People. Homes. Brighter Futures

Our Strategy for Housing in East Renfrewshire

(2017-2022)

Draft Strategy Consultation

(Autumn 2016)
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### Who is this document for?

This Local Housing Strategy will be of interest to a range of people living and working in East Renfrewshire.

This includes officers working across all Council departments, the Community Health and Care Partnership, local Councillors, Housing Associations, Housing Developers, other partner organisations, as well as residents and community representatives.

If you have any comments or questions about the work of the Local Housing Strategy, please contact us using the details given in the “Contact Us” section of this document.
1. Foreword

I am very pleased to introduce this draft 5-year Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for East Renfrewshire for 2017 to 2022. The LHS sets out the housing priorities which have been identified locally. It guides housing initiatives and service developments across all types of housing whether in the public or private sector.

Housing is a key issue facing us nationally and locally. Recent economic changes have had a major impact across Scotland, in particular on house building and for those trying to find a suitable home.

The importance of having an affordable, good quality home which suits your needs is central to the physical, social and economic wellbeing of residents. Councils have a key strategic role, as we are best placed to listen to and assess the needs of communities, and to steer actions at a local level that will work for individual communities.

East Renfrewshire Council has worked with its partners and the community to develop this strategy. We continue to build and strengthen the networks we have with local residents and our partners. Our shared vision and commitment to joint-working is critical in enabling us to deliver on the LHS outcomes.

East Renfrewshire is a desirable place to live. However, young people and first time buyers in particular struggle to buy a home because of high house values. Across the area there is a need for more affordable homes to rent, and housing designed to meet particular needs.

Housing stock in the area is in relatively good condition but a significant number of homes are ageing, and this comes with the need to repair and replace major elements such as roofs, heating, windows and electrics. We must enable households across all tenures to maintain and improve their homes.

Our strategy is ambitious but realistic. Within constrained public resources, and uncertainty in the wider economy, we can deliver these LHS outcomes which meet the needs and aspirations of people living in East Renfrewshire.

Signature

Cllr Danny Devlin, Convenor of Housing Services
What is the Local Housing Strategy?

Every Council must produce a 5-year Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for their local area. The LHS is the key housing plan for the area which considers all the “big issues” relating to our homes and the people living within them. The LHS is important as it sets our vision for what we want to achieve locally to improve housing across all tenures (i.e. social and private rent and owner occupation), and in turn how we are going to tackle these issues over a 5-year period.

The LHS plans how we can help people find a suitable place to live by building the right homes in the right places, and investing in the homes we already have.

It also looks at how we can help our residents remain in the home they have by providing the right advice to those facing financial difficulties, assistance to keep properties in good repair, and support to help people live independently in their own homes.

The LHS affects pretty much everyone in East Renfrewshire in some way!
2. Introduction & Overview

East Renfrewshire’s residents live in a variety of housing – living with family or friends, renting a home from the Council or a Housing association, renting privately and for the majority of people as owner occupiers. They have a wide range of housing needs and requirements.

Our Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is relevant to everyone who is living in or is looking for a home in East Renfrewshire. One of our most basic needs is having somewhere to live. It is also important that homes are safe, warm, in good condition and affordable to live in.

Without access to decent housing opportunities other important aspects of life including health, education, employment and playing an active part in the community are very difficult to achieve.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) identifies the important housing issues affecting people in East Renfrewshire. In turn it sets out the vision the Council and its partners have for tackling these issues and delivering improved housing and related services over the next 5-years.

The Council and its partners are committed to working together to deliver on these. This is reflected in this draft strategy which has been developed using feedback from detailed consultation with partners this year – relevant Council services, local housing providers and voluntary sector organisations – as well as members of the public.

This draft strategy outlines our LHS vision and priority themes, which have emerged through consultation. From this we have developed a set of draft outcomes we want people to experience locally, through successful delivery of the LHS.

A range of commitments for action have also been outlined, which set out the work we will undertake specifically to ensure we achieve better outcomes for local people.

A series of questions are posed throughout the draft strategy which provides the opportunity to comment on whether:

- The priorities we have identified are the right ones?
- The outcomes we want to achieve will deliver the improvements required?
- The actions we plan to take are the most important – and any suggestions for additional actions we could take to improve housing services locally?
3. Development of the Local Housing Strategy

This draft Local Housing Strategy has been developed taking account of a wide range of views across Council departments, partner organisations and the local community. A series of workshops, pop up events and partner forums were held in the first half of 2016. These were used to refresh our vision of the key housing issues affecting East Renfrewshire residents and the improvements in housing and related services we would like to see. This also provided the opportunity for early discussion with partners on the specific actions we could take to realise these improvements.

Using our online consultation system, Citizen Space, a dedicated space was created to promote the LHS using our “People. Homes. Brighter Futures.” vision with an online survey allowing the public to provide their views on the important housing issues from their perspective. The online survey was also promoted widely to Council staff, elected members, partner organisations, Tenant and Residents Groups and community forums representing a range of interests (e.g. Disability, Elderly, Minority Ethnic forums). We also undertook a series of ‘on the street’ events where we canvassed views from the public using the survey.

This was used to ensure that we consulted as widely as possible in developing the draft LHS. Information on events and progress, and the opportunity to ‘Get Involved’, has also been circulated widely via newsletters (LHS, tenants, local development plan etc.). Further newsletters to follow in Autumn 2016 will promote the draft LHS consultation, and keep people up to date with progress.

Consultation on the draft LHS runs from October to December 2016, and will be made available to a wide range of stakeholders. A variety of approaches will be used including established email networks, in hard copy and at targeted LHS consultation events. A series of questions are set out throughout the different sections of the draft for people to consider. A survey is also available on our Citizen Space (detail below).

It is important that the views of tenants and residents help to shape services and policies for housing across the area. We are piloting a “Sounding Board” approach to service scrutiny with The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). Our approach to consulting on the LHS will be the focus of discussion for this group during the draft LHS consultation period.

If you would like to get involved and have your say, please visit: http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/have-your-say or refer to the Contact Us section of this document.
4. Progress on Delivering the LHS 2012-2017

The current Local Housing Strategy vision 2012-2017 has been to ensure:

“Good quality and affordable housing opportunities are available to all our residents, within safe and attractive neighbourhoods.”

6 strategic housing outcomes were identified to help us achieve this vision – progress is illustrated below.

Significant progress has been made in delivering on this vision, with around 55 different actions set out for the last 5 years. The draft LHS reflects that there is still work to do over the next 5 years – particularly in delivering enough homes, of the right types, and in the right places, and improving our existing ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our commitment</th>
<th>Progress in Delivering on our Commitments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“People in East Renfrewshire can find a suitable place to live which is affordable to them”.</td>
<td>• On track to deliver our target of 150 additional affordable homes by 2017 – 143 achieved by 2015/16, with others in progress.</td>
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<td>• Delivery via a range of affordable housing types:</td>
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<td>- 7 new Council homes built in Eaglesham – the first by East Renfrewshire Council.</td>
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<td>- Purchase of second hand properties from the open market – 10 by the Council and 28 by Housing Associations.</td>
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<td>- Innovative partnership with CALA Homes providing 8 homes for low cost sale.</td>
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<td>- First 6 mid-market rent properties built by Link Housing Association in 2016.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Major releases of additional land for housing at Maidenhill and Barrhead South.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Research undertaken, including consultation with private landlords and private tenants to improve our knowledge of this sector, and how it responds to local housing needs.</td>
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<td>“Fewer households experience homelessness through improved prevention, and those who become homeless can access good quality accommodation, advice and support services”.</td>
<td>• Continuing to prioritise households in crisis in the relet of Council and RSL homes, through our allocations policy and referral arrangements.</td>
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<td>• Review of the Rent Deposit Scheme in 2013 to ensure resources targeted towards homeless households, or those at risk of homelessness.</td>
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<td>• Reshaped our Homelessness and Housing Advice Service to ensure the public are given assistance with finding and maintaining their homes as early as possible.</td>
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<td>• 56% increase in properties available for use as temporary accommodation through Council and RSL stock, and 9 properties leased from the private sector.</td>
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<td>• “Homelessness Champions” established across Council departments – Education, Health &amp; Social Care, Corporate &amp; Community Services – to strengthen the corporate approach to preventing and tackling homelessness.</td>
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<td>Our commitment</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Residents of East Renfrewshire, in all housing tenures, live in good quality housing”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) 2015 target met in 97% of Council homes (remaining 3% - exemptions or abeyances) and 100% of RSL homes.</td>
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<td>• £800,000 ECO funding secured in 2014/15 for a programme of works in ‘Hard to Treat’ properties (three storeys or higher). Resulting in 650 council properties and 72 private properties receiving cavity wall insulation.</td>
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<td>• Improved our knowledge of empty homes locally, undertaking Compulsory Purchase of one property in serious disrepair and targeting owners of 28 empty homes to assist in bringing them back into use.</td>
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<td>• Launch of the Council’s new Property Factoring Service in 2015, to comply with the Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2011.</td>
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<td>• £1.4 million invested in Council sheltered housing stock in the last 2-3 years, including upgrading heating systems, replacing lighting, installing new fire doors and lifts.</td>
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<td>“Residents of East Renfrewshire live in warm, dry and energy efficient homes in safe and sustainable neighbourhoods”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Over the last five years £1.9m has been secured to deliver over 3,011 domestic energy improvements to private sector stock.</td>
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<td>• Research undertaken in 2012 and 2015 to inform our approach to tackling affordable warmth, with a widely promoted resident’ survey and feedback from partner agencies and community stakeholders.</td>
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<td>• Award winning Mixed Tenure Scheme introduced in 2013 to help raise standards in the physical appearance and appeal of areas which are a mix of owners and renters, including creation of a 6-person “Hit Squad” to target problem areas.</td>
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<td>• 12 long term vacant properties successfully brought back into use at Newton Avenue, Barrhead using local residents’ views to improve the internal and external fabric of properties, and enhance safety and security for new tenants moving in.</td>
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<td>• Weekly reviews of anti-social behaviour cases undertaken by Housing, Police and other services through the ‘GRIP’ inter-agency partnership (Getting Results in Partnership).</td>
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<td>• Advice projects created locally through RSL and voluntary sector partnership providing support to tenants and residents on affordable warmth, welfare reform and digital.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our commitment</td>
<td>Progress in Delivering on our Commitments</td>
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<td>“More elderly people and those with particular needs are able to live well in housing which best suits their needs”.</td>
<td>• Improved joint working arrangements between Housing and Social Work to ensure the housing and support needs of vulnerable and ‘looked after’ young people are met effectively.</td>
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<td>• 351 adaptations completed in Council homes from 2012 to date; with a further 283 grants awarded to owners to assist with the cost of adaptations to their homes.</td>
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<td>• 17 new affordable homes built to specifically meet the needs of older or disabled people between 2012/16; with a further 14 homes currently under construction.</td>
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<td>• 273 new Telecare service users in 2014/15, with a high number reporting feeling safer and more independent.</td>
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<td>• Consistently achieving ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’ Care Inspectorate ratings locally for our Sheltered Housing and Housing Support services over the last 4 years.</td>
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| “People can access the information they need to make informed choices about their housing options”. | • We have improved the advice we offer via a full review of our Website, publications and face to face advice services to ensure people are aware of the range of housing options available to them. |
| | • Housing Services staff providing housing options advice now all trained to at least Level 1 in National Housing Advice Standards. |
| | • Production of a refreshed Customer Engagement Strategy setting out how we will work with tenants and service users to shape our services. |
| | • Delivery of a “100 Years of Housing in East Renfrewshire” exhibition in partnership with a local high school and community groups. |
| | • Opportunities for customers to feedback enhanced – e.g. new tenants and repairs surveys, temporary and supported accommodation service user groups, estate walkabouts – with clearer mechanisms for monitoring and action on issues raised. |
| | • Overlee support group produced a play raising awareness of homelessness locally and presented it to other services, Councillors and senior staff. The play was also presented at Housing Support and Enabling Unit Conference 2015. |
5. **Context**

