

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee

8 September 2021

Annual Update on Perth and Kinross Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021

Report by Depute Director (Communities)

(Report No. 21/155)

This report asks Committee to note progress in 2020/21 in implementing the Local Housing Strategy for Perth and Kinross, previously approved at Housing and Health Committee on 25 May 2016. It also seeks approval for the proposed structure and content of the revised Strategy 2022-27.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy and provide regular progress updates. The strategy must set out its priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related services across all tenures over a five-year period.
- 1.2 The Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 was approved at Housing and Health Committee on 25 May 2016 (Report No.16/234 refers). This report provides the final annual progress update in implementing the strategy. At the conclusion of the current year 21/22 the outcome of work towards the objectives will be incorporated into the revised strategy as 'baseline' information.
- 1.3 Our Local Housing Strategy was developed through a series of themed workshops to discuss the main issues and agree priorities with key stakeholders. This included local communities and tenants, housing professionals, health and social care colleagues, specialists in other related disciplines and contractors. Follow on workshops have been held periodically to review progress and modify actions in the plan, where necessary.
- 1.4 A Local Housing Strategy Steering Group, comprising of Lead Officers for each of the themes meets quarterly and monitors progress towards the annual targets set in the strategy.

2. PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The annual progress report for 2020/21 is attached in Appendix 1. The Local Housing Strategy has the following four strategic objectives. Key areas of progress in delivering the outcomes include the following:

2.2 Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities

Our aim is to create more affordable homes and manage existing stock to create homes of the size and type and in a location people want to live, with access to suitable services and facilities which encourage community integration.

During 2020/21, **we have**:

- delivered a total of 136 new houses for social rent
- bought back a further 28 houses to add to the Council housing stock
- completed a city centre development to assist in regeneration of the city centre
- provided suitable housing to 131 households with an overcrowding need
- helped invest over £17M Scottish Government Grant funding in progressing affordable housing developments to be delivered by the Council and our RSL partners This funding contributed to the housing completed in the current year as well as housing to be completed in the future
- facilitated the improvement of 17 empty properties and brought them back into use through our Empty Homes Initiative
- assisted 178 households to access good quality, affordable accommodation in the private-rented sector
- Managed 199 properties for let in the private sector through our leasing scheme

The impact of these activities has been to meet housing need in the area, providing housing for a number of households through a range of options. The additional social housing also enabled turnover within the overall stock. This has reduced waiting lists and met a range of housing needs in the area including overcrowding, alleviating homelessness and addressing medical need.

2.3 Housing and Homelessness

Our aim is to promote safe and secure communities for residents of Perth and Kinross with access to good quality, affordable accommodation with the necessary support in place to sustain them in their homes and prevent them from becoming homeless.

During 2020/21 **we**:

- reduced homeless presentations by a further 12% following the 19% reduction in 2019/20. (compared to a 9% reduction in homelessness nationally).
- reduced homeless presentations from families by 40% and young people by 13%.
- had the lowest prevalence of households in temporary accommodation at 0.5 households per 100,000 population.

- had the shortest length of stay in temporary accommodation nationally with an average of 76 days (national average was 184 days).
- provided assistance to migrant workers who lost their jobs and accommodation as a result of the pandemic – providing accommodation for at least ten households experiencing difficulties.
- continued to work on void properties throughout the pandemic in line with Covid guidance around safe working practices and allocating/letting accommodation. There was a 9% reduction in the total properties let by PKC in 20/21 compared to the previous year since many households were unable to move due to the pandemic. This is positive in that the reduction could have been much greater due to the restrictions, but our focus on turning properties around quickly reduced the pressure on the delivery of homeless services throughout the pandemic.
- staff were re-tasked at certain points to assist with priority service delivery areas such as sheltered housing complexes and Greyfriars House.
- at the outset of the pandemic, we contacted over 7,500 tenants to undertake welfare checks to make sure that they were offered wraparound support in relation to any concerns re food, money or health and well-being. We offered to maintain contact with individual tenants on an ongoing basis for as long as they needed.
- in recognition that tenants may be facing a loss of or reduction income and an increase in day to day living costs as a result of the “stay at home” message, we doubled our Sustaining Tenancies Fund to £300k.

