

# Engagement and Consultation Plan

## Introduction

East Lothian Council is committed to ensuring that key stakeholders and the local community have a role in developing the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2024-2029. Only through genuine engagement can a strategy be developed which reflects local needs and aspirations.

There was an unique opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and the local community in true partnership working, with the Local Development Plan and Health & Social Care Partnership strategic plans also due. Every effort was be taken to ensure a joined-up approach.

This report supports the development of the LHS, and aims to summarise the partnership working, consultation and engagement which took place both prior to and following the publication of the draft LHS.

## Background

The Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act requires that local authorities consult on their LHS, and the statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires the involvement, consultation and engagement of as wide a range of local residents and tenants and communities of interest as possible.

The Scottish Government's Local Housing Strategy Guidance (2019) states that engagement must be underpinned by a Human Rights Based Approach which is aligned with the Community Empowerment Act (2015) and locality planning.

When preparing the Consultation and Engagement Plan, LHS Guidance (2019) guidance states that we must be mindful that:

- Engagement and consultation are undertaken early on in the LHS development process.
- A range of media and advertising is used to ensure as wide an audience as possible within local communities and from relevant representative groups including people with or who shared protected characteristics.
- In an effort to end inequality, that the make-up of the local population is accurately reflected.
- Less traditional forms of engagement methods are undertaken to ensure all those willing or able to engage have the opportunity to do so.

## National Standards for Community Engagement

The *National Standards for Community Engagement* are good practise principles designed to improve and guide the process of community engagement. Originally launched in 2005, the National Standards were reviewed and updated in 2015/16, they set out the definitions of community engagement:

Community engagement is supported by the key principles of fairness and equality, and a commitment to learning and continuous improvement. High quality engagement is:

- Effective – in meeting the needs and expectations of the people involved.
- Efficient – by being well informed and properly planned.
- Fair – by giving people who may face additional barriers to getting involved an equal opportunity to participate.

Community engagement is a process which provides the foundation for:

- Shared decision making – where communities influence the options and decisions that are taken.
- Shared action – where communities contribute to any action taken as a result of the engagement process.
- Support for community-led action- where communities are best placed to deal with the issues they experience and are supported to take the lead in providing a response.

## East Lothian Engagement Plan

### Surveys

From 7<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the Housing Strategy (HS) Team published a themed survey every second month, with the exception of an additional survey during May 2022 on Health, Housing and Place in partnership with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELH&SCP) and Planning. Surveys were advertised via the [Consultation HUB](#) and advertised through social media channels. Table 1 outlines the number of responses received for each themed survey.

Officers from the Housing Strategy team attend regular meetings of the Rural Economy Group which has representatives from a number of areas including the National Farmers Union and local estates such as Wemyss and March. Members of the group were asked to help shape the Rural Housing Survey which formed a key part of engagement for this LHS.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response</b>
February	Initial Engagement	215
April	Health, Housing and Place	80
May	Rural Housing	228
July	Older People	94

August	Young People	80
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### Equalities Workshops

During April and June, Housing Strategy, Planning Policy and East Lothian Health and ELH&SCP teams held joint workshops for East Lothian Council (ELC), ELH&SCP and third sector staff. The theme of each workshop centred around equalities groups. Table 2 breakdowns the theme of each workshop and the number of participants.

The workshops were advertised to named contacts within each organisation as well as via Volunteer Centre East Lothian.

East Lothian Council made contact with the Scottish Showmen's Guild when writing HNDA3 and in engagement and consultation for the LHS. On both occasions it was confirmed that there is no need in East Lothian for specific provision. We will continue to monitor the situation.

Table 2: Equalities Workshops		
Date	Theme	Number of Participants
06.04.22	Children & Young People	8
08.04.22	Ethnic Minorities (including Gypsy/Travellers), asylum seekers & refugees	3
11.04.22	Learning Disabilities & Autism	6
19.04.22	Older People	6
20.04.22	Dementia	5
21.04.22	Homelessness	7
25.04.22	Substance Misuse	3
27.04.22	Mental Health	5
30.05.22	Gender Based Violence	11
09.06.22	Veterans	11
14.08.22	People involved in the Justice System	15

### Service Providers Workshops

Table 3: Service Provider Workshops		
Service	Description	Number of Staff Participants
Action for Children	Supported temporary accommodation for young people aged 16-25.	10
Blue Triangle	Supported temporary accommodation for young people aged 16-25 and adults.	4
Sight Scotland	Sight Scotland is a charity that supports & cares for blind people of all ages.	1

Stepping Out	Stepping out is a mental health project and small charity based in East Lothian.	2
Starfish Cafe	Starfish Café is run one day a week at Hope Church in Musselburgh by volunteers in recovery from drugs and alcohol	2
Carers of East Lothian	Carers of East Lothian support carers by providing a range of advice and support to aid the individual in their caring role, enhance their own wellbeing and strengthen their collective voice to improve services.	8
East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership	OT & Acute Hospital Team	22

### Lived Experience

During March and April 2022, the HS Team engaged individually with third sector organisations to establish the best way to consult with individuals they support and/or provide a service to. The impact of Covid-19 presented us with unique challenges when consulting and engaging. While all engagement with ELC/H&SCP staff took place virtually, to ensure we took an equalities focused approach, we were adaptable to the needs of the different client groups while taking the necessary precautions. Small focus groups were held in third sector buildings or virtually. Where possible, we worked alongside our colleagues in H&SCP to jointly consult with lived experience groups.

**Table 4: Lived Experience Workshops**

Date	Event & short description	Number of Participants
10.05.22	New Horizons – current tenants	4
11.05.22	WAEAML- Women’s Aid East and Mid Lothian	6
17.05.22	New Horizons – ex-tenants	3
24.05.22	Stepping Out – Musselburgh	7
22.06.22	Stepping Out – North Berwick	13
7.04.22	Veterans Breakfast	24
15.06.22	Blue Triangle – young people	4
27.05.22	ESOL- English for speakers of other language	4
13.07.22	ESOL- English for speakers of other language	6
2.08.22-9.09-22	4 x sessions Sheltered Housing Complexes	42

### Community Housing & Homelessness

In April, we held a workshop with Community Housing Service Development Team on LHS development and priority outcomes.

During May the HS team attended the team briefs of each Community Housing Team to present on ‘What is the LHS? Why is it important and how can we feed into it?’ This was

then be followed up by two 2 hour workshops later (combining 2 teams for each) for Community Housing Officers to identify priorities and share their ideas.

An initial engagement presentation was delivered to the ELTRP Exec Panel in April 2022 and discussions are currently taking place as to further engagement, with the possibility of an ELTRP conference in June with the theme of the LHS.

Table 5: Community Housing & Homelessness Engagement Sessions	
Date	Team and Engagement Type
21.04.22	Service Development Team
4.05.22	Prestonpans Team - Briefing
5.05.22	Sheltered Housing Team - Briefing
11.05.22	Musselburgh Team -Briefing
12.05.22	Sheltered Housing Team - Workshop
18.05.22	Prestonpans & Musselburgh - Workshop
18.05.22	Haddington Team - Briefing
25.05.22	Tranent Team - Briefing
1.06.22	Haddington & Tranent Team - Workshops
22.06.22	Housing Options Team (Response) Workshop
27.06.22	Tenancy Support Workshop
20.07.22	Housing Options Team (Accommodation) Workshop
28.07.22	Housing Options Team (Prevention) Workshop

### Area Partnership Engagement

To ensure consultation and engagement is specific to each area in East Lothian, each member of the Housing Strategy Team took responsibility for engaging with specific area partnerships. The aim is that these relationships will continue after the LHS has been developed and ensure close working relationships with the Connected Communities Team.

The strategy team regularly communicate with local stakeholders such as Sustaining Dunbar and Sustaining North Berwick. Area Partnerships have also played a key role in reaching out to local stakeholders on behalf of the strategy team to raise awareness of engagement opportunities and provide area specific feedback.

Table 6: Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership Engagement		
Date	Event	Number of Participants
05/09/2022	Meeting with Area Partnership	2

Table 7: Fa'side Area Partnership Engagement		
Date	Event	Number of Participants
October 2022	LHS Engagement with Area Partnership	Cancelled due to lack of participants

Table 8: Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership Engagement		
Date	Event & short description of input	Number of Participants

13.06.22	Gifford Community Council	10
16.06.22	Haddington Area Partnership	10
23.06.22	S1-6 Youth Club	9
24.06.22	P4-7 After School Club	12

**Table 9: Musselburgh Area Partnership Engagement**

Date	Event	Number of Participants
24/06/22	Dementia Friendly Musselburgh	22

**Table 10: North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership Engagement**

Date	Event	Number of Participants
31/08/2022	Area Partnership Meeting	20
06/09/22	North Berwick Children and Young People Network	6
06/04/23	North Berwick Heritage Trust- informative presentation on the LHS.	45

**Table 11: Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership Engagement**

Date	Event	Number of Participants
02.06.22	S1-4 Youth Club Prestonpans	Shadowing, no participation. Youth workers did give some backgrounds on the young people but the YP did not want to chat
08.06.22	PSG Area Partnership meeting	18
14.06.22	Longniddry Social Drop in	4
14.07.22	Lunch with the Bunch by Pennypit at the Legions	10
04.07.22	Walking Football Port Seton	5

## Consultation on the draft LHS 2024-2029

East Lothian Council's draft Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2024-2029 was accepted by the Council's cabinet on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. As per the statutory obligation, the draft LHS 2024-2029 was then published for a 12-week consultation. A decision was taken early to extend the consultation timeline by a week, to help increase response rates. The draft LHS was open for public consultation from the 13<sup>th</sup> of September to the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

The consultation gathered opinions on the strategic vision, priority outcome and specific actions within the LHS 2024-2029. Information on key local issues across housing and housing service was also included in consultations. This helped provide context to the actions and also increase knowledge around current challenges.

Actions that were consulted on were those that are not part of East Lothian Council’s statutory duties and that have not been already progressed. The consulted actions had scope to be amended or changed based on responses.

Overall, 113 people responded to the draft LHS 2024-2029 consultation.

### Survey

A survey was published on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September and closed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. It was available on ELC’s Consultation Hub and in paper form. Paper copies of the survey were available from public consultation events and at local libraries. Responses to the paper survey could be submitted back via the library or post.

Based on staff resources and time restraints, a decision was made to use mostly closed questions within the survey. Respondents had the opportunity to leave comments at the end of the survey or provide them in person via the public events.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the strategic vision, priority outcomes and specific actions in the LHS. Information was included on housing issues to help inform decisions. An easy read explanation of each action was also provided to help improve understanding.

Respondents were required to provide demographic information, including age and gender, however, could chose whether or not to respond to consultative questions on the LHS. Several respondents chose to answer questions only in specific areas, depending on their interest.

Table 12: Draft LHS 2024-2029 Survey Response		
Month	Theme	Response
September	Consultation on the draft LHS 2024-2029	44

### Public Event

A total of 41 people attended the 6 public events. Table breaks down attendance by location.

North Berwick had the highest turnout. This area has an active community, with multiple community groups who campaign on local issues. The event was held on a Friday between 13:00 and 17:00. It should be noted that schools end at noon in East Lothian, which may have helped increase attendance. Additionally, a youth group were meeting in a room adjacent to the event, with members being encouraged to come and participate in the consultation.

Haddington had the lowest turnout, with 4 people attending.

