



Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026 Consultation Report

Date: January 2021
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Table of Contents

- 1 [Executive Summary](#)
- 2 [Introduction](#)
- 3 [Early Engagement Survey, September – October 2020](#)
- 4 [Focus Groups Consultation by North Lanarkshire Council, November 2020](#)
- 5 [Consultation and Engagement by Knowledge Partnership, December 2020](#)
- 6 [Second Local Housing Strategy Consultation Survey, February 2021](#)
- 7 [Black, Asian and Minority Research Survey, May 2021](#)
- 8 [Homelessness, Second Local Housing Strategy Survey report, June 2021](#)
- 9 [Armed Forces and Veteran Organisations' Survey, July 2021](#)
- 10 [Private Rented Sector Survey, July 2021](#)
- 11 [Public LHS Thematic Workshop Discussions](#)
- 12 [Workshops on Housing to 2040, August 2021](#)
- 13 [Developers' Forum Event, November 2021](#)
- 14 [Appendix](#)

1. Executive Summary

Our new Local Housing Strategy (2021 -26) provides a vision and plan for housing and housing related services in North Lanarkshire for the next five years.

It is intended that our strategy meets the needs of our communities and the individuals who live in them. This report outlines all the consultation and engagement activities that were undertaken to inform the development of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and to reflect the views of the residents and stakeholders in North Lanarkshire.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a LHS that sets out its' strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and housing related services.
- 2.2 The LHS is 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. It sets out a strategic vision for the delivery of housing and housing related services and the outcomes that it will seek to achieve. It focusses on areas such as housing supply, homelessness, property condition, energy efficiency, fuel poverty, specialist provision, communities, and place-making.
- 2.3 We understand that the involvement of residents, tenants, communities of interest and wider stakeholders is crucial in the development of the new strategy.
- 2.4 A range of face-to-face in person stakeholder events and presentations were carried out in the initial very early stages of developing this LHS prior to Covid-19 restrictions being implemented, then a range of digital methods using the Microsoft Teams platform to provide online consultation forums, workshops, focus and discussion groups in addition to online surveys were used. Social media, local press, partner contact networks were all used to communicate consultation opportunities to increase participation. We also took advantage of the newly established nine Community Boards to consult broadly with a range of local people and groups. The consultation was structured in two phases. The first phase focused on identifying the key housing challenges, priorities and actions in North Lanarkshire to inform the development of the draft Consultative LHS, and the second focused on the content of the draft LHS.
- 2.5 A list of the consultation opportunities carried out are listed in Appendix A. These opportunities have been crucial in shaping the LHS.

- 2.5 This overall Consultation Report provides a summary of the findings from each of the consultation activities. There are more detailed reports with tables and charts on each of the consultation surveys and focus groups, which can be made available on request. A summary of the consultation and engagement activities, highlighting common key themes, key messages, challenges and how challenges and housing issues can be addressed are outlined in Section 2 Consultation and Engagement of the LHS 2021-2026.

3 Early Engagement Survey, September – October 2020

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy Team designed an online questionnaire to help capture views and feedback from stakeholders on North Lanarkshire’s housing priorities and actions as well as the impact that COVID-19 was having on housing circumstances. Survey Monkey was the tool used for the questionnaire. The format consisted of eight questions with a qualitative part for comments and contact information for anyone interested in keeping informed about the future development of the strategy.
- 3.2 The questionnaire was made available on North Lanarkshire Council’s website and publicised via social media and other wider stakeholder distribution networks. It was available from Thursday 24 September until Friday 30 October 2020.

Total Responses

- 3.3 1,266 survey responses were received in total. This represents a very favourable response return in comparison to previous online LHS surveys.

Analysis

- 3.4 The Housing Strategy Team analysed the online questionnaires with results tabulated for each survey question indicating the number of people who provided an answer and the number that skipped the question.
- 3.5 All the qualitative responses received for each question were collated and anonymised, which informed the development of the Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026. Themes were identified from the qualitative comments and anonymised comments can be made available on request. A summary of the key findings from the Early Engagement Survey are provided in this report.

Findings

Profile of Respondents

- 3.6 The highest number of responses were received from owner occupiers in North Lanarkshire (48%) followed by North Lanarkshire Council tenants (32%). Qualitative comments were received by 59 respondents with respondents specifying other descriptors which included:
- living with other relatives
 - employees of other organisations
 - interested parties
 - applicants on the Council's Common Housing Register but currently living out with North Lanarkshire
 - people who are currently homeless
 - people who are living in temporary accommodation
- 3.7 The majority of respondents were from the 45-54 years age group, accounting for 26% of all respondents, 21% were aged 35-44 years, 19% aged 55-64 years and 4% aged 65 and over. There were no respondents in the under 18 years age group.
- 3.8 There was some geographical spread of respondents with the majority of respondents from the Motherwell area, followed by Airdrie and Coatbridge.

Housing Priorities

- 3.9 Two-thirds of respondents (66%) said that affordability (where residents can afford to purchase or rent a property in a location of their choice) was their most important issue. This was followed by suitability (where residents can live in a property that is the right size and type to meet their needs) and quality & design (where homes are well designed, functional and of a high standard) which accounted for 43% and 35% respectively. One-third of respondents (34%) indicated energy efficiency (where homes are fuel efficient and not damaging to the environment) and 30% said that Health and wellbeing (whereby we promote good physical and mental health by improving access to open green space and encouraging outdoor activities). Equality (where new housing developments have a mix of private and social housing, with similar build standards) was reported as the least important priority by respondents, accounting for 17%.

Housing Challenges

- 3.10 Shortage of social housing was identified as the main housing challenge (from five most important) by 61% of respondents. This was followed by lack of housing options for young people or first-time buyers (39%) and bringing empty and disused properties back into use (34%). Lack of specialist housing for disabled or elderly residents; lack of housing options for older residents looking to downsize; and lack of amenities to support new housing

developments were all reported by 30% of respondents to be the main housing challenges in North Lanarkshire. Lack of suitable land for housebuilding and lack of 'alternative' housing options such as Mid-Market Rent, Shared Equity, and Self/Custom Build were reported as the least important by respondents in their five main housing challenges (accounting for 9% and 10% respectively).

3.11 Suggestions for Achieving Positive Impact

Respondents were asked to think about the challenges they had highlighted and provide suggestions that could achieve the greatest positive impact. 762 respondents provided suggestions for consideration. These can be categorised into the following broad key areas:

- √ **House condition** – maintenance issues with older housing stock, assistance with major repairs and maintenance for homeowners.
- √ **Suitability and accessibility** – need for increased provision of housing suitable for wheelchair users and disabled people, need across tenures and a need to set wheelchair housing targets.
- √ **Improved access to amenities, facilities and transport links** – access to necessary amenities and facilities, such as shops, GP surgeries, schools, green open space, and leisure facilities with good transport links.
- √ **Improved housing options for older people** – improving sheltered housing; increasing the housing options available for older people; improving the design of housing to support 'ageing in place' and providing options to make it easier for older people to downsize.
- √ **Increased housing provision and access to a wider range of housing options** – a need for increased provision of social rented housing and other affordable housing options i.e. shared equity, low cost home ownership or mid-market rent. Increased provision of smaller homes for older people and starter homes for younger people and larger family homes.
- √ **Better use of brown field and derelict land** – the need to make best use of existing brown field and derelict sites to preserve green space. Conversely, a small number of participants suggested the option of building on 'some' green space.
- √ **Tackle homelessness** – preventing and addressing homelessness effectively.
- √ **Improve engagement with local communities and individuals** – involve local people in decision making on housing development, listen to

views from local communities to inform new provision in meeting local needs.

- √ **Improve social inclusion, connectivity and cohesiveness** – consider housing more holistically
- √ **Regeneration of town centres** – by making better use of retail space and derelict buildings.
- √ **Preserve green space and develop/ improve access to outdoor green space** – recognising the link between good physical and mental health and the importance of accessible high quality green space in housing developments.
- √ **Utilise the house building sector to achieve wider community benefits** – reduce unemployment, improve local economies through construction industry jobs and creation of increased skills of labour force.
- √ **Tackle poverty** – rent controls for private tenancies, low affordable social housing rents, more energy efficient homes with lower fuel costs.
- √ **Revise the allocation policy and housing options approach** – improved transparency of housing options, low priority resulting in limited housing options reported as an issue and allocating/ prioritising housing for particular tenants/ populations.
- √ **Buy back more homes** – to increase social rented housing stock.
- √ **Tackle antisocial behaviour** – improve service provision and encourage/ enable communities and individuals to be more empowered to address local issues.
- √ **Streamline the housing development process** – make it easier to build high quality, affordable, energy efficient homes.
- √ **Improve partnership working** – in respect of data sharing and meeting people's needs, particularly people with additional or complex support needs.

