendix 2) which has been discussed and agreed at the Tripartite group.

There are always more submissions for funding than there is money available, and to help decide which sites should be supported in the Programme, a scoring matrix has been developed (Appendix 3). This scoring methodology has also been discussed and agreed at the Tripartite group and has been refined over the years to take account of changing priorities and to ensure that the framework rewards those sites that are tackling the key priorities for the new supply programme and, taking development constraints into account, those projects that are deliverable within the agreed time periods. This helps to ensure Affordable Housing Supply Programme spend is maximised.

This year, several adjustments and improvements have been made, which were agreed at the Tripartite meeting in April 2023. This has streamlined the scoring matrix to help focus on certain key priorities, including those which can be more challenging and expensive to deliver – particularly larger family homes (4+ bedrooms) and full wheelchair-standard accommodation. The specific pressure for family-sized wheelchair standard accommodation has been highlighted in planning-stage discussions with Providers, Developers, and Planning colleagues. Scottish Government Guidance also sets out the commitment to more homes for wheelchair users and the renewed commitment to tackling homelessness. This coincides with the Council's own research into priority housing needs and is reflected in the scoring methodology.

Agreed changes to the SHIP proforma include:

- No score for LHS outcomes met because projects generally meet all the outcomes. A tick-box to indicate that the project meets the LHS outcomes was added instead.
- More detail collected on property size and house type - a table linked to Excel to make it easier to complete.
- Provide the HARP reference where applicable, to ease uploading projects onto HARP.
- Identifying town centre sites (using town centre boundaries mapped in the Local Development Plan).
- All projects meet the minimum Bronze Active Sustainability Standard, so to reward higher standards, points are now given for Silver and above.
- 3-person equivalent added to help compare costs.
- Any other funding secured e.g., Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Specialist provision – to prioritise projects like core and cluster.

- Collect information to assess against strategic priorities which can now attract additional points. Helps accommodate the need for a balanced programme and tenure mix on some sites.
- Priority to be given to projects already in the approved SHIP, if still viable.
- This year we have also introduced up to 500 points available for projects that help the Council to deliver on particular strategic priorities such as regeneration initiatives, community sustainability and mixed tenure on appropriate sites.

The 7 scoring priorities now include:

- **Location**
more points for high demand areas
- **Housing Needs**
more points for ambulant and full wheelchair standard, and larger units
- **Specialist projects**
reward for specialist housing e.g., core and cluster and gypsy/traveller projects
- **Deliverability**
Planning status and land ownership position
- **Sustainability**
additional points for silver, silver active and gold standard
- **Best value**
points for projects delivered on or under benchmark, and for additional funding obtained
- **Strategic priorities**
Up to 500 additional points for projects that deliver on particular strategic objectives

In previous years there has been concern over low grant spend and property completions and Council officer efforts have been targeted to ensure that these areas of concern are improved. Over the last year we have engaged more with Planning colleagues, for example at pre-application discussions around affordable housing on section 75 sites. As part of this approach, we have attended Planning Committee and Planning pre-application hearings, to provide advice on housing needs and affordable housing funding/SHIP processes. This has helped to raise awareness corporately on what is involved in affordable housing delivery and the differences compared to private development.

The long development process and inevitable delays means that slippage of programmed funding is common. Scottish Government SHIP guidance requests that the programme is drawn up on the basis of Resource Planning Assumption +25%. This over-programming helps ensure that spend and units are delivered. If it becomes clear throughout the year that the full Resource Planning Assumption will not be spent, the Scottish Government will deduct the anticipated slippage and divert it to another local authority with capacity to spend before the end of the financial year.

Proposed projects are detailed in Appendix 4, along with indicative grant, timescales and number/type of property. The programme has to be flexible to accommodate the inevitable slippage and to help with this we have included a 'shadow' programme of sites which should have some capacity to progress if planned project timescales slip.

7. Housing Supply

Summary of Programme Delivery 2022-23

Falkirk's strong affordable housing programme, bolstered particularly by progress made on the Council's site at Woodend Farm, put us in the position of being able to spend an extra £2.738m of grant in 2022-23. This

took the total spend to £15.324m - 22% over our original Resource Planning Assumption allocation of £12.558m.

The following table provides a summary of affordable housing delivered in 2022-23. It shows that 164 units were provided in total last year – 162 via the Council’s Resource Planning Assumption allocation, including 59 new builds and 103 Buy Backs, and 2 completions from the Scottish Government’s now closed First Home Fund, a low-cost home ownership initiative. There were no Open Market Shared Equity purchases made in Falkirk last year and, to encourage take-up, plans are underway for the Council to publicise this scheme more widely, as set out in the new LHS.

Table 7: Affordable housing delivered 2022-23

Type of affordable housing	No. units
Council new build	0
RSL new build	48
Council buy backs	83
RSL buy backs	20
Scottish Government First Home Fund*	2*
Scottish Government Open Market Shared Equity	0
Scottish Government New Supply Shared Equity	11
TOTAL	164

*This initiative has now ended. The 2 units recorded are the final completions for this scheme.

The Council’s Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Policy [SG06 Affordable Housing \(falkirk.gov.uk\)](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/SG06-Affordable-Housing), supported by Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant funding, facilitated the delivery of 11 low-cost home ownership houses, targeted at people who would otherwise be unable to afford a new property. Colleagues in Housing and Planning worked closely with partner Kingdom Housing Association and the private developer. All 11 houses were sold on a shared equity basis to local people, 5 of whom were key workers and 8 of whom were first time buyers. SG06 identifies key workers as a priority group. An affordability assessment is carried out and people purchased between a 60% and 80% share of their property, with the remaining equity share held by the Scottish Government. The review of this project is that it has been successful, and shared equity is an affordable model that we will be including in future developments, particularly as part of Affordable Housing Policy sites.

The context of the housing market is important to the SHIP, and this year we have seen a slow-down impacted by increasing interest rates and inflation. Information from the Registers of Scotland indicates that from quarter 3 2022-23 to quarter 1 2023-4, there has been a 13% fall in the number of house sales in Falkirk Council area. In relation to Buy Backs, we are noticing much fewer properties for sale.

Summary of SHIP Programme 2024-29

This SHIP sets out proposals to deliver a 5-year balanced programme of Council and Registered Social Landlord new build and reconfiguration projects, along with Buy Backs, using Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant, Council and Registered Social Landlord resources, second homes council tax monies and commuted sums. There are plans to deliver 1,346 affordable units, an average of 269 units per year. Excluding Buy Backs, the average is 184 units per year.

A summary of projects and the Affordable Housing Supply Programme monies earmarked against them can be seen in Appendix 4, along with a map in Appendix 5 showing the distribution of sites across the Council’s housing sub-market areas.

The split between Council and Registered Social Landlord and between social rent and other tenures is summarised in the table below. This shows a balanced programme, with 54% of the programmed units being delivered by Falkirk Council (24% new build, 30% buy-backs) and 46% by Registered Social Landlords (37% new build social rent, 2% buy-backs and 7% other tenures). The Council has nomination rights to between 50% and 100% on Registered Social Landlord new build SHIP projects.

Table 8: Breakdown of SHIP Projects 2024- 29

Type	No. units	%	No. units	%
Council New Build social rent	322	24%	722	54%
Council Buybacks social rent	400	30%		
RSL New Build/Reconfigured. social rent	499	37%	524	39%
RSL Buybacks social rent	25	2%		
RSL New Build Other tenures	100	7%	100	7%
Total	1,346	100%	1,346	100%

As discussed earlier, the new draft LHS 2023-28 has a proposed target of between 180 and 225 additional affordable homes to be provided each year. This is an increase from the target of 123 units per year. Affordable housing is defined as *"good quality homes that are affordable to people on low incomes"*. There are different types of housing that qualify as 'affordable', but the SHIP programme is mainly concerned with those types that meet our priority needs and which require the support of public sector grant i.e., social rent, mid-market rent and shared equity housing.

Table 9: SHIP New Build Projects 202-29 by Provider and Property Type

Property type	Council		RSL		Total	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
General needs	212	66%	516	86%	728	79%
Ambulant	82	25%	55	9%	137	15%
Wheelchair	28	9%	28	5%	56	6%
Total	322	100%	599	100%	921	100%

Excluding Buy Backs, the breakdown of the 921 new build properties proposed for Council and Registered Social Landlord sites is detailed in the table above. The Council has plans to build 322 social rented units and Registered Social Landlords have 599 new build units in the programme (499 social rent and 100 alternative tenure). The table shows that 728 (79%) of proposed new build units are for general needs, with 137 (15%) meeting ambulant disabled standard and 56 (6%) meeting full wheelchair standard. A significant proportion of Registered Social Landlord units are being provided through 'section 75', Affordable Housing Policy (AHP) sites, which have historically not been required to deliver full wheelchair housing. This should change in the future as sites with more recent planning approvals, which are required through the AHP to deliver wheelchair housing, come to fruition. Wheelchair units need more space, so careful site design is required along with negotiation with private developers to get these units agreed as part of the affordable housing element.

