

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	3 November 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy Annual Review 2020/2021
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide the Executive Committee with an update on the progress made during 2020/2021 against delivering the agreed outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017 to 22.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that the progress on actions for delivering the agreed LHS priority outcomes, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to carry out an assessment of needs and demand for housing and related services, and to prepare and submit a five year Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to Scottish Ministers. The LHS is the main plan for all housing tenures in the local authority area.
- 3.2 The LHS 2017 to 22 was developed in 2016/2017, building on the good work undertaken by the Council and its partners under the previous LHS. The LHS works alongside the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP), to set the strategic framework for local housing development.
- 3.3 The Executive Committee approved the LHS on 30 August 2017 and noted the annual monitoring and reporting arrangements.
- 3.4 This is the fourth annual review of the LHS 2017 to 2022, with the 2019/2020 review reported to Executive Committee on 4 November 2020. The 2019/2020 review highlighted the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on progress within key areas of the strategy. This review reflects the continuing impact of Covid-19, with references throughout the report and further information provided in section 7.

4. Context and wider policy changes

- 4.1 A number of significant changes have taken place both locally and nationally since the last review of the LHS. A summary of these has been set out below:
- ◆ Published in early 2021, the Scottish Government's 'Housing to 2040' strategy identified significant policy changes planned for the housing sector over the next 20 years. This includes a target to deliver 110,000 new homes across Scotland alongside proposals to introduce new legislation aimed at aligning standards within both the private and social rented sectors, new housing quality standards and accelerated energy efficiency targets.
 - ◆ Until December 2020, the energy efficiency of social housing, including all council homes, was monitored through the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH). As of 2021/2022 the second phase, EESSH2, is commencing and sets a new higher standard to be met by 2032 with annual reporting arrangements to be included in the Scottish Housing Charter.
 - ◆ In January 2021, the Scottish Government launched its draft Heat in Buildings Strategy. This set out potential routes to decarbonisation of heat within the housing sector, covering all three housing tenures. It also included a proposed New Build Heat Standard that will require all new buildings to be heated with zero or low emission sources from 2024.
 - ◆ In October 2020, the Scottish Government published a refreshed 'Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan', reflecting revised priorities following the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan sets out how national and local government and the third sector will work together to end homelessness in Scotland.
 - ◆ In 2020, COSLA and the Scottish Government refreshed the previously published 'Improving lives for Gypsy/Travellers 2019 to 2021 Action Plan' which requires local authorities across Scotland to take a range of steps to improve outcomes for the Gypsy/Traveller community. This includes improving the quality of sites provided and ensuring the wider needs of the local Gypsy/Traveller community are met.
 - ◆ The second South Lanarkshire Local Child Poverty Action Report was published in November 2021 with housing and homelessness services continuing to make a significant contribution to tackling local child poverty levels and improving outcomes for households with children across South Lanarkshire.
 - ◆ In 2021, the Scottish Government launched their final consultation on the proposals for National Planning Framework 4. This aims to set out key planning considerations for Scotland between now and 2050, including how planning for affordable housing is determined.
- 4.2 Housing and Technical Resources will continue to monitor national and local developments in all areas and ensure that significant changes are appropriately reflected within the LHS.
- #### **5. Annual Review 2020/2021**
- 5.1 The LHS is structured around five chapters and nine priority outcomes. There are 95 indicators against which the Council monitors progress including 65 actions and 30 measures. In line with wider reporting arrangements across the Council, these

indicators can be categorised into 'green', 'amber' and 'red' depending on the progress made against them. As part of this year's categorisation, measures and actions can also now be recorded as 'completed', aligning to changes in wider reporting structures within the Council.

- 5.2 As at the end of 2020/2021, 83% of the indicators were in line with projected targets or have been completed. Table 1 outlines the 2020/2021 categorisation of the 95 indicators.

Completed	Green	Amber	Red	To be reported later	Total
9	70	10	1	5	95

Table 1: Categorisation of LHS indicators 2020/2021

- 5.3 The review demonstrated good progress has been made for 70 indicators and a further 9 have been completed in full. Key highlights within these have been provided for each of the five chapters below:

Housing Supply, Choice and Affordability

- ◆ To improve the availability of affordable housing in South Lanarkshire, a total of 339 additional affordable homes for social rent were delivered in 2020/2021. This included 142 new build homes by Registered Social Landlords, 144 Council new build homes and 53 additional Council homes purchased through the Council's framework for Open Market Purchase. A full update on progress of the Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) was presented to the Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 29 September 2021.
- ◆ Following the 2020/2021 additions, an additional 1,339 affordable homes for social rent have now been delivered by the Council and Registered Social Landlords across South Lanarkshire since this current LHS was approved and published.