Table 13 Number of people attending public consultation events, by location	
Location	Number of attendees
Musselburgh (Musselburgh Area Partnership)	7

Haddington (Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership).	4
Cockenzie (Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership)	5
Dunbar (Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership)	5
Tranent (Tranent Wallyford and Macmerry)	7
North Berwick (North Berwick Coastal)	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>

Posters were created to provide information on housing issues and context to actions, similar to the survey- see Figure 2.

Under consultative actions, attendees were asked to place a green sticker if they agree or a red sticker if they disagreed. Most attendees chose to give their opinion verbally to staff present. Attendees were provided with post-it notes and pens to write comments and questions. Again, many chose to do this verbally. With consent, staff recorded comments on behalf of attendees. Attendees could walk around the event themselves to read information or they could ask a staff member to take them around the consultation, a number opted for the later.

#### Staff Consultation Event

A drop-in consultation event for East Lothian Council, H&SCP colleagues, and elected members was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November at Council offices in Macmerry. The event used the same materials and followed the same format as the public events.

23 people attended the staff drop-in event. This included elected members and staff from:

- Housing.
- Sport, Countryside & Leisure Facilities.
- Transforming Children Services.
- Corporate Policy.
- H&SCP.

#### Partner email responses

Partners were invited to submit a formal response to the draft LHS on behalf of their organisations/services/community groups. Five responses were received. These were from:

- Homes for Scotland.
- Sustaining North Berwick.
- MND Scotland.
- East Lothian Partnership and Plan Team – NHS Lothian Directorate of Public Health and Policy.
- East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel.



## Promotion of consultation

Stakeholders, including residents, community groups and partners were made aware of the consultation using various methods. East Lothian Council's social media accounts. East Lothian Council's media pages reach a wide audience, with 18.4K followers on X and 17K followers on Facebook. The account had regular posts advertising the consultations.

Partners, including third-sector organisations and East Lothian Council colleagues, were contacted to be made aware of the survey and events. Partners were encouraged to both promote the consultation with contacts/service users and to respond to the consultation themselves.

Posters were designed to promote consultations. The date, time and location of the 6 public events were included on the poster, alongside a 'call to action' and QR code for the survey. The full poster design can be found in appendix 1.



Figure 1: Consultation Poster in Dunbar's Bleachingfield

Over 220 posters were displayed across East Lothian, including in East Lothian Council buildings, including area offices, libraries and community centres, and local shops, following permission from owners. Figure 1 shows the poster on display in a local library.

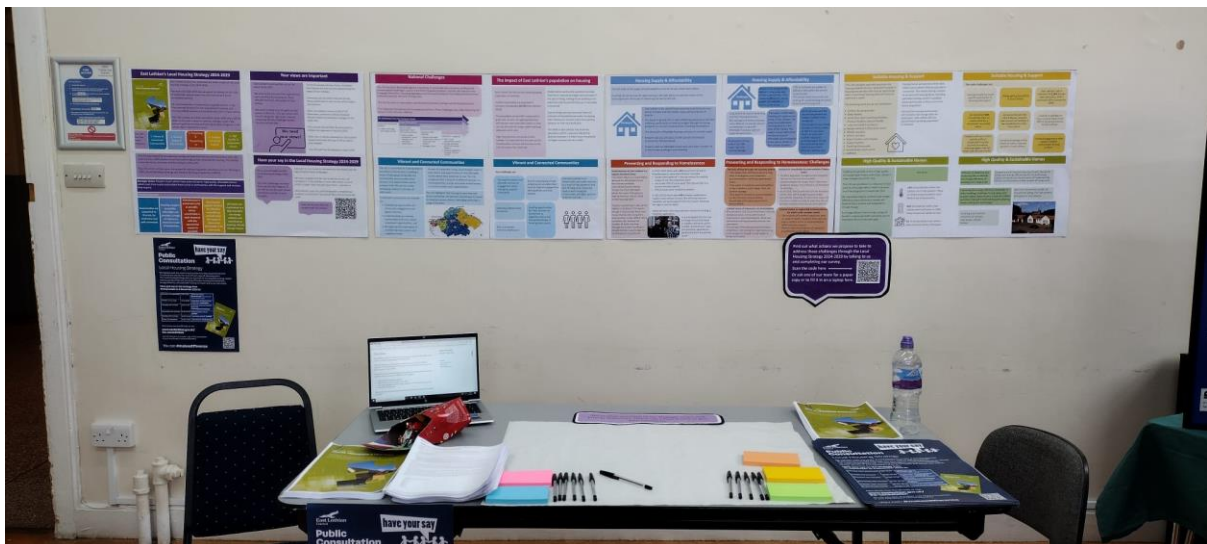


Figure 2: Information posters on display for public consultation event

# Appendix 1 Public Consultation Promotional Poster





## Public Consultation

### Local Housing Strategy

We regularly seek the views of local residents to help shape the services we provide and identify the most efficient ways of delivering them. The Local Housing Strategy sets out priorities for housing and housing-related services across all tenures including affordable housing, homelessness, energy efficiency, and specialist housing for health and social care needs.

**Have your say on the strategy from 30 September to 3 November 2023 at:**

Saturday 30th September	11.00–15.00	Fisherrow Centre, <b>Musselburgh</b> ( <i>Musselburgh Communities Day</i> )
Tuesday 3rd October	16.30–19.30	Haddington Primary School, Upper Hall, <b>Haddington</b>
Thursday 12th October	14.00–17.30	Chalmers Memorial Church, Main Hall, <b>Prestonpans/Cockenzie</b>
Wednesday 18th October	16.30–20.30	Bleachingfield Centre, <b>Dunbar</b>
Tuesday 24th October	16.00–20.00	The Fraser Centre, <b>Tranent</b>
Friday 3rd November	13.00–17.00	Hope Rooms, <b>North Berwick</b>



Alternatively scan the QR code, or visit:  
**[www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lhs-consultation](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lhs-consultation)**

you can also pick up a paper copy of the consultation at your local library or council area office.

You can **#makeadifference**



# Engagement Report

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# Introduction

Engagement and consultation are critical to the process of developing and delivering the LHS. Local Authorities also have a statutory duty, through Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act, to consult on the LHS. The statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires involvement and engagement of as wide range of local residents, tenants and communities of interest as possible.

A two-stage process was taken to engagement and consultation. The engagement stage of the LHS took place during 2022. This collected evidence from stakeholders, including residents and tenants, on the local challenges and priorities within housing and housing services. Over 1,000 people across East Lothian took part in Engagement activities, including online surveys, workshops and informal drop-ins to community groups. This evidence was used to shape the draft LHS 2024-2029, ensuring the needs of East Lothian's population was reflected.

The consultation stage of the LHS was delivered between September and November 2023, following the draft LHS being accepted by East Lothian Council's Cabinet. The consultation gathered opinions on the strategic vision, priority outcome and specific actions within the LHS 2024-2029. Actions that were consulted on were those that are were not associated with East Lothian Council's statutory duties. Actions which were already in progress were not consulted on. The actions we did consult on had scope to be amended or changed based on responses.

In total, around 1,300 people took part in engagement and consultation events.

A full account of the methodology used for consultation and engagement can be found in 'Supporting Paper 2' Engagement and Consultation Plan'.

This report summarises the key findings from consultation and engagement and can be used to support the local challenges and subsequent actions within the LHS 2024-2029.

*Please note: This Engagement Report is a summary of the thoughts, opinions and beliefs of those that took part in engagement events and workshops. This means that there might be inconsistencies in terms which are used or use of terms which are no longer used by East Lothian Council.*

# Key Stakeholders

## Community Groups

Including:

- Lunch with the Bunch
- Walking Football Port Seton.
- Community Councils.
- Area Partnerships.



## Residents



People living in East Lothian including:

- Children and Young people attending Youth and After School groups.
- Veterans.
- Young people experiencing homelessness.
- Women subjected to domestic abuse.

## East Lothian Council and H&SCP Services



We talked to those working in services including:

- Housing.
- Community Justice.
- Social Work.
- OT and Acute Hospital Team.
- Children Services.

## Third Sector Organisations

Including:

- MND Scotland.
- Sight Scotland.
- National Ugly Mugs.
- Dementia Friendly East Lothian.
- Volunteer Centre East Lothian.
- Carers of East Lothian.

## Housing Providers

We talked to those who offer services, including housing in East Lothian including:

- Women's Aid East and Mid Lothian.
- Blue Triangle.
- Action for Children.
- Rock Trust



## Issue & Interest Groups

Groups for interests and issue, including Council sub-groups, such as:

- Rural Economy Sub-Group.
- Sustaining Dunbar.
- North Berwick Heritage Trust.

# Engagement and Consultation Methods

## Surveys



### Engagement:

Themed surveys published every second month.

An additional survey in May 2022 on Health, Housing and Place in partnership with H&SCP and Planning.

Survey themes were:

Initial engagement, Health, Housing & Place, Rural Housing, Older People, Young People.

### Consultation:

In September 2023, a survey was published to consult on the draft LHS 2024-2029.

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the strategic vision, priority outcomes and specific actions in the LHS.

An easy read explanation of each action was provided to improve understanding.

All surveys were available on ELC's Consultation HUB. The Council's Social media channels were used to promote surveys.

## Equalities Workshops



### Engagement:

April and June, Housing Strategy, Planning Policy and ELH&SCP teams held joint workshops for ELC, H&SCP and third sector staff.

Workshops were advertised to named contacts within each organisation as well as via Volunteer Centre East Lothian.

Workshop themes were:

- Children and Young people.
- Ethnic Minorities (including Gypsy Travellers), asylum seeker and refugees.
- Learning disabilities & Autism.
- Older people.
- Dementia.
- Homelessness.
- Substance misuse.
- Mental Health.
- Gender based violence.
- Veterans.

### Engagement:

#### Service Providers

Workshops were run for certain key services in East Lothian.

Services were:

#### Workshops



- Action for Children.
- Blue Triangle.
- Sight Scotland.
- Stepping Out.
- Starfish Café
- Carers of East Lothian.
- East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

### Engagement:

#### Lived Experience Workshops



People's health, circumstances, experiences, previous occupation, and age can make people more vulnerable to poor housing conditions and outcomes.

We worked with third sector organisations to engage with individuals who:

- Homeless young people.
- Subjected to domestic abuse.
- Had mental health conditions.
- Veterans.
- Had migrated from other countries.
- Young people who had been homeless.
- Living in Sheltered Housing.

### Engagement:

#### Area Partnership



To ensure engagement was specific to each area, activities were arranged in each Area Partnership. These included:

- Meeting with Community Councils.
- Dropping into Youth Clubs, Lunch groups, After school clubs, Walking Football clubs.
- An information presentation for North Berwick Heritage Trust.
- Joint event with Dementia Friendly East Lothian.
- Attending Area Partnership meetings.

#### Consultation:

Events were held in each area partnership to consult on the draft LHS 2024-2029. Attendees were asked to comment on the certain actions on the draft LHS. Attendees could also ask questions to staff.

The number of engagement events and people who attended consultation differed between areas.



# Key Findings from 2022 Engagement to develop the LHS 2024-2029

# Early Engagement Survey Key Findings



**215 total responses**

**64%** were homeowners.

**33%** couple household with child/children.

**3%** single parent with adult children.



Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership was most represented. Musselburgh was least represented.

**40%** were aged 45-59. Those aged 21-29 and 75+ were least likely to respond.

## Identified Challenges:

**1**

Lack of amenities to support new housing.

