

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 5**

### **Housing Investment Programme 2024-29**

**Falkirk Council**

**Title: Housing Investment Programme 2024-29**

**Meeting: Falkirk Council**

**Date: 31 January 2024**

**Submitted By: Director of Transformation, Communities & Corporate Services**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report presents Members with the Housing Investment Programme which outlines housing investment requirements over a 5-year period and the financial impact on council house rent levels.
- 1.2 The delivery of the Housing Investment Programme directly impacts on each of the Council's three priorities,
  - (i) supporting stronger and healthier communities;
  - (ii) promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities; and
  - (iii) supporting a thriving economy and green transition.

**2. Recommendation**

**Council is asked to:-**

- 2.1 **Agree the Housing Investment Programme 2024-29 and the associated costs outlined in Appendix 1 whilst acknowledging the impact of this investment on council house rent levels.**

**3. Climate Change Implications**

- 3.1 Improving-energy efficiency in council houses will reduce carbon emissions as well as fuel costs for tenants. The Housing Investment Programme supports Local Heat and Energy Strategies and aims to reduce tenant's energy costs to help reduce fuel poverty.
- 3.2 The Programme includes projects that have a positive impact in reducing carbon emissions and these are included in the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan.

## **4. Background**

### **Housing Standards**

4.1 The Council is committed to providing homes that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. To ensure this standard is maintained, stock condition information informs the Council's Housing Asset Management Plan and the Programme. The Annual Assurance Statement approved by Executive Committee on 17 October 2023, reported that:

- 71% of the Council's housing stock met the required standard as at 31 March 2023. Properties that did not meet the standard were mainly due to electrical safety checks not being carried out and installation of interlinked smoke alarms.
- 95% of housing stock met the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. This standard aims to reduce carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty.

4.2 The investment and improvements outlined in the Programme will ensure that we improve our performance and increase the number of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

### **Housing Supply**

4.3 The Council is committed to increasing the affordable housing supply to meet housing need which continues to rise.

4.4 The Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 approved by Executive Committee on 17 October 2023 sets an affordable housing target of 180-225 a year. It highlights an acute need for larger properties and a growing need for wheelchair accessible homes for families. Both of these property types cost more to build.

### **Other Considerations**

4.5 The Programme continued to be adversely affected during 2023 by rising costs. This delayed some projects and required alternative approaches for others. As a result, the Council is projecting a spend of £70.7m of its £76.4m budget. This represents a potential underspend of £5.7m for year 2023-24.

4.6 Housing services are under extreme pressure to meet increased housing demand.

4.7 Housing standards/requirements continue to place additional pressures on finances and labour within an already stretched industry.

4.8 Inflation continues to rise within the building sector, resulting in increased costs.

## **5. Proposed Housing Investment Programme**

- 5.1 Investment of £187,89m is planned for Housing Quality Standards and Improvement Work over the 5-year Programme with £37.14m planned for 2024-25, detailed below.

### **Elemental Maintenance and Improvement Works (£27.550m)**

- 5.2 This level of investment will allow the upgrade of around 7,500 properties as detailed below.
- 5.3 The window and doors replacement programme remains a priority. Housing Services have been able to accelerate the programme during 2023 and expect to improve around 2000 homes instead of the projected 1,800 per year. The window and door replacement project is in Year 3 of an 8 Year programme, and Year 3 of a 4 Year contract. Procurement will take place during 2024 for years 2025-29. Whilst £15m per year is budgeted this cost could rise.
- 5.4 The programme of kitchen and bathroom replacement works has increased to £4.45m to reflect increased installation costs. Going forward the repair versus replacement cost for unplanned kitchen works will be reviewed during 2024 to ensure best value.
- 5.5 Intermittent drainage failures at the high flat buildings and subsequent survey findings show that the internal cast iron drainage stacks within all 13 high flat buildings need to be replaced. This work is complex and there will be a level of disturbance to tenants. We will repair one high flat building in 2024-25 to assess the design solution before proceeding with a programme of 3 high flat buildings each year over the next 4 years. A total of £0.6m is budgeted for year 2024-25. As noted, this is a new project and costs may change in future years.
- 5.6 £2.5m is required for electrical safety checks and upgrades.
- 5.7 Fabric and roofing improvement works budget for 2024-24 has reduced to £5m from £7m. If resources allow the full investment and programme of £7m will be reinstated, otherwise the improvement programme will be delayed into later years.

