

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-16 - 2013 UPDATE
Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Date: 18 March 2014
Author: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress with delivering the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2011-16. The report also provides updated information in relation to the Council's Strategic Local Programme and also proposals for the adoption of an Older People's Housing Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to prepare local housing strategies for their area, supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) provides the strategic direction for tackling housing need and demand and informing future investment in housing and related services across the Council area.
- 2.2 In addition, Members will be aware that the Council now addresses any strategic homelessness issues within the LHS following guidance on the preparation of LHS which states that the LHS is now the "sole document on housing, homelessness and support". A separate report has been provided on 2013 Homelessness and Allocations outcomes.
- 2.3 The Council's LHS 2011-16 was approved in December 2011 and was then subject to peer assessment by the Scottish Government and two local authorities, which concluded in May 2012. The LHS was well received by the peer assessment with examples of good practice being identified in relation to the plans to deliver affordable housing, consultation and equalities issues.
- 2.4 Since the LHS was approved there have been a number of changes at a national level which impact significantly on the LHS. These are outlined below:
- The introduction of welfare reform;
 - Changes to the requirements for the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)/ Strategic Local Programme (SLP), which form part of the LHS Appendix;
 - Further development of the Reshaping Care for Older People agenda (RSCOP), Integration of Health and Social Care.
- 2.4 Members will also be aware that the Council's SHIP and 2015-2018 Strategic Local Programme (SLP) was considered by the Executive on 6th August 2013. The report identified that a total of approximately 548 additional homes are planned to be delivered by 2017/18. Changes in Scottish Government funding since August 2013 have impacted

on the approved SLP, necessitating revisions to the SLP approved in August. Details of the revised SLP are provided in Section 5 below.

3. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-16 UPDATE

3.1 The LHS sets out a Vision (**Homes for Now, Homes for the Future**). The Vision is underpinned by 6 outcomes as follows:

1. Best use is made of the existing and new affordable housing stock to address local needs;
2. Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options in order to prevent homelessness;
3. People with disabilities are able to adapt their homes or have information they need to make appropriate housing choices;
4. Housing support and other services are provided to help people live independently;
5. The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty;
6. All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently.

3.2 The table below summarises progress in delivering the 6 outcomes.

OUTCOMES	PROGRESS
1. Best use is made of the existing and new affordable housing to address local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenant Incentive Scheme commenced in April 2013; • Empty homes – Falkirk Council are working in partnership with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils along with Shelter to fund an Empty Homes Officer across Forth Valley. As part of this project, 27 empty properties have been brought back into use in Falkirk Council area, during the period 1st April to 31st December 2013, • National Housing Trust project has provided 27 new homes which have recently been rented at mid-market rents • Falkirk Council's Buy Back Scheme was approved at committee on 12 February 2013; a provision of £5m per annum was made in the HRA Capital Programme to facilitate the purchase of c50 properties per annum. In the period April 2013 to January 2014, a total of 70 properties have been purchased.
2. Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options in order to prevent homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer education scheme within high schools and with hard to reach individuals is on-going; • Housing options has been rolled out to all Neighbourhood Offices from April 2013; • The provision of housing support to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness has been reviewed • A family mediation service has been introduced to help with the prevention of