East Renfrewshire was created as a unitary local authority area in April 1996, bringing together Eastwood and Levern Valley areas, formerly part of Eastwood and Renfrew District Councils respectively. Each area has its own distinct history and housing makeup, with Eastwood forming part of Greater Glasgow South (Housing Sub Market Area – HSMA), and Levern Valley forming part of Renfrewshire HSMA.

Approximately two thirds of East Renfrewshire is rural farm land encompassing the villages of Neilston, Uplawmoor, Waterfoot and Eaglesham. The remaining area comprises the mainly suburban areas of Thornliebank, Giffnock, Clarkston, Newton Mearns and the town of Barrhead.

East Renfrewshire has a number of characteristics that impact on the particular housing challenges faced locally. There is a very high rate of owner occupation, with very small private and social rented sectors, and also some of the highest house prices in Scotland.

**Housing Stock**

East Renfrewshire is distinctive due to its very high levels of owner occupation (82%) – compared to Scotland - and low levels of social rented housing provision (12%) and private renting (6%). In Eastwood, levels of owner occupation are considerably higher at 88% of all households. This presents considerable challenges for those seeking affordable housing, in particular for social or private rent in the local area.

East Renfrewshire has good links to Glasgow, including the M77, though weaker transport links across the authority area. This, and its geographical proximity to the city, means a high level of commuting which shapes housing demand. Eastwood historically has one of the highest levels of net out-commuting in the West of Scotland.

In contrast, although only 28% of all homes in the area are located in Levern Valley almost two-thirds of the Council’s properties are located here, accounting for 18% of all homes in the area. The opportunities to access affordable housing here are much greater with two thirds of RSL properties also in Levern Valley – however this masks the fact that additional social rented homes are still required, and existing homes are not necessarily of the size and type that people require.

Transport and other links between Levern Valley and Eastwood, also do not allow people to move between areas easily.
There is an increasing demand for private rental properties in the Eastwood area in particular, and the number of private rental properties has significantly increased over the past 10 years servicing all levels of the market.

Meanwhile, the highest proportion of people living locally own their house by mortgage - however house prices in Eastwood remain amongst some of the most expensive in Scotland. This makes it difficult for first time buyers and those on lower incomes to get a foot on the housing ladder locally.

Migration patterns typically show younger people moving out of the area towards the city to find more affordable accommodation, with a proportion able to afford to return later in their housing journey.

With high average household income levels, the general perception of affluence in East Renfrewshire also hides small pockets of deprivation.

East Renfrewshire has 8 data zones within the 20% Most Deprived data zones in Scotland. These data zones are located in Barrhead (Dunterlie and Auchenback) and part of Neilston. There is a single data zone in the Dunterlie area which is in the 5% most deprived in Scotland (SIMD, 2016).

This can mask how unaffordable certain housing options can be to some households, and this mixed with limited options and a shortage of social rented homes places significant pressure on waiting lists for existing housing stock.

The performance and reputation of schools is also a strong pull factor for households wishing to settle in East Renfrewshire, as it has some of the top performing schools in Scotland. Anecdotally, an increase in families taking up options for private renting in order to access schools is driving a change in the profile of private tenants locally.

Who lives in East Renfrewshire?

At 2015 National Records of Scotland (NRS) estimate that 92,940 live in East Renfrewshire, an increase of 0.6% from 2014. Roughly three-quarters of people live in Eastwood and a quarter in Levern Valley. The projected number of households in East Renfrewshire is currently 38,270.
The number of single adult households is expected to increase by 42% locally in the next 25 years with larger households projected to fall by 13% over the same period. Average household size will also continue to fall - from 2.41 persons in 2012 to 2.2 in 2037. These factors impact on the demand for homes and how this fits with homes available locally.

Population and household projections are not available generally below local authority level. However, it is anticipated that the majority of the projected household increase in future years will take place within the Eastwood area.

East Renfrewshire has an ageing population, with one of the highest proportions of over 60s in the country. 28.6% of the population will be age 65+ by 2037.

Higher than average numbers of adults with additional support needs live in supported accommodation locally (29%, against 19% in Scotland), with re-design of existing accommodation and support services presenting a further challenge to the limited alternative housing options locally.

Like the rest of Scotland, East Renfrewshire faces great changes in its population in the coming years. We expect our population to increase, to have more elderly residents, to see a decline in death rates and to have an increase in the number of households, as more people live alone.

East Renfrewshire is already one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities in the country, with significant Muslim and Jewish communities, with trends expected to continue.

This evolving profile will drive future service provision, having an impact on housing, care and a host of vital services the council and its partners provide for the people of East Renfrewshire.

Further information on the profile of East Renfrewshire can be found via the Council’s “Planning for the Future of East Renfrewshire” report (www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/planningforthefuture).
6. Shaping Our Vision

How are the priorities for housing set?

The LHS is the main housing plan for the local area and has been prepared following guidance on developing Local Housing Strategies as set out in 2014 by the Scottish Government.

The strategy should be “outcome focused” and provide the framework for achieving housing related outcomes set nationally by the Scottish Government and locally in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).

National Priorities

Locally and nationally, housing priorities are focussed on creating Social Justice for communities reflecting the national Housing & Regeneration Outcomes:

| Housing Vision: All people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meet their needs. |
| Regeneration Vision: A Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being. |
| A well-functioning housing system | High quality sustainable homes | Homes that meet people's needs | Sustainable communities |

In February 2011, the Scottish Government released “Homes Fit for the 21st Century: The Scottish Government’s Strategy and Action Plan for Housing in the Next Decade 2011-2020”. This sets out the Scottish Government’s vision for housing for the decade, reflecting the vision outlined (above). It focuses on providing affordable housing for all Scotland’s people. The paper also seeks improvement in housing quality, so that everyone has a warm and comfortable home. It recognises the role that the housing system has to play in enhancing economic growth and social mobility, as well as strengthening our communities.

In June 2015 a “Joint Delivery Plan”, was published by the Scottish Government Joint Housing Policy and Delivery Group. Membership is drawn from a wide range of housing stakeholders, COSLA and the Scottish Government. This plan sets out the priority actions identified by representatives across the housing sector, to ensure the objectives of Homes Fit for the 21st Century, and other national housing related strategies can be achieved.

High priority continues to be placed nationally on delivering enough homes of the right type and quality, in the right places, and which are affordable to meet people’s needs. Scottish Government’s “More Homes Scotland“ approach has set out a fresh target of delivering at
least **50,000 additional affordable homes by 2021 nationally** and reinforces this through additional funding to build homes and support for infrastructure, land and housing delivery. Delivery of this programme over the next 5 years will be critical to meeting our local rehousing and homelessness duties, creating a more balanced housing system and achieving national Housing, Regeneration and Health outcomes.

**Key Targets**

There are a number of targets which have been set out by Government to be achieved nationally up to 2020. The LHS is the main tool used to assist us in meeting these targets in East Renfrewshire.

- **Delivering at least 50,000 additional affordable homes nationally by 2021, which locally our agreed Housing Supply Targets will contribute to achieving.**

- **Continuing annual compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) for social rented homes, following the original target to meet this standard by 2015.**

- **All social rented homes to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) by 2020.**

- **Improvements in housing design and energy efficiency to contribute to Scotland’s commitments to reduce its energy consumption by 12% and greenhouse gas emissions by 43% by 2020.**

**Health & Social Care Integration**

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 identifies the availability of appropriate good quality housing and housing services as making an important contribution to improving health and wellbeing outcomes. Being able to live safely and comfortably at home for as long as possible is important to many older and disabled people who want to live independently. A requirement of the Act is the production of a “Housing Contribution Statement” which outlines how the housing sector can support delivery of integrated health and social care services. A statement has been produced jointly by the Council’s Housing Service and Health and Social Care Partnership – and the recommendations from this are reflected in the draft LHS.

The nine National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes to be delivered through integration provide a clear driver for this process. Those outcomes of particular importance in reflecting the housing contribution to strategic planning for health and social care are:

**National Health & Wellbeing Outcome 2:** People, including those with disabilities or long term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community.

**National Health & Wellbeing Outcome 9:** Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services.
East Renfrewshire's LHS reflects a significant range of guidance, policy and legislation formed over a number of years, and which goes well beyond the ‘bricks and mortar’ to cover the support, advice and prevention aspects of housing related services. This is in parallel to the agenda for integration of adult health and social care services, legislated for under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act (2014), and built on similar body of knowledge for health and social care services.

The challenges of meeting the health, housing and social care needs of an increasingly ageing population profile are well known and documented nationally. The Scottish Government sets out its vision for housing in “Age, Home and Community – A Strategy for Housing Scotland’s Older People 2012 -2021”. Audit Scotland’s 2013 report on Housing in Scotland, identified significant challenges for the housing sector with people aged 75 and over projected to increase nationally by 75% from 2012 to 2035. East Renfrewshire’s population fits with this trend. The Age, Home & Community Strategy seeks to enable older people to remain living independently, with a focus on prevention and giving people the choices they need to live the best lives possible.

Local Priorities

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013 - 2016 was approved by East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership and details how the strategic vision for the local area will be realised locally. The SOA reflects national priorities and is the overall plan for everything the Council and its partners hope to achieve for the local area. Our work to improve housing and related services directly supports this “bigger vision”.