**2**

Shortage of Social Housing.

**3**

Lack of housing options for young people and first-time buyers.

## Covid-19

**43%** felt they were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**19%** said it increased need for better digital connectivity.

**17%** felt it increased Anti-social behaviour in their area.

**13%** said it affected their housing need/aspiration.

**5%** said the pandemic resulted in the threat/experience of homelessness. Almost all were aged 21-29.

## Top Housing Priorities:

**1**

Affordability.



**2**

Energy Efficiency.



**3**

Infrastructure.



**4**

Diversity of housing



**5**

Suitability



# Rural Survey Key Findings

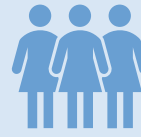


**73%** were homeowners.

**228 total responses**

**89%** were interested in the survey as they lived in a rural area.

Most respondents lived in 'accessible rural areas'.



**64%** were female.

Respondents were most likely aged 55-64. Those aged 18-24 and Over 75 were the least represented.

## Housing Development

**78%** said they saw their area grow in the past 5 years.

**57%** believed that there is not enough affordable housing in their area.



People were concerned that young people will be unable to stay in the area due to costs.

## Energy Costs

Most respondents' main source of heating was mains gas, followed by oil.

Almost all respondents were affected by increased energy costs.



The majority of respondents mentioned that costs had increased for them. Some had bills double.

Some said rise in energy prices had caused them worry or stress.

## Access to services

**60%** of respondents can access the services that they require.

The most common barrier to accessing services was public transport.



**61%** of respondents were concerned about services closing in their area.

## Digital Connectivity

**73%** have reliable mobile signal. Those who don't mostly lived in accessible rural areas.

**80.3%** have reliable broadband in their area. Those who don't mostly lived in accessible rural areas.



# Future Housing Needs of Older People Survey

## Key Findings



**94 total responses**

Over half were homeowners. **40%** owned their home outright.

Just under half lived in a house. **28%** lived in a flat.

Tranent was the most represented area, followed by Musselburgh.



**78%** were female.

**51%** were aged 65 and over.

Those aged 60-64 were most likely to respond, whilst those aged 80-84 and 85+ were the least.

**44%** felt their home is suitable for their needs.

**39%** said their home would not be suitable for their future needs. Most common reason was the ability to manage stairs.

**32%** felt home was an appropriate size.

**28%** would downsize and **12%** wanted more advice.

Most respondents had not made adaptations to their property.

**15%** had adaptations. Most common adaptations were grab rails and specifically designed.



Around **1 in 5** of respondents under 65 had a health condition.

Around **2 in 5** of respondents over 65 had a health condition.

Those aged over 65 were more likely to have a disability.

Those under 65 were more likely to have a mental health condition.

### Energy Prices:

Around **1 in 3** used measures such as closing curtains or wearing extra layers to combat rising energy costs.

Some had also had to either turn their heating off or use less energy.

**8.5%** had made sacrifices such as skipping meals to cut costs.

### Loneliness:

**28%** sometimes felt lonely.

**13%** said they often felt lonely.

Those aged 70-74 were most likely to often feel lonely.



# Young People Survey Key Findings



**80 total**

**responses**

Over **50%** lived in a home which is owned.  
**45%** of those who lived in an owned house also live with their parents/carer.

Most respondents lived in Haddington, followed by Dunbar. Musselburgh had the least.



**50%** women/girl. **41%** men/boys.

**5%** chose to self-identify.

**56%** aged 16-20. **22%** aged 21-25 and 26-30.

## Homelessness

**13%** (10) had experienced homelessness.

**91%** of respondents do not think they will be at risk of homelessness in the next 6 months.

**25%** of respondents said that that they do not know what could help them prevent homelessness.

## If you were at risk/experiencing homelessness, who would you tell?

**50%**

Would tell a relative or friend.

**36%**

Would tell ELC Services.

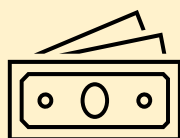
**18%**

Would not know who to tell.

## Finances

Nearly **50%** strongly agree/agree that they worry about their household's financial situation.

The payment of energy bills and making upgrades to the home were the two most common worries.



## Housing Aspirations

Most (**36%**) were unsure of their future housing plans. **35%** did not want to move.

**33%** of respondents said that they would like to live by themselves.

**30%** said they would like to live in a bigger place.

**22%** mentioned the need to make their homes more fuel efficient.

# Housing Supply and Affordability

Throughout engagement there was a clear message that demand for affordable housing outstrips supply. The cost of renting and buying has become unattainable for many, including young people and those on low incomes. The need for more and wider housing options to meet the needs of East Lothian's varied population came through as a top priority. This section will summarise the key issues, supported by quotes and the possible solutions which were discussed throughout engagement and consultation.

## Key Issue: Current Cost of Homes in East Lothian

### House Prices

For those seeking to purchase a home, affordability is becoming an increasing challenge and, for some, there is a persistent barrier to buying. General comments were raised by members of the public around house prices:

"East Lothian is expensive, there isn't the chance to buy a property- it isn't affordable".

"those on lower incomes are being heavily outbid on 2/3 bed properties by those who can afford to pay over".

"Most of the houses are priced outside what most locals can afford."

*"House prices are incredibly expensive compared to salaries."*

### Young People

Young people were said to be particularly affected. When affordability and house prices were mentioned, people often spoke of young people being unable to afford homes in the area, and the wider impact this can have on all household members.

"I worry about my own children not being able to afford to buy a home in their hometown in the future..."

"Very difficult for young people to get on the housing market. Deposits too high if purchasing property".

"I have 2 grown up sons still at home as there is no social housing out there older parents feel that they're home is not they're own due to family members still living at home".

### First Time Buyers

First time buyers spoke of the challenges faced due to the cost of buying a home. Single person households, which are predicted to be the most common household type in the county, considered buying in the area as being further out of reach.

"As a first-time buyer who is single and looking to buy a property on my own, I find there are very few options for me. I have savings for a deposit, but prices have risen so much I can barely afford to buy anywhere."

## Key Issue: Supply of Social Housing versus demand

### Affordable Homes: Rate of Development Vs Demand

The Local Authorities Affordable Housing Supply Programme was recognised as positive. However, it was felt that the rate of development simply can't keep pace with the demand for affordable homes.

*"Demand is ever increasing and the supply is unable to keep up".*

*"We (East Lothian Council) don't have enough places for people. There is a lack of accommodation, and I'm speaking of this for every area. We just don't have places to put people".*

### Lack of flow through housing

The high demand for social housing was thought to be compounded by the lack of flow through the system. That is to say that there is a low turnover of social homes due to high tenancy sustainment.

It was highlighted that East Lothian Council has a 95% tenancy sustainment rate. Participants were concerned that the lack of housing could result in the Council not complying with its duties.

## Key Issue: Lack of Affordable Housing Options

Demand for social housing was further linked to the lack of affordable housing options to meet a broad range of needs. Whilst the development of East Lothian Mid-Market Homes, helped diversify options there is still an imbalance between supply and demand.

*"We are finding we are up against less and less options. It is harder to get people into the private sector, there's hardly any mid-market rent at the moment. I think in terms of where we were 5 years ago, it is much harder."*

### Demand for Social Homes

The demand for affordable homes was highlighted through East Lothian Council staff speaking of their experiences and the size of the housing list.

Staff cited instances where *"there are 300 people waiting"* for a single property.

### Impact of wait-times for housing

The increased wait for social homes due to demand was highlighted as impacting wellbeing for tenants and staff.

Those working within East Lothian Council's housing service spoke of the pressures felt.

*"every day I'm dealing with calls saying 'when am I getting moved'".*

### Cost

Rent can vary between providers. East Lothian Council rent remain the lowest in Scotland. This can create a high demand for East Lothian Council properties.

*"People don't want to go to other housing if they can pay [£]300 instead of [£]500".*

There was also recognition that the higher rents in the private rented sector contribute to increased demand.

## Key Issue: Lack of smaller and larger affordable homes

### Lack of smaller homes:

There was concern around the demand for one-bedroom properties. This was thought to have an impact on those living in temporary accommodation, with homeless applicants most likely single person households.

*“Better accommodation for single people to reduce the number of stays in B&Bs”.*

*“Unfortunately there’s a real lack of one and two bedroom homes”*

*“More 1 bedroomed flats for young single adults to move out of family homes”*

### Lack of larger homes:

It was also highlighted that there is a lack of larger homes which are affordable in East Lothian. Those working in the Housing Service and residents spoke of the impact this had.

*“Homes for larger families are desperately needed. We are a family of 7 in a 3-bedroom house with one bathroom between us.”*

*“Larger families need social housing too! My family and many more are stuck in properties unsuitable for their need but are not able to buy or afford private rent.”*

## Key Issue: Supply vs demand for Affordable Homes Across East Lothian

### Demand for Homes in the West of the County

Location of property was seen as a vital factor in the supply of homes across the various workshops and consultations held. It was felt that due to location of services and its proximity to Edinburgh homes in the West of the county, particularly Musselburgh are in high demand.

An employee in Housing stated that, at the time of research (June 2022), *“400 people are waiting on a 1 bed in Musselburgh”.*

*“Historically East Lothian Council housing quality is a lot better than in Edinburgh which means that pressure is reflected in Musselburgh”.*

### Rural Housing

As shown in the rural survey, there was seen to be a need for affordable housing in rural areas. However, those within the housing service highlighted that demand in rural areas can be low due to perceived isolation and lack of connection to services.

*“A lot of people want to live in the west of the county as it is easier to travel to Edinburgh and has more amenities – whereas putting someone in North Berwick can feel like they are putting them in the back of beyond.”*



## Summary of Key Challenges

High cost of homes making buying a property in the county unattainable for some groups.

Demand for affordable homes outstripping supply.

Lack of affordable housing options.

Lack of smaller and larger affordable homes

High demand in the West of the county and a lack of affordable options in the rural East.

# Cost of living and warm homes

Engagement took place as the cost-of-living crisis and the increasing energy costs were forefront of news and political discussion. The impact that the increasing cost was having on individuals was discussed by services who support people as well as the individuals themselves. Those living in homes in poor conditions are more likely to be from vulnerable groups and were most effected by increasing energy cost.

## Key Issue: Impact of the energy crisis

The cost-of-living crisis was having significant impacts across East Lothian at the time research (2022). People spoke of difficulties in paying essential bills and the steps they had to take to be afford essential housing and fuel cost. Whilst the cost-of-living crisis has effects for everyone, some are more vulnerable.

People mentioned that the cost of living had caused them stress and anxiety. Some young people mentioned that they were worried about their household being able to afford rising bills.

It was highlighted that people are changing their habits due to increased energy costs. This included going on less or no holdings, turning on heating less and skipping meals.

*"I am very concerned about winter. I need to get another job to pay for the increases".*

*"I try not to put the heating on unless I desperately need to. I also try not to use unnecessary electricity so I will switch appliances off at the mains if I can, try not to put lights on, find ways of passing time than don't involve using electricity. I have noticed despite all of this that my smart meter shows a higher daily usage price than it used to, so I am very concerned."*

## Key Issue: Vulnerable groups

Whilst the cost-of-living crisis has effects for everyone, some are more vulnerable.

### Older People

Engagement sessions within the Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership highlighted that pensioners are worried because their pension income is not rising in line with rising costs for food and heating.

The older people's engagement session also had discussions around how people aged 65 and over often live in older, less energy efficient homes, whilst this demographic also requires warmer homes.

