

For tenants of North Lanarkshire Council

Chief Executive's coronavirus update

Throughout the recent pandemic our staff, partners and community volunteers have worked tirelessly to keep people in our communities safe and cared for.



Since March, our new Community Assistance Helpline has made contact with thousands of residents to make sure good support is in place throughout this health emergency.

We've made over 12,394 calls to people who are having to shield, delivered 5,927 food packages, collected and delivered 1,037 prescriptions and made 1,174 referrals to other services.

Housing teams and community hubs came together and prepared and delivered nutritious hot meals to residents across our sheltered housing complexes. Mental health and issues such as loneliness are areas of critical concern. We are continuing to lift community spirits within the complexes through weekly entertainment treats from a live piper and singer to outdoor bingo and competitions, there's always



lots going on. One resident said, "What a thoughtful thing to do, filling people's homes with music at this time just means so much!"

Estate officers are also going above and beyond to protect residents by cleaning and disinfecting intercoms, door handles, lift buttons and other touch points in tower blocks on a daily basis and they have played a key role in helping deliver essential personal protective equipment.



We are acutely aware of the economic impact of the virus and we have been reaching out to tenants who are in arrears or struggling to pay their rent and have created a special Rent Relief Fund to help. So far, we have paid out temporary relief of £198,000.

Although, this health crisis has created challenges for us all, I'd like to assure you that our ambitious plan to transform our towns and communities remain on-track despite everything that has happened recently.

We are continuing work towards much needed new homes and the council's



Issue 30 / August 2020

plan called 'The Place, The Vision,' will provide a further critical boost to the local economy, helping transform towns and communities and creating new jobs across North Lanarkshire.

Before the outbreak our economy was recognised as among the fastest growing in Scotland and a new independent report shows that we are one of the best-placed councils to withstand the economic impact of coronavirus.

For more information on our plans and what it means for you, visit: **www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/vision**

Thank you and keep safe,

Des Murray Chief Executive



- Housing projects and investments
- Rent relief fund
- Participation goes digital

LIVEHERE

tenants' **news**



Foreword



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter where you will learn more about the wide range of our services and projects as well as plans for the coming year.

The coronavirus emergency and our response to it has been one of the biggest challenges the council has ever faced. We have continued throughout the crisis to provide our existing services wherever possible and develop new services to

Help with rent arrears available

Are you struggling to pay your rent and have fallen into arrears? We have created a rent relief fund for those tenants whose income has been directly affected by the coronavirus.

If you have suffered a loss of income through circumstances outwith your control such as being furloughed, being made redundant or having your working quickly meet the needs of everyone in North Lanarkshire. Housing services in particular have had to adapt immediately to allow us to continue to support some of our most vulnerable residents while still ensuring we all stay safe.

In this issue you will find out about the wide range of financial assistance and other forms of help available if you have been affected by coronavirus.

You will also read how we are transforming lives with our new build programme and despite the many changes to the way we operate how we continue to invest in tenants' homes.

hours reduced then get in touch and find out more.

The fund is available to tenants in arrears and who aren't yet receiving universal credit. You can claim for up to 5 weeks rent and you won't be expected to pay it back until September at the earliest.

Just call our helpline on **01698 524811** and a housing adviser will be happy to tell you more and complete your application over the phone. Any money you are entitled to will be applied directly to your rent account and help reduce your arrears. Your views as always, are extremely important to us and we are developing new 'virtual' forms of tenant participation and engagement to make sure you still have an opportunity to take part and engage with us.

Although things are now slowly improving, life as we know it may not return to normal for some time. I am confident however that during these fast changing times we will do our utmost, to continue to provide the services and support that all our local communities need.

Councillor Pat O'Rourke Vice Convener of Housing and Regeneration

So if you are worried by rent arrears don't wait any longer, call today and see how we can help. So far we have paid out over £198,000 in temporary relief and helped over 58 families.



Universal Credit Assistance Fund

Help is also available to tenants who find themselves falling into rent arrears due to built-in waiting times for Universal Credit payments to be processed and paid.

We're providing access to a fund in place for council tenants struggling with the impact of making a Universal Credit claim or migrating to the benefit.

Many tenants have moved to Universal Credit from housing benefit, which was paid directly into their rent account but this process has changed and is resulting in some people going into arrears. Rent arrears have risen sharply for tenants moving to Universal Credit, and for 2018/19 were recorded at over £3m.