Table 8 shows that the programme includes a small proportion (7%) of mid-market rent and shared equity units on AHP sites. These alternative affordable housing tenures are set out in the Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance (SG06). As well as meeting an affordable housing need

identified in the HNDA, these properties can help provide a mix of tenures on some of the larger sites.

In terms of housing mix, the SHIP sites include a range of accommodation sizes to meet the various requirements of those in need, as shown in the table below.

Table 10: New build affordable properties by size

New Build No. Bedrooms	Council No.	Council %	RSL No.	RSL %	Total No.	Total %
1	45	14%	79	13%	124	13%
2	175	54%	316	53%	491	53%
3	81	25%	187	31%	268	29%
4 and over	21	7%	17	3%	38	4%
Total	322	100%	599	100%	921	100%

To help address the need for larger properties, the Buy Back programme will target the purchase of 25 four and over bedroomed properties, taking the total to 63, which is 5% of the overall total.

Specialist housing

Accessible Housing – Ambulant and Wheelchair Standard

Table 9 highlights the number of ambulant and full wheelchair standard units planned. Housing and Planning officers are working with affordable housing providers to encourage the inclusion of full wheelchair standard properties on future affordable housing sites, but it is proving to be more challenging to persuade house-builders to include these units on private sites, as they do not believe there is a market for them. Officers are exploring an innovative pilot project which will remove the risk for the developer by underwriting a small number of wheelchair properties to be built for sale on the open market. If the properties do not sell, the Council or a housing association will use existing budget to step in and purchase the units for affordable housing use.

Buy Backs

Purchasing properties previously sold to tenants under the now defunct Right-to-Buy (RTB) legislation can be a quick and cost-effective way of securing accommodation to meet the needs of those on the waiting list and bring properties back into the public sector. As well as being an excellent way to increase housing supply and provide a steady supply of lets, particularly useful when there is a gap in newbuild completions, Buy Backs can help improve stock condition and enhance local communities – majority ownership of common blocks makes it easier for social landlords to carry out essential repairs and improvements to areas where owners have a shared responsibility.

The SHIP earmarks Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant monies to both Falkirk Council and Paragon Housing Association to purchase homes through the Buy Back Scheme.

The Council's Buy Back scheme, introduced in 2013, was originally set up to purchase one- and two-bedroom ex-Council properties but the scheme has more recently been widened to include 3+ bedroom houses, when an acute need was highlighted for larger family homes and properties suitable for disabled people. In the market, these properties are often more difficult to secure so, in response, approval was given in 2020 to allow offers up to 10% above the Home Report/District Valuer valuation to be made for 4+ bedroom houses and properties which had been adapted, or had the potential to be adapted, for a disabled person. This aims to help meet the acute demand for larger family homes and properties suitable for disabled people.

The average price of a Buy Back in 2013-14 was £56,935 but by 2022-23 this had increased to £110,740. The Scottish Government grant level for Buy Backs is kept under review and is currently set at £45,000 per property. Additional resources are required to bring the properties up to the required standard. The Council has allocated an annual budget of £8.5m over the next 5 years and set a target to purchase 80 properties each year. Paragon Housing Association has an annual target of 5 properties and has earmarked £80k per year to carry out any necessary repair and improvement works.

The following table highlights the number of Right to Buy properties brought back into the public sector each year since 2013 - 813 by Falkirk Council and 41 by Paragon and Link Housing Associations. In 2022-2023, the Council purchased 5 larger properties and 1 bungalow to assist with the need for larger and adapted properties. Such properties are a priority for purchase and an assessment is made on each property becoming available to consider whether it could be reconfigured to provide a larger or adapted property.

Table 11: Number of properties bought back by year 2013-2023

Year	Council No.	RSL No.
2013-14	69	0
2014-15	76	0
2015-16	76	0
2016-17	78	0
2017-18	95	0
2018-19	87	10
2019-20	80	5
2020-21	90	6
2021-22	79	0
2022-23	83	20
Total	813	41

Source: Falkirk Council & RSL Information Systems

Housing Infrastructure Fund

The Scottish Government Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) is available to deliver housing sites where the scale and nature of infrastructure costs would prevent the site from being supported through Affordable Housing Supply Programme grant.

Falkirk Council submitted a funding application for 3 sites in Banknock and Dennyloanhead. The number of units delivered at these sites was constrained due to development works being required at Junction 7 of the M80. To facilitate the junction improvements, the Scottish Government originally offered grant up to £1.543m in May 2018. Following a tender exercise and an increase in costs, an uplifted offer of grant totalling £2,396,728 was received on 15 December 2021.

Conditions of the grant include the completion of the road infrastructure works and delivery of around 265 affordable homes. To allow for the infrastructure works to complete, these affordable units are included in the later years of the SHIP, as highlighted in Appendix 4.

Colleagues in Place Services are preparing the detailed design, tender and legal documentation to allow the project to progress and are liaising with the developers and agencies involved. The majority of the technical documents are already in place, but negotiations to secure the required contributions from the partners continue, including the Scottish Government and all private development sites contributing to the M80 works. This is a complex project and projected costs have increased further since the last funding

package was agreed in 2021.

We are aware that a further phase of HIF funding is available for suitable sites. We will discuss with the Scottish Government and apply for funding should an opportunity arise, but at present we do not have anything that meets the criteria.

8. Other Priority Areas

Climate Change and Carbon Reduction

Falkirk Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and published its organisational target of being net zero by 2030, with Grangemouth set to be the first net zero town in the Council area. Since this declaration, various actions have been implemented to achieve the targets set, and progress has been made against future targets.

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy makes it clear that new buildings will be required to use zero direct emissions heating, and have high levels of fabric energy efficiency to reduce overall heat demand so that they do not need to be retrofitted in future. This requirement will apply from 1 April 2024 for building warrant applications for new homes, but is being accelerated for all new homes delivered with grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. Projects which apply for grant funding from 1 December 2023 will be required to install zero direct emissions heating systems, unless there are compelling reasons against it. This, along with the additional benchmark grant available, is incorporated into the SHIP projects as appropriate.

New housing in the SHIP is built to a minimum sustainability standard of Bronze Active, and some properties will reach Silver Active Standard. As well as being more energy efficient they are more cost effective for residents to heat. The scoring matrix for sites was amended this year, to prioritise units at Silver level and above.

Through the LHS, the Council and Registered Social Landlord partners will work to increase the proportion of their housing stock meeting the equivalent of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band B. The Council's Housing Investment Programme 2023-2028 was presented to Council on 23 February 2023, outlining in detail the works which will be undertaken to retrofit existing properties in line with the Council's capital programme and energy efficiency obligations.

This outlined the on-going programme of heating system upgrades, estimated at £2.3m, to improve the energy efficiency of around 1,100 council houses per annum. The provision of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) to some 170 properties within 3 high rise blocks was due to commence in 2022-23, but due to significant increased contract costs, this work has been delayed and options will be considered early in 2023-24. £2m is allocated in 2023-24 to progress this initiative. Provision of £1.5m has been allowed for the installation of ASHPs in off-gas areas, and £0.75m will install more cost effective and efficient heating systems for tenants in off-gas areas in 2023-24.

Buy Back properties being brought back into the social sector are brought up to the required Scottish Housing Quality and Energy Efficiency Standards for Scottish Social Housing 1 and 2. This means that the ongoing carbon footprint of these properties, which are often poor in energy efficiency, is reduced.

The Council's Energy and Climate Change team has been working with the social housing providers in the area to help develop the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy. A stakeholder engagement survey was circulated to all social landlords last year, to gain a better understanding of how energy efficiency and the decarbonisation of heat are being prioritised locally.

The findings showed that social landlords already have set commitments and priorities to reduce their carbon footprint and have targets to achieve net zero emissions.

Empty Homes

There are around 100 second homes in Falkirk at any time. The Council received £195,242 last year from the reduction in discount for second and empty homes, which meant a balance of £905,336 budget at the start of this financial year. This funding is ring fenced for investment in affordable housing and the council currently uses this revenue stream to support the provision of new-build affordable housing for rent to meet locally determined priorities.

Making best use of existing stock is a key priority for the Council, and supporting owners of empty properties to bring them back into use helps to do that. Recognising the importance of bringing empty homes back into use and the contribution this can make towards meeting housing need, the Council has had a dedicated empty homes officer since 2013, and currently has two officers who work on empty homes and the Buy Back scheme. They provide owners with information and a range of practical options to support them in making informed choices as to how to bring their properties back into use.

