

Edinburgh's Local Housing Strategy 2025-30

June 2025

♦ EDINBURGH ♦
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Foreword to the Edinburgh Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030

I am pleased to present Edinburgh's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the period 2025-2030.

This strategy sets out the City of Edinburgh's vision; strategic objectives; and proposed actions to confront and resolve key challenges the city faces in Housing and Homelessness over the next 5 years.

Edinburgh's continuing fast growth in population and consequent demand for housing requires us to have a strong housing strategy which reflects, and is influenced by, the views of those living in our city.

The Council declared a Housing Emergency in November 2023, recognising the mounting housing pressures in the city.

This crisis has placed those who need the most support under severe and increasing pressure. Whilst this is recognised as a nationwide crisis, it is having a particularly acute impact on people and families living in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's new Local Housing Strategy aims to address the immediate crisis we are facing with delivering our longer-term aspirations. It will be reviewed and updated by the Housing and Homelessness and Fair Work Committee annually to take account of the evolving landscape and to update on progress made.

Resolving Edinburgh's ongoing Housing Emergency demands innovation, and refreshed ways of working in partnership with public, private, third sector and community organisations is crucial, as is doing so with a shared focus on purpose and increasing our collective pace.

Continued funding pressures require us to ensure resources are deployed as effectively and efficiently as possible, and to consider how best to marshal, develop and invest in the Council's in-house capability, and fulfil in full, our duties to be a responsive and responsible landlord.

We welcome the new funding stream to support housing delivery from the Edinburgh Tourist Visitor Levy however these sums are modest, and we shall continue to make the case to Scottish and UK Governments for full and fair funding in recognition of Edinburgh's unique and acute housing needs.

In responding to Edinburgh's Housing Emergency to date, the Council has acted decisively; and our staff teams across many service areas working with city partners have acted swiftly, and with agility and focus, and are committed to continuing to do so.

This is the foundation the Local Housing Strategy 2025-2030 seeks to build on.

We look forward to working collaboratively to enable and ensure the people of Edinburgh can access a suitable, settled home which is warm, safe, high quality, and affordable to them, and which truly meets theirs and their family's needs.



Cllr Lezley Marion Cameron

Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work

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Introduction

Overview

The purpose of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is to set out the strategic approach to the delivery of housing and housing related services in Edinburgh, across all housing tenures.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to produce a LHS which sets out its vision, strategy, priorities and plans for housing. [Guidance](#) published by the Scottish Government sets out what the LHS should cover. This has been the basis for developing this strategy, coupled with consideration of the acute, and sometimes unique, challenges that Edinburgh is facing in responding to the current housing emergency.

The LHS is a key strategic document which brings together service delivery across housing and homelessness into one place, as well as looking more widely across other corporate activities and priorities. The LHS is underpinned by key delivery plans, including: The HRA Business Plan and Capital Investment Programme; the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP); and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP). The strategy considers legislative requirements, and alignment with national and local strategic priorities.

This LHS has been developed against a backdrop of unprecedented economic, political and environmental challenges that have had a marked impact on the housing sector over recent years. These include: the lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; the UK's exit from the European Union; Global Conflict, including the war in Ukraine; and the Cost-of-Living Crisis. This comes at a time when Local Authority finance is under significant pressure.

Edinburgh has a growing population and urgently needs more homes of all tenures, with particular demand for affordable homes. The latest [Housing Need and Demand Assessment \(HNDA3\)](#) states that there is demand for between

36,000 and 52,000 new homes in Edinburgh between 2021 to 2040 and that between 24,000 to 35,000 of these homes need to be affordable.

Meeting this demand in a climate of reduced funding, coupled with increasing costs, is extremely challenging. Edinburgh's housing market is highly pressurised, with house prices and private rents rising significantly. The gap between supply and demand is high, particularly for affordable housing, with an average of 290 bids for every social rent advertised. The city also has extreme pressures around homelessness, with over 5,000 households currently living in temporary accommodation.

These challenges are reflected in the City of Edinburgh Council's declaration of a Housing Emergency on 2nd November 2023. Eleven other Scottish local authorities had also declared emergencies by September 2024, along with the Scottish Parliament in May 2024. This crisis has placed those who need the most support under severe and increasing pressure. Whilst this is recognised as a nationwide crisis, it is in Edinburgh where it manifests most acutely. These challenges are explored throughout this strategy, with priorities and proposed actions identified.

This is an extremely challenging time for the housing and homelessness sector, and a challenging time to prepare a long-term plan. This LHS aims to balance the immediate crisis we are facing with longer-term aspirations. It will be reviewed and updated annually to take account of the evolving landscape.

Vision and Objectives

The overall strategic vision of Edinburgh's local housing strategy is:

Everyone in Edinburgh can access and live in a home that is warm, safe, high quality, meets their needs and that they can afford. Everyone can access the right support, at the right time, to allow them to be part of a thriving community.

This is underpinned by 12 strategic objectives:

- Deliver a supply of homes across affordable tenure types to meet demand.
- Households living in privately rented homes have access to affordable, well-managed and high-quality housing with security of tenure.

- Homeowners are aware of the advice and support available to help manage their homes and how to access this. Homeowners living in shared blocks are supported to manage the condition of the shared parts of their properties.
- Ensure all homes are well maintained, energy efficient, safe, sustainable and climate proofed, working towards net zero emissions
- Reduce fuel poverty and ensure every household has a warm home they can afford to heat
- Prevent homelessness wherever possible
- Where temporary accommodation is required, this will meet the needs of the household
- Support people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible
- Reduce the number of people sleeping rough
- Ensure housing is accessible, with the right support to meet everyone's needs
- Support communities to be vibrant, connected, safe and inclusive
- Help to deliver the Council's commitment to end poverty in Edinburgh.

Structure

Edinburgh's LHS is divided into six main chapters:

Chapter 1 Deliver homes to provide choice & affordability for all – this chapter focuses on the supply of homes across the affordable housing tenures, with particular consideration to the funding landscape.

Chapter 2 Support private renters, home-owners and landlords (to ensure everyone has access to well-managed, high-quality housing) – this chapter considers all housing that is in private ownership across the city. This includes the private rented sector, housing for students, privately owned empty homes, housing co-operatives and custom build.

Chapter 3 Ensure homes are modern, warm and sustainable – this chapter focuses on housing quality and sustainability in line with ambitions to reduce fuel

poverty, improve health outcomes and advance towards net zero emissions. It sets out how Edinburgh is working to meet these ambitions and some of the key challenges in this area.

Chapter 4 Prevent and respond to homelessness – this chapter focuses on homelessness prevention and response, including temporary accommodation and work to support the transition to settled accommodation. This chapter is largely structured around Edinburgh's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan which has been the main strategic document for homelessness.

Chapter 5 Provide suitable homes with the right support to meet people's needs – this chapter covers the range of housing and support required to meet differing needs, including adapting mainstream housing as well as specialist housing and support. This chapter also covers the importance of joint working between housing, health and social care partners and other key partners.

Chapter 6 Develop vibrant, connected, safe and inclusive communities – this chapter covers a breadth of activity around neighbourhoods and communities. This includes placemaking, regeneration and creation of new neighbourhoods; opportunities for nature and looking after/ improving our green spaces; safe and connected neighbourhoods; the links between housing and poverty, and community empowerment, engagement and wealth building.

Governance

The development of the LHS has been overseen by an officer Steering Group, comprising senior managers from key service areas: Housing Strategy; Housing Operations; Development and Regeneration; Homelessness; Regulatory Services; Mixed Tenure/ Shared Repairs; Planning; and Communications. The Steering Group will continue to monitor the delivery of the strategy.

Progress will be monitored and reported on annually. The annual review will ensure the LHS continues to support key strategic priorities and is responding to drivers within the housing market, as well as policy or legislative changes.

Consultation and Engagement Overview

Developing the local housing strategy has presented a unique opportunity to engage with a wide range of stakeholders on the housing system as a whole, as well as reflecting on specific topics and issues. These inputs have helped paint a picture of Edinburgh's current housing landscape, as well as the priorities and concerns of the people who live and work in the city.

A three-phase approach to engagement was established to support the development of the LHS. Overall, it is estimated that over 1,100 people have been engaged with and 34 organisations provided a written response. The feedback from each phase helped inform the next phase of engagement by drawing out key issues, recurring themes and underdeveloped areas. The insights gathered across all three phases have helped to shape the strategy and the development of the Action Plan which accompanies the final strategy.

Table 1. LHS Consultation and Engagement timetable 2024/25

Phase	Detail
Phase 1: Early Engagement May – June 2024	Early engagement discussions with colleagues and partners. Early engagement survey was open to residents and organisations. 345 survey responses received.
Phase 2: Targeted Engagement August – October 2024	Stakeholder and resident workshops, partnerships/ forums and community engagement events. 20 events in total and over 550 people participated.
Phase 3: Consultation on the Draft Strategy February – April 2025	This phase included an online consultation on the draft strategy, open to residents and organisations. This was supplemented with further targeted engagement. The draft strategy was also submitted to the Scottish Government for feedback through their Peer Review process.

Overview of key themes

The key themes that arose across the engagement were:

- Lack of Housing Supply – this was by far the most frequently recurring theme
- Affordable housing/ the definition of affordable housing
- Lack of funding and competing priorities such as building homes vs the costs of energy efficiency standards
- High housing costs across all tenures
- Edinburgh's housing mix: short-term lets, Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and the private rented sector more broadly
- Potential impacts of the Housing (Scotland) Bill
- New build housing developments and infrastructure
- The need for more accessible housing
- Neighbourhood safety/ anti-social behaviour
- Housing quality, especially issues with mould and damp
- Requests for improved/ increased provision of information about housing rights and responsibilities

Further details on the engagement activities and outputs can be found in the Consultation and Engagement Report.

Action Plan

The LHS is accompanied by an Action Plan. As the LHS takes a comprehensive overview of housing and homelessness services, a wide range of actions have been identified. A key theme from the engagement on the draft strategy was commentary on the number of actions identified. Whilst there was broad support for these aspirations, there was also a recognition that some prioritisation is needed in order for this to be deliverable. The final LHS has been developed alongside a review of the Housing Emergency Action Plan and this is reflected in the structure of the LHS Action Plan. Actions relating to housing supply and demand for housing have been picked up through the HEAP, in recognition that these contribute directly to the response to the housing emergency. The remaining actions will sit within and be monitored directly through the LHS Annual Updates.

The Action Plan also seeks to pick up on themes from the engagement around partnership working and collective responsibility. It is recognised that the housing and homelessness challenges facing the city cannot be resolved by the Council alone, and there is a commitment to continuing to build on partnership working with a wide range of organisations to collectively achieve the best outcomes for the people of Edinburgh.

Equalities and Integrated Impact Assessment

The City of Edinburgh Council wants all our citizens and visitors to be able to use our services and fully engage with city life. The Council's Equality and Diversity Framework for 2021-25 sets out equality outcomes to advance equality and promote diversity. It sits within the wider strategic framework of:

- [Edinburgh's 2050 Vision](#)
- [Council Business Plan 2023-2027](#), which is structured around three themes: creating good places to live and work; ending poverty; and delivering a net zero city.
- The three priorities of the [Edinburgh Partnership's Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#): enough money to live on, access to work, training and learning opportunities, and a good place to live.

This framework responds to the Council's [Public Sector Equality Duty](#), which forms part of the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single act. The Act provided a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It provided a discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society in employment, and as users of private and public services. It is based on the following nine protected characteristics.

- age,
- disability

- gender reassignment,
- marriage and civil partnership,
- pregnancy and maternity,
- race,
- religion or belief,
- sex,
- sexual orientation

There are new legislative requirements and policy changes since the Equality Act 2010, including The Fairer Scotland Duty, introduced in 2018, Child Poverty (Scotland) Act (2017) and others directly related to human rights. These have been built into the planning and implementation of actions of the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework.

The Council is currently reviewing the impact of the [Equality and Diversity Framework 2021-25](#), to help shape the development of the next Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework .

An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed for the LHS in line with the Council's duty to meet equalities legislation and to ensure we create an environment of equal opportunity. The LHS IIA will be reviewed each year as part of the annual review process.

Strategic Context

The LHS reflects the strategic landscape, both nationally, regionally and locally.

National Context

- [Housing to 2040](#) is the Scottish Government's national strategy for housing. It sets out a vision for housing in Scotland to 2040, together with a route map on how to get there. It aims to deliver the Scottish Government's ambition for everyone to have a safe, good quality and affordable home that meets their needs in the place they want to be.
- [National Planning Framework 4 \(NPF4\)](#) is the Scottish Government's national spatial strategy. It sets out Scotland's spatial principles,

regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. This replaces NPF3 and Scottish Planning Policy. The six overarching spatial principles are: just transition, conserving and recycling assets, local living, compact urban growth, rebalanced development and rural revitalisation.

- The [Scottish Social Housing Charter](#), introduced in April 2012, set out the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should be striving towards for their customers. It also sets out what tenants and other customers can expect in terms of the: quality and value for money of the services they receive, standard of their homes, and opportunities to participate in the decisions that affect them.
- [The Housing \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced on 26th March 2024 and is now making its way through the Scottish Parliament legislative process. The Bill is likely to be implemented in 2026 and is expected to involve secondary legislation. The Bill covers protection for tenants, preventing homelessness and other housing matters such as rent controls.

Regional Context

- Whilst Edinburgh faces a unique set of challenges due to its housing market, the pressures of supply and demand are felt more widely across the surrounding areas. This is reflected by Fife, East Lothian, West Lothian and the Scottish Borders having all declared Housing Emergencies due to the unprecedented pressure on housing and homelessness services in their local areas.
- This region is the fastest growing in Scotland and one of the fastest growing in the UK. Six local authorities came together to produce the [South-East Scotland, Housing Need and Demand Assessment](#) (HNDA3). This covered the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife (West & Central), Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian. HNDA3 is further detailed in the Local Context section.

- The number of households in the South-East Scotland area is projected to increase by 18% to 2043, which is above the 10% increase projected for Scotland. Almost half of the total increase is projected to occur in Edinburgh.
- The Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland City Region Deal (ESESCRD) was created in August 2018 to accelerate growth within the region. The partnership includes East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and part of Fife. Five key themes were identified: Research, Development and Innovation; Integrated Regional Employability and Skills; Transport; Culture; and Housing.
- The City Region Deal reflects the commitment of the city region partners and the Scottish Government to deliver the regional housing programme and transform housing supply. The [Regional Housing Programme](#) is focussing on five key priorities:
 - Affordable Housing Delivery.
 - Retrofit.
 - Strategic Sites.
 - Regional Delivery Alliance; and
 - Future Town Centres and New Delivery Models.
- [Housing Options Hubs](#) bring together neighbouring councils by region in Scotland to promote, develop and share information and best practice on with regards to homelessness. Edinburgh is part of the East Housing Options Hub along with partners from Falkirk, the Borders, East, West and Mid Lothian.

Local Strategic and Policy Context

As the overarching strategic 'parent' document for housing and homelessness, the LHS is one of the key corporate documents underpinning the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision. Noted below by its previous name, 'City Housing Strategy', the LHS, along with the other key strategies and plans, together form

the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision. Since 2016, almost 65,000 voices have played their part in creating [the vision](#). Citizens of Edinburgh overwhelmingly agreed that in 2050, they want Edinburgh to be: **Thriving, Welcoming, Fair and Pioneering**.



Source: Council Business Plan

[The Council Business Plan 2023-27](#) has three core priorities which are interlinked and interdependent:

- Create good places to live and work.
- End poverty in Edinburgh.
- Tackle the twin climate and nature crisis by 2030.

The LHS aligns with and supports all three of these objectives and the 10 objectives set out within the plan, particularly the following six.

- Edinburgh is a cleaner, better maintained city that we can all be proud of

- People can access public services locally and digitally in ways that meet their needs and expectations and contribute to a greener net zero city
- People use decarbonised public transport and active travel as the first-choice way to get round the city
- Edinburgh is a climate adapted city, with biodiverse green spaces and cheaper, cleaner networks for energy use
- People have decent, energy efficient, climate proofed homes they can afford to live in
- People can access fair work and the support they need to prevent and stay out of poverty and homelessness

[The Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2022-2028](#) (or the Edinburgh Partnership Community Plan 2022- 2028) also sets out a good place to live as one of its three common outcomes:

- Enough money to live
- Access to work, training and learning opportunities
- A good place to live

As well as supporting the objectives of the overarching corporate plans (the Council's Business Plan and Local Outcome Improvement Plan), the LHS links to other key strategic plans including the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), the Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) and the Council's Strategy for purchasing land and homes to meet affordable housing need, considered by the Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee annually.

- [Strategic Housing Investment Plan \(SHIP\) 2025-30](#): Local authorities are required to submit an annual SHIP to the Scottish Government. The purpose of the SHIP is to set out investment priorities for affordable housing and how these could be delivered; identify the resources

required to deliver these priorities; and enable the involvement of key partners.

- **Housing Emergency Action Plan 2024-2029:** The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Housing Emergency on the 2 November 2023. An Annual Update was reported in February 2025, which committed to a review and further stakeholder engagement, as detailed on p9.
- **City Plan 2030:** is the Local Development Plan for Edinburgh for the period 2024-2034. A Local Development Plan protects places of value, sets out locations for new homes and businesses, and ensures essentials for a good quality of life are in place - such as public transport, active travel, schools, healthcare and green space. The plan sets out policies and proposals relating to the development and use of land in the Edinburgh area, and where new infrastructure and community facilities are required. It sets out where development should happen and where it should not. The policies in the plan will be used to determine future planning applications. City Plan 2030 was formally adopted in October 2024.
- **HRA Budget Strategy 2024 – 2034:** The HRA Business Plan 2024/25-2053/54 is the financial framework that underpins the Housing service. The budget is prepared annually following consultation with tenants and regular review of the 30-year HRA Business Plan and the 10-year Capital Investment Programme. It is informed by statutory compliance and government targets, tenants' priorities, and Council commitments, as well as major component replacement and health and safety. The Budget Strategy sets out officer recommendations for HRA tenant rent levels, proposals for how the budget should be allocated, and consideration of key risk factors.
- **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan:** The Scottish Government instructed all local authorities to develop, produce and cost a five-year Homelessness mitigation plan called the Rapid Rehousing Transition

Plan (RRTP) by 31st December 2018. Further to this, local authorities were asked to submit annual updates to their RRTP's. Annual progress reports have been submitted to the Councils Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committees and will now be included as part of the annual update on the LHS.

- **Mixed Tenure Improvement Strategy and update report:** The Council is the largest landlord in the city and has a duty to maintain homes on behalf of tenants and to ensure that Council homes meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH 2). Mixed tenure considerations are an important factor in the Council's approach to improving housing quality and supporting the delivery of Council commitments, including fuel poverty prevention, creating better places to live, and reaching net zero targets.
- **Climate Strategy 2030:** The 2030 Climate Strategy sets out a city-wide approach to reducing greenhouse gases in Edinburgh. The plan outlines how to deliver a net zero, climate ready city by 2030 as well as a healthier, thriving and inclusive capital for people to live and work in. The strategy and implementation plans will evolve with our learning, technology and legal powers. Progress on the city target is reported annually.
- **20 Minute Neighbourhoods Strategy:** The 20-minute neighbourhood model is a key concept in the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 and National Planning Framework 4. The Council's 20- minute Neighbourhood Strategy was first approved in June 2021, updated in August 2023. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has also been integrated into the Council's City Plan 2030, City Mobility Plan and Corporate Property Strategy which has a key theme around *living well locally*.
- **Edinburgh Economy Strategy:** The strategy aims to ensure that the city's economic priorities continue to meet the needs of citizens and businesses and drive a strong and fair recovery from the economic

effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, adapt to the changes driven by the UK's withdrawal from EU, and ensure a just transition to a net zero economy, alongside other economic changes anticipated in the coming years.

- **[End Poverty in Edinburgh Delivery Plan](#)**: Produced in response to the findings of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, this plan – updated and reported on each year – sets out the priority actions the Council and partners are taking to end poverty in the city. The plan includes actions taken across four headline themes – Increase income from work and opportunities to progress; Maximise support from social safety nets; Reduce the cost of living; and, Make it easier to find help.

Edinburgh's Local Context

The LHS considers the current and future housing needs of Edinburgh's population. This section explores the demographic and economic context of the city, along with the current housing profile.

Edinburgh's Housing Emergency

On 2nd November 2023, the City of Edinburgh Council declared a Housing Emergency, noting at the time:

There are around 7,000 households in Edinburgh without a permanent home, with around 5,000 households residing in temporary accommodation. Many of these are families with children who, without a permanent home, face deep instability in their formative years. This is a crisis which has been developing for a number of years. The long-term supply challenges, coupled with aging stock, has been compounded by a dramatic reduction in social housing numbers following the introduction of the Right to Buy policy. The Covid-19 pandemic and Cost-of-Living Crisis have had a lasting impact, both on service delivery and for residents, with more households pushed into deepening levels of poverty. In addition, there is further pressures on the social and private rental sector from the increased demand in resettling refugees from conflicts around the world,

many of whom are unable to return home and are rightly seeking permanent housing.