Our fund has already assisted a number

of tenants and families on low incomes that are facing challenges presented by changes to the benefit system. Some tenants are finding themselves in arrears for the first time due to the built-in delay in receiving their first payment and we understand that this causes real worry and stress and that's one of the reasons we've set up this fund.

Tenants eligible to receive assistance must meet the following criteria:

- they must be new Universal Credit Claimants
- their arrears are caused by the five week waiting period for receipt of their first Universal Credit payment
- ability to repay the fund via an affordable arrangement

 no existing former arrears for tenant/ joint tenant.

Stephen Llewellyn, Head of Housing Solutions, added: "We are able to recover the money paid out once our tenant has received their payment and we hope this offers a solution to alleviate the stress and uncertainty they are experiencing when claiming Universal Credit."

Any tenants struggling to pay their rent should contact their local housing office immediately. We have dedicated income maximisers who will help support tenants with Universal Credit and can identify any additional financial assistance they may be entitled to. Please contact the Rents Team Helpline on 01698 524811



ANARKSHIRE

Cooking at home really can be easy peasy

Since the schools closed in March our **Easy Peasy Cook campaign has** provided recipe inspiration for people receiving school meal vouchers and shielding food packs.

If you like cooking or just want to improve your cooking skills, our step by step, easy to follow recipes should get you going. Cooking can be fun, relaxing and getting the kids involved, will teach them important life skills.

From speedy soups to no cook wraps and hearty, healthy family dinners, there's something for everyone.

Our school favourites have proved the most popular and school chicken curry is a sure winner!

Chicken curry for dinner anyone?

You can see all our recipes here: www.northlanarkshire. gov.uk/easypeasycook



600ml of boiling water 1 tablespoon vegetable oil I teaspoon garlic puree or 1 garlic clo comflour to thicken 400g chicken breasts 200g uncooked long grain rice

- Cook rice as per the instructions on the packet Add oil, diced onions and garlic to a pot and gently fry. Mix in turmeric and curry powder and ook for a few m
- Add 400g of diced chicken and cook for 5 ninutes to seal the chicker
- Dissolve the stock cube in 500ml of water and add to the pot.
- Cook for 10 mins add the remainder of water and mer for 5 minutes
- Add a little water to 3 tablespoon of comflour to make a paste. Add to the sauce and stir to thicken. Repeat until you achieve your desired ess and season to taxte

Shaping a housing future for all with our new **Local Housing Strategy**

The development of our new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the next five year period 2021-26 is now underway. The LHS is a pivotal plan that sits at the heart of the arrangements for housing and planning through its links with Development Plans and its strategic role in directing investment in housing and housing related services locally.

Engagement from a wide range of stakeholders will work to create a robust strategy that reflects local need accurately. helping create communities which are

safe, resilient and connected, in which people can prosper.

As part of the early engagement we will launch and publicise a range of ways in which tenants and residents can feed into the review and shape the priorities and actions set out in the new strategy.

If you would like to get involved or share your views on what housing priorities should be in the meantime, please contact: localhousingstrategy@northlan.gov.uk



Construction and iobs boost as new housing projects announced

We're driving forward our ambitious plans to deliver 5,000 new council homes across North Lanarkshire, and through our investment we're supporting the local economy by creating new jobs, regenerating communities and transforming our town centres.

Further sites have been added for our new homes: new contracts awarded to take forward more developments and housing plans outlined for villages and town centres.

We've also introduced a Development Pathfinder Scheme allowing us to buy new 'off the shelf' homes from developers and continue to buy back former council homes through our Open Market Purchase Scheme.

Some of the recently approved proposals include:

- potential sites for new homes identified at Glenacre Drive, Airdrie; Gibb Street, Chapelhall and Graham Street, Wishaw
- approval to award contracts to take forward new build homes on the sites of the former Belhaven House, Wishaw; the former Chiltern's House, Chryston at the former council flats in Northburn Avenue, Airdrie: Burnhall Place, Waterloo and Caledonian Avenue, Bellshill

 ambitious plans to convert Municipal Buildings, Kildonan Street, Coatbridge, into new affordable homes.

It's an exciting time for North Lanarkshire and we're committed to our vision to make North Lanarkshire 'The Place to Live'.

Read more about our plans to transform communities and town centres on our website.







Transforming tenants' lives

Our homes are changing lives, and one family from Ravenscraig explained to us the real difference their new home is making.

Marc Howard and his family moved, from a two bedroom flat in Burnside Tower, to a new three-bedroom home at Ravenscraig.