3.12 The Impact of COVID-19 on Housing Situations

Respondents were asked in what ways COVID-19 and the lockdown restrictions has impacted on their own personal housing situation. There was a response from 899 respondents which were categorised into the following broad themes:

- **Mortgage finance more difficult to attain** – tighter lending restrictions with higher deposit and accessing mortgage finance.
- **Lack of or limited access to outdoor green space** – impacts on physical and mental health as a result of limited access to outdoor space.
- **Quality of outdoor space** - lack of connected routes, poor maintenance, accessibility and safety aspects.
- **Increased need for better connectivity** – enhanced digital connectivity for remote and homeworking.
- **Delays in housing needs being met** – cessation of routine allocations and routine repairs in earlier lockdown phases, slow-down of the construction impacted on new-build.
- **Delays in other needs being met** – adaptations and other service provision.
- **Changing housing needs and aspirations** – need for greater space and differently designed environments to support home working for all family members at home.
- **Increased homelessness or insecure housing situations** – homelessness or living in insecure housing occurred during the pandemic.
- **Loss of or reduction of income** – redundancy, furlough, employment uncertainty, and increased living costs.
- **Limited access to private sector** – less availability of private lets in earlier phases of lockdown.
- **Highlighted the need for local amenities** –requiring services, amenities and facilities that meet needs during restrictions.
- **Limited housing options** – with reduction in income and future employment uncertainty has hampered housing options.
- **Increased antisocial behaviour and other neighbourhood and community issues** – increase in antisocial behaviour has increased in some areas; issues with increased traffic/parking and littering.
- **Impact of housing and the wider surrounding environment on mental health and wellbeing** – the pandemic has for some contributed to a deterioration in mental health due to heightened awareness of the unsuitability of current housing situations, spending increased amounts of time at home throughout the pandemic.

4. **Focus Groups Consultation by North Lanarkshire Council, November 2020**

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 4.1 Four focus groups were carried out with individuals who expressed an interest in being involved in the development of the Local Housing Strategy through the Early Engagement Survey. The focus groups were undertaken between

11th and 17th November 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions the focus groups took place virtually using Microsoft Teams.

- 4.2 Participants in the focus group discussions were asked to consider a series of questions about current housing issues, future housing aspirations and housing challenges and priorities for the new LHS. The main themes and issues raised by the participants during the focus group discussions were:
- Housing availability – lack of housing and long waiting lists
 - Housing suitability – lack of housing suitable for older people or people with additional support needs
 - External environment – infrastructure, access to green space, amenities, parking issues
- 4.3 Participants were emailed a link to a survey to complete following the focus group discussions. The top three priorities selected by respondents in the survey were:
1. Access to housing – finding the right home
 2. Affordability of housing
 3. Making the best use of our homes – effective allocation *(in order of priority)
- 4.4 Four focus groups were held by the Housing Strategy Team over the course of a 2-week period between 11th and 17th November. Each discussion was approximately 1½ hours duration. Due to Covid-19 and the pandemic restrictions the focus groups were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. The focus groups took place during daytime and evening hours to promote participation from a wider audience. A semi-structured topic guide was used to facilitate the focus groups

Total Responses

- 4.5 16 people participated in the four focus groups.
- 4.6 There were 430 people who provided contact details from the 1,266 responses in the Early Engagement Survey (September-October 2020). These 430 people indicated an interest in being kept informed about the development of the strategy and in taking part in further consultation activities. 40 people from the 430 people contacted by email confirmed they would attend, and 16 people (40%) attended over the 4 focus groups.

Profile of Respondents

- 4.7 The majority of participants were aged 45-54 (50%).
- 4.8 Most participants (79%) owned their own home outright or with a loan or mortgage. A geographical spread of participants took part in the focus groups.
- 4.9 Participants from Bellshill and Coatbridge accounted for the highest number of participants, accounting for 3 people respectively, followed by Shotts accounting for 2 people.
- 4.10 The majority (57%) of participants identified as White (Scottish). There were no individuals from any of the other listed ethnic groups.

- 4.11 The highest representation came from small family household (31%) followed next by small adult household (23%). Other household types also identified were single adult (15%), single parent (8%), small older household (8%), large family household (8%) and other household (8%).

Current Housing Issues

- 4.12 72% of participants said they had no issues with their current housing.
- 4.13 Feedback from participants who highlighted issues with their current home were in relation to:
- Homelessness and the length of time to obtain a permanent house
 - Parking on pavements
 - Lack of infrastructure in newer housing estates i.e. lack of paths connecting to shopping areas and amenities.
 - Home too small for household
 - Too expensive – rent/mortgage
 - Problems with surrounding wider community
 - Problems with other safety issues

Future Housing Aspirations

Intention to Move

- 4.14 The majority of participants (57%) said they had no intention of moving.

Motivations for Moving Home

- 4.15 Participants who indicated they may move gave the following reasons that might motivate them to move:
- More space and move to the countryside.
 - Neighbours are an issue; the local flats are filled with undesirable people with addiction issues.
 - Mobility – will need downstairs living.
 - Change of location.
 - Older adult parents needing to move in and disabled family member.
 - Living in temporary accommodation and awaiting secure, permanent accommodation.
 - Downsizing – linked financial reasons.
 - Would consider moving if an unsuitable local development was given planning approval in local area.

Local Housing Strategy Awareness

- 4.16 Just over half (53%) of the participants said they were aware that the council had to produce an LHS. However, not everyone had read it or was very clear of what it contained. A wide range of methods that could be adopted by the council to increase awareness of the LHS were highlighted:
- Digitally available.
 - Available in health centres, local press, libraries, community centres, churches, council website.

- Social media such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs particularly for young people.
- Continue to publish in newspapers, posting a leaflet as not everyone uses social media.

Priorities for the New Local Housing Strategy

A Well-functioning Housing System

- 4.17 Participants were asked what the most important priority for our new strategy from the following;
- a) Access to Housing – finding the right home.
 - b) Affordability of housing.
 - c) Making the best use of our homes – effective allocation.

The majority of participants (64%) could not decide which one was the most important and selected the response 'They are all important'. For 36% of participants, affordability of housing was selected, and the following comments were provided:

- Affordability & Sustainable housing regarding energy efficiency and reduction of our carbon footprint.
- Adaptability for older people or those with additional needs.
- All priorities are important, however, can't tackle everything and the priorities are interlinked.

High quality, sustainable homes

- 4.18 Participants consider all of the following to be important:
- a) Design – well designed and of a high standard, space and flexibility fully considered to make highly functional.
 - b) Equality of standards – tenure is not obvious due to design and considered approach.
 - c) Energy efficient – homes are not damaging the environment after retrofitting to be near zero carbon and are fuel efficient reducing costs.
 - d) Maintenance – assistance for homeowners and private renters to repair and maintain their homes.
 - e) Making better use of empty homes – no homes are left empty for a significant period without good reason.
 - f) Empowerment – tenants are empowered to make changes to their homes as landlords must consider requests.
 - g) They are all important.
- 4.19 Design and making better use of empty homes were considered jointly important by 29% of participants.

Sustainable Communities

- 4.20 There were 71% of participants who considered all the following to be important:
- a) Well-designed places – distinctive and a strong sense of identity, homes built considering fit with neighbourhood and issues like flooding considered.
 - b) Connected places – the right infrastructure is in place for new homes, open space is accessible for all ages and good transport connectivity provides access to services.
 - c) Health and wellbeing – good physical and mental health are promoted through a clean environment, well maintained and accessible surrounding, e.g. walking routes, access to open, green space, free from crime and disorder etc.

There was an equal split (29%) between ‘Connected places’ and ‘Health and wellbeing’, 21% considered ‘Well-designed places’ to be important.

- 4.21 Some examples of what participants valued and wanted within their local areas in the future:
- Lack of sense of community
 - Number of community halls has decreased over the past 4-5 years
 - Residents feel like forgotten people. Families are not living close by and communities are spread out.

Homes that meet people’s needs

- 4.22 ‘Access to services’ should be the most important priority with 57% of the poll indicating this. ‘Accessible homes and ‘Diversity’ were jointly rated the second most important priority by 50% of participants.

Issues raised by participants in discussion were:

- Adaptability for older people or those with additional needs
- Might move if downsizing was encouraged and if homes were built that were more fit for purpose such as for older people or those with disabilities.

Overall Priorities for the New Strategy

- 4.23 Participants were asked to select what they thought were their top three most important priorities. The top three selected were (in order of priority):
1. Access to housing – finding the right home
 2. Affordability of housing
 3. Making the best use of our homes – effective allocation

General Issues

- 4.24 Participants were given the opportunity to raise to some general issue, which are highlighted below:
- Downsizing should be encouraged and hold a register of those wanting to move to a smaller house.

- Developers should be more accountable, stick to plans and make it easier for residents to comment on planning applications.
- One participant acknowledged that the council has less power than the Scottish Government but would like the council to hold developers to account more and make homes more affordable.
- Better communication between private developers & landlords about the type of properties that are needed to be built or adapted.
- Discussion around why North Lanarkshire cannot 'gift' land to residents to allow them to build to their own requirements. However, another participant pointed out that most people do not have the money to build their own house so this option would only benefit a small proportion of people.
- Participant asked who is going to fund all these plans? North Lanarkshire is run-down and there's no maintenance of paths etc.

