

2024–29

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Enabling access to high quality homes of different tenures which meet resident's needs and enables them to live in communities with the support and services they require.



Foreword

I am pleased to present East Lothian's new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covering the period 2024-29.

The LHS is the sole strategic document for housing, outlining the key issues and challenges within a changing demographic and economic context. It sets out a strategic vision for housing, priority outcomes and an action plan for the delivery of housing and related services across the county.

Housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of everyone in East Lothian. A well-functioning housing system is therefore vital to ensuring the communities of East Lothian flourish, children and young people have the best start in life, and those most vulnerable in our society are supported.

Since the previous Local Housing Strategy, East Lothian has faced a range of challenges, including inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, increasing legislative changes in relation to homelessness and energy efficiency, global conflicts resulting in economic uncertainty, and the effects of the exit from the EU. The Council continues to face significant increasing financial challenges, together with having the second highest population growth in Scotland. The population is also changing with an increase in our older population combined with increasing expectations and aspirations of our residents. To ensure we continue to meet expectations and deliver those services which are vital to our tenants and residents, we must continue to explore new creative and innovative ways of working and delivering services to meet the growing demand and cost pressures. This is not something we can do alone, and we will work collaboratively with key partners to implement this LHS and ensure we can meet our shared vision by 2029.

To ensure its success, our residents and communities need to be at the heart of this strategy which sets out our commitment to mixed communities, which are safe and economically secure. Since the COVID-19 Crisis, there has been a strong recognition of the contribution Housing can make to the economy, to improving health and wellbeing, eradicating poverty, and reducing inequalities. From the moment we were all told to stay at home, housing became our safe place, or it should have been. For many it didn't. We can all appreciate how much more manageable it has been if you had access to good quality green space, room to work from home, warm comfortable homes and with digital connectivity.

Our residents are critical to helping us achieve the goals set out in this strategy as the Council strives to provide excellent services with reducing resources. This LHS sets out our ambitions to achieve these goals by ensuring positive community engagement to support place-making together with meeting our climate ambitions.

I look forward to working with you all to deliver this ambitious new strategy to ensure that everyone in East Lothian has *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.*

Councillor Andrew Forest

Cabinet Spokesperson for Housing & Communities

Contents

Foreword.....	2
Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Achievements LHS 2018-23	14
Strategic & Policy Context.....	15
East Lothian Profile	19
1 Vibrant and Connected Communities.....	32
2 Housing Supply and Affordability	52
3 Preventing and Responding to Homelessness.....	75
4 Suitable Housing & Support.....	96
5 High Quality & Sustainable Homes	124
LHS 2024-29 ACTION PLAN	139
Appendix 1: Acronyms and abbreviations.....	157
Appendix 2: 8-fold Urban-Rural Classification Introduction.....	159
Appendix 3: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Introduction	160
Appendix 4: Affordable Housing Delivered in East Lothian.....	161
Appendix 5: Overview of the Housing Options service	163

Supporting papers can be found [here](#).

Supporting Paper 1: Integrated Impact Assessment

Supporting Paper 2: Engagement and Consultation Plan & Report Supporting Paper 3:

Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment Supporting Paper 4: Housing Supply

Target Methodology Paper

Supporting Paper 5: Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian Supporting

Paper 6: Scottish Government Peer Review

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant &
Connected
Communities

2. Housing
Supply &
Affordability

3. Preventing
& Responding
to
Homelessness

4. Suitable
Housing &
Support

5. High
Quality &
Sustainable
Homes

Executive Summary

The East Lothian Local Housing Strategy 2024-29 sets out the strategic vision, policies and plans to improve housing and related services. This will enable East Lothian Council and its partners to deliver high quality housing and housing services to meet the needs of the local population across all tenures, in line with national and local strategies and priorities.¹

Over 1200 people across East Lothian took part in engagement activities, online and in person. The priorities, outcomes and actions all reflect the conversations and information gathered during those activities.

Our Vision

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.

Key Challenges

The unprecedented and combined effects of the UK's exit from the EU, the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the cost of living crisis have placed significant constraints on the economy. These events have adversely affected residents, the local authority and investment in the local housing market. Residents are relying more on local support services; East Lothian Council is facing acute financial pressures; and the demand for affordable housing critically outstrips supply.

The Local Housing Strategy highlights a series of challenges East Lothian is facing:

Second fastest growing population in Scotland. An ageing population.	Population growth has not been met with an increase in revenue funding.	Highly pressurised housing market. High house prices, private rents and demand of affordable housing.
Significant homelessness pressures. Increased time spent in temporary accommodation.	Increase in single person households. Growing demand for housing support services.	Low energy efficiency of older, rural and/or private rented homes. Pressure to meet ambitious energy targets.

¹ The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) supported by an assessment of housing need, demand, and provision.

Priority Outcomes

Five priority outcomes and a range of actions were developed to achieve the vision and mitigate some of the impacts contemporary events have had on East Lothian.

Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.

Existing links with partner organisations and services such as Planning, Connected Communities and Sports, Leisure and Countryside will be built upon and where possible expanded. A Local Investment Framework will be prepared with communities, building upon Area Plans, to direct strategic investment in and around homes, ensuring a balanced mix of house types and sizes across all areas to meet local need.

Housing Supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households across East Lothian.

Over the LHS period, an affordable housing supply target of 891 homes will be delivered, alongside an estimated 3,563 market homes. New innovative funding models will be explored particularly for the delivery of mid-market housing. Reviews and updates will be carried out on the Allocations Policy, Void Procedures and Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with appropriate accommodation and support is provided.

Targeted prevention pathways will be prepared for vulnerable groups and a transformation plan will be implemented in compliance with the new Preventions Duty. Supported Accommodation provision for adults and young people will be reviewed. Temporary accommodation will be re-designated to permanent tenancies where possible.

Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

A range of actions has been created to attend to the needs of vulnerable communities. This includes but is not limited to older people, disabled people, people involved in the justice system, young people, and ethnic minorities. Homes will be delivered for those with specific needs and strategies will be implemented and reviewed like the Dementia Strategy, Home Adaptations; and Equally Safe Housing Strategy.

All homes within East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian's climate change targets.

Funding to improve energy efficiency of homes will be maximised working alongside the Scottish Government. Training and upskilling for the energy efficiency workforce, retrofitting and the building trades will be promoted. A range of strategies and policies will be developed including an Energy Efficiency Policy, Housing Asset Strategy, Scheme of Assistance; and mixed tenure Housing Conditions & Energy Improvement Plan.

Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to direct investment in housing and housing related services over a 5 year period. The Local Housing Strategy is the Council's sole strategic document for housing, outlining the key issues and challenges within a changing demographic and economic context. This Local Housing Strategy 2024-29 sets out the strategic vision, policies and plans which will enable the Council and its partners to deliver high quality housing and housing services which meet the needs of the local population across all tenures, in line with national strategies and priorities.

Most significantly, the LHS has been developed against a backdrop of unprecedented economic, political and environmental challenges, such as the Covid-19 global pandemic and the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), changing legislation and increased ambitions from Local Government and more recently, the cost of living crisis. This has all come at a time when Local Authority Finance is facing acute financial pressures.

East Lothian is the second fastest growing population in Scotland, with a rapid increase witnessed over the previous 5-10 years. However, this has placed increasing demands on infrastructure and housing and significant inequalities exist within and between communities. This has created further challenges as the growth has not been met with an increase of revenue funding to support the needs of the community.

East Lothian has a highly pressurised housing market, with high house prices and high private rents resulting in significant demand for affordable housing. The Council also faces significant homeless pressures and the economic climate continues to impact upon the ability of many households to meet their housing needs.

The scale of financial challenges now facing the Council will require a creative approach with regard to how services are delivered and prioritised to ensure we maximise opportunities and best meet the needs of residents and local communities. This will require collaboration with other partners and stakeholders both regionally and locally to maximise opportunities to redesign and modernise service delivery. Taking this into account, our consultation exercise resulted in five priority outcomes and a range of actions to achieve a fairer and more accessible housing system for everyone.

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

Our Vision & Priority Outcomes

This LHS builds on the success of the previous LHS, taking account of legislative changes and opportunities to deliver differently as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Vision and Priority Outcomes also align with a range of national and local policies as well as address key issues identified through engagement and consultation.

This LHS's strategic vision for housing over the next 5 years is that by 2029:

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.

Five priority outcomes will help achieve the vision and contribute to the Council's wider policies of improving equalities and eradicating poverty:

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

This LHS adheres to six principles:

Equalities: East Lothian Council is committed to tackling and reducing inequalities, as set out within the [East Lothian Plan](#). The [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) places a legal responsibility on local authorities and other public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires LHS's to set out how they will comply with equalities legislation. To ensure the LHS takes a comprehensive approach, the Integrated Impact Assessment was given consideration at regular intervals during the LHS process. This can be found in [Supporting Paper 1](#). Equalities were also a key theme in the engagement process prior to writing the LHS. More information can be found about our approach in [Supporting Paper 2](#).

Rights-based Approach: By taking a rights-based approach to the LHS, the Scottish Governments commitment to the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) and this is demonstrated within the Housing to 2040 ambitions. This is the first LHS

in East Lothian to undertake a Children’s Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment. This can be found in [Supporting Paper 3](#).

Trauma Informed Approach: East Lothian Council is committed to adopting a Trauma Informed Approach across its services and strategies. A trauma informed approach has five guiding principles: safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment. These principles have been adhered to throughout the engagement and consultation period as well as informing the range of actions.

Gendered Analysis: Housing and housing outcomes are undoubtedly experienced differently depending on the gender an individual associates themselves with. Men are over represented in the single homeless population. Women have a longer life expectancy, experiencing multiple health issues as they navigate older age. Not enough is yet known about those who identify with other genders, with further research required. By ensuring a Gendered Analysis approach was conducted throughout the research and writing stages, the LHS shows a commitment to ensuring that:

- Gender equality issues are adequately addressed.
- Targeted approaches can be developed.
- Constraints, challenges or gaps in gender equality issues can be highlighted for further research.

Health & Wellbeing: The critical links between housing and health are undeniable. Housing has a key role to play in improving the health and wellbeing of communities across East Lothian. Through the provision of high quality homes free of damp and mould, a reduction in fuel poverty and access to outdoor space, health can be improved. Homelessness also impacts on physical as well as mental health. A Health Inequalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the overall Integrated Impact Assessment. NHS Lothian’s East Lothian Partnership and Place Team facilitated a multi-agency workshop on the draft LHS. The findings can be found as an Appendix to [Supporting Paper 2](#). A follow-up workshop will also take place during the lifetime of the strategy with key stakeholders to explore the potential impacts the LHS may have on population health.

Sustainability: The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires local authorities to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for certain strategies and plans. It was formally determined² that a SEA is not required for LHS’ given their relationship with Local Development Plans (LDPs). This LHS is in advance of the next LDP, therefore as per guidance, a pre-screening notification was submitted. Confirmation was given that the LHS does not require a full SEA due to the reasons stated above.

² Scottish Government (2019) LHS Guidance, page 19

Methodology

The LHS is underpinned by an assessment of housing need and demand to provide key evidence of our priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services. The following areas of research have been undertaken to inform the LHS.

South East Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3 (HNDA3), South East Scotland (SES) Authorities (2021): Analysis of key housing market drivers in order to estimate future demand for housing. It provides a shared evidence base for the LHS, LDP and informs the setting of a Housing Supply Target (HST) and Housing Land Requirement.

Strategic Needs Assessment of Housing & Older People, East Lothian Council (2022): Provides estimates of need and demand for housing and housing related service for older people. It provides a clear evidence based link between the needs of older people and the outcomes identified in the LHS.

Strategic Needs Assessment of Children & Young People and Housing, East Lothian Council (2022): Provides estimates of need and demand for housing and housing related services for children and young people within the context of UNCRC. It provides a clear evidence based link between the needs of a range of identified groups and the outcomes identified in the LHS. The following groups were included in the analysis: Care Experienced Young People with and without an allocated social worker; Children and families known to the children's disability team and those who are being provided with education out with the area due to complex care needs; young carers and vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds at risk of/or currently experiencing homelessness.

Local Housing Systems Analysis (LHSA), East Lothian Council (2022): Analyses key elements of the housing system within the wider housing strategy landscape and economic and demographic context. It highlights key emerging trends, projections, issues and challenges, providing a detailed understanding of the local housing system and to what extent it is working well or 'in balance'.

[Research into the Private Rented Sector \(PRS\) in East Lothian, Arneil Johnston \(2022\):](#) The research provided evidence on the role and operation of the PRS to inform strategy interventions to support the development and improvement of the sector and its interaction with other housing tenures.

A range of statistical evidence was gathered to help inform the LHS. This includes:

CACI paycheck: Gross household income from all sources including earnings, benefits and investments. It provides income by band from £5,000 up to £200,000+ as well as mean, median, mode and lower quartile. This is provided at postcode and Area Partnership level.

Hometrack: Rental and property data for East Lothian at postcode and Area Partnership level. Data includes: postcode, property type, property style, beds, sold date, asking price, sold price, time on market. For private rented properties, listed price and date let is also given.

Engagement and Consultation

Engagement and Consultation are critical to the process of developing and delivering the LHS. During 2022, the engagement phase of the LHS took place. A summary of Engagement and Consultation is provided below and a full breakdown including a report on the views collected throughout the process can be found in [Supporting Paper 2](#).

In line with the place-making principle³, the consultation process followed the themes of the Place Standard Tool when engaging with different stakeholders and the public. Consultation sessions were carried out in collaboration with partners such as East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELH&SCP) and Planning Services to offer holistic discussions around the challenges and solutions within communities.

Scottish Government Guidance sets out five areas which Engagement and Consultation for the LHS must meet. These are set out below together with evidence of how this LHS meets those requirements.

Table 0.1: Engagement and Consultation Requirements	
LHS Guidance Requirements	
Engagement and Consultation should be undertaken early on in the LHS development process and should be continued through the development and subsequent annual review.	<p>Engagement and Consultation for the LHS began in February 2022, 10 months prior to the process of drafting the LHS. The focus at this stage was to ensure forums and events helped shape the themes and priorities of the LHS.</p> <p>Now in draft form, various consultation events will take place across each of the Area Partnerships in East Lothian. An online survey will also be available.</p> <p>As the actions in the LHS are progressed, the Housing Service will continue to engage with tenants and residents, Community Councils and Area Partnerships, third sector providers, health and social care partnership and NHS public health to ensure that the actions progress and remain relevant. The annual review of the LHS will also provide an opportunity to add additional actions where evidence and engagement supports it.</p>
Use a range of media to ensure as wide an audience as possible within	Advertising for events took place on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

³ According to www.ourplace.scot the place principle promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more collaborative approach to a place's services and assets to achieve better outcomes for people and communities.

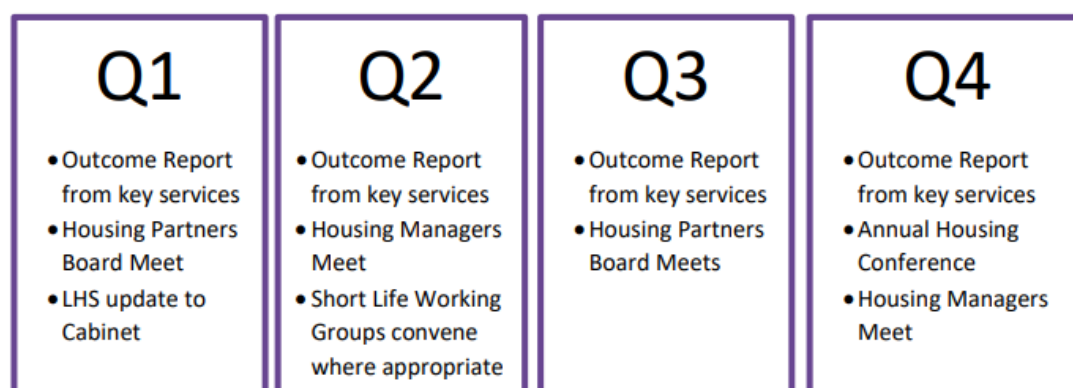
<p>local communities and from relevant representative groups including people with or who share protected characteristics.</p>	<p>East Lothian Council’s website also had a dedicated page with consultation information and monthly summaries posted. East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership also shared information on events, as did Community Council’s and Area Partnerships.</p> <p>Specific third sector services and community groups were also targeted for bespoke events and workshops to ensure those with protected characteristics were represented.</p> <p>East Lothian’s Tenants and Residents Panel (ELTRAP) also participated and advertised events.</p>
<p>Ensure effort is made to end inequality, and that the make-up of the local population is accurately reflected.</p>	<p>A range of surveys and engagement events were targeted at specific age groups. There was low uptake of online surveys amongst young people aged below 35. To counteract this, a specific housing survey for young people was set up and Officers attended youth clubs to engage directly with children and young people.</p>
<p>Recognise that some people’s views may not be readily heard through traditional engagement methods and provide evidence of how those less willing or able to engage, were given opportunity to do so.</p>	<p>Moving away from traditional focus groups and surveys, Officers took part in walking football, lunches, gardening and activities put on by youth clubs. By attending existing clubs and events, those who might have otherwise not attended a formal consultation event were able to participate. This included older people, those in rural areas and vulnerable groups.</p>
<p>Show how this has influenced the development of LHS priorities, outcomes and actions.</p>	<p>The LHS themes, priorities, outcomes and actions all reflect the conversations and information gathered over the period of Engagement and Consultation. Supporting Paper 2: Engagement and Consultation Report brings evidence collated during the Engagement phase under each LHS priority heading showing the clear strategic links.</p>
<p>Source: Scottish Government, LHS Guidance & East Lothian Council</p>	

The key highlights from our Engagement events are outlined below.



Governance

An East Lothian Housing Partners Board will be formed during Q1 2024/25 to monitor the implementation and delivery of East Lothian's LHS. Quarterly outcome reports on key measures will be produced to inform the Housing Partners Board of achievements and risks. The function of the Housing Partners Board and related governance arrangements are set out below.

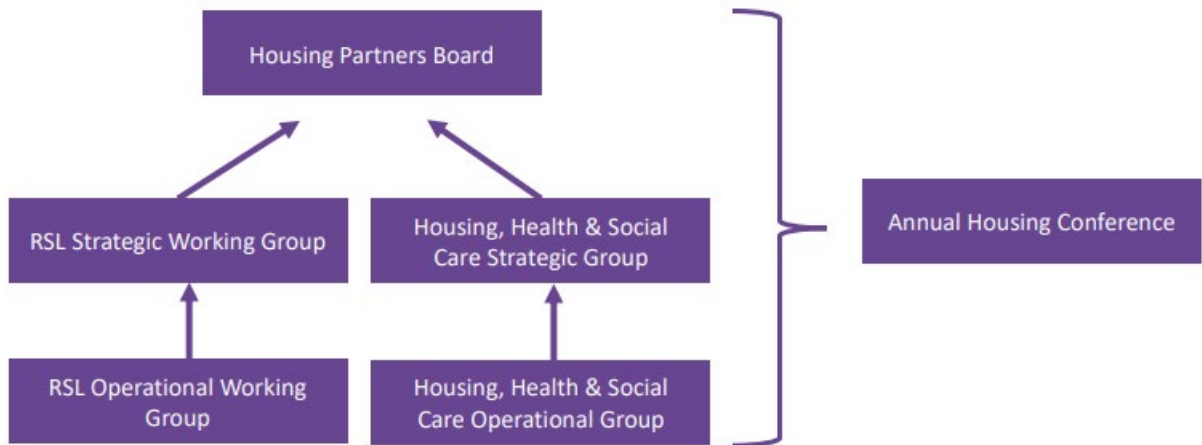


Housing Partners Board will oversee the implementation and delivery of the LHS, and approve the progress of the action plan to meet the objectives of the Strategy. It will bring together internal staff with other stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Housing Support Services, the third sector and H&SCP partners. 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.

Quarterly Outcomes Report – Relevant services will submit quarterly outcome reports to the Housing Strategy Team. The Housing Partners Board will reflect on the quarterly outcome reports to identify key priorities and instruct any relevant short life working groups to be convened in Quarter 2.

Annual Housing Conference – will provide an opportunity for all relevant and interested services, RSL partners and third sector providers to come together to share best practice, problem solve and reflect on annual targets. Outcomes from the Conference will help inform key priorities for the following year.

A series of existing working groups will also feed into the new strategic structure. The interaction between these groups is set out in the diagram below.



Achievements LHS 2018-23

Affordable Homes Delivered 2018-2023

- ✓ 643 units for social rent.
- ✓ 229 units for Mid-Market Rent.
- ✓ 23 units for low-cost home ownership.
- ✓ 100 units purchased on the open market for social rent.
- ✓ Total of 995 affordable homes delivered in East Lothian.

Health & Social Care

- ✓ Over 40 units of housing provision delivered in partnership with Health and Social Care for Social Care Users with care & support needs.

My Place

- ✓ *My Place* (flat share model for young people supported by a Peer Flatmate and the Rock Trust) received 3-year funding in 2019 from The Life Changes Trust.
- ✓ Eight 3 bed properties were purchased via the Council's Open Market Acquisition program.
- ✓ Established primarily for care-experienced young people. Now extended to unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and homeless young people.

Energy Efficiency Improvements

- ✓ 181 houses benefited from cavity wall insulation in the private sector.
- ✓ 72 homes benefitted from external wall insulations in the private sector.
- ✓ 181 heat pumps implemented in the social rented sector.
- ✓ 72 solar panels integrated into homes in the social rented sector.

Regeneration

- ✓ Over £1m invested in Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes in Tranent and Cockenzie.
- ✓ The schemes supported the refurbishment of pre-1919 priority buildings, small public realm improvements and outreach events to promote traditional skills.

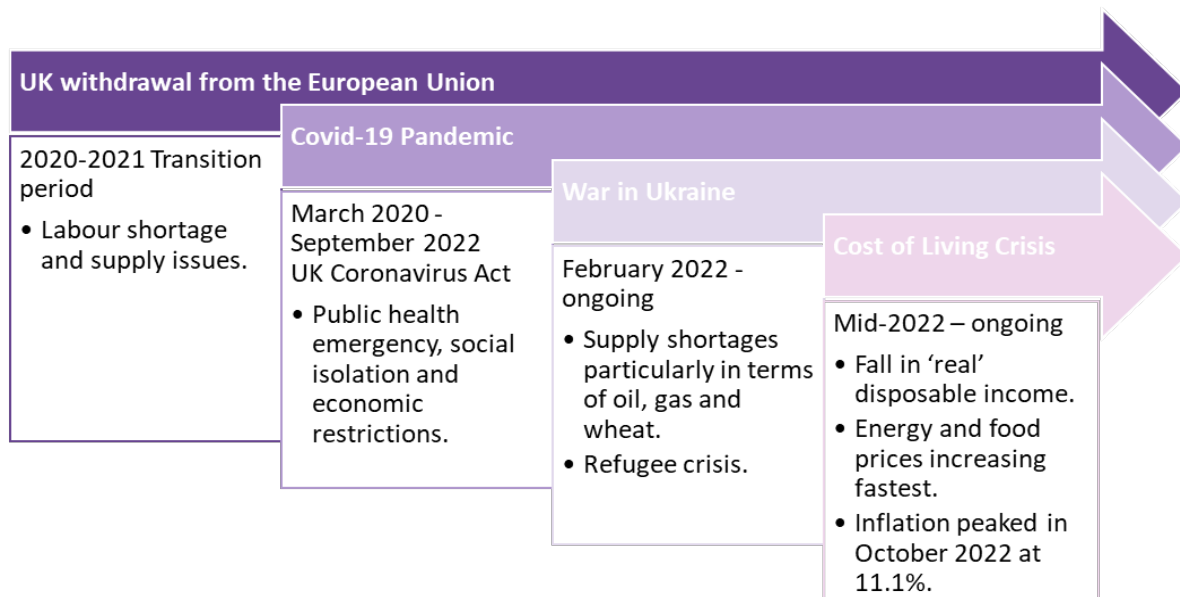
Other

- ✓ New Allocations Policy delivered 2019.
- ✓ Delivery of six new build units for disabled veterans.
- ✓ Compliance with SHQS - 86.94% as at 31/3/23.
- ✓ EESSH compliance at 90.86% as at 31/3/23.

Strategic & Policy Context

Global Economic Context

The delivery of new housing contributes towards the economy through investment in materials and labour, and increased spending within the local area. The delivery of the required level of housing is also influenced by the economic challenges experienced on a global and national scale. The unprecedented and combined effects of the UK's exit from the EU, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have placed significant constraints on the economy. Most recently, the cost of living crisis has resulted in the fall of disposable income, whilst energy and food prices continue to rise. The affects are seen in high inflation, supply chain issues and rising interest rates, all of which can adversely affect residents, the local authority and investment in the local housing market.



National Strategic and Policy Context

The LHS reflects the national strategic landscape. A range of overarching key policy documents impact the LHS. National policy which is topic specific will be outlined within the corresponding chapters.

The strategic documents set out below are ambitious and a number of their outcomes are still to be considered and set out within guidance and legislation. In line with LHS 2019 Guidance, the LHS will be updated annually to account for updated evidence i.e. new census outputs and any new guidance or relevant legislation.

[Housing to 2040](#) is the first national strategy which sets out a vision for housing in Scotland to 2040, together with a route map on how to get there. It aims to deliver the Scottish Government's ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that

meets their needs in the place they want to be. The strategic document represents the biggest overhaul to the housing system Scotland has seen and includes a range of ambitious policies which will be touched on throughout this LHS.

[National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) is the national spatial strategy for Scotland. It sets out Scotland's spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. The six overarching spatial principles are: just transition, conserving and recycling assets, local living, compact urban growth, rebalanced development and rural revitalisation.

The [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#), introduced in April 2012, set out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should be aiming to achieve for their customers. It also sets out what tenants and other customers can expect in terms of the: quality and value for money of the services they receive, standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication about, and participation in, the decisions that affect them.

[Scottish Housing Quality Standard \(SHQS\)](#) was introduced in February 2004 and is the main tool used to measure housing quality in Scotland. SHQS ensures that social landlords make their tenants' homes are energy efficient, safe and secure, not seriously damaged, and have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition.

The [Fuel Poverty \(Targets, Definition and Strategy\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) made provisions for 2040 fuel poverty targets. By 2040, as far as reasonably possible no household in Scotland is in fuel poverty and, in any event:

- (a) no more than 5% of households in Scotland are in fuel poverty,
- (b) no more than 1% of households in Scotland are in extreme fuel poverty,
- (c) the median fuel poverty gap of households in Scotland in fuel poverty is no more than £250 adjusted in accordance with section 5(5) to take account of changes in the value of money.

The 2019 Act establishes a new two-part definition. A fuel-poor household is one where:

- More than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of net income is required to pay for their reasonable fuel needs after housing costs have been deducted.
- The remaining household income is not enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living, defined as at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) once childcare costs and disability or care benefits are deducted.

[Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing \(ESSH\)](#) was introduced in March 2014 and since that time has set multiple milestones for social landlords to meet for their social homes meeting EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings. In 2019 it was confirmed that all social rented homes must meet ESSH2 by December 2032 meaning all social rented homes either *meets, or can be treated as meeting EPC Band B, or is as energy efficient as practically possible and within the cost, technology and necessary consent*. Following a review in 2023, the Scottish Government proposed the introduction of a Social Housing Net

Zero Standard (SHNZS) to replace EESSH2. The annual review of the LHS will take into account any changes in legislation and policy to meet new standards once adopted.

[Heat in Buildings Strategy](#) sets out the Scottish Government's ambitious programme to deliver climate change targets by reducing Scotland's dependence on gas and oil for heating homes and other buildings.

The LHS also reflects the commitments made to national priorities through the [East Lothian Council Plan 2022-27](#), which sets out the intention to embed human rights and person centred approaches such as trauma-informed practice into council policies and practices.

The Council Plan also sets out the following commitments which are relevant to this LHS:

- Incorporating the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) into council policies and practices.
- Implementing the recommendations of the [Independent Care Review](#) to shift policy, practice and culture to #KeepThePromise to care experienced infants, children, young people and their families.
- Embedding Trauma Informed practice into everything we do – recognising the prevalence of trauma such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, and its impact on the emotional, psychological and social wellbeing of people.
- Implementing [Equally Safe](#), the strategy to eradicate violence against women and girls.

[Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) provides a framework for the integration of health and social care services in Scotland. It places a duty on integration authorities (IA) to create a Strategic Plan for the integrated functions and budgets they control. The Act focuses on the importance of effective joint strategic planning and commissioning of services. The regulations that underpin the Act set out which health and social care functions and services must be delegated, which, as a minimum, must include all of adult social care, adult primary and community health care and a proportion of adult acute services. A Housing Contribution Statement forms part of the Strategic Plan bridging the IJB outcomes with the LHS. With regards to housing, the following are delegated in East Lothian: Housing Support and Aids, Equipment and Adaptations.

Regional Context

To accelerate growth within the region, the [Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal](#) was created in August 2018. The partnership includes East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and part of Fife. The City Region Deal reflects the commitment of the city region partners and the Scottish Government to deliver the regional housing programme and transform housing supply.

The city region deal brought together funds from the six local authorities within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region, regional universities, colleges and the private sector. Collectively it has a value of £1.3 billion which is divided into five key themes.

- Research, Development and Innovation: £750 million.
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million.
- Transport: £156 million.
- Culture: £45 million.
- Housing: £313 million.

The [Regional Housing Programme](#) aims to, amongst other things, accelerate the development of affordable housing and enable the development of seven strategic housing sites - including East Lothian’s new town, Blindwells.

[Housing Options Hubs](#) bring together neighbouring councils by region in Scotland to promote, develop and share information and best practice on the prevention of homelessness. East Lothian is a key participant in the Edinburgh, Lothian’s & Borders Hub.

Local Strategic and Policy Context

The LHS sits alongside a range of other East Lothian strategies and plans which it will support and dovetail with. Table 0.2 is split into three parts: Plans and Strategies which are East Lothian wide, encompassing all sectors and services; those which belong and are the responsibility of East Lothian Council only; and those which belong to the Area Partnerships.

Table 0.2: Local Strategies and Plans	
East Lothian wide	Local Development Plan
	Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan 2022-2025
	Climate Change Strategy 2020-25
	Local Economy Strategy (forthcoming)
	Open Space Strategy (forthcoming)
	Poverty Plan (forthcoming)
East Lothian Council	Procurement Strategy 2023-28
	Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2017-27
	Council Plan 2022-27
	Equality Plan 2021-25
	Community Justice Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2021-24
	Children and Young People's Services Plan 2023-26
	Corporate Parenting Plan 2020-2023
Area Partnerships	Area Partnership Plans

East Lothian Profile

The LHS considers the present and future housing needs of East Lothian’s population. To ensure the actions produced within the LHS support those living in East Lothian, it is essential to gain an understanding of the county’s population, one of the fastest growing in Scotland. This chapter will introduce the geographic, demographic and economic context within East Lothian, noting identified changes since the publication of the last LHS.

Geographic Profile

East Lothian is located in the eastern central Lowlands of Scotland. The county borders three other local authorities; Edinburgh to the west, Midlothian to the southwest and the Scottish Borders to the south.

East Lothian has a land-mass of approximately 270 square miles. It has a distinct and unique geography, including 43 miles of coastline, multiple river networks and the Lammermuir Hills. East Lothian’s natural landscape and historic towns have made it a sought after place to live, offering a taste of countryside living whilst being well connected to Edinburgh and other popular localities.

East Lothian is divided into six Council wards; Dunbar and East Linton, North Berwick Coastal (NBC), Haddington and Lammermuir, Preston Seton Gosford (PSG), Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry (TWM) and Musselburgh. Each of these wards have a main town and the majority of them, with the exception of Haddington and Tranent, are located along the coastline. All the main towns benefit from travel links to Edinburgh, including frequent buses and trains.

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

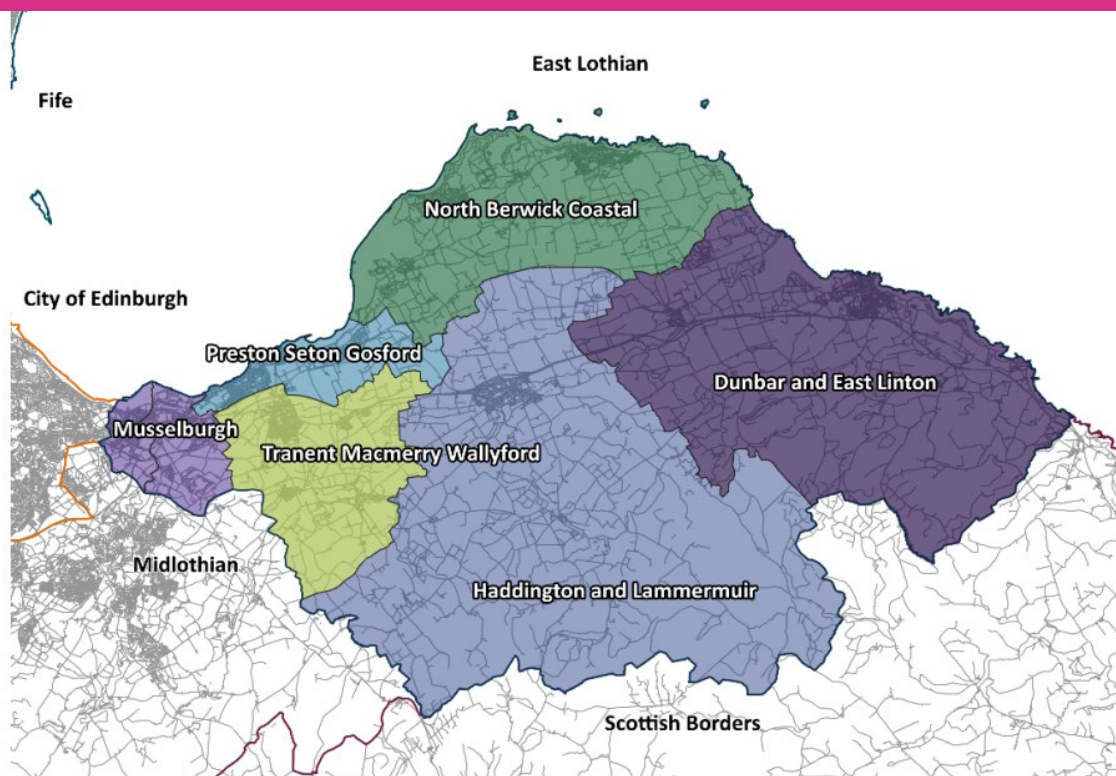
2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

Figure 0.1: Map of East Lothian, with council ward boundaries



Source: Each map in this chapter is made with QGIS. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right (2022) | Copyright East Lothian Council, Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2022)

Wards and Area Partnerships have only slight geographical differences. Area Partnership boundaries were not updated to reflect Ward changes in 2011. Throughout this document it will be made clear when there is reference to Ward or Area Partnership boundaries.

East Lothian has a population density of 156.7 persons per kilometre square.⁴ Figure 0.2 highlights the differences in population density within the county, through mapping buildings and the [8-fold urban-rural classification](#).

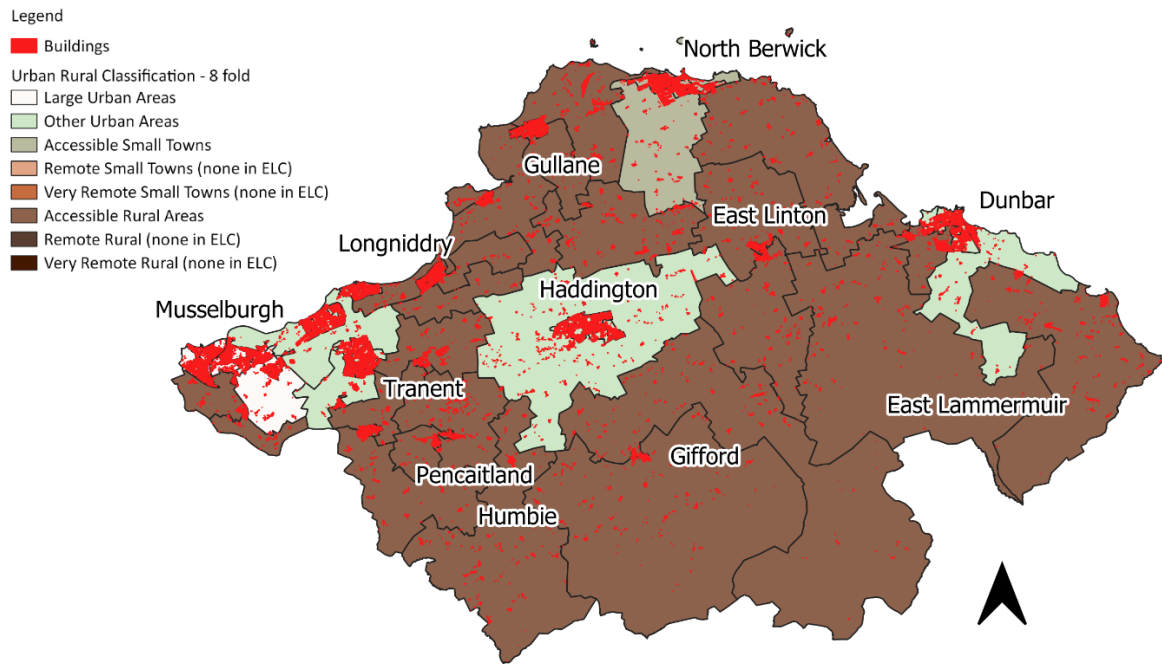
Figure 0.2 indicates that Musselburgh is densely populated. Musselburgh is the only area in East Lothian categorised as a “large urban area”. In comparison, areas in the south of the county are sparsely populated.