### **Energy Efficiency Works (£8.74m)**

- 5.8 Provision of £2.5m to continue the programme of heating system upgrades to around 1,100 Council homes.
- 5.9 Provision of £1m to install cost effective, efficient gas heating systems for around 300 homes within off-gas areas. The heating installations will start as soon as the gas infrastructure is completed within each of the agreed off-gas villages.
- 5.10 Provision of £2.64m to install Air Source Heat Pumps to an additional 120 homes for tenants who selected this green energy supply following tenant consultation.

- 5.11 Provision to replace the external cladding at Glenfuir Court. The cost of this project over 3 years is projected at £6.55m. This is more than the original budget due to the delay in starting this work whilst awaiting the outcome and recommendations of the Scottish Government fire safety review.

#### **Estate Improvements (£0.5m)**

- 5.12 Provision has reduced to £500,000 for estate improvement works. This is necessary to afford improvements to housing stock maintenance, safety and energy efficiency improvements.

#### **Health & Safety (£0.35m)**

- 5.13 Provision of £0.35m has been included to address any new health and safety requirements.

### **6. Non-Scottish Housing Quality Standard Investment (£128m)**

- 6.1 A total of £128m has been identified over the next 5 years to increase our housing stock of which £21,167m is planned for 2024-25. Details are shown below with 2024-25 expenditure shown in brackets.

#### **New Build Council Housing (£12.6m)**

- 6.2 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) approved by Executive Committee on 17 October 2023 outlines plans to deliver an additional 483 council homes through the lifespan of the current plan. This includes 331 homes during 2024-29. This requires £85.78m investment over the 2024-29 Housing Investment Programme.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Est. Site Start Date</b>	<b>Est. Site Completion Date</b>	<b>Total Units</b>
Woodend Farm	Jul-22	May-25	111
Old Denny High School, Denny (Phase 1)	Jan-26	Jan-29	137
Banknock South, Banknock	Oct-27	May-30	106
Main Street, Bonnybridge	May-21	Jan-24	22
Oakbank, Polmont	Dec-22	Apr-24	28
Haugh Gardens, Langlees	Jun-23	Jan-25	40
King Street, S'muir	Apr-27	Aug-28	21
Larbert Nursery Site	Apr-28	Jun-29	10
Grangemouth Regeneration	May-27	May-29	8
<b>Council New Build Totals</b>			<b>483</b>

- 6.3 To mitigate the rising construction costs for the new build programme a cost savings exercise was completed to review the Council's Housing specification to increase affordability. The Building Design Unit has moved from Place services to Housing to ensure efficiencies in delivery and affordability.

#### **Buy-Backs Scheme (£8.5m)**

- 6.4 Provision of £8.5m for the Buy Back Scheme contributes significantly to the

affordable housing supply target.

- 6.5 The target number of homes is 80 a year. This may be lower in year 2023-24 since the housing market has declined with fewer homes available to purchase. Overall Registers of Scotland highlighted a 14% decline from April to December 2022 compared to January to September 2023.
- 6.6 The Buy Back Scheme is adaptable and responsive and will aim to purchase and adapt homes to meet specific housing need and access disabled adaptation funding to achieve this. A future report will be presented to Members in relation to extending of properties to meet the specific housing need.
- 6.7 Properties purchased through the Buy Back Scheme receive funding of £45k per property from Scottish Government Resource Planning Assumption. This funding is subject to the Council meeting new criteria or introduced by Scottish Government in June 2023, to comply with Fair Work First.