Housing Quality and Energy Efficiency

- ◆ The proportion of homes meeting current EESSH standards continues to increase. In 2020/2021, 93.8% of the Council homes met this standard. The Council continues to work towards this target and through the Home+ programme will bring the remaining, non-exempt homes up to the standard, subject to sitting tenants granting consent to necessary works.
- ◆ The Council continues to support both the social and private housing sectors through the local administration of the Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES: ABS). To date, more than £17million in grant funding has been processed through this in South Lanarkshire, funding 5,946 improvements to properties including the installation of internal and external insulation.

Supporting Independent Living and Specialist Provision

- ◆ Of the 339 additional affordable homes for social rent delivered during 2020/2021, 97 (29%) were particular need/amenity properties. All new homes within the programme meet the housing for varying needs standard and are 'future proofed', meaning they are designed in such a way that they can be easily adapted to meet the specific needs of a wide range of customers, now and into the future.

- ◆ The Council and housing partners continue to promote the wide range of sheltered housing available across South Lanarkshire with revised published online guides on the accommodation and associated services available.
- ◆ During 2020/2021, the Council has worked with site residents at both Gypsy/Traveller sites to establish site masterplans. From these a range of improvement projects are currently being delivered. Within 2020/2021 this included the installation of new heating systems within the amenity units and improvements to health and safety infrastructure at both sites.

Addressing Homelessness

- ◆ Through closely working with housing and homelessness partners there has been a 41% reduction in the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation for more than 12 months since 2019/2020.
- ◆ The council has converted 27 temporary accommodation properties to secure tenancies, reflecting the choice of the homeless household and settled position reducing any further upheaval. This is in addition to the 24 converted in 2019/2020.
- ◆ As a result of reduced movement within the housing sector due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council and its Registered Social Landlord partners increased the percentage of social rented properties directed to homeless households. In 2020/2021 this was 61% of all council homes and 42% of Registered Social Landlord homes compared to 51% and 37% respectively the previous year.
- ◆ An 8% reduction in the number of homeless households with children under 16 was also achieved compared with the previous year.

Sustainable Places

- ◆ The Council continues to work in partnership with key stakeholders and partners to deliver 230 new social rented properties through the Whitlawburn Regeneration Masterplan, due for completion in 2022/2023. Although some delays were experienced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, work recommenced as soon as restrictions allowed which resulted in the completion of 84 properties on the site by 31 March 2021.
- ◆ The Council and its housing partners continue to engage with communities within Clydesdale, experiencing low demand of social rented housing to develop housing-led local area action plans that promote housing sustainability.

- 5.4 There was a slight increase in the number of indicators categorised as 'amber' on the previous annual reviews. As detailed in the table below, this can broadly be related service disruption as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions:

M5.7 Proportion of new-build housing of wheelchair accessible standard	<p>As part of the 2018/2019 LHS annual review, following revised guidance from the Scottish Government, a target of 8% for wheelchair accessible housing as a proportion of new build social housing was introduced to the LHS.</p> <p>In 2020/2021, 5% of the 144 new Council houses were categorised as wheelchair accessible. This</p>
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	<p>lower proportion was a direct result of delays to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is expected these wheelchair accessible standard properties will be completed in 2021/2022, increasing the proportion to above the target.</p>
<p>A6.4 Support the delivery of homelessness prevention/housing options sessions for high school children in years 3, 4 and 5</p>	<p>As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, school closures and access restrictions have been in place throughout the year, resulting in no sessions being delivered within 2020/2021. Services are, however, currently developing a digital session that will allow homelessness and housing options information to be presented to young people both in school and other settings.</p>
<p>A8.6 Continue to work with partners to ensure children and young people affected by homelessness are supported</p>	<p>Housing and Technical Resources are currently working with the Health and Social Care Partnership to introduce a well-being assessment for children experiencing homelessness. This was expected to be completed in 2020/2021, however, the impact of Covid-19 on health services has resulted in a delay, a renewed focus on this action which is aligned to the RRTP will be progressed during 2021/2022.</p>
<p>M2.1 Increase the number of accredited landlord properties</p>	<p>Despite the continued positive engagement with private landlords through regular newsletters and two virtual Private Landlord Forums, the numbers of landlords who chose to become accredited has reduced since 2019/2020.</p> <p>Officers will continue to work with Landlord Accreditation Scotland and internal services including the Landlord Registration Team to reverse this recent decline, acknowledging that the Covid-19 pandemic may be affecting landlords' priorities when managing their tenancies.</p>
<p>M2.2 The number homeless households whose housing needs are met in private rented housing</p>	<p>As detailed in section 7, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in significant changes to the needs placed on temporary accommodation and caused limited movement within the wider housing sector.</p> <p>The Council and its housing and homeless partners will continue to utilise a range of approaches to increase the number of households whose needs are met in private rented housing, including the tenancy sustainment service and housing options services.</p>