The impact of these activities has been the delivery of a good performing, high quality, value for money service for our tenants. We have minimised the impact, stigma and duration of homelessness on people in Perth and Kinross and effectively supported our tenants throughout the pandemic.

2.4 Independent Living

Our aim is to support people to live independently at home for as long as possible with help from the community and local support networks.

During 2020/21 **we have:**

- delivered 24 new houses designed to meet the needs of individuals or households with limited mobility and particular support requirements.
- continued to develop effective pathways into housing for people with support requirements.
- made significant progress in delivering additional independent living projects. Work on 8 new flats in Milne Street continued during 2020/21 and the flats were completed in April 2021. Considerable progress was also made on projects at Rannoch Road and Dunkeld Road in Perth as well as at Rattray, Blairgowrie.
- carried out 27 major and 143 minor adaptations (on average within 45 days) to council houses to facilitate independent living.
- installed 28 modular ramps (14 in Council homes and 14 in private homes).

- Completed 85 major adaptations, 9 minor adaptations and 123 small repairs for private owners through the Care and Repair scheme
- Maintained continuity of the Care and Repair scheme - approved 83 Major Adaptation grants to private sector households, with a works cost of £416k and a grant value of £345k. The most common major adaptations include wet floor showers; stairlifts; and ramped access.
- provided short term floating housing support to over 1200 clients.
- installed over 900 community alarms to support clients to live independently.

The impact of these activities has been to enable many households to access housing or remain in their homes, with support or adaptations and services that are suitable for their current and future needs, enabling them to live independently for longer.

2.5 House Condition, Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Our aim is to support residents of Perth and Kinross to live in warm, dry, energy efficient and low carbon homes which they can afford to heat. Unfortunately, all programmes were affected by the pandemic, restricting the work which could be carried out to our houses.

Nevertheless, during 2020/21 **we have:**

- installed over 250 central heating systems.
- started our survey of Council housing through our Local House Condition Survey.
- increased the number of council properties with renewable technologies – 41 properties had Air Source Heat Pumps installed and solar water heating was installed in 52 houses.
- developed and delivered on-line training on Fuel Poverty Awareness for front-line staff.

The impact of these measures ensures that our tenants' homes meet the SHQS and are well maintained. In addition, many owners and private tenants are benefiting from more energy efficient homes.

2.6 Challenges for our Local Housing Strategy

While substantial progress is being made towards delivering our outcomes, overall, several challenges continue. These include:

- The geography of the area presents some specific challenges in relation to the availability of land for new housing. This requires a strong focus on collaboration with partners to develop new housing.
- Changing demographics as 45% of our tenants are 65 or over. National and local projections indicate a significant increase in our older population over the next 20 years. This will require continued close working with health and social care colleagues to plan to meet these future demands.

- A significant challenge is faced by all services and communities in tackling and mitigating the impact of poverty. High housing costs can be key driver of poverty, with 1 in 5 of our children estimated to live in poverty and 30% of households classed as fuel poor. Mitigating the impact of poverty will be a key priority for the revised strategy.
- Addressing climate change and the potential impact on tenants. There will be a significant impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to retrofit current council stock to meet new legislation and standards.
- Responding to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the longer-term impact this may have had on households.
- Working within a construction market where there is likely to be a continued shortage of labour and materials

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 It was approved by Housing and Health Committee in November 2020 (Report No 20/215) that the submission of a revised Local Housing Strategy should be delayed by one year. Previously we were due to submit our revised strategy in 2021. We will now submit our revised Strategy to the Scottish Government in 2022.

3.2 In preparation for the revised Local Housing Strategy a review of changes in our policies and strategic direction (such as the Perth and Kinross Offer), national policies and the current housing issues in Perth and Kinross will inform the development of a series of themed evidence papers. This information will be shared with partners and stakeholders and a series of workshop events covering the themes will be organised to discuss this information and identify key objectives for our Local Housing Strategy. Potential actions which we will work on in addressing the objectives will be considered with partners and stakeholders and the actions to take forward the Local Housing Strategy will be agreed in partnership.