The majority of East Lothian is classed as an “Accessible rural area”- defined by a population of less than 3,000 and within a 30 minute drive of a settlement of 10,000 and over.

East Lothian’s rurality has changed over the past six years, with areas becoming more populated and better connected. For example, there are no longer “remote rural areas” in the county, and towns, such as Dunbar, have grown in size and are now classed as “other urban”.

⁴ Scottish Government (2021) Mid-year population estimates.

Figure 0.2: Map of East Lothian showing 8 fold urban-rural classification and building density



Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

Population Demographics

East Lothian’s population has been steadily increasing since 2000. Growth is projected to continue year-on-year well into the future. The county is expected to see the second largest population percentage change in Scotland from 2023-2033. In this period, it is predicted that the population will increase by 6.3%.



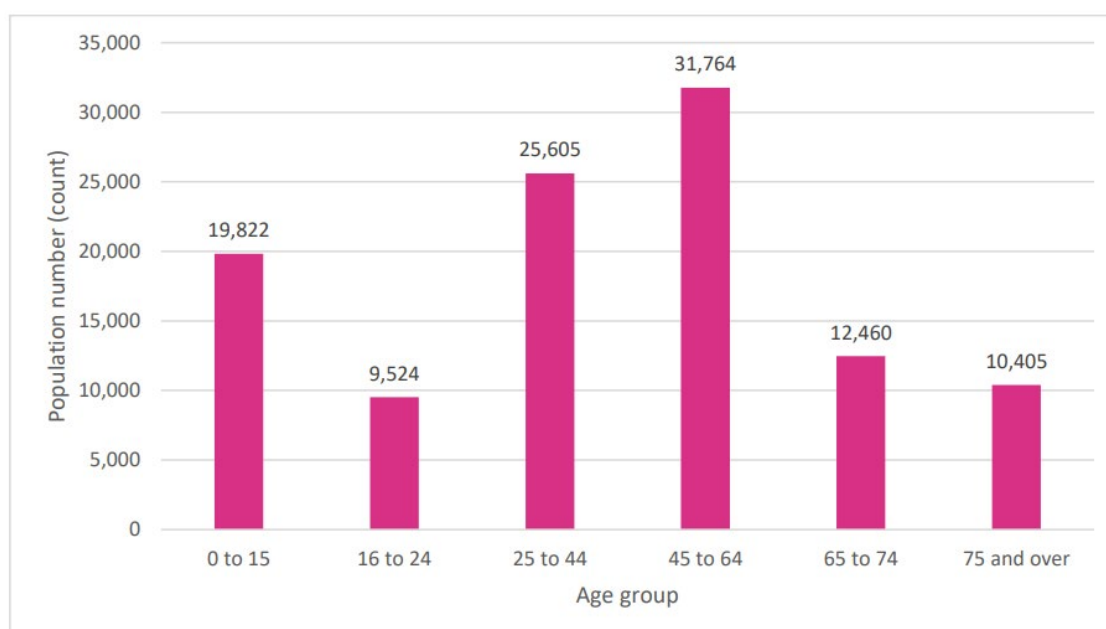
Source: National Records of Scotland (NRS), 2022

Population projections, by age-group, estimates that those aged:

- 0 to 15 and 45-64 will decrease by 1.8% and 2.8%, respectively, by 2028.
- 16-24 are expected to increase by 6.7% by 2028, compared to -0.9% in Scotland.
- 75+ are expected to have the largest increase in population, at 32%.
- 65 to 74 will also have a significant increase in population of 23.2%, highlighting East Lothian's ageing population.

The county's ageing population is expected to increase challenges for services. There will be a higher demand for accessible and adaptable homes. Likewise, Health and Social Care supports needs will increase and a sustaining workforce within this sector able to afford living in East Lothian will be crucial.

Figure 0.4: East Lothian population by age group, 2021



Source: National Records of Scotland (NRS), 2021

Life Expectancy

Residents of East Lothian are expected to live longer than the average person in Scotland. Women in East Lothian are expected to live an average 82.6 years, whilst males are expected to live 78.9 years. In contrast, life expectancy for Scotland, stands at 80.8 years for women and 76.5 years for men. While this comparison is useful, it is important to note that it can mask inequalities, as some areas within East Lothian have significantly lower life expectancy than others.

Healthy Life Expectancy is defined as the average number of years of life that people spend in good health. This measure is 60.7 years for males and 68.4 for females in East Lothian. This is higher than the Scottish average of 60.4 and 61.1 respectively.

Migration

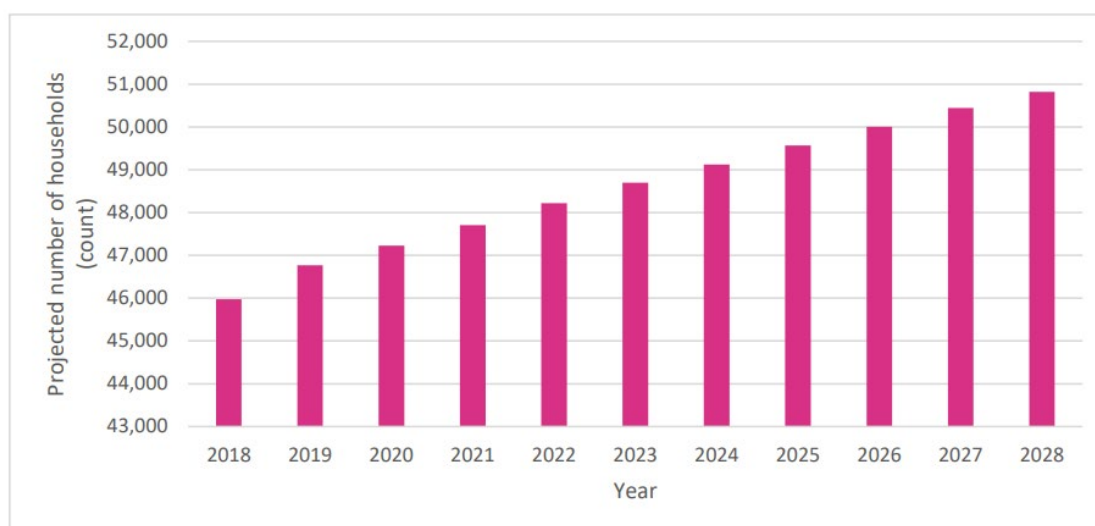
East Lothian has a significantly high number of people moving into the county. In 2020/2021, East Lothian's net migration, (the difference between out-migration and in-migration), was 1,820 people. This equates to a net migration rate of 16.6 people per 1,000 population, compared to 5.1 people per 1000 population nationally.

When comparing age groups, those aged 15-19 had the lowest net migration rate in 2021 at -45 closely followed by those aged 20-24, at -42. This shows that young people are more likely to leave the county than move in. They are most likely in pursuit of higher education or employment opportunities. However, housing affordability can also play a role for young people. Conversely, those aged 30-34 had the highest net migration rate at 360, followed by those aged 35-39 at 333. These age groups may have established jobs and savings, and are likely to establish their lives and families in East Lothian, due to the attractive lifestyle the county offers.

Households

It is estimated that in 2023 there were 48,440 households in East Lothian. The number of households in East Lothian has grown significantly over the past two decades, increasing by 26.7% between 2001 and 2021, the second highest increase within Scotland. Similar to population growth, the number of households in East Lothian is expected to grow annually, as shown in Figure 0.5.

Figure 0.5: 2018-based household projections for East Lothian



Source: National Records Scotland (NRS), 2021

All household types are expected to continue to increase. However, single adult households are predicted to have the highest percentage change (14.3%). Two adult households show similar levels of growth to single-person households, increasing by 13.2% between 2018 and

2028. Households with children or more than three adults are predicted to see low levels of change, at 5% and 2.2% respectively⁵.

Although household sizes are decreasing, Covid-19 has changed the way households are living. The shift towards home working can often result in households under-occupying homes, or requiring an additional room (often a bedroom as an office space). Although household sizes may decrease, the need for smaller accommodation may not.

The increase in single adult households can be partially explained by the growth in older populations, who are statistically more likely to live alone. 2028 projections show that 86% of those aged 80-84 in Scotland will be in single-person households. This may not necessarily have a direct effect on the size of properties however as care at home should be considered.

Economic Profile

The economic profile helps provide a picture of the economic wellbeing of East Lothian's residents. Since the last LHS, Scotland as a whole has faced some significant challenges. The global pandemic, war in Ukraine and the interrelated cost of living crisis and rising inflation have reduced people's spending power.

Inflation does not affect people equally. Cheaper food alternatives have risen at a faster pace than headline Consumer Price Inflation in recent months, meaning that low-income households who have less choice will experience higher pressure than other groups in society. Rising living costs may increase the risk of homelessness,

Since the pandemic food and social security support demand has significantly increased:

- Free school meals in primary schools have been rolled out with reduced eligibility criteria and the uptake has been considerable. 62.2% of primary pupils receive free school meals, compared to 10.9% of secondary pupils, where this service hasn't been rolled out yet⁶.
- Foodbank referrals have increased by 80% 2020/21-2021/22⁷.
- Scottish Child Payments increased by 48% between March 2022 and 2023⁸.
- 15% of households receive universal credit, a significant increase since the pandemic⁹. Between January 2019-2023, the number of households on Universal Credit increased by 62%.

5 NRS (2021)

6 [Scottish Pupils Census 2018-2021](#)

7 [East Lothian Food Bank Annual Report 2022](#)

8 Scottish Government (2022) [Scottish Child Payment Statistics](#)

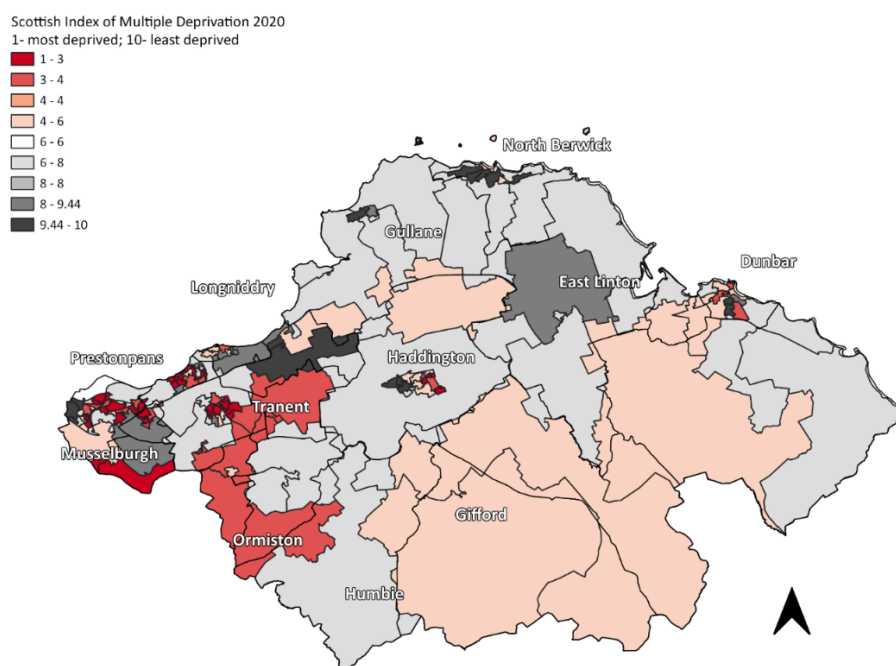
9 UK Government (2021) [Universal Credit Statistics](#)

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

East Lothian is, on average, a fairly affluent county. The county benefits from strong connections to neighbouring settlements, has high levels of attainment and reasonably high average incomes. However, this is not felt equally throughout the county.

Figure 0.6 maps the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD¹⁰) across East Lothian. The map shows that there are pockets of deprived areas surrounded by areas which are significantly less deprived, with a concentration of deprived areas in the west of the county.

Figure 0.6: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map of East Lothian



Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

There are eight areas in East Lothian which fall into the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland. There are a further two areas in East Lothian which are within the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland. All of these areas are found within the west of the county.

The SIMD focuses on concentrations of deprivation. However, not all households living in deprivation are represented here. This can effectively hide individuals living in deprivation who do not live in these categorised areas, underestimating the spread of deprivation across East Lothian. Inequalities which impact health and wellbeing should be viewed on a scale, effecting people at various levels. Whilst those in the most extreme deprivation will see the most severe outcomes, implications associated with inequalities will affect those at the mid to high levels of the scale. Therefore, SIMD cannot provide a complete image of

¹⁰ [The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (SIMD) is a tool which maps relative levels of deprivation. The SIMD collates statistics within domains including income, employment, health, and education, access to services, crime and housing. This then produces a rank for each area from the most deprived and least deprived.

deprivation within East Lothian. Further evidence should be used to indicate economic challenges faced by those within the county.

Employment

East Lothian's economy is influenced by its close proximity to Edinburgh. Estimates show that up to half of East Lothian residents commute from the county for employment, many to take up higher paid jobs in Edinburgh. Higher uptake in working from home since the pandemic has seen further locational differences between where people live and work.

Between October 2020 and September 2021, 54,600 (80.9%) of the working-age population in East Lothian were economically active. This is relatively high in comparison with the Scottish average of 76.1%. A significant proportion of individuals are registered as self-employed, accounting for 12.2% of the total working-age population.

At the end of September 2021, 80.8% of men in East Lothian were in employment, whilst 74.6% of women were employed during the same period.¹¹ Employment rates for both genders are higher than Scottish levels, which stand at 75.3% of working age men and 70.6% of working age women. The gap, however, does highlight inequalities in employment between genders, which leave women more vulnerable to poverty.

National statistics group employment in to nine occupations. East Lothian has a relatively high percentage of people employed in higher earning groups 1-5 (Table 0.3). However it has a shortage of social care staff and customer service occupations (groups 6-7). This may be because people in those groups are unable to afford to live in East Lothian.

Although a large proportion of people living in East Lothian have higher paid jobs, the cost of living crisis is now putting pressures on middle income households.

¹¹ [NOMIS](#)

Table 0.3: Employment by Occupation (January 2021-December 2021)

	East Lothian (no's)	East Lothian (%)	Scotland (%)
Soc 2000 Group 1-3	27,400	50.7	48.2
1. Managers and senior officials	5,100	9.3	8.7
2. Professional occupations	13,200	24.4	23.8
3. Associate professional and technical	9,100	16.8	15.5
Soc 2000 Group 4-5	10,500	19.3	18.9
4. Administrative and Secretarial	5,400	10.0	9.9
5. Skilled trades occupations	5,000	9.3	9.0
Soc 2000 Group 6-7	8,800	16.2	17.8
6. Caring, leisure and personal service occupations	5,500	10.2	9.4
7. Sales and customer service occupations	3,200	6.0	8.4
Soc 2000 Group 8-9	7,500	13.8	15.2
8. Process plant and machine operatives	3,600	6.7	5.2
9. Elementary occupations	3,800	7.0	9.9
Source: Nomis 2021			

Income and Earnings

The mean household income in East Lothian in 2020 was £45,105. When comparing wards, North Berwick Coastal had the highest household mean income, at £53,402. Tranent Wallyford Macmerry had the lowest mean income at £40,152. However, this remains above the mean figure for Scotland, £31,605.

Table 0.4: Average Household Earnings by Area Partnership, East Lothian

Area	Mean Income	Lower Quartile income
Dunbar & East Linton	£41,688	£25,739
Haddington & Lammermuir	£46,998	£21,842
Musselburgh	£43,333	£25,256
North Berwick Coastal	£53,402	£29,907
Preston, Seton, Gosford	£43,615	£22,568
Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry	£40,152	£21,842
East Lothian	£45,105	£24, 526

Source: NRS, CACI 2021 & East Lothian Council

Economic Inactivity and Unemployment

As of September 2021, 19.1% of East Lothian’s population were economically inactive compared with 23.9% nationally. Students (21.5%) and the long term sick (28.1%) comprised significant proportions, reflecting the national picture with corresponding figures of 25.9% and 29.4%. This decreases the number of housing options individuals are able to afford, driving up demand for social rented housing which is already in short supply.

Unemployment

The Office for National Statistics reports not only that Covid-19 has impacted most acutely on employment, unemployment and inactivity of young people in Scotland, but that these impacts have been proportionately greater in Scotland than across the UK. ¹² Covid-19 created uncertainty as workers were furloughed¹³ and unemployment increased by 1.4% from 2019 to 2020.

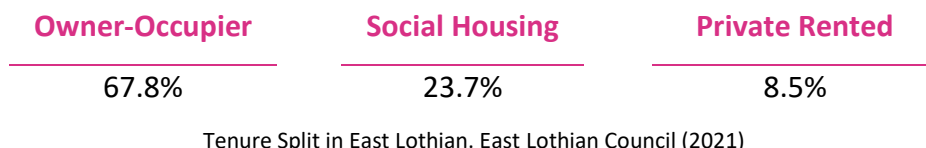
Workless households are defined as those households where no-one aged 16 or over is employed or economically active. The level of workless households across Scotland have reduced from 2009-2019. In the south east, Edinburgh experienced the highest reduction of 4.8% whilst East Lothian saw a drop of 3.6%.

¹² ONS (2020) Annual Population Survey

¹³ Furlough is the suspension or discharge of a worker or workers on account of economic conditions or short of work, especially when temporary.

Housing

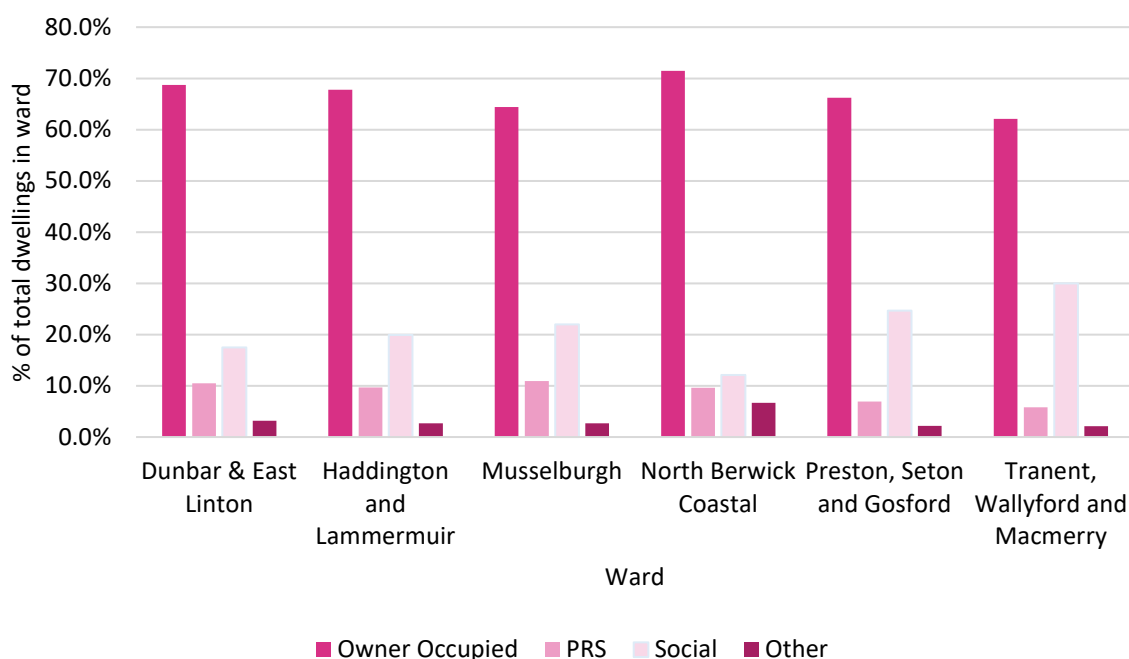
In 2021, there was estimated to be 50,641 dwellings in East Lothian. A 27.5% increase compared to 15.3% seen throughout Scotland.



Since the publication of the previous LHS 2018-2023, homeownership has increased in East Lothian by 2.7% and private rented stock as a proportion of all tenures has dropped by 2.8%. The split in tenures is not even across East Lothian wards, and can be summarised as (Figure 0.7):

- North Berwick has the highest proportion of owner occupiers.
- Musselburgh has the highest percentage of people living in the private rented sector.
- Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry has the highest percentage of residents living in the affordable housing sector.

Figure 0.7: Tenure split by Ward



Source: East Lothian Council (2023)

High house prices and high private rents has come at a time when councils are recovering from a global pandemic as well as within a context of the highest level of homelessness and with the highest numbers of people in temporary accommodation. Added to this there is the need to meet the increasing demands placed on us regarding refugees and asylum

seekers all within the context of significant growth and a cost of living crisis. Whilst acknowledging recent legislative changes have all been well intentioned, the adverse impacts have been concerning, resulting in a broken and unbalanced housing system.

Discretionary Housing Payment

Those who rent their home and receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit but still can't afford housing cost can apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)¹⁴. Spend on DPH can be a good indication of increased cost of living for households on benefits and in highlighting poverty levels.

The total spend on discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) has increased since 2018/2019. Increasing from just under £809,000 in 2018/2019 to around £900,000 in 2022/2023. Spend on DPH was highest during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020/21 – 2021/22). During the pandemic specific awards created to support those losing income. Covid-specific payments were recorded under 'other'.

DHP is most often used to mitigate the cost of bedroom tax. This cost has increased from 2018/2019. In 2022/23, around £687,000 of DHP was paid to mitigate bedroom tax. 'Other' accounts for the second highest DHP spend. Other includes:

- Hardship applications.
- Non-Dependant deductions from Housing Benefit/Universal Credit.
- Rent Restrictions (other than Bedroom Tax).
- Disability Related awards.
- 20/21 and 21/22 also included Covid Specific awards.
- Combination of any reasons.

Table 0.5: Discretionary Housing Payment by spend and year.

	Bedroom Tax (£)	Benefit Cap (£)	LHA Reform (£)	Other (£)	Total (£)
2018/19	575,504.00	47,027.00	70,229.00	116,238.00	808,998.00
2019/20	606,546.00	85,545.00	57,240.00	78,308.00	827,639.00
2020/21	692,292.00	121,414.00	49,077.00	268,315.00	1,131,098.00
2021/22	717,553.00	89,617.00	67,008.00	269,293.00	1,143,471.00
2022/23	687,201.00	54,329.00	54,078.00	104,679.00	900,287.00
East Lothian Council, 2023					

¹⁴ [Apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment - mygov.scot](https://www.mygov.scot)

Summary

This chapter has outlined some key challenges which will impact housing, housing related services and the economy:

- A rising population and increase in the number of smaller households.
- An ageing population will require more accessible homes so they can live at home for longer while receiving adequate social care.
- Global events such as the pandemic and war have led to material shortages and increases in the cost of living, making house building more expensive and household finances increasingly pressurised.
- Cost of living crisis has increased financial pressure on households generally, increasing their reliance on services and in turn putting pressure on the local authority.
- The SIMD in East Lothian may show the population which is severely affected by poverty, however it is likely many households on higher incomes will also suffer.
- High Homelessness pressures.

1 Vibrant and Connected Communities

Vibrant and Connected Communities sets out East Lothian’s commitment to creating and maintaining resilient communities and homes at the heart of great places. This section will explore not only the bricks and mortar of housing, but the surrounding environment, and the communities who live at the heart of these places. This chapter creates the framework for sustainable communities by:

- Establishing opportunities for community engagement and digital inclusion;
- Understanding our existing communities and town centre investment opportunities; and
- Recognising the importance of maintaining open spaces and neighbourhoods.

Priority Outcome: Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.

1.1 The National Context

Housing to 2040 identifies sustainable communities and a well-functioning housing system as the route to ensuring homes at the heart of great places. The pandemic reinforced that good housing benefits access to green spaces; digital connectivity; as well as increased community engagement.

The [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#), strengthens the voices of communities in decision-making regarding public services. It places a duty on Local Authorities to establish Community Planning Partnerships, known as Area Partnerships in East Lothian. The Act also empowers communities to manage land by introducing [asset transfer requests](#) and [community right to buy](#).

The [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4) defines Placemaking as ‘*the process of creating good quality places that promote people’s health, happiness and wellbeing*’. The planning system takes every opportunity to create high quality places by taking a design-led approach; direct the right development to the right place and support high quality development.

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

According to the Scottish Government, Placemaking can be achieved through the following principles:

- Place principle¹⁵ – working and planning together alongside local communities to enable better outcomes, like connected housing developments.
- Town Centre First¹⁶ – Putting the health of town centres at the heart of decision making, e.g. bringing back empty properties for housing and services.
- 20 Minute Neighbourhoods¹⁷ – living well locally, giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs nearby.
- [The Place Standard Tool](#) – prompts people to think about the physical and social aspects of place.

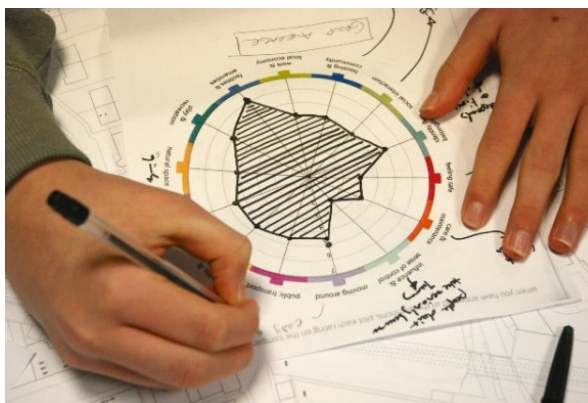
1.2 The Local Context

The East Lothian Council Plan 2022-2027 seeks to ‘develop a place based approach to deliver services designed around our local communities, focusing on community led regeneration’. One of its main objectives is to

‘Give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the services, infrastructure and environment that will allow them to flourish.’

In line with the Council Plan, Housing to 2040 and NPF4, the place making principles and six qualities of places have been taken into account by this LHS.¹⁸ 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.

Aligning the LHS with other council strategies like the [Open Space Strategy](#), the Local Development Plan 2, and the [East Lothian Play Policy](#); will ensure that the surrounding environment such as open spaces and good transport connections are a key priority in East Lothian. A supportive environment leads to higher sense of belonging and vibrant communities where people can access support which contributes towards sustaining their homes.



Picture 0.1: The use of the Place Standard Tool in North Berwick. Source: Kevin Murray Architects (2017)

¹⁵ Our Place (2023) <https://www.ourplace.scot/about-place/place-principle>

¹⁶ NPF4 – Annex D

¹⁷ [Housing to 2040](#)

¹⁸ The full definition of each of the qualities can be found in Annex D of the [National Planning Framework 4](#).

1.3 Sustainable Places and Communities

Housing is more than just bricks and mortar, the external environment is critical to creating a sense of place, belonging and brings a range of benefits. This was especially seen during the Covid-19 pandemic, where access to open spaces, was critical for national wellbeing. New housing should always, where possible, be designed to promote healthy lifestyles with good walking and cycling routes as well as possibilities for social connectedness through dementia friendly and accessible recreational opportunities.

Giving people the opportunity to interact within physical and social spaces, such as parks or community activities, reduces social isolation and creates means of community outreach for local authorities.¹⁹ Area Partnerships, in particular, generate a wealth of community empowerment, delivering vital projects for their residents.

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. Further details on this commitment can be found in [Chapter 2](#).

Housing works in partnership with services such as planning, landscape and countryside, transportation, health, connected communities, and many others to ensure sustainable places with the right house types and tenures are created to meet the needs of East Lothian's unique communities. This will be carried out in accordance with the 20minute neighbourhood approach. As local communities develop their Local Place Plans to feed into East Lothian's Local Development Plan, Housing will be a key service in providing information on need and demand at a local level. Housing Strategy have presented to Community Council's on the range of information they can contribute to ensure placemaking is achieved.

The LHS is based on a collaborative, communities first approach to understand the needs of our communities and those most vulnerable. By engaging with communities, third sector providers, partners, and council services; data, knowledge, and information can be unlocked. Current knowledge gaps and opportunities for engagement are highlighted throughout the LHS. The LHS has also undergone extensive engagement as outlined within the [Introduction](#). Collaboration will be maximised by:

- (a) Engaging with key stakeholders to support delivery across all tenure types ensuring that we meet the needs of our communities by increasing supply, improving accessibility, affordability and standards.
- (b) Working with key services at a corporate level to improve integration and support people to live more independently in their homes across all client groups such as our older people, our young people and our vulnerable homeless.

¹⁹ Woodcraft et al. (2002) [Design for Social Sustainability: A framework for creating thriving new communities](#).

- (c) Exploring opportunities to improve front line services through digital transformation and allow staff to be more connected with those that are most vulnerable.
- (d) Ensure staff are equipped with the skills and information to help those in most need, taking a trauma informed approach in supporting people. A Local Investment Framework will be prepared 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.

Action 1.1

The Local Investment Framework will be prepared with communities to enable better investment into housing and housing services, in line with the place principle. This framework will combine evidence and data across all tenures within each Area Partnership, ensuring investment and strategic decisions made are specific to local challenges. This will include the consideration of 20minute neighbourhoods. Collaboration across services such as Planning, Economic Development, Sport, Countryside and Leisure and Connected Communities will also be crucial to deliver the Framework.

1.4 Community Engagement

East Lothian residents are key to helping to achieve the goals set out in this strategy. The cost of living crisis has increased financial pressure on households, increasing their reliance on services. Likewise, East Lothian's population is growing and increased service demand is putting further financial pressures on the Council's ability to maintain excellent services. By working together with local communities, residents, third sector providers and other partners; the continuation of excellent service provision is supported.

To support, strengthen and create sustainable communities, residents should be enabled to take part in decision making processes for the provision of housing and related services. The LHS supports ongoing community engagement and participation through various partners and strategies mentioned within this chapter; for example [Area Partnerships](#), the Tenant Participation Strategy, and the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy.

Engagement with communities

The Place Standard Tool was used as part of the North Berwick Town Centre Charrette in 2017 to identify key issues during a town centre walk. This exercise identified moving around, housing, and community, and traffic and parking as key issues. As a result, a report was completed on action points to be undertaken to improve the North Berwick Town Centre.

The principles of the tool were followed when engaging with different stakeholders during the consultation process. The Equalities Workshops, conducted as part of the LHS engagement sessions, included a wide range of questions covering nearly all themes of the Place Standard Tool as they were carried out alongside Planning and Health and Social Care Partnership colleagues.

Engagement with partners

Housing Services regularly reach out to a range of service providers and the third sector who support people from different walks of life. East Lothian has a range of community forums which are used by Housing Services as a stepping stone to reach out to residents. These include, Volunteer Centre East Lothian, Tenant and Residents Associations, Area Partnerships, and Community Councils.

Ensuring engagement reflects the make-up of the population, and that all residents have the same opportunity to participate can be very challenging. The ability to engage depends on the capacity and resources available to a community. The LHS is committed to a rights-based approach and additional steps will be taken to engage with children and young people, in line with UNCRC.

Area Partnerships, supported through the Connected Communities Service, are a crucial point of contact and provide various opportunities to engage with local residents. The Area Partnerships are further discussed in [section 1.5](#).

Cross-service projects such as Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS), discussed in [section 1.6](#), integrate community engagement as part of their delivery. These projects create opportunities for East Lothian Council to address different challenges in a more holistic manner.

Engagement ensures that organisations are aware of existing services provided by East Lothian Council and are able to refer their clients to relevant services. Collaboration with organisations such as working with the 'Working for Change Collective' allows for community engagement with people from a wide range of backgrounds and lived experiences such as homelessness, poverty, domestic abuse, and experiences of using Council services.

Action 1.2

We will continue to build on existing links with other organisations and are open to engaging with organisations who have an interest in improving housing and housing services in East Lothian.

Engagement with tenants and landlords

Housing Services have strong ties with organisations such as the [East Lothian Tenant and Residents Panel \(ELTRP\)](#). ELTRP contributed towards the existing Tenant Participation Strategy 2020-2023 which sets out how council tenants can *influence and scrutinise the housing services* delivered by East Lothian Council. This strategy is considered an exemplar in Scotland and Housing Services are keen to build on the existing strategy. The strategy is now coming to an end and will be reviewed and updated in due course.

To support vibrant communities, a balanced mixture of tenures needs to be provided across neighbourhoods. The Private Rented Sector (PRS) offers a flexible tenure for households

who may not wish to or are unable to afford to purchase a property. The PRS has also proven to be a pathway to house some homeless households. Unfortunately, significant changes to PRS legislation as well as the economic situation has created uncertainties within this tenure, and the private rented stock is at risk of decreasing.

Currently, landlords in East Lothian are informed by Licensing Services about new requirements via a newsletter. 'Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian', commissioned in 2022, highlighted that further engagement with tenants and landlords within the private rented sector would be highly beneficial.

**Action
1.3**

To support both private landlords and tenants, ongoing and meaningful engagement on current reforms will be identified to solidify the role of the PRS in East Lothian.

Digital inclusion

Digital connectivity and inclusion allows residents and services to engage with each other in a more flexible manner than meeting in a physical space. This can be beneficial for people living more remote rural areas, people who are less mobile or when people have to shield for their health. Scotland's Updated Digital Strategy to create a *fully digitally inclusive nation* discusses how improved digital connectivity can also lead to better community engagement.²⁰ The strategy recognises that not all areas in Scotland are equally connected to broadband.

Digital connectivity is a means to improve access to services. Alternative options to accessing services will remain to residents in East Lothian, such as phone calls and paper forms.

East Lothian does not have areas classified as remote, however some rural areas do lack reliable digital connectivity which requires to be addressed The Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership, for example, facilitated better broadband in the rural community of Stenton. Such projects are supported and promoted by East Lothian Council.

The national Digital Strategy highlights the importance of digital inclusion of public services. The provision of digital services addresses challenges including limited service location and time restrictions and allows for better service access, particularly for people with mobility barriers.

East Lothian Housing Association

East Lothian Housing Association ([ELHA](#)) are digital leaders in the housing sector, and the first UK Housing Association to offer rent discounts as an incentive for tenants to go digital. ELHA is one of East Lothian Council's key partners and the largest housing association in East Lothian.

All of ELHA's Housing Services are accessible via [elha.com](#) and My Home, where tenants can manage their own tenancy. For those who may not be able to manage their tenancy or communicate effectively online, ELHA offer a Friends & Family Service which can be enabled by default where a Power of Attorney is in place, or on request from a tenant. In 2023, 88% of ELHA's tenants had a My Home account, and 85% were paper-free.

Ensuring that Housing Services are digitally accessible and promoting digital inclusion is, therefore, a crucial step in becoming more inclusive.

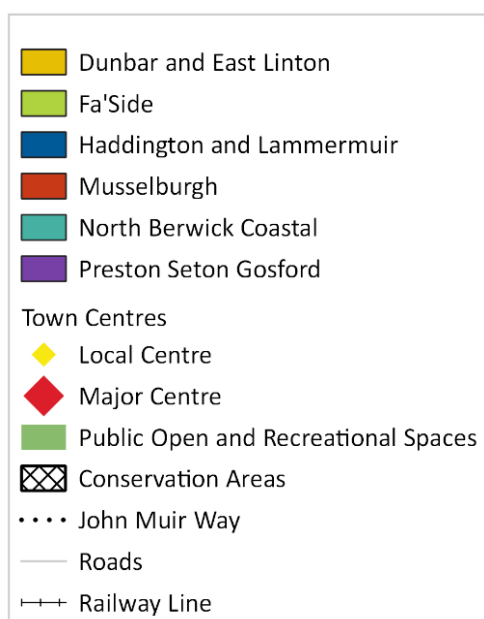
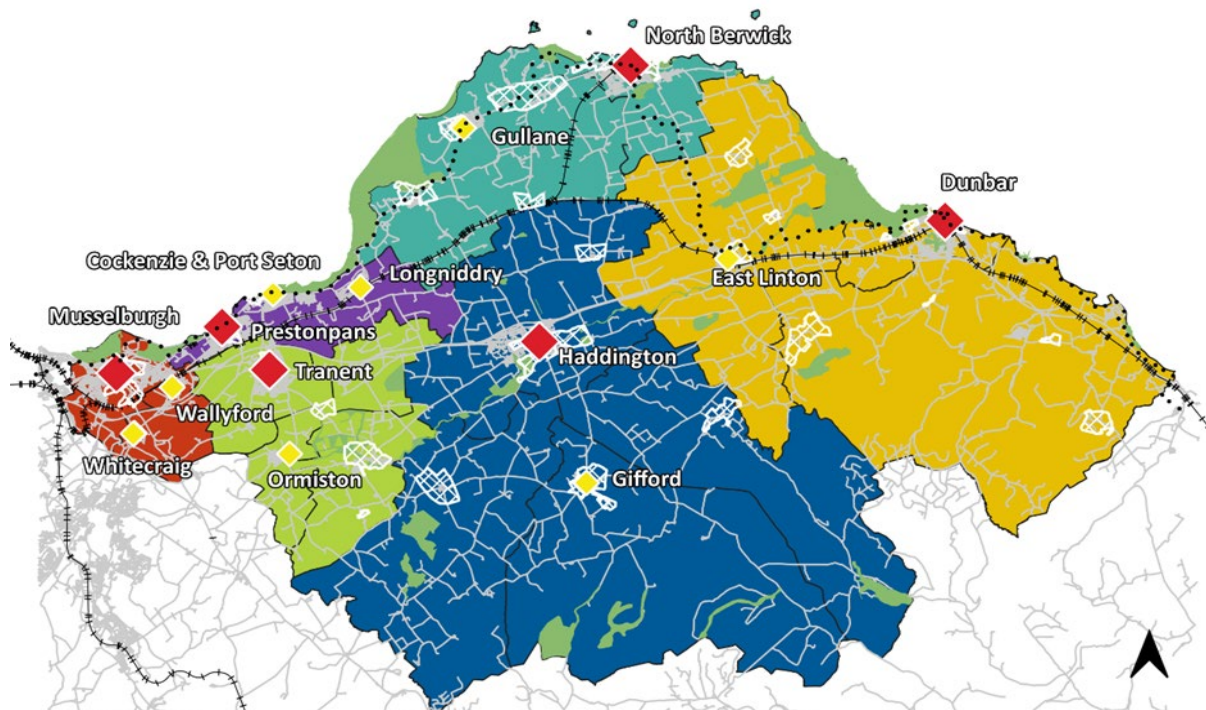
Action 1.4

As part of this, Housing Services have begun the process of creating a new Housing Management IT System with the aim for it completed during the lifetime of this LHS. The new system will improve time efficiencies for staff, clients, stakeholders and tenants, as well as improving communication.