The Council utilises the Council Tax (Variation for Unoccupied Dwellings) (Scotland) Amendments Regulations 2016, which allow increased Council Tax to be collected against homes lying empty for more than a year. This is intended as an additional tool to help local authorities encourage owners to bring empty properties back into use, both to increase the supply of housing for those who need homes and to reduce the blight on communities caused by houses being left empty and allowed to fall into disrepair. Since April 2017 the Council has applied a 100% levy on these properties. At present, none of this funding is directly allocated to the affordable housing programme in Falkirk, but officers are exploring use of this budget to provide grants to owners of empty properties, as an incentive to bring empty homes back into use.

A quarterly internal group (Enforcement Panel) comprising colleagues from Building Standards, Environmental Health, Legal Services and the Private Sector team, meets to look at properties that are causing serious issues and could require enforcement action.

Table 12: Number of empty properties brought back into use by year and timescale empty

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Under 6 Months	0	6	0	1	4
6-12 Months	4	8	3	2	3
1-2 Years	13	18	13	13	8
2-5 Years	29	17	22	14	22
5-10 Years	7	12	7	4	13
Over 10 Years	4	4	7	4	12
Total	57	65	52	38	63

Source: Empty Homes Database

The Council has set a target to bring 70 properties back into use annually and the table above shows the number of properties brought back into use over the last 5 years. The last year has seen an increase in numbers, after a reduction during 2020-2022, when Covid pandemic lockdowns meant owners struggled to get to their properties to undertake repairs. There are still issues with the increase in the price of materials and difficulty in getting trades people to work on properties.

The majority of properties are brought back into use after being empty for less than 5 years, but the last year has seen an increase in those brought back into use having been empty for more than 5 years. The Buy Back scheme was used to bring two empty properties back into use in 2022-23.

The Council has used Compulsory Purchase Order powers on two empty homes in the past and will continue to do so where the owner cannot be found and the property is structurally unsound, unsafe, or putting the community at risk. If a property subject to a Compulsory Purchase Order has potential to be used for affordable housing, funding will be sought from the Second Homes Council Tax budget and/or from the Council Tax levy on long-term empty homes.

An example of the impact of the Empty Homes team is demonstrable at St Crispin's Place. After more than 20 years lying empty, eight private properties in St Crispin's Place in Falkirk were finally brought back into use. Built around the early 1900s, the properties had lain empty for extended periods, deteriorating further over time and becoming an eyesore in the local community. With the team's persistent intervention, the properties were eventually put on the market in 2021 and purchased by a local developer, who has now completely renovated all the flats, which are now being rented privately.

Homelessness and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

Falkirk continues to face a number of challenges in tackling homelessness, with increasing homeless presentations and increasing pressures on temporary accommodation. Increasing the supply of affordable homes remains a vital component for meeting Falkirk's housing needs by enabling movement within local housing systems and is essential for preventing and reducing homelessness.

The Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-20 – 2023-24 has been developed in the context of the wider strategic planning framework and the LHS and is reviewed annually. The Plan details how those who are homeless will be provided with settled accommodation more quickly; spend reduced time in temporary accommodation and have access to clear support pathways.

The number of households in Falkirk provided with temporary accommodation is unfortunately increasing and with it the number of children housed in temporary accommodation. We recognise the detrimental impact of homelessness on child health and are committed to reducing the time children and families spend in temporary accommodation. We know that the increase in families in temporary accommodation is partly as a result of a number of larger families requiring assistance. There is a limited number of larger properties available for let in either the social or private rented sector in the area. Turnover within these properties is also much lower than in smaller properties. To try and increase the number of larger properties the Council will pay up to 10% over the District Valuer's valuation when buying back ex-council properties with 4+ bedrooms. On new build sites the Council tries to ensure that there are larger family homes included in the mix.

Gypsy Travellers

In line with consultation for the Local Development Plan, there is a specific application process for private sites. However, as was the case with previous research, the recently approved HNDA confirmed there is not a need for more gypsy traveller pitches within the Falkirk area.

Following discussions with the Scottish fire and rescue service, the Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 highlight that caravans must be 6 metres apart. The number of pitches on the site has been reduced from 15 to 10 pitches, to comply with this regulation. At the time of writing, 6 of the 10 pitches on the site are available to let, and there is no waiting list.

Consultation was conducted in summer 2021 using the place standard tool by the Travelling Persons' Participation Group and Falkirk Council officers. As part of the Place Standard Consultation, Gypsy/ Travellers on site identified that there is a need for a transit pitch onsite. This would greatly assist when relatives and friends need to visit to provide care and support for a longer period. Currently although relatives and friends can visit and stay short term there is no provision for them to bring their own caravan.

Gypsy/ travellers on the Council site advised that older residents with disabilities do not want to move from the site, as their support networks are in place. Following the consultation carried out, plans were drawn up to reprofile the site.

An options appraisal is ongoing in relation to the gypsy traveller site. Following completion, this will be discussed with tenants onsite.

Child Poverty

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 requires local authority and NHS health boards to produce a report specifying what action is underway, and is planned, to tackle child poverty in their area. The Fairer Falkirk 2019-2024 strategy sets out the ambition for Falkirk Council and the Community Planning Partnership to understand and address the impact of poverty on individuals, families, and communities in the area.

The Council undertook an Allocations Review and the findings from this were put into place on the 1 October 2020. This includes increasing the percentage lets to homeless applicants from 33% to 45% which means homeless applicants are housed quicker. There was a limited period in 2021-22 when 70% of allocations were to homeless applicants, one of the aims being to assist families in poverty. The Allocations Policy is kept under review.

The HNDA highlighted that the greatest need is for smaller properties but there is an acute need for larger properties for families. There is also a need for larger wheelchair housing. The council housing stock has fewer larger properties due to the right to buy. Often accessible and wheelchair properties are smaller. Officers working in the housing needs team have advised that larger families, those requiring accessible or wheelchair housing and families requiring larger wheelchair housing wait longer in temporary accommodation. Adjustments have been made to the programme to help to address this.

We have worked to align the new LHS for the period 2023-2028 with the Child Poverty Action Plan. Relevant actions include, we will:

- work in partnership to carry out housing regeneration across Falkirk Council area.
- encourage collaboration and community engagement to improve the impact of resource allocation and investment in community.
- work in partnership to promote community well-being activities.
- work in partnership to tackle poverty and minimise incomes.
- promote digital technology and online services.

The new LHS includes indicators around numbers attending Think Poverty training, financial gain (additional income to households) from benefits and debt support from Falkirk Council.

The Health Inequalities Impact Assessment for the new LHS identified literacy as being a factor which could have a detrimental impact on peoples' lives leading to poverty. The new LHS includes a milestone around developing protocols to ensure people can access services.

We update the LHS annually then submit to elected members for consideration and to Scottish Government for information. We will be in a position to provide updates on indicators which measure poverty including child poverty in the first update of LHS 2023-2028 after the Scottish Government LHS review.

Place Making

We have started to explore concepts such as 20-minute neighbourhoods and placemaking in relation to SHIP projects. We looked at proximity of SHIP sites to schools, GP surgeries, dentists, shops, frequency of bus service and how near to train stations. However, this was a desk top exercise, and we will develop further as part of the new LHS, which includes actions around 20-minute neighbourhoods, promoting community well-being, and housing regeneration which inform how we progress place making.

We have included the following action in LHS 2023-2028.

- we will develop local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods to deliver the healthy, sustainable and resilient places required to support a good quality of life and balance our environmental impact.

Progress will be reported on in the first update following Scottish Government LHS 2023-2028 review.

Procurement and Alternative Construction Methods

Partners are always looking for viable proposals which will offer efficiencies in costings, timescales and energy/carbon savings. This is a live discussion topic between providers at the Tripartite meeting, and it was agreed at the meeting in August 2023 that it would be beneficial to set up a working group to share knowledge, experience and ideas relating to offsite construction and passivhaus housing.

Equalities

A comprehensive Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022. The assessment identified age, disability, sex, and ethnicity as the main protected characteristics which have an impact on housing need and demand. Priorities, actions, and indicators detailed in the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, along with consultation on the needs of these specific groups, has been designed to ensure adequate housing is in place to meet the continuous demand for affordable housing in the area. The EPIA for the new LHS 2023-28 has been completed and approval is currently awaited. No significant issues were identified from either EPIA. [Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment](#)

Strategic Environment Assessment

A pre-screening Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken for the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway confirmed that a full assessment would not be necessary. The pre-screening for the new LHS 2023-28 was sent to the Gateway in 2022 and it has been confirmed once again that a full assessment would not be necessary.

[Strategic Environmental Assessment](#)

9. Consultation and Collaboration

Development Partners

The team also contacts developing landlords regularly to discuss progress with projects. This helps to ensure that any issues are flagged up and dealt with where possible, that potential future sites are identified and that sites included in the programme are realistic within the timescales proposed.

