

## Housing Feedback Report December 2018

The following answers to questions were received from Graeme Struthers, Depute Chief Executive, on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

### Strategic Questions

1. What are the plans for Linlithgow under the West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019-24?

*Answer:* The Strategic Housing Investment Plan identifies 54 homes (30 Social Rent and 24 for Mid-Market Rent) on sites as yet to be determined. Any development site(s) will be subject to approval from Scottish Government and depend on funding availability and the sites coming forward.

2. What is the size of the demand for housing in Linlithgow?

*Answer:* There are approximately 1,750 applicants currently listed for Linlithgow on the Common Housing Register.

3. What is the current estimated need for housing in Linlithgow and where is the evidence of that need?

*Answer:* The evidence is noted above from information from the Common Housing Register.

4. Is there an argument for a housing model for Linlithgow which is different to other areas in West Lothian?

*Answer:* A policy of development restraint was introduced in the Linlithgow Area Local Plan 1993 and confirmed again in the West Lothian Local Plan in 2009. The West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 will change this with a requirement for 25% of the homes built on sites to be affordable.

5. Why are the models of affordable housing tenure listed in para 5.6 of the 2018 West Lothian Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance not promoted by West Lothian Council for Linlithgow?

*Answer:* Housing sites that are proposed for housing development in Linlithgow will be required to comply with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance 2018. There is HNSA evidence to suggest that the majority, at least 60 % of Affordable Housing Need in West Lothian, should be targeted at an increase in social rented housing. Social rented housing will be the priority for development but other tenures may be considered on a site by site basis, provided they comply with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance 2018.

6. What is a fair proportion of the development land value which should be retained for the benefit of the Linlithgow Community?

*Answer:* It is assumed that this question is about how much affordable housing there should be in housing developments. The adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 requires 25% of the homes built to be affordable.

7. Is there a policy of using income from local asset sales to buy land within the Linlithgow development areas identified in the West Lothian Local development Plan?

*Answer:* The council's capital receipts from the sale of property and land held on the General Services account are pooled to support the delivery of the capital programme. In instances where a robust business case can be made for the acquisition of land or property to support corporate objectives this can be considered. There is though no blanket policy to purchase land or assets.

8. Whilst Linlithgow is attractive to those commuting to Edinburgh and Glasgow, economic development in the town is highly associated with tourism which is typified by lower paid employment. For the town to be sustainable there must be accommodation for workers in lower paid employment to service the town where is this accommodation to be located?

*Answer:* Planning policies recognise Linlithgow as a high priority area with 25% of the housing to be affordable. Of the 25% that is affordable, 60% of this housing should be social rented housing.

9. It is perceived that West Lothian Council's current housing policies are socially destabilising for Linlithgow. Is there a disconnect between need and the policies of West Lothian Council in Linlithgow?

*Answer:* Please can you clarify what is meant by this question in relation to the term "socially destabilising"

10. Young people are leaving Linlithgow for more affordable areas in the Falkirk housing area principally Bo'ness, Falkirk and Polmont. The absence of affordable housing is leading to an ageing population in Linlithgow. Those moving into new housing in Linlithgow tend to be older people in higher paid employment. We have just lost our youngest member of the Community Council as she has bought a house in Falkirk. Can this be sustained?

*Answer:* The housing mix for sites is considered at planning stage and this includes the requirement for affordable housing.

11. Why is there no infrastructure improvement plan for Linlithgow?

*Answer:* In adopting the West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) the council took a decision not to have infrastructure improvement plans for individual communities in West Lothian. The LDP was adopted on 4 September 2018.

A common thread running through the LDP is that in order to support the level of development set out in the Plan there will be a requirement for new infrastructure to be provided. Paragraphs 87 – 93 of the LDP refer. Policy INF 1 in particular sets out requirements for infrastructure provision and developer obligations.

The LDP also makes reference to the preparation of Supplementary Guidance which will explain how developer obligations will be implemented during the LDP plan period.

The LDP can be viewed at :

[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/27735/Adopted-West-Lothian-Local-Development-Plan/pdf/West\\_Lothian\\_Local\\_Development\\_Plan\\_-\\_Adopted\\_final.pdf](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/27735/Adopted-West-Lothian-Local-Development-Plan/pdf/West_Lothian_Local_Development_Plan_-_Adopted_final.pdf)

12. Based on the current growth of residential boats on the Union Canal the north bank of the canal within the settlement boundary of Linlithgow will be full within the next 10 years with infrastructure consequences. Why is there no policy on residential boats?

*Answer:* In preparing the LDP, a Main Issues Report was prepared. Residential boats along the canal, and specifically on the north bank of the canal within the settlement boundary of Linlithgow, was not identified as an issue hence no policy on residential boats is contained within the LDP.

There is, however, reference in the adopted LDP, to “Requirement to consider the relationship with the Union Canal so as to integrate new development with it whilst allowing for canal related improvements such as moorings and access improvements and respecting its setting as a scheduled monument and maintaining any buffer that may be required in relation to the potential for flood risk.” This is specifically in reference to proposed housing sites in Linlithgow which are in close proximity to the canal. Policy ENV 12 of the LDP relates to the Union Canal and it is within this policy context alongside policies HOU 2 and HOU 3 that any proposals for residential moorings on the canal would be assessed.

## **Housing Allocation Questions**

1. The absence of statistics
  - a. How many on the housing waiting list have given Linlithgow as their preferred town?

*Answer:* There are approximately 280 applicants who have given Linlithgow as their preferred area.

- b. How many in a. above currently live in Linlithgow?

*Answer:* There are approximately 140 applicants who have a Linlithgow address.

2. Why is there no anticipated housing resulting from the Vennel development?

*Answer:* In April 2017 the council’s Development & Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel approved for public consultation draft Planning Guidance for the Vennel. The draft guidance makes reference to residential development as a potential use for the area. The draft guidance can be viewed at <http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Df%94jz%8A>

Policies set out in the adopted LDP would not preclude residential development in the area.

3. Are Linlithgow tenants with a good record moving to new housing outside Linlithgow?

*Answer:* To date, there have been approximately 450 new build lets and of these, less than 10 lets have been to tenants from Linlithgow moving to other areas.

4. Is the housing buyback scheme, in which owners can sell their house to the Council and become tenants, promoted in Linlithgow?

*Answer:* The mortgage to rent scheme is a Scottish Government backed initiative to provide assistance to households who are in difficulty with their mortgage. This scheme is available to qualifying home owners in West Lothian (including Linlithgow). In recent years, there has been a reduction in take-up of this scheme.

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/20782/Mortgage-to-RentShared-Equity-Schemes>

5. Currently homeless single people are being given two bedroom council dwellings in Linlithgow ahead of families wishing to move from a one bedroom dwelling to a two bedroom dwelling. Is it possible for demand for two bedroom dwellings to be satisfied first?

*Answer:* The Allocations Policy determines who should get priority for housing in West Lothian and this applies to Linlithgow in line with all other areas of West Lothian.

6. Does the Council permit exchanges within Linlithgow? If yes, how is this managed?

*Answer:* Exchanges are permissible. Requests should be made to the local Housing Office and checks will be carried out.