²⁰ Scottish Government (2021) [A Changing Nation: How Scotland will thrive in a Digital World](#).

1.5 Communities of East Lothian

Across the county, six Area Partnership (AP) geographies are formally recognised as having distinct characteristics and challenges particular to their areas. The six areas are: Dunbar and East Linton; Fa'side; Haddington and Lammermuir; Musselburgh; North Berwick Coastal and Preston Seton Gosford. Each Area Partnership has one major town centre and further smaller local centres which all contribute towards the local economy and access to services. This section sets out a clear narrative of the distinctive areas in East Lothian.²¹

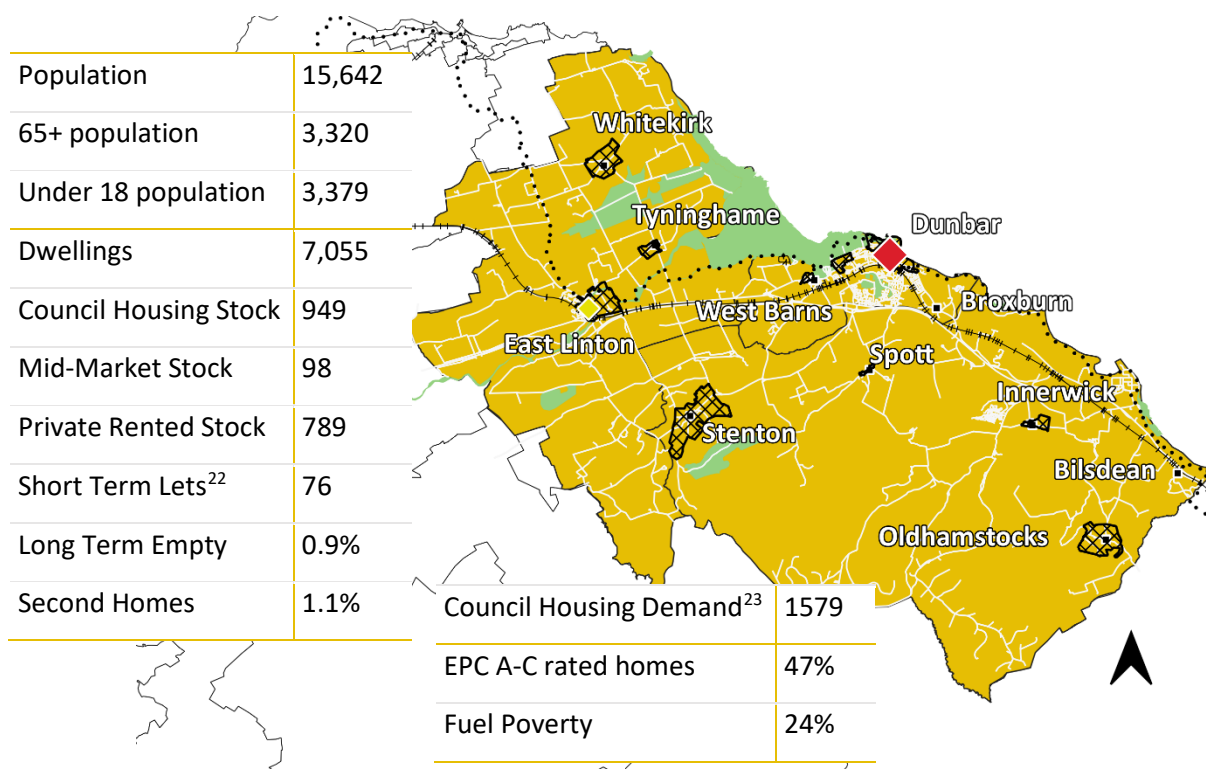


Each Area Partnership has a delegated budget from East Lothian Council to deliver improvements unique to their area. As such, Area Partnerships are responsible for delivering an [Area Plan](#). These are developed alongside residents and stakeholders to identify local priorities and how to deliver them. The challenges of each Area Partnership will be addressed through the Local Investment Framework.

Alongside Area Plans, communities can now also prepare land use plans, known as Local Place Plans. At the time of publication, no Local Place Plans have been registered by the East Lothian Planning Authority.

²¹ Each map in this chapter: Made with QGIS. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right (2022) | Copyright East Lothian Council, Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2022)

Dunbar and East Linton



The Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership is rural in nature, with the exception of Dunbar. Dunbar is the largest settlement in this AP and was extended towards the south during the last LHS period. It has the highest number of mid-market properties in East Lothian. Dunbar has seen the delivery of 116 affordable homes in the past five years, including 17 wheelchair and ambulant disabled accessible properties.

East Linton is an accessible rural village with a small local centre. At the time of writing, the new train station was under construction. The new station will improve sustainable transport connections, with East Linton being connected to Edinburgh and London.

Good digital connectivity is crucial to supporting rural communities and their access to services. Stenton and Innerwick are the second and third most [deprived areas](#)²⁴ in terms of 'access to services' in East Lothian. Affordable housing and improved digital access improve access to services, these themes will be explored as part of the Local Investment Framework.

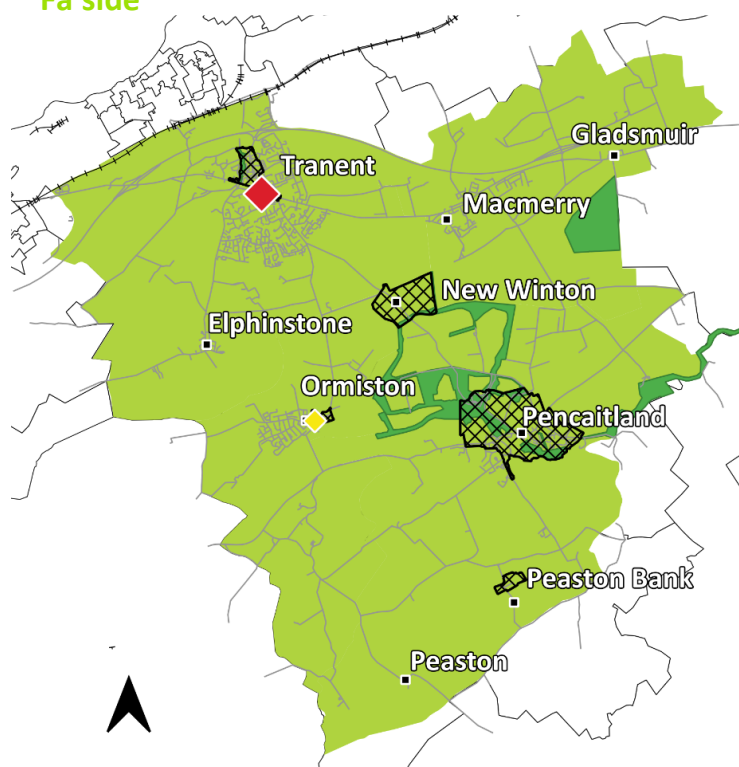
Fuel poverty affects 25.2% of private households living in Dunbar town centre and 23.8% of residents in rural areas of the AP. Dunbar has been selected for the next [CARS](#) fund 2022-2027. The fund will help to improve the fabric of historic buildings within the town centre; increase their energy efficiency and refurbish buildings at the 'back of the High Street'.

²² Snapshot numbers from East Lothian Council (2022) Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian.

²³ Number of people selecting this AP as their desired location. Multiple locations can be selected.

²⁴ Calculated by the population weighted average time taken to reach key services including primary and secondary school; GP surgery; post office; retail centre; and petrol station.

Fa'side



Population ²⁵	22,587
65+ population	3,355
Under 18 population	4,981
Dwellings	8,954
Council Housing Stock	2,121
Mid-Market Stock	20
Private Rented Stock	549
Short Term Lets	13
Long Term Empty	0.9%
Second Homes	0.1%
Council Housing Demand	1586
EPC A-C rated homes	55%
Fuel Poverty ²⁶	23%

Fa'side is a former mining area, with Tranent being the major town centre which is well connected to Edinburgh by public transport. Tranent town centre has undergone significant regeneration in recent years with the CARS fund which ended in 2022. The fund opened up additional opportunities such as the development of 28 housing units as part of the redevelopment of the former Co-op Department Store.

Fa'side has the highest proportion of people under 18 (22%) with a smaller proportion of people aged 65 and over (15%) compared to all other Area Partnerships. 23% of households live in fuel poverty, a smaller percentage than other areas. This may be because of a high proportion of council housing stock (23%). Social rented properties face stricter energy efficiency criteria in comparison to private sector housing.

The Area Partnership Plan has a strong focus on improving public spaces alongside creating safer traffic routes; promoting active travel and physical movement and reducing air pollution.

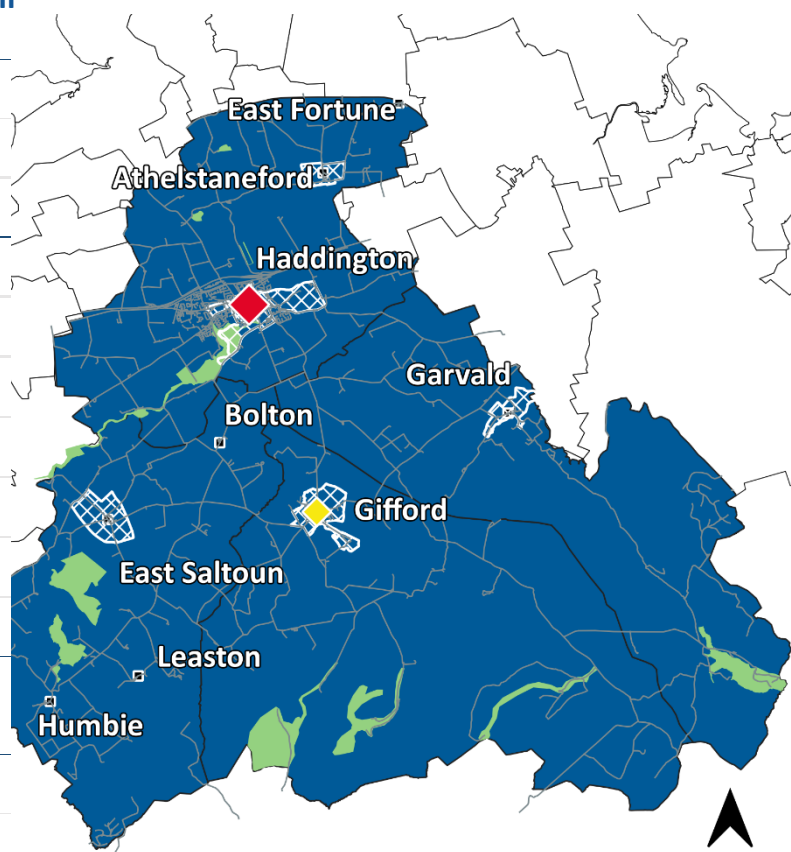
Over the last five years, a total of 155 affordable homes were developed in Fa'side of which 54 were wheelchair or ambulant disabled units. Pencaitland will see the completion of 30 new council homes in 2024, the first in the village since 1985. Macmerry has also seen significant additional housing supply in recent years. With the increase in housing in smaller villages, it is vital that residents have access to amenities and sustainable travel options in line with the 20 minute neighbourhood principle.

²⁵ Scottish Government (2022) [Population Estimates by Electoral Ward Mid-2021](#)

²⁶ Data Sources for fuel poverty data in LHS: SHCS (2019) and Home Analytics (2021) using the definition under the [Fuel Poverty \(Targets, Definition and Strategy\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

Haddington and Lammermuir

Population	20,079
65+ population	4,413
Under 18 population	4,112
Dwellings	6,674
Council Housing Stock	1,346
Mid-Market Stock	54
Private Rented Stock	763
Short Term Lets	32
Long Term Empty	1.1%
Second Homes	0.4%
Council Housing Demand	1117
EPC A-C rated homes	42%
Fuel Poverty	29.8%



Haddington is home of the local government central offices in East Lothian and is a major town centre with a mix of local shops and chain stores. The rest of the AP is rural in nature with many smaller settlements like Gifford which also has a historical local centre.

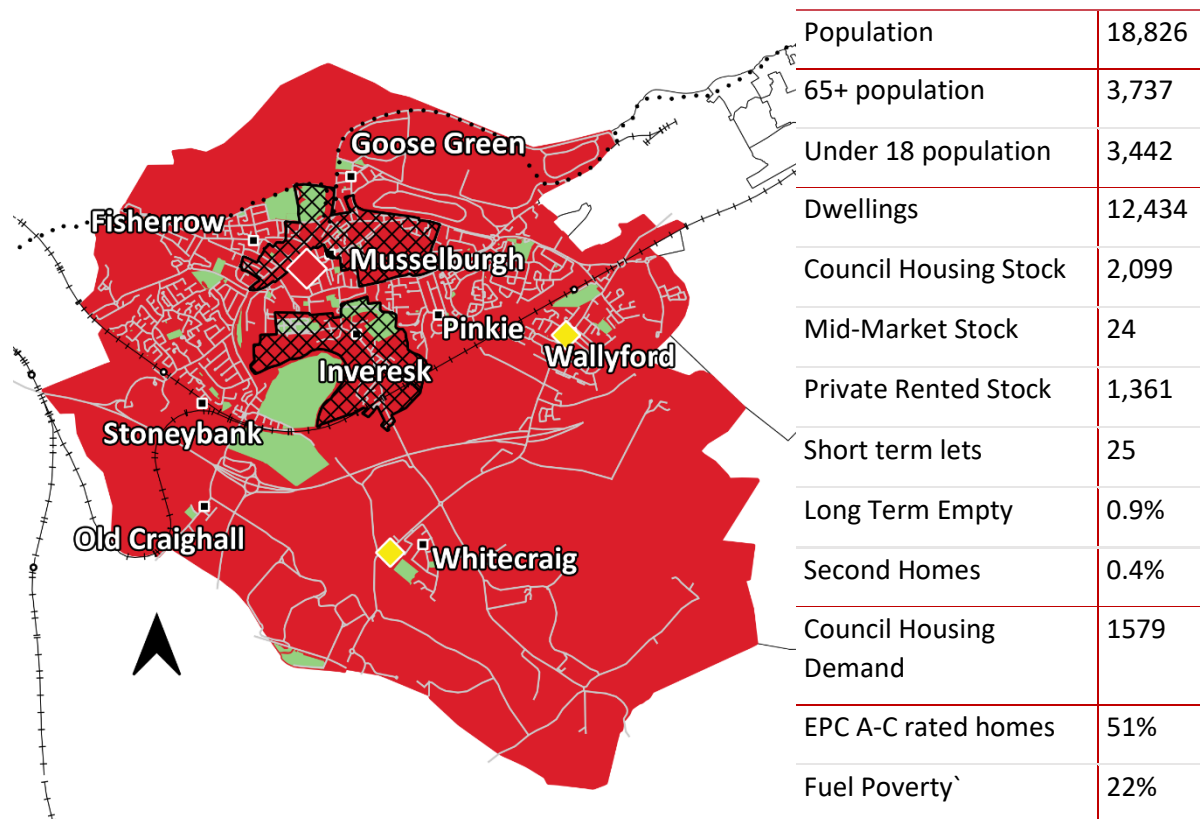
The AP overall averages at the 6th decile of the [SIMD](#).²⁷ However, some of the rural villages are in the top 3% of the most deprived in term of 'access to services' across Scotland (SIMD of 1 and 2). This has an impact on people's health and wellbeing with care services and amenities being hard to reach. Additional affordable housing can offer opportunities for people working in care services to live closer to rural areas in need of better access to services.

Housing delivery in this AP has focused on Haddington where existing access to amenities, services and transport connections are already in place. In the past five years the area has seen the development of 159 affordable homes including 71 ambulant disabled and wheelchair accessible homes. Further affordable homes are to be developed as the Letham site progresses and a planning application for the Herdmanflat site redevelopment has been submitted.

29.8% of residents face fuel poverty as this AP has a high number of pre-1919 buildings with most settlements being located in Conservation Areas. Residents in more rural areas are less likely to be connected to main energy supplies, relying on oil and biomass heating.

²⁷ The SIMD decile divides population deprivation into 10 equal parts. 1 being the most and 10 the least deprived.

Musselburgh



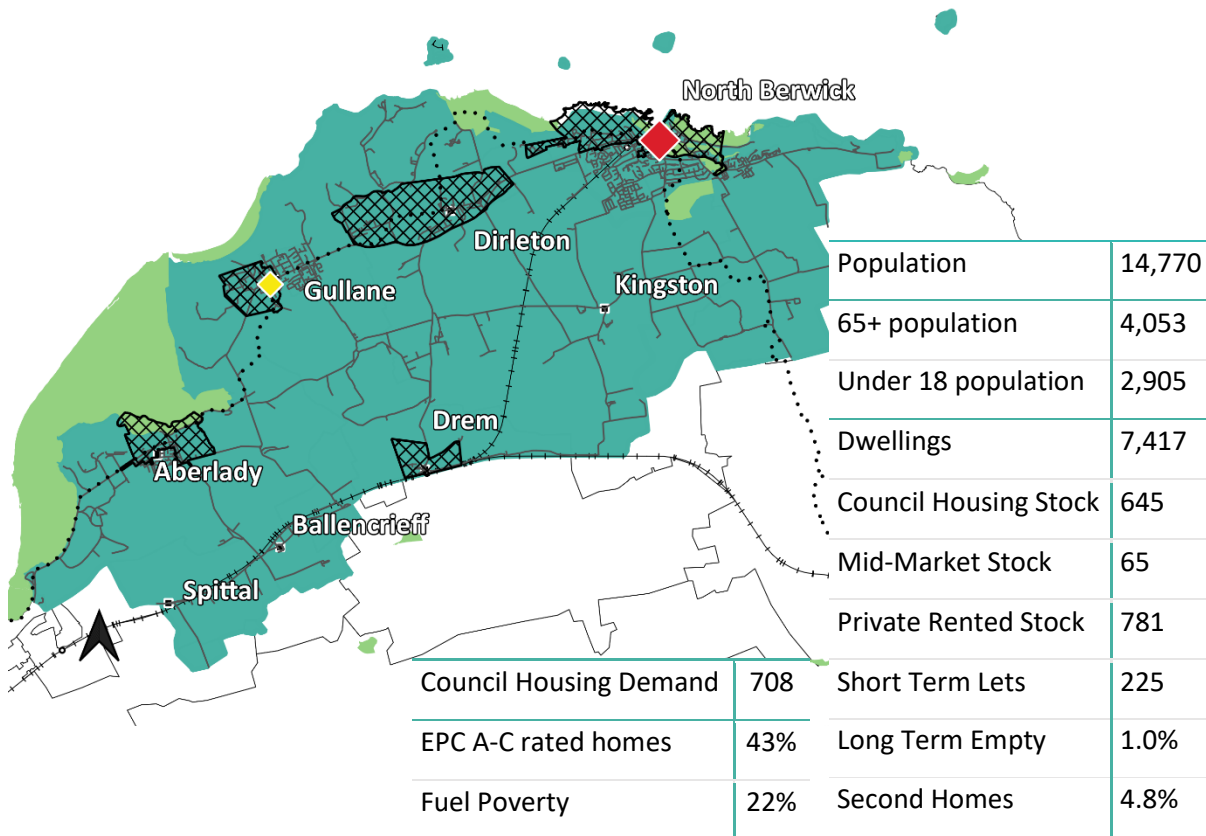
Musselburgh is the most densely populated AP in East Lothian, bordering both Edinburgh and Midlothian Council. Over the past five years 166 affordable homes were developed. 131 properties were wheelchair and ambulant disabled accessible; the highest level of provision within East Lothian. The Area Partnership’s actions focus on improving public and green spaces and active travel to provide safe and accessible places and reduce health inequalities.

Musselburgh town is well connected to Edinburgh, Tranent, and Prestonpans by public transport. Musselburgh’s town centre is a high traffic area and is under air quality management. The town is prone to flooding and the proposed Flood Protection Scheme is to be finalised in 2024. It is estimated that the scheme could protect around 900 properties from major flood events in the future.

Access to services for those outwith Musselburgh town declines sharply. Whitecraig and Wallyford are service access and education deprived, even though each has a local centre. Wallyford has seen a major expansion to the west in recent years including a primary and secondary school. Land to the north and south of Whitecraig is also allocated for development and will be delivered following the expansion of the local primary school.

Alongside the Innovation Hub at Queen Margaret University, a project funded by the [Edinburgh and South East Scotland City County Deal](#), 1,500 homes were granted permission at Old Craighall in 2018. The delivery of homes has started and the A1 junction has been upgraded. A new on-site primary school was also approved at the end of 2022.

North Berwick Coastal



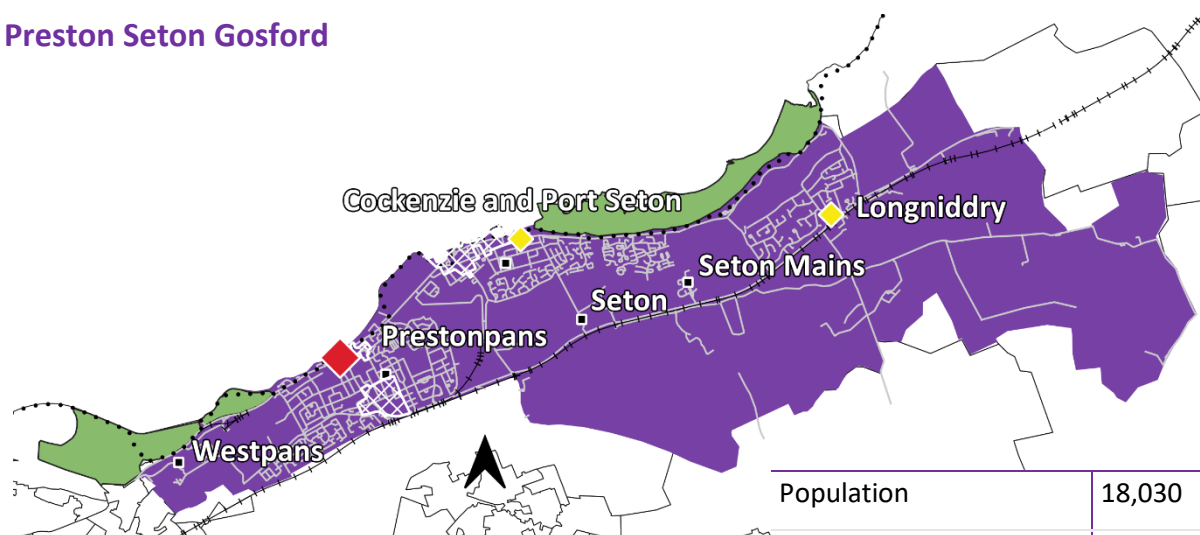
The North Berwick Coastal Area comprises of North Berwick as its major town centre and a local centre in Gullane. Both centres are located within conservation areas, as are other villages including Aberlady, Dirleton and Drem. Buildings in conservation areas are often older and less energy efficient. In comparison to other APs in East Lothian, a lower proportion (22%) of people live in fuel poverty.

North Berwick Coastal is considered East Lothian's most affluent area with a SIMD average of 8.3. Inequalities across SIMD categories are less prominent than in other Area Partnerships. However, issues of affordability for lower income households have become prominent as house prices increase. Households along North Berwick harbour are more deprived in terms of education and housing. All other, more rural, areas within the AP are service access deprived, lying below the [3rd SIMD decile](#).

The area attracts considerable tourism activity, which is vital for the local area, but also creates challenges. For example, there is a relatively high number of short term lets and second homes within North Berwick, whilst there remains pressures on having sufficient homes for people to live locally as well as for those working for the service and the care sector.

Across the AP, 242 affordable homes were developed over the past five years, including 65 mid-market properties, and 129 wheelchair and ambulant disabled accessible homes. This provision of affordable housing has been higher than in any other AP due to the level of new housing developments in this area.

Preston Seton Gosford



The Preston Seton Gosford (PSG) Area Partnership stretches out along the Firth of Forth. Most parts are well connected to Edinburgh with train stations at Prestonpans and Longniddry.

The main town centre is Prestonpans, which is partially located in a conservation area, making it ineligible for the [CARS](#) fund. The Cockenzie local centre has benefited from the CARS fund which has now come to an end.

This AP has a high fuel poverty rate of 28.8%, however considering the SIMD, large disparities can be found. Housing deprivation is high in Prestonpans and gradually declines towards the east of the AP. Prestonpans also experiences high education and employment deprivation (lowest two deciles of the [SIMD](#)) which also impact

income and health deprivation which lie around the 3rd and 4th decile. New funding opportunities introduced by Historic Environment Scotland will allow for the regeneration of town centres out-with conservation areas such as Prestonpans in the future. This could allow for the improvement of properties in Prestonpans and open opportunities for education and training within the construction industry.

Between 2018 and 2023, 156 affordable homes were built across Preston, Seton and Gosford, including 71 wheelchair and ambulant disabled homes. Longniddry is expanding to the south adjacent to the existing rail station. A café, purpose built holiday lets and office spaces are proposed within the listed farm buildings as well as improvements to the existing local centre. The integration of the new development and their residents within the existing AP will be a crucial focus point as the development progresses.

Population	18,030
65+ population	3,543
Under 18 population	3,549
Dwellings	8,084
Council Housing Stock	1,847
Mid-Market Stock	40
Private Rented Stock	582
Short Term Lets	13
Long Term Empty	0.9%
Second Homes	0.3%
Council Housing Demand	1511
EPC A-C rated homes	50%
Fuel Poverty	28.8%

Blindwells

- 480 units approved so far
- Blindwells Primary School approved

Picture 0.2: Blindwells Masterplan as approved in planning application 21/01580/PM. Source: EMA Architecture + Design Ltd (2022)



Blindwells is a new settlement which was allocated for development in the 2008 Local Plan. Blindwells is located to the north east of Tranent and south of Port Seton and is connected to the A1 to the south of the site and the A198 to the north. The vision for Blindwells is:

To shape a high quality expandable mixed community consistent with the sustainable development principles set out in national, regional and local planning policy.

Blindwells is set to be a new town which will minimise travel whilst ensuring the vitality of existing town centres. The site is approximately 130 hectares and can accommodate 1,600 homes of which 30% are to be affordable. Land has been allocated for employment and a town centre is planned alongside local facilities, amenities and green recreational spaces, including a ‘destination park’ and a loch. High quality urban connections, public spaces and facilities will contribute towards establishing a community identity.

Blindwells currently sits within the Preston Seton Gosford (PSG) Area Partnership. In line with the Place Principle, existing communities have been active in discussions around connecting the new site to Prestonpans and Longniddry through foot and cycle paths. The new town offers the opportunity to create mixed and resilient communities as well as contributing towards East Lothian’s housing need in terms of both, market and affordable housing. The PSG AP has been liaising with Longniddry Church who have been delivering welcome packs when properties have been handed over to new residents.

The first phase of Blindwells is now well underway with 480 residential units approved so far and the landscaping within Phase 1, including sustainable urban drainage systems, has been implemented. By the end of 2022, 60 council homes had been allocated to new residents. The development of the Blindwells Primary School including playing fields, playgrounds and car parking spaces was approved in December 2022. At the time of writing, details of the town centre are being prepared and the delivery schedule of parks is currently being established.

1.6 Town Centre Regeneration

Town Centres are an important feature of all towns in East Lothian, each with their own unique characteristics. The Town Centre First Principle was adopted by East Lothian Council in 2014/15. It seeks to deliver the best local outcomes, align policies and target available resources to prioritise town centre sites, encouraging vibrancy, equality and diversity.

Town Centres in East Lothian have not faced the same high level vacancy rates as the national average, nevertheless, there remains many opportunities to energise our local centres²⁸.

Town centres face a range of challenges. Due to the older nature of the building stock, with many tenements pre-dating 1918, residential and commercial buildings have higher levels of disrepair, poor conditions and low energy efficiency ratings. These buildings become vacant when improvements become too cost intensive. This often leads to properties becoming long term [empty homes](#).

One of the major challenges has been the ability to improve the Council's knowledge of housing conditions of properties in town centres. To support the Town Centre First Principle, more knowledge around the quality of properties and their adaptability is needed to deliver a fabric first approach²⁹.

Housing has a key role to play in the revitalising of town centres. Where housing developments have occurred at the edge of towns or away from town centres, residents often rely on cars and become less likely to depend on local services found in town centres. Town Centres are also critical to NPF4 policy approach of '20 minute neighbourhoods'.

The rise in Short Term Lets has also brought challenges. They can provide a degree of revitalisation to Town Centres. However, where they are not occupied for the full year, they can also create an economic gap, to the detriment of Town Centres. More information on Short Term Lets can be found in [Section 2.7 of Chapter 2](#).

East Lothian Council has led a number of Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS), a Historic Environment Scotland fund for heritage-led regeneration in Conservation Areas, in recent years. CARS brings a range of opportunities for the re-use of buildings and bringing empty properties back into use in town centres.

The scheme consists of a combination of larger priority building repair projects, smaller repair grant schemes, activities which promote community heritage engagement and training in traditional building skills (all concerning pre-1919 buildings). East Lothian's Regeneration Team have successfully delivered several schemes using this fund, summarised in Table 1.1. Success of CARS in East Lothian has been down to the level of community engagement and ensuring that 'place-making' is at the heart of all engagements.

²⁸ [East Lothian Council Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022](#)

²⁹ A fabric first approach focuses on reducing a home's heat loss at the early designs stages be it for new developments or refurbishment projects.

Table 1.1: CARS in East Lothian

Area	Funding Period	Scheme Fund	HES Fund	Main focus of delivery
Haddington	2009-2014	£1.73m	£935k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive repair and enhancement of 14 core town centre tenements. • Public realm works on Lodge Street.
Tranent	2015-2022	£887k	£570k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Repair Grants incl. 8 Shopfronts. • Fraser Centre Community Cinema. • Designing of a new town centre mural with the contribution of 200 children.
Cockenzie	2018-2023	£1.22m	£600k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support of 1 priority building on Cockenzie High Street. • Support of several small grant repair projects in the High Street and elsewhere. • Series of free outreach events related to traditional skills and materials.
Dunbar	2022-2027	£2.58	£1.11m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of budget towards training for traditional training skills in collaboration with EL Works and the Ridge. • Support of 5 priority buildings identified in the town centre, • Support of 20 buildings through general repairs fund. • Small public realm improvements and heritage education with the community.

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

A new successor fund by Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the Heritage & Place Programme, is now available to *contribute to the development of vibrant and sustainable places, through community-led regeneration of the historic environment*. Housing Strategy will work with Economic Development to maximise opportunities for area based regeneration.

**Action
1.5**

1.7 Caring for open spaces and neighbourhoods

High quality open spaces play a critical role in the life of a community, providing a range of facilities and places for quiet reflection, physical activity, sport and fun. Green spaces act as a meeting ground, promote active travel, and improve people’s mental and physical wellbeing. Green spaces also form an integral part of mitigating climate change and promoting biodiversity.

The East Lothian Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022 highlighted that satisfaction of neighbourhood management lay at 88.4% in 2022. Anti-social behaviour and estate management were of highest concern across East Lothian.

The Open Space Strategy (2018), currently under review, provides the policy framework and vision for the management of existing provision, of new open space and outdoor sports areas. It sets out the minimum open space provision for new housing developments. It also considers the management and maintenance of existing open spaces. This does not only include parks but also playgrounds and sports pitches as well as private garden grounds. Communities are a key partner in setting out new open space standards. Housing Services will collaborate with Countryside and Leisure where appropriate to help maintain those standards.

Benefits of open spaces

Sense of place	Active Travel	Climate change	Mental and Physical Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments. • Sports facilities. • Playgrounds. • Seating Areas. • Street and mature trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport links. • Pedestrian and cycle paths. • Access to parks and civic spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood prevention. • Sustainable drainage systems. • Urban cooling through tree shading, green roofs, and walls. • Nature based solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving air quality. • Space for physical activity. • Multigenerational meeting spaces to socialise. • Access to nature.

Discussions with communities around their green space needs are vital, particularly in the face of increasing budgetary constraints. Community engagement, alongside collaboration with Countryside and Leisure, Amenities, Landscape and Planning are crucial to offer a coordinated delivery of well-maintained places.

In terms of Anti-social behaviour (ASB), the county has seen an increase in complaints since the Covid-19 pandemic. Community Housing and the Safer Communities Team collaborate regularly on managing ASB across East Lothian.

**Action
1.6**

The existing ASB Strategy is also currently under review and due to be completed during the lifetime of this LHS.

1.8 Moving forward

The following summarises some of the key challenges identified in this chapter and actions that will be taken over the lifetime of this LHS. The full list of detailed actions can be found within the [LHS Action Plan](#).

Key Challenges

- Financial constraints on communities and public services as a result of the pandemic and cost of living crisis. Increased need to work alongside communities and other partners to deliver services differently.
- The need to expand and diversify community engagement whilst managing resource constraints.
- Risk of a decreasing private rented sector and need to identify creative solutions to increasing supply in this sector.
- Improving digital access to services.
- Funding opportunities for Town Centres are limited due to eligibility criteria and limited knowledge of housing stock quality.
- Rise in complaints around Anti-Social Behaviour.

Actions

- 1.1 Prepare a Local Investment Framework with communities, building upon Area Plans, to direct strategic investment in and around homes, ensuring a balanced mix of house types and sizes across all areas to meet local need.
 - 1.2 Continue to build on existing links with other organisations and are open to engaging with organisations who have an interest in improving housing and housing services in East Lothian.
 - 1.3 Ongoing and meaningful engagement opportunities on current reforms will be identified to support landlords and their tenants to solidify the role of the private rented sector.
 - 1.4 Implement a new Housing Management IT System.
 - 1.5 Maximise opportunities for area based regeneration.
 - 1.6 Complete the review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.
-

2 Housing Supply and Affordability

This section of the LHS examines the supply and affordability across all tenures within East Lothian and identifies areas of housing pressure within the county. East Lothian is the second fastest growing local authority area within Scotland and this creates supply pressure across all tenures. The speed of growth also creates additional pressures on the local authority, particularly on revenue budgets through increasing demands for services combined with increasing expectations. Ensuring the county has the right housing in the right places to meet the needs of the local population will be key to delivering the aims of the LHS.³⁰

Priority Outcome: Housing Supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households across East Lothian.

2.1 The National Context

[Housing to 2040](#) commits the Scottish Government to the delivery of 110,000 affordable homes across Scotland by 2032. Of these affordable homes, Housing to 2040 sets out that at least 70% should be for social rent. Housing to 2040 includes a commitment from the Scottish Government to define ‘affordable housing’.³¹

[NPF4](#) (National Planning Framework 4) sets out the Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) for each planning authority. The finalised MATHLR for East Lothian sets out a requirement to deliver a minimum of 6,500 homes across all tenures over the next ten years. NPF4 also set out the ability to vary the percentage of affordable housing dependant on area need.

“Proposals for market homes will only be supported where the contribution to the provision of affordable homes on a site will be at least 25% of the total number of homes, unless the LDP sets out locations or circumstances where:

- i. a higher contribution is justified by evidence of need, or
- ii. a lower contribution is justified, for example, by evidence of impact on viability, where proposals are small in scale, or to incentivise particular types of homes that

³⁰ References in the chapter are made to the east (Dunbar & East Linton; Haddington & Lammermuir; North Berwick Coastal) and west (Musselburgh; Preston, Seton & Gosford; Tranent, Wallyford & Macmerry) of the county

³¹ Generally, it is agreed that housing is no longer affordable if it accounts for more than 35% of a household’s income. However, there are a range of factors which will influence this including disability, make-up of household and income of household. There are a range of affordability measures and rationale for selecting this one should be stated. Shelter’s definition although reasonable differs from NPPF, NHF and others.

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

are needed to diversify the supply, such as self-build or wheelchair accessible homes. The contribution is to be provided in accordance with local policy or guidance”.³²

The proposed [Domestic Building Environmental Standards \(Scotland\) Bill](#) is set to introduce new minimum environmental design standards for all new-build housing to meet the Passivhaus standard, or a Scottish equivalent, in order to improve energy efficiency and thermal performance.

This will impact upon the type of new housing that is delivered within East Lothian with increasing standards pushing up unit costs. These homes will require less energy and therefore should be cheaper to run for occupants. The introduction of new energy efficiency measures for social housing and the decarbonisation of heat will also require significant investment in current stock and may impact upon future development plans.

2.2 The Local Context

Both house prices and population within East Lothian have risen sharply in recent years, leading to a highly pressurised housing market. For many on lower incomes home ownership is out of reach with high house prices across the county. Rents in the private sector have also been increasing over the same period. Demand for affordable housing has never been so high, with over 4,200 households on the Council’s housing list, 400 homeless applications, and unprecedented demand for intermediate tenures, with current supply unable to meet the demand for affordable housing.