Falkirk Council Planning Team

The Housing Strategy and Development Team meet quarterly with Planning colleagues to discuss SHIP projects and sites which are likely to be developed under the Affordable Housing Policy.

A small working group between Falkirk Council planning officers, housing strategy and development officers and Registered Social Landlord partners (Link and Wheatley Group) met last year to look at improving the processes around assessing affordable housing site developer contribution requirements and site viability. The resulting viability template for social/affordable landlords has now been used and has helped to demonstrate a reduction in developer contributions on a Council-owned site in the SHIP.

Proposed SHIP projects are sent to Planning colleagues for comment. The feedback received was taken into account when assessing deliverability and timescales and shared with developing landlords where appropriate, to enable them to consider the issues highlighted.

Scottish Water

We have provided details of proposed projects to partners at Scottish Water and planning colleagues who provided comments and information for each site. This information has been passed to developing landlords for comment and discussion. This consultation will improve future planning for project delivery and take cognisance of site constraints.

Strategic Housing Group

Affordable housing is discussed at the quarterly LHS Strategic Housing Group, which is the housing market partnership for Falkirk Council area. Representation on this group includes Council officers across services and external partners including the Scottish Government, Registered Social Landlords, Homes for Scotland and the Health and Social Care Partnership. Moving forward, the SHIP will be a standing item for this group.

Housing Contribution Steering Group

The SHIP is a recurring item on the agenda for the Housing Contribution Statement Steering Group, which has at its core Housing's role in Health and Social Care Integration. Members include representation from Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership, Registered Social Landlords and the Council's Housing services. Topics for discussion have included remodelling of existing buildings in Council and Registered Social Landlord ownership to meet specialist housing needs.

We have recently consulted with Health and Social Care Partnership regarding Cairn Housing Association's reconfiguration project at Adam Grossert Court and Kingdom Housing Association core and cluster project at Dunipace, which aims to deliver properties for people with complex care need who are delayed in Lochview Hospital and others accommodated out with area who lacked suitable options locally. This project is on a section 75 site, and we have worked with planning colleagues to input into a report to planning committee.

Tenants and Residents

On an ongoing basis we liaise with Council tenants through two tenant working groups (How Your Rent Money is Spent and Housing Asset Management Plan). Council tenants are also kept informed of the SHIP through regular articles in the Tenant Talk newsletter. We plan over the coming year to provide articles on progress with Council and Registered Social Landlord new build, including detail on nominations to applicants on the Council housing register.

Registered Social Landlords keep tenants informed with regular newsletters, on-line information and Annual General Meetings.

The council new build team and Registered Social Landlords carry out consultation with neighbours regarding specific new build sites, and site developers are encouraged to engage with the local community to help to ensure the site construction is the least disruptive it can be, and that the new development integrates well into the community.

10. Monitoring

The formal monitoring of the SHIP is through the quarterly Tripartite meeting with Scottish Government, Falkirk Council and partners. Progress is closely monitored and reported to the quarterly meeting of the Tripartite group, where any issues can be highlighted and discussed.

This has been beneficial as developing landlords face similar issues delivering affordable housing. When requested by developing landlords planning and other colleagues have also attended the meetings to discuss roads, energy efficiency and planning issues.

We also monitor projects in the SHIP through regular review meetings with individual developing landlords and through daily operations and communication channels including hybrid working.

Scottish Government SHIP Guidance 2023

The SHIP should contain the following 2 elements:

(A) A succinct PDF narrative, submitted as a supporting document to the SHIP tables generated in the Scottish Government's Housing and Regeneration Programmes system (HARP), which explains the context to the SHIP including:

- a statement on alignment with the LHS demonstrating that investment priorities identified in the SHIP are consistent with what the local authority outlined in its LHS (and updates) and how the SHIP priorities will contribute to delivery of LHS Outcomes
- a summary of the methodology used to prioritise projects
- a summary of housing investment priorities in terms of housing size, including any identified need for larger family housing (see below) and how the local authority is addressing this including through targeted purchase of "off the shelf" properties.
- a summary of the local authority's investment priorities for housing in town centres
- a summary of the use of different methods of construction in the delivery of affordable housing priorities locally (see below) and any plans within the local authority area to facilitate and support efficient delivery of projects through collaboration on (a) design/ mass customisation and (b) procurement of all construction methods
- details of specialist housing that will be delivered over the period of the SHIP including particular priorities by size, tenure and type including information on which groups (as set out in Section 10 of Local Housing Strategy guidance) this aims to support. This section should also focus on what accessible and adapted housing the Council aims to deliver across its area over the period of the SHIP. Together with information on the all-tenure wheelchair accessible housing target and what progress the local authority has achieved for the delivery of this guidance
- details of development constraints on projects and details of how the local authority has responded to and resolved these constraints prior to the site start date
- details on how the local authority's own resources and other funding are supporting the delivery of affordable housing in its area
- details of progress towards the delivery of its Affordable Housing Supply Programme across all tenures by completions
- details of targets and delivery of these targets for wheelchair accessible housing within its area
- statement that strategic housing priorities are aligned and are consistent with Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan priorities
- details of affordable housing projects that are aligned with the Local Child Poverty Action Report for the local authority area including the need for larger family housing
- details of any empty homes services and actions to bring homes back into use
- details of how Council Tax on Second and Empty Homes has been used to assist affordable housing including support to registered social landlords and communities to bring forward affordable housing
- details of how Developer Contributions have been used to assist affordable housing
- the type and level of consultation undertaken with Registered Social Landlords, communities, developers, and other stakeholders in developing the SHIP and how this has helped with the development of strategic investment priorities
- an outline of capital works planned on Gypsy/Traveller sites and whether funding has been sought through the new Scottish Government capital funding programme for Gypsy/Traveller accommodation
- details of the Housing Infrastructure Fund projects where these are linked to affordable housing delivery

(B) All affordable housing projects submitted electronically on HARP across all tenures identified as priorities and expected to require Scottish Government funding and/or complete over the five-year period including:

- include rolling forward existing projects from the previous SHIP where appropriate
- set out the funding and delivery mechanism, including where funds are being sought/provided through other SG programmes

- demonstrate that the projects and resources will be realistically delivered over the plan period, highlighting any potential risks



Falkirk Council
Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)
2024/29 Project Submission Form

Please complete this form for projects you wish to be considered for inclusion in the SHIP. Provide as much detail as possible, as this will assist in the assessment process. Submitting a form does not mean that the Council will make a commitment to include this project in the SHIP.
 The scoring guide is available in the Appendix.

Please complete a separate form for each site and return to susan.white@falkirk.gov.uk by **23 June 2023**

Organisation Details	
Name of organisation	
Name of Contact Person	
Contact Person Telephone Number	
Contact Person Email	

Project Details		
Site Name		
Site address		
Site post code		
Site co-ordinates can be found at https://www.gridreferencefinder.com/	Eastings	Northings
Please attach site location map		
Does the site have an allocation in the current 2023/28 SHIP?	Yes / No	

Housing sub-area (Please refer to the map at Appendix 2 and select appropriate box)					
Falkirk	Braes / Rural South	Larbert/ Stenhseuir /Rural North	Denny/ Bonnybridge	Grangemouth	Bo'ness
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HARP reference (if on HARP)					
Site size (ha)					
Number of units in SHIP project					
Is this an Affordable Housing Policy Section 75 site? If yes, please answer the next 3 questions.				Yes / No	
If Yes, total no. units on entire site					
Number and % of affordable units		Number		% of total	%
Has the s.75 Affordable Housing Agreement been signed?		Yes / No / Don't know			
Estimated project site start date					
Estimated project completion date					
Estimated length of contract					
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Estimated no. of units completed					
Is the site within a town centre boundary? <i>As defined by the LDP</i>		Yes / No			
		Check at Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) Falkirk Council			
Does the project include specialist/supported provision e.g., core and cluster?		Yes / No			
If yes, please give details. Include details of client group, the level of support required and how that support will be provided.					
<u>Office use only</u> Is the site within a strategic priority/ regeneration area?		<u>Office use only</u> Yes/No If yes, insert details.			

Property Mix

Please double click on the table below to open in Excel and add figures to the table.

Type	Size	GN	Amb	Wh/ch	GN	Amb	Wh/ch	GN	Amb	Wh/ch	GN	Amb	Wh/ch	Total
House	1 bed													0
	2 bed													0
	3 bed													0
	4 bed													0
	5 bed													0
Bungalow	1 bed													0
	2 bed													0
	3 bed													0
	4 bed													0
Flat cottage	1 bed													0
	2 bed													0
Flat communal	1 bed													0
	2 bed													0
Sub total		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		0			0			0			0			0
												Total Wh/chair		0
*Does communal flat have a lift?												% Wheelchair		#DIV/0!