"Our youngest son has sensory and sleep issues," explained Marc "and it was starting to take its toll on us as a family, particularly my eldest son who shared a room with his brother.

"With support from his school, we noticed that giving him more learning space was making his life easier. "We spoke to the council about the possibility of finding a house that would give us an extra bedroom.

"We received word that we were allocated a new home at Ravenscraig with an extra room and a garden too!

"I work for the NHS and have been busy providing assistance during lockdown, which has been a tough time for so many people. With the boys being stuck at home the garden has been a lifeline to us as they can play safely outdoors and run off some of that energy. It also gives my youngest the quiet space he needs too. "We are absolutely delighted with our new home and the positive changes it's made to our day to day lives."



High-rise fire safety

Our high-rise tower blocks are currently undergoing significant upgrades of key fire safety provisions as part of a joint initiative between us and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service officers in North Lanarkshire have been working closely with us and other partners to oversee the installation of automatic sprinkler systems within a number of high-rise multi-storey flats across the area.

This includes the upgrade of new 60-minute fire doors in every property, the upgrading of emergency lighting in each block, as well as the fitting of new smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms.

Station Commander Brian Byrne, Senior Officer within Prevention & Protection Directorate, said: "This is a hugely important step in enhancing the safety of residents within high-rise tower blocks across North Lanarkshire, and we welcome this investment from our local authority partners.

"These fire safety provisions undoubtedly make a significant impact in the event of a fire within high-rise buildings. The installation of sprinkler systems, for example, can provide a cost effective, and potentially lifesaving intervention in the early stages of a fire.

We are here to support communities most notably through our free Home Fire Safety Visits. To book a free home fire safety visit call **0800 0731 999**, text 'FIRE' to **80800** or visit **www.firescotland.gov.uk** where further information on how to

stay safe can be found."



High-rise plan continues taking shape

Plans to improve future housing options for people living in high-rise homes in North Lanarkshire are continuing.



In consultation with local people, we agreed ambitious plans to demolish all tower blocks and a number of low-rise properties over the next 25 years and replace them with 5,000 modern homes fit for the future.

Significant progress had been made prior to the coronavirus outbreak, with demolition complete at

Northburn in Airdrie and three other tower blocks at Holehills in Airdrie in the process of being dismantled.

Stephen Llewellyn, Head of Housing Solutions explained: "Although building and demolition work is on hold because of the current global health emergency, we are continuing to work away in the background to identify suitable housing options for our tenants.

"Our first phase plans included the demolition of 15 tower blocks and a number of low-rise blocks. We have made significant progress in reducing tenancies in these blocks, as our plans for providing quality modern homes gathers momentum."

As part of the wider tower strategy, major investment and improvement works were agreed for towers forming later stages of the re-provisioning programme. Initial structural surveys of cladding and fire assessments have been concluded on all 48 towers (4,000 flats) with identified improvement plans now underway at a number of sites and further structural assessment work being finalised.



£60m investment in housing continues

How the money was spent in 2019/2020:

Kitchens/bathrooms programme

Over £9 million was spent on kitchen and bathroom replacements during the 2019/20 investment programme. This saw over 1900 new bathrooms installed and over 760 new kitchens in tenants' homes. We continue to invest based on the age and condition of both the kitchen and the bathroom within our properties and we are currently on target to ensure that all kitchens and bathrooms within our housing stock are replaced by 2021.

Window and doors replacement programme

Throughout 2019/20 we spent in excess of ± 7 million replacing windows and doors in over 2000 properties as well our sheltered housing complexes.

Heating programme

Over £6 million replacing over 1600 heating systems in tenants' homes. In areas where gas is not available for central heating, electric heating and air source heat pumps were installed to help make homes more energy efficient and reduce energy bills.

Roof/render programme

Just over £13.5 million was spent replacing roofs and/or render to homes throughout North Lanarkshire last year. Our roof and render programme is a vital part of our investment programme as the works carried out not only improve the look of tenants' homes but more importantly improves the thermal efficiency which leads to reduced heating bills for tenants. Over 1100 tenants benefited from having these works done.

Lead pipes

Lead pipe replacement has become more and more common as people look to improve their water supply pipes. Last year we spent over £2.5 million on our lead pipe replacement programme with over 1300 properties benefiting from the works. New pipes helps provide a cleaner, healthier drinking water supply to tenant's homes.

