

Housing & Employability Delivery Plan 2016-17

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1. Overview & Profile

In 2015 the Senior Management structure of West Dunbartonshire Council was reviewed and a new smaller senior leadership team created to drive the Council's priorities forward from April 2016. As part of that leadership team, eight Strategic Leads were created. Each Strategic Lead has responsibility for a specific area and report directly to the Chief Executive. These Strategic Leads are:

Resources

- Finance and Treasury
- Procurement
- Audit and Fraud
- Business Support
- Chief Finance Officer

Regulatory

- Legal
- Licensing
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Environmental Health and Trading Standards
- Planning and Building Standards
- Elections and Democratic Services
- Data Protection and Information
- Monitoring Officer

People and Technology

- Human Resources
- Organisational Development and Change
- Health, Safety, Risk and Resilience
- ICT
- Transactional support

Communications, Culture and Communities

- Customer Services
- Policy, Planning and Performance
- Libraries and culture
- Communications, events and engagement

Education, Learning and Attainment

- Chief Education Officer
- Early Years: early learning and child care
- Primary, Secondary and Additional Support Need Schools
- Psychological Services

Environment and Neighbourhood

- Fleet and Waste
- Greenspace
- Roads and Transportation
- Leisure and Facilities Management

Housing and Employability

- Housing
- Working 4 U
- Working 4 Business
- Your Community, including community development and empowerment

Regeneration

- Regeneration
- Capital Investment Programme
- Estates and Asset Management
- DLO

Profile

The Housing and Employability Strategic area includes significant elements of the former Housing Services remit plus the Working4U service and the Communities Team responsible for the delivery of Your Community, Community Development and Empowerment.

Housing Strategy and Homelessness

This service area provides the strategic housing authority role within West Dunbartonshire, ensuring the provision of high quality affordable housing in safe and attractive areas, with active tenant involvement. It is responsible for managing the Council's housing stock and for meeting the statutory strategic housing authority and homelessness/housing advice functions.

As the strategic housing authority, the service area is responsible for the delivery and implementation of the Local Housing Strategy and the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and strategic housing investment. It provides a range of integrated, best value, high quality and specialist customer focused services. In addition, it provides management of major housing projects and delivery of the Council new build programme.

The service area also manages the delivery of homelessness and homelessness prevention services and plays a key role in tackling poverty and inequality in West Dunbartonshire through implementing a range of services to prevent and alleviate homelessness and to ensure that every homeless household gets assistance to meet their individual needs.

Housing Operations

As a landlord to a large number of Council tenants we ensure efficient support and involvement of tenants across all aspects of the service.

The allocations, anti-social behaviour and estate management service is responsible for providing tenancies and working with residents to ensure sustainable tenancies and safe communities. The service delivers the WDC housing landlord functions in relation to tenancy management and provides environmental maintenance services.

A key focus for the service is preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour across all tenures and communities within West Dunbartonshire through a range of preventative measures and working with colleagues to reduce rent arrears, promote tenancy sustainability objectives and to maximize income. Support to this is delivered through neighborhood mediation services.

Working4U

The Employability function within this strategic area is provided through Working4U and Working4Business.

Working4U is an integrated service that supports people who are unemployed and underemployed by providing assistance with benefits and debts, learning and digital literacy, youth work and preparation for work. The service manages the Council's successful Modern Apprenticeship programme and associated youth training and accreditation services. The aim of Working4U is to support local residents to improve their skills, confidence, learning and finances, assisting all on their journey into work. Working4U also supports the Council in its strategic objective of protecting the welfare of our vulnerable citizens by ensuring a focus on maximizing benefits, addressing debt problems and developing financial awareness skills. The specialist MacMillan team support cancer patients and their families to secure the most appropriate financial support available.

Working4Business works with local business to support their growth and create more jobs and wealth in our communities. Through the development of an online portal, and stronger partnership working, the service provides advice, assistance and financial support to make this happen. Furthermore, officers ensure the support is designed to meet specific needs of each business. This can be done through a range of support including starting up a business; recruiting the right people; growing businesses; developing workforces and assisting with investment.

Communities

The Communities Team is responsible for community empowerment and capacity building. This is delivered primarily through Your Community, which focuses on improving the coordination and delivery of local services and involving local residents in the design and delivery of those services. Your Community will support each of the 17 neighbourhoods which make up West Dunbartonshire to set priorities for their area and develop and deliver an action plan where communities themselves can begin to address these local priorities. The model also allows us to ensure public services are more responsive and take account of variations in local need.

The Communities Team will also provide a range of other services including community development and capacity building for local organisations, social enterprise support for aspiring providers and ongoing support to Community Councils.

The Communities Team will also support a range of Council and partner services to engage, consult and involve local residents on discussions about key areas of service change or development through local consultation models.