GN - General Needs Standard

Amb - Ambulant Disabled Standard / amenity

Wh/Ch - Full Wheelchair Standard. This should meet Housing for Varying Needs column B as a minimum

Statutory Approvals																						
Local Development Plan site ref.																						
Planning refs. including pre-app.																						
Date application submitted																						
Building Warrant reference(s)																						
Planning Officer name																						
Planning details/history e.g., discussions held, feedback received																						
Will the properties meet Housing for Varying Needs standard? If no, why not?	Yes / No																					
Project deliverability (Please check all boxes that apply)																						
<input type="checkbox"/> Full planning or MSC approval <input type="checkbox"/> Local Development Plan Housing site <input type="checkbox"/> Permission in Principle approval <input type="checkbox"/> Local Development Plan 'Other' site <input type="checkbox"/> Application submitted for Full or MSC <input type="checkbox"/> Windfall site <input type="checkbox"/> Application submitted for PPP <input type="checkbox"/> Section 75 legal agreement signed <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced pre-planning discussion underway <input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing Agreement signed																						
Developer Contributions (if known)																						
Confirmed no DCs required. <input type="checkbox"/>																						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Amount per unit</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Green Infrastructure e.g., open space</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport Infrastructure e.g., road network</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community Infrastructure e.g., schools, health</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Placemaking & Historic Environment e.g., public art</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (Please state)</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£</td> <td>£</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Amount per unit	Total	Green Infrastructure e.g., open space	£	£	Transport Infrastructure e.g., road network	£	£	Community Infrastructure e.g., schools, health	£	£	Placemaking & Historic Environment e.g., public art	£	£	Other (Please state)	£	£	Total	£	£
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Placemaking & Historic Environment e.g., public art	£	£																				
Other (Please state)	£	£																				
Total	£	£																				
Land ownership (Please select the appropriate boxes)																						
Name of landowner:	Site Developer:																					
<input type="checkbox"/> Full ownership (by Council/RSL/developer) <input type="checkbox"/> Legal option on the site subject to Planning <input type="checkbox"/> No ownership <input type="checkbox"/> In negotiation with landowner <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership with developer <input type="checkbox"/> Developer is confirmed selected bidder <input type="checkbox"/> Other relevant info (please state)																						

Sustainability (Please select the appropriate box)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	<input type="checkbox"/> Silver
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Bronze Active
Development Constraints	
<p>Please advise us of any known issues or constraints that could affect timescales or viability e.g., Scottish Water issues, abnormal ground conditions, parking requirement, lack of clean title, and include any steps been taken to overcome these.</p>	

Funding (Please select the appropriate box)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Under benchmark			<input type="checkbox"/> On benchmark		
<input type="checkbox"/> Above benchmark			<input type="checkbox"/> Other funding secured (include below)		
Project Costs					
Total Project Cost			£		
Total Works Cost			£		
Total Private/Prudential Finance			£		
Other funding e.g., HSCP			£		
Total grant required for project			£		
Total grant drawn down in previous years			£		
Total grant requested for future years					
Average Grant Per Unit	£		3-person equivalent	£	
Projected Grant Draw Down Per Year	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29

Additional Information
Project scoring can be influenced by this information, which helps assess strategic and policy fit, and may be useful to support supplementary funding applications.
Partnership Working
How will the project deliver partnership working?
Community benefits
What community benefits will the project deliver? Will anything specific to the local community be delivered as part of the procurement exercise?

<p>Please tick this box to confirm you are aware of our 6 LHS outcomes (listed below) and agree to deliver against these priorities wherever possible.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tick Box <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Local Housing Strategy Outcomes
<p>1. Increasing Housing Supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The supply of housing is increased ○ More affordable housing is provided through joint working between the public and private sector ○ We have a sustainable private rented sector <p>2. Creating Sustainable Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best use is made of existing stock across tenures ○ Best use is made of community resources to create sustainable communities <p>3. Improving Access to Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing advice is provided to those at risk of homelessness ○ People can access temporary accommodation and supported accommodation as required ○ Tenancy sustainment is improved <p>4. Providing housing and support to vulnerable groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The supply of accessible properties is increased ○ Specialist housing advice is provided in partnership ○ Older people's housing is reviewed by the Housing Contribution Statement Group (HCSG) ○ Further analysis on the housing needs of vulnerable groups is carried out <p>5. Tackling fuel poverty, energy efficiency and climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fuel poverty is tackled and progress is made to meeting national climate change targets <p>6. Improving housing conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social rented housing conditions are improved ○ Private sector housing conditions are improved



SHIP 2024/29 SCORING GUIDE

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Scores achieved will inform the selection of sites for the programme, along with consideration of wider strategic fit and policy decisions to allow a balanced programme across the Council area and between Council and RSL providers.

Viable sites with an allocation in the current SHIP will normally be given priority over new sites unless they are deemed to be too expensive or cannot be guaranteed to deliver within the next 5-year period.

Priority Location					
Points awarded	100	80	60	40	100
	Falkirk	Braes / Rural South	Larbert / S'housemuir / Rural North	Denny / Bonnybridge	Town Centre

Priority Needs and Specialist Provision					
Points awarded	200	150	100	50	300
	5-10% full wheelchair housing (HfVN Column B)	3+ bedroom full wheelchair housing	4+ bedroom houses	Ambulant disabled/ amenity	Specialist Housing project e.g., core and cluster, Gypsy/Traveller

Deliverability of Site - <i>Planning Status and Land Ownership</i>						
Points awarded	300	150	100	50	100	50
	Full planning approval / approved subject to conditions	Permission in principle	Application submitted	Housing site acceptable to Planning	Developer/ Provider has full ownership of site	Legal Option subject to planning permission

Sustainability			
Points awarded	200	100	50
	Gold	Silver active	Silver

Best Value			
Points awarded	100	50	100
Funding requirement	Under benchmark	Benchmark	Additional funding obtained

Strategic Priorities	
Points awarded	Up to 500
	Up to 500 points can be awarded for particular projects that help the Council to deliver on strategic priorities such as regeneration initiatives, community sustainability and mixed tenure on appropriate sites.