5. Consultation and Engagement by Knowledge Partnership December 2020

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 5.1 Local Housing Strategy consultation was carried out by Knowledge Partnership on behalf of North Lanarkshire Council's Housing Strategy Team using a combination of an interviewer led telephone survey, focus groups, and an online questionnaire. The consultation was undertaken between December 14th and December 22nd 2020.
- 5.2 The Council's Housing Strategy Team undertook the recruitment of residents to five virtual focus groups and nine in-depth telephone interviews. The focus groups and interviews were intended to allow specific communities of interest to contribute to the discussion on the Local Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy Team used a number of approaches to engage residents in these discussions including accessing those who were registered with North Lanarkshire Connect (the Council's consultation platform).
- 5.3 Knowledge Partnership facilitated the qualitative focus group discussions and for carrying out telephone interviews with participants. An online self-completion questionnaire, which was issued to participants at the end of each focus group and interview, gathered quantitative data on housing challenges, priorities, and respondent demographics. The content of the focus group discussion guide, interview and online questionnaire was designed by the Housing Strategy Team with input from Knowledge Partnership.

Total Responses

- 5.4 There were 34 residents who responded to the consultation and engagement.

Analysis

- 5.5 Knowledge Partnership analysed the focus group feedback, interview responses, and the data contained in the online questionnaires. The analysis involved creating the following outputs:
- ✓ Rankings, in number format (%), of the housing challenges referred to in the Local Housing Strategy. Data on rankings was sourced from the online questionnaire.
 - ✓ Rankings, in number format (%), of the housing priorities referred to in the Local Housing Strategy. Data on rankings was sourced from the online questionnaire.
 - ✓ Context and feedback from participants around the challenges and priorities referred to in the Local Housing Strategy. Information on these areas was sourced from the focus groups and interviews.
 - ✓ Feedback from participants on related housing matters such as the impact of Covid 19 on housing. Information on this area was sourced from the focus groups and interviews.
- 5.6 The views of disabled people, members of BAME groups, and LGBTQI people who participated in the study were combined with those of the 'majority populations' who took part in the focus groups and in-depth interviews. This allows for the voices of specific communities of interest to be heard within the feedback provided by the wider population of opinions. The young persons' community of interest group attracted 10 participants (comprising school students), but unfortunately these students had very limited knowledge and experience of housing issues. For this reason, the young person's feedback is reported separately in this document.
- 5.7 The findings are therefore broken down into two parts:
1. **Households** – comprising responses from communities of interest and the wider population being people with direct experience of housing and housing related matters. Respondents within this group comprised 9 interviewees and 22 focus group participants of which 40% were disabled, 12% described themselves as 'homosexual', and 8% were BAME.
 2. **Young people** – comprising responses from young people (school students), who whilst comprising a cohesive group, had very limited experience of housing and housing related matters largely because they were living at home with parents.
- 5.8 Information is provided on the key housing challenges and key housing priorities identified by participants. In addition, the views of householders were sought on the housing challenges presented by COVID-19.

Findings

Key Housing Challenges

- 5.9 Mainstream residents and minority groups (excluding young people - see below) identified the following as 5 key housing challenges in North Lanarkshire over the period 2021 to 2026. Please note that some of the items listed below were rated as equal challenges e.g. '4=The regeneration of town centres...' scored the same in terms of rating as '4=Tackling anti-social behaviour' and '4=Preventing and addressing homelessness'.
- 5.10 A shortage of social rented housing of various formats and sizes, in addition to shortages of stock in desirable housing locations. Shortage of social rented housing was thought to be made more challenging for residents as a consequence of the operation of the housing allocation system and waiting lists.
- 5.11 Affordability of housing, particularly private rents and owner occupied (including new build). Relevant here was the challenge of saving for deposits and the high cost of private rents; also important was the risk to the maintenance of housing payments presented by Covid 19 and the associated economic uncertainty.

3 = Shortage of accessible housing which includes allocations for disabled people, those with mobility problems linked to old age, and access to smaller homes (in terms of bedspaces) i.e. for people who wish to downsize.

4 = The regeneration of town centres, with investment needed to encourage community cohesion and support the viability of local housing.

4 = Tackling anti-social behaviour, including a review of the process by which perpetrators appear to gain preferential access to social housing.

4 = Preventing and addressing homelessness.

In the case of young people (school students) the following were listed as 5 key challenges for housing in North Lanarkshire over the period 2021 to 2026.

1. = Preventing and addressing homelessness.

1. = Lack of housing options for young people.

2. = Affordability of housing.

3. = The lack of alternative housing options.

4. = House condition issues

4. = Tackling anti-social behaviour

- 5.12 Other housing issues highlighted by all respondents included:
- ✓ Housing support and services for people leaving care.
 - ✓ Communication on housing matters with disabled people.

- ✓ Improving social housing estates to create a level playing field.
- ✓ Housing and care for the elderly (following the removal of warden support).
- ✓ Improving existing stock to make these homes more attractive to housing applicants

Key Housing Priorities

5.13 Mainstream residents identified the following as 5 key priorities for housing in North Lanarkshire over the period 2021 to 2026:

1 = Affordability of housing especially private rented housing and in terms of accessing to owner occupied housing.

2 = Infrastructure including access to green space, and transport links.

3 = Quality and design of homes covering new builds and the poor quality of some private rented stock. Also, relevant here is upgrading existing Council stock to ensure good quality homes for tenants.

3 = Allocation i.e. ensuring that the allocation process works for everyone and that allocations made are in keeping with the principal of 'best use of available stock'.

4 = Encompasses four items namely, housing, and related support services, energy efficiency, accessibility, and suitability.

5.14 Key housing priorities for young people (school students) the following were listed as 5 key priorities for housing in North Lanarkshire over the period 2021 to 2026:

1. = Affordability.

1. = Empty homes.

2. = Allocation.

4. = Suitability.

4. = Encompassing three items namely engagement, maintenance, and quality and design.

COVID- 19

5.15 All focus group and interviewee participants agreed that the Council's response to Covid 19 was something that should form part of the Local Housing Strategy e.g.

- ✓ Assessing the effect of isolation, loneliness and stress when making decisions on housing applications.
- ✓ Reviewing how other housing services and signposting might need to be flexed to take account of the impact of Covid 19 on tenants.

- ✓ The need for green and open spaces to be incorporated into plans for new developments and in general, providing all housing with access to safe open spaces in the future.
- ✓ Protecting people such as tenants who live in communal properties e.g. by providing door fobs to reduce the need to make physical contact with surfaces.
- ✓ Looking at how digitisation of housing services could assist access by disabled people.
- ✓ Modifying housing services to make them more robust in the face of any future pandemics.

Housing Information

5.16 Respondents said that housing information could be improved in the following ways:

- ✓ Facilitating more face-to-face contact with the housing service i.e. designing the service to allow for this despite the constraints of the pandemic.
- ✓ Improving communication and understanding of the information needs of people with a disability.
- ✓ Having more signposting on the housing section of the Council's website e.g. to other housing support providers.
- ✓ More advice and information should be provided to school pupils to make them more alert to local housing options and challenges.

6. Second Local Housing Strategy Consultation Survey, February 2021

Survey Method and Data Collection

6.1 The second LHS consultation survey was similar in format to the Early Engagement Survey. A survey questionnaire was created in Survey Monkey consisting of 19 questions including space for free text comments. The survey was advertised on the council's website and promoted on Twitter and Facebook. It was made available from mid-January 21 until 15th February 21.

Total Responses

6.2 There were 586 responses received in total.

6.3 The 586 responses are just less than half (46%) of the total responses received compared to the Early Engagement Survey (1,266).

Findings

Profile of Respondents

- 6.4 There were 44.5% participants who identified as North Lanarkshire Council tenants, 29% were Owner Occupiers, 13% were Private Landlord tenants, 7% were an Employee of North Lanarkshire Council or partner organisation and 6% were a Housing Association tenant in North Lanarkshire.
- 6.5 The majority of respondents (28%) were from the 45-54 years age group, 20% were 35-44 years, 19% were 55-64 years, 13% were 65 years and over and 4% were under 25 years

Tenure Aspirations

- 6.7 The majority of respondents – 46% aspired to own their own home, 28% rated social rent, while shared equity and private rent were both rated the lowest at 2%.

Barriers to Housing Aspirations

- 6.8 51% (262) of respondents said that there were barriers to achieving their housing aspirations and 236 provided additional comments.
- 6.9 The main themes were:
- Availability (81) including lack of suitable properties, and long waiting lists and no suitable housing offer being made
 - Affordability (74) including general cost of housing, difficulties with saving for deposit, and low income and unemployment
 - Age / disability or illness (30)
 - Abolition of 'Right to Buy' (15)

Design or Build your Own Home

- 6.10 Although a slim majority, 239 (46%) said they would like to design or build their own home, 215 (41%) said they would not.

Actions to Prevent Homelessness

- 6.11 44% said that the most important action to prevent homelessness is 'To Provide Good Quality Housing Options Advice and Information across all Tenures' and 36% said 'To Provide housing support to people who need it and work with partners to link people into services where appropriate'. Consequently, only 6% of respondents said that the most important action was 'To Provide Enhanced Mediation Services to Enable Families and Neighbours to Resolve Issues'.