	<p>homelessness amongst younger people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted debt advice and benefits advice has been provided to households affected by the spare room subsidy deductions and other welfare reform changes • Work is on-going to review hospital discharge protocols; • Nominations agreements are in place with all major RSLs in the area.
3. People with disabilities are able to adapt their homes or have information they need to make appropriate housing choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan for Older People includes a housing contribution statement which is in line with National Housing Strategy for Housing for Older People (further details are outlined in section 6) • Owners have access to grants for adaptations to enable them to remain in their home • Adaptations for tenants with disabilities are carried out following assessment by Social Work Services and Housing Services Occupational Therapists • Properties which have been adapted for those with disabilities are targeted to those applicants requiring the facilities • Client access/ uptake of the Small Repair Handyperson Services will be maximised through regular reviews and adjustments • The electrical pilot and the provision of the Small Repair Handyperson Services on a multi-tenure basis will be provided until March 2015. • We are exploring partnership working to increase the available physical assistance to live independently.
4. Housing support and other services are provided to help people live independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Neighbourhood and Social Work services have carried out reviews into housing support provision and amended the models of delivery to better suit the needs of clients. This includes self- directed support. • A review of supported accommodation is currently underway to determine the options in relation to our hostel provision to ensure that it remains aligned with our residents requirements
5. The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of 2012/13 81% of Council stock and 84% of RSL accommodation met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). Falkirk Council have investment plans in place to achieve SHQS by 2015. • We are delivering subsidised energy efficient boilers to private homes in partnership with Scottish Hydro & the Scottish Government, using Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland(HEEPS) funds.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are creating jobs and reducing fuel bills with subsidised insulation schemes for all tenures, in partnership with the Scottish Government, utilities, Energy Savings Trust and Paragon Housing Association, using ECO and HEEPS funds. • Our 3 year Council House Investment Programme includes gas mains extensions, additional Combined Heat with Power; and external wall insulation schemes.
6. All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new link on the Falkirk Council website enables applicants to note an interest with major RSLs in the area (and vice versa) to increase awareness of all available social rented properties in the area. • The Private Sector team continues to work with landlords to source additional privately leased and deposit guarantee properties.

4. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN/ STRATEGIC LOCAL PROGRAMME

- 4.1 Members will be aware of the report to Executive Committee on 6 August 2013 which provided an update on progress relating to affordable housing projects and proposals for the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)/ Strategic Local Programme (SLP) 2013/14 to 2017/18.
- 4.2 Since the approval of the SLP in August, the Scottish Government have made further changes to the Resource Planning Assumptions (Grant Subsidy), which has necessitated a review and subsequent changes to the approved SLP. A period of local negotiation between Scottish Government, Falkirk Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to enable all parties to develop an SLP complementary to Scottish Government aspirations has now been concluded. The projects to be taken forward are detailed below.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2013/14 to 2017/18

Year	PROJECT	UNIT NO'S	FUNDING
1 and 2	Merchiston Avenue, Falkirk (Phase 2) (Falkirk Council)	27	£1,242,000
1 and 2	Auchincloch Banknock (Link)	30	£1,945,890
1 and 2	Glenfair Nursery (Falkirk Council)	10	£460,000
1 and 2	Denny Police Station (Falkirk Council)	9	£414,000
1 and 2	Tinto Drive, Grangemouth (Falkirk Council)	56	£1,613,024
1 and 2	Canal Walk, Bonnybridge (Link)	28	£1,243,088
1 and 2	Bellsdyke Phase 3 (Link)	28	£1,579,660
1 and 2	Glenburn	26	£1,508,000
Total 1/2		214	£10,005,662
3	Stenhousemuir Police Station (Falkirk	15	£690,000

	Council)		
3	Carrick Place (WESLO)	20	£1,160,000
3	Denny Town Centre – Site 1 (Falkirk Council)	18	£828,000
3	Seaview Place, Bo,ness (Falkirk Council)	3	£138,000
Total 3		56	£2,816,000
4 and 5	Westquarter (Hanover)	14	£812,000
4 and 5	Buybacks (Falkirk Council)	27	£1,242,000
Total 4		41	£2,054,000
Overall	TOTAL	311	£14,875,662

- 4.3 In addition, the Scottish Government have advised indicative Resource Planning Assumptions for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and are also likely to issue new LHS and SHIP guidance in the first half of 2014. As such, at this point in time work is on-going to develop projects for years 2017 to 2019. A further report will be submitted to Committee in due course, once clearer guidance has been received from the Scottish Government.

5. JOINT STRATEGIC COMMISSIONING PLAN AND THE HOUSING CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

- 5.1 Members will be aware that a report on the Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan (JSCP) for older people was discussed by Executive Committee on 14 January 2014. The plan sets out a 3 year programme for service development in relation to Reshaping Care for Older People and the associated change programme. The Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan (JSCP) has been developed to reflect the evolving policy context, recognising that when commissioning services for older people, it is important to consider how best to take an integrated approach to deliver the strategic vision i.e.:

“to enable older people in the Falkirk Council area to live full and positive lives in their own homes or when this is not possible within homely settings within supportive communities.”