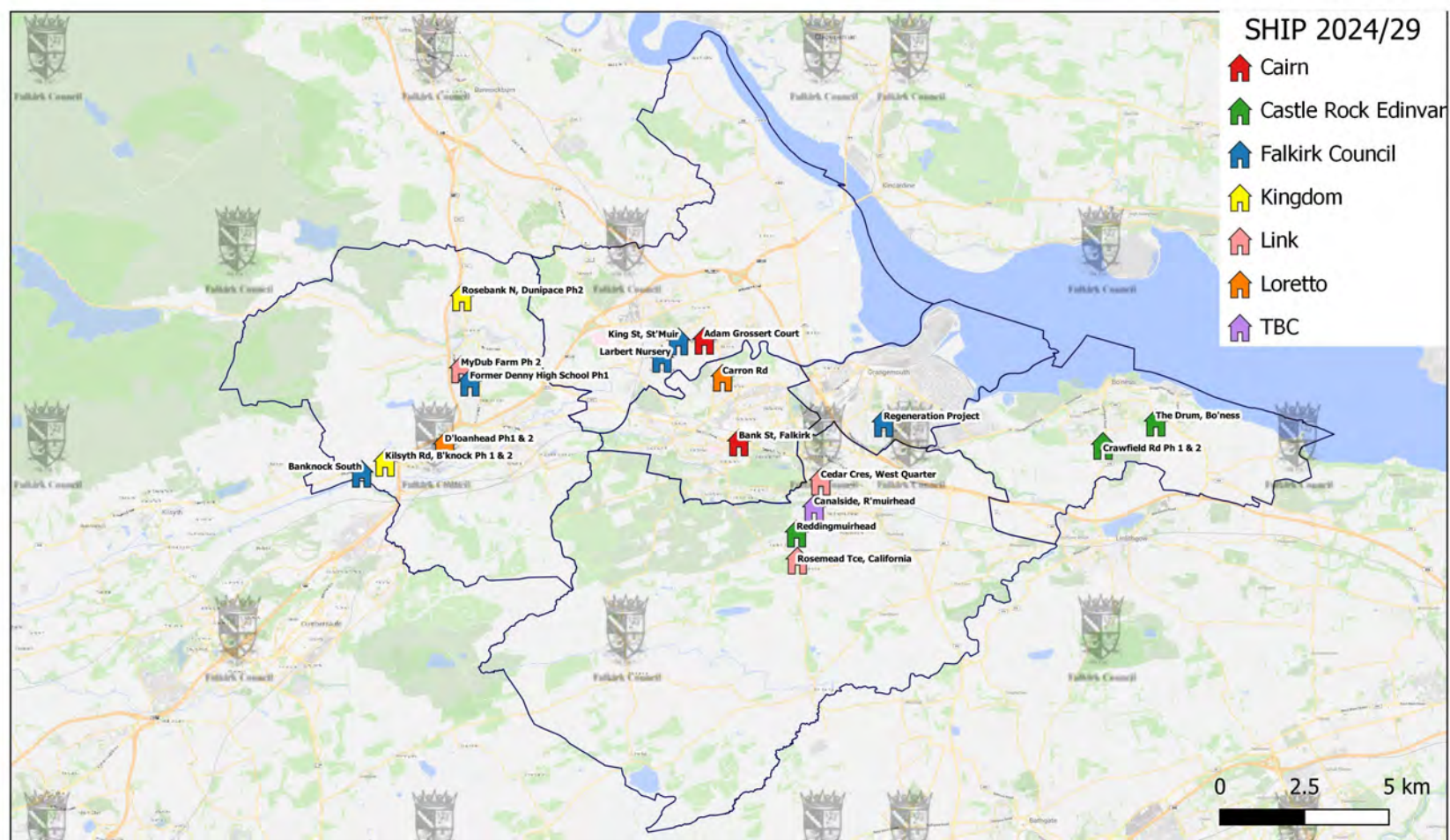
SHIP 2024/2029 Summary of Projects

Provider	Project Name	Total Units	General needs	ambulant	Wheel-chair	Total Grant	Grant pre-2024/25	Projected Grant 2024/25	Projected Grant 2025/26	Projected Grant 2026/27	Projected Grant 2027/28	Projected Grant 2028/29
FC	Haugh Gardens	40	28	12	0	£3,370,280	£1,635,665	£1,734,615				
FC	Banknock South	106	69	27	10	£10,155,264					£4,035,935	£6,119,329
FC	Former Denny High School Ph1	137	105	22	10	£13,125,199	£2,000,000		£1,417,140	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£4,708,059
FC	King Street, Stnhsemuir	21	0	17	4	£2,112,904				£430,000	£1,000,000	£682,904
FC	Regeneration Project	8	2	4	2	£988,426					£988,426	
FC	Larbert Nursery	10	8	0	2	£1,106,277					£350,000	£756,277
Cairn	Adam Grossert Court	52	0	47	5	£2,444,000			£1,000,000	£1,444,000		
Cairn	Bank Street, Falkirk	44	44			£3,666,793			£500,000	£1,000,000	£2,166,793	
CRE	Crawfield Rd Ph 1	34	32		2	£3,624,676		£2,085,025	£1,539,651			
CRE	Crawfield Rd Ph 2	34	32		2	£3,171,502				£1,110,026	£2,061,476	
CRE	Reddingmuirhead	23	23			£2,339,169		£701,751	£1,637,418			
CRE	The Drum, Bo'ness	32	30	2		£3,207,832		£1,122,741	£2,085,091			
Kingdom	Kilsyth Road, Banknock Ph1	30	24	6		£2,760,000					£500,000	£2,260,000
Kingdom	Rosebank North, Dunipace Ph2	13	11	0	2	£1,196,000			£1,196,000			
Tbc	Canalside, Reddingmuirhead	40	40			£3,680,000		£2,680,000	£1,000,000			
Link	Rosemead Terrace, California	39	35	0	4	£4,544,755		£1,000,000	£3,544,755			
Link	MyDub Farm Ph2	36	32		4	£4,089,500		£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£2,089,500		
Link	Cedar Cres, West Quarter	17	16		1	£2,023,911	£300,000	£1,723,911				
Loretto	Carron Road	82	80		2	£9,285,000				£4,785,000	£4,500,000	
Loretto	Dennyloanhead Ph1	41	39		2	£4,668,098				£400,000	£2,268,098	£2,000,000
Loretto	Dennyloanhead Ph2	44	42		2	£5,016,000						£4,000,000
Kingdom	Kilsyth Road, Banknock Ph2	38	36		2	£1,900,000						£1,000,000
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000		£3,600,000				
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000			£3,600,000			
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000				£3,600,000		
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000					£3,600,000	
FC	Buy Backs	80	80			£3,600,000						£3,600,000
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000		£225,000				
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000			£225,000			
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000				£225,000		
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000					£225,000	
Paragon	Buy Backs	5	5			£225,000						£225,000
Totals		1346	1153	137	56	£107,600,586	£3,935,665	£15,873,043	£18,745,055	£17,583,526	£24,195,728	£25,351,569
			86%	10%	4%				*minus commuted sum			
									£1,622,375			
									£17,122,680			

Shadow Programme 2024-2029						
Provider	Project Name	Total Units	General needs	ambulant	Wheel-chair	Total Grant
FC	Seabegs Road	31	27	2	2	£3,308,662
CRE	Vellore Rd, Maddiston	40	40			£3,781,000
CRE	Grangemouth Road, Falkirk	20	16	2	2	£2,034,060
Tbc	Bridge St, Bonnybridge	60	56		4	£5,758,500
Tbc	The Castings, Falkirk	8	7	1		£767,860
Tbc	Carradale Avenue	29	27	2		£2,866,189
Totals		188	173	7	8	£18,516,271

KEY	
	Local Development Plan Affordable Housing Policy site
x	Linked to Housing Infrastructure Fund
*	Affordable Housing Policy commuted sums used for Denny and Bo'ness
FC	Falkirk Council
CRE	Castle Rock Edinvar

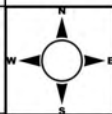
Map of SHIP Projects 2024/2029



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SHIP 2024/29

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Strategic Housing Investment Plan

Created with QGIS on: 5/9/2023



Falkirk Council

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHSP	Affordable Housing Supply Programme
HNDA	Housing Need and Demand Assessment
HST	Housing Supply Target
LDP	Local Development Plan
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
LOIP	Local Outcomes Improvement Plan
NPF	National Planning Framework
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan

Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00339 (Version 1)

SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Service & Division:	Corporate & Housing Services Housing & Communities	Lead Officer Name:	Ross Allan
		Team:	Strategy
		Tel:	01324 590387
		Email:	Ross.Allan@Falkirk.gov.uk
Proposal:	The Local Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 (LHS) is the overarching strategic document for housing. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce an LHS setting out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing related services.	Reference No:	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	No	Yes	No	No

Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	No	No

Other, please specify:	
-------------------------------	--

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):

10/08/2022	The purpose of the LHS is to set out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related service in the Falkirk Council area over a five year period (2023 – 2028).
03/11/2022	The purpose of the EPIA is to ensure the LHS has been developed with consideration of the Equality Act 2010 and the public duty which all public authority bodies must ensure they adhere to.
03/11/2022	Continuous monitoring of the outcome and actions written in LHS is carried out on a yearly basis over the 5 year period to ensure actions are progressing towards meeting the outcomes. This is considered good practice by the Scottish Government and is presented to Executive prior to being published on the Council website.

Identify the main aims and projected outcome of this proposal (please add date of each update):	

SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:		
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:		
Increase to this service budget (£'000s)	Per Annum:		
If this is a change to a charge or concession please complete.	Current Annual Income Total:		
	Expected Annual Income Total:		
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:		
	End Date (if any):		

SECTION THREE: EVIDENCE

Please include any evidence or relevant information that has influenced the decisions contained in this EPIA. (This could include demographic profiles; audits; research; health needs assessments; national guidance or legislative requirements and how this relates to the protected characteristic groups.)

A - Quantitative Evidence

This is evidence which is numerical and should include the number people who use the service and the number of people from the protected characteristic groups who might be affected by changes to the service.

Consideration has been given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, particularly around evidence on the specialist requirements of local populations. Age, disability, sex and ethnicity have been considered as these are the main protected characteristics which have an impact on housing need and demand. Information has been taken from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2022 (HNDA).

Information has been taken from multiple data sources including but not limited to various Falkirk Council Services, Census Data and National Records of Scotland.