Close links are made between the SOA and the current LHS through a set of strategic housing outcomes which complement those identified for East Renfrewshire. The SOA outcomes of most significance are:

**SOA3. “East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for residents and businesses to grow”**: 

**SOA4. “East Renfrewshire residents are safe and supported in their communities and homes”**.

Joint work will be undertaken to ensure the work of the LHS addresses the outcomes of the emerging Local Outcome Implementation Plan, the replacement for the SOA, which is being prepared for 2017.

Building on our commitments within the SOA, East Renfrewshire Council has its own developed Vision, with a set of core values and capabilities for the organisation, which are driving how services will develop in the next few years. These values underpin the commitments made in the draft LHS. East Renfrewshire Council’s vision is:

“To be a modern ambitious council, which works to create a fairer future with all.”
To help achieve this vision, a set of organisational values have been agreed with employees. These reflect how we should behave as an organisation. The values are *caring, trustworthy, efficient, people-centred and innovative*.

The five capabilities driving what we do are:

- Prevention,
- Digital,
- Community Engagement,
- Data and
- Modernisation.

**Local Drivers**

As well as nationally and locally set outcomes, the commitments of the LHS are driven by a range of factors (as set out above). The specific priorities we have identified in the LHS are based on the evidence we have about housing needs, and also the knowledge, expertise and experience of a wide range of people, including tenants and residents, council officers and partners in other organisations. The LHS also reflects policy areas which are a national priority, and of course takes into account how we can achieve best value with the resources we have available locally.

**Knowledge and Experience**

Critical to shaping the commitments we make are the views of our tenants and residents, staff and partners – i.e. those using and delivering our services. We have undertaken an extensive programme of consultation with stakeholders over the course of developing this draft strategy. This is to ensure our priorities continue to be based on the local views of services required and areas of importance to residents.

As part of this we also ensure that the LHS priorities compliment the commitments made in other plans and strategies produced by the Council and our partners, which have a housing related impact. This is to ensure we are working together effectively and providing value in the services we provide using public monies. Links to related plans and strategies is illustrated below:
The fit with national housing, regeneration and health outcomes and with local priorities including the SOA and Council’s Corporate Plan has been highlighted above. The LHS also aligns closely with the Local Development Plan (LDP), with both using the evidence of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HND) to estimate requirements for new homes over the short, medium and longer term.

The LHS identifies the nature of housing issues locally and how we should address these; this includes the extent of housing need and the types of housing required. The LDP identifies the land required to meet housing need and demand locally. This is then used to form Housing Supply Targets for the number of private and affordable new homes to be delivered locally, and in turn ensures that sufficient land is available locally to achieve this.

In recognition of these important links the draft LHS and LDP Main Issues Report are being developed for East Renfrewshire in tandem. Both documents are being consulted on between October 2016 and January 2017 by the Council’s Housing and Planning Services.

There must also be a “fit” between the LHS, LDP and Clydeplan’s Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for the region. Scottish Government has given prominence to partnership working at the regional level and the integration of approaches to land use planning and housing strategy. Further change is expected following implementation of the recommendations of the recent “Scottish Planning Review” to ensure that the system allows the national target of 50,000 new homes in the next 5 years to be met. Government guidance concerning the development of LHS’ and HND reinforce this approach.

The Council’s draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan (2017-2022) proposes specific investment in new affordable housing and ensures resources are targeted appropriately towards LHS priorities. The primary priority is to invest in new social rented housing, particularly in Eastwood, where the shortage is greatest. A clear focus is also to enhance
land available for delivering affordable housing projects, through ongoing audit of council and private sites with a view to acquiring and preparing them for development.

**Sound Evidence Base**

In addition to this, the LHS is based on a sound evidence base which evaluates the need and demand for housing services locally. The HNDA is carried out in partnership at the Glasgow and Clyde Valley regional level to assess how the wider housing market is operating, and where particular pressures exist for more homes (further detail can be found at [www.clydeplan-sdpa.gov.uk/sdp/main-issues-report-january-2015](http://www.clydeplan-sdpa.gov.uk/sdp/main-issues-report-january-2015)). The approach to developing the HNDA and its content are subject to Scottish Government guidance and approval.

The findings of successive local and regional HNDAs, the latest completed in May 2015, illustrate specific pressures within East Renfrewshire’s housing market requiring more homes overall to meet demand from local households. However, there is also a long continuing shortage of housing for those struggling to find a more affordable home to rent or buy. The protection of the socially rented stock in Eastwood (2005 to present) via Pressured Area Status has made a key contribution to tackling this issue. However with the abolition of Right to Buy (August 2016), acceleration in applications to buy from Council tenants is expected to produce a notable reduction in stock numbers.

The evidence is used to consider whether we have enough land available to build private and affordable homes locally. This is coupled with local evidence which allows us to look in more depth at residents’ needs and how planned new and existing homes fit with these.

Other important national and local research, and data sources have also been used to inform the draft LHS. This includes e.g. HL1 Homelessness Statistics, the Scottish House Condition Survey, local housing stock condition surveys, data from our housing management systems and from the Health and Social Care Partnership.

**Combined the LHS uses this available evidence to consider:**

- Do our current services meet people’s needs?
- What else can we provide?
- What types of housing advice and assistance do people need locally?
- How many additional homes are required - type, size, location?
- How many homes can be provided using available land and funding?
- What supports are required to help people to live independently within our communities?
- How can we provide proactive, rather than reactive services, and support people in times of housing crisis?

Further detail on our evidence, facts and figures are provided in “**Section 7 – Priorities for the LHS**”. However other background reports have been produced to accompany this draft, for those who are interested in finding out more about the key facts and figures, and the emerging issues in relation to the LHS.
So what are our Key Issues and Challenges?

There are a number of strategic challenges facing East Renfrewshire which have a significant bearing on what the Council and its partners can deliver through the new Local Housing Strategy. The availability of mortgage finance and restrictions on lending are improving slowly, however this combined with the cost of homes to buy locally continues to put home ownership beyond reach for many.

At the same time waiting lists for social rented homes are not diminishing and the relatively low turnover of homes becoming available in large part are required to meet steady numbers of homeless households. The profile of those becoming homeless locally is also more varied with those affected by job loss, financial difficulty and a small private rented sector coming through. The proportion of older households and those with disabilities requiring independent living solutions is also rising. The commitment to assist in meeting the needs of incoming refugees is also important, but again many have complex housing, health and support needs.

East Renfrewshire’s identified shortfall of affordable housing will continue to be a significant challenge given this context. We will continue increasing supply at the quickest pace possible by maximising opportunities for new homes through our land supply and supporting the development of difficult sites. We will also remain committed to Council house building; regarding socially rented housing as a priority on housing developments coming forward; and will endeavour to bring empty homes back into use.

In terms of housing quality, the achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standards will be a priority for investment in local Council and Housing Association homes. Assisting owners and private landlords to improve their homes and helping to secure a 42% reduction in direct carbon emissions by 2020 are more challenging targets given the current economic context. Advice and partnership services will continue to be shaped to meet demand from local residents to reduce fuel poverty – though with an improved focus on promoting the national drive to tariff switching.

With the currently constrained economic environment, and the prospect of sustained cuts to the availability of public funding, there is a clear focus on reducing public expenditure and using resources more efficiently to deliver on national and local priorities. However, the Scottish Government is keen to see new and innovative approaches to the delivery of housing and services, and new partnerships formed to achieve a sufficient supply of affordable and suitable housing to meet needs. We will continue to work with RSLs and developers to drive innovation in delivering new affordable homes to meet a range of needs.

The projected growth and ageing of the population of Scotland, and reduction in the average size of each household also present significant challenges for East Renfrewshire. With the current shift in government policy to ensure that older people can remain living independently in a homely environment, and be provided with appropriate support to do so, the local pressure for more suitable, affordable housing in East Renfrewshire increases. The increase in temporary and permanent accommodation required to meet the needs of homeless households is also placing additional pressure on limited social rented housing stock, and the private rented sector and other forms of affordable housing will continue to be explored for solutions. However, Welfare Reforms and the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit over time will affect households’ options and potential risk of becoming homeless. We will continue to address the suitability of temporary accommodation and other housing options such as the private rented sector.
Strategic Housing Vision

Taking into account commitments made locally, and through consultation with partners and other stakeholders, the vision set out for this draft Local Housing Strategy is that:

“Good quality and affordable housing opportunities are available to all our residents, within safe and attractive neighbourhoods”.

This vision has been carried over from the LHS 2012-2017, as feedback given suggests this vision is still an appropriate reflection of what we want to achieve for local residents.

The priorities, outcomes and actions set out in this document are focused towards achieving this vision. Through consultation on this draft LHS we will ensure that our partners and local residents have the chance to comment on this vision, and the approach we plan to take to achieve it.

Key Housing Priorities

Through the work undertaken to develop the draft Local Housing Strategy, a number of priority areas have been identified which will be addressed. Four priority areas have been identified for the LHS, and several linked outcomes and proposed draft commitments illustrate the improvements the strategy will seek to deliver over 5 years.

These cover the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 1: Increase Access to Housing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Our residents are able to access a choice of suitable, affordable housing to meet their needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Innovation is used to positively impact upon the available housing supply.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 2: Thriving, Attractive &amp; Sustainable Neighbourhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Residents live in communities that are safe, resilient and supportive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Residents live in warm, dry homes that are in good condition.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 3: Facilitate Independent Living</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Our vulnerable residents are able to live as safely and independently as possible in the community with appropriate care and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Support is available to those who require it, to prevent housing crisis and find sustainable housing solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority 4: Improve Access &amp; Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ People can access the information they need about our services, to make informed choices about their housing options.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Residents feel included and empowered to make a valuable contribution to their local communities, in the way that suits them best.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our Approach to Developing the LHS Commitments

In contrast to the vision, the priorities and outcomes set out for the draft LHS follow a different format to the previous LHS (2012-17). While the overarching priority themes reflect all the same national and local priorities as last time, they have been restructured from 6 into 4 key priority areas, with corresponding outcomes set out under each theme.

The reason we have done this is to reflect the cross-cutting nature of priorities identified in successive LHS’. Most of the issues identified influence a number of areas, and tackling them can require action across the board.

For example, preventing and tackling homelessness effectively requires action in a number of areas and from a range of partners:

- Ensuring there are enough affordable homes across all tenures
- That these can be found through good quality, rounded advice and information on available housing options locally
- And for those facing such crisis, that adequate support is available on a range of issues they may face – financial, welfare, benefits, advocacy, health and social care etc.