Whilst this complex picture is resulting in a nationwide crisis, it manifests particularly acutely in Edinburgh. The city has the lowest proportion of social housing in Scotland, and the demand on this is immense, with approximately 290 bids for every available home. The Private Rented Sector, meanwhile, has the highest rents in Scotland and soaring rental inflation, pushing many individuals and families towards the already critically overstretched social sector, and homelessness. To add to this, there has also been increased demand from the changes to local connection legislation meaning that anyone in Scotland is able to present as homeless to any Scottish local authority of their choice.

This forms the background to this LHS. The strategy, and the actions developed within it, must align with and complement the work that is underway through the Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP).

An annual update of the HEAP was reported in [February 2025](#). This set out key achievements to date as well as committing to: a second phase of stakeholder engagement to inform and refine the HEAP action plan; a review of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) and targets, with a focus on clear deliverables and parameters for what constitutes the housing emergency; and a review of reporting, in conjunction with the development of the Local Housing Strategy.

As a result of this review and extensive stakeholder engagement, there has been a refocusing of the HEAP around two key themes: Housing Supply and Demand for Housing.

The Housing Emergency primarily responds to the immediate situation, with many of its actions short-term. The LHS takes a more holistic, longer-term view of housing and homelessness as a whole.

Edinburgh's Population

Edinburgh has a growing population. In the ten years to 2023, Edinburgh's population grew by 8.4% from an estimated 482,850 to an estimated 523,250 people. In the same time period Scotland's population grew by 3.2%.

Edinburgh's population shows growth in each age group except for the child population, which also decreased in Scotland by nearly 2%. Both Edinburgh and Scotland saw large increases in the older population.

Overseas migration continues to be the main driver of population change in Edinburgh. The net effect of births and deaths on Edinburgh's population from 2012 to 2022 was 5,726. The net effect of migration was almost ten times higher at 53,420. Edinburgh's net birth and death rate reduced from a net increase of 1,261 in 2012/13 to a net reduction of 356 in 2021/22. The size of overseas migration to Edinburgh increased in the period 2021/22 (9,390) up from 2020/21 (6,190) while the net migration within UK continued to decrease.

In 2023 Edinburgh's population density was 1,987 residents per square kilometre. Cities like Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield have over twice the population density level of Edinburgh. Edinburgh's population increase of 8.4% between 2013 to 2023 was the fourth highest in proportional terms behind Manchester, Bristol and Leeds ([Edinburgh by Numbers 2024](#)).

Housing Need and Demand

Edinburgh has a growing population and urgently needs more homes of all tenures, with particular need for affordable homes. The latest [Housing Need and Demand Assessment \(HNDA3\)](#) for the South East Scotland area achieved robust and credible status in July 2022. HNDA's provide a statistical estimate of how much additional housing would be required to meet all future housing need and demand. HNDA3 stated that there is demand for between 36,000 and 52,000 new homes in Edinburgh between 2021 to 2040; between 24,000 to 35,000 of these homes need to be affordable.

The National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) includes a [Minimum All-Tenure Housing Land Requirement \(MATHLR\)](#) for each planning authority in Scotland. The MATHLR is the minimum amount of land, by reference to the number of housing units that is to be provided by each planning authority in Scotland for a 10-year period. The MATHLR for Edinburgh is set out in the Local Development

Plan - City Plan 2030 and for the period of the plan 2024-2034 is 36,750 homes. This is based upon the HNDA3. It includes a flexibility allowance of 25% but does not differentiate the need between market and affordable housing.

NPF4 introduces an expectation that the next local development plan for Edinburgh - City Plan 2040 - will set a local housing land requirement (LHLR). This is the amount of land required for housing and will be expected to exceed the MATHLR figure. It will be informed by evidence available at the time and will have regard to the LHS along with other matters.

Affordable Housing delivery for Edinburgh continues to be planned, managed and monitored through the Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).

Work is currently underway to commission a piece of work focusing on the amount of permanent and temporary housing required to end the Housing Emergency. This piece of work will include a review of the size, tenure mix and the amount of accessible housing required. The Affordable Housing team are involved in the consultation process. The final make-up of any new housing development, including the size and type of property, is determined via the planning process and is subject to committee approval. Work is also underway with delivery partners to review the data provided on completed homes, including any features or provisions that help with accessibility such as level access, ramps and wet floor showers.

Rural Housing

The Scottish Government encourages Local Authorities to consider any specific requirements in relation to rural housing within their Local Housing Strategy. This has been considered but is not a priority within this LHS due to Edinburgh's urban classification.

Edinburgh Demographics

Across Edinburgh and Scotland as a whole, there is an ageing population with the largest increase in population amongst the older age groups.

Edinburgh has slightly more females (52%) than males (48%). This is similar to Scotland as a whole, where females account for 51%.

[Scotland's Census \(2022\)](#) asked people to choose the option that best described their ethnic group or background. This is a classification of people according to their own perceived ethnic group and/or cultural background. In 2022, the majority of people in Scotland chose 'Scottish' (77.7%) or 'Other British' (9.4%) within the White category, together making up 87.1% of the population. In Edinburgh, this figure was slightly lower at 72%. The percentage of residents in Edinburgh who identify as Asian is higher at 9% than for Scotland as a whole at 4%. Edinburgh also had slightly higher percentages of residents identifying as Mixed Ethnic, African and Caribbean.

Edinburgh has a large student population with [73,045 people](#) enrolled in the four largest Edinburgh universities (Edinburgh Napier, University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt and Queen Margaret) 2022/23. If all were to live in Edinburgh this equates to 13% of Edinburgh's population. Some students reside in Purpose-Built Student Accommodation, while the majority seek housing in the private rented sector. Housing for students is explored further in chapter 2.

Figure 1: Edinburgh Population by Age (National Records of Scotland Data, 2022)

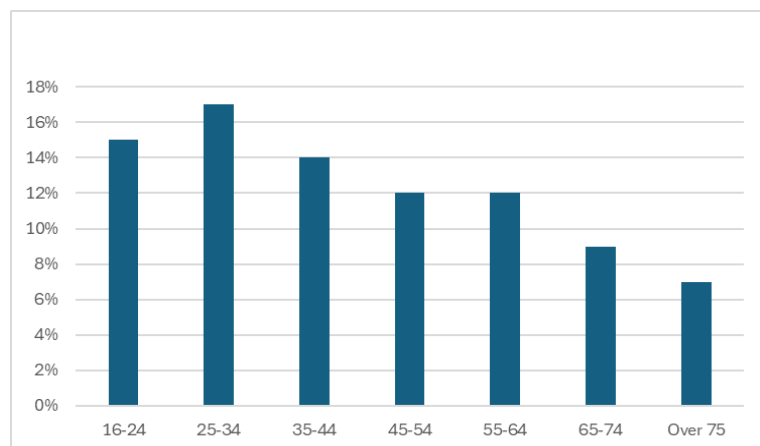
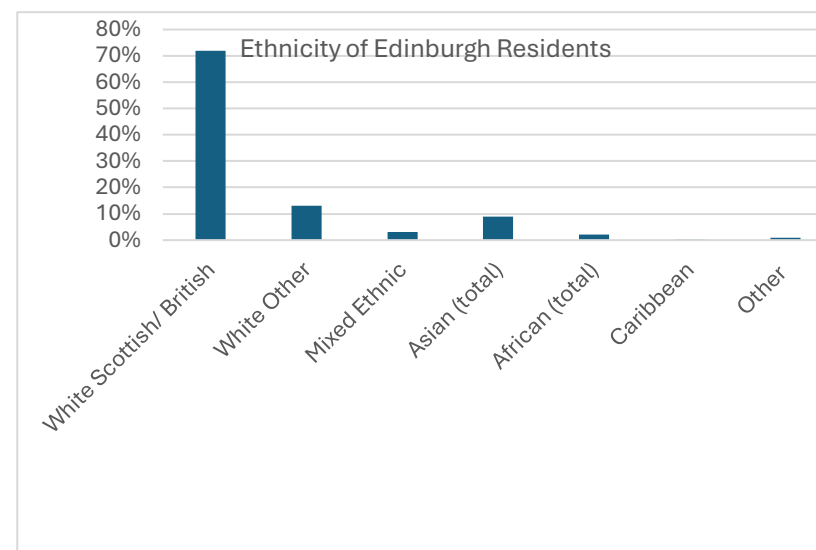


Figure 2: Ethnicity of Edinburgh Residents (Scotland's Census, 2022)



Health and well-being

Edinburgh has the highest life expectancy, and healthy life expectancy, compared with the rest of Scottish cities, with female population expected to live to an average of just over 82 years old and male population to 78 years old. Both male and female population spend an average of around 80% of their lives in good health ([Edinburgh by Numbers 2024](#)). However, this is not equal across the city and there are recognised links between people living in poverty and poorer health outcomes. This is particularly so for people living in very deep poverty, with two thirds of all people in destitution having a long-term chronic health condition or disability.

Health is determined by a combination of different social and economic factors, which, together, form the building blocks for health and wellbeing. It has long been recognised that housing has an important influence on people's health and wellbeing. Housing is one of the social determinants of health, which is linked to other determinants/ factors such as employment, education and income. As noted in the [Healthy housing for Scotland report](#), housing can influence health

directly through condition, security of tenure, overcrowding and suitability for inhabitants' needs. Wider aspects of housing that influence health indirectly include affordability and poverty, housing satisfaction, choice and control, social isolation, access to key services such as health care, and environmental sustainability.

An important reflection from the LHS engagement was an emphasis on the fact that health is not only relevant to housing in relation to accessible homes, as has often been the focus – secure, good quality, affordable housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of all residents.

Housing Profile

There were 238,944 occupied households in the City of Edinburgh in 2022 ([Scotland's Census 2022](#)). Edinburgh's tenure mix differs from the rest of Scotland. Compounded by a dramatic reduction in social housing numbers in the late 20th Century, only 16% of households in the city are in social rent housing. This is notably lower than the Scottish average of 22% and lower than most major cities in the United Kingdom.

At 23%, the number of households in the private rented sector in Edinburgh is larger than the Scottish average of 13% ([Scotland's Census 2022](#)). Private rents in the city are around 27% higher than Scottish average, sitting at £1,402 per month for a two-bedroom property ([CityLets quarter 1, 2025](#)).

The majority of Edinburgh households (60%) live in the owner-occupied sector, where house prices have also risen sharply. ESPC reports the [average house price in Edinburgh in April 2025](#) to be £304,294. Prices vary across different locations in the city, however there are numerous examples within Edinburgh where the average price of a two-bedroom flat for sale now exceeds £300,000. House prices in Edinburgh are notably higher than the Scottish average. The latest Office for National Statistics figures from October 2024 estimated the average house price in Edinburgh was sitting at around £340,000, compared to the Scottish average of £197,000 ([Office for National Statistics](#)).

Edinburgh has an ageing housing stock. Almost half the homes in the city were built before 1945. Edinburgh also has a high percentage (66%) of flatted

properties. Almost half the Council-owned homes in the city are in mixed tenure blocks.

Economic Profile

Employment, Unemployment and Income:

The proportion of people in Edinburgh who are economically inactive but want a job is lower than the average of major UK cities. Over four fifths (81.9%) of the population between 16 and 64 years are in employment, which is the highest percentage of the eight main cities in UK (excluding London). The main reasons for being economically inactive in Edinburgh includes being a student (38.1%) and being long-term sick (11.5%) ([Edinburgh by Numbers, 2024](#)).

Edinburgh's unemployment rate, at 3.4%, is lower than it was ten years ago (5% in 2014) but higher than the last two years (2.9% in 2022 and 2.6% in 2023).

Edinburgh has a large proportion of workers in high skilled occupations. Over half of the people in employment work in high skilled occupations (52%) while just around 6% work in low skilled occupations. ([Edinburgh by Numbers 2024](#)).

The median hourly pay has risen to £19.93 which is the highest of the major UK cities excluding London. ([Edinburgh by Numbers 2024](#)). In 2023/24, the average household income in Edinburgh was £58,331; that is nearly 20% higher than the Scottish average of £48,657. (CACI data 2023/24).

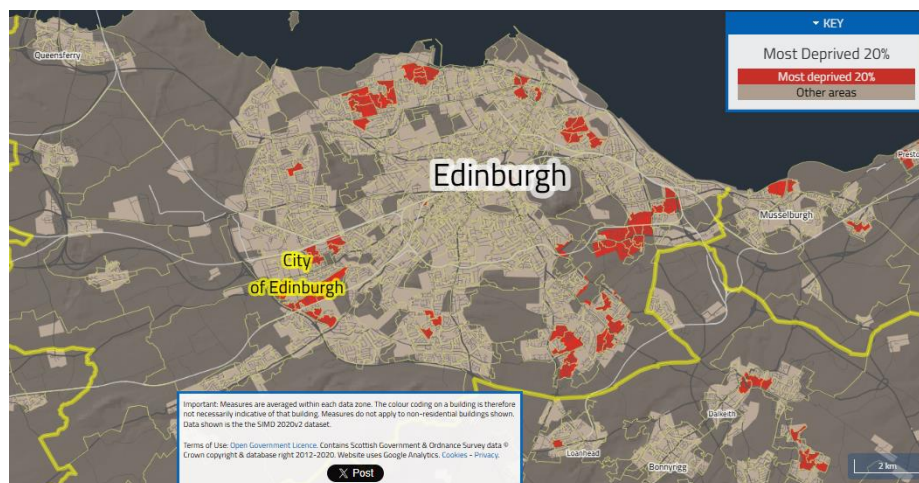
Housing and Poverty

Edinburgh is a flourishing, prosperous city. However, as with most major cities, wealth is not distributed equally. 17% of Edinburgh's residents – and 20% of all children – are living in poverty across the city. To meet the headline targets set by Scottish Government and the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, it will require 36,000 people, including 8,600 children to be lifted out of poverty over the 7 years from 2023-30.

The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (SIMD) is a tool for identifying the places in Scotland where people are experiencing disadvantage across different aspects of their lives. SIMD ranks nearly 7,000 small areas, or data zones,

covering the whole of Scotland from the most deprived to the least deprived and reports statistics on income, employment, health, education, access to services, crime and housing.

Figure 3.: SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) map, 2020, most deprived 20%, areas of Edinburgh.



71 areas in Edinburgh fall within the most deprived 20%. Within this, 30 areas fall within the 10% most deprived and 18 within the most deprived 5%. It is important to note that whilst the SIMD focuses on concentrations of deprivation, not all households living in deprivation will be represented here. There are households living in poverty across all areas of the city, therefore this mapping offers an important insight but not a complete picture.

The links between housing and poverty are clear and profound. Much of the work set out across this strategy - from homelessness prevention to delivering more affordable homes to improving housing quality - will all have a contributing role in working towards ending poverty in the city.

However, there is a recognition that more needs to be done and a different way of working is required to really turn the tide and end poverty in Edinburgh. The

Edinburgh Partnership has agreed to the development of a roadmap of change actions needed to make substantive progress for prevention of poverty and other harms. Housing has a central role to play, and this will be an important cross-service and partnership priority for 2025, as detailed further in chapter 6.

Key Workers

There is no legal test or universal definition of 'key workers' although this generally includes some or all of the following: health and social care workers; teachers and staff providing childcare; energy suppliers and wider public, private or third sector workers providing emergency or critical welfare; national infrastructure services including grocery shop and transport staff, and other key service industries without which there would be a significant impact such as the tourism and hospitality workforce.

Housing to 2040 recognised that many areas experience difficulty in attracting or retaining key workers, particularly in places where there is a lot of competition for housing. For Edinburgh, this is recognised in the Council's [Strategic Workforce Plan 2024-27](#), which cites high housing costs as a barrier when attracting people to live and work in the city. Data from the [Office of National Statistics](#) estimated that 89,000 people in Edinburgh (33.2% of the population) were in key worker roles in 2019.

At present, Edinburgh does not have a standalone policy around key workers and their housing needs, although the provision of mid-market rent housing has been recognised as an important housing option for households who would fall within this broad categorisation. This is an area for growth, as set out in Chapter 1.

Tourist Economy

Tourism plays an important role in the city and for the city's economy. Edinburgh is recognised as a global tourist destination, with seasonal peaks during the Summer and Winter Festivals. In 2023, Edinburgh experienced a rebound in tourism following the pandemic, with tourists representing almost 40% of the total of staying visitors in Scotland. Holidays was the main purpose of visiting the city between domestic and international visitors but while it represents 73% of

international visitors, it is only 35% of the domestic overnight visitors. In 2022 there were some seasonal differences in the number of staying visits but in 2023 most quarters see a similar affluence of visitors, excluding January to March. ([Edinburgh by Numbers 2024](#)).

As Edinburgh's population continues to grow and with long-term projections showing that tourism demand in Edinburgh will also increase, it is important to consider how residents, businesses and visitors alike will successfully co-exist in the city. This is recognised in [Edinburgh's Tourism Strategy 2030](#) which notes that *"in the future there will be an even greater need to manage tourism, recognising the rights of local residents to live in a city that works well, offers a good standard of living and retains its authentic character"*.

Councils in Scotland have new powers to introduce a visitor levy in their local area. These powers come from new laws in the Visitor Levy (Scotland) Act 2024. Following public consultation in 2024, Councillors agreed to adopt proposals for the Edinburgh's Visitor Levy scheme at a special meeting of the Policy and Sustainability Committee on 17th January 2025. The intention is that a levy will be charged on overnight stays to Edinburgh from mid July 2026. This was approved at the Council meeting on 24th January 2025.

A report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in May 2025 set out a series of options for housing spend.

There is potential for this levy to help support housing delivery, recognising that residents, including those working in the visitor economy or culture sector, are often unable to find affordable housing options in the city.

Chapter 1 Deliver homes to provide choice & affordability for all.

Strategic Objective(s):

Deliver a supply of homes across affordable tenure types to meet demand.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the delivery of social and other affordable housing. It sets out the acute challenges around housing delivery in the current economic climate and priorities and actions identified to try to mitigate these. It includes a summary of the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) and consideration of housing affordability in general.

The importance of increasing housing supply across all tenures, is central to addressing the housing emergency. In addition to addressing the current gap between housing need and supply, housebuilding delivers wider socio-economic benefits, such as jobs creation, delivering key infrastructure and improvements in educational and health outcomes.

Increasing the supply of affordable homes is a national priority. The Scottish Government's '[Programme for Government 2025-26](#)' sets out ambitions to "deliver 110,000 affordable homes, nationally, by 2032". The document states these will "include homes for social rent, mid-market rent and low-cost home ownership, with a focus on acquisitions and family sized homes".

and the delivery of new affordable housing remains a key priority for the Council and its partner Housing Associations. However, the unavoidable reality is that delivering new homes at the pace and scale required is extremely challenging in the current climate. The cost of construction, borrowing and delivering services to existing tenants have all increased at a time when rents have been frozen or have been increased less than overall inflation which has made delivering all priorities increasingly difficult.

Increased materials costs and a shortage of skilled workers had an immediate impact following the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit. In the subsequent years, these challenges have been compounded by supply chain disruption, shortages of materials and contractor availability, leading to sharp increases in overall construction sector costs of around 30%-40%. The reduction in Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) grant funding for new affordable homes has had a further compounding effect.

For the Council's own housebuilding programme, the cost-of-living crisis, rent freezes and increasing costs in delivering day-to-day services have reduced the Council's capacity to borrow in order to fund the delivery of new homes.

Edinburgh has a key role to play in meeting the Scottish Government's ambitions, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty, tackling climate change and promoting inclusive growth.

Local Context

There is a high demand for social rented housing in Edinburgh. Approximately 25,741 households are currently registered with EdIndex (Sep 2024), the single access point to social housing in Edinburgh. EdIndex is a partnership between the Council and 18 Housing Associations/co-operatives in Edinburgh with 15 of these partner organisations letting their homes through Key to Choice – the Choice based letting system. There are on average 290 households bidding for every social rented home that becomes available for let through EdIndex (September 2024). Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland with only 16% of homes for social rent compared to the national average of 22% (Census 2022). Almost one in three families in Edinburgh in poverty are pulled below the poverty line solely due to their housing costs. That compares with one in eight households in poverty across Scotland.

Affordable housing provision is often located as part of wider housing development, with private developers also delivering homes for sale. Supporting affordable housing developments to progress can therefore enable private sector developments to move forwards. Affordable housing and provision of infrastructure can be an important enabler for private sector developments on

large scale sites, supporting overall housing supply. The latest City Plan 2030 has increased the percentage of on-site affordable housing from 25% to 35%.

Respondents to the LHS consultation and engagement frequently raised concerns about the level of infrastructure provided with new developments. Information on infrastructure is included in Chapter 6.

The Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) is a national Scottish Government funding programme to enable affordable housing providers to deliver homes for social rent, mid-market rent, and low-cost home ownership. The National budget was reduced by 26% in 2024/25 and Edinburgh's budget was cut by 24% from £45.0m in 23/24 to £34.2 in 24/25..

In September 2024 the Scottish Government confirmed an additional £14.8m of grant funding to Edinburgh as part of an £80m **National Acquisition Programme** (announced in 2023/24). This was ring-fenced for the purchase of completed homes or for bringing long-term voids back into use. In 2024/25, the National Acquisition Fund allowed the purchase of 175 homes, in Edinburgh, to alleviate temporary accommodation pressures, including off-the-shelf homes purchased by RSL partners and second-hand homes via the Council's Acquisitions & Disposals Policy. A total of £4m of the National Acquisition Fund, in Edinburgh, was also used in 2024/25 to support bringing 565 long-term void properties back into use.