### Those with medical conditions/disabilities

Likewise, the Occupational Therapist (OT) team highlighted that people with disabilities often do require more heat and that their heating sometimes needs to be monitored. Alongside this, and the need for more smart technology, these requirements result in additional expenses people may not be able to afford with rising costs.

One participant shared that due to the cost of energy they restrict the use of their machinal bed, necessary for mobility issues.

## Key Issue: Quality of housing

Some respondents spoke of the quality of their homes, particularly those which are private rented, and the impact this has on the ability to hold heat.

One person attending East Lothian Works English lessons mentioned that they have had issues with their windows which has yet to be appropriately attended to, which has resulted their flat being very cold.

## Key Challenges

Increasing cost of energy.

Cost of energy crisis impacts vulnerable groups including older people and those with medical conditions.

People having to limit energy use- including that of necessary medical equipment

Housing condition impacting a home's ability to keep heat.

# Amenity spaces and facilities

## Benefits of green space and private gardens

The importance of green space was mentioned. This was particularly relevant in workshops and engagement around mental health, disabilities and dementia. The Dementia Consultation Workshop also discussed the benefits of community gardens and allotments to give people the possibility to connect with the community.

*“gardens are such a vital part of providing autonomy and improving wellbeing.”*

*“the garden here is my safe space.”*

*“I don’t have a garden, I hate it.”*

## Access to Amenities

Ensuring access and growth of services in line with development was a key priority for residents.

People spoke of challenges when accessing services such as GPs, Dentists, and public transport. It was also highlighted that access to these amenities varies across the county.

Whilst amenities are out with the influence of the LHS, data gathered in consultation was passed on to relevant services.

## Services and Community groups for vulnerable people

Community facilities and services are also important to enable people access to support when needed. One Occupational Therapist explained that people who are unable to access local amenities or good reliable transport can become isolated. While another stated that *“people want to be closer to communities”*.

Facilities and services can range from community centres, for general socialising and minimising isolation, to GP practices and rehabilitation facilities. Services like the Ridge in Dunbar were considered to be a great way to support people who use or are recovering from drugs. The general need for more support services were mentioned in the stakeholder workshop and by people with lived experience.

The dementia workshop highlighted that people need community support and hubs where people with dementia can tell their stories.

Support services such as ‘shared lives’ were deemed as crucial as they allow people to remain within their communities whilst dealing with their mental health condition. Likewise, people accessing ‘Stepping Out’ said that they would be lost without this service and one person said they would have lost their tenancy without Stepping Out.

# Homelessness

Homelessness is a critical challenge in East Lothian, worsened by recent events including Covid-19, the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis. To ensure an accurate picture of homelessness in East Lothian was included in the LHS specific engagement was delivered for people who worked within the service and those who had or were experiencing homelessness.

## Emergency and Temporary accommodation

### Challenges living in Emergency Accommodation

There was also concern that B&Bs do not provide full kitchen facilities which forces people to use non-cook food bank parcels that only require a kettle, which is often a pot noodle.

From a health point of view, it was mentioned that it is difficult to sign up to a GP when provided with a temporary address. This may have an impact upon young girls and women who may need women's health services, but also upon people who face mental health issues and substance users who require fast and reliable prescription services.

*"I was homeless before – then I was in a cabin – I lived off microwave meals for 6 months – it was quite unhealthy and I would go two days at a time without any food. Now I eat chippies and still skip meals. The B&B provides a proper breakfast [they put bacon in the fridge] in the shared kitchen."*

### Key Challenges: Gender and temporary accommodation

The gender-based violence workshop mentioned that temporary accommodation, especially over a long-term period, can become very traumatising and further worsen the mental state of those who have already experienced trauma/impactful events.

As the Housing Options Team and the Prevention Team highlighted, however, there is not sufficient temporary and permanent one-bedroom properties to house people who experience homelessness in East Lothian. This also results in women being housed inappropriately at times.

*"...if we have a female who's had a traumatic experience and doesn't want to share with males, we will try our best to do that. We do try to give it 100% to help people but if we don't have the accommodation we can't."*

### Key Challenge: Need for specialist accommodation

The need for specialist refuge spaces for LGBT+ individuals and sex workers was highlighted. For sex workers, it was mentioned that they often cannot work when living in a refuge, resulting in a loss in income. For those identifying as LGBT+, some may be okay to access universal services and homeless accommodation, whilst others may require LGBT+ specific services. Overall, a trauma-informed and gendered perspective is needed when offering services and accommodation.

*"Specialist spaces should have enough services to ensure they can live their lives how they wish".*

## Key Challenge: Supported Accommodation for young people

There is consensus across different teams that there is a lack housing in general, meaning young people are waiting for long periods of time. In addition, there is a perceived shortage in the amount of supported accommodation that is available.

Young people experiencing homelessness usually present with nothing and have to suddenly learn to budget on a Universal Credit income to at least cover food. Supported accommodation is seen as necessary as many young people do not have the necessary skills to sustain a tenancy.

*“There is not enough supported accommodation options for young people that need housing but don’t have the experience.*

*“Young homeless people are getting next to no support at all. Especially with making their home – I mean some wouldn’t even be able to reach their meter if they don’t have steps.”*

## Prevention homelessness

Housing education was felt to be key to tackling youth homelessness. Different housing teams suggested officers attend schools and provide information on housing options, the realities of homelessness and skills, such as budgeting. One officer suggested creating a one-stop-shop for Young People which looks at the whole picture such as budgeting, education/employment, managing a tenancy, etc., as well as housing to create more positive outcomes, prevent homelessness or repeat homelessness.

## Preventing homelessness within the social sector through tenancy support

### Key Challenge: Increased demand for tenancy support

Tenancy support is a vital service within the East Lothian Council's Community Housing and Homelessness Teams, supporting tenants to safeguard their tenancy and providing vital life skills.

The role of a tenancy support officer varies with support being provide. It was highlighted that people are often referred to tenancy support for a specific issue. However, after working with a person further vulnerabilities and support needs can be found.

It was felt that the need for tenancy support has increased. Some associated this with the impact Covid has had on mental wellbeing. Some also felt that the high demand for other specialist services and long wait times has had a knock-on effect to the service.

The increased demand for the service has led to staff pressures and challenges on capacity.

*"For the most part it is people who are just vulnerable. There isn't one person who has not got a number of vulnerabilities. So we may get one referral just for rent arrears but then we will find there are loads and loads of additional issues."*

*"People's vulnerabilities and the number with vulnerabilities has grown but the number of tenancy support officers has not and the number of services has not."*

*"There's points [where] we are running with 40 cases which is too many."*

*"We're always over-capacity and the door is never closed."*

### Key Challenge: Support for Young People

It was highlighted that young people are likely to experience challenges and require support when moving into a new home. Many young people have yet been able to gain necessary skills for managing a home. It was also added that moving into a new home can be isolating for a young people, impact mental health and wellbeing.

*"It is difficult for them to set up all the utilities, rent and create a budget plan and to know about all of the bills like council tax."*

*"The only support I wish I had was for loneliness. Mental health and support network would definitely be needed. Support worker from here [New Horizons] or someone checking in. When I grew up, I was in a house with 6 kids, then you're moving in with 12 people and then being on your own. It's really hard. I struggled financially, keeping on top of your bills. I was 19, I wasn't ready for all the bills you needed to pay. I feel like there should be a bit more. I got put into a lot of debt. When you're younger, you are just wanting to party all the time or be with your friends but you need to prioritise your bills. You need to become a young adult."*

## Trauma Informed Practice

The experiences people have had affects how they are able to respond to communication and experiences within services. Being able to respond effectively to this, by taking account of how the experience of trauma may affect behaviour can lead to positive outcomes. The practice of this is referred to as 'Trauma informed practice'.

Some highlighted that there is a need trauma informed practice training for tenancy support officers to pick up on substance misuse and domestic abuse, and also understand interrelation of these two.

Similar was discussed in the gender-based violence workshop, with tenancy support seen as crucial to help identify racial, gender and sexual discrimination, as well as violence and abuse. It was noted that whilst some people may be okay with receiving universal support, others may wish for support services that are more tailored to their needs and identity, such as LGBT+ specific services.

## Key Challenges

Impact of living in emergency accomodation on wellbeing and health.

Risk assoicated with mixed gender temporary accomodation.

High demand for supported accomodation for young people.

Need to meet the temporary housing needs of those indentifyinmg as LGBTQIA.

High tenancy support needs for youong people.

Increased demand for tanancy support.



# Health and Housing

Health and Housing are critically linked. Providing warm, affordable housing is one of the key steps towards tackling health inequalities. The impact housing can have on health was discussed throughout engagement with the public. Specific engagement on health and housing was also delivered. A themed survey was published alongside colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and workshops were held for colleagues within Occupational Therapy and the Acute Hospital team. This section will cover main themes discussed, including adapting homes to meet health needs and the impact of delayed discharges.

## Adaptions

Adaptation can vary from ‘basic adaptations’ such as level entrances, widened doors and wet floor showers to reinforced flooring and the installation of smart appliances.

### Key Challenge: Cost Challenges across tenure

Although adaptations should be tenure neutral this is not the case, with each tenure facing their own difficulties. The OT and Acute Hospital staff workshop highlighted that:

- Homeowners need to apply for a grant which may not cover all costs.
- Private renters may face difficulties getting consent from their landlord.
- Housing associations have a yearly budget allocated to adaptations and when this runs out no more are approved.

It was highlighted that cost of adaptions across all tenure have increased due to raising material costs. This means that cost challenges faced with adaptions will likely increase.

### Key Challenge Adaptions for children/young people

In terms of children, the OT workshop highlighted that they may require additional space and that as they grow older their needs may change. The conversion of garages into bedrooms for children may be appropriate when they’re at a younger age but garages soon become too small for children with disabilities. Likewise, OT’s highlighted that many families do not wish to face the fact that their child will be moving away from home at some point, resulting in insufficient time to assess a young disabled adult’s housing needs.

### Key Challenge Covid-19 Backlogs

There was recognition at the older people’s housing workshop that adaptations are not a “quick fix”, with assessments taking time to do. In addition, the repercussions of Covid were still being felt in terms of backlogs.

## Key Challenge Age of Stock

It was noted that some of the old stock will never be fully adaptable because of location and bathroom sizes.

Some new build homes still do not offer fully levelled entrances or wide enough corridors and door for wheelchairs. Storage space was also highlighted as lacking throughout properties, with some disabled people requiring a full additional room to store all their necessary equipment.

## Delayed Discharge

### Key Challenge: Impact of delayed discharge

There have been a number of delays in moving people out of hospital into appropriate housing since the pandemic. It was felt that delayed discharge has increased recently due to the lack of carers available to conduct care at home and a backlog in carrying out adaptations in people's homes. There is also a lack of OTs to make timely assessments.

*"Sometimes waiting times are so long that a person's function further deteriorates and their needs have changed by the time they get the package".*

### Suggested Changes

A step-down model was suggested, where short term respite is provided or where people can go home over the weekend and learn to gradually transition back to home life. Ideally, clients should be independent before leaving the ward, but due to understaffing this has been difficult to enforce. The following suggestions were made:

- Provision of a service following discharge- provide new equipment, fit and asses, asses in exiting home.
- People should be supported with rehab at home from the day of discharge.
- Review eligibility criteria. There is a massive group of people not assessed by the team.
- Extra support- it would be good if it could be expanded to more people. Helps with confidence levels and reduces anxieties by offering just a

## Aging Population

### Key Challenge: Choice in housing models

It was felt there was a need for choice and control with a mix of suitable housing and adaptations available for older people.