## **7. Consultation**

- 7.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires us to consult with tenants on changes to housing management policy that significantly affects tenants, including changes in rent. Compliance with consultation requirements is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 7.2 The Council considers the findings from other consultation exercises, such as the large-scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey, discussions with tenant representatives on the Housing Asset Management Group and the rent increase consultation. Information gathered from these consultations informed the Programme. This makes sure we improve what matters to tenants, as well as meeting the statutory housing requirements.
- 7.3 Consultation with tenants for rent level setting was carried out between August – September 2023.
- 7.4 The outcome of the consultation is presented in the Housing Revenue Account and Council House Rents 2024-25 report.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the expenditure plans noted in this report and the projected resources.
- 8.2 Although the investment requirements have been based on the next 5 years, consideration has been given to future investment requirements outwith this timeframe. It should be noted that priorities can change and the programme may be re-profiled.
- 8.3 Prudential indicators are shown in Appendix 2. Based on the planned investment going forward, these indicators reflect the significant increase in

investment planned for the next 5 years. This will result in more rental income being used to repay loan charges associated with the investment (from 32.9% in 2024-25 to 37.2% in 2028-29). The prudential indicators also show that the underlying need to borrow for capital investment will grow significantly from £329.5m in 2024-25 to £491.1m in 2028-29.

- 8.4 To determine an appropriate level of housing investment, the main consideration must be that the investment is affordable, prudent and sustainable. All borrowing results in revenue costs which need to be supported by housing rental income. It is, therefore, essential that housing investment is considered within the context of the Housing Revenue Account-budget and that appropriate rent levels are set.
- 8.5 Long-term financial modelling was carried out to consider the financial implications of future housing investment, whilst maintaining a viable Housing Revenue Account with affordable rent levels.
- 8.6 We need to consider how and when reserves are used and ensure that the use of reserves comply with the Council's reserve policy.
- 8.7 The level of reserves is projected to be £6.7m by 31 March 2024. A reserve balance of £5-£6m is considered prudent to meet future investment requirements. Based on current projections it is anticipated that £1.8m reserves will be utilized during 2024-25, leaving a balance of around £4.95m.
- 8.8 To ensure affordability of the investment outlined in this report and Appendix 1 it is anticipated that a 5 % rent increase is required for year 2024-25 with further increases required in future years.
- 8.9 As the HRA must be self-financing from rents, all costs must be met from rental income and or/the utilisation of reserves.

### **Resources**

- 8.10 The Programme will be managed by Housing & Communities in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders. A combination of competitive tendering and single tendering arrangements are used.

### **Legal**

- 8.11 There are no legal implications for this report.

### **Risk**

- 8.12 Reduced income from Scottish Government Resource Planning Assumption funding means that the Strategic Housing Investment Programme output is also reduced. Plans are in place to re-profile the programme for 2024-25. If sites continue to come in over bench mark the number of developments and homes that can be delivered within the programme will reduce further.
- 8.13 There is uncertainty regarding continued financial support from Scottish Government for renewable energy systems.



- 8.14 As outlined in section 4.4 to 4.7 of the report funding constraints, rising costs, material and workforce supply could impact on the Councils ability to deliver the Housing Investment Programme.

### **Equalities**

- 8.15 A full Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment has been completed and no negative impact on protected characteristic groups were identified.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 The key priorities in respect of housing investment are outlined in this report along with a proposed expenditure profile covering the next 5 financial years 2024 –29. It is estimated that a total of £317,176m will be required over the next 5 years, an average of £63.4 per annum.
- 9.2 This level of housing investment is considered necessary to maintain the Programme of improvements to our housing stock, to meet housing quality and energy efficiency standards in line with the Housing Asset Management Plan. Additionally, expenditure is required to deliver additional affordable homes.
- 9.3 As detailed in the Housing Revenue Account and Council House Rent report on this agenda, the level of housing investment is based on a 5% increase for year 2024-25, with financial modelling indicating that further significant increases are likely to be necessary in future years. If a lower rent increase is agreed, we would need to either reduce revenue/capital expenditure or to use more reserves.

