



# Chief Executive's update

**There is no doubt that the impact of the coronavirus has disrupted nearly every aspect of our lives. Families have lost loved ones, businesses across almost all sectors have been deeply affected and many people have lost their jobs and livelihoods.**



It has also been a time when we have seen communities come together to support each other like no other period in living memory. Public, private and voluntary partners have

also worked tirelessly to sustain services and provide critical supports at times of real need for many of those most at risk over a year that most will be glad to leave behind.

As we begin 2021, improving the lives of our residents and regenerating our local communities and town centres remains at the forefront of the long-term ambition for North Lanarkshire. Our plan directly supports the local economy by creating new jobs, redeveloping communities and transforming our town centres into vibrant multi-use spaces - all part of the council's vision to make North Lanarkshire the place to live, learn, work invest and visit.

When the coronavirus arrived, we had one of the fastest growing economies in Scotland. We are now recovering at pace, sustaining our momentum and drive and pushing forwards to accelerate much needed growth and fresh opportunity.

Real progress is being made, with investment and development visible across all our towns and communities.

New housing, town and community hubs, commercial property and improvements to infrastructure such as the pan-Lanarkshire orbital road which will join the M74 to the M80 on a route through Ravenscraig will all work towards the creation of connected communities supported by greenspaces and active travel networks with our lives already forever altered by the virus.

Our ambitious plan to deliver 5,000 new council homes by 2035 is also back on track with construction industry works resumed. We have completed 772 new homes, with a further 183 currently on site - 43 of which should be completed by April 2021. We are also continuing to identify new sites which are at various stages of progression for a further 1,323 homes, some of which will be within town centres as part of our phased plans to demolish existing tower blocks and build new accessible homes.

Our new homes exceed the energy efficiency/sustainability standard required by current building regulations, include technological advances such as prewired connections for broadband and include much needed purpose-built wheelchair accommodation suitable for disabled persons.

We are also steadily increasing the supply of affordable housing through our very popular Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS) which allows us to buy back privately owned properties in areas of demand. To date we have purchased 350 homes and hope to increase this figure to



400 by the end of 20/21 to provide much needed accommodation across North Lanarkshire.

Plans to demolish all 48 high rise tower blocks over the next 25 years are firmly underway with further demolition works set to commence at Burnside Court in Coatbridge early this year.

We're continuing to support our residents, communities, town centres and local economy and are making significant progress in all aspects of our plan to positively impact on all aspects of the day to day lives of our residents.

Despite these challenging times, I am delighted that our housing service is performing above the Scottish average. Read on to find out more about our performance across key areas of service delivery and stay up to date on our latest housing news and projects.



## Inside this issue

- Investing in homes
- Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026
- Get involved virtually
- Housing performance report

# Foreword



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter where you can find out more about our services and projects as well as regeneration and investment plans for the coming year.

Coronavirus and our response to it has been an immense challenge but as we enter the recovery process the council has exciting plans for North Lanarkshire. Plans which include our tower re-provisioning programme, this will see visible and significant change to our skylines as well as give us the opportunity to create quality

new housing for the people and families moving into these redeveloped sites.

We continue to invest in tenant's homes and during 2020/21 we have improved heating systems, installed new windows and doors as well as fire safety works to towers and individual properties. Investing in homes leads to more energy efficient properties, helps tackle fuel poverty and increases safety and security for residents. We know from listening to you that these are some of your top priorities.

Your views are extremely important to us and in this issue you will read about our new "virtual" forms of tenant participation and engagement.

Please take up these opportunities to get involved and tell us what you think.

Already your views and feedback are helping to shape the new Local Housing Strategy for 2021 to 2026.

You will continue to see visible signs of regeneration and improvement right across North Lanarkshire in the coming months. We're committed to supporting our residents, communities, town centres and local businesses and are making significant progress to positively impact on all aspects of the day to day lives of our residents. I look forward to seeing the progress we will make and the benefits it will bring to all North Lanarkshire communities.

