



**Belmont House, 57 Belmont Road, Cambuslang, G72 8PG**  
**www.wwhc.org.uk E: enquiries@wwhc.org.uk T: 0141 641 8628**

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Development Strategy</b>
<b>Policy Author</b>	<b>Director</b>
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West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative will provide this policy on request at no cost, in larger print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages. Please contact the office.

**Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator No. 203**  
**Registered Charity No. SCO38737, VAT Registration No. 180223636**  
**Registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014**



## **1 Introduction**

This strategy describes West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative's (WWHC) Development Strategy.

WWHC's most recent development involvement was the partnership with South Lanarkshire Council's (SLC) regeneration of East Whitlawburn. This resulted in WWHC taking ownership of 60 new build housing units at the end of Phase 3 of the project completed in April 2023.

WWHC recognises that development opportunities are very limited and it is unlikely that further opportunities will arise.

In the event that there are further development opportunities in the future, the following strategy will be adopted.

## **2 Strategic Fit**

WWHC will work on future development proposals in a way that supports the aims and objectives agreed in WWHC's Business plan.

### **WWHC's Mission**

We are committed to providing excellent housing and services to our members, residents and service users.

### **Vision**

By putting our members at the centre of everything we do, we will maintain a safe, popular area where people are happy to live.

With strategic aims to achieve the vision:

- We will ensure that customers receive the highest possible standard of service at all times
- We will provide good quality homes in an attractive environment
- We will maintain and enhance strong strategic governance
- We will seek to improve our financial strength and deliver value for money
- We will seek to address inequalities and exclusion in West Whitlawburn

- We will continue our role as a community anchor by providing services and supporting West Whitlawburn in being a strong, stable community

WWHC would be open to discussion with respect to the possibility of stock transfer opportunities or new build opportunities, in line with WWHC strategy, and partnership working opportunities with RSLs.

- WWHC will pursue the option of stock acquisition, new build, or partnership working, only if it is clearly in the best interests of current members and tenants.
- WWHC will pursue a stock transfer, new build or partnership working only if it is capable of providing a wide range of services to a high standard to all tenants, both current and potential.
- WWHC will give full consideration to any approach by any outside interested parties in relation to any stock transfer, new build or partnership proposals to WWHC.

### **3 Links with South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) Local Housing Strategy (LHS)**

There is a statutory requirement on local authorities to produce a LHS that sets out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services.

The Scottish Government’s Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Guidance (2019) places the LHS at the heart of arrangements for housing and planning, directing strategic housing investment, and promoting a whole system approach to housing delivery.

This includes:

- Homes** ensuring the supply of residential dwellings for people living in or moving to South Lanarkshire, considering affordability, tenure, house condition, fuel poverty, energy efficiency and climate change
- People** understanding the needs and priorities of local people, considering household formations, accessibility, poverty, risk of homelessness, and specialist provision such as housing for older people or Gypsy/Travellers
- Places** embedding the place principle which promotes a shared understanding of place, and the need to take a more joined-up, collaborative approach to services and assets within a

place to achieve better outcomes for people and communities in which they live.

In considering any future development opportunities, WWHC will consider how development supports the delivery of the local housing strategy in place at the time taking account of:

- Housing supply, choice and affordability
- Housing Tenure and Demand
- Households and Population
- Welfare reform and social security environment
- Outcomes
- Housing quality and energy efficiency
- Supporting independent living and specialist provision
- Addressing homelessness
- Sustainable places

#### **4 Development Strategy Principles**

WWHC Development Strategy is based on the following principles:

##### **4.1 Standards for New Housing**

WWHC will build new housing that provides future residents with quality, affordable homes in an attractive neighbourhood. WWHC will meet standards that produce quality, energy efficient homes that are sustainable in the long-term.

##### **4.2 Key Stakeholders and Partnerships**

WWHC will build on and enhance our relationships with key stakeholders and funders. WWHC will participate in or carry out community engagement activities on proposals and seek tenant feedback about their new homes. WWHC will consider how the new housing will support our wider asset management strategy. We will also consider how we would manage new housing, and whether a new project would help us to achieve efficiencies in the delivery of our services.

##### **4.3 What WWHC Will Build**

WWHC's priority will be to provide high quality affordable housing, which meets a range of needs including housing for people with a disability or other physical impairment.

#### **4.4 Financial Capacity**

WWHC will ensure that the provision of new homes is financially viable and fundable, will meet Business Plan and funders' requirements, and will not impact adversely on the future interests of our tenants and members.

WWHC will maintain close relationships with funders and regulators, and ensure that our development activity does not compromise covenants.

#### **4.5 Governance and Delivery of the Development Programme**

WWHC will ensure that the Management Committee provides leadership and close scrutiny for development activities.

WWHC will ensure the staff team has the resources needed to deliver a development programme, and that the various staff teams who contribute to the planning and delivery of the programme work closely together.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

WWHC will be proactive in assessing and managing the risks associated with development.