The Importance of Partnership

This example illustrates the importance of building on and developing joint working arrangements with partners, which are effective in delivering the LHS outcomes.

Cross-cutting issues such as homelessness, delivering new homes, providing care and support and improving the condition of homes – require action by a range of departments and partner organisations; even though the LHS is led by the Council’s Housing Service.

Experience has shown that setting outcomes based around topics (e.g. homelessness, house condition, fuel poverty) has prevented our stakeholders from fully understanding that action in certain areas can have negative effects on other areas. Our approach in this draft LHS is to set a framework which improves our understanding of inter connected issues which impact across housing services; and which supports ourselves and partners to take effective action.

This is particularly important in the context of reduced resources, and with a sharpened focus on efficiency. Working together to pool resources and to maximise opportunities to secure resources will be important in delivering on the draft LHS priorities.
7. Priorities for the East Renfrewshire Local Housing Strategy

Housing is a key issue facing us nationally and locally. The remit of the LHS far exceeds the building and maintenance of Council homes. Its scope is significant and potentially affects every household living in East Renfrewshire. As well as the homes we have and those we need, it also considers other strategic housing matters such as homelessness, fuel poverty and housing support services.

This Chapter focuses on our 4 Priority Areas, and the structure for each priority addresses the following points:

- The **Outcomes** we are committed to achieving for local residents;
- Some detail of the **Context and Challenges** we face;
- A summary of **Local Views** gathered via our consultation work;
- **What We Plan to Do** to deliver the improvements people wish to see.

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Housing Priority 1:
Increase Access to Housing

Housing Priority 2:
Thriving, Attractive and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Housing Priority 3:
Facilitate Independent Living

Housing Priority 4:
Improve Access & Participation

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We would like to hear your views on the following:

- **Do you agree with the vision that has been set out for East Renfrewshire?**
- **Do you think the priorities identified cover the housing issues of most importance?**
- **Do you think the commitments we are making will help us to achieve our vision?**
- **How do you think we can work more effectively with partners to deliver on the vision and outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy?**

You can provide feedback using the Contact details provided at Page 53.

Alternatively, our online survey is available at:

[www://getinvolved.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/environment/people_homes_brighterfutures_draft_strategy-1/](http://www://getinvolved.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/environment/people_homes_brighterfutures_draft_strategy-1/)
Housing Priority 1: Increase Access to Housing

In prioritising to *Increase Access to Housing*, we are committed to achieving the following **Outcomes:**

1.1 “Our Residents are able to access a choice of suitable, affordable housing to meet their needs”.

1.2 “Innovation is used to positively impact upon the available housing supply”.

**Context & Challenges**

East Renfrewshire, as with Scotland as a whole, is facing profound changes to its demography. The available data and evidence indicate the potential for some significant changes in the future structure of East Renfrewshire’s population, particularly in terms of its age profile and living arrangements. This will impact on the need and demand for homes and services going forward, and will be crucial to decisions on future service provision and policy.

Around a third of households are single person households, highlighting the trend for more people to live on their own. In line with national trends, there is also an increasing ageing population in East Renfrewshire, with 18% of the population aged 65+ in 2011, and the second highest increase in the over 80s in Scotland. By 2025, almost one quarter of East Renfrewshire will be aged 65 or over.

There are also higher than average numbers of adults with additional support needs living in supported accommodation locally (29%, against 19% in Scotland). The re-design of existing accommodation and support services presents a further challenge to be met to address the limited alternative local housing options.

- **Majority (82%) of people are owner occupiers – 30,525 local households**
- **Only 4,500 households are living in Council or Housing Association homes**
- **A growing Private Rental sector – makes up around 6% of all homes locally**
- **2,480 households are on social waiting lists; and 350 are homeless annually**

Owner occupation is the dominant housing tenure in the area at around 82% of all housing stock; this is higher still in Eastwood at over 90%. This contributes to the pressures caused by limited social and affordable homes to rent and buy, and the affordability of the market generally. Council and other RSL (Registered Social Landlord) homes account for just under 12% of all housing stock in the area, with around two-thirds of these located in Levern Valley. The private rented sector has grown significantly in recent years but still accounts for only 6% of all homes. Private rental homes vary widely across the area in terms of...
affordability, size and target market (e.g. entry level vs. luxury). There is a specific demand for private sector rental family accommodation in Eastwood, given the draw of local schools and lack of socially rented housing available in this area.

In 2015/16 re-let 254 of its homes to homeless households and to waiting list applicants, with on average 55% of these relet to homeless priority households over the last 3 years. This is a fairly low turnover rate. However there are approximately 2,480 applicants on social housing waiting lists locally; and an average of 350 homeless households presenting annually over the last 3 years. This means that for a significant proportion of those on the waiting list, they are waiting several years for the opportunity of being rehoused.

East Renfrewshire along with East Dunbartonshire has some of the highest house prices in Scotland; particularly in the Eastwood area. This makes it difficult for first time buyers, and even some movers on more modest incomes to find a suitable, affordable home in the local area. The level of mortgage and / or deposit required can be unobtainable; with anecdotal evidence that young people have to rely on parents to help with their purchase – unsustainable in the longer term.

The percentage of households with annual household incomes of under £10,000 (17%) and between £10,000 and £20,000 (27%) is significantly higher in Levern Valley than in Eastwood. Barrhead also has a significant proportion of households with income of under £30,000 (62%).

### Comparative Gross Household Incomes Eastwood and Levern Valley (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Eastwood</th>
<th>Levern Valley</th>
<th>East Renfrewshire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Quartile</td>
<td>£20,714</td>
<td>£13,571</td>
<td>£18,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>£39,166</td>
<td>£25,000</td>
<td>£34,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Quartile</td>
<td>£63,750</td>
<td>£44,000</td>
<td>£58,750</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CACI Income Data 2013

The table above shows that lower and upper quartile household incomes in Levern Valley are significantly lower than for East Renfrewshire as a whole. Barrhead and Neilston are also the areas identified as those with the highest deprivation levels (SIMD, 2016) across the Council area. This illustrates the differing profile and pressures faced in the two main parts of East Renfrewshire – Eastwood and Levern Valley.

There is a significant pressure for additional new homes in East Renfrewshire, particularly affordable housing, and as such this remains a priority for this Local Housing Strategy.
Affordable housing (primarily Council and RSL stock) accounts for only 12% of homes, falling to only around 5% in Eastwood; with two-thirds of all social stock located in Levern Valley. The rate of new build has remained modest, though increasing in recent years – primarily due to challenges in securing suitable land and funding for new socially rented homes. This is despite significant in-roads made via the Council’s Affordable Housing Policy since 2006.

50% of Council homes have been sold through Right to Buy, leaving a stock of just under 3,000 homes. Many of the homes sold have been larger family homes in areas of highest demand. East Renfrewshire was the first Council to apply for and be awarded Pressured Area Status in 2005 for Eastwood, because of the significant pressure on the social rented housing supply in that area. This has been renewed twice and remains in place at present. Though sales have reduced to single figures per year in the last few years, the abolition of Right to Buy in July 2016 has produced a sharp increase in applications – 90 applications were received by the July deadline and it is expected most of these homes will be sold.

The profile of socially rented homes in terms of size, type and location and its fit with local demand is also a pressure point. A large % of RSL stock in Eastwood is sheltered or very sheltered housing complexes, or amenity homes. The bulk of ‘mainstream’ properties for families, single people etc. are in Levern Valley. In both housing sub-market areas, there is high demand for smaller properties and larger family homes. The Council also has a high proportion of flats (particularly tenemental style) within its stock – at odds with local residents’ preference for houses or ‘own door’ style flats.

There are particularly low levels of houses in the Levern Valley housing sub-market area and the Thornliebank & Giffnock settlement area with flats being the predominant house type. The majority of the Levern Valley stock is 2 or 3 bedroom properties with fewer smaller properties. In comparison the Eastwood housing stock is 1 or 2 bedroom properties with fewer larger properties.

Council Tax data continues to show a small number of long term empty homes in the area; around 28. Over the last few years the Council has used powers available to reduce the Council tax discount on these properties, with extra funds collected put towards affordable housing developments. Long-term empty properties are being proactively targeted with 14 resolved with owners, one compulsory purchased in 2016; and a programme of ‘reporting empty homes’ underway.

Affordable Housing is defined by the Scottish Government as “housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes”. This includes social rented housing (provided by Councils and RSLs) and “intermediate housing” which can include mid-market rented and low cost home ownership homes provided over the long term. Some of these can be provided without subsidy from the government, but to count as affordable housing they must be affordable to local people and meet the needs of groups of households identified as in need by the housing needs assessment.
Recent estimates from the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2015 reinforce the pressure for new social rented and other affordable housing across East Renfrewshire. This has been the case over successive LHS’s. Estimates up until 2024 show that around 223 households per year will have an unmet need for housing locally - for private or socially rented/ ‘other’ affordable homes. 70 of these each year (or 31%) will have a need for affordable housing.

With this in mind we have developed draft Housing Supply Targets which balance these housing estimates, with what we expect can be delivered effectively within existing land supply and projected resources. The LHS 2012-2017 set out a target of 150 additional homes over 5 years, a modest but realistic target which we have achieved, but which was lower than estimated housing needs.

Overall to 2029, estimates are of 3,790 new homes required (3020 private/ market homes and 770 social rented or below market rent) – An additional 10% is added on top of the private estimates to ensure there will be sufficient land available to deliver on the numbers of new homes required. These targets are reflected in both the LHS and Local Development Plan Main Issues Report (MIR).

**Annual Housing Supply Targets**

- **45 per year** Social Rented/ Below Market Rent
- **178 per year** Private / Market

\[ 45 + 178 = 223 \]

New Homes Per Year

The level of need identified far exceeds the number of socially rented homes becoming available for re-let and being built. This greatly affects waiting times for re-housing compared to other local authority areas, particularly in Eastwood. The Council’s responsibility for meeting the needs of homeless households, as well as our ageing population, those with learning and physical disabilities etc. also puts significant pressure on this situation.

Challenges lie in the fact that land prices can be exceptionally high, and most land is in private ownership, meaning reliance on developers bringing this forward for development to happen. In turn, providing new social rented housing at an affordable rent poses difficulties. Other options such as Below Market Rent and Low Cost Home Ownership schemes face the same challenges, with only a small number of developments to date but increasing numbers planned.