**Cllr. Heather Brannan-McVey  
Convener, Housing and Regeneration  
Committee**

# Housing performing above the Scottish average

We're recording improvements across key areas of delivery and performing above the Scottish average when compared alongside all other social landlords in Scotland.

Weekly rent levels are 16.7% lower in North Lanarkshire; over 90% of our tenants are satisfied with the opportunities they have to participate in the service and 98.8% of our homes meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard compared to the Scottish average of 94.4%.

The Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) report rates the performance of Scottish social landlords against set standards including; homes and rents, tenant satisfaction, quality and maintenance of homes, neighbourhoods and value for money.

As a council we've also performed highly in other areas: we dealt with 97.1% of antisocial behaviour cases - above the Scottish average; 98.3% of our reactive repairs were completed 'right first time' compared to the Scottish average of 92.4% and we took an average of 21.6 days to re-let homes our homes with a void rent loss figure of 0.6%, compared to the Scottish averages of 31.8 days and 1.2% respectively.

We also pledged our commitment as a landlord by signing the Regulator's Assurance Statement, meaning people living in our homes have improved access to housing performance information. The Assurance Statement is in its second year and we're pleased to note that no changes were required, or failures identified by the Regulator during the period 2019/20.



# Investing in your homes

**Like many local authorities the past few months have been challenging as we continue to deliver our investment works during the pandemic. Despite the challenges of the coronavirus we have put procedures in place to make sure the works continue whilst making sure our tenants and staff are kept safe.**

## Lead mains

During 2020/21 we are investing approximately £1.5 million in replacing lead pipe. This project improves existing housing stock, helps us to improve health and wellbeing and helps us meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for social housing.

## Roof and render

All external roof & render works are continuing wherever possible and on average we are still completing around five properties per week.



## Cavity wall and loft insulation

We are investing approximately £500,000 in our current cavity wall and loft insulation programmes.

Works includes extraction and refilling of existing inefficient cavity wall insulation and our loft insulation programme means tenants also benefit from new loft insulation or topping up of existing insulation when required.

These investment works improve energy efficiency, reduce energy bills for residents, improve comfort and wellbeing and help achieve the Energy Efficiency Standard for social housing.

## Windows and doors programme



Our windows and doors contracts are well underway and to date over 180 installations have been carried out of triple glazed A++ rated windows and composite doors.

The windows also benefit from acoustically sealed trickle vents to provide better sound cancelling within homes and mechanical extraction ventilation is also a feature either for individual rooms or throughout homes. Smart technology means all new windows have QR codes which provide information on the date of installation, manufacturer, contractor name and contact number including emergency out of hour contact details.

To minimise disruption during the installation process our contract stipulates that the installation and all associated works must be completed in one working day, including the removal and refitting of curtains and blinds and a full house sparkle clean.

## Housing for older people

In our housing for older people complexes work has started on common rooms, this includes improvements to heating, upgraded fire alarms and new sprinkler systems as well as decorating and new carpets. Improving these rooms means residents have a safe and attractive space to meet up once it is safe to do so. Residents who have already had heating work done in their own homes have already seen the benefits with warmer homes and lower fuel bills.

Mr Rundell from Banton who had his heating upgraded last year has saved **£113 every month** on fuel bills and Miss Sweeney, a resident in Salsburgh, has reported she is saving **£20 a week** now on fuel bills since having the new air source heat pumps installed.



## Smoke Detectors Programme

Although we have been unable to install hard wired smoke detectors within all properties due to the restrictions, we have been able to use radio link systems to provide a more practical alternative and improve the safety and wellbeing of tenants. Over 10,000 heat and smoke detectors have been fitted within tenants' homes. The programme is well on schedule to meet the target completion dates and should finish in May 2021.

## Improving fire safety in towers

Programmed works include new fire doors to individual properties helping reduce heat loss, improving security, sound insulation and most importantly providing one hour of fire and smoke containment in each property. On completion over 3000 doors will have been installed and tenants are already seeing the benefits with improved noise reduction and increased safety and security.