[The City Region Deal](#) allocated £313 million towards the capital investment of housing. A total of seven strategic housing sites were identified including Blindwells in East Lothian with work currently under way to develop 1,600 homes including 480 affordable homes.

[Local Development Plan \(LDP2\)](#) is in the early stages of preparation and will take into account the requirements as stated within [NPF4](#). Guidance for the LDP states that it should have regard to any LHS.

South East Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA3) – finalised in 2022, HNDA3 uses a scenario based tool along with local data to estimate the number of additional homes that are required within each local authority to meet existing and future need and demand. [HNDA3](#) estimated that an additional 476 new homes per annum are required in East Lothian over a 20 year period, 66% affordable and 34% market. The LHS is underpinned by the HNDA which provides a robust and credible evidence base that is used as a starting point to set a Housing Supply Target.

Affordable Housing Supply Target - The HST outlines the amount and type of affordable housing that can be realistically delivered over the period of both the LHS and LDP2. The HST takes full consideration of factors which may have a material impact on the scale and pace of housing delivery including the economy, capacity of the construction sector, resource availability and planned demolitions. It also combines information about likely

³² National Planning Framework 4

resource allocations from Scottish Government as well as high priority and pipeline affordable housing developments over the next five years to produce an ambitious but realistic target for affordable housing. The affordable HST for 2024-2029 is 891 including unsubsidised units. A market HST has been set at 3,563 units over the lifetime of the LHS.

At the time of writing this LHS, there are a number of factors which are making it difficult to set a realistic HST, not least the outcome of the next land release for LDP2. There are also factors such as the recent reduction in Scottish Government Investment and the outcome of ELC's recent rent increase consultation. Based on these unknowns, the HST has been calculated on the current LDP and land audit together with the knowledge that there is likely to be a reduction in Scottish Government Investment. More information on how the HST was calculated can be found in [Supporting Paper 4: Housing Supply Target](#).

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25- 2028/29 - The [SHIP](#) sets out priorities for housing investment within East Lothian over the next five years. The SHIP outlines the potential start of 1,465 new affordable homes. It is also estimated that 1,687 affordable homes across East Lothian will be completed over the period of the plan. 36 units are planned on top of the above-mentioned units and will be delivered unsubsidised through innovative funding schemes.

While the SHIP outlines the potential start of 1465 new affordable homes assessed as high priority, this will require £64,218,000 of Scottish Government Investment. This was based on similar historic resource allocations. We now know that this investment will be reduced, therefore feel that the conservative HST is more realistic.

New affordable housing supply is however critical to meeting the needs of East Lothian residents and the Council, together with its partners, will continue to explore ways to maximise opportunities and investment to increase this target over the life of the LHS.

2.3 Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing in East Lothian is delivered via a range of different tenures, including social rent, mid-market rent (MMR) and Low Cost Home Ownership. A full list of all affordable tenures and their definitions are set out within Appendix 4.

Despite increased challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, East Lothian's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) secured the highest additional funding allocation than previous years, delivering a total of 995 new affordable homes during the previous LHS period.

Tenure	Area
Social Rent	643
Mid-Market Rent	229

Low-Cost Home Ownership	23
Total affordable housing completions	895
Open Market Acquisitions for Social Rent	100
Total	995
Source: East Lothian Council, 2023	

Action 2.1

We will continue to deliver an ambitious AHSP, with an affordable Housing Supply Target of 891 over the period of this LHS. The Council will also continue to explore new innovative models to maximise opportunities to increase the supply of housing.

2.4 Social Rent

There are a total of 11,469 social rented properties within East Lothian incorporating both council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) stock³³, accounting for 23.7% of all properties within East Lothian. An estimated number of 4,200 people are on the housing list for an East Lothian Council property, with a similar number on RSL housing lists. It can be assumed that broadly the same households are on both RSL and Council housing lists, with 28.2% of households leaving the Council Housing List in 2021/22 after being accommodated by RSLs in the County. This demonstrates the importance of RSLs in providing affordable housing.

Despite a percentage leaving the housing list, between 2021/22 and 2022/23, East Lothian Council's housing list increased by 700 households. This is indicative of the growing pressure households' face in being able to find an affordable property in East Lothian across all tenures.

The highest level of social rented stock is within the Musselburgh ward, with the lowest number in North Berwick Coastal. While Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry, Musselburgh and Preston, Seton Gosford Wards have the higher number of social homes per 1,000 population they also have the highest demand for social housing. This may partly reflect the range of house types available in these areas, with households unable to select areas on the housing list where their desired house type doesn't currently exist.

Almost a quarter (24%) of housing list applicants for social housing in East Lothian are made by households currently living in the PRS. This is more than double the proportion of households who live in the sector (10%). This suggests a strong unmet demand for social housing from PRS tenants. PRS tenants seeking social rented housing in East Lothian are concentrated in North Berwick Coastal (36%), Haddington and Lammermuir (31%) and

³³ Scottish Housing Regulator – Total Self Contained Units (2022) General Needs RSLs in the area include Dunedin Canmore, East Lothian Housing Association, Homes for Life, Wheatley Homes East.

Dunbar and East Linton (27%). These are the three wards with the least amount of social rented housing.

Table 2.2: ELC & RSL Social Rent Stock by ward per 1,000 people

Ward	Number social rented properties	Number social rented homes per 1,000 population
Dunbar & East Linton	1,313	83.9
Haddington & Lammermuir	1,532	76.3
Musselburgh	2,844	151.1
North Berwick Coastal	925	62.6
Preston, Seton, Gosford	2,211	125.1
Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry	2,644	117.1
East Lothian	11,469	104.7

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

To ensure balanced communities, and affordable options for all, it is crucial that the supply of social rented and other forms of affordable housing is accessible in all East Lothian wards. This will be achieved through the development of the [Local Investment Framework](#) (LIF), mentioned in Chapter 1. The LIF will focus on ward areas and housing need and will be assessed with related indicative targets for each ward to help address any imbalances occurring in the investment programme.

Allocations Policy

The main objective of the Allocations Policy is to meet the Council’s legal obligations specified in the Allocations and Homelessness legislation. The policy, along with other associated actions will also help the Council make best use of Council housing stock. In addition, the policy also assists the Council achieve, along with other complementary actions, balanced and sustainable communities through local lettings plans.

In setting any targets against each group the Council must give reasonable preference to certain statutory groups when allocating Council houses. These include applicants living in unsatisfactory housing conditions; tenants in social housing who are under occupying their property and who have unmet housing needs and to those applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Most of the statutory groups are found in the General Needs Group, although some applicants may fall into the Transfer Group, such as those who need re-housing because of overcrowding or whose health is being negatively impacted upon in their current

accommodation. Overcrowding, however, can be an issue across housing tenures, especially as the cost of living may increase the likelihood of multigenerational households.

**Action
2.2**

We will explore the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on households in East Lothian regards to housing options, more specifically examining the issue of multigenerational households across all tenures.

Table 2.3: East Lothian Council Housing Allocations, 2022/23

Type	Number	Percentage	Targets (set 22/23)
General Needs	370	73.56%	70%
Transfers	123	24.45%	25%
Sustainable Communities ³⁴	10	1.99%	5%
Total	503	100%	100%

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

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. However, despite allocations consistently being around 50%, the number of households and the length of time spent in temporary accommodation is critically high.

Table 2.4: Allocations to Homeless Households

Year	Homeless	% of total Allocations
2017/18	237	48%
2018/19	299	59%
2019/20	276	54%
2020/21	242	52%
2021/22	204	47%

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

A high number of homeless applications are from single person households, however the availability of one bedroom properties are limited, relative to two and three bed properties.

³⁴ For Sustainable Communities other rules apply – it is the attribute of the applicant that is the main consideration – a local lettings plan will be used to select applicants with the appropriate attributes and the applicant with the earliest date of application will be made an offer of housing.

Action 2.3

An allocations policy which considers the critical challenges within homelessness and the demand placed on single bed properties can be essential in ensuring that those remaining in emergency or unsuitable temporary accommodation for long periods can move to permanent homes. This will help improve flow within the housing system and reduce the number of Unsuitable Accommodation Order breaches. To ensure East Lothian Council's allocations policy reflects this, we will conduct a review over the period of this LHS.

Void Properties

East Lothian has higher rates of [tenancy sustainment](#) than the Scottish average. There is low turnover of tenants moving to larger/smaller properties, or moving to MMR or home ownership. This, combined with increasing periods of properties remaining void, creates a blockage in the housing system and slows the rate at which homeless households can be re-housed.

The average time to re-let a void East Lothian Council property has increased. Impacted by backlogs created through Covid-19 restrictions, material and staff shortages, as well as increased requirements to adapt and extend housing, the number of days to re-let a void Council property increased to 66.2 days in 2021/2022.

Void time directly impacts on the flow within the housing system. The greater the delays faced in turning around a void property, the longer individuals wait to be allocated a permanent home, which can contribute to lengthy periods of time spent in temporary accommodation.

Action 2.4

In recognition of the impact voids have on homelessness, we will develop a voids performance management framework.

Overcrowding

It's not only the geographical provision of social rented housing that is unbalanced in East Lothian, but also the supply of different size properties. Two bedroom properties account for 52% of social rent stock, three beds account for 25%, one beds 21% and four+ beds 2%. This results in properties being over-crowded as families grow and there is a lack of affordable larger properties to move into. It is difficult to estimate the number of households living in Council properties that are overcrowded as it relies on self-reporting through the Household Form. However, it is thought that households living in overcrowded conditions could range between 350 and 650.

Overcrowding can reduce privacy, limit space for children to study or play and can be a source of stress and anxiety. Overcrowding has also been shown to increase the spread of respiratory conditions and increase the risk of childhood infection and asthma. Living in overcrowded housing is not something that any household would choose and is symptomatic of an undersupply of affordable housing of the right size.

Alleviating overcrowding relies on a range of policy interventions all of which we will continue to utilise over the period of this LHS:

- Providing incentives for households in East Lothian Council tenancies to downsize when they no longer require larger homes in order to free them up.
- Increasing the number of larger social rent and MMR new build properties.
- Targeting properties on the open market to bring back into Council stock through the Open Market Acquisitions.
- An Allocations Policy which reflects the increasing complexities of the housing system in East Lothian.

2.5 Mid-Market Rent (MMR)

There are four providers of MMR housing in East Lothian accounting for 301 properties. The majority of MMR units are in Dunbar (32.6%), with the lowest number in Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry (6.6%). Affordable housing providers of MMR rent do not maintain housing lists, with properties advertised when they become available, similar to properties in the private rented sector. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that MMR properties are in high demand, with the number of applications per property increasing.

Table 2.5: Mid-Market Rental Properties by Ward, East Lothian, Jan 2022

Area partnership	Total number of units	% of all MMR units	Number of MMR homes per 1,000 population
Dunbar & East Linton	98	32.6%	6.3
Haddington & Lammermuir	54	17.9%	2.7
Musselburgh	24	8%	1.3
North Berwick Coastal	65	21.6%	4.4
Preston, Seton, Gosford	40	13.3%	2.3
Tranent, Wallyford, Macmerry	20	6.6%	0.9
East Lothian	301	100%	2.7

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

The comparative affordability of MMR when compared to the PRS mean that it is an option that is likely to appeal to many residents within East Lothian, particularly those looking for affordable secure accommodation who would be unlikely to obtain housing within other tenures.

Action 2.5

The provision of mid-market rent (MMR) properties will continue to play a key part in providing more affordable housing across the county and we will look to increase the stock of MMR.

2.6 Low Cost Initiatives for First Time Buyers (LIFT)

In 2020-21, there were a total of 22 properties purchased via [Open Market Shared Equity \(OMSE\)](#), and a total of 13 from April 2021 to 31st July 2021. Properties were predominately in the west of the county with only one in Haddington. The average overall price for OMSE was £160,000 which is well below the average house price within the county.

In 2022/23, the most affordable two bedroom flat was in Musselburgh with a home report value of £177,546. Followed by a two bedroom house in Tranent for £189,370, both over the OMSE threshold. In addition, an average 91.6% of properties sold for their home report valuation or higher, with the average property achieving 108.5% of home report valuation at sale. In North Berwick, this increases to 110.6% of the valuation, and Dunbar 109.7%. The highly pressurised housing market with increasingly competitive selling prices results in fewer properties available which meet OMSE thresholds.

Table 2.6: OMSE threshold by bed size, East Lothian

	1	2	3	4	5
OMSE threshold	£130,000	£175,000	£200,000	£260,000	£355,000
Source: Scottish Government, 2023					

Uptake of the New Supply Shared Equity scheme (NSSE) in East Lothian has been slow with no new developments since 2018. Constraints on the numbers of banks willing to lend on the model and over saturation within North Berwick at that time as a result of other low cost home ownership options running at the same time meant that sales were slow.

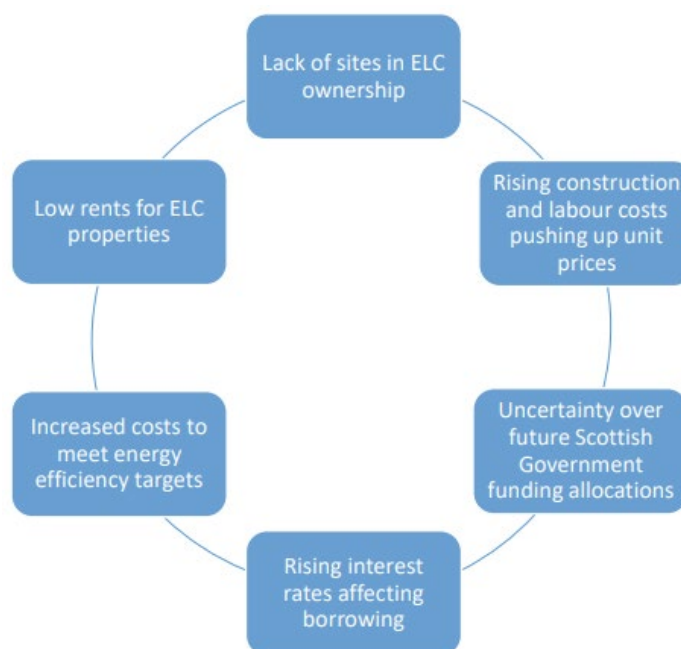
Low Cost Housing Initiatives such as Low Cost Homeownership are secured through the same legislation with house builders as part of the affordable housing contribution. House prices have been increasing by such significant amounts in East Lothian that the discount required to ensure affordability is not feasible.

Action 2.6

We will continue to explore options for affordable home ownership and investigate whether schemes such as OMSE and NSSE can be viable within the East Lothian context.

2.7 Challenges in Delivery

East Lothian is dependent on the supply of market housing, and land use policies to supply affordable housing. A lack of sites and suitable buildings owned by the Council mean that affordable housing is generally secured through Section 75 agreements.³⁵ The Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) sets a 25% affordable housing contribution requirement from developers of new housing developments consisting of five or more units.³⁶ As a result the Council has little control of when land will come forward for development.



The Council is not immune to wider economic factors such as rising inflation and increased construction and labour costs. These are pushing up the price of providing new build housing with individual unit prices increasing.

Upcoming energy efficiency legislation such as the proposed Scottish Passivhaus equivalent are also likely to result in increased building costs. While proposed measures such as SHNZS and a new Accessible Housing Standard will require increased investment in existing stock. Without additional funding it is likely that the new measures will impact upon the numbers of affordable homes that can be delivered within East Lothian, both for the Council and local RSL partners.

Action 2.7

We will renew East Lothian's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and associated Affordable Housing Policy in recognition of the widespread challenges faced by the housing system in East Lothian by undertaking the development of the Local Investment Framework to ensure the need of communities are reflected in the delivery of housing across affordable housing tenures.

³⁵ Section 75 agreements, also known as planning obligations, are contracts entered into between a landowner and the local Council, as part of the planning application process.

³⁶ With the current exception of Blindwells which has a 30% affordable housing contribution requirement.

2.8 Private Rented Sector

The PRS is a diverse sector with a broad customer base, in both East Lothian and Scotland. It is recognised as providing a good housing option for those requiring flexibility in terms of employment for those setting up home for the first time. However, in recent years, the sector has become a housing option for those seeking longer-term accommodation as well as for those unable to access social housing. The PRS accounts for a total of 4,768 properties in East Lothian, representing 9% of the total housing stock within the county.

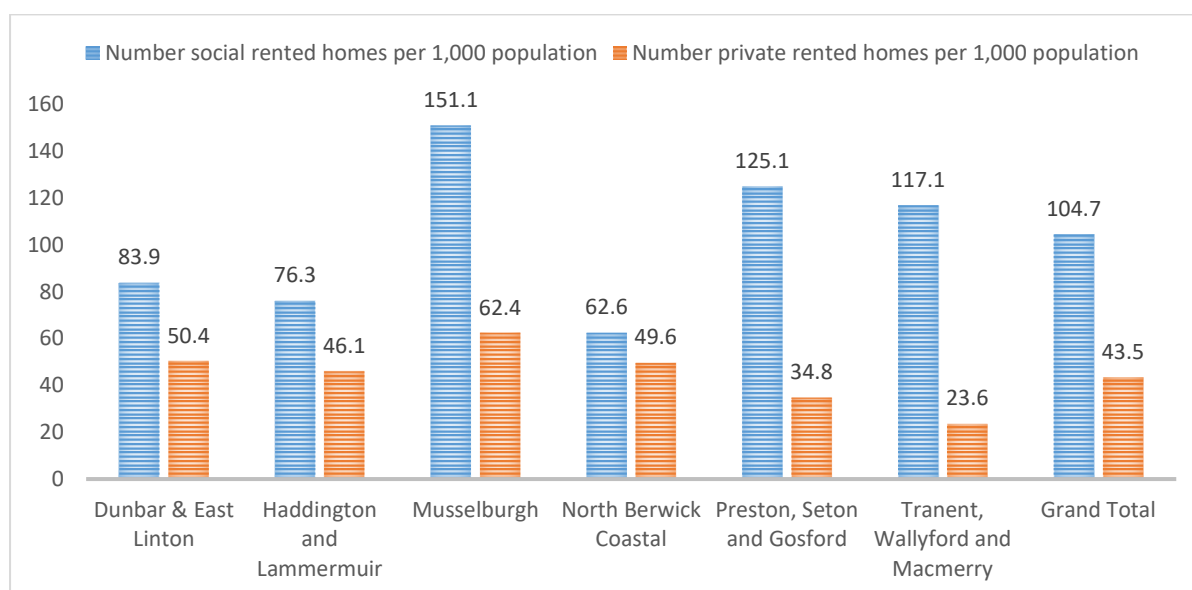
Supply of PRS

Supply of PRS isn't equal across wards in East Lothian, adding further pressure to local areas. There are lower levels of properties in 'Preston, Seton Gosford' and 'Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry' with the highest levels in Musselburgh.

The three easternmost wards have lower levels of social rented stock and higher than average levels of PRS properties, the private sector (both rented and owner occupied) plays a greater role in providing housing within these areas than in other parts of the county.

Housing supply by house type and size is currently not reported on by PRS landlords and is therefore hard to quantify.

Figure 2.1: Number social rented and private rented homes per 1,000 population



Source: East Lothian Council (2023)

The PRS has reduced by 2% as a proportion of the overall housing stock since the previous LHS. There are four main areas which are seen to cause the decline, and potential future decline in the PRS in East Lothian:

- Economic barriers – the fluctuating housing market, the taxation system for private renting (both deposit values and the Additional Dwelling Supplement of 4%), and increasing interest rates coupled with the rising cost of borrowing.
- The Private Residential Tenancy Regime and restrictions of recovery of landlord’s possession.
- Property investment including the cost of new property standards, the age and energy rating of PRS homes in East Lothian and the freezing of rents, and potential rent controls.
- Viability barriers including declining rental yields/rates and a shift in landlord risk appetite.³⁷

Letting agents in East Lothian predict that the PRS will shrink in the next 3-5 years, as landlords leave the sector.³⁸ This is likely to have a significant impact on the East Lothian housing system and local economy.

One way to boost numbers in the PRS is to investigate the viability of Build-to-Rent in East Lothian. Build-To-Rent refers to purpose-built housing developments that are built with the purpose of renting properties out in the private rented sector rather than selling the units. Uncertainty around future national policy relating to the private rented sector including rent control and energy efficiency standards has created additional pressures and resulted in a cooling of interest in build to rent in many areas.³⁹

**Action
2.8**

Explore the need for a Build-to-Rent Policy to ensure potential Build-to-Rent developments deliver high-quality properties within the private rented sector, improving both quality and supply of housing within this tenure.

Affordability in the Private Rented Sector

Based on either a 30% or 35% income to rent ratio, average PRS rents in East Lothian are unaffordable for those earning both the minimum and living wage. Around 57% of East Lothian households are unable to afford rents in the PRS.⁴⁰ The highest percentage of households unable to afford an average market rent area are in the Musselburgh Area Partnership ward making it the most pressurised area in terms of affordability, despite having the highest number of social homes.

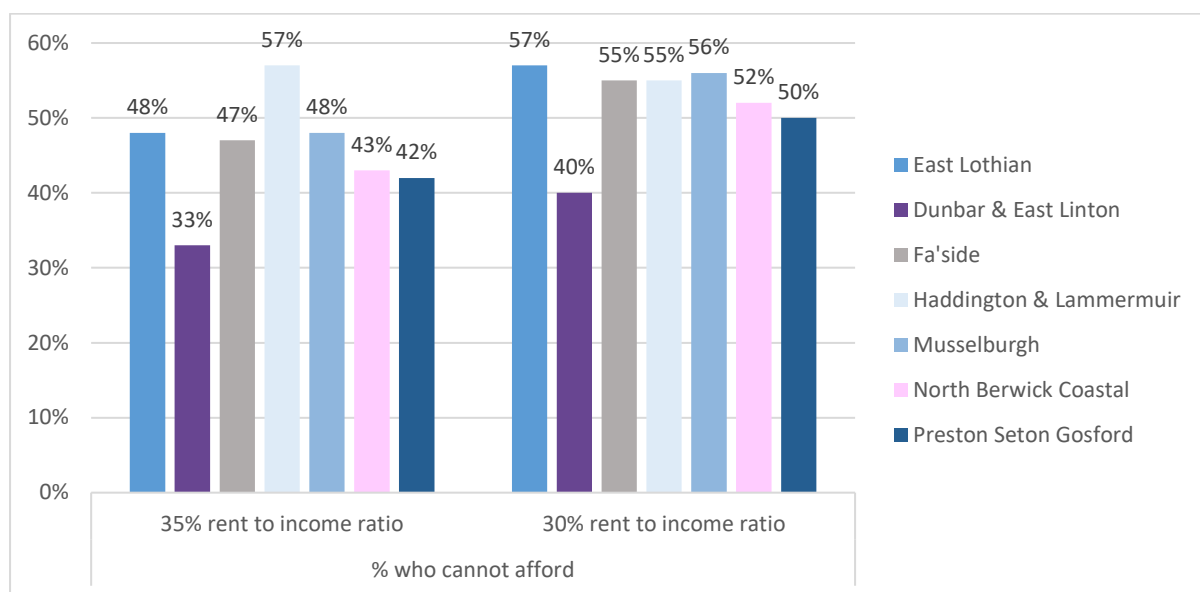
³⁷ Arneil Johnston (2022) [Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian](#), p43-44

³⁸ Arneil Johnston (2022) [Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian](#), p56

³⁹ [Housing in Scotland Current Context and Preparing for the Future - July 2023 \(solace.org.uk\)](#)

⁴⁰ Figure calculated across all households within East Lothian some of whom will be in affordable housing or living in a home with no outstanding mortgage. The number is a snapshot showing % of population unable to afford to live in the PRS if that was their tenure of choice.

Figure 2.2: Percentage of Households who cannot afford PRS rents by area



Source: Arneil Johnson (2022)

In addition the cost of living crisis will have squeezed already pressurised household finances. It is more important than ever that affordable housing is available or there is a real risk of an increase in households facing poverty. Recent interventions from the Scottish Government including rent freezes and bans on evictions have attempted to alleviate some of the pressures facing renters but have inadvertently reduced the extent of the PRS stock in East Lothian.

The private rented sector will continue to play an important role in housing people within East Lothian, however, affordability remains a key concern. Although the Council cannot directly influence rents, support and advice to private rented sector tenants including income maximisation can play an improving affordability and supporting local residents. The delivery of the AHSP may lessen pressure within the PRS and provide affordable housing for some who would otherwise have had no alternative to the PRS.

2.9 Owner Occupied Housing

The majority of homes within East Lothian are owner-occupied, accounting for 67.8% of properties within the county.⁴¹

The volume of house sales within East Lothian over the five year period increased by 2.8% demonstrating an increase in demand for house purchases within the county.

⁴¹ Scottish Government (2021) Scottish House Conditions Survey 2017-19

Table 2.7: Volume of Residential Sales, East Lothian

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
East Lothian	2,158	2,352	2,370	2,215	2,218
Scotland	102,794	102,164	102,053	95,159	95,428

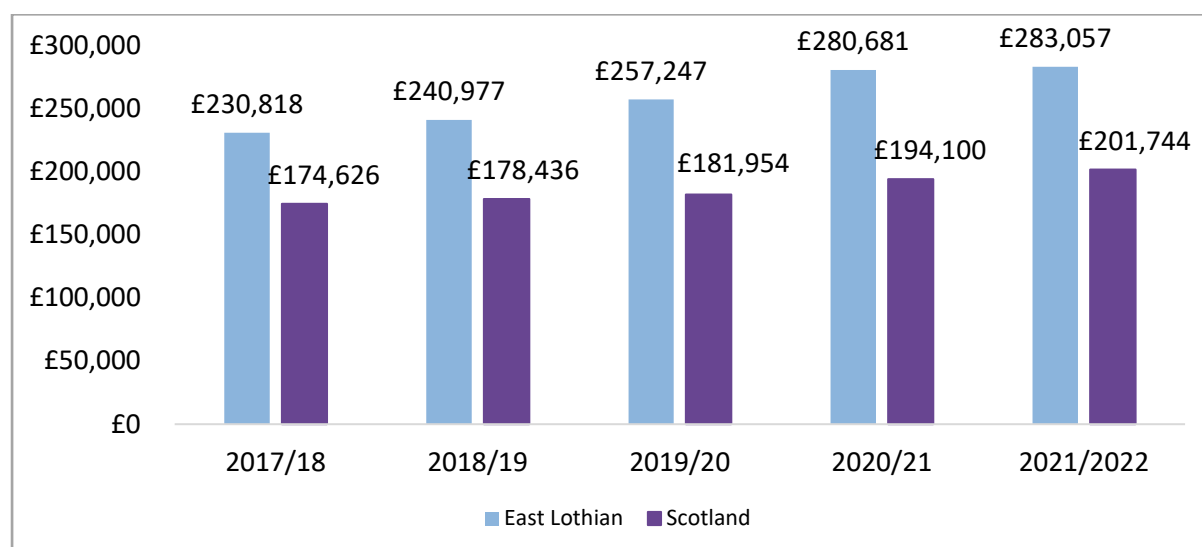
Source: Register of Scotland, 2022

During 2021, East Lothian had a high percentage of three bedroom properties being resold on the open market. Over 80% of new build homes are either three or four bedroom properties, while two bedroom properties accounted for only 2.3%, compared to 8.2% for five bedroom properties. There was no data available for one bed properties. The data suggests that the private sector tends to prioritise developing larger family homes. There is a shortage of smaller properties within the region, with demand for one bedroom properties in particular being high.

Affordability of Home Ownership

House prices in East Lothian have increased by 22.6% over the past five years and were 40% higher than the Scottish average during 2021/22.

The housing market within East Lothian is less affordable than in many other areas. The proportion of households in East Lothian with lower quartile income that are unable to afford to purchase a lower quartile home is 60.2%. Of the South East Scotland local authority areas only Edinburgh (66.02%) has a higher percentage of households unable to afford a home purchase. Homes with lower quartile prices are often seen as an entry point for first time buyers. This lack of affordability for first time buyers can result in people having to leave the area, staying with family for longer or opting for another tenure.

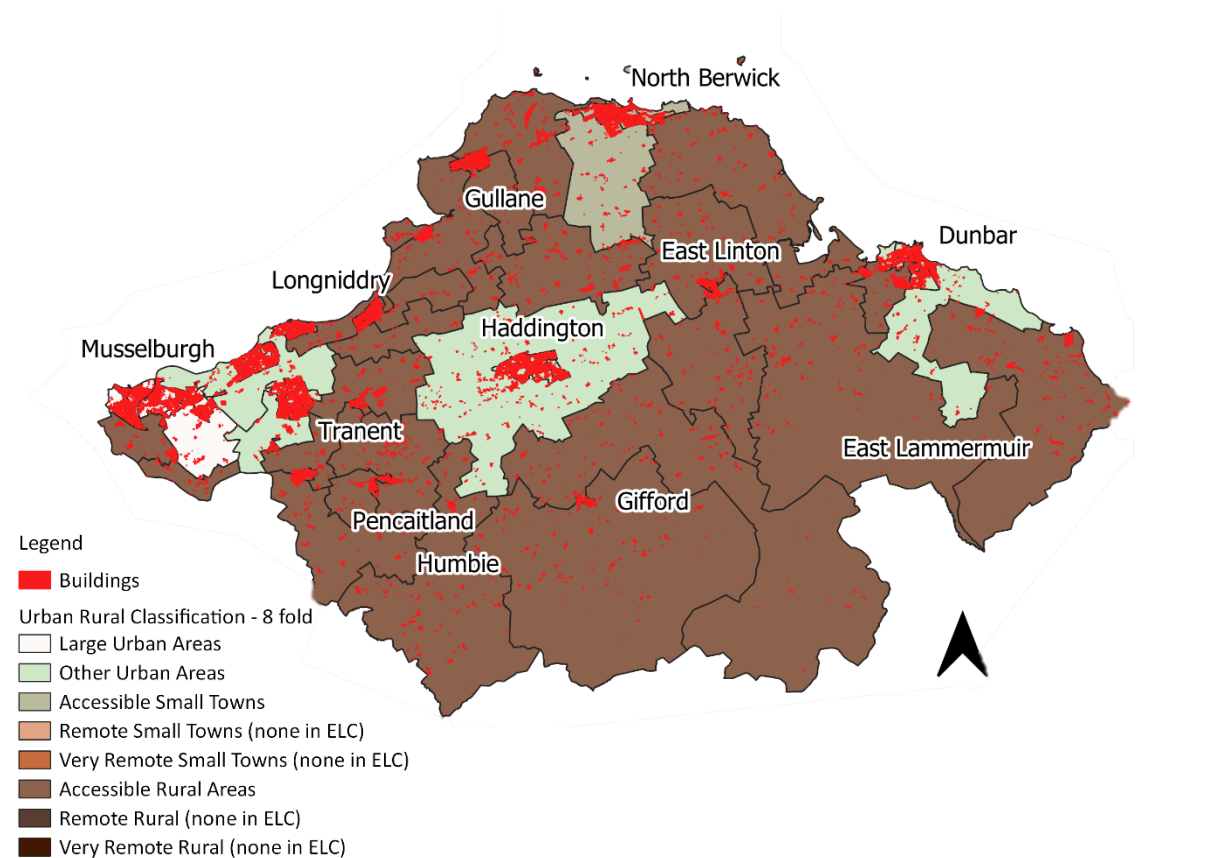
Figure 2.3 property prices within East Lothian and Scotland: Average

Source: Registers of Scotland (2022)

2.10 Housing in Rural Areas of East Lothian

Delivering housing in rural areas presents unique challenges. A lack of affordable housing in rural areas prices many households out of these areas. High house prices combined with lower wages for local employment also affect those who can purchase a home in rural areas. Under the Scottish Government's 8 fold urban-rural classification, much of East Lothian is classed as accessible rural areas. A total of 80.1% of the area of East Lothian is classed as accessible rural, with 26.3% of the population residing in accessible rural areas. With the exception of Musselburgh all area partnerships within East Lothian are home to a rural population.

Figure 2.4: Map of East Lothian by 8-fold urban-rural classification



Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

House prices in rural areas and smaller towns within East Lothian tend to be higher than those in urban areas. House prices have been rising steeply in rural areas of the county with a 30.4% increase over the last five years. Price increases on top of high prices will have a detrimental impact on the affordability of house buying for many in rural areas forcing them to look elsewhere for property.

Table 2.8: Average house prices within East Lothian by Urban Rural Classification

Rural Classification	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% increase
Accessible Rural Area	£269,412	£284,154	£317,919	£327,662	£351,396	30.4%
Accessible Small Towns	£321,951	£313,587	£336,158	£346,450	£353,711	9.9%
Other Urban Areas	£204,789	£217,059	£225,251	£239,982	£243,947	19.1%
Large Urban Areas	£175,138	£183,239	£204,386	£215,692	£236,976	35.3%

Source: Registers of Scotland, 2022

Delivery of Affordable Housing in Pencaitland

In 2023, work began to deliver thirty new council flats and houses in Pencaitland, the first new council homes to be built in the village since 1985. Under the 8-fold urban rural classification Pencaitland is considered to be accessible rural. The new development, funded by the local authority’s capital investment programme and the Scottish Government’s Affordable Housing Supply Programme, will feature a mix of house styles including cottage flats, terraced and detached family homes. Each home has been designed in accordance with Secured by Design standards and will be built to ‘Housing for Varying Needs’ ensuring tenants have the flexibility and space they need for years to come.

Action 2.9

Working closely with our Planners to identify opportunities through the Rural Housing Fund to deliver small scale innovative housing developments where there is evidence to support

2.11 Empty Properties, Second Homes and Short Term Lets

Empty Properties and Second Homes

In March 2022, 980 homes were vacant in East Lothian, including long term empty homes which no longer receive council tax relief. The number of long term empty homes has seen a 15% decrease since 2020, down to 415 homes. This may have been influenced by an increasing population and growing house prices encouraging more sales.

East Lothian has a lower percentage (0.8%) of empty homes than the national average (1.4%). North Berwick Coastal also has the highest number of long term empty homes of all areas within East Lothian with 1.4% of all homes classed as long term empty. East Lothian has a higher proportion of second homes with 2.9% compared to the national average of

0.9%. Sub-council level data for 2020, shows that North Berwick Coastal (4.9%) has significantly higher levels of second homes than other areas.

Area Partnership	Long Term Empty	%	Second Homes	%
Dunbar & East Linton	56	0.8%	76	1.1%
Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry	77	0.9%	9	0.1%
Haddington & Lammermuir	75	1.1%	27	0.4%
Musselburgh	118	0.9%	31	0.2%
North Berwick Coastal	68	1.0%	318	4.8%
Preston, Seton, Gosford	80	0.9%	24	0.3%

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

Engagement to bring empty homes back into use can help to achieve positive outcomes with regard to unlocking housing supply across all tenures.

Local authorities have powers to decide on the level of discounts on empty homes and increase the level of council tax on these properties. Income from Second Homes Council Tax can be used to fund new-build housing and help boost housing supply. However, recent freezes on Council Tax implemented by the Scottish Government will limit the extent to which this can be maximised in the coming years.

**Action
2.10**

A strategy for the use of this council tax income will be prepared over this LHS period to maximise the supply of affordable homes via this route over the coming years.

The Empty Homes Loan Fund which is available to owners of empty properties to bring their property up to standard to bring it back onto the property market has not been utilised within East Lothian. In 2023, the Council was working with the Scottish Government to change eligibility criteria to make this policy more attractive to home owners.

**Action
2.11**

Over the lifetime of the LHS an Empty Homes Strategy will be developed and we will continue to work with the Scottish Government to maximise opportunities. Engagement to bring empty homes back into use can help to achieve positive outcomes with regard to unlocking housing supply across all tenures.

Communities in Scotland have the ‘Community Right to Buy’ land and the right to buy abandoned, neglected, or detrimental land which came into force in 2018. Housing Services promote and support such regeneration which contributes towards the provision of additional housing and the local economy.

Scottish Government support the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) when it is not possible or practical to buy the property by agreement and the public interest out-weighs the rights of the property owner affected. Scottish Government recognises the challenging and resource intensive process of CPOs and is continuing to explore how to facilitate the use of CPOs by local authorities. So far East Lothian Council has not carried out any CPO. The use of CPOs to bring back empty homes will be explored as part of an Empty Homes Strategy.

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.⁴²

Based on a market snapshot, which only includes entire properties (rather than one bedroom within a larger property), it is estimated that approximately 387 STLs are available across East Lothian. The highest proportion of STL were in North Berwick Coastal (58%) followed by 19% in Dunbar & East Linton. Musselburgh had the lowest proportion of STLs (2%) along with Fa’side and Preston Seton Gosford (3.4%).⁴³

From October 2023 all short term let properties across Scotland require a licence. This will allow East Lothian Council to collect more accurate data on the number and location of such properties within the county.

The Council will work in partnership with local communities and the tourism sector to achieve a balance which meets the needs of distinctive communities across East Lothian. This involves taking into account the tourism sector, short term accommodation for seasonal workers and the need for long term residential housing.

Table 2.9: Empty Properties, Second Homes and Short Term Lets in East Lothian⁴⁴

	Number	% of all homes
Vacant and Long Term Empty Homes	980	0.8%
Second Homes	489	2.9%
Short Term Lets	387	7.4% of all lettings

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

Action 2.12

We will continue to monitor Short Term Lets to investigate if they are negatively impacting the PRS and wider housing system. An evidence paper on short term let control areas will be prepared by Planning Policy in collaboration with Housing and Economic Development in 2024.