*“There needs to be a balance and variety within the housing estate to suit all needs”.*

The use of core and cluster for older residents was also discussed. It was felt that it is a positive model as residents *“only ask for assistance when it is needed”*. In addition, benefits were seen by participants in terms of efficiencies and staff ratios.

Staffing issues were seen as a barrier to provision. Two participants had concerns around issues matching appropriate tenants once the initial tenants move on and there are vacancies.

### Key Challenge: providing health packages

It was felt that the geography of East Lothian has an impact upon service provision.

One participant felt that provision *“adversely affects those living in rural areas”* and it was believed that there is a need to make rural community councils aware of resources and link up with other community councils in different rural areas.

*“It is difficult to convince providers to provide 6-hour care package in small towns when they can do 12 hours in larger area”.*

There was awareness that the issues around carer vacancies is a national one.

## Mental Health

### Key Challenge: Increase Demand

A participant from the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) discussed the fact that some staff do not understand how mental health can impact a person and the lack of capacity a person can experience when having a period of poor mental health.

As a result of increased cases involving mental health issues, more people are seeking a move to other accommodation which has led to people going to housing panels as discussed in the rehousing panel section.

One member of the community housing team stated,

*"We are seeing an increase in mental health needs being brought to re-housing panels."*

### Key Challenge: Impact of Covid

It was widely felt that the Covid-19 pandemic had a negative mental effect on society and has changed people's lives. Many staff on the front line have commented that they have seen an increase in tenants/cases they've worked with since the Covid-19 pandemic who have mental health problems or mental illness. Officers explained:

*"People have more complex mental health issues."*

*"Councillor enquiries have massively increased in the last two and a half years-particularly in cases citing poor mental health."*

### Key Challenge: Access to Services

It was noted that there can be challenges faced when accessing mental health services.

The majority of specialist services are found within the West of the county, making it difficult for those in the East to access.

Due to the increase demand, and back-log from Covid, there are long wait time for services.

## Veterans

### Awareness of housing options

Many Veterans also have a lack of knowledge around housing options and tenancy sustainment as they did not have to concern themselves with such issues when accommodation was supplied to them by the military. Likewise, housing applications are often not accessible enough for Veterans (for example to those who have digital illiteracy or visual impairment) and they may also need additional support to apply for welfare.

### Community Support

It was highlighted that most Veterans have PTSD and that good integration within the community is crucial. Whilst Veterans should be living close to other Veterans to have a safety net, a high concentration of Veterans can lead to Veterans sticking together, isolating themselves from their local community and civil life.

### Specialist housing

During the workshop with stakeholders, Veterans discussed other Veterans who are really struggling and one stakeholder estimated that about 3-5% of Veterans need more intensive support in terms of housing adaptations, physical, mental and social care.


Challenges in terms of housing arise when specialist housing is required as there are insufficient numbers of adaptable homes. Furthermore, families are prioritised which makes it harder for single Veterans to receive housing.

## Key challenges


Increasing cost of adaptations	Adapting older homes.	Changing needs of disabled young people.
Small increase in the number of delayed discharges.	Backlog created by Covid for OTs increasing delayed discharges.	Impact of independence due to delayed discharges.
Increasing need for various housing options for older people.	Difficulty in providing health packages, particularly in rural areas.	Impact of Covid on mental health.
Lack of mental health provisions.	Community support for veterans.	Lack of specialist provision for veterans.

# Key Findings from 2023 Consultation on Draft LHS 2024-2029

# Draft LHS Consultation Survey



**73%** were homeowners.



**61%** were female.

**44 total responses**

Respondents were most likely to live in North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership.

Most were interested in the LHS as they live in East Lothian. Some also worked in the area or were in community groups.

Respondents were most likely 45-55 and 55-64.

No respondents were aged over 75.

**75% of respondents agreed with our Strategic Vision that:**

**“People in East Lothian have access to warm, high quality, affordable homes which meet their needs and enables them to live in communities with the support and services they require”.**

**We asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with the priority outcomes in the LHS.**

88% agreed.	77% agreed.	77% agreed.	72% agreed.	72% agreed.
<p><b>Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.</b></p>	<p><b>Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households.</b></p>	<p><b>Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided.</b></p>	<p><b>Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.</b></p>	<p><b>All homes are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting climate change targets.</b></p>



## Connected and Vibrant Communities

75% of responses agreed with the consulted actions which support the priority outcome for communities.

86% of respondents agreed we should “build upon existing community links”.

77% agreed a Local Investment Framework should be developed.

75% agreed that area-based regeneration should be maximised.

72% agreed with the action to support PRS landlords.

## Housing Supply and Affordability

66% of responses agreed with the consulted actions which support the priority outcome for housing supply and affordability.

90% agreed an empty homes strategy should be developed

80% agreed we should look into innovative methods for delivery.

72% agreed we should explore the rural housing fund.

68% agreed that short-term lets should be monitored.

66% agreed that the supply of Mid-Market homes should be increased.



## Preventing and responding to homelessness

66% of responses agreed with the consulted actions which support the priority outcome for preventing and responding to homelessness.

75% of respondents agreed training and awareness for staff when embedding the duty to ‘Ask and Act’.

70% agreed we should roll out housing workshops.

65% agreed we should explore flat sharing.

61% agreed we should re-designate tenancies.

59% of respondents agreed we should take a gendered approach to prevention.

## Suitable housing and support

76% of responses agreed with the consulted actions which support the priority outcome for suitable housing and support.

88% agreed that an 'Equally Safe Housing Policy' should be developed in East Lothian.

79% agreed that 10% of the total supply of new affordable housing being wheelchair accessible.

79% agreed that mechanisms should be established, through LDP2, to ensure a target of 5% of new build market housing is built to wheelchair accessible standards.

79% agreed that 200 units of affordable housing for older people should be developed.

79% agreed that core and cluster housing should be developed.

79% agreed that core and cluster housing should be developed.

## High Quality and Sustainable homes

Just under 80% of responses agreed with the consulted actions which support the priority outcome for high quality and suitable homes.

84% agreed with the action to update affordable housing specification and design guide.

84% agreed that a mixed block policy should be developed.

79% agreed that areas vulnerable to climate change should be identified.

79% agreed with the action to engage with local colleges on skills and training.

77% agreed that knowledge on private stock should be improved.

75% agreed with the action around training and development for private landlords.

Comments from individuals were read and themes were identified. Where possible themes were related to existing sections and actions of the Draft LHS. Comments with several themes were split and matched with the relevant themes. Comments and themes were then summarised and responded to as shown in the table below. Formal responses to partner feedback can be found here.

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<b>Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.</b>		
In relation to Blindwells: It needs a community hub And additional path connection to Macmerry should be formed (Winton Loan and Greendykes Road) Concerns about the quality of housing and the location were made Local community groups are important	<p>– 3) The direction of development and land uses at Blindwells are not within the powers of Housing Services but rest with the Planning Authority. The development of pathways is coordinated by Sport, Countryside &amp; Leisure. However, landownership consent would be required in the first instance which can make development of new paths very challenging. Comments and concerns will be forwarded to relevant services such as Planning and Sport, Countryside &amp; Leisure</p> <p>4) The Local Housing Strategy recognises the importance of local community groups, and residents as a whole in the development of strategic sites. Partners such as East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel will be key to ensuring that the local community can continue to feed into the ongoing development of Blindwells, especially for those already living there. The Local Housing Strategy recognises the “need to work alongside communities and other partners to deliver services differently.” We are supportive of any attempt to introduce community groups to Blindwells recognising the good that this can do for a community.</p>	No
A feeling of isolation within communities	We acknowledge the need to reduce the feeling of isolation within communities and the need to connect existing and new communities. We will continue to engage with residents, communities, and organisations to tackle social isolation and create connections between communities.	No
Important to connect new with existing communities	The LHS recognises this as a key concern, one of the priority outcomes is that “Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected”.	No
Increase in ASB	We acknowledge that there has been an increase of perceived ASB since the COVID-19 pandemic. Action 1.6 supports the review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.	No
Regarding Action 1.1 on the Local Investment Framework concerns were	Engagement and Consultation with local communities is of the highest importance for the development of the Local Investment Framework.	No

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<p>raised about including the voices of individual who don't or can't engage.</p>	<p>We will use the learning and development work from the Engagement and Consultation of this LHS, where we spoke to over 1,000 people, to ensure that we have similar results for the Local Investment Framework. We will continue to expand our network and are open to suggestions and ways to involve residents and communities. This is reflected in Action 1.2.</p>	
<p>Housing development is not supported due to the lack of infrastructure developed alongside. Infrastructure is not delivered proportionally to the number of homes being delivered. The prioritisation of infrastructure is demanded. Scottish Water and Scottish Power are mentioned alongside schools, dentists, doctors, adequate access roads, recycling centres.</p>	<p>The LHS is committed to creating diverse and vibrant communities; enabling a sense of belonging, being safe and economically secure, access local services, and opportunities and to enhance their life chances while remaining resilient in the face of difficulties.</p> <p>Aligning the LHS with other council strategies like the Open Space Strategy, the Local Development Plan 2, and the East Lothian Play Policy; we will ensure that the surrounding environment such as open spaces and good transport connections are a key priority in East Lothian.</p> <p>Ultimately decisions around granting planning application for sites and whether there is sufficient infrastructure to support them are the responsibility of the planning authority. The Housing Strategy Team acknowledges a place-based approach and will input into the upcoming Local Development Plan to ensure the Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan align.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>No housing development should take place in areas prone to flooding and where housing is delivered on farmland or greenbelts.</p>	<p>The responsibility of allocating housing sites lies with the Planning Authority who carry out extensive research on the feasibility and viability of sites prior to allocating site. We encourage early engagement during the preparation of the upcoming Local Development Plan Sites. Concerns raised within this public consultation will be forwarded to the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority engages with East Lothian's Flood Protection Service and SEPA, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, on development and flood risk.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>No mention of 20min neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>The LHS does mention 20minute neighbourhoods as part of the National Context in 1.1. However, more details will be added to how the 20minute neighbourhoods are considered locally through the LHS.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households in East Lothian.		
<p>The Council's Void Policy should be reviewed:</p> <p>That the policy should be an empty home and not a void policy.</p> <p>That the long void periods should be addressed. It was questioned why voids are 6-9months for council homes when they are only 14 days in the private rented sector. It was also suggested that there are over 100 empty homes at any given time.</p> <p>That homes should be let even if not fully 'finalised' and works should be carried out with the sitting in tenant.</p> <p>There should be a focus and priority on turning properties around. Voids have been an issue for a long time and has significant impacts on homelessness.</p>	<p>Comments in relation to empty/vacant homes, second homes, short term lets and voids, point towards a need to clarify terms:</p> <p>Empty or Vacant Home – A home which is nobody's sole residence. It is not lived in at all or lived in for less than 25 days a year. If a home is empty for more than 6 months, it is considered long term empty.</p> <p>Second Home – A home which is nobody's sole residence. It is lived in for at least 25 days during any 12 months. A second home is furnished.</p> <p>Short Term Lets - A Short Term Let (STL) is a dwelling used by persons other than the owner for short periods and for financial or other remuneration. Typically, these properties are advertised as being available for holiday let, although it can apply to other situations.</p> <p>Void – The LHS refers to void regarding their own Council stock properties. A void property is a property which lies empty between tenancies.</p> <p>The draft LHS suggests that a council property was void for 66.2 days (just over 2 months) on average in 2021/22. The void periods increased due to a variety of local and national circumstances; backlogs created through Covid-19 restrictions, material, and staff shortages, as well as increased requirements to adapt and extend housing prior to re-letting.</p> <p>Action 2.3. seeks to address the voids procedure and processes to reduce the length of time properties are void.</p> <p>East Lothian Council cannot comment on the average re-letting times for the private rented sector. However, housing standards for social rented properties are higher than those for private rented properties. Enforcement by the Scottish Housing Regulator are also stricter; therefore, East Lothian Council must ensure that all standard requirements are met before re-letting a property.</p>	