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**Date:** 11 January 2024

### **Appendices**

1. Housing Investment Programme 2024-29
2. HRA Prudential Code Indicators
3. Full EPIA



**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

2024-29 HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

PROPOSED EXPENDITURE PROFILE

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29 New	Totals For 5 Yrs	Average Unit Cost	Units Improved in Yr1 (2024/25)	Units Improved in Yr2 (2025/26)	Units Improved in Yr3 (2026/27)	Units Improved in Yr4 (2027/28)	Units Improved in Yr5 (2028/29)	Total Units Improved over 5 Yrs
HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD WORK													
Elemental Maintenance & Improvements													
External Fabric Improvements (incl. fees)	£5,000,000	£9,500,000	£9,500,000	£8,000,000	£5,000,000	£37,000,000	£11,500	435	435	435	435	435	2,175
Windows & Doors Replacement (Incl. Fees)	£15,000,000	£15,000,000	£15,000,000	£15,000,000	£15,000,000	£75,000,000	£8,000	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875	1,875	9,375
Kitchen Renewal	£3,200,000	£3,200,000	£3,200,000	£3,200,000	£3,200,000	£16,000,000	£2,900	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	5,500
Bathroom Renewal	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£1,250,000	£6,250,000	£2,230	550	550	550	550	550	2,750
Electrical Works	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£12,500,000	£645	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	16,500
High Flats Stack Replacement	£600,000	£1,800,000	£1,800,000	£1,800,000	£1,800,000	£7,800,000	£7,059	85	255	255	255	255	1,105
Sub-Total	£27,550,000	£33,250,000	£33,250,000	£31,750,000	£28,750,000	£154,550,000		7,345	7,515	7,515	7,515	7,515	37,405
Energy Efficiency Works													
Replacement Heating/Controls (incl. fees)	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£2,500,000	£12,500,000	£2,000	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	5,500
Replacement Gas Heating - Off Gas Areas (incl. fees)	£1,000,000	£700,000	£0	£0	£0	£1,700,000	£3,200	299	189	0	0	0	488
Replacement ASHP Heating - Off Gas (Incl. fees)	£2,640,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,640,000	£22,000	120	0	0	0	0	120
Renewable Technology (incl. fees)	£0	£0	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£3,000,000	£3,500	0	300	300	300	300	1,200
Alternative Renewable Heating Replacement (3 Towers)	£0	£2,700,000	£0	£0	£0	£2,700,000	£15,750	171	0	0	0	0	171
Glenfuir Court External Cladding (EWI) (incl. fees)	£2,600,000	£2,600,000	£1,350,000	£0	£0	£6,550,000	£77,059	0	0	85	0	0	85
Sub-Total	£8,740,000	£8,500,000	£4,850,000	£3,500,000	£3,500,000	£29,090,000		1,690	1,589	1,485	1,400	1,400	7,564
Estate Improvements													
Estate Landscaping Improvement Work (incl. fees)	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£2,500,000							0
Sub-Total	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£2,500,000		0	0	0	0	0	0
Health & Safety													
General H&S work (incl. fees)	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£1,750,000		350	350	350	350	350	1,750
Sub-Total	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£1,750,000		11075	11043	10835	10665	10665	54,283
Total HQS Expenditure	£37,140,000	£42,600,000	£38,950,000	£36,100,000	£33,100,000	£187,890,000	£0	20,110	20,147	19,835	19,580	19,580	99,252
NON HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD WORK													
New Build Housing													
Construction Works (incl. fees)	£12,667,334	£3,799,276	£15,173,079	£27,699,495	£26,447,802	£85,786,986							
Sub-Total	£12,667,334	£3,799,276	£15,173,079	£27,699,495	£26,447,802	£85,786,986							
Property Buy-Backs													
	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£42,500,000							
Sub-Total	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£8,500,000	£42,500,000							
Total Non-HQS Expenditure	£21,167,334	£12,299,276	£23,673,079	£36,199,495	£34,947,802	£128,286,986							
Total Expenditure	£58,307,334	£54,899,276	£62,623,079	£72,299,495	£68,047,802	£316,176,986							

RESOURCES

Prudential Borrowing

SG Grant - New Build	£1,734,615	£1,417,140	£2,930,000	£8,874,361	£12,266,569	£27,222,685
New Build - Other funding Source	£1,000,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,000,000
SG Grant - Buy Backs	£3,600,000	£3,600,000	£3,600,000	£3,600,000	£3,600,000	£18,000,000
SG Grant - Energy Efficiency	£1,560,000	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,560,000
Total Income	£7,894,615	£5,017,140	£6,530,000	£12,474,361	£15,866,569	£47,782,685

Total Expenditure	£58,307,334	£54,899,276	£62,623,079	£72,299,495	£68,047,802	£316,176,986
Prudential Borrowing	£50,412,719	£49,882,136	£56,093,079	£59,825,134	£52,181,233	£268,394,301