- Falkirk has an increasing population; this has been the case since the mid-1990s. The National Records Scotland 2018 population projections indicate a rise of 6% between 2018 and 2043 which will result in a population estimate of 169,962 by 2043.
- The population is ageing with the majority of age groups between 0-59 years expected to see a fall between 2018 and 2043, with the largest fall expected to be in the 5-11 age group at 14%. There will however in stark contrast be a substantial increase in the 75-84 and the 85+ age group at 76% and 92% respectively, this compares to 66% and 84% nationally. The population of Falkirk is expected to age at a higher rate than the national average
- Single person households are the largest household category in Falkirk, and this is expected to increase as there is a projected to be a 7% fall in household size from 2.20 to 2.05 people per household and from 2.15 to 2.03 in Scotland in the next 25 years.
- 74% of households who live in properties with disrepair are pensioners, 28% of households in fuel poverty are pensioners
- An estimated number of 2,598 people are living with dementia
- 7000 households whose home limits their day-to-day activity equates to circa 4000 social rented and circa 2000 owners
- 392 Falkirk Council applicants for accessible properties
- There continues to be an increasing need for disabled adaptations, 3% circa 2,000 households report requiring disabled adaptations. Although need for wheelchair housing greater for older people, need is across all age groups. Of those with a disability, 19% of children, 41% of working age adults and 68% of those above retirement age where the disability is due to mobility.
- Average of 1,109 homeless applications per year annually over the last 10 years. Largest group single people.
- Single males represented 47.5% of all homeless applications in 2020-21
- There are 51 people with severe and multiple disadvantage who would benefit from a Housing First approach - Housing First supports vulnerable people with complex needs to get into settled accommodation.
- 92.32% of LHS survey respondents had broadband access at home, with a further 73.99% being able to access the internet via mobile phone data. Indeed, overwhelmingly, the preferred device to use for internet access is a mobile phone (91.64%), followed by laptops (66.04%) and tablets (62.26).
- the percentage of respondents with internet declines with age. For example, 97% of tenants between the ages of 16 and 34 had internet access, while only 25% of respondents over 65 had internet access. The elderly (60+) comprises 23.8% of Falkirk's 35,900 households.

B - Qualitative Evidence

This is data which describes the effect or impact of a change on a group of people, e.g. some information provided as part of performance reporting.

Social - case studies; personal / group feedback / other

Age, disability, sex and ethnicity have been identified as the main protected characteristics which have an impact on housing need and demand. Priorities, actions and indicators detailed in the LHS along with consultation on the needs of these specific groups have been designed to ensure adequate housing and support services are in place to meet the continuous demand for affordable housing, specialist housing options and support services in the local area.

Best Judgement:

Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?	No
Who provided the best judgement and what was this based on?	
What gaps in data / information were identified?	
Is further research necessary?	No
If NO, please state why.	Extensive consultation was carried out across the local area to determine the priorities, actions and indicators.

SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT		Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place
Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?	Yes	
If YES, please state who was engagement with.	<p>A survey was made available for people to complete via online and in paper form across the local area. The survey was promoted online via the Council's social media platforms and was shared with Local Community and Support Groups. Physical copies were also distributed across the area via local groups.</p> <p>Extensive engagement was carried out during the development of the LHS including face to face consultation with Asylum Seekers, Young people, Homeless assessment centre residents, Older People's Group, Community Café and Food Pantry service users as well as Community Learning & Development's Young parent's group.</p> <p>Opportunities to participate were also given to those resident in the Travelling Persons Site and service users of the Sensory Centre, Falkirk & Linlithgow Autism Support and LGBT Falkirk.</p>	
If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.		
How was the engagement carried out?		What were the results from the engagement? Please list...
Focus Group	Yes	Participants across the eight focus groups held highlighted a desire to see more social and affordable housing provided by Falkirk Council & Partners. The importance of Housing Options was highlighted as was the provision and promotion of adaptations services
Survey	Yes	82% of respondents noted that it was Very Important or Important to build more affordable housing. 86% responded that building more home that meet people's changing needs was a priority. 93% want to see empty homes back in use. 88% places an importance on preventing homelessness, 81% thought it to be important to signpost clients to services to maximise income and benefits. 87% placed an importance on providing advice on housing adaptations 90% saw it important to promote technology (e.g., MECS, Home Safety Monitoring) to stay at home for longer. 83% noted that the providing advice on how to save energy at home was very important or important.
Display / Exhibitions	No	
User Panels	No	
Public Event	No	

Other: please specify	Details regarding the consultation was shared online via Falkirk Council's social media platform. Information was also shared via the local newspaper's social media outlets. Details of the survey and its availability were sent directly to Registered Tenants Organisations and Falkirk Council's People's Panel. Details were also sent directly to those who had previously taken part in Housing related consultation and had indicated a willingness to take part again.
Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?	No
Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?	Yes
Is further engagement recommended?	Yes / No

SECTION FIVE: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Equality Protected Characteristics: What will the impact of implementing this proposal be on people who share characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 or are likely to be affected by the proposal / policy / project? This section allows you to consider other impacts, e.g. poverty, health inequalities, community justice, carers etc.

Protected Characteristic	Neutral Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Please provide evidence of the impact on this protected characteristic.
Age		✓		<p>Between 2018 and 2028, the population of Falkirk is projected to increase from 160,340 to 165,462. This is an increase of 3.2%, which compares to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole.</p> <p>Falkirk is projected to have the 11th highest population out of the 32 council areas in Scotland in 2028</p> <p>The average age of the population of Falkirk is projected to increase as the baby boomer generation ages and more people are expected to live longer. An increase of 13.5% (2308) in the 65-74 age group and a 29% (3755) expected to be noted in the 75+ age group.</p> <p>This is likely to have implications for social care, health, housing and leisure services. It will also mean demand for purpose-built housing to meet the needs of the aging population. It is likely that most older people wish to remain in their own home for as long as possible. It will also mean an increase in the demand for adaptations to be made to existing housing.</p> <p>The New LHS will have a commitment to supplying new homes that will be future proof and will meet the changing needs of people. Consultation results highlighted the importance of this amongst those aged 65+.The significance of providing specialist housing advice for those within the same age group with disabilities was also noted.</p> <p>Younger people (16-24) are often difficult to engage with, but two focus groups were held at the Link Academy facility and with Community Learning's Young Parents group to obtain their views on housing in Falkirk. The main issues raised were affordability, cost of living and the availability of Social Housing and appropriate housing options.</p>

Public Sector Equality Duty: Scottish Public Authorities must have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance quality of opportunity and foster good relations. Scottish specific duties include:

				<p>Falkirk Council's increasing digitisation of services, ensuring the elderly can still access services is a major challenge Falkirk Council must overcome.</p> <p>Also, Some individuals may lack the necessary proficiency or assurance to navigate the web or operate electronic devices. Older households tend to be less equipped with broadband services. This is believed to stem from a preference among older individuals to utilise traditional methods of communication and obtaining information/services.</p>
Disability		✓		<p>The LHS is committed to ensure that all new builds are designed to meet the standard of varying needs thus ensuring that new builds are suitably designed for people as they move through life.</p> <p>The LHS is committed to building adapted/wheelchair accessible properties during the course of LHS4</p> <p>To coincide with the aging population, it is estimated that an increase in demand on the adaptation services is inevitable and will lead to people being able to live at home comfortably and for longer.</p>
Sex	✓			<p>Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing in the Falkirk area will benefit all protected characteristics</p> <p>HL1 statistics show that single males are overrepresented in homeless applications. Falkirk Councils current Housing Options are equipped to provide advice and information on each applicant's personal circumstances.</p>

Ethnicity	✓			<p>Increasing new affordable housing, ensuring the correct support is available to people who require it, providing up to date housing options information, tackling fuel poverty, driving up standards in the private sector and improving our estates will no result in any negative impact on these protected characteristic.</p> <p>Overall the LHS is designed to benefit all protected characteristics and it is anticipated there will be neutral impact for the protected characteristics listed above</p>
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Sexual Orientation	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Transgender	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Pregnancy / Maternity	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Poverty		✓		<p>The Cost of Living, poverty and increased energy costs were a concern noted throughout the consultation process.</p> <p>The LHS is committed to reducing fuel poverty and increasing the energy efficiency of homes in the Falkirk Council area. The initiatives and resources available are targeted towards households identified in fuel poverty hotspots detailed in the LHS.</p> <p>This commitment will benefit households by providing the necessary advice, grants and initiatives to reduce bills, improve the warmth of their accommodation and lift residents out of fuel poverty.</p> <p>Low-income households are more prone to struggle with paying for a broadband connection, signing a contract, and acquiring the necessary equipment for internet access.</p>

Care Experienced	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.	✓			Commitments to increasing the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of homes and services in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)	<p>The LHS is designed to make available affordable housing and increase housing options for people in the local area.</p> <p>The Cost-of-Living Crising and Covid-19 pandemic and recovery have all had an impact on the residents of the Council area in particular the local economy, jobs and household finances which has a direct impact on housing.</p>			
		Evidence of Due Regard		
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):				
Advance Equality of Opportunity:		Actions to target specific groups to raise awareness of services e.g. Fuel Poverty assistance, Adaptations services		
Foster Good Relations (promoting understanding and reducing prejudice):				