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
	<p>Social landlords must make sure that the homes they let meet the Tolerable Standard in addition to other aspects of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. Letting out unfinished properties would risk renting out homes that breach these standards. There may also be a health and safety risk from having tenants living in a property while ongoing works are carried out.</p> <p>Action 2.3 commits to carrying out a review of the Council's Void Policy.</p>	
<p>Allocation policy should focus on most vulnerable households and ensure that the council meets statutory duties.</p>	<p>The number of allocations to homeless applicants have increased significantly in the past few years. In 2020/21, just under half of all allocations were made to homeless households. A review of the allocations policy is an action within the LHS, the review will give due regard to the most vulnerable households within East Lothian and will assist the Council to meet statutory duties.</p>	No
<p>In relation to Mid-Market Rent: More Mid-Market Rented properties are needed. MMR should be true mid-market and not slightly under LHA</p>	<p>1. Action 2.4 seeks to increase the supply of mid-market housing. There are currently four providers of MMR housing in East Lothian providing a total of 301 properties.</p> <p>2. East Lothian Council seeks to ensure that MMR homes provided in East Lothian are affordable. However, rents must also ensure that properties can be managed and maintained to a high standard. ELC works closely with MMR providers to ensure that the needs of residents are met. Current MMR rents are set at a rate between 80-85% of the LHA providing a more affordable option that the PRS for many looking to rent.</p>	No
<p>Following housing types should be provided: Single bedroom properties Bungalows and cottages too many developments of 4/5beds with 3 bathrooms. A better mixing of sizes on sites is required More homes for larger families Housing for young people</p>	<p>As part of sustainable living, local residents need to have choice and opportunities to find affordable homes where they would like to live. The LHS recognises that a mixture of different tenures, i.e. homeownership, private and social rented homes; is crucial to widen such opportunities.</p> <p>Action 1.1 seeks to prepare a Local Investment Framework with communities, building upon Area Plans, to direct strategic investment to deliver homes to ensure a balanced mix of house types and sizes across all areas to meet local needs.</p>	No

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Need to build affordable housing: In rural areas Supplying 1 bed properties Larger properties Avoiding big developments	As part of sustainable living, local residents need to have choice and opportunities to find affordable homes where they would like to live. The LHS recognises that a mixture of different tenures, i.e., homeownership, private and social rented homes; is crucial to widen such opportunities.  Action 1.1 seeks to prepare a Local Investment Framework with communities, building upon Area Plans, to direct strategic investment to deliver homes to ensure a balanced mix of house types and sizes across all areas to meet local needs.	No
Need to build more council homes.	Action 2.1. seeks to deliver 891 affordable homes over the period of the LHS. Where viable, East Lothian Council will always seek to maximise the number of social rented homes.	No
The LHS has not considered the role which private housing development provides.	The LHS acknowledges the role private housing development plays in East Lothian in Section 2.7 of the Strategy: 'East Lothian is dependent on the supply of market housing, and land use policies to supply affordable housing.'	No.
The need for affordable homeownership was also mentioned a few times.	Action 2.5 seeks to Continue to monitor the viability of delivering affordable home ownership options within East Lothian including investigating whether schemes such as OMSE and NSSE can be more widely utilised.	No
Need for homes with affordable rent for young people.	The draft LHS acknowledge the high rental values in East Lothian. Various Actions in the LHS such as increasing the supply of housing (2.1), monitoring short term lets (2.11), and preparing a built to rent strategy (2.7) have been established to improve rent affordability in East Lothian.	No
Landlords are leaving the private rented sector. More support is required to keep this already small tenure in East Lothian.	East Lothian Council does not have control over UK and Scottish Government legislation on the private rented sector. Numbers of landlords within the PRS have remained stable in recent months, there is no evidence of a significant decline. Numbers are monitored on a monthly basis through landlord registration data. Although numbers have remained stable, the proportion of homes within the PRS has declined relative to other tenures, suggesting that the sector is stagnating.  Action 1.3 in the Draft LHS seeks to support both private landlords and tenants to solidify the private rented sector role in East Lothian.	No

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Enquiry about delivering housing with Housing Associations and whether Housing Association can buy properties back on behalf of the council.	<p>East Lothian Housing Services have good working relationships with Housing Associations active in East Lothian. East Lothian Housing Services collaborate with Housing Associations regarding the delivery of affordable housing in East Lothian.</p> <p>Associations and Registered Social Landlords (RSL) can buy properties from the open market, known as open market acquisition. Such decisions are made by each RSL based on their business plan. Such decisions are not within the control of East Lothian Council.</p>	No
Developers should increase their contribution during the house building process and commuted sums should be updated.	Developer contributions are set by the Local Planning Authority. Housing Services do not have regulatory powers to demand such contributions. Housing Services do engage with the Local Planning Authority highlighting existing need and demand in East Lothian and inform the Local Planning Authority on the Housing Supply Target Housing Services set regarding affordable housing. Housing Services do not have the powers to establish other infrastructure needs which come with housing developments.	No
In relation to Action 2.6 on the Rural Fund. Reference was made to the Scottish Parliament consultations in relation to rural areas. Any changes introduced should be reflected within the LHS. Rural development requires investment in roads and infrastructure.	Housing Services follow any legislative and strategic change introduced by UK and Scottish Government. Any additional changes in legislation brought in after the LHS is finalised are considered during the annual update review the LHS. We recognise the need for infrastructure to be developed alongside housing developments. The infrastructure needs alongside housing are established by the Local Development Plan and the Planning Authority and cannot be established within the Local Housing Strategy.	No
In relation to Action 2.6, the renewing of East Lothian Affordable Housing Supplement Planning Guidance the LDP should be influenced in different ways. Ensure Planning guidance is enforceable.	Housing Strategy engage and collaborate with Planning Authorities as much as possible to ensure that the housing needs are reflected within the LDP. Such collaboration are in relation to Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance, Short Term Lets, and accessible housing.	No
Can the council buy homes from the open market and the council should build on council owned land.	The Council utilize Open Market Acquisitions to purchase homes on the open market. Between 2018-23, East Lothian Council purchased 100	No



Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
	<p>properties on the open market and brought them back into council stock.</p> <p>East Lothian Council owns few sites for housing development in East Lothian. Those that are in Council ownership, and considered as appropriate for housing development, such as Herdmanflat in Haddington, have been earmarked for future housing provision.</p>	
<p>The council shouldn't be forced to build by Scottish Government.</p>	<p>The Scottish Government recognises that there is a housing need across Scotland. Scottish Government's Housing Strategy, Housing to 2040, seeks to deliver 100,000 affordable homes across Scotland until 2031/32.</p> <p>To deliver affordable housing, national and local governments rely on private housing development in the first instance to enable the delivery of affordable housing through developer contributions.</p> <p>The National Planning Framework 4 established that the minimum all tenure (social and private) to be delivered in East Lothian for the upcoming 10-year period should be 6,500 homes. This is to ensure that East Lothian can meet its existing all tenure housing needs.</p> <p>Based on the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, the Housing Supply Target has been set to deliver 1,470 affordable homes between 2023 and 2028. To enable this target, a number of private housing developments need to be delivered.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>In terms of innovative delivery the promotion of shared living and intergenerational living was mentioned.</p>	<p>Officers have attended workshops on inter-generational living. This will now be included as an action within the LHS as the Council looks to find innovative ways to better utilize the region's housing stock.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Taxing second homes is a solution to the challenges the housing system faces: Engagement with homeowners should be considered. One comment added that such taxing will only deter a small proportion of second homeowners.</p>	<p>The LHS supports engagement with homeowners regarding second homes and other housing related matters.</p> <p>Fiscal policies may not deter all persons but have the potential to introduce some shifts in economy and investment. According to the Scottish Government 'Nationally the aim is to encourage more residential accommodation to be used as homes for living in and for these to be occupied for more of the time.' Locally the LHS seeks to maximise the supply of affordable housing. The taxation of second homes is considered as one of many means to maximise this supply.</p>	<p>No</p>

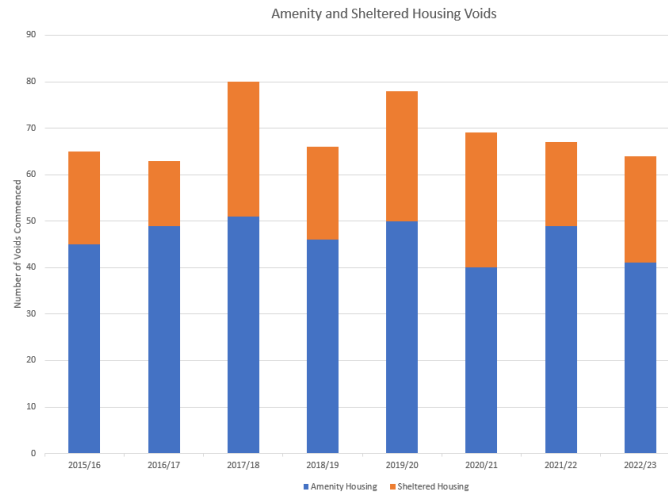
Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Empty homes are a problem and should be filled quicker.	Action 2.9 seeks to develop an Empty Homes Strategy and we will continue to work with the Scottish Government to maximise opportunities regarding any funding to bring back empty homes.	No
Regarding Short Term Lets and Second homes within the Empty Homes Strategy; using planning conditions should be imposed on new build developments for the use of primary residence only.	The regulation of Short Term Lets lies with the Planning Authority and East Lothian Licensing Services. Housing Strategy support the Planning Policy team by carrying out research around the impacts of short term lets on communities. Action 2.10 reflects this and an evidence paper on short term let control areas will be prepared by Planning Policy in collaboration with Housing and Economic Development in 2024.	No
<p>Challenges and solutions to Short Term Lets:</p> <p>Adverse impact on community and economy, quality of life</p> <p>Economic benefits of STL for local businesses and employment</p> <p>STL contribute towards homelessness numbers</p> <p>Shifting STL to long-term letting</p> <p>Need for control areas in North Berwick</p> <p>STL not being owned by local residents</p> <p>Displacement of STL from Edinburgh to East Lothian</p> <p>Create stronger stance on STL rather than just 'monitoring' the situation</p>	<p>The LHS recognises that in some cases there are benefits to STLs and any position taken will look at the economic benefits for the tourism sector, short term accommodation for seasonal workers and the need for housing.</p> <p>Housing Services/the LHS support the long-term letting of properties where possible. Influencing who purchases individual properties is beyond the scope and cannot be controlled by the LHS and ELC.</p> <p>It is important that any stance ELC take is robust and credible. Therefore, monitoring and collecting data to properly evidence any pressures will be central to any decisions that are made.</p> <p>The introduction of licensing from October 2023 will allow the Council to obtain a more complete picture of the make-up of STLs within the county and inform any decision making. Ultimately the powers to introduce policies regarding STL lies with the Planning Authority.</p> <p>Housing Services will support the Planning Authority in evidencing any need, in accordance with Action 2.11</p> <p>The LHS recognises that a large proportion of STLs are within NBC. Musselburgh and other areas in the west of the county currently have relatively low levels of STLs. This suggests that there is little in the way of displacement from Edinburgh to East Lothian and that STL purchase decisions are made on the attractiveness of East Lothian as a destination rather than its proximity to Edinburgh.</p> <p>Action 2.11 will allow us to monitor the situation.</p>	