## Grant funding boost for investment works

During the lockdown period in 2020, successful funding bids were approved for future investment work such as HEEPS (Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland) with £2.4m grant funding for owners and a successful bid for external funding of £36,000 for decarbonisation from the Scottish Government.

**The funding will help improve energy efficiency in properties throughout North Lanarkshire.**

## Repairs emergencies and gas safety during lockdown

Despite the challenges of the past few months Housing Repairs and Maintenance Teams continued to provide a 24/7 repairs service to tenants during lockdown and recovery.

Our Customer Contact Centre continued to take housing emergency repair calls, technical officers carried out site visits wherever possible as well as operational

teams continuing to co-ordinate gas safety inspections and essential safety maintenance.

Many tenants were understandably apprehensive about allowing tradespeople into their homes at a time when even visits by their own families were limited.

To combat this mobile and smart technology was in full use where possible

and PPE (personal protective equipment) was used to meet all health and safety requirements.



## Preparing Schools for Coronavirus

As well as improving and maintaining tenant's homes during the pandemic we

also help maintain school hubs, ensuring they can remain open to provide vital childcare support for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.



## Affordability, suitability, quality and design are your top housing priorities

**Work is now well underway to develop the new Local Housing Strategy for North Lanarkshire, which will span the next five year period (2021 - 2026).**

To help develop the strategy a range of consultation and involvement activities have taken place over recent months with tenants and residents of North Lanarkshire and wider stakeholders.

The response and participation in these activities has been overwhelmingly positive with many people taking part in different ways to share their views on what they see as the most important housing priorities.

From the consultation carried out so far affordability, suitability and quality of design have been cited as the top priorities for tenants and residents in North Lanarkshire, with 66% of people reporting

in a recent survey that being able to afford to purchase or rent a property in a location of their choice was their most important priority, 43% said that living in a property that is the right size and type to meet their needs is most important, and 35% said high standards of quality and design was most important.

The main housing challenges in North Lanarkshire were identified as a shortage of social housing, lack of housing options for young people or first time buyers and the need to bring empty and disused properties back into use.

These valuable early insights will help shape the new Local Housing Strategy and set out what our priorities should be for the next five year period. Thanks to everyone who has taken part in consultation so far. Hearing your views and feedback is vital in developing the new Local Housing Strategy.

If you would like to know more or help shape the new strategy, then visit [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-council/council-strategies-and-plans/council-strategies/developing-our-new-local-housing](http://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-council/council-strategies-and-plans/council-strategies/developing-our-new-local-housing) or email [lhs@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:lhs@northlan.gov.uk)



### Could you save money by switching to a better energy deal?

With winter temperatures here, it's more important than ever to check you're not overpaying on energy bills. Our **It Pays to Switch** campaign offers a competitive comparison site with a range of tariff choices so if you've not changed supplier for a while you could save money by making that switch.

**Set aside some time to check it out at [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/switch](http://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/switch) or phone our partner's dedicated telephone service on 0800 9202136.**



# Changes to local skyline

**Tower blocks which have dominated local skylines for decades have now been earmarked for demolition as part of North Lanarkshire Council's towers regeneration programme.**

Coatbridge and Motherwell will see major change as several high-rise blocks are demolished over the next two years. Site work began at Burnside Court in Coatbridge in January 2021, and will be followed by Coursington, Allan and Draffen Court in Motherwell in the spring of 2022; and then Jackson Court, High Coats and Dunbeth Court in Coatbridge in the spring of 2023.

The blocks are included in the first phase of a 25-year plan to knock-down all 48 high-rise blocks across the authority. Three towers in Airdrie have already been demolished.

Stephen Llewellyn, Head of Housing Solutions said: "The health pandemic has been a challenge for everyone, and we are grateful to our tenants for their help and understanding throughout these unprecedented times.

"A crucial aspect of moving our tower plans forward has been working with our tenants to reduce the number of people living within blocks identified in our first phase programme.