Performance Review

In 2015/16 the services delivered a number of key achievements on behalf of the Council:

- Maximised the delivery of new affordable housing in West Dunbartonshire. The Council delivered 91 new homes for social rent in West Dunbartonshire in Clydebank and Dumbarton, including 37 new council homes for rent, against an annual target of 70
- Developed and introduced a West Dunbartonshire design standard for affordable housing. This area is the first local authority to introduce a design standard for affordable housing.
- Delivered the Scottish Social Housing Charter outcomes with evidenced performance improvements and increased customer satisfaction levels. Satisfaction levels have risen by 19% in the last three years.
- Met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard within the delivery of our Housing Capital Investment programme which in 2015/16 delivered the following:-
 - 220 kitchen and 40 bathroom renewals
 - 365 heating replacements
 - 670 window and door renewals
 - 257 new roof replacements
 - 232 insulated render upgrades
- To achieve our social housing delivery plans we have developed strong strategic housing partnerships within the housing association sector in West Dunbartonshire. Our strategic housing partnership with Wheatley Group delivered a further 54 new social rented homes in 2015/16 at Beardmore Place, Clydebank.
- Empty homes (private sector). The strategic partnership with the Scottish Government and Renfrewshire Council through the Homes Again West empty homes initiative has resulted in 40 empty homes in the private sector being brought back into use in West Dunbartonshire
- The effective and efficient management of empty homes is key to delivering value for money. We have reduced the number of empty properties across West Dunbartonshire by 151 and introduced interventions such as annual tenants visits aimed at identifying tenants who need advice and support to remain in their homes.
- Continue to develop tenant scrutiny and increase opportunities for tenants to influence decision making processes.
- Continued to work in partnership to reduce homelessness across West Dunbartonshire. Homelessness has reduced by over 40% in the last 5 years.
- Our approach to the involvement of our tenants in shaping the delivery of housing services was recognised as we became the first local authority to achieve 'Silver' accreditation from TPAS Scotland.

- We began delivery of the new *'Your Community'* approach to local engagement and involvement. This brings local communities closer to the design and delivery of local services
- We successfully supported 10 Syrian families to settle in Clydebank as part of the UK wide programme to support refugees, winning a Chief Executive award for this work.
- In 2015/16 we have developed improved analysis and reporting and understanding of operational performance relating to delivery of estates services, relating to tenancy sustainment (WDC) tenancies, abandonment and WDC tenants presenting as homeless from a secure tenancy.
- The Council received a Silver COSLA Award for the work we have undertaken restructuring Working4U to refine and improve the service whilst achieving a saving of over £1million. The Council is being considered for a Gold Award for this exemplary public sector improvement project.
- To support the delivery of Working4U services and maximize partnership opportunities, we have secured external funding in excess of £3million from City Deal Working Matters; European Structural and Investment Funds; Skills Development Scotland and McMillan Cancer Support
- Since the start of the Working4U service we have achieved 2,000 jobs in 1,100 days; 416 Modern Apprenticeship opportunities; 2,500 qualifications; £10.5million in Income Maximisation and £3.5million in reduced financial liability.
- West Dunbartonshire Council is one of only three Local Authorities in Scotland to successfully provide its Modern Apprentices with access to Duke of Edinburgh Award accreditation.

There are also some challenges to delivery, which can delay progress and cause frustrations for employees and citizens. Some of the challenges are:

- Redesigning our approach to homelessness within the landscape of significantly reduced financial assistance, informed by UK welfare reform
- Meeting the significantly increased affordable housing supply targets of contributing to 12,000 new affordable homes in Scotland
- Ensuring value for money for tenants and ongoing affordability within a challenging economic landscape
- Reducing the number of empty homes and improving the surrounding living environment
- Improving tenancy sustainability for our residents
- Improving rent collection
- Exploring opportunities to deliver the Working4U service to Council tenants
- Improve the Working4U brand, developing a new single team culture and implementing new Working4U processes including a single Management Information System
- Responding to the on-going challenges of UK Welfare Reform, the development of the DWP Work Programme in Scotland and the new HMle inspection framework
- Growing and diversifying Modern Apprenticeship opportunities

2. Strategic Assessment

The housing and employability management team completed a strategic assessment and performance review to determine the major influences on service delivery and strategic priorities going forward into 2016/17. As a result of this assessment the following factors were recognized as having a significant influence on the work of service in 2016/17:

Housing Act 2014

The Housing (Scotland) Act received Royal Assent in August 2014. A range of amendments were made to the original Housing (Scotland) Bill during the parliamentary process, many of them were suggested by tenants, including West Dunbartonshire's tenant organisations. Some parts of the Act require secondary legislation or further guidance. Whilst the exact timetable for full implementation is not yet known, we do know, for example, that changes to the Right to Buy section of the Act will be implemented in August 2016.