Actions to Prevent Homelessness from Occurring

- 6.12 42% of respondents provided additional free text comments to the question.
- The main points raised were:

- 69 (28%) of those who provided a response said that there should be more services available, including support and prevention services.
- 53 (21%) of those who provided a response said that the council should build more homes, reuse empty buildings, or have temporary accommodation.
- 50 (20%) of those who provided a response said that there should be no more actions or were unsure of the actions that should be considered to prevent homelessness occurring.

Actions in Reducing the Impact on those who are Homeless

6.13 Participants were asked to rate the importance of the following statements:

- Reduce the time that homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.
- Provide good quality temporary accommodation that is affordable and meets the needs of homeless households.
- Work across multiple partners for those who have complex needs

6.14 43% of participants said that the most important action is to 'Provide Good Quality Temporary Accommodation that is affordable and meets the needs of Homeless Households'.

6.15 The percentage of respondents who said the most important action was to 'Reduce the Time that Homeless Households Spend in Temporary Accommodation' or 'To Work Across Multiple Partners for those who have Complex Needs' was the same (33%).

Actions to Help Reduce the Impact on People who Experience Homelessness

6.16 31% of respondents provided additional qualitative comments to the question.

6.17 The main points raised:

- 64 (36%) of those who responded said that the impact on people experiencing homelessness could be reduced by providing support and advice services. Several respondents mentioned mental health as an issue that would need additional help.
- 34 (19%) of those who responded referred to affordability, availability of temporary and permanent properties and waiting times to be rehomed.
- 47 (26%) of those who responded said that there should be no more action / don't know / not sure of the actions that should be taken to reduce the impact of those people who experience homelessness.

Older People, Disabled People, and People with Additional Support Needs

6.18 Participants were asked to rate the importance of the following statements in order of priority:

- Shortage of accessible housing for social rent (i.e. council or housing association).
- Shortage of accessible housing in the private sector (i.e. for private rent or sale).
- Accessibility of the wider environment.
- Location of accessible housing in relation to amenities and infrastructure (such as health centres, shops, and transport links).
- Access to equipment, adaptations and/or technology.
- Suitability of existing housing.
- Allocation of adapted housing.
- Access to support services.
- Access to information on housing options.
- Assistance for older people to downsize.
- Lack of alternative housing options for older owner occupier households, such as shared equity or shared ownership.
- Future planning to prevent housing crises from occurring.
- Engagement of older people, disabled people and people with additional support needs to identify housing and support needs more accurately.

6.19 A high percentage of those who responded 203 (68%) ranked 'Shortage of accessible housing for social rent' (i.e. council or housing association) as their top most important housing related issue.

Other Housing Related Issues

6.20 25% of respondents provided additional qualitative comments on other housing related issues that are important in making sure people have access to appropriate housing and support to enable them to live well in their own home. The main points raised:

- 66 (46%) of those who responded said that there are no other important related issues to making sure people have access to appropriate housing and support to enable them to live well in their own home.
- 29 (20%) of those responded mentioned issues around availability, maintenance of properties, suitability, and issues with anti-social behaviour.
- 20 (14%) of those who responded said support and adaptations are other important issues.

Most Important Actions to Address these Challenges

- 6.21 300 (51%) participants provided their top 3 most important actions. These were very evenly distributed.
- Improve the suitability of existing housing where possible (38%)
 - Increase the number of social rented homes built for older people (36%)
 - Improve the accessibility of all new build social rent homes to ensure greater longer-term adaptability (36%)

Energy Efficiency

Temperature in your home

- 6.22 51% (297) of participants provided a response to this question with most of them 46% (138) stating that their home was fairly warm. A smaller number of respondents 6% (17) respondents said their home was very cold.

Fuel Costs

- 6.23 51% (298) participants provided a response to this question in relation to their fuel costs and affordability. Of those who responded, 27% (81) said they found it neither easy nor difficult to afford their fuel bills. This was closely followed by 25% (74) who said they found it was somewhat difficult.

Controlling your heating

- 6.24 The majority of respondents 87% (261) said they knew how to control their heating.

Condition of your home

Disrepair Issues in the Home

- 6.25 The majority of respondents (61%) said they did not have any issues with their home in relation to disrepair however, (39%) said 'Yes, they did have issues'.
- 6.26 Of the 115 respondents who said 'Yes, they had issues with their home in relation to disrepair', 110 provided free text comments. Some respondents provided more than one issue; therefore, the main themes have been summarised:
- Dampness and mould issues
 - Issues with windows and doors causing draughts
 - Roof, cladding & outside roughcast, and fascias
 - Issues with broken interior fixtures such as heating systems, toilets, sinks etc

Most Important Actions to Improve House Condition?

- 6.27 Of the 296 responses there was an overwhelming 80% (237) who said that the most important action should be to 'Invest in Social Rented Housing through Planned Maintenance'. There were 58% of participants who indicated 'Effectively address disrepair and maintenance issues in mixed tenure blocks'.

Regenerating and Developing Sustainable Communities

- 6.28 Of the 294 responses to this question, the top 3 most important actions were:
- 81% (237) said bring more empty homes back into use through buy-back schemes;
 - 57% (168) said develop better ways to identify low demand housing and develop solutions to address this; and
 - 56% (166) said engage and involve local people and communities better to identify issues and develop solutions.

Final Considerations

Other actions

- 6.29 Of the 135 responses, 44 said no or unsure of other actions that should be considered. However, 91 qualitative comments were provided, which were very diverse and covered wide-ranging topics; not all related to housing issues.
- 'Carbon footprint – encourage recycle and upcycle in communities. Encourage looking out for each other – neighbours, community. All housing to be accessible to their community'.
 - 'Improve town centres so people take pride in their town'.
 - 'Keep communities small but independent by providing local availability of all necessary support services e.g. medical centres, libraries. police stations, community centres, local shops i.e. pharmacists, post offices hairdressers. cafe. Schools, public transport availability, sports areas, playparks, improved local environment, litter bins etc'.

7. Survey Reports by Theme, May-July 2021

Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Research Survey, May 2021

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 7.1 The research survey was available on the council website to complete during January and February 2021.
- 7.2 Responses were collected using the SNAP survey system. Respondents were given multiple choice questions and opportunities to add qualitative comments.

7.3 The survey asked about the following:

- Participation in community life
- Satisfaction and wellbeing
- Access to services
- Employment
- Housing
- Harassment and hate crime
- Covid-19

7.4 The survey was available to complete in the following languages:

- Arabic
- English
- Polish
- Punjabi
- Kiswahili
- Traditional Chinese
- Urdu

Total Response

7.5 There were 314 responses to the survey.

Findings

Profile of Respondents

Age

7.6 The vast majority of respondents, 87% are aged between 25 – 64 years of age with most aged between 25-39 years (88, 34%). Only 6% of respondents were aged 65 years and over.

Sex

7.7 The vast majority of responses (196, 72.5%) have been provided by females.

Ethnic Group

7.8 The highest number of responses (42%) were provided by residents who identified as 'White – Polish'. There were 20% of respondents who identified as Asian or Asian Scottish or Asian British – Pakistani.

Current Housing Situation

7.9 The highest responses were received from homeowners (97, 41%) followed by council or housing association tenants (84, 36%). Low numbers of responses from individuals who are currently homeless (4, 2%).

Applied for Council or Social Housing

- 7.10 Slightly more individuals (51%) said that they have never applied for council or social housing compared to 49% who had applied for council housing.
- 7.11 When offered a home most residents (79, 70%) have accepted a property.
- 7.12 There were 54 respondents who gave a reason or described the barriers to applying for council or social housing. Some of the main reasons were: 21 respondents own their own home, 14 have no need for council or social housing or did not want to apply, 6 live with family or friends and 6 have previous experience of waiting lists or don't think they meet criteria.

Language and Accessing Housing Information and Options

- 7.13 More than half of respondents (130, 57%) said they did know how to access information about housing and options available in a language they could understand.

Immediate Family Housing Experiences

- 7.14 Over-crowding was the highest response (57, 50%) with half the residents indicating they had family experience of this. There were 15% of respondents who indicated homelessness and 32% of respondents who gave other reasons.

3 Most Important Housing Priorities

- 7.15 Affordability of housing (20%), Quality of housing (20%), Supply of housing (15%) and homelessness (14%) were rated as the top 4 most important housing priorities.

8. Homelessness, 2nd LHS Survey Report, June 2021

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 8.1 The purpose and background of the LHS, as well as the methodology and data collection results of the consultation is set out in the 2nd LHS Survey Report June 2021.

Total Responses

- 8.2 There were 586 responses received in total to the LHS survey, with 387 people responded to some or all the questions around homelessness.

Findings

Most Important Actions

8.3 The most important actions were:

- 44% of respondents said 'to provide good quality housing options advice and Information across all tenures' as an essential element of homeless prevention activity.
- 36% of respondents advised that they viewed the most important action to 'provide housing support to people who need it and work with partners to link people into services where appropriate'.
- 12% of respondents were of the view that 'providing advice on adaptations across all tenures' was their most important issue.
- 10% felt that 'helping young people understand what it's like to have their own home including their rights and responsibilities' was their number one priority.
- Only 6% of respondents said that the most important action was 'to provide enhanced mediation services to enable families and neighbours to resolve Issues'.