The MIR supports the LHS vision for increasing housing options in well designed, well-connected neighbourhoods, with homes of the right size and type which will support households’ needs over a lifetime. Masterplans for 3 Major Development Sites identified in Barrhead and Newton Mearns have been produced via strong partnership working between the Council, Housing Providers and Developers. The draft **SHIP (2017-2022)** key priority is to invest in new social rented housing. A strong focus is placed on enhancing land available for affordable housing, through identifying and acquiring sites for development.
Local Views - What You Said

“More affordable/ low cost home ownership options”

“Overdevelopment in certain areas is unattractive, and places pressure on facilities”

“Transport links poor and rule out living in some areas if you rely on buses etc.”

“More houses need to be built - less flats as it’s not what people want”

“Lack of appropriate size of housing for single people and larger families”

“Many homes have been sold through Right to Buy - has put major pressure on the waiting list”

“Not enough council houses for people - build more”

“Provide larger accommodation”

“Affordability of homes is big issue”

“Reliance on parents helping first time buyers/renters – but this is not sustainable”

“Increase in ‘own door’ or cottage style social housing – accessibility is key”

“There needs to be a much simpler and fairer method of allocating council houses”

What We Plan to Do - Tackling the Issues

Outcome 1.1: To ensure residents are able to access a choice of suitable, affordable housing to meet their needs, we plan to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR TARGET</th>
<th>OUR COMMITMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 178 private and 45 new affordable homes per year | ✓ Deliver on agreed Housing Supply Targets  
✓ Maintain a sufficient 5-year land supply to support delivery of new homes.  
✓ Review the Council’s Housing Allocations policy to ensure it continues to address local housing needs.  
✓ Use ‘Off the Shelf Purchases’ locally to boost housing supply.  
✓ Ensure our Private Sector Rent Deposit scheme is responsive to local needs. |
- Develop our longer term strategy for acquiring and assembling sites for housing development, to support effective investment.
- Ensure housing need and demand information is kept up to date, in line with Scottish Government guidance.
- Develop a modest programme of Council house building.
- Review and improve how efficiently we let Council and Housing Association properties.

**Outcome 1.2: Using innovation is used to positively impact upon the available housing supply, we plan to:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR TARGET</th>
<th>OUR COMMITMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ![Deliver 120 new Council homes](image) | ✓ Maximise use of available support nationally ('More Homes Scotland') to accelerate delivery of new housing.  
✓ Ensure effective advice and signposting is available on all opportunities for renting and buying locally.  
✓ Bring long term empty homes back into use by offering support to owners, and where required taking enforcement action.  
✓ Promote the development of an Accessible Housing Policy through the emerging Local Development Plan.  
✓ Challenge for innovation in the design and delivery of new affordable homes developed locally.  
✓ Develop area based plans to maximise affordable housing opportunities, as well as community ‘connectedness’ in areas of pressure. |
Housing Priority 2: Thriving, Attractive and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

In prioritising "Thriving, Attractive and Sustainable/ Inclusive Neighbourhoods", we are committed to achieving the following Outcomes:

2.1 “Residents live in communities that are safe, resilient and supportive”.
2.2 “Residents live in warm, dry homes that are in good condition”.

Context & Challenges

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) target for 2015 met in Council & RSL homes

97% of Council homes currently meet SHQS (3% exemptions/ abeyances)

Investment priorities for major works, reflect an ageing Council stock

£6.8m investment required for major works to 2022; increasing post 2022

The 2015 target for compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in Council and RSL homes was successfully achieved locally. The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is a standard set by the Scottish Government. All Scottish social landlords must have met this by March 2015 and maintain it thereafter. The standard has a range of elements that cover the following areas:

- Energy efficiency
- Tolerable standard
- Healthy, safe & secure
- Modern facilities
- Be free from serious disrepair.

97% of Council properties were assessed as meeting the SHQS and RSLs were above the Scottish average with over 98% of stock meeting the SHQS. The remaining 3% and 2% respectively are categorised as abeyances or exemptions – meaning there are times we are unable to complete the required works because other owners will not agree to the works in mixed tenure blocks, or it is not be an effective use of rent money. Around half of RSL properties have been built in recent years and do not yet have significant investment requirements.

The Council’s Housing Asset Management Plan for 2016-20 identifies that the condition of the housing stock is generally good, but is an ageing stock with particular investment requirements over the next few years. 70% of Council homes are over 50 years old, and 28% are over 80 years old. This is a key factor in how we must target resources going forward, including ongoing spend on external elements such as roofing and rendering. Key priorities for investment include:

- Central Heating
- Kitchens and Bathrooms
The SHQS does not apply to privately owned and rented properties. Other standards are used to gauge condition including Tolerable Standard, Disrepair and Repairing Standard (rented properties). Our Private Housing Scheme of Assistance prioritises advice and assistance to owners to maintain their homes, and improve the standards of homes in the worst condition. Through the LHS, the Scheme of Assistance will be promoted more effectively to ensure owners are aware of the help that is available to them.

The Scottish House Condition Survey (2014) reports that 6% of owner occupied homes locally have extensive disrepair issues, with around 42% of homes with some less critical disrepair. Because the private rented sector is relatively small (2400 or 6% of homes) it is more difficult to quantify through this national survey. However, the assumption is made that a similar proportion of privately rented homes will face these issues – this could be higher.

2% of privately owned homes locally have critical issues in terms of the basic Tolerable Standard. This is slightly lower than the Scottish average of 3%. Where properties are identified, The Council will act to identify works required and work with owners to rectify these issues. Work is also undertaken proactively to identify properties in poorest condition, with recognition that the difficulties facing owners are largely the cost of works required.

It is important to note that a significant number of households identified as living in private properties in poorer condition are elderly or on a fixed income, and are therefore vulnerable in terms of age, economic position or health.

There are over 3,000 properties locally which have been purchased through Right to Buy with significant pockets in Eastwood. Levels of disrepair and improvements required in these properties have been identified as an issue locally, particularly in mixed tenure blocks of flats. Again, a number of these households are potentially on lower incomes.

Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS 2014) figures show that 30% of homeowners in East Renfrewshire are in fuel poverty based on the national definition. This is just below the Glasgow and Clyde Valley average at 31%, and the Scottish average of 33%. However this figure has continued to increase in recent years given economic pressures and fuel prices,
and the Scottish Government target of 2016 for the eradication of fuel poverty remains unmet.

A continuing upward pressure on this trend is expected as a result of rising fuel and living costs and changes to welfare benefits. This will also impact on social and privately renting households, though numbers are harder to estimate given the size of these groups locally.

The estimate of East Renfrewshire households who are in extreme fuel poverty stands at 9% compared to an average of 7.9% across Glasgow and Clyde Valley. The Scottish average is 10%. This is of concern given the proportions of these living in the private sector, elderly or single people who are harder to reach in terms of providing advice and support.

While factors other than poor energy efficiency of dwellings contribute to a household being described as fuel poor (e.g. income levels, fuel costs), the poor energy performance of many private sector dwellings is a key contributing factor to fuel poverty. 3% of owned homes are affected by poor energy efficiency levels; with this particular issue also affecting 4% of pensioners.

The work by Scottish Government to introduce legislation regarding Regulation of Energy Efficiency in the Private Sector (REEPS) in the near future is likely to present a significant challenge locally, particularly bringing homes up to standard for sale and rent, given the number of households to be affected. Through the LHS we will respond locally to the challenges presented by introduction of these standards.

Over the last five years over £2.5m has been secured through government funding to deliver over 3,011 domestic energy improvements to private sector homes in East Renfrewshire. Last year, detail of assistance available was issued via Council Tax annual letters to all residents. However in some cases, there has been limited take up of these offers – anecdotally this has been due to a range of issues including opposition to cold calling and competing priorities for owners outgoings. We will continue to maximise opportunities for local residents to take up assistance offered through national funding programmes.

Currently, 60% of Council properties meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) which all stock must meet by 2020. The Council and RSLs locally are on track to meet this, though a significant level of investment will be required to achieve this given the age and profile of stock.

200 new central heating systems were installed in Council homes in 2015/16 – reducing fuel poverty and greenhouse gas emissions. Increasing investment is planned over the lifespan of the Council’s fresh Asset Management Plan for 2016-21, which sees the commitment to install 1,300 new central heating systems over the next 4-5 years.

£800,000 ECO funding was secured in 2014/15 for a programme of works in `Hard to Treat` properties (three storeys or higher), resulting in 650 council properties and 72 private properties receiving cavity wall insulation. In 2015/16 poor energy efficiency in no-fines and solid brick-wall housing was targeted with external wall insulation, using funding from the Scottish Government HEEPS: ABS funding. This programme will continue subject to funding.

Housing Associations operating locally are also proactively addressing the issues of energy efficiency within their stock resulting in a reduction of fuel poverty for tenants. Recent new build developments have sought to maximise design features which improve solar gain and
thermal efficiency. However, challenges still remain in delivering new homes to the Scottish government’s “greener standard” despite additional funding.

Our award winning Mixed Tenure Scheme was introduced in 2013 to help raise standards in the physical appearance and appeal of areas which are a mix of owners and social renters. The scheme included the creation of a 6-person “Hit Squad” to quickly target problem areas. The difference that this has made in mixed tenure estates is widely recognised and the approach mainstreamed into local service delivery.

12 vacant Council properties were successfully brought back into use in 2014 at Newton Avenue, Barrhead. These were long term voids requiring investment to improve their fabric and physical appearance, and affected by a poor local perspective due to previous issues of anti-social behaviour from tenants. Using local residents’ views, improvements to the internal and external fabric of properties was undertaken, which enhanced safety and security for new tenants moving in. This has resulted in additional homes made available, and good outcomes for new residents and those of neighbouring homes.

There are no significant issues of low demand across the Council and RSL homes locally, with any localised issues managed through the approach to lettings. However through our consultation process, we have been informed that standards in re-let homes can be poorer than expected by new tenants. For those on a very low fixed income or who may be vulnerable, there are challenges in bringing these homes up to a liveable standard.

In terms of ensuring our neighbourhoods are maintained to a good and safe standard, the ‘GRIP’ inter-agency partnership of Housing, Police and other services continues to monitor and respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour. A programme of neighbourhood inspections is also in place, allowing the chance for local people to discuss areas of priority for them on a “walkabout” basis. Again this involves Council departments, Councillors, local RSLs. The approach will be reviewed again in early 2017, though feedback suggests that attendance from a wider range of services is required to address issues in the round.

From the perspective of wider community improvements, the work of the LHS has supported plans drawn up for areas such as Auchenback and development of the Neilston Town Charter. We continue to support planned locality based improvements through participation in Town Centre Charettes currently being undertaken for Thornliebank and Clarkston. Both areas have specific housing challenges, firstly in terms of the condition of private homes locally and secondly in the absence of social rented and other affordable housing. Both are of significance to our identified LHS priorities.