Work on implementation of the Act as a whole and the detailed responses required on guidance and regulation will be a key task over 2016/17.

Access to Housing

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to ensuring that people looking for housing, and in housing need, find it easy to access suitable options based on their own personal situation and get the information they need on how to access suitable housing. Over 2016/17 we will deliver on this by:

- Developing a Housing Options Framework

Housing Options Guidance has been jointly developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA is to be published very soon. The guidance has been developed in order to support the development and embedding of Housing Options at all levels of local authorities. Alongside the guidance is a detailed Training Toolkit which will cover everything staff need to know in undertaking a Housing Options role.

In 2016/17 we will establish and deliver a customer focused housing options approach in line with the Housing Options Guidance.

- Revising the Housing Allocations Policy

This policy underpins the Council's approach to the allocation of housing. It specifically focuses on ensuring the service complies within the legal and regulatory framework and good practice guidance including the new requirements of the Housing Scotland Act (2014). It also ensures that we respond to complex individual needs and circumstances as well as ensuring an open and transparent process regarding the allocation of Housing in West Dunbartonshire.

Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the policies and proposals for housing of all tenures in West Dunbartonshire. We will deliver a new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to cover the period 2017-2022 addressing:

- Housing Need and Demand
- Promoting Good Quality Housing
- Homelessness
- Sustainable and Supportive Communities
- Addressing particular housing needs

Value for Money/Income Maximisation

During 2016/17, we will focus on delivering value for money on all of our key projects as well as ensuring we maximise our income potential. This will be facilitated through the following key areas;

- Ensuring effective implementation of new HRA guidance
- Delivering an effective, robust and flexible rent arrears/collection focus
- Exploring avenues for increasing external funding to West Dunbartonshire
- Managing a decrease in the number of empty homes in the area
- Implementation of the Integrated Housing Management System (IHMS)
- Supporting residents to maximise income through Working4U and its partner agencies

Welfare Reform

April 2013 saw significant changes to the benefit system, which have been implemented over recent years. The negative impact of welfare reform has been felt by many residents in West Dunbartonshire. The Council, like all others in Scotland, will continue to face financial challenges as demand for services grow and the impact of wider changes to benefits entitlements, and other economic pressures, affect our communities. We will play a major role in helping the Council meet these challenges by continuing to look at new and innovative ways of delivering services, reducing costs and very importantly securing investment in our area. As part of this challenge in 2016/17 we will continue to review service delivery to meet the needs of customers affected by Welfare Reform through all elements of the Working4U Service, our approach to temporary accommodation and take into account additional changes through the Scotland Bill. A key focus will be on the challenges and opportunities from the devolution of the UK Work Programme to Scotland.

Employability and Learning

Working4U meets the employability needs of customers who reside within West Dunbartonshire through the provision of Modern Apprenticeships, Employability Fund placements and support comprising Youth Employment Initiative, the Strategic Skills Pipeline, EU funded Poverty and Social Inclusion and Working Matters City Deal. The Working4U learning programme provide confidence building, learning opportunities, training and qualifications to help young people and adults gain the skills and confidence to move into further training and/or employment; literacy and numeracy training; digital inclusion and financial awareness learning opportunities, Duke of Edinburgh, Youth Achievement, Volunteer Awards and a range of SQA qualifications including Core Skills, IT Skills, Personal Development, Employability and Financial Awareness Awards.

In 2016/17 we will complete the phased implementation and deliver the work, learning and money programme to support individuals to achieve positive outcomes and destinations. We will also continue to improve our Modern Apprenticeship programme to inform future workforce planning within the Council.

Your Community

In 2016/17 we will complete the phased implementation of the Your Community model of engagement and community development, and improved local service delivery. Furthermore, we will continue to prepare for the introduction of the Community Empowerment Act in summer 2016 inclusive of community asset transfer, allotments, community right to buy, strengthening community planning and strengthening participation and community empowerment.

3. Resources

As a Council we are committed to supporting every employee to 'Be the Best' through providing personal development opportunities and ensuring that our employees feel valued and recognised for their contribution in delivering the Council's vision and strategic objectives. This commitment is achieved through ensuring all employees have a Performance and Development Plan (PDP) in place and supporting professional and personal development in their current role and for any future career plan.

Our development priorities include training; leadership and manager development; customer service; change management; technical skills and specialist skills that support and maintain professional expertise. Our commitment to learning and development is recognised through the achievement of Gold Standard from Investors in People (IiP).