Prevent Homelessness

8.4 42% (249) of respondents provided a response on actions which should be considered to prevent homelessness from occurring. The main actions raised by respondents were:

- There should be more services available, including support and prevention services (69, 28%)
- The council should build more homes, reuse empty buildings, or have temporary accommodation ((53, 21%).

Reducing the Impact on those who are Homeless

8.5 43% said that the most important action is to 'provide good quality temporary accommodation that is affordable and meets the needs of homeless households'.

Actions to Reduce the Impact of Homelessness

8.6 31% (180 people) answered this question. The main actions raised are as follows:

- 64 (36%) of those who responded said that the impact on people experiencing homelessness could be reduced by providing support and advice services. A few respondents mentioned mental health as an issue that would need additional help.
- 34 (19%) of those who responded referred to affordability, availability of temporary and permanent properties and waiting times to be rehomed.

- 47 (26%) of those who responded said that there should be no more action/ don't know/ not sure of the actions that should be taken to reduce the impact of those people who experience homelessness.

9. Armed Forces and Veterans Organisations Survey, July 2021

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 9.1 The survey was issued to six organisations which are, or may be, engaged in supporting current and former military personnel in North Lanarkshire during Spring 2021.

Total Responses

- 9.2 Three surveys were completed, by:
- Armed Forces Support Project, Motherwell
 - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Coatbridge
 - Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA)

No responses were received from Housing Options Scotland, Poppy Scotland, or Veterans Scotland.

Number and Type of Housing Advice Cases

- 9.3 Respondents were asked to provide the approximate number of housing advice cases they deal with annually, and to set out the nature of the enquiries they dealt with. The three organisations who responded to the survey reported an annual caseload of around 100, with two of the three noting that demand from the Armed Forces Community (AFC) in North Lanarkshire was 'about the same' as in other authority areas in which they operate, while for one, North Lanarkshire was 'much less challenging'.
- 9.4 There is limited data on the number of AFC households within a local authority area, which makes it difficult to consider how proportionate demand for housing and housing advice and information services is. However, in this survey, the type of housing issues respondent organisations reported dealing with suggest that there are no issues which affect the armed forces community in North Lanarkshire.
- 9.5 The issues highlighted were broadly typical of more generic housing advice services, primarily homelessness, notice of proceedings/evictions, obtaining PRS tenancies and supporting households in rent arrears. SSAFA also support ex-service personnel to floor and furnish their homes and report that this service costs on average £3,000 per property.

Gaps in Housing Supply and Service provision

- 9.6 Each of the three respondents identified gaps in housing supply, including too few one-bedroom houses for single men (Armed Forces Support Project) and too few adapted properties for disabled veterans (SSAFA). CAB noted that service users found it difficult 'to obtain suitable housing meeting their expectations in the areas that they wish to live in because of the overall shortage' of social housing.
- 9.7 The Armed Forces Support Project identified a related issue, highlighted that allocations policies do not take account of the impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on veterans who may not be suited to living in volatile environments such as areas/blocks which were known for high prevalence of alcohol and drugs issues. PTSD is a particular issue for the AFC.
- 9.8 The Armed Forces Project further raised concerns that housing advisors may not have sufficient understanding of PTSD and the impact this condition could have on AFC households.

Experience of Engaging with the Council

- 9.9 Respondent organisations reported broadly good relationships with North Lanarkshire Council; two noted their experiences were 'very good' (the highest rating) and while the other rated their experiences as 'poor' however explained selecting this score as '[the] Council always worked well to help sort issues out' suggesting that a clerical error may have been made in relation to a particular case.

10. Private Rented Sector Survey, July 2021

Survey Method and Data Collection

- 10.1 The Private Rented Sector Survey (PRS) provides a useful insight into North Lanarkshire's PRS, suggesting there is now a mature and stable market which, however, may be vulnerable to economic shocks or further fiscal reform. It also highlights some issues raised by landlords in the survey and identifies landlords' preferred engagement methods, which may guide future consultation and information sharing activities.
- 10.2 Postal Surveys were issued to the email addresses associated with all landlords registered with North Lanarkshire Council.
- 10.3 499 responses were received.

Profile of Landlords

- 10.4 The majority (65%) of all landlords reported owning only one property in North Lanarkshire.
- 10.5 A small majority of respondents were male (54%) with the remainder female (46%). Most respondents (55%) were aged 55 or older with just 6% aged under 35.

- 10.6 One-third (33%) of respondents were retired with less than half (45%) working full-time, around a sixth (16%) working part-time and the remainder (6%) economically inactive. Only 7% reported that being a landlord was their 'full-time and main job' with around two thirds (67%) stating that private rented property ownership was instead a long-term investment. The remainder (27%) reported that being a landlord was a side-line to boost their income.
- 10.7 Slightly more than three in ten (31%) did not disclose their incomes. Almost a quarter (24%) reported that their household income, from all sources including benefits, employment, and rents, was less than £30,000 per annum which suggests that there is an element of financial precariousness in the sector. Nearly a fifth (19%) stated their household income was £30,000-50,000 while 13% of landlords reported incomes of £50,000-70,000 and 13% with incomes of £70,000 or more.

Rents and Costs

- 10.8 The majority of landlords (73%) reported that their rental income exceeded their costs, with 18% indicating by either a lot or 55% by a little (55%). About one-sixth (16%) stated that rental income was 'around the same' as their costs while more than one in ten (11%) have costs more than their income.
- 10.9 One-third of respondents (34%) reported that their tenants were in receipt of Housing Benefit with a slightly higher proportion (42%) stating that rents charged were below, at or around Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels. A further third (34%) stated that rents were within 10% of LHA while the remaining quarter (25%) rent homes at more than 10% above LHA. These findings suggest that while North Lanarkshire's PRS is relatively affordable, full Housing Benefit would only cover the full rent in fewer than half of all private rented homes suggesting an affordability challenge for the area's poorest residents.
- 10.10 Almost half (46%) of all landlords own their properties outright, with around a fifth reporting loan to value ratios of 1-49% (21%) and 50-74% (22%) respectively. One in eight (12%) have loan to value ratios in excess of 75%, with a quarter of this group (3% overall) having an LTV of 90% or more. These landlords may be particularly vulnerable to interest rate rises.

Management and Standards

- 10.11 Tax reforms phased in between 2016 and 2020 increased PRS landlord's potential tax liabilities and may undermine the investment case for owning rented property. These changes, however, only apply to individuals and landlords whose properties are owned by a limited company. Fewer than one in eight (12%) of respondents reported that they have incorporated with the vast majority (88%) now liable to tax on all of their rental income (rather than just their profits).
- 10.12 Almost four in ten (38%) landlords report that they self-manage their PRS properties, around five times the number that state being a landlord is their profession. More than half (52%) of landlords instruct letting agents to provide

'full service' management while the remaining tenth instruct an agent to find tenants, or to find tenants and collect rents.

- 10.13 The vast majority (92%) of landlords were aware of minimum property condition standards with the remainder either unaware or unsure of their responsibilities. A larger proportion of landlords (19%) reported being unaware of minimum energy performance standards which have recently been introduced, suggesting that there may be a need to raise awareness of this new duty (which the Council is responsible for enforcing).

Covid Impacts and Plans for the Future

- 10.14 While two-thirds (67%) of landlords stated that Covid had not impacted on their business, more than one in ten (11%) described Covid as having had a 'significant negative impact' with 22% reporting that the pandemic had had a negative impact.
- 10.15 Landlords had more mixed views on their plans for the future with 38% expecting their portfolios to 'stay the same' over the next five years while a slightly higher proportion stated they 'will' or 'may' sell (32%) some or all of their properties during this period than expected to add to their portfolios (30%). These findings suggest that while the size of the market may stay stable there could be significant churn in the future.

Experience of North Lanarkshire Council

- 10.16 While only 18% of respondents reported an awareness of the Council's private sector housing team. More than one-quarter (29%) reported that they had 'dealings with the Council with regards to their properties' during the previous five years.
- 10.17 Almost half (47%) of the 155 respondents to this question noted a positive experience, with almost three in ten (29.7%) describing their experiences as 'neither good nor poor' and the remaining 23.9% stating their experiences were either 'fairly poor' or 'very poor'. Three key themes emerged from these explanations: common repairs, community safety and Council Tax.
- 10.18 While some respondents noted they had received repairs grants, landlords largely noted negative experiences around common repairs. This included a perceived lack of responsiveness and help for issues in four in a block properties and concerns about the quality of work.
- 10.19 A few concerns were raised about antisocial behaviour and environmental health issues, including noise nuisance and fly tipping. There was a general sense that the Council expected landlords to take action against their tenants but are given little help to do so, while on the other hand this required a high burden of proof before they would investigate complaints made by landlords.
- 10.20 Respondents had more mixed views on Council Tax – with some highlighting the responsiveness of the service while others noting perceived inadequacies in processing discounts when properties were void.
- 10.21 Landlords also expressed frustrations that Council staff advise landlords to force evictions when tenants are in arrears, at landlord's expense, with one reporting an £8,000 loss as a consequence. Another noted a specific issue

affecting landlords at the Millcroft Road regeneration site, stating that while he understood that Covid-19 will have impacted on the Council's plans he has not had any correspondence about the proposed Compulsory Purchase of properties in the area since before the pandemic, which makes it difficult for him to make his own plans.