The allocation of National Acquisition Fund monies is based on 80% being allocated to the five local authority areas which have experienced the highest current and sustained temporary accommodation pressures for the last three years.

The confirmed national AHSP budget for 2025-26 is £767.7m. This represents an increase of £171.8m, 29%, when compared to the 2024/25 national budget of £595.8m. Edinburgh's budget for the 2025/26 Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) has been confirmed as £59.428m. This comprises £45.053m to support the Core Programme and a further £14.374m of ring-fenced National Acquisition Fund monies

As well as the new build homes delivered through the AHSP, the **Council's Acquisitions and Disposals (A&D) strategy** seeks to purchase existing homes on the open market to consolidate block ownership. This is reviewed in more detail in Chapter four.

A key part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme is recorded in Edinburgh's [Strategic Housing Investment Plan \(SHIP\) 2025-30](#). The SHIP sets out a potential development programme of around 9,000 new affordable homes over a five-year period, with over 7,800 of these requiring grant funding through the AHSP. These would require an additional £416m over the five years 2025/26-2029/30 from current funding levels. The SHIP also noted a significant number of homes to be approved in its final year, 2029/30, which would require an additional £273m to complete delivery in the years following this SHIP.

1.1 Affordability

Respondents to the LHS consultation and engagement asked for a clear definition of the term 'affordable housing' and for 'affordability' of housing to be defined.

The Scottish Government's ['Rent affordability in the affordable housing sector'](#) report (June 2019) notes that affordability issues for home-owners and potential buyers is a balance between purchase cost, deposit, repayment and income affordability.

Rent affordability concerns both the private rented sector (PRS), as well as the affordable housing sector. However, the affordable housing sector has three main characteristics: lower rents compared to the PRS, greater security from eviction, and priority for vulnerable tenants.

The term 'affordable' is used to refer to various housing tenures including social rent, mid-market rent, intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership. The Council published interim guidance on ["Affordable Housing"](#) in December 2024 which includes a definition of each of the tenures. In addition, the tenures are also described on the following page. Grant funding provided through the Scottish Government's 'Affordable Housing supply programme' (AHSP) aims to deliver 70% of affordable housing as social rent. In 2024/25 77% of approved

affordable homes were for social rent and 64% of completed homes were for social rent.

The use of the term 'affordable' is subjective. Citizen's Advice Scotland note:

"There's no doubt that affordability will mean different things to different people, taking into account your income and the relative importance of what you want to buy compared to other things." (['What's a fair price for affordable housing'](#), March 2024)

CAB Scotland carried out a survey in 2024 asking people what affordability meant to them. Most people thought that a person on minimum wage should be able to comfortably afford their housing costs, with most saying that no more than 30% of a person's salary should be spent on housing costs. Both Scottish Government and Shelter Scotland research currently states that paying more than 30% to 40% of household income on housing is considered unaffordable, although affordability does vary depending on personal circumstances.

Affordability calculations for the private rented sector, based on the average gross household income for Edinburgh and average new rental costs in Edinburgh from 2023/24, showed that almost one third (28%) of average monthly gross household income is spent on rental costs. This is based on average monthly gross household income of £4,861 (CACI 2023/24) and average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment of £1,370 (CityLets Optilet 2023/24).

There is currently no standardised definition of rent affordability, as it depends on the household type and composition, household income, including any housing benefits, location and size of the property and other factors.

The Scottish Government Housing Affordability Working Group published their ["Housing affordability study: Findings Report"](#) in March 2024. The group consulted with affordable housing tenants and private tenants. The findings set out that "There was no clear consensus on the best measure or definition of housing affordability" and that a "measure or definition of housing affordability must be clear, specific and relative to tenants' everyday lives and finances, reflect the realities of the rental market, emphasise fairness and dignity for tenants and consider what is realistic, affordable and allow for future proofing".

The report asks that Scottish Government considers the research findings when developing a shared definition of housing affordability across Scotland. A report from the group with an updated and shared definition of housing affordability is due to be published in 2025. When the report recommendations are published, officers will review these for application in Edinburgh and integration in the Affordable Housing Policy (AHP) guidance, which will be subject to the approval of Planning Committee.

Affordable Housing Tenures

The Council's Affordable Housing Policy (AHP) applies to any new residential planning application for 12 homes or more. The Council has published guidance on Affordable Housing which sets out that 35% of homes should be affordable and that, for proposals of 20 or more dwellings, the provision should normally be on-site. Affordable housing tenures are ranked in priority order with the most housing need being for social rented homes. The affordable housing should be 'tenure blind' and indistinguishable from market housing, creating an integrated neighbourhood for all residents, regardless of tenure type. The definition of different affordable housing tenures is set out in the [Affordable Housing Guidance](#) and is summarised below:

Social Rent is the highest priority affordable housing tenure in Edinburgh. Social rented homes are let with a [Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement \(SST\)](#). This grants tenants the right to stay in the home for as long as they wish, provided they do not breach the terms of the tenancy. Social rents are lower than all other affordable tenures and rent levels are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator. There are around 37,484 households living in the social rented sector in Edinburgh ([Scotland's Census 2022](#)).

Mid-Market Rent (MMR) - Mid-market rents are set below market rents with starting rents set below Local Housing Allowance levels. Local Housing Allowance is used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting private-sector accommodation in the UK and is set in relation to the 30th percentile of local private rented accommodation levels. Mid-market rent tenants enter into a

Private Rented Tenancy. Mid-market rent offers tenants secure, well-managed, new-build and energy efficient homes.

There are just over 5,000 mid-market rent homes in Edinburgh let by ten organisations, mostly registered social landlords (RSLs) via their subsidiaries and Edinburgh Living (the Council's Limited Liability Partnership) and Local Affordable Rented (LAR) Housing Trust (Edinburgh Council research, March 2024).

Mid-market rent homes are also used to house people at risk of homelessness. More information on this is noted in Chapter 4: Homelessness.



Places for People Scotland, Oxbgangs Green - RSL delivered Mid-market rent development



Places for People Scotland, Oxbgangs Green - RSL delivered Mid-market rent development

"I lived in private lets in Edinburgh for 20 years ... Over those 20 years rents went up and up and I had a constant rumbling anxiety that I would be evicted and not be able to afford anything. Buying was impossible so my options were very limited. I feel incredibly privileged to have my current [mid-market rent] home with a reasonable rent and no worries about being evicted." (LHS Early engagement survey response)

MMR homes require less grant subsidy than social rent because rents are higher. Those higher rents can sustain a higher level of borrowing, which in turn can potentially help deliver onsite affordable housing where social rent alone would not be viable. MMR is often used to cross subsidise and enable social-rented homes within the same development, supporting onsite delivery and

minimising the need for off-site affordable housing contributions or commuted sums.

The Council also works with partners to deliver mid-market rent housing without grant funding. These include Local Affordable Rented (LAR) Housing Trust and the Scottish Government's MMR invitation scheme.

Intermediate Rent is an affordable rented tenure with rents that cannot exceed Broad Rental Market 30th Percentile (the lower third of the rental market), which is published by Scottish Government each year. Intermediate Rent homes are let with Private Residential Tenancies, are owned and managed by a Build to Rent Operator and are delivered without grant funding. The homes are secured as affordable for a minimum of 25 years. More information on Build to Rent is provided in Chapter 2.

Intermediate Rent has been used as an affordable housing tenure for Build to Rent (BTR) developments and there have been 880 approvals for intermediate rent from 2020-2024.

Low-Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) tenures such as Shared Equity can help families purchase an equity stake in a property, with the remaining equity owned by Scottish Government or RSLs. RSLs can access low levels of grant funding for LCHO. LCHO tenures are restricted to no more than 20% of the affordable housing in a planning application or 12 units, whichever is the lower.

Golden Share is an approved affordable housing tenure and form of LCHO, where homes are sold at 80% of market value making them affordable to people in housing need. Golden Share homes are capped at a maximum initial purchase price of £214,796 and applicants must demonstrate they could not obtain a mortgage for the home at its full market value. These homes are built and sold by house builders and do not require grant funding.

Support is also available through the Scottish Government's [Open Market Shared Equity](#) (OMSE) programme, where applicants can own between 60-90% of their home. OMSE is available to first time buyers and the following priority groups:

- people aged 60 and over
- social renters (people who rent from the council or a housing association)
- disabled people
- members of the armed forces
- veterans who have left the armed forces within the past two years
- widows, widowers and other partners of service personnel for up to two years after their partner has lost their life while serving

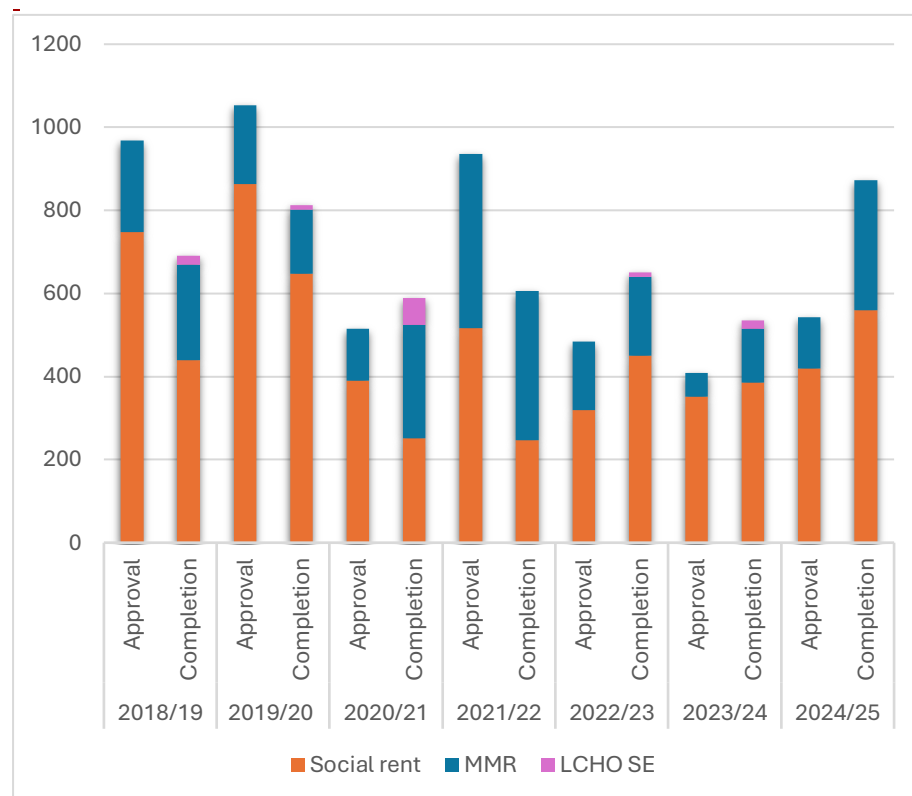
Since 2018 until the end of 2024/25 there have been 1,321 successful home purchases through OMSE in Edinburgh.

1.3 Delivering Homes - Affordable Housing Supply

Over the last 10 years, the Council, Housing Associations and other partners have completed 11,134 new affordable homes (including homes for social rent, mid-market rent, intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership). Around half were supported with Scottish Government grant funding.

The chart below shows the number of homes completed and approved from 2018–25 with Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) funding. Through a combination of project prioritisation, re-phasing of projects and the strategic use of commuted sums, the 2024/25 AHSP programme delivered increased numbers of homes delivered despite the 24% reduction to the AHSP core budget. The figures for 2024/25 in the chart below, include National Acquisition Programme funding from the Scottish Government.

Figure 4. Edinburgh Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) grant funded homes Approved and Completed by year and Tenure (2018/19-2024/25)



The majority of affordable homes approved and completed are for Social rent. Over the seven years 2018/19 – 2024/25, 63% of all grant funded completions and 74% of all approvals have been for social rent homes. The rest of the approved or completed homes were for Mid Market rent along with a small number of Low-Cost-Home-Ownership homes (Shared Equity). Figures for homes approved and homes completed through the AHSP differ due to it usually

taking a period of 18-36 months between approval and completion of homes being built.

Turning to the size of homes built, through the AHSP, over 66% of the homes delivered through the AHSP over the five years from 2018/19 – 2022/23 were two-bedroom properties. One-bedroom homes formed around 30% and a small number of 3+-bedroom properties were built (CEC AHSP housing completions data 2018/19 – 22/23).

The [Strategic Housing Investment Plan \(SHIP\) 2025-30](#) identifies a potential development programme of around 9,000 new affordable homes over a five-year period, with just under 8,000 of these requiring grant funding through the AHSP. This would need an additional £416 million grant over five years. The SHIP also noted a significant number of homes to be approved in its final year, 2029/30, which would require an additional £273m to complete delivery in the years following this SHIP. The SHIP is reviewed annually, and the Council will continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding, however without significant uplifts in grant funding it will not be possible to deliver all of the potential new units identified in the SHIP.

The SHIP provides a potential pipeline rather than a target, of potential approvals and completions as delivery of affordable homes is dependent on a number of factors outwith the Council's control, including the amount of affordable housing grant funding made available to Edinburgh by the Scottish Government.

1.4 Construction Costs

In 2024/25 it was estimated that the average construction cost of an affordable home in Edinburgh was around £244,000. This is an average estimated cost based on AHSP data; construction costs vary depending on numerous factors such as specification, location, number and size of homes. The Council's build standards, for example, are higher than the minimum levels requested by the Scottish Government and this can increase costs further. This figure is a working estimate of cost which can be subject to change before and during development.

From 2020 to 2024, the average construction cost of an affordable home, as recorded in AHSP data for Edinburgh, showed an increase of over 40%. During the preceding five years (2016/17 to 2020/21), the average construction cost of an affordable home increased by only 14.5%.

The cost of building an affordable social rent or mid-market rent home is split between grant funding and private finance (borrowing by the Council or RSL). Delivery of affordable homes is challenging in part because Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) grant benchmark levels per home, although they have been increased in recent years, they have not increased in line with the rise in construction costs.

Table 2. Baseline AHSP Grant Benchmarking Levels

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25*
Council Social Rent	£71,500	£83,584	£87,763
RSL Social Rent	£78,000	£91,182	£95,741
Council MMR	£49,000	£57,281	£60,145
RSL MMR	£53,000	£62,542	£65,669
*benchmarks increased on 10 October 2024 Additional funding is applied for additional quality measures			

For any Affordable Housing Supply Programme funding approved since November 2022, developing landlords are required to participate in a Development Value for Money service delivered by the Scottish Housing Network. After house building completion, landlords make a Cost and Time return with a tenant satisfaction return completed within the first year of completion. This data is benchmarked across the Scottish social housing sector.

Regulations continue to evolve, bringing improvements to the built and local environments, particularly around environmental considerations. This manifests through changes to Building Regulations, Planning Legislation/Guidance and

decisions made at National level. In the current context of high cost and reduced funding, consideration of the balance between delivery that already provides a very high level of sustainability, accessibility and adaptability and the impact on the overall number of homes delivered is needed.

Partnership working

Public sector and third sector partnership working is essential to deliver more homes. Partnership working, for example, includes continuing to work closely and pro-actively with public bodies such as the NHS and the defence sector in relation to securing public land or buildings for sale for affordable housing development.

In April 2024 the Scottish Government created a Housing Investment Taskforce including CoSLA, ALACHO and other organisations representing both public and private interests. The Taskforce's remit is to build investor confidence and attract further capital investment into housing, encourage and promote new delivery partnerships, unlock existing financial commitments and to shift the balance of investment in affordable housing to increase private funding. A final report will be provided in 2025.

The Edinburgh Partnership is the community planning partnership for the city. It brings together public agencies, third and private sectors with local communities to deliver better services. The Edinburgh Partnership convened a new Housing sub-group (EPH) in November 2024. The EPH will meet quarterly to examine strategic issues in housing and homelessness focussing on links with public health issues. The EPH benefits from being part of the community planning structure with senior leader membership from across the public sector including; NHS, Lothian Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Higher and further education sector in Edinburgh, Social Security Scotland Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Development Scotland, EVOC, SHAPE, Homes for Scotland and the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership.

The Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership (EAHP) meets quarterly and is comprised of RSLs and the Council. Members produced an 'Our Commitments for Edinburgh' document in 2023 stating the collective and shared goals of the

Partnership to; 1. Create and manage good places to live, and providing targeted care and support where needed, 2. Contribute to ending poverty and homelessness with an increase in affordable homes, financial inclusion and welfare advice and 3. Work together to deliver net zero targets for the partnership's homes.

Innovation

In a time of unprecedented housing challenges, as well as working in partnership, housing organisations need to think differently in order to provide homes at the scale required. RSLs and the Council need to deliver affordable homes through the AHSP but also need to be innovative and consider new models of delivery.

The Council is carrying out financial modelling to explore ways to reduce reliance on grants. This includes working with the Scottish government's Housing Investment Taskforce to identify actions, in 2025, that will unlock investment in housing by bringing together key interests of investors and investees. In addition, alternative income streams are being modelled, including the Visitor Levy for Edinburgh and opportunities to increase income from land sales. Opportunities to support purpose-built Build-to-rent accommodation are also being explored as this offers a non-grant funded route to deliver homes at a scale and pace which exceeds that of homes for market sale. The Council is also pro-actively working with landowners on the large-scale Strategic Sites identified within City Plan 2030 to explore opportunities to deliver large numbers of new homes.

Off-the-shelf purchase of completed homes continues to be considered by the Council on a case-by-case basis. These homes offer the clear benefit of delivering affordable homes immediately, without the need to wait for homes to be built. Over 500 off-the-shelf homes were bought by the council to provide temporary and settled accommodation over the past year for Ukrainian refugees and other homeless households. Extensive grant funding has been secured from the UK 'Homes for Ukraine' tariff funding, Scottish Government 'Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund' (ULTRF), the National Acquisition Programme and HRA and general fund borrowing. Grant subsidy has been used innovatively to make the best use of the various funding sources available.

Innovative building methods

The Edinburgh Home Demonstrator (EHD) is a programme supported by the Scottish Government to research and deliver a new approach to delivering affordable housing using offsite manufacturing. The programme's outcomes have been tested across three pilot projects which the Council has supported. These pilot projects will deliver 264 homes for Edinburgh and 75 for the wider region. The first development by the Council of the homes, which use offsite manufacturing, were completed in late 2024 in [Granton](#). They show how quickly off-site manufactured homes can be built and to high energy efficiency levels. Some RSLs are also developing modular housing and there is scope for best practice to be shared.

The EHD's approach to delivering housing has been adopted and supported by the City Deal Partners and is now delivering homes across the region under the Regional Delivery Alliance (RDA). A suite of house and flat typologies that are all aligned with offsite manufacturing processes and meet net zero targets could help to deliver homes at scale across both the affordable and private sectors.



All photos: offsite construction: Granton Demonstrator 1 project, Oct 2024



Land Supply and purchase of completed 'Off-the-shelf' homes

Land assembly continues to pose a significant challenge. Aside from the financial pressures, affordable housing developers also need greater control of sites in order to accelerate development of affordable housing. The [Council's Strategy for purchasing land and homes to meet affordable housing need](#) sets out the Council's approach to increasing affordable housing supply by four routes; building directly, working on strategic sites with development partners, purchasing completed new build homes, and purchasing second hand homes.

The Council works directly with landowners to purchase both land and completed homes, particularly where there is an opportunity to increase the level of on-site affordable housing provision to above policy levels. It also works closely with and promotes close working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to ensure a collaborative approach, rather than one of competition. The objective is to maximise delivery of affordable housing and make effective use of the funding that is available to all partners.

Due to the higher values of private housing for sale it has always been challenging to secure land on the open market in Edinburgh, particularly when the market is so buoyant. Nonetheless, the Council has had success in doing so. The Council has managed to assemble a significant pipeline of sites through the purchase of publicly owned assets, acquiring, for example, the Liberton Hospital site, from the NHS, in March 2023.

Void Properties

Void properties are homes owned by the Council or RSLs which are temporarily unlet. The number of Council owned void homes increased during the Covid-19 pandemic when work in homes was restricted and the lettings process was impacted by public health guidelines too.

High void numbers create a blockage in the housing system and slow the rate at which homeless households can be re-housed. This is why the Council voids reduction project plan was established in 2023 to speed up the process of bringing homes back into use as swiftly as possible. It is a key priority for the council and is also highlighted in the Housing Emergency Action Plan.

Additional resources have been deployed to Council repairs and locality teams in 2024 and 2025, and a working group established to closely monitor progress and take any necessary actions. As a result, the number of Council voids were halved during 2024/25, with a total of 672 voids remaining at 31 March 2025. Work is ongoing, as a priority, to continue to quickly reduce the number of void properties.

Overcrowding and Under-Occupancy

Scotland's Census collects information on the number of people in each household and on the number of bedrooms in each household's accommodation. This information is used to work out if a household has the required number of bedrooms, too few or too many. In the census this is calculated using the 'bedroom standard' from the Housing (Overcrowding) Bill 2003. This legislation only applies in England and Wales but the definition is applied in the Census data in order to make the calculation.