In terms of supporting strong and resilient communities, through the LHS we continue to monitor the needs of Gypsies/ Travellers who live or migrate through East Renfrewshire. The numbers of those settled in bricks and mortar housing are in single figures from data available. There is currently no site provision for this community or significant demand for
this from recent, short term encampments here. We will continue to monitor this situation with neighbouring Councils to address issues of accommodation and support emerging.

A significant commitment for this LHS is the resettlement programme for refugees ongoing across the UK and Scotland. 4 families have already been rehoused locally, with a commitment to rehouse up to 50 refugees locally through this programme. There are also significant numbers of unaccompanied children requiring resettlement. The challenges presented come in terms of our overall shortage of affordable housing, but also in ensuring a firm joint approach with partners to addressing significant health, support and other needs which are critical to ensuring families can be integrated successfully into the community.

The 2016 Citizens Panel Survey of local residents has revealed that 94% of residents are satisfied with East Renfrewshire as a place to live. It also showed that the majority of respondents rate their quality of life highly, giving it 8 out of 10. The detailed findings from the survey are used to improve services for the benefit of our residents.

**Local Views - What You Said**

- “Great community environment helps people settle– promote ‘good neighbours’”
- “Extend community wardens service”
- “Gardening assistance should be available as a means tested service”
- “Better community facilities are needed”
- “More investment in housing repairs”
- “Commitment to estate walkabouts by a range of Council services”
- “Keep gardens to a high standard; reduce litter, wheelie bin storage”
- “Investment in housing stock and environment encourages community involvement and pride in area”
- “External appearance of homes need improved”
- “Council and private housing should all be in good order – visible difference in upkeep of homes”
- “Tenants need to be given a more definite plan of action in writing when work is to be scheduled for their area”
- “Factoring service should be expanded to cover more homes”
- “Better standard of void properties – poor quality puts a big pressure on low income households trying to make a home liveable”
What We Plan to Do - Tackling the Issues

Outcome 2.1: To ensure residents live in communities that are safe, resilient and supportive, we plan to:

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| Resettle up to 50 refugees locally 2021 | ✓ Resettle up to 50 refugees locally by 2021.  
✓ Develop an improved joint approach to neighbourhood inspections to raise standards.  
✓ Continue to invest in the ‘Mixed Tenure Scheme’ to assist in raising the standard of the physical environment.  
✓ Respond to emerging requirements for regulating energy efficiency standards in privately owned and rented homes.  
✓ Improve our joint understanding of the needs of Gypsy Travellers living in and travelling through the local area.  
✓ Contribute to developing plans for Thornliebank and Clarkston Town Centres, ensuring improvements in housing are explored.  
✓ Monitor the impact of the introduction of the new private rented sector tenancy locally, and respond to any emerging issues.  
✓ Ensure effective joint-approach to re-settlement of Syrian refugees locally, including unaccompanied children/ young people. |

Outcome 2.2: To support residents live in warm, dry homes that are in good condition, we plan to:

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✓ Promote available information and support to reinforce owners’ responsibilities to maintain their homes.  
✓ Expand the use of factoring services to achieve improved standards in mixed tenure areas.  
✓ Review letting standards for Council and RSL homes to support improved tenancy sustainment.  
✓ Use available powers and resources to proactively support improvement of homes in poorest condition (e.g. Missing Shares) |
| ✓ Proactively improve our strategy for major Council capital programme improvements, through improved information and joint planning. |
| ✓ Support increased participation of owners in capital programme works through improved planning and payment options. |
| ✓ Continue to direct available support for home energy efficiency improvements towards the most vulnerable households. |
Housing Priority 3: Facilitate Independent Living

In prioritising to **Facilitate Independent Living**, we are committed to achieving the following **Outcomes**:

**3.1** “Our vulnerable residents are able to live as safely and independently as possible in the community with appropriate care and support”.

**3.2** “Support is available to those who require it to prevent housing crisis and find sustainable housing solutions”.

**Context & Challenges**

- **25% of Eastwood and a third of Levern Valley residents aged over 65 by 2031**
- **29% learning disabled live in supported accommodation** (19% in Scotland)
- **154 ‘Looked After Children’ supported at home or in the community locally**
- **27% of the population have 1 or more long term condition or disability**

The housing sector already makes a substantial contribution to enabling and supporting older people, disabled people, and those with support needs and long term conditions to remain at home in their local community.

It is critical that planning for, and responding to the housing and support needs of these different groups is carried out in a joined up manner by housing, HSCP and other partners. Partnership allows us to respond as effectively and timeously as possible to the range of household needs, support the shift to self-directed support, and facilitate independent living.

**Challenges in Supporting Independent Living across East Renfrewshire**

**Older People** - In East Renfrewshire the very elderly population (85+) is set to grow at a higher rate than nationally. Also a quarter of Eastwood residents and almost a third of Levern Valley residents will be aged over 65 by 2031. Also, the number of people living with a long-standing limiting illness is increasing with people living longer (but not healthier) lives.

**Dementia** – The number of people with dementia in Scotland is expected to double between 2011 and 2031. This will result in an increasing demand on housing, care and support services to enable those suffering dementia to remain independent. The Scottish Government policy is to ’shift the balance of care’ to support people to remain at home independently as long as possible, rather than in care homes or hospitals. Providing the right housing and support at the right time will prevent crisis and unplanned hospital admissions.

**Physical Disabilities** – 27% of East Renfrewshire’s population have 1 or more long term health condition or a disability. This has significant implications in terms of suitable housing options and support to allow people to live independently. The ageing population is also pushing up the number of people living longer, but a significant number have mobility or other long term conditions which require adaptations or support to remain independent.
In recent years we have also seen a substantial increase in the number of local young adults or families with children with physical disabilities who require housing assistance - such as adapting their current home or renting/buying suitable affordable accommodation.

**Learning Disability** - Higher than average numbers of people with learning disabilities currently live in supported accommodation in East Renfrewshire (29%, compared to 19% across Scotland). The current re-design of existing accommodation and support to promote independent tenancies increases pressure for suitable homes via the general housing supply.

The Isobel Mair School in Newton Mearns is a centre of excellence for educating children and young people with learning disabilities. We have seen an increase in the number of families whose children attend this school also looking to settle in East Renfrewshire, which will impact on future numbers of adults with learning disabilities living in the local community.

**Young and ‘Looked After’ People** - East Renfrewshire is also home to a number of young ‘looked after’ people (154); other vulnerable youngsters facing homelessness; or with complex needs – all of whom require support to establish and sustain their tenancy. However, in common with the wider population, access to mainstream housing in suitable areas remains a barrier due to the significant pressure for affordable housing in East Renfrewshire. A care leavers’ protocol between Housing and HSCP is in place to provide a coordinated response to meeting needs – however the limited supply of available accommodation locally presents a challenge to moving on to independent living.

Intensive support is provided through our supported accommodation unit at Connor Road, and outreach support is offered to others living independently within the community to help manage and sustain their tenancies. Other options are required to respond to the numbers of young people locally who require rehousing and support, and this will involve exploring options such as sharing, supported landlord etc. For many vulnerable young people there is a real risk of homelessness. Our focus is on preventing this occurring through appropriate support and advice, with the need for family mediation and related services also identified.

**Mental Health and Addictions** – 3.5% of East Renfrewshire’s residents are impacted by a mental health condition, which affects their day to day activities. It is commonly accepted that serious mental health problems and addictions are more prevalent among homeless and vulnerably housed people. Housing and HSCP must work together to address the housing and support needs of this group, and target resources towards preventing crisis occurring.

Over the last 2-3 years, £1.4 million has been invested in the Council’s sheltered housing stock. This has included upgrading heating systems, replacing lighting, installing new fire doors and lifts. Satisfaction levels within complexes is high at 99% rating it as good or very
good, and continuing assessment by the Care Inspectorate rating services as very good or excellent.

There are established RSL sheltered complexes where modernisation of the properties is required over the coming years to meet changing aspirations and the drive for flexible services to cater for different needs. This is accounted for within our SHIP programme. One complex at Waterford Road, Giffnock has recently been demolished and redeveloped as amenity housing for older people. Demand has been high for these with handover expected in November 2016.

Through our consultation, and in enquiries about recent affordable housing developments, it has been highlighted that older residents are looking for a range of sheltered; retirement / downsizing; and other suitable housing. Demand is increasing because of the ageing population, but more frequently older owners feel there is a lack of smaller suitable properties for them to buy generally, or that they are competing with others in the housing market which puts prices well out of reach. This sets down a challenge for the LHS in terms of meeting this through suitable design and a variety of options to rent and buy within new housing developments.

Enhanced accessibility and adaptability standards for all domestic new builds were introduced under mandatory building standards introduced in 2007. Over time the regulations are expected to make a significant impact on the profile of the housing stock. An element of wheelchair and accessible housing is included in most affordable housing developments in East Renfrewshire. However we will also endeavour to ensure that at least 10% of new homes are, or can be made, accessible through the LHS and LDP.

At the same time there is an increasing need for adaptations to meet the needs of the ageing population within their existing homes. £201,000 was spent on adaptations to 131 council properties in 2014/15. 65% of all these adaptations were major works such as level access or wet floor showers. The remainder were minor including handrails; grab rails; and altering steps, paths and ramps. Increased investment of £300,000 in 2015/16 was used to tackle a backlog of properties awaiting adaptations. Investment of £200,000k per year is estimated in future years.

The bulk of grant funding available for private sector housing issues continues to be prioritised towards adaptations. 283 grants have been provided to owners for disabled adaptations in the last 3 years locally; as a result 12% of owner occupied homes now have adaptations. However, adaptations can now be found in 40% of our social housing. Housing Associations also continue to work to meet adaptation requirements within their own stock using Stage 3 funding. However the demand for adaptations continues to increase, with those assessed as less than 'critical' facing a significant wait.

The shift towards ensuring independent living for older and disabled people will place additional pressure on housing services locally. Scottish Government figures indicate that there are around 1,420 specialist dwellings for older people or people with physical disabilities locally. However the majority of older people are home owners and this is particularly apparent in East Renfrewshire. The number of community alarms installed locally has increased from 11.9% to 25.4%.
Responsiveness to local needs is critical in helping people remain at home. Additional supports should be promoted and accessible where possible e.g. the national ‘Help to Adapt’ scheme, Care and Repair, our dedicated Housing Options Advice service for older and disabled people, and telecare supports. The challenge for the LHS will be to respond to any changes in supports available within continuing constraints on public funding.