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided.		
<p>Regarding proposed Action 3.1. and taking a gendered approach. Supporting comments:</p> <p>To look at gender budgeting and available data</p> <p>More training for staff, particularly Housing Officers is required regarding tenants who have experienced gender-based violence.</p> <p>Considering elderly women in private housing</p> <p>This approach is essential to protect women and families escaping domestic abuse, location of relocation and access to support must be considered</p> <p>Women are less likely to have been considered in wider policy landscape and caring responsibilities should be considered during housing application process. They are less likely to be single homeless applicants due to caring for children.</p> <p>Against actions:</p> <p>Concerns around housing transgender people</p> <p>This should not be a priority.</p> <p>66% of single homeless applications are from single males. No gendered approach is taken to addressing homelessness.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy Team will work with the Corporate Policy and Performance Team to find further information and data on gender budgeting.</p> <p>Regular training for Housing Officers is available. A new trauma informed learning module for all council staff was recently published and is now compulsory for all housing staff. Violence Against Women and Girls: Spotlight on Domestic Abuse is also compulsory for all housing staff. We will continue to explore further training opportunities for Housing Staff.</p> <p>The LHS recognises that women have a longer life expectancy, experiencing multiple health issues as they navigate older age. The LHS also recognises that older people are more likely to live in privately owned homes. Care and Repair East Lothian is an existing service which supports older private homeowners regarding repairs and home adaptations.</p> <p>East Lothian Council Housing Services work closely with organisations such as Women’s Aid Mid and East Lothian to protect and support women subjected to domestic abuse. We agree with this statement. To ensure women have been considered within the LHS a gendered approach was taken.</p> <p>By ensuring a Gendered Analysis approach was conducted throughout the research and writing stages, the LHS shows a commitment to ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality issues are adequately addressed.</li> <li>• Targeted approaches can be developed.</li> <li>• Constraints, challenges or gaps in gender equality issues can be highlighted for further research.</li> </ul> <p>Housing and housing outcomes are undoubtedly experienced differently depending on the gender an individual associates themselves with. Men are overrepresented in the single homeless population. Women are more likely to present as</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
	<p>homeless with one or more children. Not enough is yet known about those who identify with other genders, with further research required.</p> <p>Priority 3 of the LHS is to prevent homelessness as far as possible. 62% of prevention cases are headed by women. This does not indicate whether women are single, in a partnership or caring for children. The data indicates that women are more likely to ask for help before making a homelessness application. A higher % of homeless applicants are men, this indicates that men may be less likely to seek help prior to becoming homeless.</p> <p>A gendered approach recognises that the world is experienced differently depending on a person's gender identity (e.g. male, female, non-binary...) and the discrimination they face in society. Factors which increase the risk of homelessness and outcomes can differ considerably.</p> <p>A gendered approach recognises and responds to the specific risks and vulnerabilities different genders experience when facing the potential risk of homelessness. Prevention Pathways are expected in the anticipated Housing Bill. Prevention Pathways will target unique approaches at vulnerable groups more likely to be at risk of homelessness. Men and women will be less or more likely to at risk of these vulnerabilities, with men more likely prison leavers and women more likely subjected to domestic abuse. Therefore, Prevention Pathways, delivered in line with national guidance, will start to target risks for all genders.</p> <p>East Lothian Council's Housing Options team take a person-centred approach with prevention cases. This means that a full account of the circumstances which has led a person to approach the prevention team is taken into account and a full list of options is explored tailored to needs.</p> <p>Embedding a gendered approach requires cultural changes. This takes considerable time, resources and capacity. The current housing crisis highlights that resources and capacity within housing and</p>	

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
	<p>homelessness services are in a critically short supply.</p> <p>After the consultation period was ended, it was decided that, due to the critical challenges within homelessness, as identified in the LHS, that this action should be removed from the LHS. This action will be revisited. Gender differences within prevention will be monitored and approached when developing prevention pathways.</p>	
<p>Regarding Action 3.2, rolling out Housing Workshops to pupils: Not all children are brought up in a safe environment. That pupils in p1-6 would be unable to understand homelessness and budgeting. That this should be connected with other skills in the curriculum. That it is the perfect time for this. That the voice of young people is important.</p>	<p>The LHS acknowledges that not all children live in safe environments. Housing and Children’s Services works closely in ensuring that children are given the best opportunities live in safe environments.</p> <p>We recognise that information and workshops on housing and homelessness need to be tailored age-appropriately.</p> <p>The design of the school curriculum is the responsibility of the Education Department. A more holistic inclusion of housing into the wider curriculum may be difficult, however we are open to discussions and engagement with Education Services.</p> <p>Agree (no further action needed)</p> <p>Agree (no further action needed)</p>	No
<p>Action 3.7 on turning temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation: Cost of temporary accommodation is high That turning temporary into permanent accommodation would result in a loss of temporary accommodation which would have negative impacts. That temporary accommodation may be of a different, lower standard, than existing permanent homes.</p>	<p>Housing Services recognise that the cost of temporary accommodation can be significant in some cases. Housing Services seek to deliver and provide permanent housing where possible. Where temporary accommodation is required, this is provided in the best possible way balancing the costs and the needs of a person.</p> <p>We recognise that there will remain a need for temporary accommodation where necessary. However, in some cases, converting temporary into permanent properties can be invaluable for the existing tenants. Temporary properties need to meet permanent property standards before being able to be converted to permanent tenancies.</p>	No

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<p>Action 3.8 on exploring flat sharing:</p> <p>More peer support and stability is needed</p> <p>All options should be expanded including building tiny houses and other housing models.</p> <p>Flat sharing requires more flexible leases</p> <p>This is a great idea</p>	<p>In some models, such as My Place that operate within East Lothian, peer support is provided.</p> <p>Prior to adopting any model for flat sharing careful consideration would be given to a range of factors including whether peer support was required and what levels of support tenants would require.</p> <p>Quality Standards expected within the social rented sector would make it difficult to develop tiny houses for social rent. Within the private sector this would theoretically be possible but is not something that the Council intends to promote. Other innovative forms of housing are something that the strategy team continues to keep abreast of.</p> <p>We recognise that Laws in relation to leases and tenancies are set by the Scottish Government and East Lothian Council would need to adhere to these.</p> <p>No comment (agree)</p>	
<p>Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.</p>		
<p>Regarding housing for older people:</p> <p>Need for reliable housing and support for vulnerable people</p> <p>That sheltered housing is the way forward to keep independence for longer.</p> <p>Need to consider older people and disabled people more</p> <p>Bungalows and cottage are needed to support ageing population.</p> <p>Asset swaps for older people should be facilitate</p>	<p>No comment (agree)</p> <p>The existing sheltered housing provision within the county will continue to play an important part in housing our older population over the lifetime of this LHS</p> <p>In preparing the LHS extensive engagement has taken place with a number of groups including those in older age groups and disabled people. This included visiting sheltered housing to allow residents to voice their opinions. A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment was prepared looking at the housing needs of older people; this was used to inform the LHS.</p> <p>There is limited land for the provision of housing within East Lothian. Bungalows and cottages are land intensive forms of housing. However, they are important to those with disabilities, and we will continue to provide balanced mix of housing.</p> <p>East Lothian Council tenants can choose to exchange their tenancy with another council or housing association tenants throughout East Lothian and the UK or apply to the council for a transfer. RSLs including East Lothian Housing Association also allow tenants to make mutual exchanges. This is not something that is possible to enact within the private sector.</p>	<p>No</p>

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS																																				
<p>Supporting the implementation of adaptations in owner occupied housing is crucial to avoid people having to move, particularly in cases where people have dementia, sensory impairments, and carers.</p>	<p>East Lothian Council and ELH&amp;SCP will continue to work together to ensure that homes are accessible and adaptable, ensuring that older people can live in their homes for longer, negating the need for additional specialist provision in East Lothian. This will be achieved through making use of technology enabled care, adaptations, and aids.</p> <p>Two actions within the LHS relate specifically to supporting those living with dementia:</p> <p>Action 4.6: Housing Services will continue to work alongside East Lothian H&amp;SCP to ensure the development and implementation of the Dementia Strategy has strong strategic links to housing and housing related services.</p> <p>Action 4.7: Housing Services will also support the development of the Post Diagnostic Support for Dementia route map.</p>	<p>No</p>																																				
<p>There is a lack of carers due the lack of affordable housing. Many carers travel from Musselburgh.</p>	<p>Data shows that East Lothian has a lack of care work force. The delivery of affordable housing in Action xx and the preparation of the Local Investment Framework will help towards supporting housing key industries including a local care works force.</p>	<p>No</p>																																				
<p>A question was raised on whether voids have increased in amenity and sheltered housing post pandemic.</p>	<p>Internal Council data shows that there has not been a marked difference in the number of voids in Amenity and Sheltered Housing over the last 8 years. The chart shows the number of properties of each type becoming void each financial year since 2015/16.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Amenity and Sheltered Housing Voids</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Financial Year</th> <th>Amenity Housing</th> <th>Sheltered Housing</th> <th>Total Voids</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2015/16</td> <td>45</td> <td>20</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016/17</td> <td>49</td> <td>14</td> <td>63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2017/18</td> <td>51</td> <td>29</td> <td>80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018/19</td> <td>46</td> <td>20</td> <td>66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019/20</td> <td>50</td> <td>28</td> <td>78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020/21</td> <td>40</td> <td>29</td> <td>69</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2021/22</td> <td>49</td> <td>18</td> <td>67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2022/23</td> <td>41</td> <td>23</td> <td>64</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Financial Year	Amenity Housing	Sheltered Housing	Total Voids	2015/16	45	20	65	2016/17	49	14	63	2017/18	51	29	80	2018/19	46	20	66	2019/20	50	28	78	2020/21	40	29	69	2021/22	49	18	67	2022/23	41	23	64	<p>No</p>
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<p>A question was raised on how the support services in core and cluster properties</p>	<p>The provision of health and social care support is the responsibility of the Health and Social Care Partnership. Housing Services work closely with</p>	<p>No</p>																																				