Tower projects

- 1700 new front fire doors and fire safety checks have been fitted within our towers
- A new sprinkler system has been installed at Birkshaw Tower
- The refurbishment of the four tower blocks in Coatbridge (Blairgrove, Merryston, Glen and Millbrae) which includes new cladding, lighting, windows and doors is well underway and will continue into 2021
- The upgrading of emergency lighting within our towers is complete with the exception of Milton Court which will be completed ASAP

Energy efficiency standard for social housing

As part of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Scottish Government launched the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH) in March 2014 to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty, and greenhouse gases and overall improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland.

Last year we spent over $\pounds 1$ million on our stock and as of April 2020 over 87% of our properties meet that standard.

The range of works and energy efficiency measures planned for this year have been affected by the Coronavirus crisis but we continue to carry out energy efficiency measures in our voids and deliver low energy light bulbs to households where the property does not meet EESSH.

19:

Buying scheme boosts council homes

An additional 143 properties have been turned into homes for families to rent in the last 12 months through our open market purchase scheme.

Over $\pounds 11$ million has been invested in acquisitions and repairs to deliver more homes for local people to live in and to provide additional housing stock in sought after areas.

Pamela Humphries, Head of Planning and Regeneration explained: "This open market purchase programme means we can increase the number of good quality homes for rent in our towns and villages in places our communities want to live in.

"It enables us to buy properties where the purchase means the council takes complete, or majority ownership of blocks of flats making communal repairs much easier to complete."

More information on the scheme and homes which would be considered for purchase is available at: www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/councilbuybackschemes



tenants **news**



We continue to show strong performance across most of the standards and outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter in our 7th annual submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

It shows that overall we continue to perform well in the service areas that matter most to tenants.

- 91% are satisfied with the overall service the council provides
- 98.83% of our homes met the scottish housing quality standard
- the average time we took to complete emergency repairs reduced from 4.4 hours to 4.25 hours
- the average time for non-emergency repairs to be completed reduced from 7.7 days to 6.95 days
- 97% of tenants who had repairs or maintenance carried out were satisfied with the service they received

- it took an average of 21.58 days to re-let homes, compared to 23.5 days previously
- in relation to our antisocial behaviour service, 97.05% of cases have been resolved, the remaining cases will be resolved in the following reporting year.

The Scottish Housing Regulator Landlord Report which provides information on all Scottish Social Landlords will be available later this year. Comparing ourselves to Scottish averages and other landlords enables us to benchmark our performance and improve services.



Waste services

Our Household Waste Recycling Centres are open for a range of items of rubbish, while maintaining physical distance rules to protect staff and the public.

You can dispose of up to 20 bags of household rubbish, cardboard, wood, carpet and underlay, mattresses and suites.

From 6 July, you can also get rid of garden waste at the centres.

The number of cars on site at any time is limited and the centres are only open for North Lanarkshire residents so please bring photo id and proof of your address.

A limited special uplift service is also available for a maximum of 10 items or 20 bags of rubbish.

To follow physical distancing rules, we can only uplift bags of waste or items that can be carried by one person. Items must be a maximum of 20kg and no more than 1m in length.

Online Anytime

Providing secure and easy to access services without the need to leave home is particularly valuable at the moment.

Our new Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates Portal is a fast, online way to carry out routine transactions, such as checking statements and making payments. It can also be used to apply for council tax reductions and exemptions. Our household waste collection service continues to operate as normal. For more information, to check your collection day or the

A £35 charge is payable when you book the uplift - phone 01698

materials which can be placed in each bin please visit:

www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/recycle

403110.



To help provide extra guidance about how to set up an online council tax account, we have produced a short animated video featuring step-by-step instructions. It is available on our website **northlanarkshire.gov.uk/doitonline** so please log on to find out more about the benefits available and how to get started.

All you will need is your Council Tax Reference Number and National Insurance Number if you have had a previous benefit claim.



Participation goes digital

During these testing times our Tenant Participation Team has been adapting to new ways of keeping in touch with all our tenants and residents.

This has included carrying out weekly wellbeing calls, taking part in Zoom meetings with North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants' and Residents', regularly updating our Facebook page **@NLCTenantParticipation** and liaising with internal and external partners to ensure all relevant updates and developments are shared amongst our communities.

Although the team has been unable to meet up in person we have been putting plans in place to ensure our tenants' voices continue to be heard and are involved in shaping housing services. We will be introducing a monthly digital Tenant Participation Newsletter to keep you updated in all things relating to tenant participation as well as sharing the work of our Tenants' and Residents' Groups. To subscribe to this please contact us on

TenantParticipation@northlan.gov.uk or **01698302565**. Or if there is another way you'd like to keep in touch just let us know.