⁴² Scottish Government (2023) [National Planning Framework 4 Annex D](#).

⁴³ East Lothian Council (2022) Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian

⁴⁴ East Lothian Council (2022)

2.12 Self-Build / Self-Provided Housing

Self-provided housing refers to housing built by an individual and can also refer to custom-build where a house-builder tailors a property to a household's preferences prior to it being built. Benefits of self-build include the ability to build a house to meet a person's long term needs and tailor the property to the individual's preferences. It can also mean greater flexibility in terms of location and design of the property.

The Scottish Government's Self-Build Loan Fund aims to support the delivery of good quality and energy efficient housing, giving people more choice about the homes they want to live in and offers up to £175,000 to help with development costs.

Under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 Local Authorities are required to prepare and maintain a list of those who have registered interest with the authority with the intention of acquiring land in the authority's area for self-build housing. The latest self-build register held by the Council currently contains six individuals with an interest in self-build within the county. This list is currently published on the Council's website. Self-provided housing could be an important innovative solution to housing shortages, particularly in rural areas. As the Local Development Plan 2 is developed, opportunities for self-build (both private and social) will be explored through a call for sites.

2.13 Housing for Key Workers

There is currently no official definition of 'key workers' in East Lothian. However, figures from the Office for National Statistics show that 33.6% of workers within East Lothian are classed as key workers. Housing to 2040 recognised that many areas experience difficulty in retaining key workers⁴⁵, particularly in places where there is a lot of competition for housing.

Concern was raised in the Rural Housing Survey around housing for key workers. The availability and affordability of housing for key workers can impact upon an area's ability to retain and attract people who provide vital services. As salaries across the public sector tend to be standardised, key workers can enjoy a higher standard of living in areas where housing costs are low.

In 2021/22 the average property price of £286,626 in East Lothian was 38% higher than the national average for Scotland. The higher cost of housing within the county may impact upon the ability to house key workers, in turn this may have a negative effect on upon key industries and local health and social care services.

House prices are higher in the east of the county, particularly in North Berwick Coastal, something that is likely to exacerbate issues around affordability of housing for key workers particularly those on lower incomes. There is particular concern around housing for care

⁴⁵ Key Workers are defined as individual's employment in essential occupations to the specific area. They also tend to be in lower to lower quartile income range and include care workers.

workers and other health professionals at a time when there is an aging population which is likely to result in increased demand for healthcare services.

**Action
2.13**

We will define the term 'key workers' within the East Lothian context and prepare research on the housing needs of key workers to inform future policy decisions.

2.14 Distinctive Housing Themes by Area Partnership

The following table provides a summary of distinctive housing themes by Area Partnership.

Table 2.10: Distinctive Housing Themes by Area Partnership

Dunbar & East Linton	
↑	2 nd highest lower quartile House Price
↓	Lowest percentage of households unable to afford the PRS
↑	2 nd highest proportion of households living in the social rented sector
↓	Second lowest level of social rented stock
Haddington & Lammermuir	
↑	Largest population of over 65s.
↓	2 nd lowest affordability ratio of lower quartile income to lower quartile house prices
↑	Largest supply of market housing over the last five years.
↓	Lowest ratio of housing list applicants to allocations.
Musselburgh	
↑	Highest number of total dwellings.
↓	Lowest lower quartile incomes.
↑	Highest level of social rented stock.
↓	Lowest average lower quartile house price.
North Berwick Coastal	
↑	Highest lower quartile house prices.
↓	Lowest levels of social housing.
↑	Highest levels of owner occupation.
↓	Lowest percentage increase in house prices 2017-2021.
Preston, Seton and Gosford	
↑	Most affordable lower quartile house price to income ratio.
↓	Lowest 5 year supply of market housing.
↑	Third highest level of social rented stock.
↓	Second lowest lower quartile house prices.
Tranent, Wallyford and Macmerry	
↑	Largest 2017-21 median house price increase by percentage.
↓	Second lowest lower quartile income.
↑	Highest proportion of social rented properties.
↓	Lowest proportion of owner occupiers.

2.14 Moving Forward

The following summarises some of the key challenges identified in this chapter and actions that will be taken over the lifetime of this LHS. The full list of detailed actions can be found within the [LHS Action Plan](#).

Key Challenges

- The demand for affordable housing continues to outstrip supply.
- House prices in East Lothian are 38% higher than the national average.
- Lack of land in Council ownership restricts housing provision.
- Interest rates continue to rise making borrowing more expensive.
- Increase in construction cost and higher new build standards will reduce overall numbers of new supply.
- 60.2% of lower quartile income households are unable to afford home ownership.
- House prices are generally higher in rural areas and smaller communities.
- The supply of affordable housing isn't equal across areas in East Lothian.
- Property sizes for affordable homes vary, with lower numbers of 4+ bed homes resulting in overcrowding.
- Housing list numbers have increased by 700 households within a year.
- 57 % of residents are unable to afford to rent within the PRS.
- The current allocations policy is from 2019 and is in need of a refresh.

Actions

- 2.1 Deliver the affordable housing supply target of 891 affordable homes over the period of the LHS.
 - 2.2 Explore the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on households in East Lothian.
 - 2.3 Review the Allocations Policy.
 - 2.4 Develop a voids performance management framework.
 - 2.5 Increase the supply of mid-market housing and explore new innovative funding models to increase the supply of affordable housing.
 - 2.6 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.
 - 2.7 Update Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance and associated documents.
-

-
- 2.8 Explore the need for a Build-to-Rent Policy
 - 2.9 Explore the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund to see where it could allow for innovative rural developments to take place.
 - 2.10 Explore innovative methods of delivery including utilizing second homes council tax income.
 - 2.11 Develop an empty homes strategy.
 - 2.12 Continue to monitor Short Term Lets to investigate if they negatively impact the PRS and wider housing system.
 - 2.13 We will define the term 'key workers' within the East Lothian context prepare research on the housing needs of key workers to inform future policy decisions.
-

3 Preventing and Responding to Homelessness

Homelessness in East Lothian is primarily considered to be a structural issue, with a highly pressurised housing system across the county. East Lothian has a higher than national average house prices and a relatively small and expensive PRS. East Lothian Council properties remain the most affordable option for many in the county - placing a great demand on council social rented housing stock. Tenancy sustainment is one of the highest in Scotland, whilst turnover of void properties is one of the lowest. Whilst this is positive, this reduces the number of voids that flow through the system resulting in people having to wait longer for permanent accommodation.

The previous LHS 2018-2023, identified the main challenges for homelessness in East Lothian as:

- The high demand for temporary accommodation leaving the Council dependent on emergency accommodation.
- A long wait-time for permanent and suitable accommodation, leading to an increase in the length of time spent in emergency and temporary accommodation.
- Slow turnover of temporary accommodation as people wait for their permanent home.
- Limited housing options for homeless households due to the restructuring of housing benefits as Universal Credit was rolled out across the county.

Despite the achievements delivered through the LHS 2018-2023, these challenges remain and, have in fact, worsened due to pressures the past 5 years have placed on the housing system and services.

This chapter will outline growing pressures within the housing system and the impact this has on those threatened with or experiencing homelessness.

Priority Outcome: Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with appropriate accommodation and support is provided.

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

3.1 National Context

In 2017, a new commitment was made by the First Minister to eradicate rough sleeping, transform temporary accommodation, and end homelessness. The [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Group](#) (HARSAG) was established to determine the changes necessary to achieve this vision. HARSAG's subsequent recommendations have shaped the future direction of policy, which seeks to ensure homelessness is a rare and short-lived experience through a transformative re-design of the system. For East Lothian, this means adapting existing practice in line with new legislation, which has come at a relatively fast pace. The following section outlines a number of significant policies resulting from HARSAG's recommendations, including both enacted and future legislation.

Local authorities were required, in 2018, to produce a [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan](#) (RRTP). RRTPs operate over a 5-year time frame and set out actions to be taken to prioritise prevention and, where homelessness occurs, ensures households are quickly provided with appropriate settled housing. RRTPs are prepared at a local level, reflecting local issues and challenges and set out how these can be addressed, making effective use of available resources.

In November 2019, the [Commencement of Section 4 of the Homelessness etc. \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) (on 7 November 2019) made changes to the intentionality test. This change means Local Authorities can now choose whether or not to investigate intentionality. East Lothian Council uses this power to investigate intentionality under the narrowed definition to focus on 'deliberate manipulation' of the homelessness system. Under guidance, deliberate manipulation refers to "*manipulation of the homelessness system where the applicant actually foresees that their actions would lead to them becoming homeless*".⁴⁶

[The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2020](#) extended legislation prohibiting the use of unsuitable accommodation for longer than 7 days for pregnant women and children to include all homeless households. This policy further embeds human rights into homelessness policy. In addition to this, a new [Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework](#) was published in April 2023, to ensure that all temporary accommodation throughout Scotland is of a consistently high quality.

The [Homeless Persons \(Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities\) \(Scotland\) Order 2022](#) suspended the requirement for households to have a local connection to the area they were making a homeless application to. This ended the need for local authorities to refer to one another when an applying household's local connection was elsewhere. A local connection refers to a person residing (currently or in the past), being employed or having family based in the area.

Following recommendations from the [Prevention Review Group](#), the Prevention of Homelessness Duty is expected to come forward as a Housing Bill towards the end of 2023.

⁴⁶ [Code of Guidance on Homelessness: Guidance on legislation, policies and practices to prevent and resolve homelessness \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

The Duty will focus on early intervention and a strengthened, joined-up approach. There are a significant number of proposals, although three main themes to the Duty are:

- The need for earlier intervention in relation to the prevention of homelessness. Currently, local authorities take action where households are at risk of homelessness within 56 days or less. This change would place the duty to take action where the threat of homelessness is within 6 months.
- The introduction of 'Ask and Act', where public bodies would have a duty to enquire about a person's housing situation and take effective action if there is an immediate or future threat of homelessness.
- Embedding the 'no wrong door' approach into practice through ensuring homelessness prevention and response can be accessed through a variety of 'bodies'. It will also require local authorities to develop 'Prevention Pathways' for vulnerable groups such as those subjected to domestic abuse and those leaving prison.

Covid-19 Emergency Legislation

The Scottish Government introduced a number of emergency measures during the Covid-19 pandemic as a temporary response to prevent homelessness.

Included within measures was the [Cost of Living \(Tenant Protection\) \(Scotland\) Act 2022](#), which came into law in October 2022. The purpose of the Act was to prevent homelessness by stabilising housing costs within the rented sector and reducing unlawful evictions. This Act restricted landlords (private and social) from increasing residential rents during a tenancy. This effectively froze rents for those currently renting. The measure ended in March 2023 and was replaced by a rent cap.

The Act also introduced a temporary pause on evictions. This prevented landlords, except in a limited number of circumstances, from evicting tenants. Landlords were further deterred from evicting tenants through an increase in fines for eviction cases found to be unlawful. It is expected that this will remain in force until September 2023.

3.2 Local Context

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

East Lothian's RRTP reaches across multiple services within the Council, aligning with wider Council policy. East Lothian's RRTP was created with the vision:

"A fresh, new partnership arrangement enables a holistic approach to housing options, ensuring everyone has a home that meets their needs with a commitment to work towards ending homelessness in the longer term by 2024."

The RRTP outlined five priority outcomes for East Lothian:

1. Homelessness is prevented as far as possible.
2. Access to existing housing for homeless households is improved across all tenures.
3. The homelessness system is more efficient and effective.
4. Access to support is improved for homeless people with complex needs, where appropriate.
5. Supply of new permanent/settled housing is increased across all tenures.

To realise these ambitions, the RRTP detailed the necessary actions and resources required. Actions were reflective of the overall visions of the Scottish Government in regards to rapid rehousing. Progress of East Lothian's RRTP has been delayed as resources were reprioritised to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and the refugee crisis following the war in Ukraine. This has limited the number and success of actions delivered within the RRTP.

An overview of the Housing Options Service can be found in [Appendix 5](#).

3.3 Local Challenges

There are a number of challenges which impact the way the housing system operates and influences the experience of homelessness in East Lothian. Challenges are both long-standing and, more recently, as a consequence of global events.

Demand vs supply of affordable homes

Homelessness in East Lothian is largely driven by the lack of affordable housing. As found in [Chapter Two](#), due to the high cost of homes and rents within the PRS, for many the only viable housing option is social rent. This leads to high demand for a limited resource. Despite efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing; including the creation of East Lothian Mid-Market Homes LLP, and the delivery of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme; it cannot keep pace with demand.

This issue is most critical within one bed and larger properties. Those facing homelessness in East Lothian are mainly single persons who can no longer stay with family members or friends. This means single bed properties are in high demand for those experiencing homelessness. Similarly, larger families struggle to find affordable options which meets the needs of all members. Whilst demand continues to increase against a backdrop of limited supply, this can lead to extended periods spent in unsuitable or temporary accommodation.

Covid-19

The pandemic added additional challenges to the housing system. The Housing Options team had to adapt standard practice quickly in order to deliver the service in line with restrictions. Due to national restrictions on working, new build programmes slowed down. This reduced the number of housing completions, including new council stock. The number of existing Council homes being brought back into stock through turnover also reduced as void times became longer through restrictions, and staff illness and shortages.

Emergency measures brought in by the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 were effective in supporting people to maintain tenancies. However, measures including the temporary rent freeze and a pause on evictions, have impacted landlord and investor appetite in the PRS. These measures limited rent increases and made recovering properties difficult. Research found that temporary measures, alongside upcoming changes to building standards, have led to some landlords considering selling their property.⁴⁷ Since the previous LHS, the total supply of PRS properties in East Lothian has reduced by 2% of the overall housing stock. Any further reductions in PRS stock will further exacerbate demand for social and MMR properties.

War in Ukraine

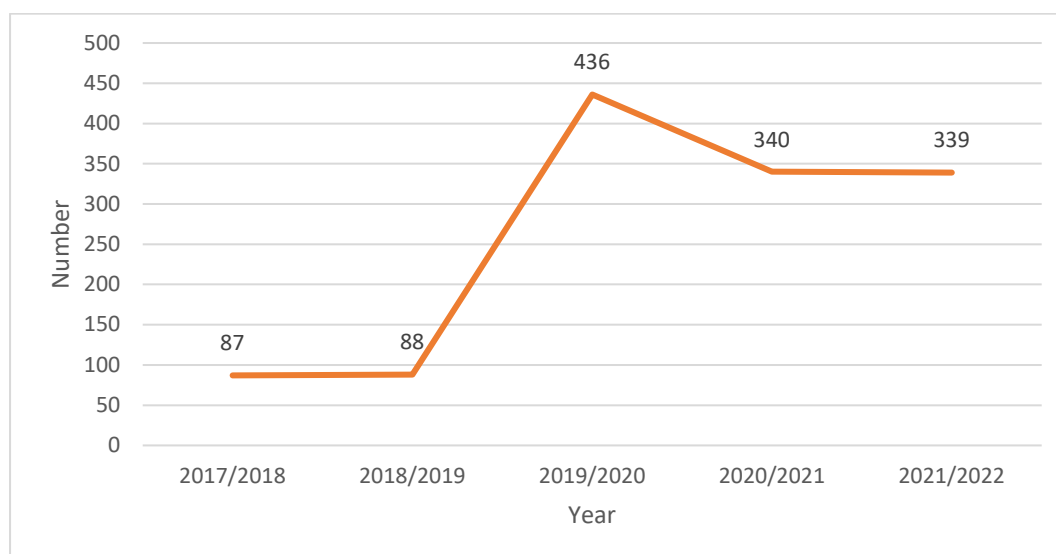
The Scottish Government and UK Government have introduced a range of schemes to accommodate and support households displaced by the war in Ukraine, including schemes to enable local households to act as sponsors, providing host placements. During 2022/23, resources within Community Housing and Homelessness have been focussed on matching refugees with host households and supporting households in host accommodation to access longer-term settled accommodation. Given the number of subsequent breakdowns within sponsor / host relationships and these short-term accommodation commitments coming to an end, it is anticipated that homeless applications will increase going forward. Large numbers of Ukraine households living in East Lothian under the Homes for Ukraine Extension Scheme also pose a significant risk in terms of potential homelessness pressures. While homelessness prevention/housing options services have been successful to date in avoiding homelessness for Ukraine households, with the exception of those arriving under the Family Visa Scheme, significant resources are required to maintain this position. Circa 30 private sector tenancies were secured in 2022/23 via the Council's rent deposit scheme to prevent homelessness among Ukraine households. Whilst positive for preventing homelessness within this population group, it impacts upon the ability of all homeless households generally to access the sector.

3.4 Prevention

In 2019/20 there was a sharp increase in Prevention cases, in part due to changes to case recording, in accordance with revised Guidance. Case numbers have reduced and levelled off over the last two years, however with the current cost of living crisis, increasing mortgage costs and host accommodation arrangements for Ukrainian refugees breaking down, it is anticipated that prevention cases will increase going forward. This can be supported by evidence [mentioned previously](#) on the increase of DHP spend. This showed that those dependent on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit and needing more help to pay rent.

⁴⁷ East Lothian Council (2022) Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian.

Figure 3.1: Number of Prevention Cases Recorded by Year



East Lothian Council (2023)

The current reasons for and the tenure of households approaching, align with this. The top three reasons in 2021/22 for approaching the prevention team were;

- Action from landlord resulting in the termination of a tenancy - 20.6%.
- Dispute within household/relationship breakdown (non-violent) - 20.4%.
- Risk of losing accommodation (eviction/repossession)- 15.3%.

Households approaching the prevention team in 2021/22 were:

- Private Rented – 49.9%.
- Owner-occupier – 14.5%.
- Parental / family home / relatives – 14.2%.

Due to the high cost and limited stock within the PRS and inability to get a mortgage, young people are living in the family home for longer, and as lifestyles change, pressure on relationships can lead to a breakdown.

With 50% of prevention cases coming from the PRS, and 20.6% approaching due to action from a landlord, the private rented sector remains one of the most precarious tenures, within the context of changing legislation and Scottish Government reforms⁴⁸.

Households seeking prevention support in East Lothian are most likely to be headed by women. Between 2018/19 – 2021/22, over 51% of applicants were women. In 2021/22, this rose to 62%.

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. This experience also

⁴⁸ [Overview of private rented housing reforms in Scotland | Scottish Parliament](#)

impacts the outcome of an individual's experience of housing. Factors which increase the risk of homelessness and prevention outcomes can differ considerably. Factors and outcomes are strongly correlated to gender.

Domestic abuse is the most common reason for women becoming homeless. Homeless applications due to a violent or abusive dispute within a household have increased in the past 5 years in East Lothian. In 2021/2022 it accounted for 24.6% of total applications. 84% of homeless applications due to a violent or abusive dispute were made by women.

However, due to the stigma and the risks associated with fleeing domestic abuse, many women may choose not to access Council homelessness services. This means that the extent of women experiencing homelessness is likely to be under-represented.

In recognition of this, since April 2021, ELHA have offered a domestic abuse pass for those subjected to domestic abuse. Those making an application with ELHA, through 'These Homes', can apply for a 'domestic abuse priority pass'.

Once applied, the pass awards 200 priority points. For the pass to be awarded individuals must be:

- Currently living with the perpetrator.
- Access support where required.
- Be able to provide evidence of the domestic abuse either through police reports or contact with relevant services such as Women's Aid East and Midlothian.

As of December 2023, there were 294 applicants with a live pass.

Whilst the pass provides an alternative route to accessing housing, as applicants do not need to have a live homeless application, those with a priority pass have to wait a considerable amount of time. This is reflective of the critical pressures on social housing stock and low turnover of properties. Since the priority pass was introduced, 14 domestic abuse applicants have been allocated a property by ELHA.

3.5 Prevention Activities

East Lothian Council's Prevention Team have a wide variety of tools available to prevent households from becoming homeless. These include providing information as well as signposting individuals to organisations and support providers.

Resettlement Support

Moving into a home is extremely challenging, particularly for those living independently for the first time. To help support households moving into new accommodation, the Prevention service offers resettlement support. This support includes assistance with accessing benefits and maximising income, neighbour mediation, enabling access to health services and help sourcing furniture. This support is essential in helping tenants to manage and sustain a tenancy.

Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

Households who are homeless/potentially homeless, can often find the PRS unaffordable and out of reach. Providing a deposit and rent in advance can be a challenge, with households typically requiring significant funds to secure a property.

A review of the Council's rent deposit guarantee scheme in 2018 found that uptake of the scheme was low due to a range of concerns from landlords. These concerns were addressed, where possible, in the form of a revised scheme. Under the new scheme, the Council can provide both rent in advance and deposits; cash as an alternative to a guarantee; tenancy support; advice to landlords and access to funds for furniture. The changes significantly increased uptake of the scheme from 2019 onward and at its peak, the scheme supported around 60 new homeless households per annum.

There is a limited supply of PRS properties, with many being unaffordable. It is expected that pressure on this stock will worsen during the lifetime of this LHS. This is due to increased mortgage repayments pushing up rents and further increasing demand from those affected by the cost of living crisis who may now be unable to purchase a property. In 2022/23, circa 30 PRS properties were secured for Ukraine households via the scheme, which prevented homelessness for this group, relieving pressure on temporary accommodation stock. However, this resulted in reduced availability for existing homeless households. For vulnerable homeless households, enabling access to the PRS can provide a positive and effective housing outcome, although high demand from a range of groups for limited stock means this can be challenging.

Mediation

To effectively prevent homelessness, a focus is required on the root causes, evaluating the factors which lead to homelessness and addressing these via appropriate actions.

In East Lothian, 'asked to leave' continues to remain the main reason for homeless applications. Mediation can be used as a tool, where appropriate, to support families where a member is threatened with homelessness. Mediation services can provide an opportunity for families to solve disputes and has been particularly beneficial for resolving disputes when a young person is asked to leave home.

Notably, mediation is only appropriate where it is in the best interests of all within the household for the individual to remain in the home and often the individuals concerned are unwilling to consider mediation as a solution. However it is essential that a variety of support and housing options are available for those 'asked to leave', particularly for young people. Mediation can provide an effective solution in some circumstances.

In 2022, East Lothian Council's Housing Options team introduced a new enhanced mediation service, delivered by Cyrenians and Circle, which combines mediation, outreach support and education as effective tools for homelessness prevention. It is too early to assess the

outcomes of this new project although initial indications are positive for those families accessing the service.

Early Intervention through education

Early intervention is considered essential in effectively preventing homelessness. Awareness raising is vital, ensuring children and young people are aware of the support and housing options available, particularly for those considering leaving home or who may be asked to leave by parents.

East Lothian Council has delivered a Housing Education Project for secondary school students since 2003. This currently comprises of a presentation session for those in S4, S5 and S6 classes. In 2022/23, 66% of secondary schools in East Lothian received at least one presentation. The purpose of the programme is to provide young people who may be considering their destinations following school with practical information on household costs, tenancy options and avoiding homelessness.

The importance of early intervention and empowering children is highly recognised within the Council, particularly through the commitment to embed UNCRC practices within services. Extending the education scheme, adapted for a younger age group, provides an opportunity to adopt UNCRC principles to the Council's housing service and ensures children in East Lothian are aware of the local housing system and services from an earlier age.

Action 3.1

In recognition of the success of this program, and a reflection of the UNCRC commitment, we will update and roll-out Housing Workshops within high schools and extend to primary schools across East Lothian.

Housing Options Toolkit

'The Housing Options Toolkit was developed in partnership with the five national Housing Options Hubs, with funding from the Scottish Government. The aim was to provide training materials to support East Lothian Council staff to obtain skills, attitudes and competencies required to implement a preventative approach. Whilst the toolkit was developed in 2010, it has only recently been introduced in East Lothian.

Housing Service Development Staff have been delivering training to all front-facing Community Housing staff. Training is delivered in person to increase understanding for the topic and encourage discussion. Efforts have been made to update information provided in the toolkit and make adaptations based on local issues. It is hoped that all Community Housing staff will be trained using the Housing Options Toolkit. Community Housing staff will be giving and recording stage 1 Housing Options advice to tenants in 2024.

3.6 Prevention Outcomes

East Lothian Council's Prevention Team is highly successful at achieving positive prevention outcomes for around 85% of households approaching for assistance. Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, remaining in their existing home can be a favourable outcome for households. Typically, around a third of cases are supported to remain in their property, preventing a requirement for a homeless application.

Significant numbers are also assisted to access the private rented sector and avoid homelessness, with around a quarter of cases avoiding homelessness in this way. More recently MMR properties have also become a viable housing option for households threatened with homelessness.

Generally, despite best efforts, each year around 15% of prevention cases make a homeless application, reflecting the limited availability of affordable housing options in East Lothian.

3.7 Upcoming Changes to Prevention Legislation

'A new Housing Bill, anticipated in 2024, will likely see changes in respect of a new homelessness Prevention Duty. Early indications are that the duty to prevent homelessness will focus on households who are within a six-month period from becoming homeless, which will require additional resources. It is considered likely that this will lead to a rise in homeless applications and further exacerbate existing pressures on temporary accommodation.

Key to the new Prevention Duty is the concept of 'no wrong door'. Those in public facing positions will be required to ask about a person's housing situation and take action, if it is considered an individual is at risk of homelessness, referring on to the Prevention Team. This will require training and awareness raising for public bodies, focussing on homelessness and housing options in East Lothian.

Action 3.2

To ensure a one-council approach to this, we will prepare and implement a service transformation plan to enable compliance with the new Prevention Duty.

This will create positive multi-agency working and will help to reduce the number of those who 'fall through the cracks'. However, it is essential that staff delivering this are aware of challenges within the housing system and are clear on the information they are giving. This will help reduce the risk of raised expectations and ensure people are not encouraged to make decision which are not in their best interest.

Action 3.3

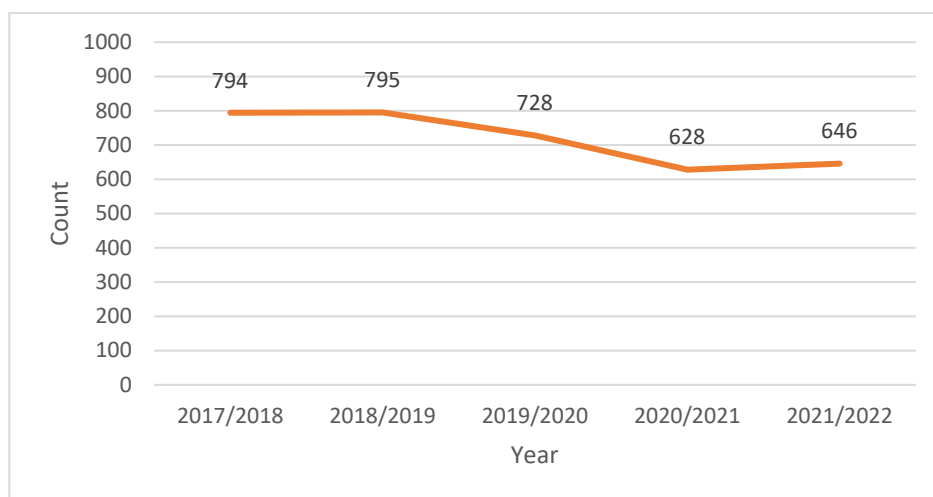
We will carry out training and awareness raising sessions ensuring expectations are managed appropriately regarding East Lothian's pressurised housing system.

The changes in legislation will also require Council's to develop 'Prevention Pathways'. These recognise that certain groups are more vulnerable to homelessness and will experience it differently. Prevention pathways will target unique approaches at groups most at risk to homelessness, including those subjected to domestic abuse, prison leavers and young people. [Chapter 4](#) will discuss these groups in further detail.

3.8 Homelessness

The number of homeless applications highlights the demand for the Council's Response service and can provide an insight into the levels of homelessness within the county. Homeless applications have declined since 2017/18 from 794 households to 646 in 2021/2022.

Figure 3.2: Number of Homeless Applications, East Lothian



Source: East Lothian Council (2022) HL1

However, applications made with the Council cannot show the full extent of homelessness. National evidence has shown that not all homeless individuals will choose to access statutory services. This is a deep-rooted challenge, influenced by the long history of stigma attached to homelessness and entrenched by poverty. Individuals who don't access the statutory service often experience complex homelessness, including extended periods of 'sofa surfing', and are more likely to be from vulnerable population groups.⁴⁹

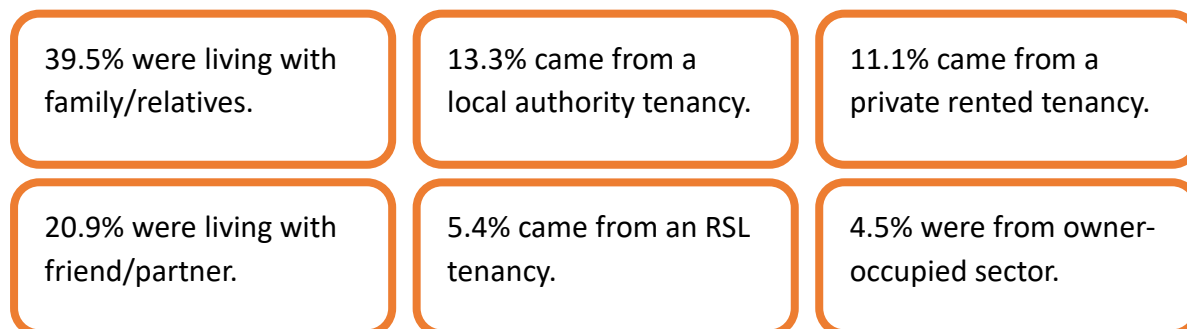
3.9 Homelessness Demographics

Of those who made homeless applications over the previous five years, single person applicants were more likely to be male, although single parent applicants were more likely to be female. Around a quarter of applicants were aged 18-25 and the majority of applicants were in the 26-59 age range.

The housing circumstances prior to a homeless application are set out below. It is anticipated that the cost of living crisis and increase in inflation will drive up the percentage

⁴⁹ ["Hidden" homelessness in the UK: evidence review - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

of homeless applicants from the private sector as mortgage rates soar and landlords increase rents.



Source: East Lothian Council (2022) HL1

High numbers of homeless applicants (40% in 2021/22) do not have security of tenure, living with friends, family or relatives. As lifestyles and needs change with age, there often reaches a point, both for the individual and family members, where it is no longer sustainable to live in that home.

Violent or abusive dispute is consistently among the most common reasons for homelessness in East Lothian and Scotland, increasing from 17.6% in 2017/18 to 24.6% in 2021/22 (East Lothian based). Just over 84% of these applicants came from female-headed households. Possible actions which could be taken with upcoming national legislation will be discussed in further detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Support Needs

The majority of households making a homeless application do not have support needs, however, there are a number who do. In 2021/22 around 17% of homeless applicants had one support need identified. This is down from 2017/2018, when it was over 24%. However, the proportion of households with two support needs and three plus support needs increased within this timeframe. Households with three plus support needs saw the largest percentage growth from 3.5% in 2017/18 to 8.3% 2021/22.

Table 3.1 Support Needs Homeless Applications (% of total applicants)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
No support needs	60.8	64.9	63.0	66.8	62.4
1 support need identified	24.4	20.5	21.8	18.6	17.2
2 support needs identified	11.3	10.4	11.4	10.3	12.1
3+ support need identified	3.5	4.2	3.8	4.3	8.3

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

Mental health is typically the most common support need identified for homeless households, accounting for 34% in 2021/22. The stresses and trauma related to homelessness, including financial troubles, relationship breakdowns and the experience of homelessness itself, can lead to high levels of depression and anxiety amongst homeless households.

Increases in the number of recognised support needs may reflect the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical wellbeing of individuals generally, although it is likely that in part the increase is due to improved recording of support needs.

Intentionality

Legislation in relation to the 'intentionally homeless' element of homeless assessments was enacted in 2019, changing the duty to a power, with discretion for local authorities. Accordingly, a revised person-centred approach is taken when assessing intentionality, taking full account of the circumstances which led to the application. This has resulted in a significant reduction in intentionally homeless decisions. In 2017/18 prior to legislative change, 72 households were found to be intentionally homeless. In 2021/22, only 9 households were assessed as intentionally homeless.

While the revised approach to households assessed as intentionally homeless has resulted in positive outcomes for individuals, this has exacerbated existing pressures. The Council is required to provide temporary and permanent accommodation to households who, under previous legislation, would only be entitled to advice and assistance. This has led to additional demand on resources which were already under significant strain.

Rough Sleeping

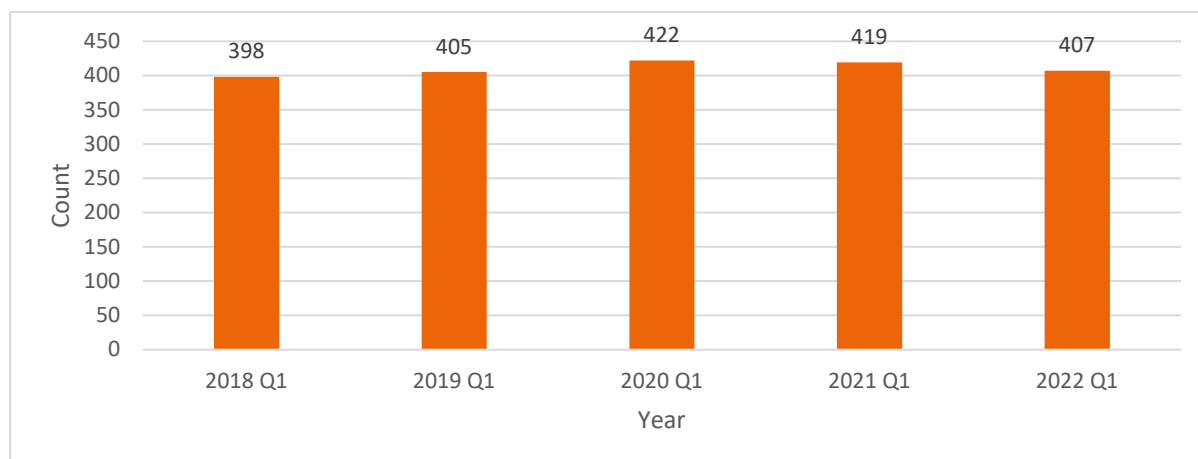
The percentage of homeless applicants sleeping rough prior to making an application has increased since 2017/18. Those individuals sleeping rough the day prior to application has increased from 1.8% of applicants in 2017/18 to 5.6% in 2021/22. Those sleeping rough at some point in the three months prior to making a homeless application have shown similar trends, with the proportion increasing from 2.4% of applicants in 2017/18 to over 7% in 2021/22.

These increases have, in part been related to the impact of Covid-19 on accessing services and improvements in recording.

3.10 Temporary Accommodation

East Lothian Council has around 400 units of temporary accommodation in use at any time. Around a third comprises of emergency accommodation, including shared accommodation. Supported accommodation accounts for 12.1% of temporary accommodation.

Figure 3.3: Number of households in temporary accommodation – end of Q1 2018-2022



Source: East Lothian Council (2022) HL1

The percentage of those living in emergency accommodation has grown substantially in the past 5 years. Between 2018 and 2022 there has been a 109.3% increase in the number of households in emergency accommodation. Meanwhile, the percentage of those living in furnished temporary accommodation has declined year on year. This has been due to a combination of converting tenancies from temporary to permanent which has reduced the units of temporary housing stock, a reduction in the use of the private sector leasing scheme and lengthy wait times for permanent accommodation, seeing people remain in temporary accommodation for longer.

Table 3.2: % of total households living in temporary accommodation by accommodation type in Q1 of each year

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Local authority furnished	74.6	73.1	68.2	60.4	58.2
Supported accommodation	8.0	7.2	7.1	6.7	6.6
Emergency accommodation	15.8	18.8	21.6	29.8	32.4
Women's Refuge	1.5	1.0	3.1	3.1	2.7

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022 HL1

Experiencing homelessness can be extremely traumatic for children and can have long lasting effects. Homelessness can reduce attainment, increase risk of child poverty, impact relationship building and make a child more vulnerable to homelessness when they are

older. Whilst numbers have declined in the past 5 years, there still remains a significant number of children living in temporary accommodation. 'A snapshot on the 31st March each year shows that in 2022, 181 children were in temporary accommodation.

Due to the pressure placed on supply and a lack of movement through the housing system, 11 dependent children were living in emergency accommodation at the end of Q1 in 2022.