Scotland's Census 2022 found that 2.7% of households in Edinburgh (6,554 households) had at least one fewer bedroom than required. These households are described as overcrowded using the 'bedroom standard'. This mirrors the Scottish average of 2.4%. Conversely 62% of households in Edinburgh had more bedrooms than required (148,172 households), which was broadly in line with the Scottish average of 70.3%. These households would be considered to be underoccupied.

As of 5 May 2025, 1,134 households have Silver Priority for Overcrowding, which is 4.2% of all priority groups, compared to waiting time (65%) and Silver Priority for Homelessness (27.6%)

In 2024/25, 41 properties were allocated to those with Silver Priority for Overcrowding, which equated to 2.6% of lets in 2024/25. 15 of these were properties owned by CEC and the other 26 were from RSL partners

Overcrowding, where it exists, is symptomatic of an undersupply of affordable housing of the right size. It limits space for children to study or play, reduces privacy and is a source of stress and anxiety. Overcrowding has also been shown to increase the risk of childhood infection and asthma.

Overcrowding issues will be considered as part of the Council's housing allocations policy review which will be completed during the timeframe of this LHS. The allocations policy review is covered in more detail in Chapter 5.

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):
Deliver a supply of homes across affordable tenure types to meet demand.

Key Challenges
Demand for affordable housing outstrips supply
High construction costs, with large increases in costs over the past five years
High borrowing costs due to increased interest rates
Significant additional resources are needed to deliver affordable homes at the scale required. Benchmark grant levels not keeping pace with the cost of development or finance
Reduction in AHSP grant funding
Uncertainty over the level of grant funding available into future years
Competing capital funding priorities for social rented housing with, for example, increased energy efficiency requirements for existing stock impacting on the number of new homes that can be developed from the same budget.
Higher new build standards cost more to deliver
Increased developer contributions through the Section 75 rules towards infrastructure costs

Proposed Actions
1.Ensure better alignment of the Council's general budget, medium-term financial plan and HRA in the short, medium and long-term, including the cross-subsidy of funds from the general fund to the HRA (where this is appropriate), in order to better support delivery of the Council's strategic objectives as set out in the Business Plan.
The other actions relating to chapter 1 will be managed through the Housing Emergency Action Plan under several of the high-level actions for Housing Supply and Demand for Housing, as below:

- HS1: Work with partners to increase and improve supply of housing in the city and develop and implement innovative funding solutions.
- HS2: Be responsive to the housing market by being flexible and dynamic in approach to tackling the Housing Emergency.
- HS3: Work with partners to develop new delivery models of housing in the city.

DH1: Work with partners to make best use of all homes in the city.

Chapter 2 – Support private renters, homeowners and landlords

Strategic Objective(s):

Households living in privately rented homes have access to, affordable, well-managed and high-quality housing with security of tenure.

Homeowners are aware of the advice and support available to help manage their homes and how to access this. Homeowners living in shared blocks are supported to manage the condition of the shared parts of their properties.

Introduction

This chapter covers privately owned housing. This includes the Private rented sector, Build to rent, housing for students, Short-term-lets, owner-occupied housing, empty homes, second homes, self-build and Community-led housing. Affordability issues are also reviewed.

2.1 The Private Rented Sector

Local context – PRS

The Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Edinburgh and Scotland has gone through significant changes over the last 5-10 years, in terms of rent levels and the size of the PRS. The PRS now makes up 23% of homes in Edinburgh or 65,495 registered properties (Council registrations data, March 2025) compared to 13% nationally (latest Scottish Household Survey 2023). Almost 10% of all registered PRS homes in Edinburgh, (6,325) are houses in multiple occupation (HMO) (Council licensing data, March 2024). The size of the PRS and its legislative and regulatory environment, make it an important focus in the Local Housing Strategy. There are 44,608 registered landlords in the city (Council registration data, March 2025). There has been an 8% increase in landlords registered and properties registered since 2019.

In early 2024 Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) carried out a national survey of registered landlords to understand the issues facing landlords and to find out about their practice. Over 5,400 registered landlords in Edinburgh responded. The results showed that 62% of landlords own only one property and 32% own between 2-5 properties. The most common demographic types of tenants that landlords let to were single occupants or couples with no children. In terms of recent rent setting, 53% of landlords had increased the rent compared to the previous tenancy. When asked what their future plans were, over one third (39%) of landlords said they plan to keep their number of properties the same. A further third (32%) said they had not made plans. 25% planned to decrease their number of properties or sell all their properties and leave the business. Only 4% indicated they intended to increase their number of properties.

Rents in the PRS have increased by 82% on average in Edinburgh over the last 10 years. In the 18 months to March 2025, Edinburgh continued to experience the highest rental inflation of any UK major city. Through LHS engagement, respondents reflected on the importance of considering the PRS in relation to the wider housing system, rather than in isolation. High rent levels in the PRS in Edinburgh are largely a reflection of the overall lack of housing supply, across all tenures. Increasing housing supply, across all tenures, is a vital part of ongoing and longer-term solutions, to the current housing crisis.

Respondents to the LHS consultation also shared their experiences of a lack of housing choice and the socioeconomic impacts of high rent levels.

The widespread impacts of high housing costs are recognised, both in terms of upfront deposit requirements and ongoing housing costs. This can reduce peoples' available income to engage in activities and contribute to the local economy. At the same time, in discussions with residents and stakeholders there was acknowledgment that the PRS may be struggling to attract investors due to increasing costs and regulation. However, Council landlord registration figures show the number of registered landlords and properties have increased, year on year, to date.

The wider policy landscape in relation to private renting has seen many changes in recent years: Emergency PRS legislation in 2020, the Cost of Living (Tenant

Protection) (Scotland) Act 2022 which expired in March 2024, as well as the Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024 which aims to enhance rights and increase protection for PRS tenants.

The Housing (Scotland) Bill is looking to introduce a PRS Regulator and legislation to underpin a system of national rent controls. This would supersede the previous system of Rent Pressure Zones and is intended to help improve the quality and condition of homes in the PRS. The long-term impacts on the sector, in terms of investment decisions and landlord choices, are currently unclear. The Housing (Scotland) Bill seeks to put in place requirements for the collection of data from private landlords, which can then be used by Local Authorities to make a case for the creation of a local rent control area(s). The Council will continue to monitor the Bill's progress and will continue to prepare for the Bill becoming an Act as more details are confirmed.

In October 2024 the Scottish Government announced an amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Bill setting out how rent increases will be capped in areas where rent controls apply, subject to the approval of Parliament. In response to consultation and discussions with stakeholders, rent increases would be limited to the Consumer Price Index (a measure of inflation) plus 1%, up to a maximum increase of 6%. The rent cap will apply to rent increases both during the term of a tenancy and in between tenancies. The Scottish Government hopes that, where it applies, the rent cap will stabilise rents and so support tenants rent levels whilst also providing appropriate protection for the property rights of landlords and supporting investment. In November 2024 the Bill formerly passed stage 1 of the process. A consultation was carried out as part of Stage 2, to respond to calls for further clarity on the circumstances where exemptions from rent control and situations where a permitted rent increase above the rent cap may apply.

In May 2025, the Scottish Government confirmed the following amendments:

- Scottish Ministers will have powers to request the same information from private sector landlords as can be requested by a local authority under the rent control measures in the Bill

- Measures are included to make sure that the information cannot be requested from the same landlord more than once in any 12 months
- As noted above, the level of the rent cap CPI+1% up to a maximum of 6% has been agreed
- The list of information which local authorities can request from landlords has been expanded. This is now more consistent with information collected by Rent Service Scotland

These amendments are intended to provide flexibility to allow Scottish Government to work in partnership with local authorities to lead the different parts of the complex task of collecting data on current rent levels on existing tenancies which have lasted for more than a year, not just those from newly advertised properties. It will also allow them to work with local authorities to deliver consistency and quality in data collection. There was a clear consensus from all parties involved in the consultation that data collection has to be robust to ensure rent control can be applied only where it is appropriate and proportionate, as well as the need for a national approach to data collection.

Issues of a lack of accessible housing for people with mobility issues or a disability in the PRS were raised at the LHS Stakeholder event along with the need for homes to be adapted in the PRS when needed. Accessibility and adaptation of homes are considered in depth in Chapter 5.

Affordability in the PRS

High PRS rent levels and rent increases in recent years means that private renting is unaffordable to many. Combined with the Cost-of-Living Crisis and high energy costs this will be impacting on some people's ability to sustain tenancies or find suitable rental accommodation.

The overall average advertised monthly private rent in Edinburgh was £1,506 compared to a Scottish average of £1,172 ([CityLets quarter 1, 2025](#)). This represents a 31.9% increase over the last five years, and a 65.1% increase over the last 10 years.

Affordability calculations for the private rented sector, based on the average gross household income for Edinburgh and average new rental costs in Edinburgh from 2023/24, showed that almost one third (28%) of average monthly gross household income is spent on rental costs. This is based on average monthly gross household income of £4,861 (CACI 2023/24) and average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom apartment of £1,370 (CityLets Optilet 2023/24).

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) was introduced in 2008 to provide Housing Benefit entitlement for tenants renting in the private sector. The current average private sector rent levels in Edinburgh dictate that even with maximum LHA rates, those on incomes falling into the [Broad Rental Market Area](#) (BRMA) category, cannot afford to access the majority of privately rented homes in the city.

Housing to 2040 and the Housing (Scotland) Bill will lead to more regulation and likely rent controls in the PRS by 2025 along with introducing energy efficiency targets for the PRS. These measures will hopefully help to limit cost increases going forwards for anyone renting in the PRS.

Quality, Regulation and support in the PRS

Private landlords are required by law to register with the Council to ensure they are 'fit and proper' and comply with their legal responsibilities to ensure their properties meet the required safety standards. The Council provides information and advice to private landlords on the repairing standard, furnishings, fire safety and landlord gas safety to ensure they know what is required of them by law and how to resolve issues with tenants.

Properties licenced in the private rented sector such as HMOs and STLs (secondary lets) are subject to additional safety checks and inspections and additional licence conditions. The aim is to ensure these properties meet the required safety standards. A home is a House in Multiple Occupation where there are at least three tenants living there who are unrelated to each other and share a toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities with other residents. On 31st March 2025 there were 6,809 HMOs registered in Edinburgh.

Private landlords have an important role to play in providing good quality housing options. The Repairing Standard, in the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2006](#), covers the legal and contractual obligations of private landlords to ensure that a property meets a minimum physical standard. In addition, the tolerable standard must also be met. The Tolerable Standard is a basic level of repair your property must meet to make it fit for a person to live in and the Council can require you to carry out work to bring your home up to this standard.

<https://www.mygov.scot/landlord-repairs/tolerable-standard>.

Where unregistered or non-compliant landlords are identified, appropriate enforcement action will be taken. Partnership working between Building Standards, Legal Services, Environmental Health and Police Scotland has been key in progressing enforcement activity.

The First-tier Tribunal for Scotland (Housing and Property Chamber) is a specialist judicial body that deals with disputes and issues arising between landlords and tenants in the private rented sector. The tribunal deals with determinations of rent, repair issues, assistance for landlord's right of entry and support to resolve issues between homeowners and property factors. It was established to provide a more accessible and streamlined process for resolving housing disputes and replaced the previous system where such cases were handled by the sheriff courts.

The same rules for landlords and tenants in standard PRS properties apply to HMOs in terms of registration. However, in addition HMOs need to be licensed by the Council and are subject to additional safety, security and living space requirements. The Council is responsible for enforcing HMO standards and can take enforcement action against any HMO licence holder who is not complying with the relevant conditions or legislation.

The Council's Private Rented Sector Enforcement Team deals with over 2,000 complaints each year. The team takes a range of enforcement action from providing advice and guidance, issuing Rent Penalty Notices, to submitting reports to the Procurator Fiscal where appropriate.

Introduction of the Private Residential Tenancy Agreement in 2017 by the Scottish Government provided some increased security for tenants and landlords. It is open-ended, meaning a landlord is no longer able to ask a tenant to leave simply because the fixed term agreement has ended. It also provides more predictable rents and protection for tenants against excessive rent increases. In addition, it provides landlords with comprehensive and robust grounds for repossession in 18 specified circumstances.

Further to the Private Residential Tenancy Agreement, 2017, tenants' deposits are now more secure as they must be secured in one of the three national Tenancy deposit schemes.

Letting agents are also regulated nationally with ways for landlords and tenants to challenge allegations of poor practice which do not meet the Letting Agents' Code of Practice.

The Council also has a Private Rented Sector Team who provide support to households living in PRS accommodation where there is a risk of homelessness and provide support to homeless households to access the PRS sector. The team also work closely with letting agencies to ensure a supply of PRS homes for households who have been or are currently homeless. More information on this is provided in chapter 4: Preventing and responding to Homelessness.

2.2 Build to Rent (BTR)

BTR developments are purpose built rental accommodation, high quality and professionally managed. They can accelerate housing development, delivering homes on a large scale and contributing to regeneration and placemaking. BTR can bring institutional investment to the city and secure affordable housing without the need for grant subsidy through the delivery of Intermediate rent homes.

There have been around 900 approvals for intermediate rent since the policy was introduced. There were 116 BTR completions in 2024/25.

Large scale sites planned for development in West Edinburgh include West Town c.7,000 homes, Crosswinds, West Craigs, Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh

Garden district and the Saica site at Turnhouse Road. Collectively these six sites have the capacity to deliver c.16,000 homes with some of these potentially available for BTR.

Discussions with BTR developers, operators and investors are ongoing to support delivery of the current pipeline and identify further affordable homes that can be delivered without grant funding, as was detailed in the [Support for Build to Rent](#) report.

The BTR sector faces similar challenges to other house building sectors, including increased construction costs, however the impact of increased interest rates is higher as much longer-term borrowing is required in comparison to properties built for sale.

The [Build to Rent In Scotland 2024](#) market review report by Rettie & Co (Nov 2024), states investment in BTR in Scotland has been limited in comparison to other parts of the UK. The [Scottish Property Federation](#) in a press release (Oct 2024) welcomed recent proposed changes to the Housing Scotland Bill of an index-related measure and level of cap of rent increases but raised concerns about the extension of rent controls to vacant properties between tenancies and that consultation on exemptions to rent controls will not take place until Spring 2025.

2.3 Housing for students

Edinburgh has a longstanding global reputation as a university city and welcomes a significant student population every year. There were 72,365 students enrolled in the four largest Edinburgh universities in 2023/24 (Edinburgh Napier, Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt and Queen Margaret Universities) with 86% studying full-time. Part-time students are more likely to already be living in the city and not in need of new accommodation, while the 62,535 full time University students are far more likely to need accommodation.

Student numbers in higher education in Edinburgh rose 29% over the 10 years from 2014/15-2021/22. However, the number has fallen by 3% overall in the last two academic years, suggesting student numbers may have levelled for the time

being. International students form 36% of total student numbers with the number of international students also falling slightly in 2022/23.

Students live in a range of accommodation types across the city: privately rented homes which are often Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); private homes either owned by students or their family; purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) owned by the University or the private sector; and a small number are living in student co-operative housing.

There has been continuous growth in PBSA in Edinburgh. Since 2005 when there were 7,350 bed spaces, PBSA has increased by over 200% with 22,581 PBSA bedspaces in the city in December 2024, comprised of 12,109 university owned or managed PBSA and 10,472 private PBSA bedspaces. At December 2024, there were 1,691 PBSA bedspaces currently under construction, 2,672 with planning consent yet to be developed and 1,233 awaiting a decision.

The majority of students in private PBSA are housed in buildings with 101-250 bedspaces or in buildings with 521-500 bed spaces. The majority of the University/ College owned PBSA accommodation is in cluster arrangements with shared kitchens although there are also some studio units too.

A CIH Scotland report: '[Student housing options and experiences of homelessness in Scotland](#)', Sep 2024 linked to the Cross-Party Group on Housing, notes that there is a significant gap in standardised data on rent levels, student incomes, and affordability metrics along with gaps in information on the housing need of different student groups, e.g. from low-income backgrounds, international students, students with families, and those with accessibility requirements.

It is recognised that many students in the city are facing housing pressures around supply and affordability and that some students are living in poverty. Representatives we spoke to from Heriot Watt University reported that "9% of Heriot Watt students have £50/ month left after paying their monthly rent" (2024). LHS engagement with students identified a recurring theme around the challenges of finding and securing suitable private rented accommodation that is affordable to them, citing high monthly rents as well as often unobtainable

deposit requirements. Issues were highlighted around a lack of HMO accommodation as well as difficulties sourcing short-term accommodation which was required due to the unavailability of some purpose-built student halls over the summer period.

Particular attention was drawn to the challenges facing international students, with feedback indicating that housing information and advice provided to students, and access to rental guarantor schemes, can be inconsistent. Attention was also drawn to students with a disability and/ or particular access requirements, in recognition of the pressures around accessible housing which are further explored in chapter 5.

The CIH Scotland report highlights that the provision of new PBSA continues to move upmarket, making it difficult for students to afford. Students need affordable housing options that are currently, for the most part, not being provided by the market.

Through LHS engagement, student representatives highlighted concerns about PBSA rent levels and the pricing differential between university owned and privately owned PBSA, with the latter being more expensive.

The [CIH Scotland report](#) also points to "significant gaps" in reporting and monitoring of student homelessness. Ambiguity exists around who is responsible for addressing student homelessness. The Council supports the report's conclusion that national and local government and the universities need to work together more pro-actively to find solutions.

Targeted engagement with students was undertaken as part of the LHS consultation, including a focused survey on student living which was jointly developed with Planning colleagues. The survey asked a range of questions around current accommodation; how easy or difficult it was to find accommodation in Edinburgh; and where students currently go to find advice and information about housing in Edinburgh. At the time of writing, the majority of respondents (80%) found it either difficult or very difficult to find accommodation. The main challenges around accessing accommodation were almost unanimously reported to be around affordability and rent increases. Additionally,

there not being enough housing to meet demand, lack of information on how and where to access a place to live and finding a lease that would be available at the right time. A further breakdown of the responses can be found in the Consultation and Engagement Report.

2.4 Short Term Lets (STLs)

A short-term let is the use of accommodation, provided by a host to a guest, on a commercial basis, where the guest does not use the accommodation as their only or principal home.

In 2018 Rettie & Co Letting Agency carried out an analysis of the Impact of the Edinburgh Short term Rental Market and estimated there had been a loss of around 10% of private rented homes to short term lets (STL) in the lead up to 2018.

A 2019 Scottish Government commissioned research report noted the impact of STLs in the Old Town, New Town and Tollcross areas. These areas had 16% of dwellings let through Airbnb. Many participants of the study highlighted the negative impact of STLs including a reduction in residential housing, increased house prices, noise disturbances for residents, resident population decrease and what was felt to be over-tourism.

In response to concerns about the negative impacts of STLs across Scotland, the Scottish Government introduced new planning and licensing legislation to help local authorities to regulate short term lets. The Council brought in new licensing requirements for STL operators and conducted a consultation in 2021 on designating the whole Council area as a STL Control Area. There was significant support for this action, although some stakeholders raised concerns about the impact of reducing accommodation for visitors and tourists, and Scottish Ministers granted approval for Edinburgh to become the first 'short-term let control area' in Scotland, coming into effect on 5th September 2022.

A licence is now mandatory to operate a STL in Edinburgh. There are four different types of STL licence: **Secondary letting**: where the whole property,

which is not someone's principle home, is let to guests; **Home Sharing**: renting out a room or rooms in your home to short-term let guests; **Home letting**: using all or part of your own home for short-term lets, while you are absent (for example, while you are on holiday) and ; **a mixture of Home Sharing and Home Letting**.

Since 5th September 2022 a change of use of a dwellinghouse to use for a short-term let occurring on or after that date within the Control Area is deemed a material change of use and requires planning permission. Planning permission is not normally required for home sharing or home letting.

The effect of the new STL legislation is evident in the number of Airbnb listings for entire homes which has almost halved from 2020 to 2024, from 7,895 homes to 3,694. Airbnb are one of a number of short-term let booking platforms so the number of dwellings in use as short-term-lets may be higher.

A total of 4,724 STL licences were issued by the Council up to March 2025. Almost half of the licences (49%) were for whole house / secondary letting and just over half (51%) were for Home sharing and /or Home letting: (18% were for Home letting and Home sharing, 14% for solely Home sharing and 19% for solely Home letting). The Council will continue to process, monitor and report on short-term let licence applications and planning applications relating to short-term lets.

2.5 Owner Occupied Housing

Local context and affordability of Home ownership

Most homes in Edinburgh, 60%, of the total proportion of all households in the city, are in owner-occupation.

ESPC reports the [average house price in Edinburgh in April 2025](#) to be £304,294. Prices vary across different locations in the city, however there are numerous examples within Edinburgh where the average price of a two-bedroom flat for sale now exceeds £300,000. House prices in Edinburgh are notably higher than the Scottish average. The latest Office for National Statistics figures from October 2024 estimated the average house price in Edinburgh was sitting

at around £340,000, compared to the Scottish average of £197,000 ([Office for National Statistics](#)).

In this context of high private house sale prices, inherited wealth can play a key part in someone's ability to purchase a home or not. The current housing system can create structural barriers that affect social mobility.