3.3 A review of relevant documents and legislative changes since we last reviewed the Strategy in 2016 has informed the revisions to the structure being proposed. Notable documents in informing proposals for the revisions to the Structure are: -

- LHS Guidance 2019
- Housing to 2040
- Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
- Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019
- Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
- Housing and Regeneration Outcomes Framework
- Ending Homelessness and Rough Sleeping: Action Plan
- Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies 2018 - 2032
- More Homes Division Guidance Note 2019/02 - Wheelchair accessible housing target
- Fairer Scotland Action Plan

- The Heat in Buildings Strategy (currently in Draft) and revisions to energy standards (EESSH2)

These documents were reviewed along with guidance documents setting out a vision for a Fairer Scotland, tackling racism and inequality, minimum energy efficiency standards across all tenures, addressing health inequalities and working towards National Health and Wellbeing outcomes for all members of our communities including those with specific individual needs.

- 3.4 It is proposed that although the structure of the revised Local Housing Strategy will remain unchanged, some revisions will be made in the detail of the sections to better reflect the vision for what Scotland's homes and communities should look like by the end of 2040 as set out in the recently published Government Paper Housing to 2040 [Housing 2040](#). In line with this document, it is proposed that main sections to the strategy will be retitled: -

- 1. More Homes at the Heart of Great Places**
- 2. Affordability and Choice to promote Independent Living**
- 3. Affordable Warmth and Zero Emission Homes**
- 4. Improving the quality of all homes**

It is proposed that there should be a revision of the balance in the strategic objectives to maintain alignment with current national and local priorities.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Considerable progress has been achieved throughout 2020/21 in delivering the key outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy. Working collaboratively with all our stakeholders has been key to the delivery of our success. This will be further enhanced as the Service plays its part in the development of the emerging Perth and Kinross Offer. The Perth and Kinross Offer provides a platform to allow us to agree how we can align budgets, use our resources for maximum impact and for ensuring communities have services where and when they need them.
- 4.2 It also sets out how together we can create the future we want and need, and how we can keep improving our services and communities. An important part of the Offer is that everyone in Perth and Kinross gets involved and understands the part they can play. The Offer is key to enabling the council to continue to respond effectively to an increase in demand for services, financial and budget constraints, respond to new legislation and the challenging fiscal climate.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the Committee:
- notes the progress made during 2020/21 towards achieving the outcomes set out within the LHS (Appendix 1).
 - approves the proposed structure for the revised Local Housing Strategy to be submitted to the Scottish Government in 2022

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	
Community Plan/ Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	Yes
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 The Single Outcome Agreement for Perth and Kinross has five outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resource allocation. The following are reflected in the LHS:

- *Giving every child the best start in life;*
- *Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;*
- *Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;*
- *Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives;*
- *Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.*

Corporate Plan

1.2 The strategy reflects the Council's corporate plan objectives listed above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 Funding for the developments in this report come from the Council's new build housing programme, use of the second home Council Tax Fund and Developer Contributions for affordable housing.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 Resource implications of this report relate to the local authority new build housing programme and the use of land currently in Council ownership.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.

A report is has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

A report is has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council must discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:

- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;

- in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes; and
- in a way that it considers most sustainable.

A report has been prepared using the online integrated appraisal toolkit, available at <http://www.pkc.gov.uk/EqIA>

Legal and Governance

- 3.4 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications in this report.

Risk

- 3.5 The Housing and Environment Senior Management Team regularly review capital monitoring reports that highlight individual project progress and risk.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Elected Members of Perth and Kinross Council, Perth and Kinross Executive Officer Team, Senior Management within Perth and Kinross Council and all staff of Perth and Kinross Council were consulted on the strategy.

External

- 4.2 The following organisations were consulted on the draft LHS for 2016-2021:
- Community Councils
 - Community Planning Partnership
 - Registered Social Landlords
 - Local Estate Agents
 - Registered Private Landlords
 - Scottish Government
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities
 - National Parks
 - Equalities Groups
 - Registered Tenant Organisations
 - Perth and Kinross Interested Persons Database
 - Housing and Community Care Working Groups
 - Homes for Scotland
 - Private Landowners and Developers
 - Residents of Perth and Kinross
 - Other Partners Organisations within the Private, Public, and Third Sector

- 4.3 The Tenant Committee Report Panel were consulted on this report and commented:- “ It is good to see evidence of good practice backed up with case studies and photographs. Perth and Kinross Council have done quite a bit considering the circumstances in the past year.”

5. Communication

- 5.1 A communications plan has been prepared to work with operational teams on delivery of the strategy.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Progress Update for 2020/21 on Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021