# FALKIRK COUNCIL

## HRA PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS

	PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	COMMENTS
1	Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	32.9%	32.0%	33.2%	35.1%	37.2%	Shows how much of the Council's HRA income is committed to repaying debt arising from capital investment
2	Capital expenditure	£58.3m	£54.9m	£62.6m	£72.3m	£68.0m	Simply the planned capital expenditure per the appended HRA capital programme
3	Capital Financing Requirement	£329.5m	368.0m	£411.0m	£456.0m	£491.1m	The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) reflects the underlying need to borrow for HRA capital investment

# Equality & Poverty Impact Assessment 00635 (Version 1)

## SECTION ONE: ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

<b>Service &amp; Division:</b>	Corporate & Housing Services Housing & Communities	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b>	Paul McLay
		<b>Team:</b>	Asset & Investment
		<b>Tel:</b>	07803898044
		<b>Email:</b>	paul.mclay@falkirk.gov.uk
<b>Proposal:</b>	Housing Investment Programme 2024-29	<b>Reference No:</b>	

What is the Proposal?	Budget & Other Financial Decision	Policy (New or Change)	HR Policy & Practice	Change to Service Delivery / Service Design
	Yes	No	No	No
Who does the Proposal affect?	Service Users	Members of the Public	Employees	Job Applicants
	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Other, please specify:</b>	Tenants			

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

15/11/2023	The aim of the Housing Investment Programme is to :- -Maintain and improve the quality and energy efficiency of the council's housing stock to ensure compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality standard (SHQS) and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) -Increase the affordable housing supply to help meet local housing need and demand and the national "Housing 2040" agenda.

## SECTION TWO: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

For budget changes ONLY please include information below:			Benchmark, e.g. Scottish Average
Current spend on this service (£'0000s)	Total:	£328m	A budget of £328m over a 5 year period (2023-28) for the Housing Investment Plan was approved by Falkirk Council on 23 February 2023 .
Reduction to this service budget (£'0000s)	Per Annum:	£11m (over the 5 year plan)	A budget of £317m is planned for the next 5 years 2024-29 and will be presented to Falkirk Council on 31 January 2024. This includes a budget of £58m for year 2024-25
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:	£7.89m Grant income from Scottish Government in year 2024-25	
If this is a budget decision, when will the saving be achieved?	Start Date:	31/01/2024	
	End Date (if any):	31/03/2029	

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.

The Housing Investment plan support the Local Housing Strategy priorities and the national priorities relating Climate Change, Net Zero, reducing homelessness and providing homes that meet the Scottish Housing Standards. The Programme also support the Council Plan and the Falkirk Plan.

The programme has been designed to take account of the local and national priorities and local data as detailed below:-

Tenant Profile Information

Falkirk Council has around 16,700 homes and have a minimum of 16.700 tenants. Each home will have a minimum of 1 person residing there but all residents living within the home will benefit from the Housing Investment Programme at one point in the life cycle of improvements.

Our equalities data on the protected characteristics of our tenants is extremely limited. Work is ongoing to improve that during 2024/25 via Housing Online. We hold significant data on those who are actively seeking Housing but these are not current tenants nor impacted by the proposed rent increase.

Housing Need and Demand and Health & Social Care Data

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment, approved by Scottish Government for years 2023-25 data has informed the development of our Local Housing Strategy and the Council New Build Programme. This data shows an acute need for larger family homes and fully wheelchair accessible family homes to meet the need for families who have a child who is disabled. This data also highlights providing homes for a growing elderly population, to provide homes that meet changing physical needs and to support the Health & Social Care Partnership objective to help people live independently at home for as long as possible.

***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*

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 Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 identifies the need for an additional 180-225 affordable homes per year. Based on the Housing Need and Demand data Falkirk Council New Build Programme will include 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.

### **Poverty and Energy Efficiency**

The Housing Investment Programme included home improvements that can significantly increase the energy efficiency of our homes through the replacement window and doors programme (9,375 homes during 2024-29) and replacement energy efficient and renewable energy heating systems (679 homes during 2024-29). These improvements are delivered on a rolling programme, some of which have been installed pre 2024. All tenants will benefit from these improvements including those in affected by poverty including around 10,000 of our tenants who we know are "low income 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**

The Programme has been developed to include feedback from Tenants from the "Tenant Satisfaction" survey which asked what was important to them Responses should they valued the window and door replacement programme and a budget of £15m has been assigned to this programme of works.