This is where schemes such as Golden Share and OMSE can play a part to help some households on lower incomes purchase homes. See section 1.2 for more details.

Help for owners to repair and maintain their homes

Through the [Scheme of Assistance](#) the Council aims to help owners through advice and information. Owners are responsible for finding their own resources to fund the repairs and maintenance needed. More on support for homeowners is noted in Chapter 3 in relation to energy efficiency and other home improvements.

There are a wide range of Council services to help owners to repair and maintain their homes, and to live independently. The [Scheme of Assistance Statement](#) sums up these services, this includes a [Shared Repairs Service](#) for repairing and maintaining common areas of a building.

Work will be taken forward during 2025 to update the Scheme of Assistance and the associated information on the Council's website.

2.6 Private Sector Empty Homes

There are three private sector Empty Homes Officers (EHOs) employed by the Council. A dedicated EHO role was created in 2019 and two further temporary EHOs were recruited in February 2025, with an enhanced focus on proactive activities. EHOs provide advice and information to owners to help them deal with issues, supporting them to bring empty private home back into use. The EHOs work closely with the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, an arms-length organisation hosted by Shelter Scotland.

In September 2024 it was estimated that there were 3,093 privately owned empty homes across Edinburgh (derived from Council Tax data). The most common reason for a home being empty is that the owner has moved on without selling the property, or that there have been estate/inheritance issues. The most common barrier for empty home owners is the financial cost of bringing the property back into use.

The Council's work to date in relation to empty homes has focussed on longer-term empty homes (which are often in a poor state of repair, having a detrimental impact on neighbours or the wider community). Cases are typically generated from complaints from members of the public or they are reported on the Council's website. The Empty Homes Officers work across Council departments to resolve issues around repairs and maintenance or environmental health impacts of empty homes, and with colleagues in Revenues and Benefits teams on debt recovery and Council Tax issues. This includes bringing in additional income through proactively identifying long-term Empty Homes where the 100% [Council Tax premium](#) can be applied. Additionally, joint work takes place with the Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service teams to help to find owners and engage with them on shared repairs cases.

Most of the 68 homes brought back into use in 2024, as a direct result of Council intervention, were empty for multiple years. Homes empty for 2-5 years accounted for 39% and homes empty for 5-10 years accounted for 39% too. (Empty Homes report February 2025)

The table below shows 83% of the empty homes brought back into use were for either owner occupation or for private rent. The miscellaneous category in the table includes: homes purchased by the Council, let through a private sector leasing scheme, let through a Housing Association management scheme and sold at auction.

Table 3: Privately Owned Empty Homes – Council support – Outcomes from 2024

	Number of homes	Percentage
Owner Occupied	37	54%
Privately Let	20	29%

Miscellaneous	11	17%
TOTAL	68	100%

(Empty Homes Report, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 25 February 2025, data for 2024)

The number of active empty homes cases at March 2024 was 293. The reasons active cases remain empty are due to owners being unwilling to sell or rent (29%), difficulty locating/ engaging with owners (23%), repairs ongoing (18%) and other reasons including: property inherited and no action taken by new owners (8%), legal disputes (5%), difficulty establishing ownership (1%). (Empty Homes Report, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 25 February 2025, data for 2024)

With additional staffing resource now in place, the Council is now able to take a more strategic approach to managing empty homes, with the aim of reducing the number of empty homes across the city. The EHOs will align with strategic goals identified in the Housing Emergency Action Plan with a view to reducing homelessness. This will include promotion of the Private Sector Leasing Scheme as an option for owners of empty homes who may wish to let out their properties. In addition, the Council will give focused consideration to the potential use of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) within the context of empty homes work

2.7 Second homes

A second home is a property which is furnished and lived in for at least 25 days in a 12-month period but is not someone's sole or main residence. There are approximately 1,700 properties in Edinburgh currently categorised as second homes (January 2024).

The Scottish Parliament approved new powers enabling councils to increase the amount of Council Tax payable on second homes by up to 100% and from 1 April 2024 second homes in Edinburgh are now subject to a double (200%) Second home Council Tax charge.

The future occupation and active use of these properties will deliver economic, social and wellbeing benefits. It is hoped this change will encourage owners to

bring properties back into active use as permanent homes and therefore increase the available housing stock in Edinburgh.

The potential net increase in billable liability for these properties is estimated at £3.2m per annum. Moving forward this sum will be influenced by the number of second homes and if homes are successfully occupied on a more permanent basis, as the premium will revert to the typical Council Tax charge. Over time the amount of additional income raised through application of the premium is likely to reduce significantly, consistent with the intention of the policy.

2.8 Self-Build/ Custom build

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires local authorities to prepare and maintain a list of people who have registered an interest in self-build with the intention of acquiring land in the authority's area for self-build housing. The register will provide information on the level of demand within Edinburgh to inform future local development plans.

87 people have registered an interest in self-build within Edinburgh, up to January 2024, by entering their details into the [Self-build housing land register](#).

New Build housing completions are monitored by the Council. Self-build properties are not separately identified so data on the number of self-builds in the city is not currently available. The Scottish Government have developed a [guide to self-building a home](#) to help people to understand what's involved in self-build and where to find out more.

2.9 Community-led housing

There are various models of community-led housing including Co-operative Housing and Cohousing.

Co-operative housing is not-for-profit, democratic housing, run by its members. Housing co-operatives can take many forms, with the 'fully mutual' model being popular. This means that all tenants are required to be members of the co-op and the governance structures consist entirely of tenant members. The [Co-](#)

[operatives UK Directory](#) provides information on housing co-operatives in the UK, listing details of around 40 housing co-operatives in Scotland. Housing co-operatives in Edinburgh include; the Edinburgh Student Housing Co-operative, West Granton Housing Co-operative and Lister Housing Co-operative (both Registered Social Landlords) as well as smaller co-ops like Ploughshare in Bruntsfield and Bath Street in Portobello.

Cohousing is a collaborative approach to community living with homes set up to allow for privacy but with access to shared gathering places too. Cohousing communities are set up and run by their members for mutual benefit. Cohousing can be developed for home ownership, shared ownership or both affordable and market rent. Some cohousing projects may choose to be co-operatives.

An action noted in the Council's Housing Emergency Action plan, raised by participants in the LHS engagement work and included in LHS actions is for the Council to investigate what funding models or other support might be suitable or available to help establish new Housing Co-operatives including student housing co-operatives.

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):
Households living in privately rented homes have access to, affordable, well-managed and high-quality housing with security of tenure.
Homeowners are aware of the advice and support available to help manage their homes and how to access this. Homeowners living in shared blocks are supported to manage the condition of the shared parts of their properties.

Key Challenges:
Rent levels in the city are at the highest since records began. Demand far outweighs supply.

Affordability for renters or prospective renters remains challenging with the ongoing cost of living crisis and the gap between rent and LHA levels
Uncertainty from the sector in response to proposed legislative and policy changes.
Whilst improvements have been made in recent years, the PRS is viewed as a less stable housing option when compared to social rent, mid-market rent and home ownership tenures.
Although providing much needed accommodation for students PBSA developments are often not well received by local residents and students alike.
Increased difficulties for many in paying higher mortgage repayment levels or attempting to buy a home as a first-time buyer, following the UK 'mini budget' in September 2022.
Arranging for shared repairs to be made in tenements and other shared buildings
It is difficult to influence the actions and decisions of private owners with regards to the use of their empty homes.

Proposed Actions
2. Work towards increasing the proportion of social rented homes in order to (at least) match the Scottish average, and in turn reduce the proportion of PRS stock in the city.
3. Support compliance within the Private Rented Sector via landlord registration, licensing and enforcement.
4. Consider ways to improve the provision of guidance and support for landlords and tenants. (to include guidance on legislation on letting and renting properties, and providing clear communication on how the council can support tenants who have a dispute with landlords.)
5. Work with partners to review and support housing options information and advice for University students and prospective students studying in Edinburgh
6. Refresh the Council's 'Scheme of Assistance' information, providing updated advice and guidance for home-owners on how to improve, maintain and repair their home
7. Within Council led mixed-tenure improvement programme areas - Continue to pro-actively support and advise homeowners and other residents on how to fund required home improvements.

8.Reduce the number of privately owned empty homes to bring them back into effective use
9.Radically reduce the level of second property ownership in the city
10.Become a Rent Control Ready Council in relation to the Housing (Scotland) Bill
<p>There are additional actions around increasing the availability of affordable accommodation for students and exploring co-operative models that will be managed through the Housing Emergency Action Plan. These will sit under two of the high-level actions for Demand for Housing and Housing Supply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DH2: Work with partners to plan for future housing needsHS3: Work with partners to develop new delivery models of housing in the city.

Chapter 3. Ensure homes are modern, warm and sustainable

Strategic Objective(s):
Ensure all homes are well maintained, energy efficient, safe, sustainable and climate proofed, working towards net zero emissions
Reduce fuel poverty and ensure every household has a warm home they can afford to heat

Introduction

This chapter emphasises the importance of ensuring that households in Edinburgh can live in high-quality, sustainable homes. Achieving this goal is crucial for reducing fuel poverty, improving health outcomes, and advancing towards net zero emissions. By enhancing property conditions and energy efficiency across all types of housing through Whole House Retrofit (WHR), homes will be better prepared to handle the effects of climate change.

Timely repairs carried out to a good standard is crucial to keep homes free of draughts, mould and dampness, which in turn helps residents to heat their homes efficiently, reducing fuel poverty and improving health and wellbeing.

This chapter outlines how Edinburgh is working to meet the standards set by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator, whilst also addressing key challenges in this effort. It highlights actions and solutions to help overcome those challenges, aiming to improve housing quality and sustainability.

National Context

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) and [Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032](#) (RPP3) sets out a clear expectation for all public bodies to contribute to emission reduction targets, deliver programmes to increase resilience against Climate Change and to carry out their work sustainably. The overall goal is to build a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider

benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland at the end of the RPP3 in 2032, with a target date for net zero emissions of all greenhouse gases by 2045.

The RPP3 was updated in 2020 following the Covid-19 pandemic. [Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018-2032 - update](#) outlines the government's plans to meet the climate change targets within the [Climate Change \(Emission Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030 and to net zero by 2045. It also acts as a key strategic document for Scotland's green recovery from Covid-19.

Quality of housing and repairs, maintenance and improvements are two of the 16 outcomes set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Social landlords are expected to manage their businesses so that *"tenants' homes, as a minimum, when they are allocated are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), and any other building quality standard in place throughout the tenancy; and also meet the relevant Energy Efficiency and Zero Emission Heat Standard"* and that *"tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done"*.

[Scottish Housing Quality Standard \(SHQS\)](#) was introduced in February 2004 and is currently the main way the quality of housing is measured in Scotland. SHQS ensures that social landlords make their tenants' homes energy efficient, safe and secure, not seriously damaged, and with kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition.

[Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing \(EESH\)](#) was introduced in 2014 to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland and to help reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. It has replaced the energy efficiency element within the SHQS. EESH2 was introduced in 2019 which requires social housing to meet, or can be treated as meeting, EPC Band B, or is as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of December 2032 and within the limits of cost, technology and necessary consent.

The Scottish Government is planning to replace EESSH2 with a new "Social Housing Net Zero Standard" (SHNZS) to align with its net-zero emissions targets. Consultation on the new standard closed in March 2024 and it is expected that the new SHNZS will be introduced in 2025 at the earliest.

There are a number of legislative changes on the horizon which may come into effect during the lifetime of this LHS. These include:

New Housing Standard: Housing to 2040, Scottish Government's strategic plan for housing, includes an action to introduce legislation to implement a new Housing Standard, which will cover all homes (new and existing). This new standard could potentially help to improve conditions in all homes, especially those in the private sector going forward.

Compulsory Owners' Associations: a new legislation to establish compulsory owners' associations in all tenement blocks in Scotland may be introduced during the lifetime of this LHS, with an aim to help to address disrepair and facilitate improvement in tenement blocks. The Scottish Law Commission published a discussion paper, Tenement law: compulsory owners' associations, for consultation until 1 August 2024. The discussion paper included proposals on the establishment, formation and operation of compulsory owners' associations and the rights and responsibilities to be imposed on them. Scottish Law Commission will now provide the Scottish Government with a report detailing its recommendations on compulsory owners' association and providing a draft Bill for consideration, expected to be available in spring 2026.

The Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024 deals mainly with private rented, accommodation and homelessness prevention. The Bill could help to improve the quality and condition of PRS properties by introducing further PRS regulation. The Scottish Government also intends to introduce amendments to the Housing (Scotland) Bill that will broaden Ministers' powers to impose timeframes on social landlords to investigate disrepair and start repairs, through regulation, similar to those in the Awaab's law in England. Subject to the passage of the Bill, the Scottish Government will bring forward secondary legislation to develop timescales for investigation and commencement of repairs

that are hazardous to tenants' enjoyment of their homes, starting with damp and mould.

Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) indicators: The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) published a paper in June 2023, titled "[Our Regulation of Social Housing: a discussion paper](#)". The paper looked at ideas to review the Regulatory Framework in order to strengthen its emphasis on listening to tenants, quality of homes and tenant and resident safety. It suggested the introduction of new indicators to the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) as a means to strengthen the monitoring of tenant and resident safety. It also asked for ideas on how best to monitor the effectiveness of landlords' approach to managing reports and instances of mould and dampness. Further information is noted in the Dampness, Mould and Condensation section in this Chapter.

Local Context

Edinburgh's 2030 Climate Strategy sets out a city-wide approach to reducing greenhouse gases in Edinburgh and the plan to deliver a net zero, climate ready city by 2030 as well as a healthier, thriving and inclusive capital for people to live and work in.

The [2030 Climate Strategy](#) sets the following targets in relation to housing:

- All new Council-led housing developments to be net zero.
- Develop regional renewable energy solutions.
- Identify Heat Network Zones across the city.
- Develop a plan for retrofitting social housing across the city to the highest energy standards, to reduce energy demand and tackle fuel poverty.
- Establish an Energy Efficient Public Buildings Partnership.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and its secondary legislation on the [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies \(Scotland\) Order 2022](#) requires all local authorities to create a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan.

[Edinburgh LHEES](#) operates within a complex and quickly changing set of policies and regulations. Its focus is on improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions in different building types, in both residential sector (housing of all tenures) and services sector (all non-domestic buildings in the public and commercial sector), and heat networks across the city. It aligns closely with the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy and aims to reach net zero by 2030 and eliminate fuel poverty by 2040.

The key national policy targets and regulations underpinning the Edinburgh LHEES are summarised below.

- **Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definitions and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2018** - Statutory targets to be achieved by 2040 where no more than 5% of households in Scotland in fuel poverty and no more than 1% in extreme fuel poverty, and the fuel poverty gap, i.e. the additional income required to lift households out of fuel poverty, is no more than £250 (in 2015 prices).
- **Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019** - Statutory targets for reducing all of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. These includes a headline target of net zero by 2045 and intermediate reductions targets of 75% reduction by 2030 and 90% reduction by 2040.
- **Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021** - A framework for developing heat networks throughout Scotland and statutory target of heat networks supplying 2.6 terawatt hours of thermal energy by 2027 (equivalent to circa 120,000 additional homes) and 6 terawatt hours by 2030 (equivalent to circa 400,000 additional homes).
- **Heat in Buildings Strategy 2021** - sets out the Scottish Government's ambitious programme to deliver climate change targets by reducing Scotland's dependence on gas and oil for heating homes and other buildings. Scottish Government published the [Heat in Buildings Bill](#) for consultation between November 2023 and March 2024. The Bill is

expected to be introduced to Scottish Parliament in early 2025 and become law by end of this Parliament term in May 2026. The Bill is designed to complement the work already underway with the Heat in Building's Strategy. The Scottish Government proposes to make new laws about the heating and energy efficiency of existing homes and workplaces:

- All homes and businesses will have to move to a clean heating system by the end of 2045.
 - People buying new homes and buildings before 2045 would be asked to move to a clean heating system within a set period after the sale.
 - Minimum energy efficiency standards for all homes to be achieved by the end of 2033, to make them warmer and less expensive to heat. Private rented properties are to reach minimum standard on a change of tenancy from 2025, with a backdrop date of 2028 for all remaining properties in the private rented sector.
- **New Build Heat Standard 2024** - The New Build Heat Standard ensures that all new buildings applying for a building warrant from April 2024 will need to install clean heating systems, such as heat pumps and heat networks, instead of oil and gas boilers. The new standard also applies to some conversions.

Edinburgh LHEES links to the Scottish Government's target of decarbonising the heating of all buildings in Scotland by 2045 and, in turn, the wider target of making Scotland net zero carbon by 2045, as well as the Council's own target of making Edinburgh a net zero carbon city as set out in its 2030 Climate Strategy.

Edinburgh LHEES covers a 20-year journey to decarbonisation and as such three areas of activity have been identified as most urgent, which should also be regarded as the focus of this LHS in relation to energy efficiency of homes:

- Targeting areas with the highest levels of fuel poverty and the 20% most deprived areas of Edinburgh (as per the SIMD).

- Decarbonising Council-owned housing and non-domestic stock in line with national timescales.
- Supporting wider decarbonisation of Edinburgh within the funding and resources that are made available to the Council, beginning with a focus on facilitating a citywide heat network.

The baseline analysis undertaken as part of the Edinburgh LHEES has identified multiple key challenges to decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency in Edinburgh:

- A very high proportion of flats and mixed-tenure buildings.
- A very high level of existing gas grid connections.
- A high proportion of privately rented homes and relatively small social housing sector.
- An aged housing stock with a significant proportion of listed buildings.
- 120,938 homes in Edinburgh have an Energy Performance Certificate rating worse than 'C' and will therefore require upgrading to meet national targets.
- A high proportion of homes requiring heat decarbonisation are currently heated using gas boilers.
- A high proportion of homes requiring retrofit are "hard to treat".

The Council's Policy and Sustainability Committee approved the Climate Ready Edinburgh (CRE) Plan 2024-2030 on 22 August 2024. It is the city's second adaptation plan and follows on from the Edinburgh Adapts Plan 2016 to 2020. It builds on the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy and sets out the actions we need to take to ensure the city can adapt locally to the changes in our climate.

Long-term projected climate trends for Edinburgh includes:

- Average temperatures will continue to increase across all seasons.
- Typical summers will be warmer and drier and winters milder and wetter.
- Weather will remain variable and may become more variable.
- Intense, heavy rainfall events will increase in both winter and summer.

- As global average temperatures increase, we will also experience rises in sea level around Edinburgh's coast.
- Winter frost and snowfall will reduce.

These changes impacts on our built environment. Rising temperatures, severe and variable weather and intense rainfall are damaging our buildings and infrastructure and causing disruption to travel. We should therefore build resilience into Edinburgh's built environment as well as its community and health service.

The CRE Plan sets out the specific actions required to address the risks and impacts of these changes in climate. It aims to adapt Edinburgh in ways that are fair, equitable and beneficial to our people, communities and businesses and help deliver a nature positive city. There are nine priority themes and thirty-one objectives in the Plan, which each have a set of actions for delivery between now and 2030. Amongst the nine priority themes, Priority A and Priority F have been identified as having most relevance to housing and homelessness.

Priority A – Planning and the built environment includes actions to help mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing flooding and overheating of buildings and surrounding environment, increasing the resilience of Edinburgh's social housing stock and rental sector, and supporting owners of basement properties to prepare for increased flood risk.

Priority F – Community, health and wellbeing includes actions to support and build the resilience of our communities and health services, taking a 'people first' approach and ensuring a just transition for all, for example by incorporating other extreme weather events into Edinburgh's Winter Weather Contingency Plan to ensure homeless people and rough sleepers are informed and protected during these times.

Current Delivery

There is significant ongoing activity in Edinburgh around energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation. Key areas of activity include:

- All new build Council owned homes to have zero direct emissions heating sources and built to Passivhaus energy efficiency standards.
- Energy efficiency improvements to the Council's existing social housing stock and privately owned homes within a mixed tenure setting, adopting the "whole house retrofit" and area-based regeneration approach.
- Development of heat network projects in Edinburgh, most significantly ongoing work to appoint a concessionaire to deliver and operate a heat network in Granton Waterfront.

3.1 New Homes

The New Build Heat Standard sets out the acceptable standard for all new builds seeking building warrants from April 2024 onwards in Scotland. Homes and buildings are not allowed to use polluting oil and gas boilers. Instead, they must use climate-friendly alternatives like heat pumps and heat networks.

[Edinburgh Design Guidance](#) (January 2020) forms part of non-statutory planning guidance, which interpret the policies set out in the Local Development Plan. It sets out expectations for the design of new building development, design of streets and parking standards in Edinburgh.

The design guidance includes a range of requirements and considerations to ensure all new build homes are energy efficient:

- The orientation of buildings should be set so that residents can utilise the benefits of solar gain and daylight and reduce energy demand.
- Consider measures to mitigate impact of summer overheating.
- Compliance with the carbon dioxide emissions reduction targets as per the Scottish Government's policy.
- Meet the current Scottish Building Regulations through a combination of energy efficiency measures such as high levels of insulation, air tightness, energy efficient appliances, and the use of low or zero carbon technology.
- Provision of good levels of natural light and sunlight in buildings and spaces in order to benefit the health and quality of life of the residents

and users of the buildings as well as helping to save energy through reducing lighting and heating demands.