There were 312 homeless presentations in East Renfrewshire in 2015/16, which was a 15% reduction in applications from the previous year. Of these 64% were single people and 29% of applicants were aged 16-25 years old - these rates remain steady based on previous years. However as just under a third are young people and likely to be vulnerable, this has significant implications for the types of accommodation and support required to assist them. A longstanding education programme is in place in local schools raising awareness of homelessness amongst young people, aimed at preventing homelessness occurring.

A working protocol is also in place between Housing and HSCP (as above) to ensure vulnerable young people are adequately supported. Challenges in tenancy sustainment for some of these young people mean that work is ongoing to consider alternative housing options to individual tenancies, and to prevent crisis by improving the ‘new tenant journey’. This is also important given the number of repeat homelessness cases has increased in the last 3 years from 3.5% to 9% of cases.

Of concern also is an increase in presentations from families with children, from 5.3% to 7% in the last 3 years, despite applications overall decreasing. This places pressure on temporary accommodation to be more responsive in terms of size and type. Similarly those with a disability or chronic health problem last year accounted for 21% of those assessed as homeless. Acquiring suitable temporary accommodation which meets a range of needs, i.e. for wheelchair or with adaptations, is challenging.

The majority of homeless presentations are from the private rented sector (32%) or from those staying with relatives or friends (32%). Local knowledge suggests this is due to the relative cost and insecurity of the private rented sector (PRS) and a lack of alternative affordable housing options to move on to. The introduction of the new Private Sector Tenancy soon is likely to have an impact (as yet unknown) on the size of the PRS locally and who it will cater for. This situation will be monitored for any knock on effects for homelessness and the local housing market.

From 2012 all unintentionally homeless households have been entitled to settled accommodation. There are also duties placed on local authorities to provide temporary accommodation, for a reasonable period, to other homeless households which will allow them to secure their own accommodation.
One of our key commitments is to continue to reduce our use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. While temporary accommodation numbers have been increased in recent years - in particular available scatter flats and privately leased properties - to meet demand. Without additional supply it will be very difficult to eradicate B&B usage completely. The use of Bed & Breakfast reduced from 58% in 2013/14 to 34% in 2015/16. This has reduced further this financial year and was 11% as at 30th September 2016. Notwithstanding these improvements, bed and breakfast usage remains an area of concern and work is being undertaken to ensure a further reduction.

The length of stay in temporary accommodation has risen also with an average of 20 weeks to discharge duty, as opposed to 17 weeks three years ago. This reflects the wait for suitable Council or RSL homes becoming available, despite the fact that the majority of council homes are relet to homeless households currently.

The number of applications from those who are ‘potentially homeless’ in the next two months has jumped up after a reduction last year. At the same time the numbers of applicants managing to resolve their homelessness prior to a decision being made on their application has seen a corresponding dip. Anecdotally this is reflecting the difficulties people face in finding suitable, affordable housing alternatives locally.

Preventing homelessness where possible is a key principle of the draft LHS. 61% of homeless applicants assessed for housing support needs, have been provided with support in line with Housing Support Regulations. Through housing options advice and information, support and early intervention we will seek to prevent homelessness occurring or re-occurring.

The changes to the benefit system brought about through welfare reform have also started to impact upon the local population through the rollout of Universal Credit. The costs of temporary accommodation for households, as well as the availability of suitable housing options will be affected. An increase in devolved powers will help to mitigate against some of the effects of welfare changes, however we will continue to closely monitor the changing benefit landscape and the potential increase in rent arrears and homelessness.

Local refuge provision for women experiencing domestic violence includes 5 refuge flats and several scatter flats, provided by RSLs in recent years. 14% of homeless households last year were fleeing domestic violence, and increase from 8.6% 3 years ago. There has also been an increase in women with complex needs coming forward for support. The LHS must consider how these needs can be met effectively. We will work jointly with Women’s Aid to continue to increase suitable accommodation available to domestic abuse victims.
Local Views - What You Said

- "Hard to heat homes – choice between eating and heating for some”
- "Make it easier to get adaptations carried out”
- "More sheltered housing should be provided – good quality homes and service”
- "More help and assistance with financial issues”
- "More support for the elderly at home”
- "Better housing for disabled people”
- "Plan ahead for an ageing population”
- "Improve accessibility in new and existing homes where possible”
- "People want to be able to stay in their home over their lifetime”
- "Causes of homelessness need to be tackled”
- "I feel there are good support systems to help people but are these available to everyone if needed?”

What We Plan to Do - Tackling the Issues

Outcome 3.1: To help our vulnerable residents to live as safely and independently as possible in the community with appropriate care and support, we plan to:

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| To ensure at least 10% of new homes are, or can be made, accessible | ✓ Maximise the contribution of housing to meeting Health and Social Care needs through identifying areas for effective collaboration.  
✓ Review of existing housing services supporting independent living, to ensure they are fit for purpose.  
✓ Use digital technology to improve awareness of potential adaptations and design features to support homes to meet a lifetime of needs.  
✓ Ensure disabled adaptations are used to support people in most need across tenures.  
✓ Promote “Help to Adapt” scheme and use pilot outcomes to inform local improvements in policy and advice. |
Review the capacity of social housing provided for older and disabled people to be ‘futureproofed’ for changing needs.

Continue to prioritise available grant funding towards adaptations.

Prioritise improvements to support tenancy sustainment for new tenants and other vulnerable households.

Outcome 3.2: To ensure support is available to those who require it, to prevent housing crisis and find sustainable housing solutions, we plan to:

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<tr>
<td>Continue to reduce our use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation</td>
<td>✓ Continue to reduce our use of Bed and Breakfast for temporary accommodation.</td>
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<td>✓ Maintain an effective supply of temporary accommodation which is responsive to changing needs.</td>
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<td>✓ Review “move on” rates from temporary accommodation to establish areas for improvement in achieving successful rehousing outcomes.</td>
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<td>✓ Review the outcomes of our joint protocol for Looked After and Young People to ensure we are effectively meeting our statutory duties towards vulnerable young residents.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Work jointly with Women’s Aid to increase the supply of accommodation available to victims of domestic violence.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Consider alternative housing solutions for vulnerable groups which are affordable and supportive, e.g. sharing, supported landlady.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Monitor the impact of Universal Credit on council tenancies, and develop effective responses to reduce rent arrears and the risk of homelessness.</td>
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Housing Priority 4: Improve Access & Participation

In prioritising to **Improve Access & Participation**, we are committed to achieving the following **Outcomes**:

4.1 “People can access the information they need about our services, to make informed choices about their housing options”.

4.2 “Residents feel included and empowered to make a valuable contribution to their local communities, in the way that suits them best”.

Context & Challenges

- Staff providing housing options advice trained to national standards.
- Housing plays a critical role in local “community conversations” piloted by HSCP.
- A digital drive is required to modernise local housing and services.
- Residents want improved capacity in local advice services to tackle ‘affordable warmth’.

The developing local approach to advice and information has been driven by our involvement in one of several national “HUBs” made up of neighbouring local authorities and RSLs who share good practice and pool resources to improve services locally. Each Council is at a different stage in its introduction of the “housing options approach”; though we are working together to develop a fresh training toolkit to support staff nationally, and to ensure a consistency and quality of advice for people across Scotland. In tandem we have improved our website and advice leaflets available to the public; ensured our staff are trained to nationally recognised standards, and are using these enhancements to deal with the range of housing enquiries received into our services. This is in line with recent Scottish Government guidance on housing options and forms a key strand of our work to support the prevention of homelessness and other housing crises occurring.

We are also working closely with HSCP on the theme of prevention and shared advice and signposting, to ensure that residents, staff and partners (GP’s, voluntary organisations etc.) can access up-to-date quality information through a simplified route. This will be the focus of partnership work going forward, in particular to reduce pressure through hospital admissions and delayed discharges, and on other services by ensuring residents can find appropriate advice and support. As well as a central point for information, HSCP are piloting a series of “community conversations” which will provide on the spot advice to enquirers by connecting directly with staff in a range of services and offering a ‘one-stop shop’ approach. Housing is recognised as a critical element of this, and we continue to work jointly on this.

Work will also be undertaken on reviewing how people access limited available housing options locally. This will help us to simplify the process as far possible, and make it more customer focussed. We will begin by considering the Council’s Allocations policy and how our waiting lists and void homes are managed.
The drive to provide more digital services is a key feature of the Council’s commitment to residents, as well as being driven by national priorities. Online services are the increasing preference of a majority of people and we are committed to meeting this demand by introducing text messaging, online applications and other services. The shifting approach to claiming welfare benefits is driving this shift to online applications also, and a multi-agency Welfare Reform group locally is considering how we can respond to ensure public access to online services is available to those who need it.

Work has already begun (through Barrhead HA’s new 15 unit development at Rankin Court), to increase the capacity for tenants to access online services by introducing Wi-Fi. We will seek this in future housing developments to support tele healthcare needs also. Improving digital access at this time is critical to ensure the whole community is switched on and the most vulnerable have improved life chances. This will be a key feature of our LHS to 2022.

Part of our commitment in the last LHS was to improve our understanding of the services residents could benefit from to achieve ‘affordable warmth’ in their homes. Over successive strategies a significant amount of work and investment has focused on housing stock improvements, and targeting advice at the most vulnerable households at risk of fuel poverty. This is a well-established approach to housing services locally, via Citizens Advice and RSLs with dedicated projects supporting this.

Research undertaken in 2015 used results from a widely promoted resident’s survey, along with observations from interactions with residents and local stakeholders. The research indicated a clear demand for a local 1:1 energy advice service – providing flexibility through drop-ins, telephone and home visits. This would increase capacity to support tariff switching for instance. A range of delivery options were explored with the overall view that linking the range of existing, good quality advice services locally through a dedicated resource was most preferred. Action on these recommendations is a priority for the LHS.

The Council produced its first Customer Engagement Strategy in 2014 in recognition of the need to engage with all of our customers, including tenants. This set out commitments for consulting with and supporting people to engage in discussions about our services. This strategy is currently being evaluated independently by TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) taking on board view of tenants and customers, and points for action identified by the Scottish Housing Regulator in 2016 regarding our pathways to participation. The outcomes of this review are expected in early 2017, and will shape the improvements we plan to deliver, including a new Customer Engagement service standard.

Services have been developing in recent years in response to a comprehensive range of customer feedback we gather through service specific feedback surveys; our bi-annual Tenants Survey; and use of Citizens Panel and Citizen Space online surveys. These surveys are promoted widely to customers, tenants and residents via our Tenants Newsletter, social
media and direct follow up with those who have received a service from the Council, e.g. repairs.

In our 2014 Tenants Survey, tenants' top 4 service priorities were:

- **Being kept informed** (61% rate this as their top priority);
- **Receiving an effective repairs service** (48%);
- **Having their views taken into account** (42%); and
- **Receiving a good customer service** (41%).