"Of the initial 1,750 properties identified, we now have 1,127 empty flats and we have agreed future housing options with the vast majority of people currently living in those homes. This reflects the consultation we held with residents who overwhelmingly shared our ambition to regenerate our tower sites."

Major refurbishment work has also recommenced at Blairgrove, Merrystone, Glen and Millbrae towers in Coatbridge having been put on hold in summer 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. These works include fitting new windows, cladding and upgrading entrances.

## It's quicker to click!

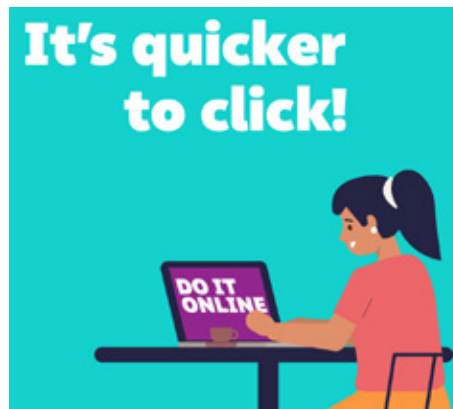
A campaign has been launched to encourage residents and businesses across North Lanarkshire to access council services online, supported by a new, more user-friendly website to provide quick and easy access to information and enable online transactions, such as reporting bin issues, booking into a recycling centre or paying your council tax.

To take advantage of these services you just need to sign up for a Scottish Government 'myaccount', which will provide you with a secure log-in and a private dashboard where all your transactions with the council will be logged in one place. You can sign up for a myaccount at: [mygov.scot/myaccount](https://mygov.scot/myaccount)

The first council service to go online is waste solutions, which accounts for the largest number of enquiries.

New online options will allow you to report any issues, such as a missed bin, and to request assistance with your bin – all without having to lift the phone or leave your home.

**Bins and waste issues can be reported at any time at [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/binsandwaste](https://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/binsandwaste)**



### Useful numbers

- Environmental enquiries **01698 403110** (including special uplifts and bin collection, road repairs, lighting faults, abandoned vehicles and pest control problems)
- Housing Repairs **0800 678 1166**
- Gas/solid fuel heating repairs **0845 606 1555**
- Homelessness **0800 953 2424**
- Antisocial behaviour **0300 123 1382**
- Social Work Emergency Service **0800 121 4114**

Visit [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/winter](https://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/winter) for more information about our full range of winter services.

## Tenant Participation update

**This year, as with many services across the country, tenant participation and engagement can no longer be delivered in its usual form.**

As our Tenant Participation Team are unable to meet with tenants and residents face to face they had to adapt and innovate to ensure tenants' voices were still being heard.

New methods of involvement need to be fluid and able to adapt quickly, whilst ensuring government guidelines are adhered to.

Zoom meetings, online consultation and virtual groups are now the norm. And whilst the team cannot hold their usual forms of consultation they, along with North Lanarkshire Federation (NLF), are still here to support existing groups with advice and support and are also still able to deal with enquiries for anyone thinking about setting up a tenants and residents association.

You can request a virtual meeting with any of the TP Team via Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Skype. You can also contact the team by phone, email, text, Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp.

In October 2020 a virtual community listening session took place to help plan engagement opportunities for this year and 2 virtual Food for Thought sessions were held by NLF on the Community Safety Strategy and developing the new Local Housing Strategy. All the sessions went well and more successful sessions are planned for the future.

**To find out more contact the team on 01698 302565 or visit us on Facebook @nlctenantparticipation**

## New role for TP Team

**One of the ways the TP Team has adapted to their new ways of working is to help support other vital parts of the housing service.**

From March to June they volunteered as part of the NLC Community Assistance helpline helping vulnerable residents and they now help support the homeless helpline by working on a rota basis to give help and advice to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

With housing offices remaining closed for face to face meetings due to the pandemic, the free phone helpline **0800 9532424** provides a vital means of contact 24

hours a day, 7 days a week for those most vulnerable.