The Council has also set a default requirement that all new build Council homes in Edinburgh must meet the Certified Passivhaus energy efficiency standard, ensuring they are highly energy efficient. This standard also allows for the use of low-carbon heating systems, so new buildings will not produce emissions from fossil fuels. Importantly, this helps avoid adding to the challenge of decarbonizing Council-owned homes.

3.2 Retrofitting existing homes

Edinburgh has the highest percentage of homes built before 1945 in Scotland and within Edinburgh, private rented and owner-occupied homes have significantly higher percentage of home built before 1945, at 58% and 50% respectively, than social rented homes at 22%.

Edinburgh also has the second highest percentage of flats (instead of houses) in Scotland at 66%, with Glasgow having the highest percentage of flats at 73%, compared to the Scottish average of 36%.

Based on the data from the Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2017-19, it is estimated that about a third (c.80,000) of homes in Edinburgh were flats built before 1945. In addition, there are 50 conservation areas in Edinburgh that have special architectural or historic interest. The Council must protect these areas and there are extra rules to control building work to these homes.

The Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2017-19 also found that approximately 44% of all homes in Edinburgh failed to comply with the SHQS, with homes in the social rented and private sector having higher percentage of non-compliance at 45% each, than those in owner-occupier sector at 43%.

About a third (29%) of Edinburgh's homes were in urgent disrepair, i.e. homes requiring immediate repair to prevent further damage of the building or health

and safety risk to occupants, ranging from 27% in the owner-occupier sector, to 28% in the social rented sector, to 35% in the private rented sector.

If focusing on the critical elements of a building, which relates to disrepair to building elements central to weather-tightness, structural stability and preventing deterioration of the property, the percentage reduced to 23%, i.e. about a quarter of Edinburgh's homes were in urgent disrepair of critical elements.

This profile of Edinburgh's housing means that there are additional challenges to repair, maintain and improve existing homes, especially in relation to works in the common areas of mixed tenure blocks, where agreement from the majority of owners is required for repair and maintenance work to progress and unanimous agreement is required for improvement work (unless the title deeds stated otherwise).

According to the Scottish Housing Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2017-19, about 2% of the owner-occupied housing in Edinburgh were estimated to be Below Tolerable Standard (BTS), while no statistically robust sample was found in the social rented and private rented sector.

There are no Housing Renewal Areas designated in Edinburgh. The Council uses the Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service and Mixed Tenure Improvement Service to help repair, maintain and improve the condition of existing housing instead, especially those in the owner-occupied sector.

The Council's [Edinburgh Shared Repairs Service](#) offers free advice and information to help owners organise repairs to the shared or common areas of a building. Its Missing Shares Service helps flat owners who are having problems getting other owners to pay their share of repair costs, enabling essential repairs and maintenance to progress in the common areas of a tenement or block of flats.

Missing Shares paid since the implementation of the scheme in September 2017 (to March 2025) amount to around £266,000. The value of works facilitated through applications to the scheme amounts to £7.2m of privately arranged common repair projects. This demonstrates the value of the scheme for private owners. Only 33% of applications resulted in actual payment by the Council due

to owners who previously did not pay, then making payment after applications were submitted.

The creation of mixed tenure neighbourhoods in the 1980s and 1990s, arising from Right-to-Buy legislation, has led to increased complexity in taking forward repairs, maintenance and improvements to common areas of blocks or tenements, which were once solely owned by the Council.

Investment is needed to the external fabric and communal areas of mixed tenure blocks to ensure flats are warm, damp free, safe, secure and wind and watertight. Taking the fabric first approach will assist the Council to comply with the requirements set by the Scottish Government in relation to EESSH2 and also support owner occupiers and landlords in achieving future energy efficiency standards. In addition, making progress towards the Councils objectives to meet the Net Zero Carbon target by 2030 and reduce fuel poverty.

On 7th June 2018, the Council approved a [Mixed Tenure Improvement Strategy](#), setting out the next steps to tackle mixed tenure repairs, including a proposal to establish a Mixed Tenure Service to engage with all residents and manage the delivery of the construction work. The Mixed Tenure Improvement Service (MTIS) was established as a result and its implementation was started in 2020.

A pilot project in Murrayburn, Hailesland and Dumbryden was established, working with private owners and Council tenants to organise work on 180 blocks, involving 1,400 homes, with approximately 1,000 homes owned by the Council and the remaining 400 owned by private owners.

As the pilot progressed, the Council has extended its Scheme of Assistance to support owners to pay for their share of costs arising from Council-led mixed tenure work. Owners are expected to secure private finance from the market to meet their share of the work. Should owners have difficulty securing finance from the market, the Council can provide extended debt repayment terms to help owners meeting their responsibilities.

The policy is aimed at getting the balance right for both the Council and debtors whilst not encouraging owners to agree payment plans with the Council by default, as the market is more likely to offer more financially attractive

alternatives. However, longer repayment terms may be a preferable option for people who are unable to access high street finance but may end up facing an inhibition order if they cannot afford to repay costs within the previous Council's debt repayment terms; owners with total MTIS debts of more than £10,000 could be offered a payment plan of a maximum of ten years. Under the enhanced Scheme of Assistance, owners with total MTIS debts of more than £7,000 could be offered a payment plan of up to 15 years.

As a last resort, owner occupiers may also consider an option to sell their flat back to the Council and remain in their home with a Scottish Secure Tenancy, in line with the agreed strategy for consolidation or divestment of interest in mixed tenure blocks, as set out in the Council's Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

This option is available where owner occupiers have exhausted all potential options to fund repairs to their homes privately. The Council may consider buying an owner occupiers home, either on the open market with vacant possession or to offer a sitting tenancy. Between May 2022 and March 2025, 24 tenanted acquisitions with owner occupiers have taken place to help progress MTIS projects and other block improvement work through block consolidation. The purchase price has been around two thirds of the home report value.

More recently, the Council agreed to extend the tenanted acquisition offering (under current conditions) to private sector landlords in all Council led mixed tenure improvement projects where the Council currently owns at least 50% of the homes in the block, allowing the affected private tenants to remain in the properties as Council tenants.

The MTIS pilot in Murrayburn, Hailesland and Dumbryden is now in its final years and engagement work has already started in the next area-based regeneration areas in Lochend and Restalrig and in Magdelene, Bingham and the Christians, which will form part of the 15-year investment plan to progress the WHR investment in low rise blocks.

Adopting the model developed in the MTIS pilot and an area-based approach, the investment plan for low rise blocks will ensure wider building and neighbourhood improvements are undertaken at the same time. The holistic

area-based investment will help to rationalise capital programme investment and reduce the requirement to revisit the same area for future investment. It will also allow current resources to be focussed on specific larger areas of investment rather than spread thinly across multiple fabric upgrade projects, helping the capital programme to achieve constant and significant delivery.

The proposed 15-year investment plan consists of three phases, which broadly follow the SIMD ranking for data zones. The strategy currently focusses on investment that supports wider poverty alleviation outcomes. As the low-rise stock condition survey findings continue to be submitted more informed planning of priority areas can be undertaken.

Phase 1 will include all homes that sit within the most deprived 5% SIMD data zones and the vast majority of areas in the most deprived 10% SIMD data zones. These areas typically have challenging mixed tenures and pre-1950 stock. Phase 2 will move to areas where the majority of homes fall within the most deprived 20% SIMD data zones. Challenging mixed tenures still exist in Phase 2, but a higher percentage of houses instead of blocks starts to emerge. Phase 3 will be for areas where most of the homes sit out with data zones in the most deprived 20% SIMD. Some of the area-based schemes in Phase 3 are smaller in scale in terms of CEC homes and with house to block ratio parity or above.

Acquisitions and Disposals

The Council's Acquisition and Disposal (A&D) programme aims to increase the number of Council homes and consolidate block ownership, and in turn, helps to manage block repairs and improvements.

Since 2015 (to March 2025), the Council has purchased 506 homes and sold 230 homes through the A&D programme. This has led to 102 blocks becoming fully Council owned, 169 blocks where the Council has divested its interest and 382 blocks where the Council has further consolidated its majority ownership.

In addition to block consolidation, and to meet the wider objective of increasing overall supply, the project also includes the purchase of houses. There continues to be significant demand for ground floor, larger family homes. Most houses

have been purchased in areas where the Council currently has ownership. However, as the demand for 4-bed plus homes has increased, consideration is also given to purchasing suitable larger homes outwith the traditional areas. The Council has purchased 19 standalone houses to date.

The total number of acquisitions across the city has increased from 32 homes in 2020/21 (when the MTIS pilot started) to 89 homes in 2023/24 and 156 homes in 2024/25. The vast majority of the acquisitions took place in Pentland Hills ward within South-West locality, where the MTIS pilot in Murrayburn, Hailesland and Dumbyrden is situated in, and many owners opted to sell their homes back to the Council.

301 of the acquired homes were purchased privately and 205 were purchased off the market.

The Council is seeking to broaden the criteria for the A&D scheme, with a report on this going to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in February 2025.

High Rise

There are 50 high rise blocks within the Council housing estates, accounting for around 20% of overall Council homes. The majority of the blocks are of a mixed tenure with a mix of Council tenants, private owners and landlords. The blocks were typically constructed around the 1960's, some using non-traditional construction methods and materials for the time. This type of construction and the age of blocks mean that they are typically difficult to heat, resulting in a greater risk of dampness, mould and condensation. In addition, some are listed as historical buildings due to their heritage and are therefore more challenging to maintain and improve.

A different approach is therefore required to progress the WHR investment in high rise blocks. Specific bespoke design and intrusive survey processes are required for the various construction types found across these blocks.

The programme of work for high-rise blocks will work through the blocks (with four exceptions noted below) over the next 10 -15 years, carried out on a priority

basis using stock condition information, to bring the blocks up to an 'enhanced standard'. The retrofit strategy means that all aspects of the building are targeted, including the main structure, the thermal efficiency of the envelope to water tanks, to electrical systems, lifts, common areas and fire safety.

The current investment plan aims to have four blocks in design development and four blocks in delivery each year, as well as delivering environmental projects in the local area surrounding the high-rise blocks.

There are currently 12 high-rise blocks in various stages of design and development. As part of the early stages of project inception, we carry out a full structural assessment which gives the structure a health check and provides assurance that the building is a sustainable and viable building (in conjunction with the retrofit works) for a minimum of 50 years. Four blocks are already in the final stages of design with construction work expected to commence in 2025/26. Eight blocks are close to reaching final RIBA Stage 2, where architects translate initial ideas into detailed and innovative design concepts.

Fire Safety has been identified as a priority action through the stock condition survey reports. When blocks are progressing through the retrofit programme, it is critical that fire safety is an integral part of the design programme and the construction phase. In some cases, fire safety works have been identified which cannot wait for the main investment programme to reach them. A separate fire safety programme has therefore been approved which can progress in other blocks in tandem with the investment programme. This is on site now and progressing through its own priority list with a Fire Strategy Programme in place.

In addition to the WHR investment on improving the fabric of the high-rise blocks to help meeting EESSH2, the Councils High-Rise Management Team is responsible for managing a range of activities designed to maintain and protect the investment in blocks, the blocks themselves as well as the tenants and residents that there. This includes managing the cyclical maintenance programme within homes (kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors and heating systems) and within the common areas (CCTV, water tanks, pumps, generators, lifts, mechanical and electrical systems and communal heating systems). The team also carry out an important Concierge factoring type service including

owners billing, block safety inspections and the control and management of third-party contractors who may want to carry out work in these buildings whilst not under the direct control of the Council.

There are four blocks where the Council is in a minority ownership where carrying out large scale investment work is particularly challenging. A separate long-term strategic approach is being developed at the moment which will be subject to further consultation and approval.

During the engagement exercise for the LHS development, stakeholders highlighted the importance of engaging all affected residents, tenants and owners in the area-based regeneration areas, and to communicate the Council's investment plans as early as possible, to enable appropriate planning for the financial and/or rehousing requirements.

Building on the work captured as part of the HEAP around "improving customer experience", the Council will carry out further engagement with tenants and residents in addition to ongoing engagement around investment plans. This will take into account the tenant and community experience of high rise living and longer-term aspirations to help inform future planning and investment.

3.3 Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area-Based Schemes (EES: ABS)

The Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area-Based Schemes (EES: ABS) is a Scottish Government scheme which provides funding to local authorities to reduce fuel poverty and enhance energy efficiency in privately-owned homes through the installation of insulation and other energy efficiency measures. This funding is aimed at areas with high fuel poverty and offers grants to assist homeowners in high fuel-poverty areas with the costs of energy efficiency upgrades. In areas where council-owned homes are present, the council covers the expenses of these improvements. The following table sets out the grant-funded measures delivered throughout the city in the last five years up to 2023/24. The table does not include measures that were not supported by grant funding.

The grant allocation for the 2024/25 programme was issued by Scottish Government in September 2024 and work is expected to continue until the end

of June 2025. This includes external wall insulation (EWI) projects and solar PV/Internal Wall Insulation (IWI) programmes across the city. The 2025/26 EES:ABS programme will focus its funding on support for private owners across the two low rise area based programmes at Magdalene, Bingham and the Christians and Restalrig and Lochend.

Table 4. EES:ABS grant funded measures delivered over the last five years to 2023/24 (Scottish Government [publication](#))

Measure	Private	Social	Total
Internal Wall Insulation (solid wall)	276	10	286
External Wall Insulation (solid wall)	551	626	1177
Cavity Wall Insulation	58	9	67
External Wall Insulation for Cavity Walls	480	169	649
Hard to treat CWI (CWI solution)	459	250	709
Loft insulation (virgin)	38	3	41
Loft insulation (top up)	65	21	86
Room in Roof insulation	20	1	21
Under Floor Insulation	47	6	53
Draught Proofing	16	0	16
Window Glazing	10	0	10
Heating Controls	33	0	33
Photovoltaics*	704	164	868
Total	2757	1259	4016

*Includes 443 solar PV and 425 battery storage

3.4 Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund

In 2021, Scottish Government made £200 million available to support social landlords across Scotland to install zero direct emission heating systems and energy efficiency measures, to help meeting the fuel poverty target by 2040 and the net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) is available up to 2026.

The latest funding round consists of two themes, with a maximum value of grant available of £5 million per project:

- theme 1 – zero direct emissions heating system for social housing across Scotland: the financial support available will be a contribution of up to a maximum of 60% of total CAPEX (capital expenditure) costs for the zero direct emissions heating elements only.
- theme 2 – “fabric first” energy efficiency only projects: the financial available represents a funding contribution of up to a maximum of 50% of eligible CAPEX costs.

This is the only capital funding available to social landlords for energy efficiency measures in social housing and landlords are required to submit applications to be considered for the fund. Funding is available on a project-by-project basis and is not guaranteed, making it difficult for social landlords to make long-term financial plan around the funding and energy efficiency investment.

In light of this, the Convenor of the Council’s Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee wrote to the COSLA President and the Cabinet Secretary in November 2022 and set out the significant challenges that Edinburgh faces in relation to EESSH2 delivery, and requested that serious consideration was given to applying a funding formula based on need to the SHNZHF as well as requesting an increase to the overall fund.

3.5 Heat Networks

The Council plans to implement various initiatives to improve energy standards and decarbonise the city's buildings. These include setting stricter planning

policies, such as the Edinburgh Design Guide, to ensure new buildings meet higher energy standards and requiring low and zero-emissions technologies for heating and powering buildings. Additionally, the Council is creating a City Heat and Energy Partnership with the University of Edinburgh, SP Energy Networks, and other stakeholders to develop joint investment and heat masterplans. A city-wide heat and energy plan will be developed, aligning current and future grid development with the city’s energy needs and promoting renewable energy solutions like wind, geothermal, hydro, and solar power. The Council will also work with partners to decarbonise energy infrastructure and identify Heat Network Zones across the city.

As part of the Edinburgh 2030 Climate Strategy, the Council will also work to ensure infrastructure projects connect to heat networks and work with communities and developers to build heat networks for key public buildings and new developments. The Council will collaborate on local energy projects to provide low-cost, clean energy to neighbourhoods, with a focus on disadvantaged areas. It will also align electricity grid investments with development plans to support increased local energy generation and explore the potential for local energy generation communities as part of net-zero pilot projects.

In line with the net zero carbon strategy, the Council is seeking to deliver a low carbon heat network (planned to be operational in 2025) as part of the Granton Waterfront regeneration that will supply cost-competitive heat from low carbon sources to Granton Waterfront and the surrounding area. Modelling shows that the heat network will result in long-term carbon and financial savings.

3.6 Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is defined in Scotland as existing if more than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of net household income is required to pay for their reasonable fuel needs after housing costs have been deducted; and, the remaining household income is not enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living (defined as at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) once childcare costs and disability or care benefits are deducted).

Scottish Government estimated that in 2022, 791,000 households (31% of all households) in Scotland were in fuel poverty, of which 472,000 (18.5% of all households) were in extreme fuel poverty. Scottish Government's Fuel Poverty Strategy (2021) identifies the four main drivers of fuel poverty as:

- poor home energy efficiency
- high energy costs
- low household income
- how energy is used in the home.

Data from the Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2017-19 found that, despite social housing having the highest energy efficiency rating, tenants in social rented homes were more likely to be fuel poor, primarily driven by the relatively low household income.

In September 2020, the Edinburgh Poverty Commission published its final report, [A Just Capital: Actions to End Poverty in Edinburgh](#), and a call to action for the city to end poverty in Edinburgh by 2030. The report identifies six areas for action – fair work, a decent home, income security, opportunities to progress, connections and belonging, health and wellbeing; making links with housing condition and income “security” with poverty, including fuel poverty.

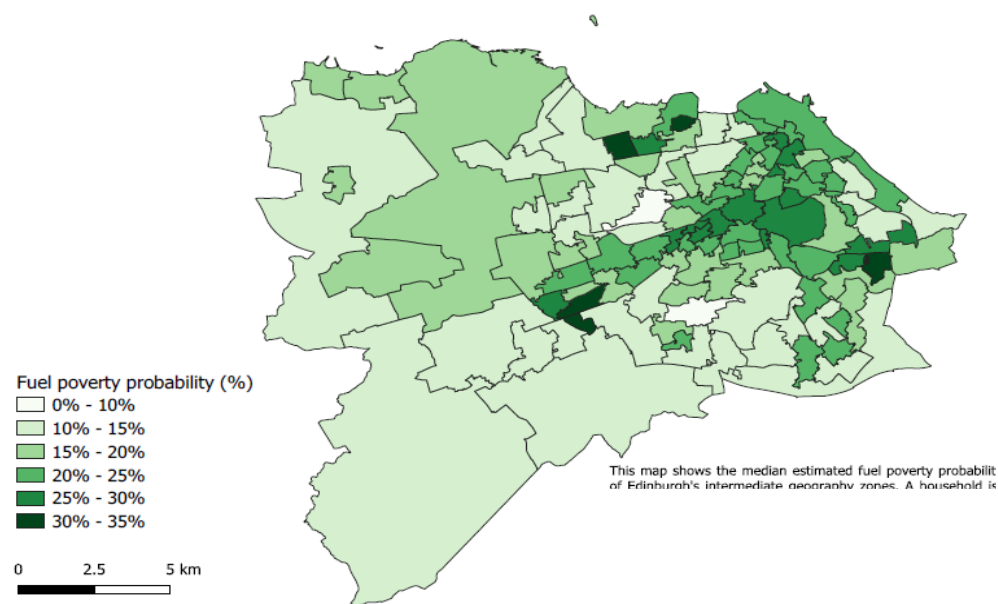
Table 5. Scottish House Condition Survey Local Authority Analyses 2017-19, City of Edinburgh Council

	All Tenures	Owner-occupied	Social Housing	Private Rented
% of Dwellings with an Energy Efficiency Rating (SAP 2012) of B or C (high rating)	51%	47%	66%	55%
Mean/ Average SAP 2012 Rating	66.7	66.0	70.5	66.3
% of Households in Fuel Poverty	21%	11%	38%	35%

% of Households in Extreme Fuel Poverty	11%	7%	12%	22%
Mean/Average Household Income	£32,800	£37,500	£19,300	£28,300

The Energy Saving Trust's Home Analytics data provides the probability of households experiencing fuel poverty, using data from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Scottish House Condition Survey, energy measures installed in the properties, tenure of the households, etc. The estimate shows that households in Clovenstone, Westerhailes and Muirhouse Intermediate Geography areas have the highest probability of experiencing fuel poverty, with both areas having high concentrations of Council and ex-Council homes. The map below shows the probability of households experiencing fuel poverty across the city.

Figure 5. Median Fuel Poverty Probability by intermediate geography zone, Energy Saving Trust, 2017-19



The map above shows the median estimated fuel poverty probability of each of the City of Edinburgh's intermediate zones. A household is considered to be in fuel poverty when their fuel bill is more than 10% of its full income, after housing costs. The data shown in the map is modelled from each property's characteristics (levels of insulation, heating system, type, etc) and demographic data (tenure, SIMD decile etc) and calibrated using the local authority-level fuel poverty rate as described by the 2017-19 Scottish House condition Survey. Source: Home Analytics Scotland v3.9.1, Energy Saving Trust.

