

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

**MEETING DATE:** 12 September 2023

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** East Lothian Consultative Draft Local Housing Strategy 2024-29

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the key elements of the consultative draft Local Housing Strategy 2024-29 and to seek approval to consult formally on this draft for an eight week consultation period.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Consultative draft Local Housing Strategy 2024-29.
- 2.2 It is recommended that Cabinet approve an eight week consultation period from 13<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 with a final document presented to Cabinet in January 2024.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

### **Legislative context**

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for their area. The Act also states that the LHS must be supported by an assessment of need and demand, of housing provision and related services. The LHS must be submitted to Scottish Ministers and local authorities must keep their LHS under review.
- 3.2 The LHS sets out the strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services across East Lothian for the period 2024 – 2029 and within the context of the current financial challenges.
- 3.3 The LHS is the sole strategic document for housing, bringing together a wide range of housing related priorities into one place and enabling a co-

ordinated response in terms of action. The LHS plays a number of important roles, including:

- Setting out the strategic direction of the Council and its partners to delivering high quality housing and related services, to meet identified need across the county.
- Outlining the Council's approach to meeting its statutory housing responsibilities, i.e. in relation to homelessness, house conditions and fuel poverty.
- Summarising the response to national housing priorities, i.e. the Scottish Housing Quality Standard; town centre living; reduction in carbon emissions and supporting the development of sustainable communities, while also reflecting the needs and priorities of the local area.
- Demonstrating how housing can contribute to improvements in health and wellbeing, the reduction of poverty and influence the effective integration of health and social care.

3.4 The consultative draft LHS has been developed in line with 2019 [Scottish Government Guidance](#), taking into account any recent relevant legislation such as the National Planning Framework 4.

### **Engagement**

3.5 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to consult on their proposed LHS. To inform preparation of this Consultative Draft LHS, a process of engagement commenced in February 2022 and ended in January 2023. Over 1,000 people participated in this process which included a range of online surveys, in person focus groups and workshops.

3.6 Engagement workshops included:

- 5 online surveys spanning a range of topics including: early engagement, rural housing, older people, children & young people, and health & housing.
- 6 service provider workshops with our third sector partners.
- Engagement sessions with Area Partnerships and Community Councils, capturing the views of 120 people.
- Equalities workshops for staff across Health and Social Care Partnership, the third sector, and wider ELC teams, involving approximately 80 people.
- A range of 1:1 interviews, focus groups and engagement were conducted over 9 sessions with 'lived experience' groups, hearing the experience of 71 individuals.

- Specific workshops held for teams and departments who wanted to directly input into the LHS. This included: 10 workshops with community housing and homelessness teams, 3 workshops with OT & Acute Hospital Team and 3 workshops with Justice Social Work Team.
- 3.7 The proposed strategic vision, corresponding priority outcomes and actions were developed through the Engagement process. An impact analysis narrowed the proposed actions down, while ensuring they would meet the proposed priority outcomes and strategic vision.

### **Structure**

- 3.8 The LHS has been undertaken under the backdrop of the UKs withdrawal from the EU, the Covid-19 Pandemic, the War in Ukraine and most recently, the Cost of Living Crisis. Underpinning all of the challenges in the LHS is the increasing financial uncertainty and funding gap faced by East Lothian Council.
- 3.9 Taking account of the key housing issues identified; the changing strategic planning framework; local context and engagement from local communities, the proposed strategic vision for East Lothian 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.***

- 3.10 To underpin this vision, five priority outcomes have been identified:
- Communities are supported to flourish, be distinctive and well connected.
  - Housing supply accessible, affordable and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households across East Lothian.
  - 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 in East Lothian are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting climate change targets.
- 3.11 An action plan underpins and supports these priorities, which will direct and target resources and activity over the period of the LHS. The proposed draft actions are set out from page 122 of the LHS.

### Next Steps

- 3.12 Following approval from Cabinet the consultative Draft LHS will be formally consulted on for an 8 week period from 13<sup>th</sup> September to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.
- 3.13 A series of consultation events have been planned which will give residents, tenants and community groups an opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy. An online consultation will also be available.

Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> September	10.00-16.00	Fisherrow Centre, Musselburgh (Musselburgh Communities Day)
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> October	16.30-19.30	Haddington Primary School,
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> October	13.30-17.30	TBC
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> October	16.30-20.30	Bleachingfield, Dunbar
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> October	16.30-20.30	The Fraser Centre, Tranent
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> November	12.30-17.30	Hope Rooms, North Berwick

- 3.14 A drop-in consultation event will be held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November between 10.00-16.30 for ELC, H&SCP members of staff and elected members to attend.
- 3.15 During the consultation period, the LHS is also subject to a peer review process led by the Scottish Government. The consultative draft LHS will be submitted to the Scottish Government to trigger this process.
- 3.16 Following the 8-week consultation period, the LHS will be reviewed in light of the responses, feedback from the Scottish Government and Peer Review.
- 3.17 It is proposed that the Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029 is submitted to cabinet in January 2024 for sign off before being sent to Scottish Government and becoming an official Council document in the new financial year.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

## 5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 An integrated impact assessment (IIA) was carried out on the Consultative Draft LHS. This forms **Supporting Paper 1** of the LHS. Three areas were picked up during the IIA process:

- The need to ensure that the LHS is updated to utilise the Census Data when it is published. This recognises that the existing Census is now over 10 years out of date, and is normally a key resource for reporting on equalities data.
- The need to continue to make efforts to reach out to groups which haven't been as well represented within engagement sessions. This includes LGBT+ and ethnic minorities. Housing will work alongside ELH&SCP and ELC's respective Equalities Officers and VCEL who have also identified similar gaps.
- To ensure that the Consultative LHS is fully accessible and includes Alternative Text (Alt Text) where there are tables or graphics. This has now been completed.

5.2 Due to the significant positive contribution Housing can make to the lives of children and young people, and in recognition of the UNCRC, a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Screening and a Full Assessment (CRWIA) was carried out. This is the first time a CRWIA has been carried out for an LHS. Both documents can be found in **Supporting Paper 3** of the LHS.

5.3 Housing is also a key enabler of positive health and wellbeing across all client groups. A Health Inequalities Impact (HII) Matrix was carried out on all the actions of the LHS. A workshop has been organised with Public Health Consultants within Public Health NHS Lothian which will form part of the final Local Housing Strategies Supporting Papers.

## 6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.2 Personnel - Significant staff time will be required to complete, monitor and oversee the development of the LHS.

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 [Consultative Draft LHS 2024-29 and Supporting Papers 1-5](#)

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