Table 3.3: Total number of dependent children in temporary accommodation at end of quarter 1

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total	228	194	197	172	181

**Action
3.4**

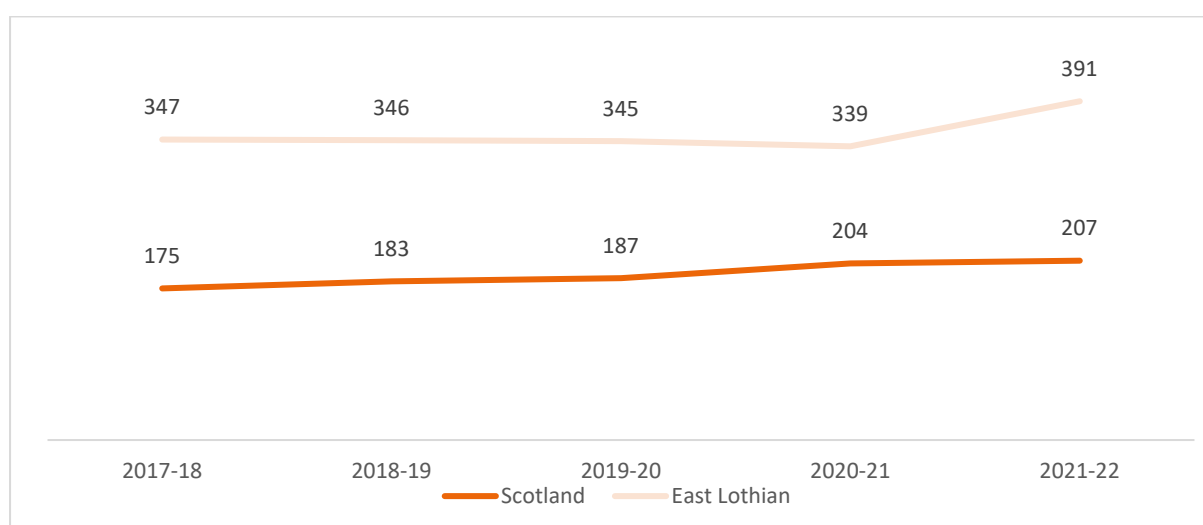
Recognising the potential trauma of homelessness, we will make formal consideration of the wellbeing needs of accompanying children (with a focus on domestic abuse) using a trauma informed approach and implement recommendations.

3.11 Time spent in Temporary Accommodation

The time spent in temporary accommodation in East Lothian has remained well above the Scottish average, at 391 days compared to 207. Single person households, on average, had the longest stay in temporary accommodation.

Between 2017/18 and 2020/21 time spent in temporary accommodation, whilst trending downward, was consistently high. In 2021/22 time spent in temporary accommodation rose significantly and continues to do so.

Figure 3.4: Average total time (days) spent in temporary accommodation



Source: East Lothian Council (2022) HL1

The average time households are spending per temporary accommodation placement has also been increasing. This means that the amount of time spent before moving on from emergency to a furnished general needs unit to permanent, for example, is lengthening.

Table 3.4: Average Length of Time (Days) per Placement in Temporary Accommodation by Accommodation Type

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
LA dwelling	414.1	360.4	361.8	383.2	450
Supported Accommodation	241.6	261.4	167.0	244.5	204
Emergency	68.8	58.9	58.3	82.5	84
Total	205.4	189.1	163.6	200.1	186

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022 HL1

Action 3.5

To reduce the wait time in temporary accommodation, we will re-introduce a rolling programme to re-designate temporary accommodation as permanent tenancies, for households in fully furnished local authority dwellings who wish to remain permanently.

Unsuitable Accommodation Order

Following legislative changes to the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO), East Lothian Council has, and continues to be, regularly in breach of the order. The Council is one of a small number of local authorities who are identified as regularly breaching the UAO terms.⁵⁰

As of June 2023, East Lothian Council had 124 live breaches of the UAO, which largely impacts single households. By breaching the UAO terms, the Council is unable to meet its statutory duty to provide suitable temporary accommodation to these individuals. For individuals, UAO breaches mean living in accommodation deemed unsuitable under Scottish Government policy. This may have significant impacts in terms of mental and physical health.

The length of time in which households remain in Unsuitable Accommodation and the corresponding number of breaches is influenced by the availability of affordable housing and the number of existing homes becoming empty and being re-let. The more challenging it is to move homeless households into permanent accommodation, the longer individuals wait for suitable temporary accommodation. Actions such as reviewing allocation targets and implementing a new voids policy will directly target the flow within the housing system and mitigate the challenges associated with breaches of the UAO.

⁵⁰ [Housing in Scotland Current Context and Preparing for the Future - July 2023 \(solace.org.uk\)](https://www.solace.org.uk/)

**Action
3.6**

East Lothian Council will also explore flat sharing arrangements for single people in emergency accommodation to address the number of those living in unsuitable accommodation for longer than 7 days.

3.12 Supported Accommodation

Supported accommodation provides temporary housing alongside support for vulnerable people with specific needs.

Adult Supported Accommodation

There is one unit of adult supported temporary accommodation in the county, which offers 7 spaces for those with complex needs. This accommodation is contracted by the Council to Blue Triangle who provide 24-hour staffing to support vulnerable homeless adults. Those within the accommodation have access to a wide variety of support, including group led substance recovery sessions.

As the only supported accommodation for adults within the County, demand for provision is high. Those within the accommodation have a long wait for permanent accommodation, meaning turnover can be slow and dependent on evictions. Most often, those in need of supported accommodation are single adults. This can leave vulnerable adults living in emergency accommodation with low levels of support provided.

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The supported accommodation mixed gender 'group living', with shared living and kitchen spaces can be unsuitable for those who present additional risks. As a result, between five and six evictions occur per year, largely due to assessed risk to other residents.

**Action
3.7**

The provision of adult supported accommodation will be reviewed to ensure it continues to meet need and demand in the county.

Supported Accommodation for Young People

Young people who experience homelessness in East Lothian can be allocated to supported accommodation. There are a total of 29 spaces for young people, with the majority of located in the west of the county.

Two alternatives to supported accommodation exist in East Lothian. They can either be used as an alternative to supported accommodation or as a move on/next step from supported accommodation. Both were established primarily for Care Experienced Young People, however, the success of My Place, a peer-flatmate model with drop in housing support, has seen it expand to include Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People and young people experiencing homelessness. There are a total of eight properties or 16 spaces in My Place.

Starter Flats, provided by East Lothian Council also provide a 'move on' option from supported accommodation for CEYP or an alternative to group living. Housing provisions for young people will be discussed further in [Chapter 4](#).

3.13 Housing First

East Lothian's RRTP made commitments to delivering Housing First – the Scottish Government's preferred approach for individuals with complex needs. 'Housing First' operates with the premise that housing is a human right and persons experiencing homelessness should not have to prove themselves as 'home ready' before being provided with a tenancy. It maintains that through person-centred, wrap around support, those with complex needs and traumatic experiences, including repeated homelessness, can live well in their 'forever home'.

Two Housing First models existed in East Lothian in early 2023: East Lothian Council's model and STRENGTH (Sustaining Tenancies through Rights Empowerment and Normal Genuine Trauma-informed Homes). Both were aimed at meeting unmet needs for vulnerable adults with multiple and complex needs. Due to the demand on social rented homes, rapid re-housing based on individual choice is not possible to deliver in East Lothian. The STRENGTH project made adjustment for this within its model, using Housing First as a prevention to homelessness, offering support in temporary accommodation and making referrals based on suitability to an available property.

Housing First support is resource-intensive and best practice limits the number of cases an officer should support at any one time, limiting the number of open Housing First cases within East Lothian Council's Housing Options Team. However, the key challenge in respect of Housing First in East Lothian is the ability to provide permanent housing for a small number of households quickly, in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy, given lengthy wait times for homeless households generally.

STRENGTH - Housing First for Women Subjected to Domestic Abuse

STRENGTH was a two-year Housing First pilot (March 2021-2023) delivered by WAEML, ELHA and East Lothian Council. Its purpose was two-fold; to provide a housing solution to homelessness and to prevent homelessness. Ten women were provided with wrap-around, Housing First support three of whom were allocated tenancies by ELHA.

An interim evaluation found that the project achieved, over a short period of time, positive outcomes including a 90% sustainment and health and wellbeing improvements. Service users have seen increased self-confidence, reduced or ceased anti-depressant prescriptions and have been able to build upon relationships with family members and friends.

A scenario-based exercise, based around that used within the [Pathfinder report](#), also recorded early evidence that the project can result in budget savings across services.

Despite success, STRENGTH was unable to secure additional funding and has now ended.

The Council's Housing First project is ongoing, however given lengthy wait times for homeless households generally, this means that a rapid response to the provision of permanent housing for a small number of individuals continues to be challenging, within the context of the Council's Allocations Policy and taking account of equalities.

3.14 Duration of Homelessness

The mean time in which a homeless application remained open sat between 54 and 61 days over the past five years.

3.15 Homelessness Outcome

The most common outcome for homeless households is a Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST). In 2021/22, around 47% of homeless households moved into a SST. This was a decrease from the previous year, where over 57% of homeless applicants were moved to a SST. Most SSTs are provided by East Lothian Council, with over 70% of households being allocated a council property in 2021/22. Total lets to homeless households in the private rented sector are considerably lower, averaging at around 4% over the same time period.

Table 3.5: Homeless Outcome (%), East Lothian

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Scottish Secure Tenancy	45.0	50.5	49.0	57.3	47.1
Private Rented Tenancy	2.9	3.8	4.9	3.2	4.6
Returned to previous/ friends	10.7	6.9	12.4	10.0	12.5
Other - Known	4.2	2.7	3.7	4.1	4.1
Other - Not Known	6.2	5.0	6.1	5.0	3.6
No duty owed to applicant	15.5	17.0	15.5	14.5	17.5
Contact lost before duty discharge	15.2	13.9	7.4	5.7	9.8

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

Outcomes which accounted for 1% or more have been included.

3.16 Tenancy Sustainment

East Lothian Council has high tenancy sustainment rates and low repeated homelessness cases, which combined shows the dedication to supporting people to find adequate housing which meets their needs. In 2021/22, 94.1% of tenancies which began a year previously were sustained, higher than the Scottish average of 91.1%. Repeat homelessness cases have remained relatively low in the past 5 years. Cases peaked in 2019/20 at 5% of applications and have since decreased to 3.8%⁵¹.

⁵¹ These statistics, however, only show cases where the name and household composition on the application matches a previous applications. This means that cases where children have now grown to be adults or where a couple now presents as a single person is not included in this data.

3.17 Moving Forward

The following summarises some of the key challenges identified in this chapter and actions that will be taken over the lifetime of this LHS. The full list of detailed actions can be found within the [LHS Action Plan](#).

Key Challenges

- The lack of flow through the housing system, meaning individuals spend a long time in emergency and temporary accommodation, awaiting permanent accommodation.
- Increased time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Limited stock of temporary accommodation.
- Limited choice in supported accommodation for adults with complex needs.
- Increase number of UAO breaches.

Actions

- 3.1 Update and roll-out Housing Workshops within high schools and extend to primary schools.
 - 3.2 Prepare and implement a service transformation plan to enable compliance with the new Prevention Duty.
 - 3.3 Carry out training and awareness raising sessions ensuring expectations are managed appropriately regarding pressurised housing system.
 - 3.4 Make formal consideration of the wellbeing needs of accompanying children (with a focus on domestic abuse) using a trauma informed approach and implement recommendations.
 - 3.5 Implement a rolling programme to re-designate temporary accommodation as permanent tenancies.
 - 3.6 Explore flat-share arrangements for single people in emergency accommodation.
 - 3.7 Review the current provision of Supported Accommodation for adults and young people.
-

4 Suitable Housing & Support

A person's age, physical and mental health, ethnicity, identity and vulnerabilities all determine what is needed from housing and housing services to live well. Those in minority and marginalised populations are most at risk of living in homes which are unsuitable for their needs. This makes them more vulnerable in society. Having homes and services which best reflect East Lothian's diverse population is essential. This means having a variety of services and housing types, including specialist housing⁵², which is available and proportionate to the current and future population.

This Chapter will discuss the availability of suitable housing and support services in relation to vulnerable groups. These groups align with LHS guidance and are:

- Children and young people.
- Older people.
- Social care users.
- People involved in the justice system.
- Women and girls.
- Ethnic minorities.
- Asylum seekers and refugees.
- Gypsy/Travellers.
- Travelling Showpeople.
- Armed forces communities.
- LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace).

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

Priority Outcome: Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

⁵² Local Housing Strategy guidance states that *specialist provision is accommodation and services that may be appropriate when mainstream housing does not meet an individual's needs.*

4.1 The National Context

The [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) places a duty on all public bodies to actively consider how we can reduce inequalities of outcomes caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

[Independent Review of Adult Social Care](#) (2020) recommended the establishment of a [National Care Service](#) (NCS). At the time of writing (March 2023), a consultation of the draft NCS Bill was in review. While the development of a NCS will have a significant impact on how community health and social care services are planned and delivered in the future, the impact on housing related services are unknown.

The [Coming Home Implementation: A Report from the working group on complex care and discharge](#) recommended transformational change to deliver innovative and quality services to people with learning disabilities and complex support needs. It emphasised the need for effective community based solutions over that of out-of-area placements and long-term hospital stays.

The [Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027](#) and [Good Mental Health for All](#) recognises the importance of socio-economic circumstances and the broader social and physical environment in which we live has on mental health. A key protective factor is a positive physical environment including housing, neighbourhood and greenspace. Within this context, it is essential there are a range of choices available to ensure homes meet specific needs; whether that be wheelchair accessible housing, housing with care and/or support, or general needs housing within a resilient and connected community.

The [Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030](#) sets out the priority outcome for minority ethnic communities in Scotland to have equality in physical and mental health as far as is achievable, have effective healthcare appropriate to their needs and experience fewer inequalities in housing and home life. The Framework includes 19 actions based on 'housing', largely focused on data collection and updating LHS and HNDA Guidance.

[Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#) is a commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time so that they can reach their full potential. GIRFEC provides a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. This should be embedded within all services who work with or alongside children and young people.

[Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone \(SHORE\) Standards](#) aim to ensure that housing needs of those in prison are handled at an early stage and in a consistent way across Scotland. The standards focus on prevention, adopting a Housing Options approach at the earliest point possible to maintain or seek alternative secure accommodation on release. This will improve the individual's chances of reintegrating back into their community successfully, improving rehabilitation and reducing the likelihood for reoffending.

[Improving the lives of Scotland's Gypsy Travellers \(2019-2021\)](#) is joint action plan developed by the Scottish Government and COSLA to address inequalities faced by gypsy travellers. The plan makes commitments to improving access to culturally appropriate housing and public services, strengthen representation and income maximisation, as well as tackling racism and discrimination. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the plan's timeline was extended to 2023.

4.2 The Local Context

Demand for housing and services will increase and change with the population. East Lothian has the second fastest growing population in Scotland, influenced by natural change, high life expectancy and migration. The number of older and younger people, and those living with dementia, are all set to change at various rates. This means more people will be living in their homes for longer and are more likely to have a health condition as they age. Demand for resources, such as accessible housing stock, staff to deliver care packages and funding for adaptations will also increase. Affordable housing is not only needed for those who need support, but those who provide it. Staff shortages have already been experienced in the health and social care sector, with availability of affordable homes in the area an influencing factor. Demand for resources, increased through a growing and ailing population, is coming at a time of acute financial constraints. This further adds to challenges. To inform this chapter, three Strategic Needs Assessments were carried out during 2021-2023, these focused on: accessible housing (including wheelchair housing), older persons and children and young people. The findings of these Needs Assessments are presented within this chapter.

The available information which can be used to evidence growing demands, is varied and inconsistent across different populations. For example, East Lothian Council is still reliant on the 2011 Census data to some extent, to provide information on ethnic minorities in the area. Until the upcoming census data is realised, it is difficult to predict what will be needed, in terms of housing and services, in future years. In addition, certain groups, including Gypsy Travellers and Showpeople, are often a missing voice in consultations. Therefore, the needs and demands for certain groups are largely unknown.

Meeting these needs for all in East Lothian requires a whole Council approach with aligned strategies. Below are examples of current strategies which are relevant and aligned with this LHS.

The [East Lothian Council Plan 2022-27](#) sets out the local authority's commitment to trauma informed practice.

The [East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-2025](#) sets out nine strategic goals that are aligned to, and support, the key objective of reducing inequalities and poverty. The two most relevant are: improve the life chances of the most vulnerable in our society and deliver transformational change and harness the opportunities that technology offers in the provision of services.

The [Children and Young People’s Service Plan 2020-2023](#) which sets out three key priority outcomes: improve children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing; support parents, carers and families to be more resilient and; reduce inequalities for our children and young people within and between our communities.

The [East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#) sets out seven strategic objectives⁵³ and an overall vision *to support all people in East Lothian to live healthy lives, to achieve their potential to live independently and exercise choice over the services they use*. The Integrated Health Board (IJB) Strategic Plan also provides the overarching context for a range of other plans and strategies which the LHS aligns with. These include: East Lothian Dementia Strategy 2023-28 and the Planning Older People’s Services workstream.

At the time of writing the Strategic Plan, it was decided to delay the Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) until the Local Housing Strategy 2024-29 was finalised, this would ensure joint priorities and outcomes and a HCS with tangible and measurable outputs. Work on the HCS will conclude in April 2024.

Table 4.1: Linking East Lothian LHS and IJBs Priority Outcomes

LHS Priority Outcome	IJB Strategic Plan Objectives	Where joint priorities will result in joint outcomes
Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.	1	Well connected communities will contribute to a reduction in social isolation and loneliness, improving the health of the population.
Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of the households.	3, 4, 7	Increasing affordable homes will ensure that households can access other health promoting activities as a reduction of total income spent on housing declines. Accessible housing will lessen pressure on health care services through a reduction in falls, reduction in delayed discharge, increase East Lothian’s ability to deliver end of life

⁵³ Strategic Objective 1: Develop services that are sustainable and proportionate to need (1.1 planning for an ageing population).

Strategic Objective 2: deliver new models of community provision, working collaboratively with communities.

Strategic Objective 3: Focus on prevention and early intervention.

Strategic Objective 4: Enable people to have more choice and control and provide care closer to home.

Strategic Objective 5: Further develop/ embed integrated approaches and services (5.3 meeting housing needs).

Strategic Objective 6: Keeping people safe from harm.

Strategic Objective 7: Addressing health inequalities.

		care at home and reduce pressures on unpaid and paid carers.
Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided.	3, 6 and 7	Experiencing temporary accommodation and homelessness is widely regarded as traumatic. A reduction in overall physical and mental health is not unlikely before and during a period of homelessness. Preventing homelessness will ensure better long term health outcomes for individuals, reducing pressure on local health and social care services.
Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	Through the provision of core and cluster housing, we can maximise housing options for those with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health conditions and sensory impairments. This allows social care users to live closer to home, reduce homelessness after discharge and allow the partnership to deliver social care in a co-ordinated and efficient manner.
All homes are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting climate change targets.	3	Improving house conditions across all tenures has a direct impact on the health of a population. A reduction in fuel poverty and the presence of damp and mould will reduce the chances of respiratory infections.
Source: East Lothian Council, 2023		

4.3 Children and Young People

Housing is a critical enabler in promoting the health and wellbeing and is critical to the safety and security of children and young people. High or rising housing costs can push families into poverty, then impacting on access to other basic activities and health-promoting opportunities such as nutritious foods and play. Housing Quality, referenced in

chapter 5, also has an impact on children's health. A cold, damp house is associated with higher prevalence of respiratory conditions such as asthma. Through the East Lothian Strategic Partnership, Transformation of Children's Services, UNCRC Working Group and Poverty Working Group, Housing work to ensure early intervention and prevention is at the heart of local housing policy and practise for children and young people.

Children with disabilities and support needs

Examining data on children with additional support needs and disabilities provides evidence of the type and size of homes which are needed within East Lothian. It also indicates the housing support potentially required for when children/young people move into their own home as they grow older.

Around 618 children receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) within East Lothian, and 320 of those receive winter heating assistance (eligible only to children on highest DLA). Children with disabilities often need additional space than is within a typical home for the provision of equipment and support aids. Larger homes with ground floor bedrooms are in short supply in East Lothian. Setting a wheelchair accessible housing target (discussed [here](#)), will help to address this need. This will ensure children and young people can grow up in a household that meets their needs, and families do not need to experience the stress of overcrowded and unsuitable housing.

Care Experienced Young People

In March 2022, 216 children were looked after by East Lothian Council, similar to the national trend. Care Experienced Young People (CEYP)⁵⁴ are more likely to face poverty and lower earnings, higher rates of unemployment, difficulties with housing and homelessness, physical and mental health issues, and stigma. While there has been a significant increase in the number of available housing options for young people leaving care in East Lothian during the previous 5 years, an estimated 6-7 young people per annum remain in unsuitable accommodation. This is due to a lack of suitable housing and required support which can differ for each individual. There are currently 25 spaces for CEYP across a range of provision in East Lothian, but there remains a need for an additional 35 spaces across a range of accommodation types including: rapid access emergency accommodation, supported accommodation and individual tenancies with intensive wraparound support.

⁵⁴ The term 'care experienced' refers to anyone who has been or is currently in care or from a looked-after background at any stage in their life, no matter how short, including adopted children who were previously looked-after. CEYP within the LHS directly refers to those who are receiving Throughcare and Aftercare service from Children's Social Work Team, this does not include young people who have been adopted.

Table 4.2: Current Provision v. Existing Need & Future Demand of Housing Provision for Care Experienced Young People (units/spaces)

	Current Provision	Need
Rapid access emergency accommodation	0	10
Supported accommodation	9	14
Individual tenancies with intensive support	0	10
Shared flats with support	16	8
Total	25	42
Source: East Lothian Council, 2023		

**Actions
4.1**

A review of supported accommodation for all young people in East Lothian will develop a range of options to meet the gaps in housing and accommodation provision.

Included within the overall estimates above is the 3-4 young people who move on from residential care⁵⁵ in East Lothian every year. It is estimated that there will be 18 CEYP requiring move-on housing from residential care over the period of the LHS.

**Action
4.2**

For some young people, the jump from residential to supported or independent living is too great. To bridge the gap, Housing and Children’s Services are working to develop a flat near to a new residential home which will provide young people with a gradual stepping stone to independent living.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)⁵⁶

For every 650 UASC coming to the UK, 10% then move on to Scotland. A smaller percentage are then allocated to East Lothian. The number of UASC coming to East Lothian used to average around one every 2-3 months. However, Children’s Social Work have reported an increase in the number of children and young people requiring accommodation in East Lothian, with sometimes three arriving in one month. In early 2023, it was estimated that East Lothian would take 6-9 UASC per annum over the next ten years. It is, however, expected to be higher due to the increase in UASC arriving in the UK. The nature of UASC arrivals means that it is difficult for accommodation to be scheduled, especially as the support needs and ages of the children/young people are unknown. For UASC over the age of 16 and whose support needs allow, they can be allocated a range of options open to other care experienced young people i.e. supported accommodation, residential home (for those aged 12+), or shared accommodation with floating support. My Place, a peer flat-

⁵⁵ A residential home is sometimes also referred to as ‘residential care’ or a ‘children’s home’. It’s a home where young people live together and are supported by a live-in team of staff. There are two residential homes in East Lothian.

⁵⁶ Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are children and young people who are seeking asylum in the UK but who have been separated from their parents or carers. While their claim is being processed, they are cared for by a local authority.

mate program with housing support has proved successful where the young person is over the age of 16 and presents with low support needs. Where the UASC is under 16, they are often placed in one of two residential children's homes in the county or in foster care. The support needs of UASC are very different to that of care experienced young people, risk of trafficking being of highest concern.

My Place

My Place is a peer flatmate project which partners care experienced young people, homeless young people and unaccompanied asylum seeking young people with a college or university student. Peer flatmates are volunteers who live alongside two young people in a three bedroom property. They adopt a mentoring role, providing practical guidance for young people, helping to develop their independent skills and navigate the shared environment. My place received 3 year pilot funding from the Life Changes Trust, and has now been mainstreamed within East Lothian, jointly funded by Housing and Children's Services.

Kim and Quan*, originally from Vietnam, are two young people the project is supporting. Both were in vulnerable positions that led them to being exploited, abused, and trafficked under false pretences of a better life in Scotland. They were homeless, and without a main caregiver in Vietnam, and so applied for asylum in the UK.

Since arriving in East Lothian, Kim and Quan moved into MyPlace. They have the support of a peer flatmate, the Rock Trust, and the 15+ Throughcare and Aftercare Service. Once introduced to their flatmate, Marisa*, Kim and Quan quickly built up a strong, trusting relationship with her. They would cook, and eat together, giving them all a chance to talk about their day to day life, and any issues they might be facing. They also worked together to maintain the house and garden.

The friendship and guidance they received from Marisa has helped Kim and Quan become more confident and settled in the local community. The holistic approach of the My Place project appears to have benefited them. Both have now gained settled status and recently moved into their own properties.

*All names have been changed to protect identities.

Out of Area Placement

Where services in East Lothian are not available that suit children and young people, or Children's Services find that they've reached capacity within residential homes and available foster carers, children and young people can be placed out of area. In December 2023, a total of 24 children and young people were in out of area residential care due to pressures in East Lothian. A further 19 children and young people were in external foster care. In line with ambitions set out in The Promise, Children's Services and Housing Services continue to meet regularly to explore ways which could support bringing young people back to East Lothian.

Young Carers

Currently, 207 young people are known to East Lothian Council Young Carers Services. However, Scottish Government research indicates that 1,500 children could be young carers

in East Lothian. [Young carers](#) can face a range of housing challenges, with higher responsibilities and pressures than other children of their age. Over time, this can lead to family relationship breakdown and, potentially, homelessness.

The Young Carers Service collaborates with the [Bridges Project](#) to help young carers transition into adulthood, including moving away from home. Work is undergoing to review the [Young Carers Statement](#) and include housing questions to ensure that young carers have ample opportunity to consider their current and future housing situation prior to a crisis taking place.

Children and young people are vulnerable due to their age and stage in life, and any additional needs they may have only adds to that vulnerability. To recognise this, we will

**Action
4.3**

prepare a Young Persons Housing Pathway which will encompass all young people who find themselves at risk of homelessness. This will be in line with the [‘The Promise’](#) and the Prevention of Homelessness Duties. It will ensure all 16-17 year olds and those aged 18+ with additional vulnerabilities receive age appropriate housing, support and advice.

**Action
4.4**

We will also work collaboratively with education, the Children’s Strategic Partnership, and the Poverty Action Group to create an environment in which children can thrive and health inequalities are reduced.

4.4 Older People

The older adult population⁵⁷ have specific needs for housing and housing related services. There is a growing ageing population in East Lothian, which already has a population of 22,192. Over 65s make up 20.6% of the total population, an increase of 4.7% since 2015. By 2030, the population of those aged 65+ is expected to rise to 26,974, an increase of 21.5%. Between 2018 and 2030, Dunbar and East Linton is going to see the highest increase in those aged 65+, followed by Fa’side and Haddington & Lammermuir.⁵⁸

Table 4.3: % Increase in over 60s population to 2023-2030

Dunbar & East Linton	Fa’side	Haddington & Lammermuir	Musselburgh	North Berwick Coastal	Preston Seton Gosford
37.4%	33.2%	28.3%	20.9%	22.2%	24.9%

Source: NRS population projections – 2020 based

⁵⁷ In [A Fairer Scotland for Older People](#) (SG) an ‘older person’ can be defined from age 50+. This LHS has included statistics of those aged 60+ as older.

⁵⁸ NRS Projections -2020 based

The majority of older people live in general needs housing. Of those aged 65+ in East Lothian, 67% live in owner-occupied housing, 26% in social rented sector, 4% in the PRS and 2% in 'Other'.⁵⁹ This highlights the need for housing of all tenures to be both accessible and adaptable, ensuring that people can live longer at home.

There are 1,469 specialist properties for older people in East Lothian, the majority of which are for social rent and based in the west of the county. The majority of owner-occupied retirement housing is located within the east of the county. Retirement and Sheltered Housing offer a group living environment while still living in your own tenancy. In Council Sheltered Housing, a warden is present 9-5pm and can provide housing support and management. In Retirement Housing, the warden is present for a few days of the week to provide a housing management service.

Table 4.4: Specialist Housing for Older People in East Lothian by tenure and type

Social Rent Amenity	Social Rent Retirement	Social Rent Sheltered	Owner-occupied Retirement
48%	11%	19%	22%
Source: East Lothian Council, 2022			

East Lothian Council and ELH&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.

**Action
4.5**

The redevelopment of the former Herdmanflat Hospital Site will provide much needed housing for older people within the Haddington & Lammermuir ward, which will see the third highest percentage increase in people over 60 by 2030.

**Action
4.6**

To meet the growing older population a total of 200 units across different affordable tenures for older people should be developed over the course of this LHS, this includes the provision of housing in the Herdmanflat Hospital Site.

Dementia

In 2022, East Lothian had an estimate of 2,104 people with dementia, with a projected 65% increase by 2040. Estimates of dementia amongst those under 65 account for the smallest percentage (just 2% of the overall number diagnosed between 2018 and 2022) with rates projected to remain static. Of those with a diagnosis, the highest percentage reside in the Musselburgh, Wallyford and Whitecraig areas. While only 5% of those diagnosed live in rural areas, the highest proportion of these residents are within the Haddington & Lammermuir

⁵⁹ Census, 2011

and Dunbar & East Linton wards. The majority of residents with dementia continue to live in general needs housing, with a higher likelihood of entering a care home during the later years of dementia.

Those with dementia face a range of challenges within housing including:

- Sensory impairments, including visual perception, may make it difficult to manage stairs. Touch sensitivities may impact wellbeing and create risks around hot water, kettles, or ovens.
- Individuals may face a decline in mobility and find that they are less able to walk up and down stairs easily or use kitchen appliances.
- Isolation and not feeling connected to the community due to stigma or being unable to access the community outside one's door because it lacks accessibility features and is not 'dementia friendly'.

The projected increase in the number of residents with dementia, highlights the need for all services, communities and physical spaces to be dementia-friendly, and trauma informed.

Action 4.7

Housing Services will continue to work alongside East Lothian H&SCP to ensure the development and implementation of the Dementia Strategy has strong strategic links to housing and housing related services.

Action 4.8

Housing Services will also support the development of the Post Diagnostic Support for Dementia route map.

4.5 Social Care Users

In 2018, East Lothian's H&SCP published a Strategic Needs Assessment which calculated the predicted social care requirements of particular need groups, specifically those with a learning difficulty, physical disability and/or mental health condition. While these relate to social care users, they are indicative of a growing population of adults with complex care needs. The report found the following:

- Social care users with a learning disability are projected to grow from 402 in 2019 to 729 in 2041. People with a learning disability are currently on trend to increase at a rate below expected population growth. In East Lothian, 24.8% of all people with learning disabilities have more than three other health conditions, compared to 2.3% of the Scottish population.
- Physical disability social care users are projected to increase from 224 in 2019 to 271 by 2041. Physical disability social care costs are projected to increase at an average

yearly rate of 3%. Physical disability is currently on trend to grow in line with the expected projected growth.

- Mental health social care users are projected to grow from 231 in 2019 to 248 by 2041. Mental health is currently on trend to grow in line with the expected projections growth.

While the number of individuals receiving support from H&SCP remains relatively low, there is an indicative trend of increasing complexity and therefore more intensive support arrangements.

Care and support at Home is largely provided by external commissioned agencies, with 8.5% of the care delivered by East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP).⁶⁰ The majority of service users come from the Older Person client group, followed by those with a learning disability. Smaller numbers also receive care packages for mental health conditions and physical disabilities.

Table 4.5: Delivery of Care at Home in East Lothian

Providers of Care at Home	Service Users	Hours of care per week delivered
33	1,212	20,280

Source: East Lothian Council, 2022

For those who do require specialist housing, East Lothian Council have worked closely with the East Lothian H&SCP to create a clear system of referrals to ensure adequate housing provision can be provided. These are called Housing Episode Forms. This has been focused on people who have a learning disability and require 20+ hours of specialist care and support.

The introduction of Housing Episode Forms, ensured social workers could accurately record their client’s care, support and housing needs, including preferred locations. This then

**Action
4.9**

allowed Housing to adequately plan for specialist provision such as core and cluster accommodation⁶¹. Over the course of this LHS we will review the process of Housing Episodes forms, so it can be rolled out to further client groups.

In 2022, a new provision of core and cluster flats for individuals with mental health conditions was opened to replace previous bedsit provision. The new housing provision

**Action
4.10**

encompasses 8 individual flats alongside a staff base for 24/7 care and support provided by a specialist provider. Individuals are most often referred to the provision from inpatient care as a temporary step down measure before moving into their own tenancy. Despite this additional

⁶⁰ East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership, 2022

⁶¹ Core and Cluster combines the traditional model of shared housing and independent living facilities more suited to people who benefit from an environment that is bespoke and tailored to their specific needs. The model offers greater flexibility in support provision and increases independence, as the individual has their own tenancy.

provision, an analysis of delayed discharge data from Royal Edinburgh Hospital found delayed discharge from psychiatric care to be a significant problem, albeit small in numbers. The analysis found that, due to a lack of joined up working, individuals discharged from a mental health bed with no fixed abode is common.

Work will be undertaken with East Lothian's H&SCP to establish pathways, in line with the Duty to Prevent, to ensure, as far as possible, that no-one is discharged into homelessness. Further work is also underway to develop core & cluster housing for individuals with mental health conditions.

To meet the continuing need for core and cluster housing in East Lothian, and to ensure that homelessness is avoided after hospital stays, a Strategic Needs Assessment indicated that

Action
4.11

up to 60 units of core and cluster housing, over the lifetime of the LHS, are required to meet the needs of social care users. Delivery is dependant both of AHSP and the funding of H&SCP to provide care and support within the properties.

Core and cluster provision will also aid East Lothian is supporting the Scottish Government's '[Coming Home](#)' agenda. The 'Coming Home' report set out a new framework for people with learning disabilities and complex needs who are placed in unsuitable out-of-area placements or who are inappropriately admitted to hospital due to a breakdown in their community-based support. The H&SCP have developed a dynamic risk register, which identifies all people living with a learning disability out-of-area. Following this, it was established that out of 18 people living out-of-area, 3 people require local resources with the remainder currently in appropriate placements and settings.

4.6 Long Term Health Conditions

Not all people with long term conditions choose to access support from services within the Council, many choose to access therapeutic/rehabilitative support from services within the voluntary or private sector. For example, in 2018 the Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre, based in Edinburgh and now known as Compass, reported the provision of therapeutic services to 68 people from East Lothian. Service users presented with predominantly neurological issues such as Multiple sclerosis, Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, stroke recovery, as well as a small percentage who were living with the effects of cancer, fibromyalgia or wound healing/diabetic ulcers.

A high proportion of severely or profoundly deaf people have other disabilities as well. For example, of those aged under 60, 45% have additional disabilities – these are most likely to be physical disabilities.⁶² Among severely or profoundly deaf people over 60 years, 77% have an additional disability. For 45%, this means significant dexterity, sight difficulties or both.⁶³ Sensory impairments will affect not just the accessibility of the home, but the features and

⁶² ELH&SCP – Strategic Needs Assessment

⁶³ ELH&SCP – Strategic Needs Assessment

the equipment which make up a home. For example, the provision of smoke, fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

**Action
4.12**

East Lothian Council will work closely with East Lothian's H&SCP as they develop a Physical Disability Action Plan and a See/Hear Action Plan for Sensory Impairment, to ensure that housing and housing related services meet the needs of these client groups.

4.7 Terminal Illness

Terminal illnesses such as motor neurone disease (MND) can be devastating for individuals and families, with the average life expectancy from diagnosis just 18 months. People living with the disease can quickly lose their ability to walk, talk, eat and breathe unaided. Likewise, individuals with a cancer diagnosis can also find themselves quite quickly in unsuitable housing. We recognise that the final days, months and years of an individual's life is highly impacted by their ability to feel safe and comfortable at home. East Lothian Council's Allocation Policy and subsequent Health and Housing and Re-housing Panels reflect this. However, moving house is a stressful situation even in the best of health, and to lessen the impact on the individual and on Council services, it is essential that private sector homes are developed to be as accessible and adaptable as possible.

4.8 Wheelchair Accessible Housing

Scottish Government guidance requires local authorities to prepare a target for the provision of wheelchair accessible housing across all tenures. In 2021, East Lothian Council conducted an Accessible Housing Needs Assessment, which recognised the benefits of accessible housing to a range of client groups including social care users, wheelchair users and families.

It was estimated that 1.5% of the East Lothian population were using an NHS Wheelchair in 2021. The Musselburgh area has the highest percentage of wheelchair users, with 2.4% of the population requiring one some or all of the time. The number of wheelchair accessible homes sits at around 114 in the social rented sector, while the number is unknown in the private sector.

As part of the research for [HNDA3](#), the SES local authorities commissioned Arneil Johnston to establish the existing unmet need for wheelchair users by local authority. Table 4.5 sets out the current estimated unmet need for wheelchair accessible housing in East Lothian. The 2021 unmet need for wheelchair accessible housing was estimated to be 430 households, accounting for 8% of all unmet wheelchair need in SES and 1.8% in Scotland. Due to limitations in data, the unmet need was not able to be broken down by tenure.

Table 4.6: Unmet Wheelchair Need

Unmet Need East Lothian	Unmet Need SES Authorities	Unmet Need Scotland
430	5,433	23,520
Source: HNDA3, 2021		

**Action
4.13**

To meet the current unmet need and existing demand for social rented wheelchair accessible housing, this LHS commits to 10% of the total supply of new affordable housing being wheelchair accessible, with a minimum of at least 100 units to be delivered over the five years.

East Lothian Council has not yet developed a mechanism by which to promote the development of wheelchair accessible homes in the private housing sector. By only developing wheelchair accessible housing in the affordable housing sector, an additional burden is being placed on already stretched provision. Proposed changes to Building Standards through the [‘Enhancing the accessibility, adaptability, and usability of Scotland’s home consultation’](#) will ensure a new minimum standard in private homes.

**Action
4.14**

It remains critical that a supply target is developed. Through LDP2, East Lothian Council will establish mechanisms to ensure a target of 5% of new build market housing is built to wheelchair accessible standards.