As the first point of contact, the level of support given ranges from advice, information and signposting to intense emergency assistance before case details are passed to specialist housing staff to make contact to investigate the situation. The level of calls received varies from day to day with many people securing either temporary or permanent housing within North Lanarkshire.

The team has benefitted from this experience by diversifying and building on housing knowledge, skills and links with other organisations.

## Award success

**2020 was a productive year for housing services who were recognised for excellence across a range of awards and services.**

### SHORTLISTED IN TENANTS INFORMATION SERVICE NATIONAL AWARDS IN EXCELLENCE 2020

- Kirkwood Tenants & Residents Association - Tenants Group of the Year
- North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants and Residents - Housing Revenue Account Scrutiny Group - Most Inspiring Scrutiny Group
- Kate McDonagh - Young achiever of the year
- North Lanarkshire Council - Tech Flat - Excellence in Digital Innovations

### UK HOUSING AWARDS

- Winner: Community Safety - CCTV Services to Housing, North Lanarkshire Council
- Finalist: Campaign of the Year: Sheltered Housing Review Team

### FINALISTS IN SCOTTISH HOME AWARDS 2020

- Development: Calder Court, Motherwell. Category: Affordable Housing Development of the Year (Small, Social Rent)
- Development: Blair Road, Coatbridge. Category: Affordable Housing Development of the Year (Mid-Sized, Social Rent)

These submissions were entered in partnership with the project contractor, Robertson Partnership Homes.

### APSE SERVICE AWARDS FINALISTS 2020

- Best Housing, Regeneration or New Build Initiative ; (for our Open Market Purchase Scheme)



## Changes to our services

Many of our day-to-day services have been significantly affected by our response to coronavirus.

We have a dedicated section on our website [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/coronavirus) with regular updates on services affected together with the latest national advice and guidance.

## Housing

Our first stop shops and housing offices are closed to the public at this time. If you need to get in touch regarding a housing issue please call your local housing office.

# How to contact us

To discuss any aspect of your tenancy or if you 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](mailto:airdriehousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### BELLSHILL

26 Motherwell Road,  
Bellshill ML4 1RE

t: 01698 332340

e: [bellshillhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:bellshillhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### COATBRIDGE

Buchanan Centre,  
126 Main Street,  
Coatbridge ML5 3BJ

t: 01236 812561

e: [coatbridgehousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:coatbridgehousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### CUMBERNAULD

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

t: 01236 632726

e: [cumbernauldhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:cumbernauldhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### KILSYTH

Parkfoot Street,  
Kilsyth G65 9AA

t: 01236 828120

e: [kilsythhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:kilsythhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### MOODIESBURN

Blackwoods Crescent,  
Moodiesburn G69 0EZ

t: 01236 638888

e: [moodiesburnhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:moodiesburnhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### MOTHERWELL

Dalziel Building,  
7 Scott Street,  
Motherwell ML1 1SX

t: 01698 274135

e: [motherwellhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:motherwellhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### SHOTTS

162-164 Station Road,  
Shotts ML7 4AW

t: 01501 824747

e: [shottshousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:shottshousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### VIEWPARK

135 Burnhead Street,  
Viewpark G71 5DD

t: 01698 403700

e: [viewparkhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:viewparkhousing@northlan.gov.uk)

### WISHAW

Houldsworth Centre,  
Kenilworth Avenue,  
Wishaw ML2 7LP

t: 01698 302920

e: [wishawhousing@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:wishawhousing@northlan.gov.uk)



## HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

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: [northlanarkshire.gov.uk/home-contents](http://northlanarkshire.gov.uk/home-contents)**

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](mailto:housingservices@northlan.gov.uk)



#### MANDARIN

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.

#### URDU

اگر آپ کو دوسری زبان میں یہ معلومات درکار ہو تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے مندرجہ ذیل پتے پر رابطہ کریں

#### ARABIC

إذا كنت بحاجة الي هذه المعلومات في لغة أخرى أو على شكل آخر، يرجى الاتصال بنا لمناقشة الاحتياجات الخاصة بك