Workforce Planning

Workforce planning is integrated within the strategic planning process, highlighting the key workforce related activities for the year and reflecting the longer term strategic aims of the services. Each Strategic Lead is responsible for the annual review of requirements for their respective service areas to ensure that any key actions are identified at an early stage.

We gather the views of our employees through our regular employee survey, the most recent survey results relate to the survey carried out at the end of 2015. From this an organisational improvement plan has been put in place. These improvement activities focus on 5 key areas and are embedded in the action plan for this strategic area.

EMPLOYEES

The number of full time equivalent staff in each section is outlined below:-

Section	No. of staff 2016/17
Housing Development and Homelessness	50
Housing Operations	130
Working4U	65.8
Communities	11.8
TOTAL	253.6

Finance

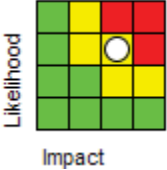
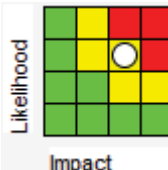
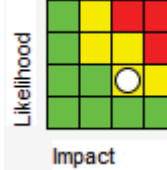
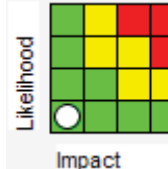
The 2016/17 revenue budget for housing and employability as a strategic area is £60.447m. This is supported by an additional £42.74m from the Housing Revenue account. In addition to this the service has access to capital budgets totalling around £27.3m. We will make the best use of the resources available to deliver on key priority areas and secure external funding where we can.

The resources to deliver on this in 2016/17 action plan for Housing and Employability are:-

Section	Gross Expenditure 2016/17	Gross Income 2016/17
Housing Services	£55.85m	
Working4U	£3.836m	£1.413m
Communities	£0.761m	
TOTAL	£60.447m	£1.413m

4. Risks

In carrying out a strategic assessment and planning for 2016/17 the Housing & Employability service has considered the Council's strategic risks. It has identified those strategic risks that the division can help reduce and detailed these below along with additional service area specific risks.

Risk Title	Description	Current Risk Score	Target Risk Score
<p>Council Estate and Facilities are not fit for purpose</p>	<p>The Council's assets and facilities are not fully fit for purpose with consequent adverse impact on our ability to deliver efficient and effective services. Included in this assessment is Council's property portfolio, housing stock, roads and lighting, fleet and open space.</p>		
<p>Failure to achieve the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter</p>	<p>The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that tenants and customers should expect from social landlords, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive. Failure to continue to meet these could place the Council at risk of the intervention powers of the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>		

Appendix 1 – Housing and Employability Structure

REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT & GROWTH

STRATEGIC LEADS



Appendix 2 - Action Plan 2016-17

Priority	Objective	Action	End Date	Assigned to
Social Mission	Improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure	Deliver new Local Housing Strategy to cover the period 2017/2022	November 2016	John Kerr
		Maximise the delivery of new affordable housing in West Dunbartonshire	March 2017	John Kerr
		Deliver refreshed Housing asset Management Strategy	February 2017	John Kerr
		Carry out comprehensive Tenant Satisfaction Survey to inform service delivery and improve satisfaction levels	September 2016	John Kerr
	Improve the wellbeing of communities and protect the welfare of vulnerable people	Ensure successful local implementation of Housing Act 2014	March 2017	John Kerr
		Develop and implement a robust Housing Options Framework	March 2017	John Kerr
		Review and refresh West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy	February 2017	Coordinator – homelessness services
		Carry out detailed analysis and develop and implement interventions aimed at reducing level of repeat homelessness	December 2016	Coordinator – homelessness services
		Improve reporting of temporary accommodation	May 2016	Coordinator – homelessness services
		Support local implementation of Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act	March 2017	Amanda Coulthard
		Review service delivery to meet the needs of our customers affected by	March 2017	Stephen Brooks

		welfare reform		
	Improve economic growth and employability	Preparing for Scotland's Health and Employability Programme 2017	March 2017	Stephen Brooks
		Review MA programme to improve future workforce planning	March 2017	Stephen Brooks
		Ensure successful delivery of Working4U	March 2017	Stephen Brooks
Organisational capabilities	Strong financial governance and sustainable budget management	Implement Rent Collection Action Plan and improve performance around rent arrears	March 2017	Andy Cameron
		Ensure compliance with HRA Guidance	March 2017	John Kerr
	Fit for purpose estates and facilities	Deliver the Scottish Social Housing Charter locally	March 2017	John Kerr
	Innovative use of IT	Deliver IHMS (Integrated Housing Management System)	March 2017	John Kerr
	Committed and dynamic workforce	Implement Employee Survey Improvement actions	March 2017	Peter Barry
Legitimacy and support	Positive dialogue with local citizens and communities	Deliver Your Community across West Dunbartonshire	March 2017	Amanda Coulthard