More recently extensive consultation took place with for the Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 during 2022-23. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy setting out strategic priorities and plans for the delivery of housing related services. The Equality Act 2010 also requires the involvement, consultation, and engagement with as wide a range of residents as possible’.

Consultation included an online survey which returned 937 responses 195 from private sector surveys (85 private tenants survey), 81 (landlord and letting agents survey) and 29 (Scheme of Assistance-Elderly and Disabled services). The general survey had 742 responses.

A Citizen Space online questionnaire was created with the assistance of the Editorial Panel, a group consisting of volunteers to gain the views and feedback from local people on Housing and Housing Services in Falkirk. The format consisted of questions covering five topics including Improving Neighbourhoods, Homelessness, Housing and Support for vulnerable people, Improving Housing Conditions and Reducing energy costs and climate change. Each section also provided space for comments to be added. The survey also asked further questions seeking opinions on Housing Issues in Falkirk and Digital inclusion.

The questionnaire was made available on Falkirk Council's website and publicised via social media and other distribution networks including Local News Outlet, Registered Tenants Organisations, Community Learning & Development, Social Work, Education, Forth Valley College, People's Panel consultation list and further existing consultation registers.

Promotional material was sent to local community centres and food pantries. The survey was also made available in hardcopy format to these groups with pre-paid envelopes attached for ease of return. The survey was available for translation if required.

"Focus Group" sessions were held with "quiet voice" members of the community. This included sessions with representatives [from](#) (add link survey findings)

- Syrianian Resettlement Programme
- Homeless Assessment Centre (Castings) residents
- Older People Centres
- Community Cafe and Food Pantry
- Young People
- Young Parents
- Community Day Care Centres
- Military Matters (army veterans)

The views, values and opinions of attendees were reflected in the Local Housing Strategy which underpins the Housing Investment Programme.

As part of our ongoing commitment to Tenant Participation and Engagement Falkirk Council is supported by the How Your Money is Spent group. This is a tenant led group and they are involved in the development of the Housing Investment Programme. No equalities data is currently available regarding the representatives of this group. This will be collected during 2021.

#### 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.**

The programme is based on robust data and is continually updated and validated. This data includes quantitative data (local and national) and qualitative from tenants consultation, participation and engagement. We will gather equality data of future participants during 2024. Next years programme will be reviewed and reprofiled based on information gathered this year which will include a Tenant Satisfaction Survey.

**SECTION FOUR: ENGAGEMENT**

Engagement with individuals or organisations affected by the policy or proposal must take place

<b>Has the proposal / policy / project been subject to engagement or consultation with service users taking into account their protected characteristics and socio-economic status?</b>	Yes	
<b>If YES, please state who was engagement with.</b>	A rent consultation exercise was carried out in advance of preparing the budget. Projects and priorities have been discussed with tenants on the Housing Asset Management Group. Engagement with tenants in the off-gas areas has determining the programme for alternative heating. Tenants Satisfaction survey findings and Local Housing Strategy consultation findings as detailed in Section 4.	
<b>If NO engagement has been conducted, please state why.</b>		
<b>How was the engagement carried out?</b>	<b>What were the results from the engagement? Please list...</b>	
<b>Focus Group</b>	Yes	Tenant on the Housing Asset Management Group report back to the Tenants Forum on current progress and planned investment in the councils housing stock. Local Housing Strategy consultation findings from focus groups detailed in Section 3.
<b>Survey</b>	Yes	Letters and questionnaires have been sent to all tenants in the off-gas areas to establish their preferred heating options. This has resulted in c 220 of 720 requesting green heating options. Tenants Satisfaction Survey findings.
<b>Display / Exhibitions</b>	No	
<b>User Panels</b>	No	
<b>Public Event</b>	No	
<b>Other: please specify</b>	A rent consultation exercise was been carried out in August 2023. The outcome of this helps to inform the Housing Investment Programme and is reported separately to Falkirk Council.	
<b>Has the proposal / policy/ project been reviewed / changed as a result of the engagement?</b>	Yes	
<b>Have the results of the engagement been fed back to the consultees?</b>	Yes	
<b>Is further engagement recommended?</b>	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>Specific investment in new social housing projects are aimed at improving housing for older people.</p> <p>Younger people with complex care needs will be better catered for through partnership working to develop suitable property types and provision. Options being considered as part of the Local Housing Strategy include Core and Cluster and Closer to Home.</p>
Disability		✓		<p>5% of council new build home will be fully wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>New social housing projects are designed to meet the Housing for Varying Needs design standards.</p> <p>The quality of their homes will be improved.</p> <p>Additional provision is made for lifts, electric scooter charges and other design factors that aid people with a physical disability.</p>
Sex	✓			The Programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Ethnicity		✓		The Programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics. Increasing the number of affordable homes helps meet this need.
Religion / Belief / non-Belief	✓			The programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Sexual Orientation	✓			The programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Transgender	✓			The programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.