In light of this, the Council has commissioned Changeworks to offer in depth energy advice to Council tenants. The Energy Advice Service provides;

- Information on how to use energy systems and storage heaters efficiently
- Information to combat condensation and dampness
- Help to accessing funds and grants e.g. Warm Home Discount and Winter Fuel Payment/ Pension Age Winter Heating Payment
- Support to compare tariffs and help to switch providers
- Support to prevent/manage fuel debt
- Support to correct billing errors.

The Energy Advice Service aims to reduce fuel poverty and brings together different resources, they offer in person events and a one-to-one service for specific needs. The service supported 1,621 tenants in 2024/25 (February 2024 to January 2025), resulting in c.£305,000 of financial savings to tenants and 413,000 kg of carbon saving.

As low household income is one of the main drivers for fuel poverty, the Council has a dedicated Income Maximisation Service for Council tenants. The service received 478 referrals from frontline housing staff within the localities and helped Council tenants to secure nearly £185,500 extra income in 2024/25, which included Housing Benefits paid to tenants' rent accounts, Universal Credits Housing Costs, Council Tax, overpayment and other additional income.

A Tenant Hardship Fund was also set up, as part of 2023/24 Council housing budget, to support Council tenants experiencing financial hardship, including those who cannot access benefits. In the first year of operation, 2,585 awards were made, with a total of £576,332 paid out to tenants.

The criteria of the Fund was extended in 2024/25 to assist tenants facing pressing personal / family financial pressures (for example, to replace or repair household appliances, to pay for school activities and to meet demands for energy bills or personal debts). The maximum award has also been increased to two fortnightly (four weeks) rent payments where appropriate. In 2024/25, a total of 1,814 applications were received and £660,185 was awarded to 1,591 tenants. The majority of the remaining applications are either being reviewed or awaiting further information for the application. There were 223 refused or duplicate applications.

In addition to the support above, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) is a UK government initiative, aimed at helping low-income and vulnerable households improve energy efficiency in their homes. The ECO4 Flex scheme allows local authorities in Scotland to work with energy suppliers to identify eligible households that may not meet the standard ECO4 requirements but still need support. Through flexible eligibility criteria, local authorities can refer households for upgrades like insulation, efficient heating systems, and renewable energy installations.

In order to qualify, homes require a low Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating (typically D or below) and must meet specific income or vulnerability criteria. The goal of the scheme is to achieve lower energy costs for those most in need while reducing carbon emissions and improving energy efficiency standards in Scotland's housing stock.

When eligible, ECO Flex funding will be considered to complement Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes (EES: ABS) programmes and also to assist the delivery of mixed tenure projects to the homes of households at risk of fuel poverty. The Council's ECO4 statement can be found [here](#).

3.7 Dampness, Mould and Condensation

Following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak from Rochdale in 2020 as a direct result of black mould in the flat he lived in, there has been greater awareness than ever before of the serious impact the presence of damp and mould can have on the health of residents.

In February 2023, “*Putting Safety First: A Briefing Note on Damp and Mould for Social Housing Practitioners*” was jointly published by the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (ALACHO), Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), and the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The briefing provided an overview for practitioners and landlords on how to deal with damp and mould in a way which is proactive, understanding of tenants’ experiences, and to resolve the underlying issues effectively.

As mentioned under the National Context section of this chapter, Scottish Housing Regulator published [Our Regulation of Social Housing: a discussion paper](#) in June 2023 to look for ideas to strengthen its Regulatory Framework in relation to listening to tenants, quality of homes and tenant and resident safety. A revised Regulatory Framework was published in February 2024 as a result, which came into effect on 1 April 2024. A subsequent [consultation on the proposed changes of the ARC](#) (Annual Return on the Charter), was carried out between 16th September and 8th November 2024, including the potential introduction of three performance indicators on damp and mould:

- Average length of time taken to resolve cases of damp and/or mould.
- Percentage of resolved cases of damp and/or mould that were reopened.
- Number of open cases of damp and/or mould at the year end.

The SHR published its response to the consultation in January 2025, to allow social landlords to start collecting the data from 1st April 2025 for the 2025/26 ARC. For each of the new indicators, landlords will be asked to provide a breakdown of cases (i) caused by condensation and (ii) caused by structural issues.

Data from the Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-19 Local Authority Analyses stated that 4% of social housing in Edinburgh was found to have rising or penetrating damp, compared to the city’s average of all tenures of 2%. The analyses also found that 13% of social housing had condensation problem, compared to 5% in the owner-occupied sector, 8% in the private rented sector and the city’s average of 7%.

Damp and Mould are issues that the Council continues to prioritise. Over the last 12 months, there has been significant investment in this area and a dedicated Damp and Mould team has been established, to support tenants who are experiencing these issues.

The Council developed and implemented a [new process](#) to manage issues of dampness, mould and condensation in Council homes in 2021, which aimed to deliver on a range of objectives including:

- Improving communication.
- Providing a direct point of contact for customers.
- Undertaking a survey for every reported case.
- Increased sense of ownership; and
- All issues resolved to the tenant’s satisfaction.

A review of the new process was undertaken and [reported](#) in January 2022. The review found that while some elements of the new process had been integrated, such as completing a survey for each report, several areas required further development to enable a full rollout. The main challenge was a lack of capacity, especially as damp and mould reports were increasing, and the process was resource-intensive at a time when internal resources and contractor availability were significantly strained.

Key recommendations from the 2022 review included:

- Recruitment of an additional qualified dampness surveyor to manage increased demand.
- Providing additional administrative support for case officers, with a focus on improved tenant communication, focusing on timely, detailed letters.

- Integrating Changeworks referrals earlier in the process to reinforce the advice provided by the Energy Advice Service.
- Strengthening contract management to improve performance and productivity where subcontractors are used.
- Review of training and support requirements for staff involved in dealing with cases of dampness, condensation and mould.

In response to the recommendations to the review, [a Dampness, Preservation and Mould Service Improvement Plan was](#) developed in 2023. Progress is monitored regularly through the Cyclical Assurance on Service Performance report to Council's Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

3.8 Repairs

The written submission from Shelter Scotland to the LHS consultation stated that:

“... substandard living conditions pose serious risks to the health and wellbeing of tenants, contributing to respiratory illnesses, mental health problems, and other long-term health issues” and “... poor housing conditions disproportionately impact low-income households, exacerbating inequality and trapping people in a cycle of poverty. Addressing disrepair is essential not only for improving residents’ quality of life but also for reducing strain on public services”.

Council House Repairs

Repairs in Council homes emerged as a theme within the LHS engagement, with links identified between property condition (quality repairs and maintenance) and health and wellbeing of the residents.

The Council's Housing Emergency Action Plan includes actions to improve the management speed and quality of repairs in both Council homes and private rented sector, as captured in the proposed actions table beneath.

Opportunities

There are various legislative and regulatory changes that may take effect over the lifetime of this LHS. These will be monitored and responded to on an ongoing

basis and their progress and impact will also be reviewed as part of the LHS annual review process and include.

- Social Housing Net Zero Standard
- Heat in Buildings Bill
- New Housing Standards for all tenures
- Compulsory owners’ associations in all tenement blocks
- Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):

Ensure all homes are well maintained, energy efficient, safe, sustainable and climate proofed, working towards net zero emissions

Reduce fuel poverty and ensure every household has a warm home they can afford to heat

Key Challenges:

Edinburgh's housing stock - making improvements in blocks of flats requires agreement from multiple stakeholders, including absentee landlords who are often hard to engage. Securing agreement for complex and costly work has proven to be difficult, and in some cases, unrealistic without further guidance and regulation from the Scottish Government. Additionally, the high volume of flats creates practical issues, such as limited space for installing heat pumps and fewer opportunities for solar panel installations to offset electricity costs.

Most homes in Edinburgh are connected to the gas grid, making the shift to zero-emissions heating more difficult. Gas heating is widely used because it is affordable, has a well-established supply chain, and offers high flow temperatures, making it an attractive option for many. Transitioning from gas to electricity-based heating, like heat pumps, introduces challenges such as noise, space requirements, and higher costs.

High costs of installation for decarbonisation technologies, budget constraints and uncertainty over funding beyond 2026/27. Costs involved are often the major barrier for homeowners and private landlords trying to improve their homes to high energy efficiency/ net zero standard. For social landlords, there

is a challenge to keep rents affordable while raising enough rental income to fund the investment required to meet the net zero standard.
Behavioural factors including the need for public education around energy efficiency, and the willingness of people to change their behaviours.
The electricity grid may face capacity issues as more homes switch from gas to electric heating.
Retrofitting certain buildings could prove to be both practically and financially difficult, especially when the investment doesn't yield a conventional payback.
There are also concerns about the Council's limited influence on Scottish and UK government policies and unclear regulations for heat networks.
Rapidly changing technology - there are few companies who can carry out the work required and as the Scottish target approaches, all other RSLs in Scotland will be bidding for the same contractors to do the work, putting access to the required skills and knowledge under strain.
The Council has set high ambitions for the delivery of its own net zero ready homes ahead of Scottish Government targets and to higher specifications. Aiming to deliver specifications ahead of the required Building Regulations comes with additional costs and pathfinding for more sustainable products and technologies in the marketplace, all of which need to be compatible with the expectations of the insurance market.

Proposed Actions
11.Continue to support all new build Council homes to be constructed to high standards of energy efficiency and sustainability. <i>There is a lower energy demand to heat the homes, with low or zero emissions heating systems required. This means they will minimise the amount of carbon emissions to aid with the city's ambition to be net zero carbon and reduce fuel poverty.</i>
12.Investment in blocks with Council ownership - Implement the 15-year Whole House Retrofit (WHR) investment plan for low rise blocks
13.Develop an investment and management strategy with an aim to make homes in high rise blocks warm, safe and sustainable.
14.Assess and review the future of the high rise estate.
15.Support delivery of the Edinburgh Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) 2023-2028.
16.Continue to make a case for a funding formula based on need to the Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund (SHNZHF) and an increase to the overall fund.

17.Provide advice and guidance and take enforcement action where required, to ensure the tolerable and repair standards are met.
18.Continue to develop in house capacity and skills in order to grow a public sector workforce capable of delivering the investment needed to repair and climate-proof homes across the city.

Chapter 4. Prevent and respond to homelessness

Strategic Objective(s):
Prevent homelessness wherever possible
Where temporary accommodation is required, this will meet the needs of the household
Support people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible
Reduce the number of people sleeping rough

Introduction

This chapter will outline growing pressures within the housing system and the impact this has on those threatened with or experiencing homelessness. It will set out the range of work ongoing as part of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, reflecting on actions which have completed, actions which remain ongoing and will be taken forward as part of the LHS, and any new actions identified.

National Context

The Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area and to prepare a strategy (as part of the LHS) for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness.

In 2017, the Scottish Government established a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to determine the changes necessary to eradicate rough sleeping, transform temporary accommodation, and ultimately end homelessness. Following publication of the HARSAG recommendations, the Scottish Government required all Local Authorities to publish a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by December 2018.

The Scottish Government's Ending *Homelessness Together* is the national homelessness strategy, which set out a range of actions in response to the recommendations of the HARSAG, including the development of RRTP's. *Ending Homelessness Together* has a focus on eradicating rough sleeping,

supporting the most vulnerable households and reducing time spent in temporary housing.

A series of legislative changes have been introduced in recent years which have had a marked impact on service provision:

- The Commencement of Section 4 of the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (on 7 November 2019) made changes to the intentionality test. This change meant that Local Authorities can now choose whether or not to investigate intentionality.
- The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 extended legislation prohibiting the use of unsuitable accommodation for longer than 7 days for pregnant women and children to include all homeless households. In addition to this, a new Temporary Accommodation Standards Framework was published in April 2023, to ensure that all temporary accommodation throughout Scotland is of consistently high quality.
- The Homeless Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022 suspended the requirement for households to have a local connection to the area they were making a homeless application to. A local connection refers to a person residing (for at least 6 months in the area or 3 years within the past 5 years), being employed or having family based in the area (who have been resident for at least 5 years) or having a special circumstance.

Horizon Scanning

- The Housing Scotland Bill will introduce a new 'ask and act' duty on specified public sector bodies, requiring them to ask about a person's housing situation and act to prevent them becoming homeless wherever possible. This chapter outlines the preparatory work underway in anticipation of the 'ask and act' duty coming into force.

- The Bill also extends the time period where households threatened with homelessness can seek assistance. Households will be able to present to local authorities and receive support up to six months prior to being homeless (rather than the current two). It is foreseeable that there will be a rise in the number of households seeking or receiving homelessness assistance from Local Authorities as a result.

Local Context

The number of households in temporary accommodation in the city has continued to rise, along with the time spent in temporary accommodation. The latest statutory returns show that Edinburgh has the highest number of households in temporary accommodation at over 5,000, along with having the highest average time in temporary accommodation at 429 days in 2024/25.

The number of households in temporary accommodation and the time spent there was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 emergency. During the pandemic, the Council was required to significantly increase the amount of temporary accommodation available to meet demand. Pre-pandemic, there were 3,570 households in temporary accommodation and at the end of March 2025, there were 5,426 (including 1,035 in unsuitable temporary accommodation). Throughput from temporary accommodation services slowed during the pandemic across all tenures.

There has been an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless and accessing temporary accommodation, driven by a number of policy and legislative changes by national government. The total number of households who are assessed as unintentionally homeless with a local connection was 7,416 as at 31 March 2025. This includes households who have recently left Home Office accommodation following a positive asylum decision and an increase in the number of Ukrainian Displaced People (UDPs) presenting as homeless and accessing temporary accommodation.

Coupled with this, Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland. Where an individual/household has been assessed as statutorily homeless as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, silver priority is awarded for bidding for homes through Edinburgh's Choice housing allocation system.

The number of households in temporary accommodation in Edinburgh is at the highest level since Scottish Government recording began and households are now, on average, staying in temporary accommodation for longer. This is a reflection of the acute pressures around housing need and demand. Supply is central to this crisis. However, preventing and addressing homelessness is about more than securing somewhere to live. There needs to be consideration of people and household's circumstances as a whole, including wellbeing, employment, welfare needs, and health and social care. In a time of increasing challenge, partnership working has never been more important.

In 2024, Council lets were suspended from November 2024 to January 2025, due to a need to address the compliance issue within temporary accommodation by eliminating the use of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) properties. This resulted in the service having access to around 500 less bedspaces. Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee agreed the Medium to Long Term Plan for Temporary Accommodation in February 2025.

There were 2,472 instances where the Council had failed to accommodate 1,026 households in 2024/25. This was an increase from the previous year where there were 1,450 instances affecting 550 households. To address this and the compliance risk around using unsuitable forms of temporary accommodation, Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee agreed to suspend Council lets for a second time from 25 April 2025.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan

The homelessness strategy for Edinburgh is currently set out in Edinburgh's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), which is set around four strategic objectives.

1. Preventing homelessness in the first place.
2. Where temporary accommodation is required, this will meet the needs of the household.
3. Supporting people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible; and
4. Reducing the number of people sleeping rough.

The Council intends to mainstream the RRTP into its LHS going forward and will carry forward those RRTP actions which are ongoing, as well as capturing any additional actions identified. This chapter provides updates on the delivery of the RRTP under each of the four strategic objectives.

Current Delivery

4.1 Preventing homelessness

The first strategic action in the Edinburgh RRTP is to prevent homelessness in the first place. This has been instrumental in the shift to prevention led services and has supported officers to secure additional ongoing funding for prevention services from the Council.

Through the Council's Homelessness Transformational Prevention Programme, teams have been embedded to focus on preventing homelessness and supporting people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible. Further detail on each of these is provided below. These services have recently won an award in the Scottish Housing Awards in the housing-led approaches to ending homelessness category.

Homelessness Prevention Working Group - A Homelessness Prevention Working Group has been established with cross Council representation and third sector representation via the Strategic Homeless Action Partnership Edinburgh (SHAPE). Membership now also includes a representative from public health.

A refreshed workplan setting out the priorities for the next 6-12 months has been developed and leads for each of the workstreams are in the process of being allocated. The workplan will focus on:

- Access to employability for homeless households/households threatened with homelessness.
- Hidden homelessness and place-based approaches to prevention.
- Preparing for the Homelessness Prevention Duties; and
- Tenancy sustainment.

Prevention and partnership housing officers - This small team was established in preparation for the Prevention Duty, which has now been confirmed in the Housing (Scotland) Bill. The role of the Officers is to develop and deliver training for internal and external partners to use their existing conversations with people to identify a risk of homelessness, supporting the aims of the new duties. The officers delivered 45 training sessions in 2023/24 and 66 training sessions in 2024/25.

The officers have been part of a working group to incorporate this training into a suite of Poverty Prevention related training materials, as well as working on training material for the Homelessness Code of Guidance and preparing information leaflets regarding homelessness prevention support. The team are also working on delivering focus groups with service users to inform future prevention activity.

Early intervention to identify and support people at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping in the future – The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) provide a multi-disciplinary response for Council tenants who are at serious risk of eviction action and are not engaging with their locality Housing Officer.

The team aim to actively reach out to households to offer wrap around support with the aim of sustaining the tenancy and preventing homelessness. All referrals come from Locality Patch Housing Officers. In 2023/24 the team supported 26 households to maintain their tenancy and avoid homelessness. As at December 2024, the team were working with 30 households. In 2024/25 the team supported 17 households to maintain their tenancy and avoid homelessness, and as of March 2025, the team were working with 44

households The team will also develop referral routes to ensure that the service can be accessed by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) colleagues in the future.

Introduction of an Early Intervention Team - The team were established in December 2023 with the aim of preventing homelessness at the earliest opportunity. They reach out to all households who contact homelessness services who are not immediately roofless and offer an appointment with the Early Intervention Team to identify opportunities to prevent homelessness from any tenure, except from private rented.

The team have instigated a new approach for social rented tenants fleeing domestic abuse or racial harassment, with each tenant being seen by the Early Intervention Team. They also discuss all housing options with tenants to try to find a safe solution and avoid homelessness where it is safe to do so. In 2024/25, 389 households were supported to avoid homelessness.

The team have also been undertaking a pilot programme of work whereby a member of the team is based in the job centre one afternoon a week. This was established following discussions with the job centre who advised that they had identified a number of people they were working with who had concerns over their housing situation. 58 customers were engaged with through the initial pilot:

- 32 were already homeless - all were given advice or referred to appropriate services.
- 17 people were identified as being at risk of homelessness.
- 7 people (41%) were prevented from homelessness.

This drop-in arrangement will continue and is due to be reviewed in summer 2025.

New ways to intervene earlier - Officers are seeking to develop ways to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness. This includes closer working with partners such as Health and Social Care, Public Health, Children & Families and Employability services in the city.

To support this, officers are seeking to carry out Edinburgh-specific research in line with the recent [Crisis publication](#) which looked at missed opportunities to prevent homelessness. This will complement the work being undertaken as part of the Housing Emergency Action Plan to map the homelessness system across the city. A predictive analytics software package is also being implemented, which will bring together different data sets to allow earlier identification of households who may be at risk of homelessness.

Developing pathways for vulnerable groups - The [Domestic Abuse Housing Policy](#) was agreed at Policy and Sustainability Committee on 14th May 2020, setting out Edinburgh's housing options for survivors/victims of domestic abuse. Following agreement by the Equally Safe Executive Committee, Improvement Plan work is underway to extend Edinburgh's Domestic Abuse Housing Policy to become an Equally Safe Housing Policy. The focus will remain on preventing homelessness for victims / survivors of domestic abuse but will also include all aspects of violence against women and girls, in addition to the existing policy.

A pathway continues to be in place for women and children experiencing domestic abuse to access Private Sector Leasing properties with support from a Domestic Abuse provider. This pathway is exclusively for women and children living in refuge accommodation, to allow women whose support needs have decreased, but who have not yet secured a tenancy of their own, to move on to independent living. This continues to be a successful model and 27 women accessed this across 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Home Share properties have also been made available, with support provided by a Domestic Abuse provider. Home Share are properties where 3 to 5 people share a temporary accommodation property. In the past year 29 residents have accessed this type of accommodation. There are currently 3 properties with 11 bedrooms available.

A partnership is being developed to provide move on accommodation for women fleeing domestic abuse. There are currently 9 flats, with intentions to increase

this to 30. These flats were procured by a third sector partner using a social investment model.

Youth Homelessness Prevention – Young people and the challenges they face in entering and navigating the housing system was a recurring theme from the LHS engagement.

In relation to youth homelessness prevention, there is a range of work underway. Following receipt of a feasibility study looking at the possibility of developing a youth housing hub, officers have been working to progress this idea. This would see both statutory and non-statutory services providing support and accommodation for young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness based in one physical hub setting.

An initial stakeholder event with internal and external partners took place in March 2024, with 22 attendees including Council and third sector partners. There was broad support for the hub to allow one place for young people to access services. Officers have been exploring other youth housing hub models across the UK.

A steering group with partners from homelessness services and Children, Education and Justice Services has been convened. The group will be expanded to include representatives from the third sector and will ensure that young people with lived experience can also contribute.