Future Engagement

10.22 Landlords were asked to rank five potential future engagement methods in order of preference:

- Annual landlord conference
- Newsletter
- Themed workshops
- Virtual meetings
- Website/email updates

10.23 Website/email updates and newsletters were by far the most popular choice, followed by an annual conference.

11 Public LHS Thematic Workshop Discussions

11.1 Introduction

As part of the second round of consultation seven thematic workshops were held for the public on the strategic housing outcomes contained within the Draft LHS. These thematic areas included:

- The Private Rented Sector
- Climate change and fuel poverty
- House condition
- Homelessness
- Placemaking and communities
- Specialist provision
- Housing delivery

11.2 Method and Data Collection

The Seven thematic workshops were held across a 2-week period including evenings and days to maximise involvement.

The workshops were promoted using social media and details were published on the council's LHS webpage, with Eventbrite used to register participants. The workshops were facilitated by a member of the Housing Strategy Team.

11.3 The Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Four participants attended the LHS workshop on the PRS. This workshop explored the PRS in North Lanarkshire, future PRS energy efficiency requirements, repairs and investment, the role of the PRS in town centre

regeneration and challenges in accessing the PRS. Comments generally on the Draft LHS in relation to the PRS were also sought. The following key issues were raised:

- **Motivations are to generate a steady yield** rather than make capital highlighted by those landlords in attendance.
- Landlords in attendance advised they had a small number of properties and **Investing in the PRS in Scotland** is an attractive option as properties are less expensive and rents are reasonable.
- **Private Landlord Registration** -awareness of this requirement with the local authority was raised as a potential gap amongst English landlords investing in Scottish properties.
- **Grow landlord portfolios** in a small way in coming years – highlighted by all landlords This is not just motivated solely by investment but by the difference landlords can make to improving outcomes for people through provision of a high-quality homes.
- **Lack of investment options** as a barrier in relation to investing in the PRS specifically related to the inability to invest in personal SIP to purchase residential property.
- **Common repairs issues generally** noted as influencing choices in PRS house types and in ascertaining factors in mixed tenure blocks discouraging potential investment in purchasing PRS properties. Council could consider supporting landlords through helping them get in touch with other owners to enable common repairs to be completed
- **Property standards** - the council could provide funding and support to help deliver improvements and investment in property standards.
- **Negative perceptions of the PRS** were highlighted specifically in relation to poor condition and management of homes in the PRS, although there are good landlords who provide a high-quality service.
- **Challenges of increasing energy efficiency requirements** -concerns in relation to recouping initial investment and lack of understanding of the funding required to meet increased requirements.
- **Lack of expertise in the field of energy efficiency advice** to inform improvements.
- **Regenerating town centres** - the role of the PRS.
- **Planning Regulations** – landlords might be more interested if these were amended and the example of conversions in town centres in England without the need for planning consent and increasing the height of a building without consent was mentioned as a possible way of assisting.
- **Development/refurbishment costs** not stacking up against the end value of a property was mentioned as a barrier.
- **The relationship between letting agents** and landlords was highlighted as important in increasing opportunity of lets.

- **Accessing the PRS** - challenges for people were discussed, and negative perceptions of vulnerable groups were mentioned.
- **Better links with PRS by council** - to help provide greater opportunities in the PRS and help ensure people are provided with appropriate support to sustain their tenancy.
- **Housing needs in North Lanarkshire** - some landlords are interested in engaging with the council to better understand this, so they could help deliver developments/projects to meet these needs.

11.4 **Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty**

Two participants attended the LHS workshop on climate change, energy efficiency and fuel poverty. This workshop explored future energy efficiency requirements, fuel poverty - extent, signposting and support and ways to engage with private sector landlords. Comments generally on the Draft LHS in relation to climate change, energy efficiency and fuel poverty were also sought. The following key issues were raised:

- **Refurbish existing buildings** - too much focus on new build homes and not enough on refurbishing existing properties.
- **Investing in energy efficiency improvements** for lower value properties was highlighted as unattractive as little capital gain to be made from it.
- **Older buildings** - undertaking works in older buildings was also mentioned as not being financially viable in some instances.
- **Differences in housing markets** were discussed with rental yield being more important in North Lanarkshire as opposed to capital growth which renders investment in improvements as unaffordable.
- **The cost of technology** was also highlighted as not being affordable enough yet.
- Issues associated with empty homes was discussed and complications with renovating including high costs was highlighted.
- **Stronger enforcement action** to ensure properties are brought up to standard.
- **Planning permission restrictions** could potentially be explored by the council for new build developments for developers to make a commitment to bringing older properties up to standard.
- **Fuel poverty lack of awareness of services** to sign post to if identified as an issue.
- **Smart meters** in respect of inability to transfer ownership and requirement to read manually, suggested that people need to understand how to use them more effectively to lower fuel bills.

- **A lack of understanding and expertise around energy efficiency and technology overall** was highlighted and it was suggested that the council and/or Scottish Government could assist with providing a trusted trader scheme and improved advice.
- **Ground source heat pumps** and the example of the **Eden project** in Cornwall was discussed.
- **Coal mines** as a source of ground source heat were also discussed with the skills and drilling experience being highlighted as available in Scotland.
- **Improve communications on energy efficiency measures** and providing information and advice.

11.5 House Condition

Five participants attended the LHS workshop on house condition. This workshop explored improving house condition across tenures, mixed tenure issues, engagement with the private sector, barriers, and challenges to improving house condition

- **Open Market Purchase Scheme** could focus on properties in the worst condition to address disrepair in the private sector.
- **Options for homeowners** - council to consider these for those who struggle with maintenance costs to sell their property to the council and continue to live in the property as a tenant.
- **People who purchased under Right to Buy** can struggle with maintenance who purchased their property because the mortgage was cheaper than rent and are encountering issues now because they have no savings to invest in maintenance.
- **Fuel poverty** particularly older people.
- **Other newer energy efficiency measures are less financially viable**, taking around 12-15 years before investment is returned while some energy efficiency measures are relatively easy and cost effective to install (i.e. bringing properties up to EPC D rating).
- **Investment schemes** can encourage upfront investment in energy efficient technologies e.g. solar panels and potential to sell electricity to grid.
- **Climate change** - council to take the lead to encourage others by showcasing examples.
- **Some reluctance in investing in new technologies** as they're not well enough advanced yet.
- **Effectiveness of retrofitting older properties** when there's other more pressing house condition issues.
- **Mixed tenure issues** - for many landlords the issue is not that they are reluctant to take part, the issue is affordability.

- **Buy back properties** to help enable common works and sell properties where they perhaps own one property in a block (Council does incorporate buy backs to enable common works within the OMSE scheme).
- **Funding for maintenance works** for owner occupiers.
- **Future fire alarm regulations** - a lack of communication of on this and what are the future requirements.
- **Landlord registration issues** in relation to not all landlords being registered.
- **Connection between poor house condition and health** was emphasised and the need for enhanced communication of the benefits of investing in improving house condition to improve health.

11.6 Homelessness

Three participants attended the LHS workshop on homelessness. This workshop explored Homes First, The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and the other actions contained within the Draft LHS in relation to tackling and preventing homelessness. The following key issues were raised:

- **Refusals for social housing** - a range of factors that influence people's decisions on offers, including but is not limited to the area, the type of housing, and proximity to support networks.
- **Impact that the tower reprovisioning programme** has on allocations and subsequent impact on homelessness.
- **Reprovisioning programme is a longer-term programme** spanning across 20 years and is linked to new housing provision as well as best use of existing stock.
- **Section 5s and nominations with RSLs** - the importance of RSL partners in effectively tackling homelessness was highlighted particularly in relation to certain areas where RSLs provide most of the social housing i.e. Cumbernauld.
- **Lenders being reluctant to fund schemes/developments** for vulnerable tenants was highlighted by a participant as being a barrier.
- **Private sector rent deposit guarantee scheme** could be utilised more to improve access to the private rented sector.
- **Shared room rate for LHA** - challenges that young people face such as the shared room rate for LHA.
- **LHS needs to capture the impact of Covid-19** on housing needs.