A6.3 Working with Community Planning Partners to further develop approach to supporting homeless people to access employment and training opportunities	Wider development of the Adult Employability Partnerships has resulted in Employability Services liaising with Housing and Technical Resources to raise awareness of education, training and employment opportunities as they become available. Joint working will continue to be progressed in 2021/2022 to develop a new approach to support homeless households to access appropriate training and employment opportunities.
M4.2 The percentage of all South Lanarkshire households estimated to be in fuel poverty (Scottish House Condition Survey)	Despite remaining below the national average of, the latest Scottish Household Condition Survey estimates illustrated a 2% increase in fuel poverty levels in South Lanarkshire from 20% to 22%.

Work to progress the current amber indicators will continue to be made throughout the final year of the LHS.

5.5 One measure was categorised as 'red', below anticipated performance:

◆ M1.3 The number of long term empty properties

As identified within the 2019/2020 annual review, the total number of empty homes across South Lanarkshire continues to increase. As of 31 March 2021, 1,326 were recorded within South Lanarkshire, which was approximately 0.85% of the total homes. Despite an increase on previous years, the proportion continues to remain significantly lower than the Scottish national average of 1.60%. Statistics published in December 2020 also illustrated a 16% increase in the total number of empty properties across Scotland on the previous year.

With the aim of reversing this trend locally, the Council continues to work with the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to provide a dedicated service which looks to provide information and practical assistance to owners to help bring empty properties back into use. In 2020/2021, the following activity was progressed:

- ◆ Appointment of an additional officer in August 2020, dedicated to the role of empty homes
- ◆ Establishment of a new officer working group with representatives from services relating to housing, council tax, building standards and environmental health. The group meet to discuss reported cases of empty properties and actions each service can take to resolve the case.
- ◆ Development of a new matchmaker scheme which will provide a platform for those willing to sell and buy properties to contact one another
- ◆ Promotion of the services and support available through the Council's website

Despite the increasing national trend and challenges presented in engaging with owners of empty properties, progress has been made in bringing five properties back into use during 2021/2022.

Throughout 2021/2022, key priorities for the service include:

- ◆ Further enhancing the provision of support, information and advice for owners to help bring empty homes back into use.
- ◆ Implementation and promotion of the matchmaker scheme.

In addition to the measure contained within the LHS, the South Lanarkshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) now also contains a monitoring target of bringing 15 empty properties per year back into use.

- 5.6 Five indicators were identified as 'to be reported later'. Services continue to collate data for these and will update the performance framework when available.

6. Proposed revisions to LHS Performance Framework

- 6.1 Taking account of the wider context and policy changes as detailed in Section 4, it has been necessary to review the performance framework against which progress within the LHS is measured. This is to ensure the performance indicators remain relevant and measurable.

- 6.2 Following the 2020/2021 annual review, it is proposed that no measures or actions are to be added or removed from the LHS for its final year.