SECTION SIX: PARTNERS / OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Which sectors are likely to have an interest in or be affected by the proposal / policy / project?		Describe the interest / affect.
Business	Yes	Important to ensure there is a good choice of various all tenure housing options available to make Falkirk Council a more attractive place for people to want to reside and work
Councils	Yes	Insight into the challenges facing Councils and how they are tackling them
Education Sector	No	
Fire	No	
NHS	Yes	The NHS is represented in the IJB which is responsible for planning, resourcing and the operational oversight of a wide range of health and social care services which overlap with housing
Integration Joint Board	Yes	The NHS is represented in the IJB which is responsible for planning, resourcing and the operational oversight of a wide range of health and social care services which overlap with housing
Police	No	
Third Sector	Yes	<p>Many different types of organisations from the Third Sector are involved in the delivery of housing and support services to people so that people have choice in the services that can support them to maintain independent living. It is important the third sector is an equal partner in the development of the LHS and that effective partnership across health, social care and the third sector is embedded and sustained into the future to provide the right advice and support to enable people to make informed decisions about their housing as they age or their circumstance change.</p> <p>Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Housing Services Third Sector Private Developers Health and Social Care Reform Private Sector Scottish Government</p> <p>There is 16 RSLs in the Falkirk area with amenity, sheltered or very sheltered housing stock covering approximately 500 properties and 3,500 mainstream properties. Our partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) contributes to the joint funding of projects in the SHIP and determining the number of new builds. This partnership is necessary to ensure that any future housing developments include a variety of house types and sizes, reflecting local community needs</p>

while encourage new models of housing that enable older people to maintain their independence in the community and are fully adaptable to meet the changing life needs of tenants.

The Council's Housing Services in currently provides a wide range of Housing Options to anyone with a housing issue/need. Accessing high quality information and advice services will be vital to ensuring people of all ages have access to the right housing and support.

It is crucial Private Developers liaise with the Council to ensure that they build homes which are suited to the changing needs of households. Developers should be encouraged to build to the Lifetime Homes standard to ensure that properties are flexible and adaptable. Lifetime Homes are designed to create and encourage better living environments for everyone from raising small children to coping with illness or dealing with reduced mobility in later life.

The Private Sector Housing is committed to ensuring better communication with tenants and landlords, robust enforcement procedures, effective repairs and maintenance solutions in order to drive up standards in the private sector to encourage peoples to consider the private rental sector as a viable option.

Private Developers ensure new builds can accommodate the variety of needs across the lifetime of the occupants as evidence suggests people want to remain in their homes as they age and want to remain as independent as possible.

Partnership involves local authorities and housing associations, as well as private and voluntary sector providers. All have a vested interest in LHS to ensure older people have choice in the services that can support them to maintain independent living. Most elderly people prefer to live independently in their own home, rather than entering institutional or hospital care, and the Scottish Government wishes to deliver health and social care in the community. This suggests there will be a growing demand for appropriate servicing and adaptation of the existing housing stock to incorporate wheelchair friendly and other facilities to allow this.

Planning has a role to play in regards to LHS as they are responsible for developing the Local Development Plan (LDP) which is used to identify suitable land for new builds and grant planning applications. Planning will also look at potential projects to make sure there are no issues with sites, for example flooding, reduction in open space, building restrictions, listed buildings which may be renovated and impact on wildlife.

	The Scottish Government need to be satisfied that each Local Authority are addressing the issues, concerns and demand for housing within their communities linking their LHS with SOA and overall strategic aims of the Scottish Government.
Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.	Additional advice and support services will assist in progressing some of the priorities and actions to provide advice and assistance relating to specialist housing options and support.

SECTION SEVEN: ACTION PLANNING

Mitigating Actions: If you have identified impacts on protected characteristic groups in Section 5 please summarise these in the table below detailing the actions you are taking to mitigate or support this impact. If you are not taking any action to support or mitigate the impact you should complete the No Mitigating Actions section below instead.

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
The EPIA demonstrates the proposal is robust; there is no potential for discrimination and opportunities to promote equality have been taken. All priorities, outcomes and actions in the LHS are designed to contribute towards improving the communities for everyone.	N/A	N/A	N/A	06/09/2022	N/A

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
<p>The New LHS will have a commitment to supplying new homes that will be future proof and will meet the changing needs of people. Consultation results highlighted the importance of this amongst those aged 65+.The significance of providing specialist housing advice for those within the same age group with disabilities was also noted.</p> <p>There is also a need to raise awareness of adaptations and streamline the process for applying for disabled adaptations whilst also reducing timescales. Raising awareness will also help to support people living in their homes for longer, increasing suitability</p>	Older people or those who require adaptations to existing homes	LHS Priority 4 - Housing & Support for vulnerable groups. LHS Priority 6 Improving Housing Conditions. All relevant actions are listed within the LHS	Disabled Adaptations are carried out for the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) by the housing service. The costs being transferred to the Integration Joint Board's budget from Falkirk Council's housing revenue account	09/03/2023	Local Housing Strategy, Strategic Housing Investment Plan, Local Development Plan

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
<p>Initiatives and resources available are targeted towards households identified in fuel poverty hotspots detailed in the LHS.</p> <p>This commitment will benefit households by providing the necessary advice, grants and initiatives to reduce bills, improve the warmth of their accommodation and lift residents out of fuel poverty.</p>	Poverty/Fuel Poor	LHS Priority 5 - Tackling Climate Change, Energy Efficiency & Fuel Poverty. All relevant actions are listed within the LHS	Natalie Moore Young & Paul McLay and Carole Glass	09/03/2023	Local Housing Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy, Climate Change Strategy
Raising awareness of housing options and increasing the number of affordable housing and sustainable private sector options will increase choices for all including single male homeless applicants.	Homeless applicants or those threatened with homelessness	LHS Priority 3 - Improving Access To Housing, LHS Priority 7 - Creating a sustainable Private rented sector. All relevant actions are listed within the LHS	Laura Smith & Natalie Moore Young and Gail Lucas/Lesley Scaif	09/03/2023	Local Housing Strategy, Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
New build developments that are of qualifying size (20 or more new homes) will include a % of affordable properties.	First time buyers. Young Buyers	LHS Priority 1 - Housing Delivery. Plans will ensure the delivery of both market and affordable housing	Natalie Moore Young	28/03/2023	Local Housing Strategy, Local Development Plan

Identified Impact	To Who	Action(s)	Lead Officer	Evaluation and Review Date	Strategic Reference to Corporate Plan / Service Plan / Quality Outcomes
Digital Inclusion - Develop and implement digital skills training programs for older residents or for those experiencing poverty or live in noted areas of deprivation. Explore opportunities to provide low cost equipment and training to develop, gain confidence and promote digital device use.	All who require internet access and/or skills development.	LHS Priority 4 - Support for vulnerable people, LHS priority 2 creating sustainable communities	Alan Christie,	28/03/2023	Digital Housing Strategy, Local Housing Strategy, Tenant Participation Strategy. Digital Inclusion Strategy

No Mitigating Actions

Please explain why you do not need to take any action to mitigate or support the impact of your proposals.

Are actions being reported to Members?	Yes
If yes when and how ?	Committee report being provided to Members, highlighting the outcomes of consultation and the mechanism in place via the LHS i.e Affordable Housing Options, Housing Supply Targets (All Tenure) and Specialist Housing Advice, Reducing Fuel Poverty.

SECTION EIGHT: ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

Only one of following statements best matches your assessment of this proposal / policy / project. Please select one and provide your reasons.

No major change required	Yes	Increasing affordable housing, ensuring the correct support is available to all people who require it, providing up to date specialist housing options information, tackling climate change and fuel poverty, driving up housing standards in both the social and private sector whilst also improving our estates will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics.
The proposal has to be adjusted to reduce impact on protected characteristic groups	No	
Continue with the proposal but it is not possible to remove all the risk to protected characteristic groups	No	
Stop the proposal as it is potentially in breach of equality legislation	No	

SECTION NINE: LEAD OFFICER SIGN OFF

Lead Officer:

Signature:		Date:	07/03/2023
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SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:		Has the EPIA demonstrated the use of data, appropriate engagement, identified mitigating actions as well as ownership and appropriate review of actions to confidently demonstrate compliance with the general and public sector equality duties?	Yes
ASSESSMENT FINDINGS		Qualitative and Quantitative assessments and survey.	
If YES, use this box to highlight evidence in support of the assessment of the EPIA			
If NO, use this box to highlight actions needed to improve the EPIA			
Where adverse impact on diverse communities has been identified and it is intended to continue with the proposal / policy / project, has justification for continuing <u>without making changes been made</u> ?		Yes	If YES, please describe: The assessment demonstrates that relevant actions are in place within the LHS to address the impacts highlighted.

LEVEL OF IMPACT: The EPIA Task Group has agreed the following level of impact on the protected characteristic groups highlighted within the EPIA

LEVEL		COMMENTS
HIGH	Yes / No	
MEDIUM	Yes / No	
LOW	Yes	

SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF

Director / Head of Service:

Signature:		Date:	01/09/2023
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