11.7. Placemaking and Communities

Four participants attended the LHS workshop on placemaking and communities. This workshop explored tackling empty homes, regenerating

town centres, the Place Standard Tool, tackling low demand housing and development of sustainable communities more broadly. The following key issues were raised:

- **Broad agreement** that the key challenges identified in the LHS were the right ones.
- **Concerns about specific low-demand housing** with concentrations of antisocial behaviour, which consequently stigmatises these areas and perceived prevalence of temporary accommodation in these areas (one participant).
- **Proactive, targeted intervention** in these low housing demand areas could be undertaken by the council to address ASB and/or through preventative measures (like enhanced letting standards or lower rents to attract and sustain tenancies).
- **Improve the aesthetics of North Lanarkshire's neighbourhoods** – e.g. improving off-street parking, ensuring properties are well-maintained and regularly painted, improving connectivity and public transport between towns. These issues became apparent during lockdown when using parks and green spaces.
- **Impact of Covid on homes and places** people need and aspire to, for example requiring additional space at home or better access to green spaces.
- **Place Standard** recognised as a valuable tool to use in engaging with communities around place-based, which could be useful in tenant participation work.
- **Positive recognition of Council's engagement activity** to a variety of audiences throughout the pandemic, such as the LHS and a range of other plans and projects - strong support for retaining online methods going forward (with one disabled participant stating this allowed her to engage in ways she may not have been able to if events were held 'in person') as well as resuming face to face consultation.
- **Concern on some consultations**, which caused unrest whereby individuals maliciously set out to destroy the relationship between the council and communities around the town visions.
- **Strong support for town centre visions**, particularly for the Shotts vision, with one describing it as 'fantastic' and stating that it is 'brilliant that the council is investing in bringing homes up to standard and improving education and other facilities, and that it is starting to engage really well with residents.
- **Support for principles of community wealth building** to ensure that the benefits of future growth were inclusive and helped support jobs in local communities.
- **Potential for community groups**, where appropriately supported, to take ownership of and sustain land and buildings, particularly where the council and other public bodies may be rationalising their estates.

11.8 Specialist Provision

Two participants attended the LHS workshop on specialist provision. This workshop explored challenges and barriers in relation to specialist housing, increasing the provision and access to accessible housing across tenures, tackling inequalities, and meeting the housing needs of people who share a protected characteristic. The following key issues were identified:

- **Increase knowledge and raise awareness** on specialist provision to meet the needs of disabled people and people with support needs as a private landlord (one participant).
- **A gap in understanding the barriers that disabled people face** with some concerns that the actions may not be specific enough for the various disabilities.
- **Improve awareness of disabled people's needs** and the needs of other people such as LGBT, ethnic minority groups as this a challenging priority.
- **Improve knowledge of housing needs** and access to the information on housing needs to meet any gaps as a private landlord.
- **Private landlords to work further with health and social care** and the council to better utilise the private sector to meet specific housing needs.
- **Lack of accessible housing and delays** in securing a suitable housing solution for disabled people. Council could implement smaller changes.
- **Improve making information more accessible** such as considerable length of time a request for a change to improve accessibility of information.
- **Lack of awareness of the social model of disability** and how this creates barriers to good quality housing advice and information.
- **Role of co-production group** and their involvement in raising awareness of barriers experienced by disabled people and implementing change.
- **Role of private landlords in relation to retrofitting properties** to improve accessibility and funding/grants.
- **Develop a list of trusted traders** who could assist with retrofitting.
- **Role of technology** in promoting independence and health and wellbeing.
- **Increased engagement from disabled people** due to the increased range of digital/online opportunities available as a result of the pandemic and change in approach, which is positive and to be encouraged going forward.

11.9 Housing Delivery

Two participants attended the LHS workshop on housing delivery. This workshop explored increasing the delivery of high-quality sustainable housing across tenure. The following key issues were raised:

- **Sufficient supply of land, subsidy, appetite from residents** i.e. supportive of new development, and labour and skills supply were key issues highlighted.
- **Gap in labour and skills supply** - these challenges were present preceding the pandemic, however the pandemic has exacerbated them.
- **Community benefits and wealth building** and a need for training local people and improving skills base.
- **Increasing future sustainability standards** to pay more attention to what is needed tomorrow.
- **Scottish Government subsidy for affordable housing** and whether this is sufficient to incorporate the increasing requirements.
- **Importance of infrastructure** in creating sustainable places was raised and reference to an infrastructure first approach.
- **Pockets of low demand housing** linked to anti-social behaviour and perceptions about temporary accommodation.
- **Car parking and house condition.**
- **Proactive approach to tackling these issues** - careful consideration to allocations and working with communities could help regenerate places and areas.
- **Types of homes built through the new build programme** and suggested that less flatted accommodation and lower density flatted accommodation i.e. four in a block would be a better longer-term strategy for sustainable places. Financial viability of this approach raised.
- **Extension of the Affordable Housing Policy** to include other areas in North Lanarkshire to increase the provision of affordable housing.
- **Affordable Housing Policy and evidence** required to justify the implementation of a policy.
- **Increase in the provision of private homes** but a lack of affordable homes which meant that local people were being forced to move out with the area.
- **Developments were 'going under the radar' in phased development approaches** to avoid a fuller contribution to infrastructure.
- **Concerns in relation to pressure on local health services and schools.**

- **Stimulating demand** and regeneration through building affordable housing in areas of low demand.
- **Need for larger family sized homes** as well as the need for **increased housing options for younger people**.
- **Need for mixed generations** within housing developments and that a lot of the challenges that young people face is associated with a lack of support.
- **Connecting with sustainable travel** potentially need strengthened in the final LHS.
- **Allocation policy** to be considered to ensure best use of housing stock.
- **Shared guardianship** in relation to the allocation policy.

12. Workshops on Housing to 2040, August 2021

12.1 Introduction

There were two parts to the workshop discussions (a) Investing in Homes, Place and Communities' and (b) Embedding community wealth-building principles in the approach and practices of social landlords.

Generally, there was broad agreement in the workshops that North Lanarkshire has taken a very proactive approach in responding to some of the emerging policy agenda set out in Housing to 2040. Participants agreed that, in some areas, the LHS could make stronger reference to work which is already under development in some key areas including active and sustainable travel, economic development and the Economic Regeneration Delivery Plan and attempt to be more specific in areas to help improve deliverability.

(a) 'Investing in Homes, Place and Communities'.

12.2 Participants were asked the following questions and summarised responses are provided:

- Does North Lanarkshire have a pipeline of 'investable propositions'?
- How do we develop more investment-ready projects in the areas highlighted in Housing to 2040?
- The LHS commits to 'exploring the concept of '20-minute neighbourhoods' by 2023: is this ambitious enough? Should it commit to flagship projects?

12.3 Does North Lanarkshire have a pipeline of 'investable propositions'?

- **Investable [housing] propositions** – significant in our town centres and places, with a number of feasibilities underway, supported by its

economic regeneration plan and associated structures which was established in 2019.

- **Largely social rented homes** in our town centres and will require public subsidy to deliver.
- **Alternative housing tenures** - possible in towns and town centres too, including for mid-market rent and shared equity (Council and RSLs).

12.4 How do we develop more investment-ready projects in the areas highlighted in Housing to 2040?

- **Place-based projects** - delivering around land assembly and infrastructure, with brownfield and town centre projects typically being much more complex to deliver and projects of this nature can take many years to come to fruition as a consequence.
- **Enabling infrastructure** – by delivering on this for follow-on development NLC may increase the value of land, which is later required, making public-led investment more expensive.
- **CPOs** – there may be a need to consider extending the scope of this (for example, for supporting infrastructure to enable later development) and engage with Scottish Government on making the process more straightforward.
- **Role of the LHS** – in providing evidence and supporting CPOs in a similar way to other plans and policies such as the ERDP.
- **Make connections and linkages** between the LHS, the ERDP, the Town Visions etc.
- **Town Centre Regeneration** – North Lanarkshire Council's approach may be more opportunistic (and less strategic) than it should perhaps be.
- Challenges around valuations as current Council policy does take account of the social or environmental costs and benefits associated with acquisition and development. This may constrain the Council's ability to assemble land where market values for current use are low.
- **Private sector partnerships** may allow for the Council to take a more hands-off approach and remove some of these constraints.
- **The Town Visions**, when fully adopted, will however provide the strategic context to drive investment (though it was noted that these Visions will not have the formal status of 'masterplans', which may limit their use in the formal planning process).
- **Place Standard** – strong agreement this is a very useful, though under-used, tool.

12.5 **The LHS commits to ‘exploring the concept of ‘20-minute neighbourhoods’ by 2023: is this ambitious enough? Should it commit to flagship projects?**

- **20 Minute Neighbourhoods** – supported as a concept and agreed to make a stronger commitment to this concept which provides an excellent design and planning principle, which includes identifying key action(s) to be taken during the lifetime of the LHS.
- **Ambiguity (some) about the term 20 Minute Neighbourhoods** and how it distinguishes itself from other (perceived) ‘buzzwords’ like active travel which NLC has focused significant effort on in recent years with plans to connect towns with their centres through bike and walking routes.
- **20 Minute Neighbourhoods and quality**– focus on the quality aspects of the components as North Lanarkshire already has several existing 20-minute neighbourhoods.
- **Low-carbon infrastructure**- the potential for ensuring North Lanarkshire’s repurposed town centres can provide low-carbon communal heating through district heat networks.
- **Funding Tensions**- tension between the availability of capital funding to support place-based investment and the relative lack of revenue funding to maintain new buildings (including homes). This is linked with the rationalisation of the public sector estate and may allow for new housing opportunities (through conversions and on cleared sites).
- **Improving standards in housing** such as digital connectivity, improved access to outdoor/green space, increased indoor space for home study and working and improved accessibility and energy efficiency measures - agreed in the focus group that these wider objectives should be delivered. However, cost implications associated with these aspirations (noted SG’s review on affordable housing subsidy) were highlighted.
- **Health Inequalities** – the role of housing in tackling health inequalities was highlighted, which should be fundamental to the LHS and underpin the priorities and actions.