4.9 Adaptations & Technology Enabled Care

It is estimated that 19% of homes within East Lothian have been adapted; 36% within the social rented sector and 14% in the owner occupied sector. Data constraints mean the number in the PRS is unknown but, in line with national data, it is expected to be smaller than the owner-occupied sector.⁶⁴

Housing adaptations can range from minor installations, such as safety rails, to major adaptations, such as a wet floor shower or a curved stair lift. Adaptations were delegated to the IJB via the [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#), although Housing Services continue to co-ordinate the delivery of major adaptations in the private sector, and all adaptations within the East Lothian council properties. Adaptations are delivered and financed differently depending on housing tenure. Aids and Minor Adaptations are provided by the ELH&SCP.

⁶⁴ Scottish House Conditions Survey

Table 4.7: Funding and co-ordination of major adaptations by tenure

Tenure	Funding	Contribution	Co-ordinated
East Lothian Council Tenant	Housing Revenue Account	No contribution from tenant required	Community Housing Occupational Therapists
Housing Association Tenant	Scottish Government award to individual housing associations	No contribution from tenant required	Procured service i.e ELHA and Homes for Life use Care & Repair East Lothian
Private Housing Sector (private rented housing or owner-occupied)	Self – funded, Charitable grants and/or through Private Sector Housing Grant funded via Housing Services & ELC’s General Services budget.	20% contribution required if household doesn’t meet certain criteria	Care & Repair East Lothian

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

Care & Repair

Care & Repair East Lothian provides assistance and support to people aged 60+ and people aged 50+ with a disability who are homeowners or private tenants to enable them to adapt or repair their homes.

An average of 55 households benefit from Care & Repair Service per year, with the majority of take up by those who have mobility issues, although there has been a significant increase in the number of households with dementia requiring the service.

In 2020/21, the Small Repairs & Minor Adaptation Service completed 1,106 jobs, the majority of which were joinery, but also included fitting smoke alarms and other home safety provision, home security, draught proofing, key safe installation and grab rails.

The funding of Care & Repair is under considerable strain, with increasing numbers of people seeking to use the service.

Action 4.15

Care & Repair will undergo a service review within the timeframe of this LHS, this will include investigating ways to maximise funding and ensure it continues to meet need and demand in East Lothian.

Financing adaptations

The funding of major adaptations in East Lothian has come under increasing pressure, with demand outstripping the amount of finance available to fund them. This is true of all tenures, with many housing associations also significantly constrained by Scottish Government budget allocations. This is due to an increase in demand as well as increased contractor and material costs.

Table 4.8: Number of adaptations facilitated by Care and Repair by funding type

	PSHG*	Privately funded
2018/19	73	3
2019/20	57	4
2020/21	48	4
2021/22	50	6
2022/23	79	6
2023/24 - April to August	63	4

Source: Care & Repair, 2023 *Private Sector Housing Grant

Any decrease in major adaptations going forward due to a lack of funding, is likely to result in increased numbers of delayed discharges, increased risk of accidents and hospital admissions.

Adaptations also play a critical role in the housing system, allowing people to live at home for longer when they wish to do so. A national shortage of accessible homes in the private sector often results in Council and RSL properties being over-subscribed where householders cannot meet their needs. A reduction in availability of major adaptations is likely to increase demand on Council and RSL properties. East Lothian Council's housing list already has over 4,200 households on the housing list and is currently in breach of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order for homeless households in emergency accommodation.

Action 4.16

Housing and HSCP will explore alternative options to funding within East Lothian to ensure we meet our shared statutory obligations.

Technology Enabled Care

Technology Enabled Care (TEC) or Telecare are devices which enable individuals to stay safe and independent at home. Personal alarms and monitoring systems can alert call centres of carers if an individual is experiencing a problem such as a fall either at home or outside. Different forms of telecare can be used in a variety of ways including:

- To detect risks such as smoke, floods and gas leaks.
- Call for help if you fall.
- Remind you to take your pill at the correct time.
- Notify someone if you leave your home and would have difficulty finding your way back.
- Help you stay safe when out and about.

To promote the different forms of TEC, East Lothian H&SCP worked alongside East Lothian Council's Housing Service to develop the Wellwynd Hub, converted from a former warden's flat for sheltered housing into a 'dementia friendly' homely setting. The Wellwynd Hub is a home safety resource to help older people keep active and independent, providing early intervention. Based in Tranent, those visiting Wellwynd Hub can try therapeutic equipment to enable safety and independence. This might include community alarms and telecare equipment alongside other TEC solutions. The hub embeds early intervention and occupational therapy as key in promoting independence, reducing demand on services by encouraging self-management, improving health and wellbeing and safety within the home and outdoors. There are three delivery strands within the Hub:

- Active and Independent Living Clinic: a team of skilled health professionals, including occupational therapists and physiotherapists, helps people keep as active and independent as possible.
- Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Clinic: provides an opportunity for health and TEC professionals to demonstrate telecare, smart technology, adaptations and equipment in action, allowing people to see what might best suit their needs.
- Telecare: staff training to ensure all staff have an overview of potential TEC solutions for people they are working with.

The Hub is fully equipped with adaptations and equipment which helps towards maintaining independence and staying safe at home. These include a wet room, wash and dry toilet, adapted shower, bathing aids and a specially adapted kitchen. The success of Wellwynd Hub will see it being rolled out in the East of the County to ensure equity of access.

4.10 Public Protection

Public Protection includes adult support and protection, child protection, offender management and violence against women and girls. Within this section, public protection will be discussed alongside individuals covered by Justice Social Work. The housing system in East Lothian has a direct impact upon public protection. For example, a lack of housing supply means that serious offenders cannot be adequately housed, impacting their chances of rehabilitation. Having a safe, stable and affordable home can reduce poverty, increase wellbeing and, therefore, decrease chances of requiring public protection measures in the

long term. In other words, risk is better managed if an individual has security of tenure and the support of local communities.

Through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, East Lothian Council will continue to increase affordable housing supply to meet the needs of the community, contributing to a range of wellbeing outcomes. Housing Services will also continue to support key public protection processes such as MAPPA⁶⁵, MARAC⁶⁶ and relevant Offender Management Groups.

4.11 People involved in the justice system

Individuals involved in the justice system, either through receiving a prison sentence or a Community Payback Order (CPO), are vulnerable to a range of poor housing outcomes, including homelessness.

Transition

The Transition Project was set up by the Getting it Right to Reducing Reoffending Workstream to support individuals to desist from offending and anti-social behaviour. Chaired by Police Scotland, the Project adopts a multi-agency approach and is supported by key partner agencies such as Justice Social Work, Housing, Substance Use Services and employability services.

The central aim of Transition is to provide responsive and timely support to individuals regarded as being at highest risk of anti-social behaviour and/or offending behaviour, where this behaviour has been evidenced to be extremely detrimental to the health and well-being of the individual.

The Project has been successful in helping individuals to desist from offending behaviours, access substance use and mental health support, and provide access to housing support and advice.

The population of East Lothian in custody is small, accounting for 77 individuals during a snapshot survey across Scottish Prison Service on December 31st 2022. However, the number of individuals given a custodial sentence compared to the CPO between January-December 2021⁶⁷ shows an imbalance in the Scottish Government policy 'presumption against short term sentences'. Of those who received a custodial sentence, 12 were held for under 12 months. Short term sentences have a significant detrimental impact on sustaining long term housing. This can add to pressure within the homelessness system and put an individual's ability to desist from re-offending at a disadvantage. Over the lifetime of the previous LHS, Housing Services worked closely with Justice Social Work to establish lines of

⁶⁵ Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements - [Multi-agency public protection arrangements \(MAPPA\): Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mappa-guidance)

⁶⁶ [Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference](#) is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, justice social work, health, child protection, housing practitioners and other specialists.

⁶⁷ East Lothian Council, 2023

communication for those leaving prison. However, due to the highly pressurised housing system in East Lothian the SHORE standards have been difficult to fully implement.

**Action
4.17**

East Lothian Council Justice and Housing Services will continue to work closely together to implement SHORE as far as possible, taking into consideration any new pathways or requirements brought forward by the Scottish Government Prevention of Homelessness Duties legislation.

4.12 Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence Against Women and Girls⁶⁸ (VAWG) includes all individuals who identify as women and girls, and includes: domestic abuse, rape, sexual assault, commercial sexual exploitation and so called ‘honour based’ violence, like female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Responses to homelessness for women who are subjected to domestic abuse were outlined in [Chapter 3](#). During the lifetime of the previous LHS, work began to establish an Equally Safe Housing Policy in East Lothian which recognised preventative housing approaches to VAWG. These approaches largely aligned with the Scottish Governments draft Rented Sector Strategy. East Lothian Council awaits the 2023 Housing Bill in order to implement any changes within local policy and protocols with regards to domestic abuse, specifically those around removing a perpetrator from a tenancy. East Lothian Council has recently announced that it will prepare an Equally Safe Strategy. Housing Services will work with partners as this develops to ensure that women and girls are not disadvantaged by any housing policy or protocol, and remains committed to [Chartered Institute of Housing Make a Stand pledge](#).

Domestic Abuse Single Points of Contact (SPOC)

During the coronavirus pandemic, a SPOC was set up within each Community Housing Area Office. One Community Housing Officer was given extra training and guidance with regards to how to approach conversations about domestic abuse. This was a response to Women’s Aid East and Mid Lothian (WAEML) sharing that there were a number of high risk women that they could no longer make contact with due to the extra risk which lockdown posed. It was recognised that the Community Housing Teams were in a unique position to be able to make contact with tenants and check on their welfare.

Any VAWG service was able to use this system where the risk was deemed substantial. SPOCs were given a script to follow, written by specialist services, and direct contact numbers for specialist services in East Lothian, should they need to seek advice.

Not only did this system contribute to the safety of women and girls subjected to gender based violence during the Covid-19 pandemic, but it also forged closer working relationships between Community Housing and WAEML.

⁶⁸ Defined by Scotland’s [Equally Safe Strategy](#) “by this we mean the violent and abuse behaviour carried out predominantly by men directed at women and girls precisely because of their gender. Behaviour that stems from systematic, deep-rooted women’s inequality”

**Action
4.18**

We will continue to develop an Equally Safe Housing Policy which recognises all VAWG.

4.13 Ethnic Minorities

There is limited data on ethnicity in East Lothian and Scotland, with the most recent data coming from the 2011 Census. Additional data when the 2022 Census results are released will aid this section, as will compliance with new Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Equalities

**Action
4.19**

Monitoring requirements. We commit to using the 2022 Census results to better understand how race and ethnicity impact housing and health inequalities to ensure we are not unintentionally ignoring the needs of populations who have historically and systematically been marginalised.

Two engagement sessions were held in partnership with East Lothian Works during English as a Second Language classes, including a women's only conversation café. The most common challenges presented by those who were able to feed into the consultation chimed with national research reports and included:

- Requirement for larger properties.
- Ethnic Minorities are more likely to live in the private rented sector and experience poor conditions i.e. damp and mould.
- Lack of dedicated services in East Lothian for Ethnic Minorities, with the majority based in Edinburgh.
- Insecure jobs.

**Action
4.20**

East Lothian Council will continue to work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and other third sector partners to help identify housing need and challenges faced by ethnic minorities in East Lothian.

4.14 Asylum Seekers & Refugees

Asylum seekers and refugees arrive in the UK from a wide range of countries. The Syrian conflict, withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and more recently, the conflict in Ukraine, have significantly increased the number of people requiring rapid access to accommodation. The UK and Scottish Government have committed to a range of humanitarian schemes to provide protection and enable asylum seekers and refugees to be accommodated safely in the UK. The schemes, as set out below, have varying levels of local authority involvement and different funding arrangements:

- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), recently replaced by UK Resettlement Scheme.
- Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.
- Homes for Ukraine (HFU), Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme (SSS), Family Visa Scheme and Homes for Ukraine Extension Scheme.
- National Transfer Scheme for [Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children](#) (UASC).
- UK Asylum Dispersal Scheme.
- Community Sponsor Scheme.

At the time of writing the LHS, 18 Syrian households (79 individuals) and 82 Ukraine households (150 individuals) had been accommodated in East Lothian via local authority facilitated schemes and it is estimated a further 500 Ukrainian households are living across the county.

Table 4.9: Asylum Seekers and Refugees in East Lothian

Individuals accommodated in East Lothian	Projected additional households requiring accommodation by 2024
229	226
Source: East Lothian Council, 2022	

A temporary Refugee and Asylum Seekers Team was set up in 2022 in response to the Ukraine crisis, to co-ordinate arrivals, facilitate host accommodation arrangements, provide support and deliver advice and assistance in relation to housing options. There have been a number of positive outcomes for displaced people from Ukraine i.e. accessing private sector housing for those moving on from host families and zero households have presented as homeless via local authority facilitated schemes. However this increased need and demand for housing and related services has and continues to place pressure on the housing system. There are concerns regarding the Council’s ability to accommodate the potential growth in demand from refugees and asylum seekers, i.e. further households anticipated as a consequence of the recent disembarkation of MS Victoria (previously accommodating circa 900 displaced people from Ukraine in nearby City of Edinburgh) and additional households via the Asylum Dispersal Scheme.

The focus to date has been on meeting the immediate accommodation needs of displaced people, particularly households from Ukraine. Going forward, a longer term focus is required on wider integration and sustainable housing options, to enable refugees and asylum seekers to live full and independent lives.

**Action
4.21**

As conflict continues throughout the world and climate emergencies result in extreme weather which may result in displaced persons, a strategic approach to accommodating refugees and asylum seekers and a formalised team will be explored in East Lothian.

4.15 Gypsy/Travellers

Up until 2020, East Lothian and Midlothian Council shared a Gypsy/Traveller Site on the border between East and Midlothian. There are also two private sites in East Lothian. A reduction in the number of tenants on site to zero, followed by extreme vandalism including fire raising, resulted in the site being closed.

**Action
4.22**

We will continue to work with the Scottish Government to improve our data and understanding of need and demand for a site in East Lothian.⁶⁹

**Action
4.23**

We will explore the need for a Gypsy/Traveller site and if required, carry out a review to identify a new site in a suitable location.

Despite the shared site being closed, there has been no increase in Roadside Encampments within East Lothian. This is likely due to the different needs of Gypsy/Travellers who stay on permanent sites and those who stop at encampments when they are travelling.

**Action
4.24**

To ensure those who stop at roadside encampments can access local facilities, and in line with Scottish Government policy, a formalised multi-agency policy on Roadside Encampments will be explored in 2023 between Housing, Infrastructure and Protective Services.

4.16 Travelling Showpeople

Little quantitative and qualitative information is available on Travelling Showpeople and their accommodation needs in East Lothian. It is recognised that this is a gap that should be addressed. There are currently no private or public sites for Travelling Showpeople within East Lothian, the nearest public site lies within the City of Edinburgh.

⁶⁹ Despite a range of attempts to engage with individuals identifying as Gypsy/Travellers and partner agencies who support them, no quantitative or qualitative local information could be sourced.

4.17 Armed Forces Communities⁷⁰

The [Armed Forces Covenant](#) was signed by East Lothian Council, East Lothian Community Planning Partnership and The Armed Forces Community in East Lothian in February 2013. Objective 3 of the Covenant is Housing, where the local authority is expected to

Develop a clear direction and guidance within the Local Authority and the Armed Forces as to what levels of service provision can be expected and what is required of the military community to enable them.

A veteran can be anyone who has served for at least one day in the military, either as a reservist or as part of the regular armed forces. Military life is demanding, dangerous and difficult. Adapting back to civilian life can be fraught with complications. However, veterans (and by extension their families and dependants) are not a homogenous group. Their experiences during and after the armed forces are shaped by a range of factors including:

- Experiencing a traumatic event during service.
- Socio-economic background prior to entering the military.
- Having a family/loved one to return to.
- Seeing someone killed or injured.
- Being seriously injured themselves.
- Type of support networks available upon returning from the armed forces.

In September 2022, there were eight households on the Council House housing list marked as 'Armed Forces Veterans'. Of the eight, six were active applicants. To address need, East Lothian Council worked with the Scottish Veterans Garden City Association (SVGCA) Houses for Heroes project to deliver six new build units for veterans. These were completed during the lifetime of the previous LHS and enabled disabled veterans to access purpose built accommodation within or near their local communities. Support is provided to those in the properties by SVGCA, who own and manage a number of properties for veterans across Scotland. During a review of the Allocations Policy in 2019, the Armed Forces Community were given recognised status.

⁷⁰ The Armed Forces community encompasses both individuals who have served in the Armed Forces and individuals affiliated with the Armed Forces including military family members and dependants.

4.18 LGBTQ+

There is limited information on the specific experience of those who identify as LGBTQ+ in East Lothian. National research shows that people identifying as LGBTQ+ face discrimination, and inequalities increasing their risk of homelessness.⁷¹ New requirements from the Scottish Housing Regulator, which includes a guide [Collecting Equality Information: National Guidance for Scottish social landlords](#), will aid East Lothian Council to understand any requirements of those identifying as LGBTQ+.

Action 4.25

Housing will work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and Working for Change Collective to ensure people identifying as LGBTQ+ are represented in engagement and consultation.

4.19 Summary of Identified Need

Below is a summary of the identified affordable housing need for the specific groups mentioned through-out this chapter. A total of 374 units of affordable housing should be developed for over the course of this LHS, this translates to around 75 units per annum. This figure, however, does not include the contribution which market housing can make to reduce the identified need for affordable homes, through the increase in accessible and adaptable homes for sale.

Table 4.10: Identified Affordable Housing Need for specific groups between 2024-29

	Number of Units
Core & Cluster	60
Older People	200
Care Experienced Young People	14
Wheelchair Accessible	100*
Total	374

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

*Minimum of 100, 10% of all affordable housing, not including units provided under core & cluster.

⁷¹ [LGBTQ+ and Homelessness - Statistics and Support | Crisis UK](#)

4.20 Moving Forward

The following summarises some of the key challenges identified in this chapter and actions that will be taken over the lifetime of this LHS. The full list of detailed actions can be found within the [LHS Action Plan](#).

Key Challenges

- Increased need for youth specific approaches to housing and support.
- Rising ageing population in East Lothian.
- East Lothian had an estimate of 2,104 people with dementia, with a projected 65% increase by 2040.
- Estimated that there are 430 households who have an unmet need for a wheelchair accessible home.
- Increased demand for Care & Repair requires new sources of funding to be established to meet local need.
- Limited knowledge on how sensory impairment affects housing provision in East Lothian.
- Individuals continue to leave custody without sustainable housing secured for release, leading to higher risks for them and the community around them.
- Limited knowledge of the needs of ethnic minority groups in East Lothian.
- Limited engagement with Gypsy/Traveller communities in East Lothian.

Actions

Children and Young People

- 4.1 Review supported accommodation for all young people in East Lothian and develop a range of options to meet the gaps for housing and support.
 - 4.2 Develop a satellite flat near to the new residential children's home.
 - 4.3 Prepare a Young Person's Housing Pathway in line with The Promise and Prevention of Homelessness Duties.
 - 4.4 Work collaboratively with education, the Children's Strategic Partnership, and the Poverty Action Group to create an environment in which children can thrive and health inequalities are reduced.
-

Older People & Dementia

- 4.5 Redevelop the former Herdmanflat Hospital Site for affordable housing for older people.
- 4.6 Develop 200 units across different affordable housing tenures for older people over the course of the LHS.
- 4.7 Work alongside East Lothian H&SCP to ensure the development and implementation of the Dementia Strategy has strong strategic links to housing and housing related services.
- 4.8 Support the development of the Post Diagnostic Support for Dementia route map.

Social Care Users

- 4.9 Review the process of Housing Episodes forms, so it can be rolled out to further client groups.
- 4.10 Prepare a pathway, in line with the Duty to Prevent, to ensure, as far as possible, that no-one is discharged into homelessness.
- 4.11 Develop up to 12 units of core and cluster housing provision per annum.

Long Term Conditions

- 4.12 Work closely with East Lothian's H&SCP as they develop a Physical Disability Strategy and a See/Hear Strategy for Sensory Impairment, to ensure that housing and housing related services meet the needs of these client groups.

Wheelchair Accessible Housing

- 4.13 Ensure 10% of the total supply of affordable housing is developed to wheelchair accessible standards, with a minimum of at least 100 units of wheelchair accessible housing to be delivered over the 5 years.
- 4.14 Establish mechanisms through LDP2 to ensure a target of 5% of new build market housing is built to wheelchair accessible standards.

Adaptations

- 4.15 Review Care & Repair East Lothian.
- 4.16 Explore alternative options of funding major adaptations within East Lothian to ensure we meet our shared statutory obligations.

People involved in the Justice System

- 4.17 Implement the SHORE standards.
-

Violence Against Women and Girls

4.18 Develop an Equally Safe Housing Policy which recognises all VAWG.

Ethnic Minorities

4.19 Use the 2022 census results to better understand how race and ethnicity impact housing and health inequalities to ensure we are not unintentionally ignoring the needs of populations who have historically and systematically been marginalised.

4.20 Work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and other third sector partners to help identify housing need and challenges faced by ethnic minorities in East Lothian.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

4.21 Implement a strategic approach to accommodating refugees and asylum seekers.

Gypsy/Travellers

4.22 Continue to work with the Scottish Government to improve data to estimate the need and demand for a site in East Lothian.

4.23 We will explore the need for a Gypsy/Traveller site and if required, carry out a review to identify a new site in a suitable location.

4.24 Prepare a multi-agency policy on Roadside Encampments.

LGBTQ+

4.25 Work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and Working for Change Collective to ensure people identifying as LGBTQ+ are represented in engagement and consultation.

5 High Quality & Sustainable Homes

Enabling households to live in high quality and sustainable homes within East Lothian is a key strategic aim of this LHS.

The LHS can contribute to a reduction in fuel poverty, encourage better health outcomes and drive progression towards Net Zero. By improving property condition and energy efficiency across all tenures, homes will become more resilient and adaptable to climate change. An energy efficient home brings a range of benefits thus improving health outcomes such as respiratory illnesses and joint pain.

This section will examine the county's housing stock, including social housing and how it aligns with standards for house condition and energy efficiency set by the Scottish Government and regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. It also identifies areas where there is scope to improve the condition of housing across all tenures and progress towards Net Zero.

Priority Outcome: All homes within East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian's climate change targets.

5.1 The National Context

[The Building \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) (as amended) introduced health, welfare and safety standards for all buildings including the conservation of fuel and power and achieving sustainable development. Standards are to be complied with when buildings works are carried out related to the structure, fire safety, environment, safety, noise, energy and sustainability of buildings.

[The Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) introduced a repairing standard for private sector properties and amendments to the tolerable standard of properties ensuring that properties are fit for habitation. It puts legal obligations on all landlords to carry out maintenance and repair works to the interior and exterior of the property within reasonable timescales. The Act also gives Local Authorities powers to enforce repairs and maintenance works, alongside schemes to support repair works such as Scheme of Assistance and Housing Renewal Areas.

Established on 1 April 2011 under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 the [Social Housing Regulator](#) regulates registered social landlords, including local authority's landlord and

Introduction

Context

1. Vibrant & Connected Communities

2. Housing Supply & Affordability

3. Preventing & Responding to Homelessness

4. Suitable Housing & Support

5. High Quality & Sustainable Homes

homelessness services. The SHR are responsible for monitoring the performance of social landlords under the [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#).

Introduced in 2014 [EESSH](#) set out the minimum energy efficiency ratings that social housing must meet, the standard varied depending upon the dwelling type and the fuel type used to heat the home. Following a review in 2023, Scottish Government proposed to replace EESSH2 with a Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) to ensure that any investment is targeted towards long-term solutions that deliver Net Zero and support the eradication of fuel poverty.

Published in 2021 the Scottish Government's [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#) has designated both the decarbonisation of homes and buildings, and the review of energy efficiency standards as national priorities. These measures are key to meeting Scotland's ambitious climate change targets (set out in the [Climate Change Plan](#) and [The Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)) of net zero emissions by 2045 and in tackling fuel poverty.

[Tackling Fuel Poverty in Scotland: A Strategic Approach](#) was published in 2021 sets out policies and proposals for national government, local authorities and third sector partners to help meet the targets set out in the 2019 Act.

The coming years will see a further drive to align housing quality standards in the social and private rented sector via [A New Deal for Tenants](#).

5.2 The Local Context

In August 2019, East Lothian Council declared a climate emergency. Outcome 3 of the [East Lothian Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025](#) states:

East Lothian's homes and buildings will be Net Zero and energy efficient, enabling us to achieve Fuel Poverty targets, will use low carbon and renewable heat and energy sources, and will be adapted for future climate change impacts.

To mitigate the impacts of climate change and ensure homes remain warm and dry, existing housing stock needs to be adapted to cope with higher levels of precipitation, dampness and increasing humidity. Conversely, during heatwaves homes need to be cool. Both keeping homes warm and ensuring they do not overheat are necessary to reduce health risks. Developing new high-quality homes which can withstand adverse weather conditions, are well insulated and ventilated is a key aim of East Lothian Council and reflected throughout this Local Housing Strategy.

[The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy](#) (LHEES) will set out the local authority's plans to systematically improve the energy efficiency of domestic and non-domestic buildings and decarbonise heat. The Scottish Government requires all local authorities to publish their first LHEES by 31st December 2023. East Lothian Council commissioned Changeworks to undertake a pilot study on energy efficiency and decarbonisation in East Lothian's Private

Rented Housing Sector, alongside a methodology evaluation, both of which were completed in 2022.

East Lothian Council have recently employed an LHEES officer with production of the LHEES strategy underway. This transformative strategy aims to revolutionise the way homes within the region are heated and is due for publication in early 2024.

5.3 Climate Change and Housing

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. Since the 1800s, [human activities have been the main driver of climate change](#), primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas⁷².

The impact of climate change is often first felt by those who are most vulnerable.

'When people are already vulnerable, climate change can have a compounding effect, worsening overall outcomes, particularly those associated with health and wellbeing⁷².'

The highest levels of deprivation are concentrated in the west of the county, meaning these areas are likely to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Housing has an important role to play in mitigating climate change. The current and future housing stock influences greenhouse gas emissions from construction of large-scale developments to direct heating emissions from individual households. Housing also has an important role to play in shielding residents from some of the impacts of climate change.

Housing can reduce climate change through utilising greener technologies such as zero direct emissions heating and promoting greener forms of construction that better utilise buildings.

Fabric first is the principle of a building fabric that retains heat — through a well-insulated, airtight structure, before thinking about additional technologies such as renewable energy. Taking a fabric first approach to modernisation by focussing on the components and materials that make up the fabric of the building will in many cases be the preferred option to reduce emissions.

Many of East Lothian's main towns, including Musselburgh, Prestonpans/Cockenzie, North Berwick and Dunbar, are located along the Firth of Forth, exposing them to rising sea levels.



Picture 5.1: Flood damage to properties on Lammer Street, Dunbar, courtesy of Alex

⁷² Climate Ready Scotland: climate change adaptation programme 2019-2024

Flooding and coastal sea level rises pose a severe risk to dwellings and may lead to the complete loss of homes.

To lessen risk, preparing for climate change events is important and the significance of joint working is emphasised within this LHS. Planning how the Council can support the adaptation of housing and prepare residents for climate disasters, such as flooding, will play a key role.

Action 5.1

We will identify areas and populations in East Lothian threatened by climate change. This will also allow strategic decisions to be made to mitigate any risk.

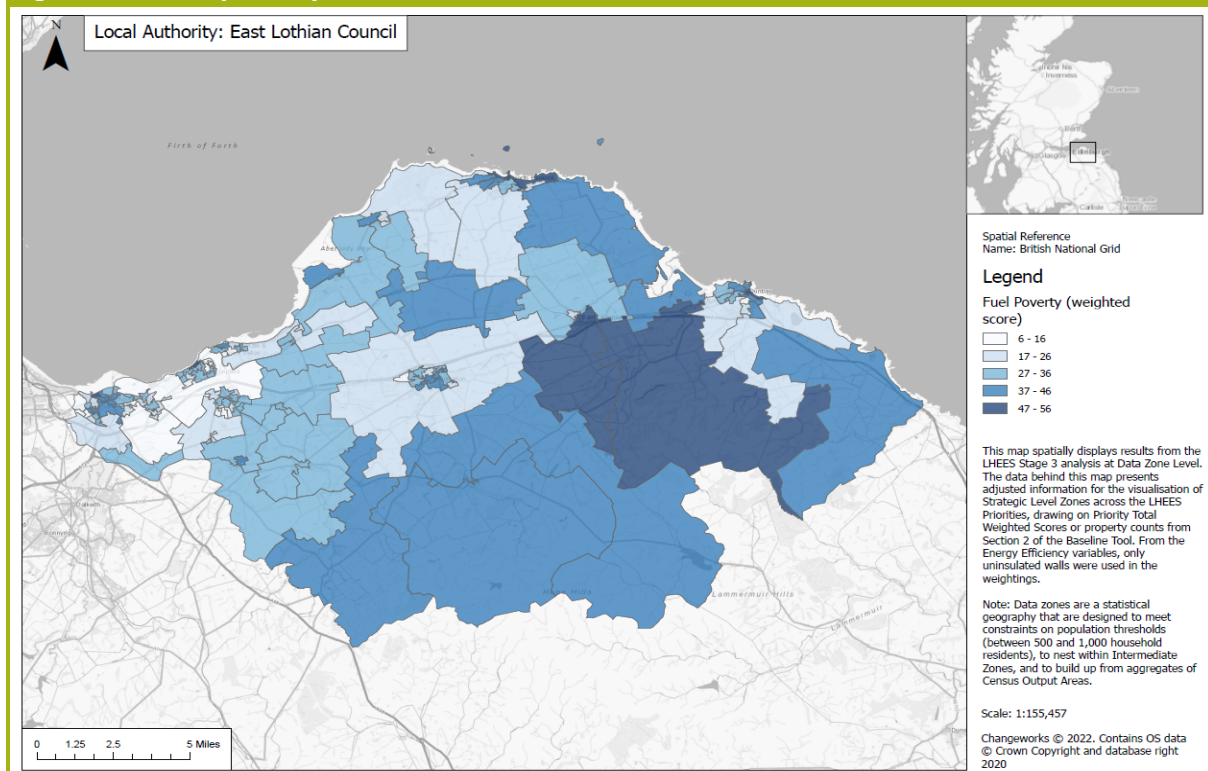
Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme

In 2024 the Musselburgh Flood Protection Project Team will present the finalised Outline Design to Council and seek permission to advance to Stage 5, where the proposed scheme will be published. It is estimated that the scheme could protect 2,500 properties from major flood events once implemented.

5.3 Fuel Poverty

Areas of East Lothian with the highest rates of fuel poverty can be found in both urban and rural areas. There are likely to be different factors affecting fuel poverty depending on location including household income, property type, level of insulation and main heating type.

Figure 5.1: Fuel poverty in East Lothian



Source: Changeworks, 2022

Homes that are poorly insulated and fail to retain heat result in higher energy costs and a greater risk of fuel poverty. Under heated homes exacerbate health inequalities and can lead to damage to the fabric of the building.

The recent cost of living crisis has resulted in soaring bills pushing more people into fuel poverty, potentially resulting in those households now under-heating their homes. As a result figures for fuel poverty used in this section are likely to under estimate the scale of the problem.

Table 5.1: Fuel Poverty across East Lothian

Households in Fuel Poverty	Households in Extreme Fuel Poverty
24%	9%

Source: Changeworks, 2022 (Taken from Home Analytics)

Tenure comparison

Nationally households within the private rented (37%) and social rented sectors (38%) have far higher levels of fuel poverty than owner occupiers (16%)⁷³. Within East Lothian households aged 65+ (38%) and households living in the social rented sector (42%) are most likely to live in extreme fuel poverty⁷⁴.

Figures from Home Analytics show that the highest proportion of properties with an EPC banding of A-C are found in the social rented sector. EPCs while indicating how energy efficient a home is don't indicate risk of fuel poverty. Someone on a low income living in a well-insulated modern home will still face fuel poverty if they don't have enough income to cover their bills.

Table 5.2: % of properties with EPC A-C ratings by tenure

Social Rented	Private Rented	Owner-occupied
59.4%	39.1%	46.2%

Source: Home Analytics, 2023

Age of properties

The age of a property can have a significant effect on its energy efficiency due to different building techniques and regulations in place at the time it was built.

Within East Lothian 70% of properties were built post 1945 with 30% built prior to this, these figures are identical to the Scottish average⁷⁵. Older properties (pre-1919) tend to have lower EPC bandings while newer properties are more likely to have a higher EPC banding

⁷³ SHCS Local Authority Tables 2017-19

⁷⁴ SHCS Local Authority Tables 2017-19 (no data for the PRS was available for East Lothian)

with over 50% of properties built in East Lothian post-2002 having an EPC A-B. Among properties built prior to 1919 the proportion is 1.7%. The Scottish House Condition Survey shows that fuel poverty is more prevalent in homes built post 1945 than it is in older ones.

Rural and Urban Areas

Properties in rural areas are less energy efficient than those in an urban area with 65.8% banded EPC D or below. Properties in rural areas are less likely to be on the gas grid, reducing their energy efficiency and increasing their energy bills. 36% of homes in 'accessible rural areas' are off the mains gas grid and 13.2% of households are heated with oil.

Reducing fuel poverty



To tackle fuel poverty, it is essential that local data sets, particularly in the private sector, are improved. The Council has detailed data sets on the quality of its own social housing stock. However, data of the private sector stock is much more limited. This data would allow the Council to support the most vulnerable households out of fuel poverty first.

Action 5.2

Over the lifetime of the LHS, we will improve knowledge and understanding of private sector stock through analysing data such as home analytics, census data, the Scottish House Conditions Survey and local knowledge.

Energy Advice Service

East Lothian Council outsources its energy advice and support service to residents. The service tackles fuel poverty through advice, advocacy, undertaking home visits and hosting workshops. Support provided has helped people with billing issues, making improvements to the energy efficiency of their home, finding energy savings and managing their energy usage. Reasons for referral include heating, high energy bills, fuel debt, fuel disconnection

and insulation. Table 5.3 demonstrates that advice given by the East Lothian Energy Advice Service has provided significant savings to households within the county.

Type of support	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Households supported/engaged with energy advice	181	212	288
Savings achieved through energy advice and billing	£31,004.85	£41,199.16	£54,175.75
Community engagements	0	5	3
Front line staff training events	0	1	4

Source: Changeworks, 2022

Transitioning to net zero

While reaching net zero remains a priority, it is important that the transition is just, with no adverse impact upon the most vulnerable communities within East Lothian. We will ensure that decisions are balanced, and they are being made in the best interest of the most vulnerable and that affordable warmth is realistic for the population as a whole.

For example, alternative technology such as heat pumps can help to reduce emissions from fossil fuels. However an increase in electricity use from using a heat pump may result in increased bills and a risk of fuel poverty, particularly if electricity unit rates remain high.

Economic factors such as the rising cost of materials and labour will also impact upon the transition to net zero as will the acute financial challenges facing local authorities in their ability to finance greener homes. The increased costs risk will also impact upon other areas of investment such as the delivery of new build affordable homes.

Action 5.3

To move towards net zero the number of skilled workers in East Lothian able to install new technologies has to be increased. By engaging with local colleges, universities and [East Lothian Works](#), in the provision of training and education, upskilling in sustainable construction methods will be promoted. This will also provide opportunities for people to live locally, whilst pursuing apprenticeships and further education.

Action 5.4

The provision of an Energy Efficiency Policy will provide a framework for moving forward and reducing the emissions of Council properties across East Lothian. It will also ensure a just transition so that households are not left behind or facing increased vulnerability to energy costs.

East Lothian Council and West Lothian Council have agreed to jointly commission a report to provide a comparison between the different low carbon energy approaches they should be

considering when developing their individual Low Carbon Net Zero (LCNZ) New Build Housing Strategies.

Action 5.5

Hub South East, utilising the expertise of specialist energy and sustainability supply chain partner Carbon Futures (Consultancy) Ltd, were asked to develop a specification for a Low Carbon Energy Performance Analysis that will assist the development of the aforementioned Low Carbon Housing Strategies.

Investigating the impacts of the different available energy approaches now will contribute to the more efficient delivery of housing in the future, whilst hopefully also allowing a level playing field to be developed that will support ongoing performance, maintenance and life cycle analysis of new housing stock.

5.4 Social Housing Quality

SHQS & EESSH

The SHQS was introduced in 2004 ensuring that social landlords provide homes that are energy efficient; safe and secure; not seriously damaged; and with kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition. Since 2012, this target has been incorporated in the [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#).

More recent additions to the SHQS have included previous energy efficiency measures being superseded by the EESSH, the requirement to install additional smoke, heat and Carbon Monoxide detection as well as completing electrical safety inspections at intervals of no more than 5 years.

As at the end of 2022/23, 86.94% of Council owned properties met the SHQS. EESSH failures account for the 9.14% of those non-compliant properties, which is on par with the national average (9.6%). Remaining non-compliant properties are made up of cases where improvement works were unable to be completed for technical and/or social reasons and these are classed as being exempt or in-abeyances.

East Lothian Council review all SHQS exemptions and abeyances on a quarterly basis and where possible these are progressed e.g. when a property becomes void or sold and new tenant/owner is in place. Officers also on a cyclical basis reach out to all tenants with non energy efficient heating systems who previously declined an opportunity to modernise.

The Council acknowledge that energy efficiency standards are under review and will continue to follow the interim guidance until the new standard is set. Figures from 2022/23 show that 90.86% of East Lothian Council properties met EESSH standards⁷⁵.

It is proposed that from 2025 all new build homes in Scotland will have to meet a new Scottish version of the Passivhaus standard. Guidance has also been issued which will prohibit gas boilers from being installed in new homes from 2024. Both of these measures

⁷⁵ Scottish Housing Regulator

are likely to have a significant impact in terms of the cost of providing new housing and how housing is designed and utilised.