Clearly information and communication are important features of how our customers judge our services. This is reflected in the LHS consultation more broadly where residents have expressed the need to know more about services, and the desire to get more involved where they have a view to give about a service.

While our feedback mechanisms are well developed, in order to improve the participation and influence of local residents on their local communities the need to build capacity has been identified as priority for the LHS. There are historically a number of hard to reach groups with a low level of participation, including young people. There is a need to improve our understanding of the needs of these groups, and to work with them to enable them to actively participate and influence local policy and service delivery.

We have undertaken work to encourage those most at risk of being excluded to influence service delivery through our Connor Road “Chips and Chat” events with young people in supported accommodation. The Overlee support group (for people in temporary accommodation) has been proactive in sharing service views, whilst also undertaking peer support and putting on a play for a range of senior stakeholders, highlighting the realities of becoming homeless.

To continue innovation in how our services are influenced, and encourage participation, we are committed to developing scrutiny of our services through a customer “Sounding Board”. This will offer board members appropriate training and support via TPAS to undertake their roles, and will begin with an evaluation of the approach taken to consultation for the LHS.
Local Views - What You Said

“More use of volunteers and community groups to support people in the local area – community spirit!”

“The little things help! – frontline staff provide a good service”

“More facilities like Connor Road to support young people in developing life skills before being getting their own tenancy”

“What We Plan to Do - Tackling the Issues

Outcome 4.1: To ensure people can access the information they need about our services, to make informed choices about their housing options, we plan to:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduce enhanced online services and direct messaging for ERC customers</td>
<td>✓ Modernise our digital communication with customers by introducing online services and direct messaging.</td>
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<td>✓ Ensure housing advice and signposting is high quality and responsive to the range of individual needs (e.g. Older, Disabled, Hospital/Prison leavers, Young People).</td>
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<td>✓ Work jointly with HSCP and housing providers to ensure information resources are accessible to the range of staff delivering advice and support.</td>
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<td>✓ Champion the principle of ‘Prevention’ locally through roll out of our ‘housing options approach’ to the delivery of advice services.</td>
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<td>✓ Explore the potential for improving access to available housing options for local people.</td>
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Consider options for responding to identified demand for advice on “affordable fuel” in line with national and local priorities for tackling poverty.

Consider providing enhanced digital capacity and access in new Council and housing association developments to support vulnerable tenants (e.g. WIFI, Tele healthcare capacity).

Outcome 4.2: To allow residents to feel included and empowered to make a valuable contribution to their local communities, in the way that suits them best, we plan to:

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<tr>
<td>Develop a new Council housing ‘customer engagement’ service standard by 2018.</td>
<td>✓ Work jointly to ensure housing priorities for local areas are reflected in the new Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Locality Plans.</td>
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<td>✓ Agree a programme of action to support ongoing ‘community conversations’ on housing issues.</td>
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<td>✓ Develop and deliver on a new ‘customer engagement’ service standard for the Council’s Housing Service.</td>
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<td>✓ Deliver on improvements identified in the review of local pathways to participation.</td>
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<td>✓ Review service user feedback mechanisms to ensure they allow customers to influence the full range of housing services provided locally.</td>
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<td>✓ Explore with partners, the opportunities for involving interested residents in scrutinising delivery of the LHS.</td>
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<td>✓ Develop our local approach to tenant and service user scrutiny, in line with the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter Review.</td>
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8. Delivering the Strategy & Measuring Progress

Who are our partners in the delivery of the LHS?

To achieve the commitments made in our draft strategy, we will rely on a number of key delivery partners. These will be:

### Priority 1 - Required Delivery Partners
- Planning
- Regeneration/ Major Developments Team
- Housing Associations
- Property & Technical Services
- Legal Services
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Glasgow & Clyde Valley Housing Market Partnership
- Land Owners/ Developers

### Priority 2 - Required Delivery Partners
- Regeneration/ Major Developments Team
- Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction Team
- ERC Syrian Resettlement Task Group
- Housing Associations
- Cleansing
- Roads & Transportation
- Police Scotland (GRIP)
- Property & Technical Services
- Legal Services
- Tenants & Residents Groups
- Private Landlords & Home Owners

### Priority 3 - Required Delivery Partners
- Health & Social Care Partnership
- Housing Associations
- Care & Repair
- Home Owners
- Community Groups
- Voluntary Organisations
- Women’s Aid
- Money Advice & Rights Team
- DWP/ Benefits
- Private Landlords

### Priority 4 - Required Delivery Partners
- Money Advice & Rights Team
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Prevention Team
- Community Planning Team
- Housing Associations
- Health & Social Care Partnership
- National Housing Options HUB
- Community Councils
- Tenants & Residents
- Private Landlords
- Home Owners
How will we measure our progress in delivering the LHS?

Each of the actions which are agreed through consultation on the draft LHS will be measured using agreed targets and timescales, and a number of indicators which demonstrate that progress is being made. This detail will be set out in the finalised Local Housing Strategy.

In some cases a numerical target will not be appropriate or useful, but all change and progress will be recorded. We will report against these targets every year and will publish a statement of our progress.

The targets which will be set are important; however of most significance is the difference that will be made to the lives of the people of East Renfrewshire in achieving the goals set out by the Local Housing Strategy.

Progress on delivering the LHS will also be monitored and guided by the LHS Partnership Group, comprising elected members and senior officers. A number of working groups meet periodically to progress actions within the LHS. Members of this group include officers from the Council's Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Environmental Health Services, the Health and Social Care Partnership.

The East Renfrewshire Housing Providers Forum also meets regularly throughout the year, and will be used to discuss progress on delivering the LHS, SHIP programme and other partnership projects.

In order to achieve the outcomes set out in the LHS, the recommended actions will need to be completed with our partners. As outlined above, effective partnership working is vital to the delivery of the LHS, and one of the key strands of the LHS is to continue to raise awareness between partners of the role they have in LHS delivery. An example of this has been the appointment of “Homelessness Champions” within each of the Council’s departments, to ensure issues are tackled jointly.

The finalised LHS will include an action plan for implementing the strategy which will set out what needs to be done, who will do it and by when – this will be developed jointly by the Council and its partners over the coming months.

Resources to Deliver the Strategy

A significant challenge in delivering the LHS will be using available, limited resources effectively to achieve our priorities. There are known pressures on budgets available nationally and locally and there is a real possibility of further cuts to budgets available to deliver services in the near future.

The Council has had to make savings of £32m from 2011-15, with an estimated funding shortfall of £20m from 2015-18. The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) finances the management and maintenance of council homes, as well as supporting investment in new homes and major improvements to our stock. It is recognised that effective use of available resources is required if we are to deliver more with less, this includes pooling resources (whether this means money, time or skills) and maximising opportunities for bringing additional investment into the area.
Despite the financial challenges we face, we have increased investment in our housing stock. Investment of around £14m will also be put into delivering up to 120 new Council homes. The draft SHIP programme will attract up to £25m of grant funding from Scottish Government, as well as investment from the Council, RSLs and developers to deliver new affordable housing over the LHS period.

We have set out within this draft LHS the context of changing demographics, the availability of affordable homes, the condition of some existing homes, and the need for support and advice services amongst our residents. At the same time, the impact of Welfare Reforms, including the introduction of Universal Credit will impact on our HRA income through potential rent arrears. These reforms bring significant risks to the revenue that funds other services, such as temporary and supported accommodation. There are also direct impacts that reductions in benefits have on tenants and residents locally. As yet some of these impacts are unknown or are still to emerge fully. The pressure on financial resources presents clear challenges for the LHS, which we will track and respond to over time.
Assessing the Impact of our Strategy

Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is being carried out to ensure that the Council’s guiding principles of fairness and equality are reflected in the approach that we have taken in the LHS. We continue to review the developing outcomes and actions to ensure any negative impacts have been removed. The draft impact assessment so far does not identify any significantly adverse effects for particular equalities groups.

The conclusions drawn include:

• The strategy will impact upon the whole population of East Renfrewshire due to the scope of issues that it covers;

• The strategy will positively impact on older people and those with a disability, as assistance will be prioritised to their particular needs;

• Improvements are required in our approach to targeting advice at different groups, and we should explore the routes available to deliver this as widely as possible;

• We have improved engagement with young people, those with disabilities and minority ethnic groups – but further work is required;

• We should continue to consider the needs of the diverse groups living locally when developing new services or advice, however consultation has shown issues of importance such as housing options and assistance for owners, are in common with the wider population.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Council must consider the environmental impact of the LHS, in line with the requirements of the Environment (Scotland) Act 2005. A Pre-screening report will be submitted to SEA Gateway under Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, indicating that there is no likelihood of significant effects through the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022.

The SEA carried out for the Local Development Plan covers the major environmental issues relating to the LHS given its focus on new supply of housing, and more recently the updated State of the Environment report to accompany the Main Issues Report of the new LDP. The most significant impacts would result from the commitment to deliver new affordable housing and release of major strategic development opportunities; this will be managed through the Local Development Plan which has responsibility for allocating land for development.

Other considerations related to work to improve the condition of existing housing stock, for which environmental impacts are already considered as part of our delivery programme.
9. Consultation Plan

Draft LHS Consultation (Autumn 2016)

**Public Consultation**

- **October 2016**
  - Pop Up Events
  - Feedback Sessions
  - CMT / DMT
    - Scottish Govt Peer Review OPEN
    - Housing Services Management Team

- **November 2016**
  - Feedback Sessions
  - Sounding Board
  - Launch Briefings
  - Partner Forums
  - Leads Sessions
  - Overview Round Up

- **December 2016**
  - Consultation Round Up
  - Overview Round Up
  - Housing Providers Forum
    - Affordable Housing Working Group
  - Housing Partnership Group (Member/Officer)
    - Peer Review Outcomes

**Partner & Stakeholder Consultation**

- **Set Nov:** Training Session (TPAS)
- **15th Nov:** LHS Consultation Scrutiny
- **Dec:** Sounding Board Feedback
  - Dec.: RTO Feedback
  - Citizen Space Online Closes
10. Contact Us

If you would like further details, please contact:

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Barrhead
G78 1SY

Tel: 0141 577 4687 or 8404

Email: strategy.housing@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Or you can keep up with development of our strategy at:

www://getinvolved.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/environment/people_homes_brighterfuturess_draft_strategy-1/
11. **Background Reports** *(Available on request)*

- East Renfrewshire LHS 2017-22 - Background Evidence Report


- **Draft** East Renfrewshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan (2017-2022)

- **Draft** East Renfrewshire Housing Contribution Statement (Integration of Health & Social Care) 2016