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
can be secured in the long term.	HSCP to have a collaborative approach on the provision of housing and care.	
Action 4.7 on support for dementia: This action is important.	No comment (agree).	No
Action 4.12 on the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing and targets: 'Placing targets of certain homes, such as wheelchair accessible, at a local level may discourage investment from developers to build and should be pushed at a national level to ensure a level playing field'. Not all wheelchairs are the same size and that needs to be considered when building homes	Housing targets, for any house type, are currently set on a local level by local authorities. This allows each local authority to carried out in depth needs assessments and set targets to meet those needs. LHS commits to a minimum of 100 units of wheelchair accessible housing over the next five years. Design standards for wheelchair accessible housing conform to Housing for Varying Needs standards and relevant legislation.	No
'people leaving prison have to start from scratch – need to have better support.'	The LHS recognises the challenges people face when leaving the justice system and support them through Action 4.16 – the implementation of SHORE standards. SHORE - Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone	No
One question was raised whether Action 4.16 also related to CEYP leaving the justice system.	Yes, SHORE standards apply to anyone leaving the justice system.	No.
Action 4.19 on taking a strategic approach to accommodating refugees and asylum seekers: people should be supported to navigate the housing system and that people from Hong Kong should be mentioned. Refugee crisis is putting significant pressures on homelessness	We acknowledge refugees come to the UK and East Lothian from across the world. Refugees and asylums seekers from specific countries were mentioned in the LHS as they were considered as having a measurable impact on East Lothian over the coming 5-year period. This does not result in refugees and asylum seekers from other countries being neglected in the proposed action.	No
Education should be considered for Gypsy Travellers.	Housing Services support Education Services where possible. However, the Local Housing Strategy has limited influence on the provision of education for the Gypsy Traveller Community as this lie out with the remit of Housing Services.	No



Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Engage with MECOPP regarding the Gypsy Traveller community	The Housing Strategy team has and will in the future engage with MECOPP.	No.
Good knowledge on the need and demand of the Gypsy Traveller community is required.	It is hoped that upcoming census outputs will provide a fuller picture of the Gypsy Traveller community within EL. Numerous attempts to engage with the local GT community for the LHS were made, however, engagement levels remain low. Officers will continue to reach out to the Gypsy Traveller community over the lifetime of the LHS.	No
Regarding the LGBTQ+ community 'Housing needs to look into this' 'by supporting specific vulnerable groups there is a danger on missing out on other groups'. The participation and engagement steering group should be included in action 4.22	And 2) Extensive research and community engagement informs the preparation of the LHS to identify vulnerable groups. The identification of vulnerable groups allows the LHS to attend to the needs of the community and attend to inequalities. We recognise the difficulties to identify all vulnerable groups and attend to the needs of every resident. Housing Services are open to engage with organisations and residents to recognise and attend to the needs of any vulnerable group in East Lothian. Housing Services are an inclusive service and do not discriminate against any protected characteristic. 3) Housing are a key member of the steering group. Action 4.22 seeks engagement with the community out with ELC corporate groups.	
The question was raised whether debt is a driver of people not getting adequate housing? For example, energy and rent arrears debt?	Debt can be a deterrent to accessing housing particularly in the private sector. Debt reduces a person's credit score which limits access to mortgages, likewise landlords also consider credit scores before letting properties. In the social rented sector, rent arrears may limit a person's ability to transfer homes. Notably, a person's health and personal circumstances are considered in the case of East Lothian Council tenants.	No
All homes in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian's climate change targets.		

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<p>Regarding Action 5.3 on the provision of training and education in sustainable construction:</p> <p>That this is already happening, and focus should be on rural skills</p> <p>Skills are required to improve the quality of housing</p> <p>Affordable housing is an ideal place to start to upskill construction workers to achieve the standards we desperately need.</p> <p>Existing organisations in East Lothian already share knowledge of sustainable construction methods.</p>	<p>We will investigate the type of training needed as part of Action 5.3.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>In relation to improving the energy efficiency of existing homes:</p> <p>Need for guidance on retrofitting</p> <p>Planning policy restricting repairs and modernisation</p> <p>High energy bills require insulation of all homes</p> <p>Existing community groups are insulating homes in their areas with support from ELC</p>	<p>Guidance on the retro fit of traditional buildings is available from Historic Environment Scotland.</p> <p>More general advice is available from Changeworks. Specialist advice should always be sought prior to making any decision.</p> <p>Both national and local planning and housing guidance acknowledge the challenges between protecting the historic environment and delivering modernisation projects to improve the energy efficiency of buildings. Housing and Planning Services regularly engage to discuss solutions that satisfy both requirements.</p> <p>and 4)</p> <p>ELC supports a fabric first approach. Over the lifetime of the previous LHS, in the private sector, 181 homes benefitted from Cavity Wall Insulation and a further 72 homes benefitted from external wall insulation. Not all homes are suitable for insulation, in such cases other solutions such as heat pumps and solar panels are explored.</p>	

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<p>In relation to building new homes and their energy efficiency: Building home fit for future: district heating, micro renewables, affordable green energy, high airtightness, and whole-house ventilation with heat recovery Not all new builds have solar panels and air source heat pumps</p>	<p>1. The direction of travel for large scale future energy provision such as district heating as well as the decarbonisation of heat will be set by the Local Heating and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) on which the Housing Strategy Team have been consulted. This is due for publication in 2024 and aims to revolutionise the way homes are heated throughout the region.</p> <p>Action 5.6 will ensure that updates are made to the affordable housing specification and design guide to reflect net zero and sustainability ambitions. This will provide a framework that will enable ELC to better incorporate greener energy into new build Council housing.</p> <p>2. From April 2024 all new building seeking a building warrant will require a zero direct emissions heating system such as a heat pumps this will mean that future housing in new developments will no longer utilize mains gas.</p> <p>The LHS notes that there are 149 Council homes with Air Source Heat Pumps, 274 with Solar Photovoltaic and 114 with Solar Thermal. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to utilizing renewables where possible. However, as many affordable homes within the region are provided by developers as part of larger developments it is not always possible to dictate what features the home will have.</p>	
<p>High energy bills, cost of living crisis and fuel poverty were mentioned as challenges people face. Retrofitting, improving energy efficiency and home insulation have been highlighted as means to address these challenges.</p>	<p>We agree with these points. They are already included within the draft LHS.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>A wider approach through considering carbon and biodiversity impacts rather than just energy efficiency.</p>	<p>Housing Services have limited statutory powers when it comes to carbon and biodiversity solutions. The Service is working with a range of other services such as Planning, Climate Change, and Sport, Countryside &amp; Leisure to support and direct wider changes.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>The balancing of high standards and cost implications were raised</p>	<p>All Council homes are developed to a high standard. With the cost-of-living crisis and</p>	<p>No</p>

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
	<p>increased material costs it is recognised that providing new homes will be more expensive.</p> <p>In the private rented sector properties must meet the repairing standard. This is monitored by our licencing team.</p> <p>We appreciate that high standard developments in term of EPC rating and quality are more costly. However, high quality and insulated homes can be more cost effective in the long term. The current cost-of-living crisis, material and labour shortages have put further pressures on the ability for ELC to deliver the number of homes planned. Housing Services engage with and are open to collaboration and innovative delivery methods to deliver the number of high-quality homes required to meet the needs of residents.</p>	
<p>Information on EPC rating should be collated during house sales. Developers should comply with EPC requirements</p>	<p>Information in relation to Scottish EPC data is available on the EPC register. All homes that are put up for sale or rented out must have a valid EPC certificate.</p> <p>All homes within the social rented sector must meet minimum EPC standards. Within the private sector there are currently no minimum EPC bandings for new builds, however, the Scottish Government are likely to introduce future measures under the proposed Heat in Buildings Bill. It is beyond the remit of the Council to impose EPC requirements on developers, this would need to come through legislation from the SG. From April 2024 all new building seeking a building warrant will require a zero direct emissions heating system such as a heat pump.</p> <p>In addition, there is often an expectation from purchasers that new homes will be energy efficient, meaning that in this regard the market often self-regulates.</p> <p>The SG are currently consulting on proposals for their Heat in Buildings Bill. This will introduce minimum energy efficiency standards for homeowners within the private sector.</p>	
<b>Other comments</b>		
<p>Cross check information provided in LHS with</p>	<p>The LHS undergoes an annual update reviewing existing actions. As part of this update numbers are reviewed and data sets such as the Census</p>	<p>No</p>

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
Census 2022 once published.	2022 are included in the annual updated. This is also acknowledged within the LHS under Strategic and Policy Context.	
Too many actions are listed and that actions should be more focused on the most important challenges	The Local Housing Strategy is concerned with all tenures across East Lothian. Furthermore, other considerations in terms of homelessness, housing support, house conditions and net zero targets need to be taken into consideration in accordance with the Local Housing Strategy Guidance 2019. The proposed actions have undergone several rounds of consultation and engagement with the public, third party organisations and council services. All actions were carefully considered and to ensure all crucial actions are included within the LHS. An East Lothian Housing Partners Board will be formed during Q1 2024/25 to monitor the implementation and delivery of East Lothian's LHS. The Board will monitor risk and agree key priorities for the coming year, with short life working groups to be established where necessary to lead on key areas of implementation and risk mitigation. Further information on the Governance of the LHS and implementation of actions can be found within the draft LHS.	No
Challenge stigma attached to council homes	The council's maintenance, management and new build program aim to deliver high quality housing. Action 3.2 which will roll out Housing Workshop across school will also help to change perceptions around council homes.	No
Security of tenure	The LHS supports existing Scottish legislation on security of tenure and Action 5.2 seeks to provide 'Well publicised, accessible training and development materials for private landlords on tenancy legislation and compliance.'	No
More consideration towards sitting tenants	Development of a Housing Asset Strategy will support better outcomes for Council tenants. In addition, support can be sought from Housing Officers and Tenancy Support Officers if tenants require support.	No
Recycle furniture of former tenants	It is the tenants responsibility to furnish their properties. This means that tenants own their furniture and are responsible for the removal of furniture when leaving the property. The council does not have the resources to facilitate the exchange of furniture between tenancies. In certain circumstances the council can support people on low income in the provision of furniture upon receipt of a council tenancy.	No

Consultation Response	Action Taken/How Used	Change to LHS
<p>Regarding the council property management:</p> <p>Improve quality of council repairs</p> <p>Make garden aid more accessible</p> <p>Incentivise downsizing</p> <p>End council tenancy succession rights</p> <p>Sell council homes to existing tenants</p> <p>Council rent level should consider the heating costs of each property</p>	<p>East Lothian Council has introduced significant changes to its property maintenance in the past 2 years. Customer satisfaction rates have increased according to the latest Scottish Housing Network Tenant Satisfaction report 2022/23. The council continues to monitor and improve the property maintenance of it's council stock.</p> <p>Garden Aid is available to East Lothian Council tenants who, because of disability or age (60 years old or over) are no longer able to maintain their garden. We recognise that there may be other tenants who would benefit from garden aid. Unfortunately, current budgetary pressures do not allow for the scheme to be expanded. Tenants can get in touch with their Housing Officers should they require any support regarding their tenancy and garden maintenance.</p> <p>East Lothian Council already offers grants to council tenants who wish to move to a smaller property either owned by the council or another Housing Association in East Lothian. It should also be noted that there is an acute shortage of smaller one-bedroom properties making the logistics of downsizing difficult even where there is a willing party.</p> <p>Succession rights are set by Section 13 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 which amends schedule 3 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. Succession rights are set in law and are not something that ELC has powers to change. The right to buy in Scotland ended in 2016. According to the Scottish Government 'Ending Right to Buy will prevent the sale of 15,000 homes over a 10-year period. It will protect the existing stock of social rented homes and ensure social landlords can help people who need social housing.'</p> <p>The energy consumption of each household varies widely with a range of influencing factors and is not only based on the energy efficiency and age of a property. The type of heating installed will historically have been reliant on infrastructure within that area and is out with the control of the Council. In March 2023 over 90% of the Council's stock met EESSH standards and can therefore be considered to be energy efficient. The Council continues to work towards improving the energy efficiency of its stock and full compliance with EESSH standards.</p>	