### **5 Planning and Implementation**

Planning and implementing a Development Strategy depends on a wide range of internal and external factors.

#### **5.1 Internal Factors**

- Achieving a close fit between the development programme and WWHC's overall business strategy and asset management strategy.
- Raising the additional funding needed for delivery of the development programme
- Maintaining positive relationships with our local authority partners, the Scottish Government, funders and regulators.
- Ensuring that the development programme does not compromise the interests of existing tenants or our ability to invest in their homes and services.
- Having the right staff resources in place to deliver the development programme, as well as excellent communication and joint working.

#### **5.2 External Factors**

While development can be an opportunity to build new homes, there are also some significant challenges and risks to be navigated:

- Scottish Government funding and benchmarking
- Partnerships
- Welfare reform and rent affordability
- Economic factors, costs and interest rates
- Design and future proofing

## **6 Asset Management Strategy**

At a strategic level, the condition of WWHC existing stock could have an impact on the WWHC's future asset management strategy, and on the overall balance of funding needed for investment in existing homes and new homes.

WWHC carries out stock condition surveys (SCSs), with sampling on an ongoing basis.

SCS results allow us to update our asset management and investment strategies, and the related plans for future funding.

Major repairs are currently funded from revenue income rather than borrowing, and the SCS results and future projections will tell us whether this will continue to be sustainable.

### **6.1 Assessing Asset Management Issues for New Developments**

As well as meeting existing and new housing needs, development proposals must always:

- Demonstrate a close fit with WWHC's overall strategy for our existing homes
- Complement other aspects of the asset management approach

On a practical level, WWHC will take account of the following asset management issues:

- Future plans for investment
- Need and demand for the proposed housing
- How new housing will be managed and whether this would ensure that future customers receive a high quality service; that WWHC can provide services efficiently and effectively; Possible scope to achieve efficiencies in the management of the new and existing housing
- The value that any new housing would add to the overall asset base.

## **7 Type and Quality of Housing**

WWHC will develop new housing to achieve the following outcomes:

- Good design
- Good space standards
- Built to last
- Accessible and adaptable
- Energy efficient
- Good quality external open space
- Affordable to tenants in relation to the costs of living in the home
- Reductions in environmental impact

WWHC is committed to building new homes that are accessible and adaptable, to meet a range of needs including situations where tenants' needs change over time.

- WWHC's approach will be guided by available data (including the Local Housing Strategy) and the priorities of SLC.
- WWHC will consider how we can contribute to meeting the needs of an ageing population.
- The design of new homes should be future proofed where possible.

## **7.1 Design and Quality Standards**

WWHC will meet the mandatory standards set by the Scottish Government which are current.

- Housing for Varying Needs design standards (relating to general needs, amenity and wheelchair housing)
- Secure by Design
- Current Building Regulations
- Current fire safety standards
- Current energy efficiency requirements

## **7.2 Housing Needs Assessment**

WWHC will carry out a housing needs assessment to determine local housing needs for an appropriate stock mix.

## **8 Risk Management**

A full range of risks will be assessed, monitored and managed as part of the overall risk management process.

## **9 Procurement and Community Benefits**

Appropriate arrangements will be agreed by the Management Committee in line with WWHC Policy which can maximise social impact.

## **10 Governance**

WWHC's development activities are carried out under authority from the Management Committee with the following matters reserved for Committee decision:

- Approving the Development Strategy
- Monitor performance against the key objectives, principles and policies described in the Development Strategy
- Monitor progress of the development programme, including budgets and expenditure

## **11 Financial Management and Funding**

WWHC will ensure that the following requirements are met for the development project:

- WWHC will maintain funder and regulator confidence in our current financial management and future planning.
- WWHC will ensure that funding covenants are met at all times.
- WWHC will secure grants from the Scottish Government.
- At tender stage (or equivalent) a full financial assessment of a project will be conducted
- WWHC will have the necessary cash flow to meet development period costs as they become payable.
- Development period and long-term private funding is in place (e.g. through loan facilities), for the portion of project costs that is not grant-funded.
- WWHC's future cash flows will enable all future financing costs to be met as they become due for repayment.

WWHC will instruct financial advisers to review options that are potentially available in terms of the amount and type of funding that will best meet WWHC's needs, and to then help us secure the necessary funding once the capital costs are established.

### **11.1 Rent Levels and Affordability**

WWHC is committed to ensuring that rents for new properties are affordable to our tenants.



WWHC will use a number of methods to test its rent levels for new build properties:

- Comparison with Scottish Government benchmark rents
- Local comparisons across the local authority area

## **12 Equalities**

WWHC is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in our work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

## **13 Reviewing the Development Strategy**

The Management Committee will assess any future development opportunities in line with this strategy.

This strategy will be reviewed 5 yearly or sooner if required.