(b) Embedding community wealth-building principles in the approach and practices of social landlords

12.6 **The following questions were asked to participants in the workshops:**

- How do we better link housing investment with local economic development, employability, and skills initiatives?
- Should consideration of community wealth-building be ‘built in’ to the proposed Enterprise contract for Council services?
- In advance of 2025, what steps can we take to support this approach?

12.7 How do we better link housing investment with local economic development, employability, and skills initiatives?

- **Concept of Community Wealth-Building** - somewhat vague, there was broad agreement that the Council and its RSL partners have a strong foundation for work in this area.

Should consideration of community wealth-building be 'built in' to the proposed Enterprise contract for Council services?

- **Council's Workforce for the Future Strategy** includes community wealth building in its emerging plans for developing a Construction Academy and developing work around creating shared apprenticeships.
- **Glasgow City Region officers' group** – North Lanarkshire participates in the GCR which is currently considering procurement arrangements incorporating community wealth-building and it is important the LHS demonstrates making connections to wider strands of GCR work such as this.
- **Social Value Toolkit pilot** developed by HACT for the affordable housing sector and intends to mainstream this work, which is useful for demonstrating the impact of investment.
- **New strategic procurement pathways** are being developed by the council, which will allow for more 'parcels' of work to be packaged together giving contractors more certainty about their pipeline of work. This will allow contractors to take on more apprentices and trainees. This new model will enable the Council to 'develop more opportunities for our own people' and deliver the type of community benefits that our residents' needs.
- **Construction Academy** – the form of a Construction Academy was discussed, with suggestions including for a 'physical' academy delivered by the Council and for one delivered by further education partners.

12.8 In advance of 2025, what steps can we take to support this approach?

- **Role of RSLs** - may be willing to contribute to support any Construction Academy's operations in lieu of community benefits.
- **LPPs** - no guidance issued yet and local authorities may have a role in supporting their development, however the Council's intention will, in the first instance, be to support the recently established Community Boards as the primary forum for making place-based investment decisions.

13. Developers' Forum Event, November 2021

13.1 Background and Format

The Developers' Forum was an online event, which followed the previous events, Delivering the homes North Lanarkshire needs to grow (2019) and the Infrastructure Summit (2018). It was aimed at developer partners, other key stakeholders, and specific council services with the purpose of providing an opportunity for participants to hear more about key developments, shared areas of interest and an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities to deliver the homes North Lanarkshire needs. The format of the Forum consisted of a series of short presentations, followed by a workshop discussion. The Programme is attached as an Appendix to this report.

61 participants attended in total. 46 external participants and 15 internal council participants.

13.2 Workshop Discussions

'Exploring challenges and opportunities to deliver the homes we need, create sustainable communities, and improve outcomes for all in North Lanarkshire.'

13.3 Background

There were two aims to the development of the workshop event held on the 12th November 2021. The first aim was to explore the current and future challenges facing the housebuilding sector as well as potential opportunities. The second aim was to identify how we can overcome these challenges through working together and capitalising on the opportunities to deliver the homes North Lanarkshire needs to grow and thrive.

Three workshop groups were facilitated by council staff asking participants to consider five key questions. A summary of the key issues to emerge from the workshop discussions is detailed in the remainder of this report.

13.4 Current and Future Challenges

New build

The current challenges reported by participants include, high level of demand, supply chain issues, lead in times, and labour shortages. New build houses are selling faster than they can be built, although it is anticipated that this will level off in the next few months. Demographics, future growth, inward migration, and reduced household size will also impact. North Lanarkshire Council are good at providing information.

Participants reported that they view the current challenges to be short to medium term and that the market would eventually find stability. However,

there is uncertainty around when the market will start to settle and what it will settle at.

SMEs and PLCs

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a 'perfect storm' for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). There have been material and labour shortages as well as rising costs. This situation is likely to last into the medium term.

Furthermore, private limited companies (PLCs) are subject to similar issues. While the market is strong in terms of sales, there are ongoing issues in relation to the supply chain, staffing and consents.

Planning Reform

Participants did not feel confident that Planning Reform changes will help address the current challenges. Issues were highlighted with consultees in particular, Scottish Water and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

Educational Qualifications in Construction Sector

Recruitment and apprenticeships for construction are challenging. The workforce has been reduced by experienced tradespeople leaving. COVID impacted on the apprentice uptake. In terms of the construction sector, there is a lack of interest in construction courses in further education and updates for these courses are needed. Furthermore, there is a lack of engagement and promotion of construction jobs.

Climate Change

There are massive costs associated with meeting the climate change agenda for North Lanarkshire Council. The national climate change infrastructure needs investing. Climate change has cost implications for smaller developers and participants highlighted the need for support from the council. Delays are also a challenge.

For developers the focus is on Net Zero Heat at point of use and promoting connections for district heating.

Another challenge is the capital costs associated with achieving Net Zero Carbon.

The technology to be used has not been agreed by industry or Scottish Government and there are challenges associated with the range of technology and its application. Much further development and scaling up of new technologies are required if we are to meet our climate change targets.

13.5 Overcome Challenges

New Build

Planning ahead and ordering materials well in advance of when they will be required on site to ensure build continuity. Looking at what alternative suppliers/ materials/ detailing can be used to circumnavigate any of the issues arising and working hard on labour supply to provide certainty and security of continued work to create continuity.

Volume, security and certainty over projects and timescales as well as flexibility in any contracts awarded to take cognisance of the fluctuation in materials in labour will support developers in overcoming the current and future challenges.

There needs to be collaboration and partnerships in balancing risks, burgeoning costs, and uncertainty to ensure projects can proceed in these challenging times. Improved partnership working to deliver mixed tenure areas involving building under licence which is similar to Glasgow led Transformational Regeneration Areas (TRAs) may provide a way forward to make the projects more attractive for potential developers.

Planning Reform

Further consultations and more cost information are required to provide an improved understanding. It is clear more certainty is crucial and the need for more planners was identified by participants.

Educational Qualifications in Construction Sector

Community engagement programs are a potential way to challenge the perception of the construction sector. In addition, talking to college students in promoting the industry as a future career.

The council is committed to getting more people to work in the construction sector.

Climate Change

More collaboration with the private sector is required to move forward on climate change. There are council projects that are in place to meet climate change targets. The local plan is to be carbon net zero by 2030. The biggest emitters are in building and transport.

In terms of planning, the council could provide a more proactive approach in minimising delays for example, from waiting on response from Nature Scotland, which impacts on development.

North Lanarkshire Council are exploring ways to work with smaller builders on climate change.

The Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy will be required to be developed by each local authority by 2023.

Examining the potential of retrofitting existing housing stock to make 'green' in addition to new build is helpful.

It was emphasised that planning for a for a non-gas future needs to start now.

14. Appendix A

14.1 Consultation Phase One - Public Involvement and Engagement

- Tenants and Residents Conference, November 2019.
- Top Housing Priorities Survey, November 2019.
- Postcard and Suggestion Boxes, November 2019 – January 2020.
- North Lanarkshire Federation Food for Thought Session, January 2020.
- North Lanarkshire Federation Open Meeting, Microsoft Teams, August 2020.
- Tenants Newsletter, August 2020.
- Early Engagement Survey (online), October 2020 • Accessibility Panel, November 2020.
- Lanarkshire Ethnic Minority Group, November 2020.
- 4 Early Engagement Focus Groups, Microsoft Teams, November 2020.
- Housing Co-production Meetings (throughout development process).
- 4 Independently facilitated Focus Groups with Communities of Interest, Microsoft Teams, December 2020.
- 10 In-depth Telephone Interviews with Communities of Interest, December 2020 • 9 Community Boards, November – December 2020.
- Veterans and Armed Forces Survey, January 2021.
- Homelessness Survey, January 2021.

14.2 Consultation Phase One - Partner Involvement and Engagement

- Registered Social Landlord Forum, November 2019.
- Housing to 2040 Workshops, January 2020 • Gypsy and Travellers Strategic Group, September 2020.
- Alcohol and Drug Partnership, September 2020.
- Addictions, Learning Disability and Mental Health Partnership Board, October 2020.
- Long Term Conditions Partnership Board, October 2020.
- External Providers Steering Group, October 2020.
- Interview with NACSBA, November 2020.
- Looked After Children and Young People Strategy Group, November 2020
- Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Steering Group, November 2020.
- Strategic Planning Group (Health and Social Care Partnership), December 2020.
- Local Housing Strategy Steering Group (throughout development process)
- Private Landlord Survey, January 2021.
- Violence Against Women Working Group, January 2021.
- Improving Children's Services Group, January 2021.
- Tackling Poverty Group, January 2021.

- Registered Social Landlord Survey, January 2021.
- Developers Survey, February 2021.

14.3 **Phase Two Consultation - Public and Partner Involvement and Engagement**

- Presentation of the draft Consultative LHS at all the partnership groups and forums from phase one.
- Seven thematic public workshop discussions on the strategic priority areas.
- Three Housing to 2040 workshops exploring shorter term commitments. outlined in the national strategy in the context of the LHS.
- Presentation and discussion at the nine Community Boards.
- North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants and Residents Special Meeting.
- Additional ad-hoc presentations as requested.
- Online survey.