7. Impact from Covid-19

- 7.1 Part of the review process looked to identify how progress in meeting the agreed actions and measures within the LHS was impacted by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. A summary of three key areas that were the most significantly impacted is provided in the table below:

Affordable housing supply programme	<p>As a result of national lockdown, significant delays to construction projects have occurred throughout the year on both a national and local scale. Although all sites operated by the Council were restarted as soon as restrictions allowed, progress against previously agreed timescales was limited due to material shortages and safe systems of work agreed to.</p> <p>A full update on both the progress made to date and revised timescales within the South Lanarkshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan was presented to the Housing and Technical Resource Committee on 29 September 2021.</p>
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Homelessness	<p>Whilst there has not been a substantial increase in the number of homeless presentations made to the Council since the pandemic began, challenges arose relating to the increased demand for and the throughput of temporary accommodation as a result of limited movement in the housing market.</p> <p>The Council and its housing and homelessness partners met those challenges, however, including through taking forward innovative approaches such as utilising empty student accommodation for homeless households and substantially increasing the percentage of lets to homeless households. As the Covid-19 pandemic evolves, the Council and its partners will continue to monitor and adapt to ensure support is provided to those who need it. This includes reviewing and contributing to national policy direction relating to homelessness and housing support.</p> <p>The second Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 to 2024 annual review was presented to the Housing and Technical Resources Committee on 30 June 2021 and provides further details of the required changes of approach by services to meet the new challenges and progress in this area.</p>
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- 7.2 As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, Housing and Technical Resources will continue to work with services and partners to react to and resolve any issues presented, ensuring tenants and customers are supported and can continue to access vital services.

8. Looking ahead

- 8.1 2021/2022 will be the final year of the current LHS. In addition to the indicators being progressed within the strategy, the Council and its partners will continue to take forward a wide range of other work, including:

- ◆ Contributing to the development of the next Glasgow City Region Housing Demand and Needs Assessment which will assist in the annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan submission and development of South Lanarkshire's next LHS.
- ◆ As part of the wider Housing Needs and Demand Analysis (HNDA), development of a South Lanarkshire Gypsy/Traveller accommodation needs assessment will be completed in partnership with housing, health and education services to ensure the right numbers and types of accommodation options are available.
- ◆ A Temporary Accommodation Strategy Plan containing an assessment of current provision and suitability of temporary accommodation for homeless households will be delivered, considering both suitability and location of current accommodation options with recommendations progressed.
- ◆ Monitoring the implementation of the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 strategy, including the implications for housing or homelessness services and partner organisations.
- ◆ Development of the next South Lanarkshire Local Housing Strategy 2022 to 2027. This will include significant liaison and consultation with stakeholders,

elected members and the public and follow guidance issued by the Scottish Government. Alignment will also take place between new or revised actions and activities related to the housing sector within the new Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, Strategic Commissioning Plan and Community Plan.

9. Next Steps

- 9.1 The review identified that the Council and its housing, health and homelessness partners have made good progress in 2020/2021 towards delivering on the current, agreed LHS Priority Outcomes, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 9.2 The performance monitoring framework as set out in the LHS 2017 to 2022 will be updated to ensure the strategy continues to align with associated plans and strategies, as well as to reflect new national policy priorities as noted in Section 4.
- 9.3 The Council will continue to monitor, influence where possible and enact any national policy changes that relate to the LHS, including the associated impact and recovery from the current Covid-19 pandemic.

10. Employee Implications

- 10.1 There are no employee implications as a result of this report.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

12. Other Implications

- 12.1 The actions in the LHS link closely to the wider Rural Strategy, Strategic Commissioning Plan, Local Development Plan and Economic Strategy.
- 12.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) pre-screening determination was completed as part of the development of the LHS 2017 to 2022.
- 12.3 The content of this report will contribute to the evidence to support the requirements of the newly introduced Annual Assurance Statement.

13. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 13.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was completed as part of the development of the LHS 2017 to 2022. The EQIA identified that the LHS would be of particular relevance to individuals covered under the “protected characteristics” as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and would have a positive impact upon communities across South Lanarkshire.
- 13.2 The LHS is subject to ongoing consultation and engagement with key partners and stakeholders.

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7 October 2021

Links to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Focused on people and their needs
- ◆ Improve later life
- ◆ Protect vulnerable children, young people and adults
- ◆ Deliver better health and social care outcomes for all
- ◆ Improve the quality, access and availability of housing
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration

Previous References

- ◆ Executive Committee Report, 'Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Annual Review 2019/20' 4 November 2020

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Local Housing Strategy 2017-22
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019-24
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Strategic Commissioning Plan 2019-22

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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