While the number of East Lothian Council properties with renewable energy systems has increased over the last couple of years, 94.8% of East Lothian Council properties still run on gas boilers.

Both Council owned properties and ELHA continue to invest in a number of renewable energy systems. This has included 4 properties constructed to Passivhaus standards.

Table 5.4: Number of properties with renewable energy systems

	East Lothian Council	East Lothian Housing Association
Air Source Heat Pump	149	7
Ground Source Heat Pump	-	40
Solar Photovoltaic	274	-
Solar Thermal	114	-

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

**Action
5.6**

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak who died in Rochdale as a result of a respiratory condition caused by mould in his [home in 2020](#) a working group reviewing current damp, condensation and mould processes was convened by the Council in early 2023 with a focus on Council Housing. The intention of the group is to develop new processes and deliver staff training. We will monitor and review the benefits of the new process.

**Action
5.7**

Our tenants’ homes are our assets. We will develop a Council Housing Asset Strategy to ensure that these assets remain sustainable and remain fit for purpose over their lifecycle.

Delivery of the Strategy will take place over two phases. The first phase will set out the framework for improving the Council’s property portfolio economically over a five year period, through our annual investment plans. The second phase seeks to expand the Strategy towards taking a ‘whole organisation’ approach by adopting the principles of integrated asset management.

The Council currently has well-developed systems in place in relation to stock knowledge, investment planning and a tenant safety compliance framework. The Housing Asset Strategy will enhance and formalise this, supporting better outcomes for Council tenants. The strategy will recognise the financial challenges the Council faces in meeting new standards and requirements for social housing and will seek to find innovative solutions to meet the Council’s obligations.

Action 5.8

East Lothian Council's affordable housing specification and design guide will be updated to reflect net zero and sustainability ambitions.

5.5 Private Sector Housing Quality

Over 35% of properties within the PRS were built pre-1919⁷⁶. In the social rented sector, the figure is only 3.4%. Similarly, the number of newer properties, those built post-2002, is lowest in the PRS. Owner-occupied properties account for the largest proportion of properties built between 1984 and 2002. Older properties are likely to require more maintenance and are often harder to make energy efficiency improvements to.

Compared to Scotland overall, East Lothian has lower levels of extensive disrepair but significantly higher levels of both urgent disrepair and disrepair to critical elements.

Table 5.5: Level of Disrepair (all tenure)

Level of Disrepair	East Lothian	Scotland
Extensive	5%	6%
Urgent	36%	20%
Disrepair to critical	61%	53%

Source: SHCS LA Tables 2017-19

Scheme of Assistance

The [Scheme of Assistance](#) offers advice, and in some cases financial help, to private sector landlords and homeowners. Assistance is provided to avoid properties falling into despair, improve energy efficiency and deliver home adaptations for people with disabilities.

Through the Private Sector Housing Grants (PSHG), adaptations in private sector homes are funded for those eligible, this is covered in [Chapter 4](#).

EES:ABS

[Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes](#) (EES: ABS) are delivered through the Scheme of Assistance, EES: ABS provides funding to local authorities to address fuel poverty and improve the energy performance of private sector homes by installing insulation and other energy efficiency measures. Funding is targeted towards fuel poor areas and implemented with local delivery partners. East Lothian has delivered over £2million worth of EES:ABS measures since 2018.

⁷⁶ Home Analytics

A range of works have been supported by EES:ABS funding, including:

- Targeting owner-occupied flats with shared stairwells, to ensure whole buildings were insulated.
- Solar photovoltaic technologies including Tesla battery packs to properties in Prestonpans.
- Cavity wall and external wall insulation in Musselburgh and Dunbar.

Table 5.6: Number of EES:ABS funding measures implemented since 2018

Critical wall insulation	External Wall Insulation	Solar Photovoltaic
181	72	17

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

Action 5.9

We will explore opportunities to combine funding streams maximising opportunities to provide holistic approaches to both improvements and conditions.

Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS)

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#) sets out the criteria for the ‘Tolerable Standard’ of residential properties. The standard has been steadily rising in recent years and has now been extended to require all homes to have smoke and heat alarms. It is the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that the standard is being met and support landlords under the Scheme of Assistance.

The percentage of dwellings considered to be Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS) within East Lothian stands at 2%, or 1,000 homes⁷⁷.

Tenure specific figures were not available at a local authority level. Nationally, 1% of properties within the social rented sector, 1% of properties that are owner occupied and 3% of properties within the PRS are believed to be BTS. If figures within East Lothian mirror those nationally, 143 properties in the PRS within the county would fail to meet the tolerable standard.

Condensation and Damp

Figures from the Scottish Housing Conditions Survey (SHCS) indicate that 15% of properties within East Lothian have some evidence of condensation. The national figure is 8%,

⁷⁷ SHCS 2017-19 LA Tables

suggesting that condensation levels are far higher within East Lothian. Condensation can lead to the growth of mould in the home, which can pose health risks to occupants.

Figures from the SHCS show that 2% of properties suffer from damp within the county, with 5% of pre-1945 properties having rising or penetrating damp. In order to meet the tolerable standard properties must be substantially free from rising or penetrating damp. These figures therefore give an indication that some properties risk failing the tolerable standard at a later date if problems with damp are not treated.

Housing Renewal and Enhanced Enforcement Areas

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#) provides local authorities with powers to tackle substandard housing within their area. The [Enhanced Enforcement Areas Scheme \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#) enable a local authority to apply for additional discretionary powers so that it can target enforcement action at an area characterised by poor conditions in the PRS. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that any specific areas within the county suffer from large numbers of sub-standard homes to the extent that a Housing Renewal Area or Enhanced Enforcement Area is required.

Shared Repairs

Although tenements do not make up a large proportion of properties in East Lothian, advice on shared repairs is a critical element of the Scheme of Assistance. East Lothian Council contribute £1,530 towards [Under One Roof](#), a charity which provides impartial advice on repairs and maintenance for flat owners in Scotland. Under One Roof has given advice to households within East Lothian in relation to obtaining agreement from owners and proceeding with repairs to a property as well as guidance on how to form an owners' association. During 2024, the Dunbar Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme will pilot a My Stair Community Project helping tenement residents to creatively work together to maintain their buildings. Tenement stair management support will also be given to assist with setting up and initial co-ordination for residents to work together.

Missing Shares

A missing share pilot was carried out in 2014 by East Lothian Council in Musselburgh. The budgetary and resource constraints since then have meant that this has not been extended.

Action 5.10

The Scheme of Assistance will be reviewed to strengthen its role within the county, improve co-ordination and ascertain the levels of assistance local residents can receive. This will include:

- An update of the Housing Renewal Area Policy to identify criteria against which an area would be compared in order to support housing improvement.
- An update of the Enhanced Enforcement Area Policy
- A Review of the Below Tolerable Standards Strategy

- Exploring new methods of helping to facilitate shared repairs in tenement stairwells through innovative means such as through mobile apps.
- Missing Shares Policy

**Action
5.11**

Explore the opportunity to employ a Private Sector Housing Officer to enhance the quality of non-financial assistance, such as leaflets, pro-active visits and telephone advice. A dedicated Officer will allow for a more pro-active approach towards providing assistance within the private sector as advocated by the Scottish Government and help to deliver the Scheme of

Assistance.

5.6 Landlord Engagement

The private rented sector is a critical element of East Lothian’s housing system, so it is essential we continue to support landlords to provide high-quality accommodation. The Council are part of the national landlord registration scheme through which all landlords who let or seek to let a property within East Lothian must be registered as ‘fit and proper’.

The Council’s licensing team engages with landlords, enquiring about necessary documentation such as gas safety certificates and EICRs. In cases of non-cooperation, landlord registration is reviewed by the Licencing Sub-committee.

Table 5.7: East Lothian Council Landlord Training and Engagement during 2022

Landlord Accreditation Scotland training:	Key Notes Newsletter:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy Management. • Property Condition & Property Management. • Preparation for Possession Actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on relevant legislation. • Opportunities for landlords to contribute to local and national strategies. • Training opportunities.

Source: East Lothian Council, 2023

**Action
5.12**

In anticipation of further Scottish Government reforms across the Rented Sector, Landlords and letting agents were invited to participate in ‘Research into the Private Rented Sector in East Lothian’. Findings indicate that support for landlords is required in the following areas:

- Well publicised, accessible training and development materials for private landlords on tenancy legislation and compliance.
- Ongoing and meaningful engagement with private landlords on current and proposed reforms to the sector to identify through partnership, how landlords can be supported to remain in the sector.

5.7 Mixed Tenure Approach

Organising repairs and maintenance in mixed tenure blocks with multiple owners can prove challenging. East Lothian Council currently owns properties in 296 buildings which are of mixed tenure.

Action 5.13

To capitalise on the range of funding available to improve stock in different tenures, a co-ordinated strategic approach will be established in 2024. This will include development of House Conditions and Energy Improvement Plan which will enable the Council to set out a framework for mixed tenure blocks.

The Plan will support mechanisms to meet EPC targets setting out an approach to mixed tenure repairs including shared repairs and modernisation projects. It will also outline how the Council will improve energy efficiency within mixed tenure areas.

5.8 Moving Forward

The following summarises some of the key challenges identified in this chapter and actions that will be taken over the lifetime of this LHS. The full list of detailed actions can be found within the [LHS Action Plan](#).

Key Challenges

- Difficulty in obtaining and analysing data to identify the energy efficiency of buildings on a large scale.
- Improving the energy efficiency standards, particularly of older buildings, buildings in rural areas and private rented sector homes.
- A lack of a skilled workforce which is trained in maintaining and adapting homes with green technology.
- Risk for an increasing number of households falling into fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty.
- Ensuring a just and fair transition to net zero that leaves nobody behind.
- Compliance with SHQS and EESSH standards and the prospect of implementing new energy efficiency standards and Passivhaus in the context of rising costs.

Actions

- 5.1 Identify areas in East Lothian vulnerable to climate change.
 - 5.2 Improve knowledge and understanding of private sector stock.
 - 5.3 Promote training and upskilling in sustainable construction.
 - 5.4 Develop an Energy Efficiency Policy for East Lothian Council properties.
 - 5.5 Low Carbon Net Zero (LCNZ) New Build Housing Strategy Produced.
 - 5.6 Implement recommendations to tackle damp and mould in council properties.
 - 5.7 Development of a Housing Asset Strategy.
 - 5.8 Update the Affordable Housing Specification and Design Guide.
 - 5.9 Explore opportunities to combine funding streams.
 - 5.10 Review the Scheme of Assistance and subsequent documents.
 - 5.11 Explore the opportunity to recruit a Private Sector Housing Officer.
 - 5.12 Develop a program of landlord engagement aligned with any national changes in legislation.
 - 5.13 Develop a mixed tenure Housing Conditions and Energy Improvement Plan.
-

LHS 2024-29 ACTION PLAN

Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
1.1	Prepare a Local Investment Framework with communities building on Area Plans, to direct strategic investment in and around homes.	No Local Investment Framework in place.	Prepare Project Initiation Document with timelines of different phases of LIF. Members Library Report submitted for each phase of LIF.	2025	Housing Strategy & Development
1.2	Build on existing links with other organisations and be open to engaging with organisations who have an interest in improving housing and housing services in East Lothian.	Existing ties with various organisations and groups exists.	Keep a list of existing contacts. Keep list of contacts up to date. Expand list of contacts.	2029	Housing
1.3	Support both private landlords and tenants, through ongoing and meaningful engagement on current reforms to solidify the role of the private rented sector in East Lothian.	Private Rented Sector study completed in 2023.	Number of Landlord Engagement Letters and Events held.	2029	Housing
1.4	Implement a new East Lothian Council Housing Management IT System.	Need to replace existing IT solution(s) with modern, integrated, customer-friendly digital solution.	New HMIS IT solution implemented.	2025	Housing

Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
1.5	Maximise opportunities for area based regeneration	Dunbar CARS commenced in 2023. New Heritage and Place Programme from HES.	Successful applications to HES and other relevant organisations to promote regeneration.	2029	Economic Development & Regeneration Housing Strategy & Development
1.6	Complete the review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy	Existing ASB Strategy out of date.	Engagement & Consultation sessions held. New ASB Strategy approved by Cabinet.	2024	Community Housing & Homelessness Safer Communities

Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households in East Lothian.					
Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
2.1	Deliver 891 affordable homes over the period of the LHS.	Over 1,000 homes delivered over the period 2018-2023.	The number of affordable housing units supplied year on year.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development
2.2	Explore the effects of the cost-of-living crisis on households in East Lothian regards to housing options, more specifically examining the issue of multigenerational households across all tenures.	Limited knowledge of the effects of cost-of-living crisis on multigenerational households in East Lothian.	Report completed.	2027	Housing Strategy & Development
2.3	Carry out a review of the Council's Allocations Policy.	Allocations policy last reviewed in 2019.	Review submitted to Members Library. Recommended changes approved and implemented.	2025	Community Housing & Homelessness
2.4	Develop a voids performance management framework.	Void policy last reviewed in 2019.	Review submitted to Members Library. Recommended changes approved and implemented.	2024	Community Housing & Property Maintenance
2.5	Increase the supply of mid-market housing.	There are currently 301 MMR properties within East Lothian.	The number of mid-market rent properties has increased within the county.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development

Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households in East Lothian.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
2.6	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.	Current OMSE thresholds mean the number of qualifying homes on the market is low. NSSE has not been utilised since 2018.	Number of affordable home ownership options delivered year on year is monitored.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development
2.7	Update the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance for LDP2 and associated documents.	The current Affordable Housing SPG is out of date.	Members Library Report. Approved Affordable Housing SPG.	2024	Housing Strategy & Development
2.8	Explore the need for a Build to Rent Policy.	No Build to Rent policy is currently in place.	Build to Rent Policy approved and Members Library Report submitted.	2025	Housing Strategy & Development
2.9	Explore the Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund to see where it could allow for innovative rural developments to take place.	No uptake within East Lothian of the Rural Housing Fund for affordable housing.	Rural Housing Fund utilised. Feed into LDP2 on need for small scale affordable housing developments.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development Planning
2.10	Explore innovative methods of delivery including utilizing second homes council tax income.	Currently no detailed information exists in terms of the viability of innovative and alternative forms of financing housing within the county.	Innovative financing and delivery models investigated and report prepared into their viability within East Lothian.	2029	Housing

Housing supply is accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households in East Lothian.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
2.11	Develop an empty homes strategy.	No current strategy is in place.	Strategy produced and recommendations provided.	2026	Housing
2.12	Continue to monitor Short Term Lets to investigate if they negatively impact the PRS and wider housing system.	Initial monitoring difficult without licensing fully in place.	An evidence paper on short term let control areas will be prepared by Planning Policy in collaboration with Housing and Economic development in 2024.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development Planning
2.13	Define the term 'key workers' within the East Lothian context prepare research on the housing needs of key workers to inform future policy decisions	No definition currently in place	Definition of 'Key worker' within the context of housing affordability agreed.	2026	Housing Strategy & Development

Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
3.1	Update and roll-out Housing Workshops within high schools and extend to primary schools across East Lothian.	Material and resources used for Housing Workshops within high schools due updating. Housing Workshops not delivered within primary schools.	Review of resources and material for Housing Workshops completed and approved. Number of primary schools who receive Housing Workshops.	2025	Community Housing & Homelessness
3.2	Prepare and implement a service transformation plan to enable compliance with the new Prevention Duty.	Guidance on Prevention Duty not yet published.	Transformation plan to enable compliance with the new Prevention Duty submitted to Members Library. Transformation plan approved and embedded within service.	Dependent on legislation	Community Housing & Homelessness
3.3	Carry out training and awareness raising sessions ensuring expectations are managed appropriately regarding pressurised housing system.	No training and awareness session regarding the pressurised housing system.	Number of training and awareness sessions conducted. Number of departments/services who have received training and awareness sessions.	2029	Community Housing & Homelessness
3.4	Make formal consideration of the wellbeing needs of accompanying children (with a focus on domestic abuse) using a trauma informed	No formal approach taken to accompanying children within homelessness cases.	Consultation on how accompanying children experience homelessness. Consultation used to inform review of approaches taken to homeless	2027	Community Housing & Homelessness

Homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
	approach and implement recommendation.		households with accompanying children. Recommendations from review approved and taken forward.		
3.5	Implement a rolling programme to re-designate temporary accommodation as permanent tenancies.	Number of households in temporary accommodation. Length of time spent in temporary accommodation.	The number of temporary accommodation re-designated as permanent tenancies.	2029	Community Housing & Homelessness
3.6	Explore flat-share arrangements for single people in emergency accommodation.	33 shared tenancy arrangements in place (March 2023) in emergency accommodation.	Number of flat-sharing arrangements in emergency accommodation units. Monitoring of UAO breaches.	2029	Community Housing & Homelessness
3.7	Review the current provision of Supported Accommodation for Adults and young people in East Lothian to ensure it meets identified need.	No review undertaken.	Report and Recommendations submitted to Members Library. Procurement exercise complete.	2025	Housing Strategy & Development EL H&SCP

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
Children and Young People					
4.1	Review supported accommodation for all young people in East Lothian and develop a range of options to meet the gaps for housing and support.	Review Group established in July 2023. Remit approved under Transformation of Children's Services.	Report to Transformation of Children's Services. Procurement program established.	2024	Housing Children's Services Transformation Team
4.2	Develop a satellite flat near to the new residential children's home.	There are no close-by support flats for use by the residential housing team.	Development of property.	2027	Housing Strategy & Development
4.3	Prepare a Young Person's Housing Pathway in line with The Promise and Prevention of Homelessness Duties.	No pathway in place.	Approved pathway in place. Report to Members Library.	2024	Housing Children's Services
4.4	We will also work collaboratively with Education, the Children's Strategic Partnership, and the Poverty Action Group to create an environment in which children can thrive and health inequalities are reduced.	Light-touch approaches in place.	Strategic action plan produced.	2029	Housing

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
Older People and Dementia					
4.5	Redevelop the former Herdmanflat Hospital Site for affordable housing for older people.	Initial consultations taken place.	Planning permission granted. Full public consultation. Delivery of affordable housing on site.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development
4.6	Develop 200 units across different affordable housing tenures for older people over the course of the LHS.	Older People's Needs Assessment completed to calculate need.	Number of affordable homes for older people developed year on year.	2029	Housing
4.7	Work alongside East Lothian H&SCP to ensure the development and implementation of the Dementia Strategy has strong strategic links to housing and housing related services.	Dementia Strategy approved.	Number of key initiatives and training opportunities for housing staff developed and implemented.	2029	Housing H&SCP
4.8	Support the development of the Post Diagnostic Support for Dementia route map.	Housing has taken part in workshops to help inform the route map.	Finalised route map approved. Training and information sessions rolled out within housing.	2027	H&SCP Housing

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
Social Care Users (Mental Health, Physical Disabilities, Learning Disabilities and Sensory impairments)					
4.9	Review the process of Housing Episodes forms, so it can be rolled out to further client groups.	Housing episode forms in place for learning disability clients.	Review of forms completed. Changes rolled out. Training and information sessions with wider social work staff.	2026	Housing H&SCP
4.10	Prepare a pathway, in line with the Duty to Prevent, to ensure, as far as possible, that no-one is discharged from hospital into homelessness.	No pathway in place.	Working group formed. Pathway approved. Members library report.	2027	Housing H&SCP
4.11	Develop up to 12 units of core and cluster housing provision per annum.	Previous LHS target achieved.	Number of units delivered year on year.	2029	Housing
4.12	Work closely with East Lothian's H&SCP as they develop a Physical Disability Action Plan and a See/Hear Action Plan for Sensory Impairment, to ensure that housing and housing related services meet the needs of these client groups.	Little understanding of the needs of those with a sensory impairment in East Lothian.	Strategy approved. Consideration of a needs assessment for individuals with sensory impairments.	2027	H&SCP Housing

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.					
Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
Wheelchair Accessible Housing					
4.13	10% of the total supply of affordable housing will be wheelchair accessible, with a minimum of 100 units delivered over the five years.	No target currently in place.	The number of wheelchair accessible housing delivered year on year.	2028	Housing
4.14	Through LDP2, East Lothian Council will establish mechanisms to ensure a target of 5% of new build market housing is built to wheelchair accessible standards.	No target currently in place.	Establish policy. Members Library report. Number of market housing meeting wheelchair accessible standard delivered year on year.	2026	Housing
Adaptations					
4.15	Review Care & Repair East Lothian.	Review group established in August 2023.	Review complete. Recommendations established. Report to EMT and Members Library.	2024	Housing Strategy & Development
4.16	Explore alternative options of funding major adaptations in the private sector to ensure we meet our shared statutory obligations.	Private Sector adaptations budget under significant strain.	Additional funding available for private sector adaptations.	2025	Housing H&SCP

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.					
Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
People involved in the justice system					
4.17	Implement the SHORE standards.	SHORE standards beginning roll out.	Number of people entering custody with a housing plan in place. Number of people leaving custody with a housing plan in place.	2025	Community Housing & Homelessness
Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)					
4.18	Develop an Equally Safe Housing Policy which recognises all VAWG.	No specific domestic abuse or violence against women and girls housing policy.	Working group established. Housing Policy signed off. Members library report submitted.	2026	Housing
Ethnic Minorities					
4.19	Use the 2022 Census results to better understand how race and ethnicity impact housing and health inequalities.	Limited knowledge of race and ethnicity in East Lothian.	Reporting of outcomes in LHS update.	2025	Housing Strategy & Development
4.20	Work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and other third sector partners to help identify housing need and challenges faced by ethnic minorities in East Lothian.	Limited evidence on challenges faced by ethnic minorities in East Lothian.	Increase in local evidence base through number of engagement events, 1:1 interviews or focus groups.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.					
Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
Refugees & Asylum Seekers					
4.21	Implement a strategic approach to accommodating refugees and asylum seekers.	No strategic approach in place. Temporary team in position.	Strategic approach in place.	2026	Community Housing & Homelessness
Gypsy/Travellers					
4.22	Continue to work with the Scottish Government to improve data to estimate the need and demand for a site in East Lothian.	Ongoing discussions with Scottish Government and COSLA.	Improved access to data. Ability to estimate need/demand for a site in East Lothian.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development
4.23	We will explore the need for a Gypsy/Traveller site and if required, carry out a review to identify a new site in a suitable location.	Site closed due to disrepair.	Needs assessment completed. Report to Members Library	2026	Housing Strategy & Development
4.24	Prepare a multi-agency policy on Roadside Encampments.	Working group formed.	Approved multi-agency policy on roadside encampment. Members Library Report.	2023	Housing Infrastructure Protective Services

Suitable Housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
LGBTQ+					
4.25	Work with Volunteer Centre East Lothian and Working for Change Collective to ensure people identifying as LGBTQ+ are represented in engagement and consultation.	Limited input by LGBTQ+ community.	Increased engagement from LGBTQ+ across all housing and housing services.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development

All homes in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian's climate change targets.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
5.1	Identify areas in East Lothian that are vulnerable to climate change.	There are currently no areas formally identified as being most vulnerable to climate change.	Areas most vulnerable to climate change have been identified.	2028	Housing Strategy & Development Sustainability and Climate Change Officer LHEES Officer

All homes in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian’s climate change targets.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
5.2	Improve knowledge and understanding of private housing stock.	Report commissioned in 2022, requires cross tabulation with a range of other sources.	LHSA updated to reflect increased knowledge.	2028	Housing Strategy & Development
5.3	Engage with local colleges, universities and East Lothian Works, in the provision of training and education in sustainable construction.	No options currently exist.	Pathways established for those wanting to work in sustainable construction.	2028	Housing Strategy & Development
5.4	Develop an Energy Efficiency Policy.	There is currently no policy ‘in place.	Policy in place. Report submitted to member’s library.	2024	Housing
5.5	Develop a specification for a Low Carbon Energy Performance Analysis that will assist the development of the Low Carbon Housing Strategies.	Currently no specification exists.	Specification completed. Low Carbon Housing Strategies adopted.	2026	Housing
5.6	Monitor and review the new processes from the condensation and mould working group.	Working group has convened and is discussing how to proceed.	Recommendations received and implemented.	2028	Housing

All homes in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian’s climate change targets.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
5.7	Develop a Council Housing Asset Strategy to ensure that these assets remain sustainable and remain fit for purpose over their lifecycle.	No current strategy.	Both phases of the asset strategy completed.	Phase 1 – March 2024 Phase 2 – March 2026	Housing Assets Property Maintenance
5.8	Updates are made to the affordable housing specification and design guide to reflect net zero and sustainability ambitions.	Current guidance needs to be updated.	Members Library report submitted. Approved Specification in place.	2026	Housing
5.9	Explore opportunities to combine funding streams.	Alternative funding streams are under-utilised.	Opportunities to provide holistic approaches to both improvements and conditions are maximised.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development
5.10	Review & Implement a range of Private Sector Housing Policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Renewal Area Policy • Enhanced Enforcement Area Policy 	All Policies are currently out of date.	Revised policies in place. Report submitted to Member’s Library.	2028	Housing Strategy & Development

All homes in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting East Lothian's climate change targets.

Ref	Action(s)	Baseline	Indicator / Measure	End Point	Co-ordinator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Below Tolerable Standard Strategy Scheme of Assistance including BTS properties 				
5.11	Explore the opportunity to recruit a Private Sector Housing Officer (PSHO) to deliver the Scheme of Assistance and enhance non-financial assistance on offer to residents living in the private sector.	No Private Sector Housing Officer in place.	Private Sector Housing Officer is in position and greater levels of assistance are on offer to those living in the private sector.	2025	Housing
5.12	Well publicised, accessible training and development materials for private landlords on tenancy legislation and compliance.	Three training sessions delivered in 2022 along with three issues of the Key Notes newsletter.	Training continues to be delivered over the lifetime of the LHS. Key Notes is used to keep landlords informed of legislation and how they comply.	2029	Housing Strategy & Development Licensing
5.13	Develop a House Conditions and Energy Efficiency Improvement Policy including mixed tenure blocks.	No policy is currently in place.	Policy in place. Report submitted to Member's Library.	2026	Housing

Appendix 1: Acronyms and abbreviations

AHSP	Affordable Housing Supply Programme
AP	Area Partnership
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BTS	Below Tolerable Standards
CARS	Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPO	Community Payback Order
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
EES:ABS	Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes
EESH	Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing
EL H&SCP	East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership
ELC	East Lothian Council
ELHA	East Lothian Housing Association
ELTRP	East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
GIRFEC	Getting It Right For Every Child
HARSAG	Housing and Rough Sleeping Action Group
HES	Historic Environment Scotland
HNDA	Housing Need and Demand Assessment
HST	Housing Supply Target
IJB	Integrated Joint Board
LCHO	Low Cost Home Ownership
LDP	Local Development Plan
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, questioning and ace
LHEES	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MATHLR	Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement
NCS	National Care Service
NHS	National Health Service
NRS	National Records of Scotland
NSSE	New Supply Shared Equity
OMSE	Open Market Shared Equity
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PSG	Preston, Seton, Gosford
PSHG	Private Sector Housing Grant

RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SES	South East Scotland
SHCS	Scottish House Conditions Survey
SHNZS	Scottish Housing Net Zero Standard
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan
SHORE	Sustainable Housing on Release for Everyone
SHQS	Social Housing Quality Standard
SHR	Scottish Housing Regulator
SIMD	Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
STL	Short Term Let
STRENGTH	Sustaining Tenancies through Rights Empowerment and Normal Genuine Trauma-informed Homes
SVGCA	Scottish Veterans Garden City Association
UAO	Unsuitable Accommodation Order
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
UK	United Kingdom
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WAEML	Women's Aid East and Midlothian

Appendix 2: 8-fold Urban-Rural Classification Introduction

Class	Name	Description
1	Large Urban Areas	Settlements of 125,000 people and over.
2	Other Urban Areas	Settlements of 10,000 to 124,999 people
3	Accessible Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and within a 30 minute drive time of a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
4	Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
5	Very Remote Small Towns	Settlements of 3,000 to 9,999 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
6	Accessible Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and within a drive time of 30 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
7	Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 30 minutes but less than or equal to 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
8	Very Remote Rural Areas	Areas with a population of less than 3,000 people, and with a drive time of over 60 minutes to a Settlement of 10,000 or more.
Scottish Government (2020) 8-fold urban rural classification		

Appendix 3: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Introduction

Further information can be found on the [Scottish Government](#) website.

The SIMD focuses on concentrations of deprivation. Not all households living in deprivation are represented, this can underestimate the spread of deprivation. Inequalities which impact health and wellbeing should be viewed on a scale, effecting people at various levels. Whilst those in the most extreme deprivation will see the most severe outcomes, implications associated with inequalities will affect those at the mid to high levels of the scale. Therefore, SIMD cannot provide a complete image of deprivation.

The SIMD combines seven different domains, or aspects, of deprivation. The full definitions and calculations of each domain can be found in the [SIMD 2020 technical notes](#). The domains have different weighting.

Income (28%)	Number of adults receiving benefits.
Employment (28%)	Working age people receiving certain benefits.
Health (14%)	Mortality and hospital stays.
Education, skills and training (14%)	School attendance and attainment, working age people with no qualifications.
Geographic access to services (9%)	Population weighted average time taken to reach key services by various transport means including GP, schools, retail centres, post office, and petrol station.
Crime (5%)	Recorded crime rate for selected crime types per 10,000 population.
Housing (2%)	Persons in households that are overcrowded and persons in household without central heating.

The SMID can also be split into different [groups](#):

- Quintiles split the datazones into 5 groups, each containing 20% of Scotland's datazones
- Deciles split the datazones into 10 groups, each containing 10% of Scotland's datazones
- Vigintiles split the datazones into 20 groups, each containing 5% of Scotland's datazones
- Percentiles split the datazones into 100 groups, each containing 1% of Scotland's datazones.

Appendix 4: Affordable Housing Delivered in East Lothian

Types of Affordable Housing Delivered in East Lothian	
Tenure	Description
Social Rent	Housing provided at an affordable rent and managed by a local authority, Registered Social Landlord or other not for profit social housing provider, regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator.
Mid-Market / Intermediate Tenure	Accommodation available at rents below market rent levels in a defined local area. Rents are typically lower than Local Housing Allowance levels. This tenure may be provided by a Registered Social Landlord, developer or alternative organisation agreed by East Lothian Council's Strategic Investment Team. Rents and eligibility criteria will be set in agreement with East Lothian Council and the provider.
Subsidised Low Cost Home Ownership for Sale (shared equity)	A publicly funded subsidised unit, sold at a level identified as being affordable within a local context. The householder pays for the majority share in the property with a Registered Social Landlord, local authority or Scottish Government holding the remaining share under a shared equity agreement. No rent or occupancy payment is taken and the householder owns the property outright. The householder may be required to buy out the equity balance at an agreed point in the future.
Low Cost Home Ownership (Shared Ownership)	The householder purchases part of the dwelling and pays an occupancy payment to a Registered Social Landlord in respect of the amount outstanding. The householder has the ability to buy the dwelling in its entirety or increase the level of ownership of the dwelling in the future.
Unsubsidised Low Cost Home Ownership - (Discounted Sale Model):	A standard dwelling sold by a developer in partnership with East Lothian Council, to an agreed identified client group, at a specified price below market value. The methodology for calculating the discounted sale assumes a multiplier of three times the median income level for each market area. A Deed of Conditions is attached to the missives, in order to maintain the dwelling as an

	affordable unit to subsequent purchasers. The conditions are set out and agreed between East Lothian Council and the developer within a Section 75 agreement.
Unsubsidised Low Cost Home Ownership (Golden Share)	A model similar to Discounted Sale, with the exception of a difference in criteria in relation to pricing and eligibility. Typically the asking price is set at 80% of the market value in perpetuity, with the market value being set by an independent or District Valuer to the satisfaction of East Lothian Council. Eligible purchasers must be able to evidence a local connection and an ability to finance the purchase of the full market value of the property.
Unsubsidised Low Cost Home Ownership (Unsubsidised Shared Equity)	The householder purchases part of the dwelling, typically 60- 80% of the value, with the remainder of the stake held by the developer.
Self-Build	Self-build refers to housing built by individuals or a group of individuals for their own use. This may involve developers selling serviced plots for self-build to the intended owner occupier at a discounted price.
Source: East Lothian Council - Local Development Plan - Affordable Housing (2018)	

Appendix 5: Overview of the Housing Options service

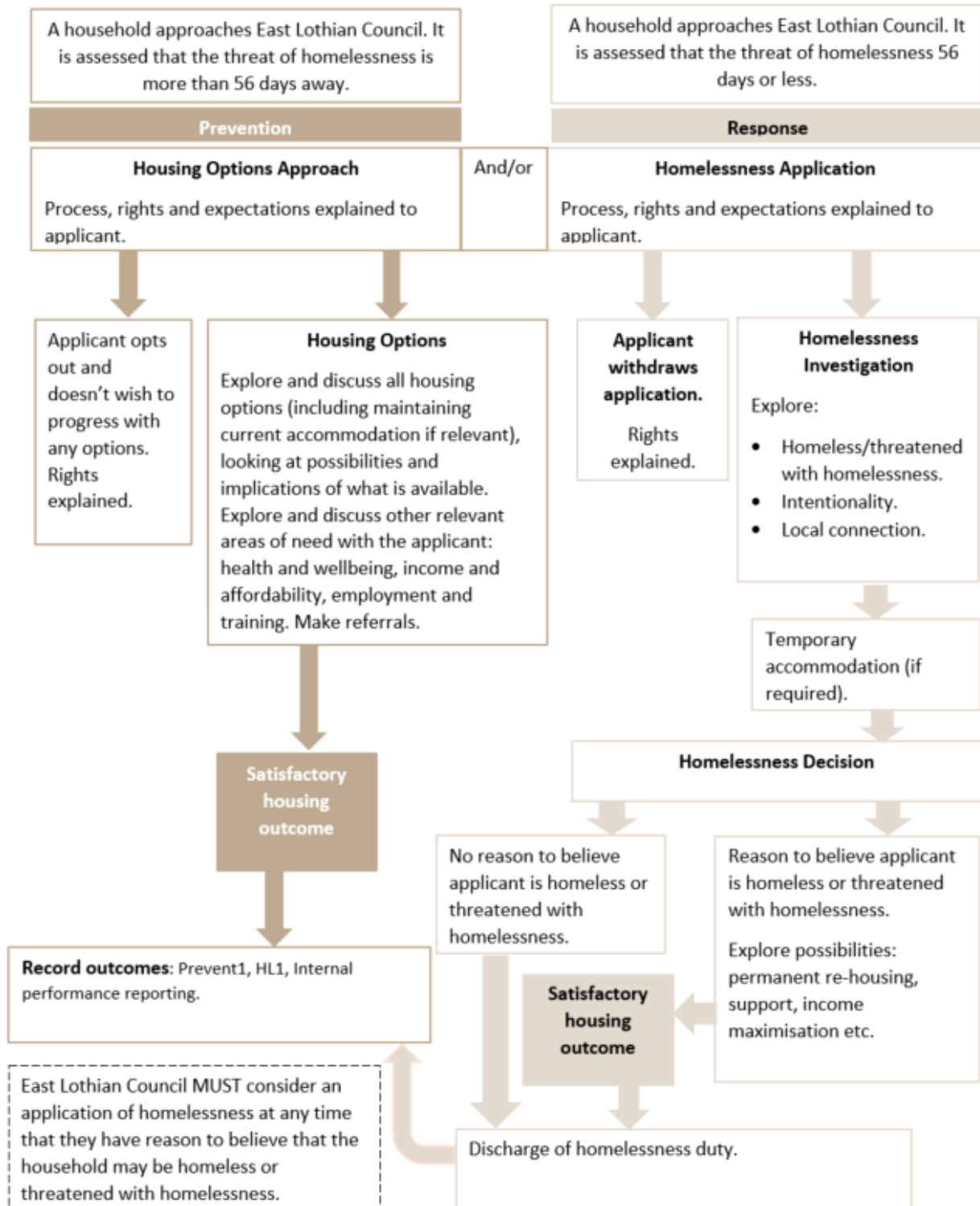
The prevention and response to homelessness in East Lothian is delivered by the Housing Options Team. The Housing Options Team takes a dual approach to crisis response and homelessness prevention. It is delivered by two separate though interlinked teams. This reflects the good practice guidance developed by the 32 local authorities which make up the 8 regional Housing Options HUBs.

A visual of all those approaching the Housing Options Team are triaged and separated into 'Response' or 'Prevention'. This triage is visualised in Figure X below. Those within the 56 day period of homelessness are referred to the Response Team for a homeless assessment. This allows for the prioritisation of a crisis response and the provision of temporary accommodation. Those out-with the 56 day period are referred to the Prevention Team. Prevention focuses on actively assisting households to prevent homelessness from arising. This includes services such as mediation and providing holistic information on housing options available. Where homelessness cannot be prevented and a household moves to a position of being threatened with homelessness within 56 days, a homeless assessment is carried out.

The Council has the duty to provide households with temporary accommodation as they are being assessed for homelessness. Not all households will choose to or require temporary accommodation at this stage, however, this may change within the duration of the assessment and application.

Assessing the demand for the Housing Options service is a critical part in monitoring homelessness in East Lothian. Information is recorded within the Prevention and Response process, through applications and assessment decisions. This information is then used for quarterly and annual reporting to the Scottish Government. East Lothian's Prevention (Prevent1) and Response (HL1) data will be used throughout Chapter to analyse local trends.

Housing Options Service System Diagram





Versions of this leaflet can be supplied in Braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language. Please phone Customer Services if you require assistance on 01620 827199

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