- 5.2 The Housing Contribution Statement is an appendix to both the JSCP and the LHS and is particularly relevant to LHS outcome 3. The statement recognises the following outcomes of the JSCP as being of particular relevance:

- We will agree, both a model of specialist housing and adaptations procedures for older people which will enable them to live in homely settings in supportive environments (where possible) in order to avoid unnecessary admissions to care homes or hospitals;
- Information is clear, concise, integrated and delivered on the “first stop” principle which allows older people and their carers to maintain control and make informed choices;
- Communities are able to contribute to the design of preventative and anticipatory supports to help older people stay well and independent;
- Older people are aware of housing options and equipment and adaptations are provided promptly following assessment of need;

- Hospital discharge processes will encourage older people to return to their own homes and there will be no discharge directly to a long term care home placement.

5.3 Neighbourhood Services are involved in the Hubco strategic review of high end care highlighted in the JSCP. In addition, Neighbourhood Services are involved in the following change fund projects:

- Develop a partnership agreement between Falkirk Council and NHS Forth Valley relating to a streamlined adaptations service;
- Increase the trades involved in the Small Repairs/ Handyperson Service, extend the service to all tenures and widen awareness of the service. Neighbourhood Services are funding the continuation of this pilot project until March 2015.

5.4 Given the significant importance of ensuring independent living where possible and the role housing plays, it is proposed that an Older Peoples' Housing Strategy is developed. The Strategy will take account of the Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan, Change Fund Projects and the Hubco high end care review.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The LHS provides the strategic direction for tackling housing need and demand and informing future investment in housing and related services across the Council area. Progress is set out in Appendix 1 and shows that significant progress has been achieved across the LHS's six outcomes.

6.2 Notwithstanding the financial constraints associated with the provision of additional homes, meeting the need for affordable housing continues to be a priority. The need for additional housing is being delivered via a number of routes outlined in the LHS Update including those outlined in the table below:

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Council new build	36	64	142	18	18
RSL (social rent)	42	0	91	20	14
Mortgage to Rent*	19	19	19	19	19
New build below affordable housing threshold**	123	100	100	100	100
RSL new build MMR	22	0	21	0	0
Council refurbishment (multis)	10	0	0	0	0
National Housing Trust	0	27	0	0	0
Buy backs ****	0	70	70	70	70
Empty Homes***	0	27	20	20	20
Total	252	307	463	247	241
Total HNDA target	233	233	233	233	233
Variance	19	74	230	14	8

* Estimate based on 2012/13

** Estimate based on 2012/13, future years will be informed by Affordable Housing Policy

** *Estimate based on 2013/14 and involvement in the Shelter cross council empty homes scheme

**** 27 buybacks funded via SLP in 2016/17

- 6.3 Based on the projects planned within the SLP, outlined in 5.2 above, together with projects in progress and projected estimates, a total of c1,500 additional affordable homes are anticipated to be delivered over the 5 year life of the LHS. This represents c350 more homes than the Housing Need and Demand Assessment i.e.: 25% above target.
- 6.4 Older people's issues continue to be a national and local priority. This is addressed locally in partnership through the Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan (JSCP) and the Housing Contribution Statement. The latter includes involvement in the Hubco strategic review of high end care and on-going change fund projects. It is proposed that an Older Peoples Housing Strategy is developed to provide a co-ordinated and focused direction to support independent living.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members are invited to:

- **Note the progress to date in delivering the Local Housing Strategy Objectives;**
- **Agree the revised Strategic Local Programme outlined in section 4.2; and**
- **Note the approach being undertaken in relation to progressing older peoples' housing issues detailed in Section 5 and the submission of a Local Housing Strategy for Housing for Older People to a future meeting of the Executive.**

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DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

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Ref:

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Executive 6 August 2013 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan & Council House New Build
2. Scottish Government LHS Action Plan Update
3. Strategic Local Programme (Revised)

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should contact the officers listed above.