

# More than a Roof

## West Dunbartonshire Council's Housing Solutions Strategy Summary

2025 - 2028



**CONTENTS**

1. Introduction ..... 3

2. Background and Consultation..... 4

3. Key Objectives and Actions ..... 6

## Introduction

“More than a Roof” is West Dunbartonshire Council’s 6th Homeless Strategy with a strong focus on finding housing solutions for those households in need. This strategy covers the period from 2025 to 2028, which means it is aligned with our current Local Housing Strategy which also runs until 2028.

“More than a Roof” aims to build on the achievements of “Home at the Heart”, our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. It has been developed within the backdrop of a Housing Emergency both locally and nationally, where demand is higher than ever, and supply is reducing.

The strategy was produced in partnership with key stakeholders, which importantly included in-depth consultation with households experiencing homelessness and staff working in the service and takes accounts of these opinions around how we can end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

Following this process, four Key Objectives for West Dunbartonshire Council were clear, and they are:

1. Homelessness is prevented by providing good quality advice and information to enable informed decisions on personal housing solutions;
2. Where homelessness does occur households are rehoused quickly;
3. Review and ensure there are a wide range of support services available to prevent and end homelessness; and
4. Working with partners to provide Interim options for temporary accommodation and providing best quality temporary accommodation where required.

The Strategy contains an action plan outlining how we plan to achieve these objectives over the three-year period. The full Housing Solutions Strategy can be found on the West Dunbartonshire Council webpage, under the section Housing Options and Homeless Services.

## Background and Consultation

### Background

Scotland's Homeless legislation is one of the strongest in the world yet ending homelessness has not been achieved. However, external factors including a world pandemic and then a subsequent cost of living crisis and the impacts that has had on both supply and demand for housing has meant Scotland is facing a Housing Emergency, with the Scottish Government declaring a Housing Emergency on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to experience high levels of deprivation, reducing population, and relatively poor health outcomes. It has seen a slight improvement around unemployment levels reducing to 3.4% in 2023 compared to the national average of 3.5%. Owner occupier continues to be the largest housing tenure at 55% with social housing making up 24.5% of housing stock.

In 2023/24 there was a 10% decrease in the number of homeless applications received by West Dunbartonshire Council compared to the previous year. However, the numbers assessed with a duty to house continue to increase, meaning an increase in demand for all forms of temporary accommodation and for settled accommodation.

### Consultation

Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve, consult and engage with as wide a range of their residents as possible. There has been a wide consultation process as part of the formulation of this strategy. The focus of the consultation was homeless prevention, housing options, housing support, temporary accommodation and information and advice. The consultation included:

- Hosting a focus group at Ashton View to talk to current residents about their experiences;
- Attending various team meetings to discuss the strategy and the consultation process;
- An online survey for staff;
- An online survey for people currently experiencing homelessness and those who have had experience of homelessness in the last two years;
- Consulting with partners and stakeholders via an online survey, including:
  - Addictions
  - Mental Health
  - Adult Social Care
  - Criminal/Community Justice
  - Housing Associations
  - NHS

- Third Sector Support
- Throughcare
- WDC Housing Operations
- Woman's Aid;
- Public consultation events;
- Further stakeholder consultation via our quarterly Housing Solutions Partnership meeting and WDTR0.

### **Outcomes of consultation**

It is evident from the consultation process that there is a strong need for a greater collaborative approach in the prevention of homelessness. There is also a need for increased and alternative housing support options to meet growing support needs. Such themes, alongside the need for more available housing options and temporary accommodation that meets identified need have informed the objectives and actions of the new strategy.

### **Consultation on the published draft**

Further consultation was carried out once a draft was produced which service users, staff and stakeholders all fed back on. Strong support for the objectives of the strategy was received.

## Key Objectives and Actions

The strategy is underpinned by four key objectives, which will be detailed below.

### Objective One – Homelessness is prevented by providing good quality advice and information to enabled informed decisions on personal housing solutions

#### ACTIONS

##### Key actions to help achieve Objective one:

- Restructure of the homeless service to a housing solution focus which will review our delivery of housing options interviews and personal housing solutions plans;
- Introduce a Housing Solutions Charter for provision of information and advice;
- Roll out a common housing application form for social housing providers in West Dunbartonshire to make it easier to apply for housing;
- Regularly updating the information about our stock and availability so that our residents have realistic information of West Dunbartonshire housing stock options available to them to enable them to make informed housing solution decisions;
- Ask the Housing Solution Partnership to explore housing options and what it means in West Dunbartonshire to further strengthen the advice and information available to residents;
- In line with the Housing Act liaise with public bodies and landlords to help them understand their responsibilities to 'ask and act' and explore actions to prevent homelessness;
- Reviewing protocols and processes with partner agencies with the aim of delivering positive outcomes for residents. This will include updating partner contribution statements;
- Explore the option of creating a "one door" approach for all housing information and advice which is consistent and robust and captures new demand created from the Housing Act;
- Gain accreditation for information and advice.

### Objective Two - Where homelessness does occur households are rehoused quickly

#### ACTIONS

##### Key actions to help achieve objective two:

- Regularly improving our online stock information and further promote so residents have a better understanding of what our stock is like and what becomes available to make informed decisions;

- To increase our supply through our acquisition programme focusing on medical needs and larger family homes to meet need our own stock is unable to address;
- Continue to lobby for increased affordable housing supply funding from the Scottish Government to enable our programme to meet unmet need;
- Explore further promotion of the service Homeswapper to increase mutual exchanges to meet other housing needs.

### **Objective Three – Review and ensure there are a wide range of support services available to prevent and end homelessness**

#### **ACTIONS**

##### **Key actions to be taken forward to help achieve objective three:**

- Review the casework support assessment ensuring that it captures all support needs of households to prevent and end homelessness;
- Explore options to fund and provide more informal and practical types of support for particular groups that would not fall into prescribed housing support;
- Make service users and other stakeholders aware of all support options available;
- Creation of a youth specialist housing support team as part of the service restructure;
- Explore establishing and funding a housing first and other accommodation options for young people;
- Review funding options to expand the existing Housing First Service, including opportunities to prevent homelessness;
- Review and create protocols to ensure positive partnership working between the housing solutions service and all Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) partners;
- Explore options in partnership with other key stakeholders for providing long term housing support for tenants to sustain their tenancy and avoid homelessness.

### **Objective Four - Working with partners to provide Interim options for temporary accommodation and ensuring best quality temporary accommodation is provided**

#### **ACTIONS**

##### **Key actions to achieve objective four:**

- Create a stock profile for dispersed temporary accommodation and review against temporary accommodation standards;
- Continue to offer a conversion programme within available budget;

- Explore support and accommodation options for young people aged 16-21 years;
- Implement recommendations of the residential supported housing review including smaller and self-contained accommodation options; and
- Explore the delivery of rapid access accommodation in partnership with HSCP colleagues.



## Additional Formats of the Document

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

### Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.



**British Sign Language** users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](mailto:contactSCOTLAND-BSL), the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service on 01389737198

### Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

### Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

### Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

### Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

### Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

### Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

### Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔



West Dunbartonshire Council, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL



[equalities@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)



01389 737198