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:				
Marriage / Civil Partnership	✓			The programme will increase the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Poverty		✓		Improving the quality and energy efficiency of the housing stock will assist in reducing fuel poverty.
Care Experienced	✓			The programme will increase increasing the number of affordable housing and improve the quality of social housing in the Falkirk area will benefits all protected characteristics.
Other, health, community justice, carers etc.		✓		Housing plays a vital role in people health and wellbeing. Providing stable homes enables people to attain more through education, training, employment and access health and other services. A sense of belonging and connection with the community where they live and environmental outdoor space improvements also aids improved health and wellbeing.
Risk (Identify other risks associated with this change)				
	Evidence of Due Regard			
Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination (harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct):	New council homes are allocated fairly through the agreed allocation policy.			
Advance Equality of Opportunity:	<p>New council homes are allocated fairly through the agreed allocation policy.</p> <p>Contract Standing Orders include the requirement for community benefits.</p>			
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.
<b>Business</b>	Yes	Economic opportunity for business to tender for and be awarded contracts to undertake projects in the programme.
<b>Councils</b>	No	
<b>Education Sector</b>	Yes	New affordable homes could have an impact on school capacity. This is controlled and mitigated through the statutory planning process.  Improving the quality of homes has a direct correlation to improving educational achievements.
<b>Fire</b>	Yes	Fire safety is an integral part of the Housing Investment Programme in both the council new build design and ensuring robust fire safety in existing homes.
<b>NHS</b>	Yes	Adequate supply of good quality homes of varying size and type that meet peoples needs helps the NHS by:- - people can be discharged from hospital sooner, having a positive impact on NHS resources, - safe homes helps in good repair can prevent slips, trips and falls, reducing the need for NHS services - help people to live independently at home for longer, reducing pressure on NHS services.  Improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of tenants.
<b>Integration Joint Board</b>	Yes	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, this includes the management of the Disabled Adaptation Scheme across tenures.
<b>Police</b>	Yes	All new council homes are designed to meet Secure by Design Standards.
<b>Third Sector</b>	Yes	Third Sector are involved in the delivery of new affordable housing projects.
<b>Other(s): please list and describe the nature of the relationship / impact.</b>	Health & Social Care Partnership - joint working through the Local Housing Strategy and the Housing Contribution statement to meet shared aims to improve peoples quality of life, this can be through disabled adaptations to meet peoples needs or project design and delivery to meet specific client group needs, such as those with complex care or physical disability.	

## 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

### No Mitigating Actions

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

No negative impacts have been identified, therefore, no mitigation action is required.

**Are actions being reported to Members?**

No

**If yes when and how ?**

No actions identified, Members will have access to the full EPIA to allow them to assess identified impacts.

**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	There is no evidence to suggest any negative impact on protected characteristic groups.
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:	21/11/2023
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**SECTION TEN: EPIA TASK GROUP ONLY**

<b>OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF EPIA:</b>	<b>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?</b>	Yes
<b>ASSESSMENT FINDINGS</b>  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	Consultation and engagement has been carried out with tenants. Although limited data has been provided, there is a commitment to improve this going forward.	
<b>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>?</b>	No	If YES, please describe: As this is a universal increase that is established and is executed in line with legal requirements contained within missives and Housing Regulator expectations.

**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	No	
MEDIUM	No	
LOW	Yes	Approximately 63% of tenants are protected from any increase, and there will be further promotion of support available for those who would benefit from it.

**SECTION ELEVEN: CHIEF OFFICER SIGN OFF**

<b>Director / Head of Service:</b>			
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	12/01/2024