Our tenant participation officers, Julie & Nancy are available for any advice or support you require and will be happy to help!

New website coming soon

Following public feedback, including responses gathered from tenants' and residents' groups, we have been working hard to design and build a new website that makes it easy for people to find and understand the information that they need.

As much as possible, we want to provide a website that allows residents to self-manage transactions, applications, requests and service contact from any device and at a time that suits.

Along with giving customers more control over this kind of interaction, this shift to web-based communication, will help us adhere with government guidance when it comes to reducing the need for social contact.

Ahead of the website going live, we are looking for people to take part in short user testing sessions, so if you would like to get a first look at the new site and see how it works, please email your contact details to digitalnl@northlan.gov.uk and we will be in touch with more information about how the process will work.

NORTH

COUNCIL

At this time of year it's good to think of ways to save money on your autumn and winter energy bills.

Switching tariffs (and/or energy supplier) is a really good way to save money. It Pays to Switch is free, easy to use and available all year round. It allows you to quickly check out the best deals available.

If you haven't switched energy tariff in a while, now is the time that you should be doing something about it. The most recent savings achieved by our customers range from £198 to £354 per year.

You don't need to be a North Lanarkshire tenant or resident to use It Pays to Switch, it's open to everyone in mainland UK. So why not find out how much you could save today?

Check out our site, you have nothing to lose!

Save money by getting a better energy deal

It Pays to Switch

northlanarkshire.gov.uk/switch



How to contact us

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your tenancy or need general advice about housing you should contact your local housing office.

AIRDRIE

1st Floor Coats House, Gartlea Road, Airdrie ML6 9JA

t: 01236 758035 e: airdriehousing@northlan.gov.uk

BELLSHILL

26 Motherwell Road, Bellshill ML4 1RE

t: 01698 332340 e: bellshillhousing@northlan.gov.uk

COATBRIDGE

Buchanan Centre, 126 Main Street, Coatbridge ML5 3BJ

t: 01236 812561 e: coatbridgehousing@northlan.gov.uk

CUMBERNAULD

Fleming House, Ground Floor, 2 Tryst Road, Cumbernauld G67 1JW

t: 01236 632726 e: cumbernauldhousing@northlan.gov.uk

KILSYTH Parkfoot Street, Kilsyth G65 9AA

t: 01236 828120 e: kilsythhousing@northlan.gov.uk

MOODIESBURN

Blackwoods Crescent, Moodiesburn G69 0EZ t: 01236 638888 e: moodiesburnhousing@northlan.gov.uk

MOTHERWELL

Dalziel Building, 7 Scott Street, Motherwell ML1 1SX

t: 01698 274135 e: motherwellhousing@northlan.gov.uk

SHOTTS

162-164 Station Road, Shotts ML7 4AW t: 01501 824747 e: shottshousing@northlan.gov.uk

VIEWPARK

135 Burnhead Street, Viewpark G71 5DD t: 01698 403700 e: viewparkhousing@northlan.gov.uk

WISHAW

Houldsworth Centre, Kenilworth Avenue, Wishaw ML2 7LP t: 01698 302920 e: wishawhousing@northlan.gov.uk HOME CONTENTS

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AS A COUNCIL TENANT YOU ARE ENTITLED TO JOIN OUR HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE SCHEME

By paying a little extra along with your rent you can have peace of mind that your belongings are protected.

The scheme provides basic or basic plus accidental damage cover and allows you to safeguard the contents of your home from as little as 55p per week.

For more information visit your nearest First Stop Shop or alternatively, you can visit www.northlanarkshire. gov.uk/homecontents

If you need this information in large print, on audio tape, in Braille or in another language, please contact:

t: 01698 274139 f: 01698 403005 **e:** housingservices@northlan.gov.uk.



MANDARN

如果你需要用其他语言或者其他格式表示这些信息,请与我们联系 以便讨论你的要求。

POLISH

Jeżeli potrzebujesz tą informację w innym języku lub formacie, proszę, skontaktuj się z nami, żeby przedyskutować Twoją potrzebę.

اكر آب كودوسرى زبان ين بد مطورات دركار بوتو برائ مريانى بم مدرجة يل يد يردابط كري ARABIC

اذا كنت بحاجة الى هذه الععلومات في لغةأنجرى أوعلى شكل آنحر، يرجى الاتصال بنا لعناقشة الاحتياجات الخاصة بك