Additional joint collaboration with Through Care and Aftercare (TCAC) is currently underway in response to the Housing Emergency Action Plan. A working group, consisting of representatives from housing, homelessness services, and TCAC, has been established, and a draft work plan has been created, with a particular focus on supporting care experienced young people. Housing is one of the seven pathways of the TCAC service, and there is a range of support available to care experienced young people/ care leavers, including financial and practical.

The workplan seeks to strengthen the services and support offered to care experienced young people, across four key themes:

- Early intervention and prevention for young people transitioning out of care.
- Developing care leaver pathways, including transitions from residential care and access to housing and youth services.
- Supporting tenancy sustainment; and
- Commissioning accommodation and support services.

Developing pathways to avoid homelessness at key transition points such as leaving hospital or prison – The well-established pathway for delayed discharge continues to be implemented, with individuals being matched to suitable properties or supported to bid on homes that meet their assessed needs. This includes discharge from both rehabilitation and acute settings.

The hospital discharge pathway for patients leaving the Royal Edinburgh Hospital (REH) has become more embedded over the past year, with several patients being successfully housed. The Home Accessibility Referral Team has an Assessment Officer who is responsible for REH outreach, supporting colleagues and patients by attending the patient flow meetings, and emergency ad hoc arrangements to alleviate the pressure on REH beds.

The Prison Outreach Officer continues to provide both early intervention support to prisoners, as well as supporting people due for release within a twelve-week period. The main focus of this work is early intervention and tenancy sustainment (where possible), although homeless assessments are raised ahead of release with transfer to the appropriate team once the prisoner is back in the community.

A total of 391 referrals were received by the Prison Outreach Officer in 2023/24, an increase of over 10% from the previous year, however, this decreased to 297 referrals in 2024/25. The table below provides details of housing prior to entering prison.

Table 6. Housing Prior to entering Prison, City of Edinburgh Council Internal Data, 2023-2025

Housing Prior to Prison 2023//24	Housing Prior to Prison 2024/25
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City of Edinburgh Council tenants	68	85
Registered Social Landlord tenants	54	36
Open homeless case	152	82
Owner/ Private Rented Sector	9	9
Family	7	24
Private Sector Leasing	2	1
Unknown	63	35
Total	355	297

45 of the 122 live social tenancies were maintained in 2023/24, which rose to 75 in 2024/25. 18 tenancies were terminated timeously in 2023/24 and 23 in 2024/25.

40 homeless assessments were raised for individuals due to leave prison within the next 12 weeks.

Temporary Accommodation continued to be requested for individuals with specific needs, allowing them to access accommodation that would give them the best chance of success on coming back into the community. 65 bed space requests were made for prisoners with a planned liberation date.

With regard to the removal of local connection, six referrals have been made from prisoners elsewhere in Scotland about the possibility of coming to Edinburgh upon release, and information about housing and temporary accommodation has been given at this time. To date, those making the enquiries have opted not to pursue a homeless assessment for Edinburgh, having been made aware of the pressures and potential length of time to secure permanent housing.

Due to rising numbers of prisoners across the Scottish prison estate, the Scottish Government announced plans in May 2024 for an early prison release scheme. This meant that that people sentenced to less than four years in prison were considered for release from custody six months earlier than they would have been. In Edinburgh, 13 prisoners were identified for release under this scheme

Of these, five people either had a tenancy to which they could return or someone they could stay with and the other eight were potentially homeless. Three households accessed temporary accommodation.

A further early release scheme took effect in early 2025. In Edinburgh, 35 known prisoners are identified for release under this scheme. Of these, four had a live Council tenancy that returned as planned, nine have open homeless cases and the remainder are still to be determined. All prisoners being released early will be offered housing advice appointments so we could see additional presentations.

Further consultation on any future early prison releases has been undertaken by Scottish Government. Additionally, joint working has taken place with colleagues from across housing and homelessness and the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership to develop a joint working protocol. The work is focused around two main themes: prevention, including preparing for the Homelessness Prevention Duties and preventing delayed discharge; and housing needs, including older people and those with multiple and complex needs. This work will continue to progress over the coming year.

Improved information on service availability - The EdIndex webpage has been revised to provide information on how to access homeless services, an updated silver priority guide and information on waiting time for social rented homes. All correspondence from homelessness services staff includes a footer which directs everyone to the EdIndex webpage. On 3 March 2025, the housing service launched an online Housing Options Tool and online EdIndex application form. The tool uses the applicant's answers to assess their likelihood of being categorised as a certain priority level for social housing. The applicant will then be advised of potential wait times which will help to set the applicants expectations in terms of priority and the overall process. The tool acts as triage and pinpoints potential applicants to other housing options that may be more suitable to them rather than automatically applying for social housing. In an effort to combat digital exclusion, automated bidding was introduced in April 2025. Applicants can submit their details and criteria, and the automated bidding system will place bids on suitable homes on their behalf. The applicant can set

criteria including preferred areas, type of home, floor level, wheelchair accessible, sheltered or general housing and number of bedrooms.

Income Maximisation – An Income Maximisation Development Officer - post was established in response to issues raised at consultation events regarding affordability of housing in the city. The post holder continues to deliver sessions to both internal and external staff. During the period March 2023 - March 2024, 74 training sessions were delivered to 845 attendees. This included trainees from 17 Council services, 11 voluntary sector services and multiple NHS teams. For the period March 2024 to March 2025, 13 sessions were delivered to 112 attendees. The officer has continued to support the Money Counts training, including developing training materials and platform for delivery.

'Keys and a Kit' Programme – Family and Household Support (FHS) have been taking forward this programme to reach out to residents who are close to an offer of settled accommodation with an opportunity to access sessions on how to be a good neighbour, income maximisation and wellbeing. The initial 8 sessions have taken place in homelessness accommodation with support, and there are plans to develop this further and offer opportunities for those not in supported accommodation to take part. Ongoing support from the FHS team is also offered.

A Private Rented Service (PRS) Team has been developed to - work with tenants and landlords to reduce the number of people becoming homeless from the PRS. The team was established in November 2019 in response to a growing number of homeless presentations from the PRS. The team work with private landlords and lettings agents to establish the PRS as an ongoing housing option for potentially homeless or homeless households. The team also works with tenants, providing; comprehensive support, advice and information, assisting with property searches, providing comprehensive income maximisation advice and assistance, affordability checks and applications for deposit assistance and rent arrears issues. They will also identify further entitlements to benefits, top up payments and grants which further maximises the tenant's income.

Since March 2022, the PRS team have prevented homelessness for over 1,000 households by helping them to remain in their current PRS tenancy or by

supporting them into a new PRS or Mid-Market Rent (MMR) tenancies and other suitable housing options such as sheltered accommodation. The financial inclusion officer within the team has supported households to access £493,522 of financial gains in the last year.

Support for Homeless Households (ongoing)

Housing First – Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing with separate wrap around support for people with the most complex needs, who are predominantly people with a history of rough sleeping. Edinburgh was a pathfinder area and has been delivering Housing First since November 2018. From October 2021 the Pathfinder programme came to an end and the Council took over funding responsibilities for the Housing First Visiting Housing Support in Edinburgh.

A new contract for Housing First in Edinburgh was awarded by the Council's Finance and Resources Committee on 25th January 2024. This contract is for a period up to 10 years. The service is delivered by Simon Community Scotland / Streetwork. The contract commenced in April 2024.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, 23 new Housing First tenancies started, bringing the total number of Housing First tenancies to 224. In 2024/25, the tenancy sustainment rate was 88%, excluding deaths this figure increased to 89.6%. From the beginning of the pathfinder to March 2025, the tenancy sustainment rate was 63.1%, excluding deaths the figure rose to 69.9%.

The new contract has been in place for 6 months and allows for further growth of the service. We are currently in the process of increasing the number of people supported by 40 per year. We have identified that housing first is not the best option for everyone and are increasing the long-term supported accommodation spaces to meet this demand.

Visiting Housing Support – Following a review of current contracts and engagement with stakeholders, a procurement exercise was completed for the delivery of homelessness support services in Edinburgh. Alongside the Housing

First service, the following homelessness support services were agreed and started in April 2024:

These services provide support for people who are at risk of becoming homeless, who are homeless or who have recently experienced homelessness to move to or keep settled accommodation and gain independent living skills. In 2024-25 they supported 887 people with 630 getting or keeping a home

- Complex Needs Visiting Housing Support Services, delivered by Simon Community Scotland / Streetwork. This service sits alongside the Housing First service and delivers a visiting housing support service for people with two or more support needs. In 2024/25, they supported 224 people with 59 getting a home and 55 keeping a home.
- Street Based Outreach and Support Hub, delivered by Simon Community Scotland / Streetwork. These services operate 365 days of the year, with the street-based outreach service supporting people rough sleeping in the city to access rapid access accommodation.
- The support hub provides initial advice and support sessions aimed at sustaining tenancies. The service worked with 1,017 people in 2024/25.
- Locality Visiting Housing Support and Preventative Support is currently delivered from April 2024 by Turning Point Scotland in the South-East and North-East Localities and Right There (in partnership with Four Square) in the South-West and North-West Localities. For 2023/24 Locality Visiting Housing Support and Preventative Support was delivered by Right There and Foursquare. In 2024/25, they supported 670 people, where 120 were supported to get a home and 392 were supported to keep their home. Turning Point supported 571 clients, where 7 were supported to get a home and 392 were supported to keep a home.

Young Persons Support, Group Work and Youth Emergency Support Services are delivered by Link Living. They support young people aged between 16 and

25 years of age who are at risk of becoming homeless, who are homeless or who have recently experienced homelessness to move to or keep settled accommodation, gain independent living skills and engage with employability services. In 2024/25, they supported 402 people with 134 getting a home, 103 keeping a home, 107 gaining life skills and 73 accessing education, training and employment. 49 young people also completed the group work modules.

Using Data to support Homelessness Prevention –Work is underway to explore how data and predictive analytics can be used to help prevent homelessness by identifying earlier people who may be at risk. A proof of concept is being designed to take this forward. In addition, work is underway with DataLoch to explore the potential of a project which seeks to build on our understanding of which services which health services people engage with both in the lead up to, and during, periods of homelessness. Gaining such an understanding will help service managers to more efficiently utilise finite resources, cultivate better interventions that prevent homelessness, and better target assistance to the most at risk. This is being explored through DataLoch, a collaboration between the University of Edinburgh and NHS Lothian, funded by the Edinburgh City Region Deal.

4.2: Where temporary accommodation is required, this will meet the needs of the household

Background / Context

A key commitment within the RRTP, as well as the Housing Emergency Action Plan, is to change the mix of temporary accommodation in the city. In light of the current homelessness pressures and challenges which are expected to continue to grow, this is being accelerated and upscaled. This seeks to ensure there is an adequate supply of temporary accommodation and that this accommodation is suitable and will meet the needs of the household.

Transforming the mix of temporary accommodation (ongoing) – There was a reduction in the number of Temporary Furnished Flats (TFF), driven by a reduction in Private Sector Leased (PSL) properties and Private Rented Temporary Accommodation properties. A change to the PSL scheme has recently been agreed by Finance and Resources Committee with the aim of increasing the stock.

The plan for transforming the mix of temporary accommodation focuses on increasing the stock of Temporary Furnished Flats (TFF)s as quickly as possible and reducing the amount of Emergency Accommodation. As noted earlier in this chapter a longer-term plan for temporary accommodation is currently being developed and a report was presented to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 25 February 2025.

Table 7. Temporary Accommodation Capacity, City of Edinburgh Council Internal Data, 2023-2025

Type	Capacity at 31 March 2023	Capacity at 31 March 2024	Capacity at 31 March 2025	Change from 31 March 2024 to 25
Temporary Furnished Flats*	3, 332	3, 264	4, 105	+841
Other (Homeless Accommodation with Support)	732	729	793	+64
Emergency	1, 267	1, 406	1, 097	-309
Total Capacity	5, 331	5, 399	5, 995	+596

*TFF in the table above includes: PSL, Private Rented Temporary Accommodation, Home Share, Dispersed Flats and Purchased Properties

Table 8. Temporary Accommodation Stock type %, City of Edinburgh Council Internal Data, 2023-2025

Type	% Stock at 31 March 2023	% Stock at 31 March 2024	% Stock at 31 March 2025
Temporary Furnished Flats **	63%	60%	68%
Other (Homeless Accommodation with Support)	14%	14%	13%
Emergency	24%	26%	19%
Total Capacity	+1%		

**TFF in the table above includes: PSL, Private Rented Temporary Accommodation, Home Share and Dispersed Flats

Private Sector Leasing (PSL) – The PSL contract is currently delivered by Curb. This contract started on 1 April 2020 and provides self-contained properties leased from private landlords. The number of properties available through the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme increased from 1,375 in March 2020 to 1,740 in March 2025. However, this is a slight reduction in March 2023, when there were 1,830 properties in the scheme and 1,817 in March 2024. Given the market pressures in Edinburgh, it was identified that there was a need to enhance this to ensure that the Council continues to secure and retain properties in this scheme, and a change has recently been introduced.

Home Share – This is a form of temporary accommodation where 3 to 5 people live together in a furnished home in the community. Feedback from residents on this model has been incredibly positive. This has expanded significantly since its introduction, increasing capacity from 26 bedspaces in March 2020 to 142 bedspaces in March 2025. This accommodation is classed as suitable temporary accommodation and is an area where continued growth is planned.

Community Hosting and Supported Lodgings – Officers have continued to develop plans for community hosting / supported lodgings in Edinburgh. These are forms of temporary accommodation where a mentor or host lives in the property and provides a supportive relationship. This form of temporary accommodation is likely to be suitable for people with low support needs. A Public Information Notice (PIN) was issued in May 2024 to test market interest, and a procurement exercise will commence over the coming months.

Additional Long-Term Supported Accommodation – A need for this type of accommodation was identified in conjunction with Health and Social Care partners. Rowan Alba continue to provide two long-term supported accommodation services for men who have a history of homelessness and long-term alcohol misuse issues. An additional long-term supported accommodation service for women has recently been commissioned at Birkintree Place, with 8 spaces and plans for an additional five spaces. This forms part of the additional 60 Homeless Accommodation with Support spaces [agreed](#) in November 2023. These provide suitable and supported accommodation as an alternative to bed and breakfast accommodation.

Increase in Homeless Accommodation with Support – following a successful procurement exercise, there has been an increase in the number of 'Homeless Accommodation with Support' bedspaces. The additional bedspaces include the long-term supported accommodation noted above. An additional 60 bedspaces were approved. To date, 49 bedspaces have been commissioned and 36 are currently available. 30 additional beds for women at risk of or fleeing domestic abuse have also been secured with 15 currently in place. An additional 10 spaces for homeless people who have mental health issues has also been commissioned.

Purchasing Homes for Temporary Accommodation – To increase the supply of suitable temporary accommodation, Finance and Resources Committee agreed to the purchase of self-contained accommodation. To date, 502 additional properties have been approved for purchase, 130 homes have already been completed, with all remaining homes being handed over by the end of

2025/26, which will significantly increase the stock of suitable temporary accommodation. Additionally, 270 homes have been purchased via the Council's Acquisitions and Disposals policy for use as temporary accommodation, adding to the supply of suitable temporary accommodation.

In addition to changing the mix of temporary accommodation stock, a number of other actions were taken forward. An update on these actions is set out below.

Psychology in Hostels pilot (ongoing) – Rowan Alba, the NHS and the Council worked together to get grant funding for a pilot 'psychology in hostels' project. The project is entering year 2 and the project has enabled access to psychological support for residents who would otherwise wait a very long time, putting them at serious risk. This has also hugely benefited staff, importantly in training for reflective practice, risk management, identifying triggers and signposting. Feedback from the service notes that staff having onsite access to the Psychologist has been invaluable.

Ensuring we use our stock more effectively– Given the pressures on temporary accommodation, the RRTP set out a need to ensure that people's needs are matched to their temporary accommodation placement as soon as possible. A link worker continues to support people in Rapid Access Accommodation to ensure that people are matched to suitable 'move on' accommodation to meet their needs. To support this, any available Homeless Accommodation with Support is offered to Rapid Access Accommodation residents in the first instance.

An Officer has been recruited within the temporary accommodation team to support households to access temporary accommodation that meets their needs, and work closely with the Link Worker.

Introduced a dedicated Family and Household Support team working with families in bed and breakfast or shared houses - this team work with housing colleagues to identify a suitable settled housing option for families. FHS provide ongoing support which may include accompanied viewing to the property,

support to get essential items to make a house a home and any practical support to help the family move into their settled home as quickly as possible.

Should a need for ongoing support be identified, the wider FHS team will ensure this is provided. At the end of March 2025, 96 families had moved out of bed and breakfast or shared house accommodation and a further 19 families had offers and were waiting to move.

Introduced a dedicated Family and Household Support team working with households in temporary accommodation – this team work with households in temporary accommodation who have a start date agreed for a settled tenancy, to ensure that they can move out of temporary accommodation and into their home as quickly as possible.

These dedicated officers are informed as soon as a tenancy start date is agreed. From that point, they will work with each household on whatever is required, without a strict remit. This may include supporting the household to access goods to make a house a home, support with setting up utilities and other bills and any other support the household requires. The team will ensure that where a requirement for ongoing support is identified, this is provided by the wider FHS team. This has reduced the time between getting a tenancy and leaving temporary accommodation from 26 days in December 2023 to 11 days in March 2024.

Explore the possibility of ‘flipping’ temporary furnished flats into permanent homes, if and when stock allows (ongoing on a case-by-case basis) – Given the ongoing demand for temporary accommodation, it is not currently possible to flip properties on a regular basis. Temporary furnished flats are currently “flipped” on case-by-case basis, based on individual household circumstances. ‘Flipping’ will not be possible until such time as supply exceeds demand.

Work with Education Services – The service continues to engage with Health Visitors from the NHS to alert them of all under 5s in temporary accommodation with their family, to allow health visitors to connect with the family and ensure

they are known and linked into services. Going forward, the focus will be on accelerating the reduction in the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation. This will include exploring other development opportunities in vacant larger properties for multi-use, establishing a year-round welcome centre as well as other hybrid supported accommodation services with access to other statutory and voluntary agencies.

4.3 Supporting people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible

Lets to homeless households - Where an individual/household has been assessed as statutorily homeless as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, silver priority is awarded for bidding for homes through Choice. During 2024/25, the Council and partner housing associations let 1,342 homes. This was a decrease from 2023/24 where 2,112 homes were let, however, there was a suspension of Council lets from November 2024 to January 2025. Prior to the Council's declaration of a Housing Emergency, there was a commitment in Edinburgh for a minimum of 70% Council social rented homes (across existing and new build homes) to be let to homeless households, and 50% for lets from RSL's. Through the Housing Emergency Action Plan, this has increased to 80% of Council social rented homes and 65% of social rented lets from RSLs.

Moving people through the system more quickly– The Transformation Team, based within the Homelessness Prevention and Housing Options Team, has supported 470 households in 2024/25 to move from temporary accommodation to settled accommodation. This team has been expanded and will look to focus further on homelessness prevention activity. Given that the most prevalent reason for a household presenting as homeless is relationship breakdown, investment will also seek to implement a mediation service to further enhance homelessness prevention activity.

Mid-Market Rent (MMR) as an option for homeless households - The Council's PRS team work to prevent households from becoming homeless by supporting them to remain in their PRS tenancy or to access alternative accommodation. Consideration of Mid-Market Rent forms part of this. Previously, there was a target of 50% of MMR properties to be let to homeless households.

However, MMR allocations from the Council's Edinburgh Living portfolio in 2023 were 75% to households who were homeless or at risk of homelessness or moving from temporary accommodation.

Long-term supported accommodation services – An additional two long-term supported accommodation services have been introduced where households have a PRT, to meet demand in this area. This has involved working with the third sector to ensure support funding is in place to allow them to purchase settled homes for households with funding secured via social investment models. This work has resulted in the delivery of 32 additional homes, purchased by the Simon Community for service users with complex needs. In addition, Cyrenians' have currently delivered 8 homes for homeless people experiencing domestic abuse and anticipate this growing to 30 homes.

Social investment models have an important role to play in helping to deliver both temporary and longer-term supported accommodation. This is recognised in the Housing Emergency Action Plan, with an ongoing action to continue working with partners to encourage use of social investment funds to deliver suitable or settled accommodation when properties become available.

4.4 Reducing the number of people sleeping rough

Prior to Covid-19 it was estimated that there were approximately 80 – 120 rough-sleepers on any one night in Edinburgh. Throughout the pandemic, the Council and partners worked collaboratively to ensure that there is accommodation available for everyone.

The latest data provided by the commissioned outreach services notes that there are an estimated 70 rough-sleepers in the city. Officers from the Council continue to work with the commissioned street-based outreach service to identify potential accommodation options for rough-sleepers.

Rapid Access Accommodation– We continue to provide Rapid Access accommodation for rough-sleepers, including a dedicated accommodation service for females. This allows the commissioned street-based outreach service to support people directly from the street into accommodation. There are also

dedicated 'link workers' who support households in Rapid Access Accommodation to find a suitable move on placement.

Welcome Centre – The Council continues to work with partners to deliver the Welcome Centre which currently operates between October and May. This provides additional accommodation for people at risk of rough sleeping. The Council is currently working with partners to identify a new venue for the welcome centre and the aim is for this to be a year-round service, rather than only operating during the colder months.

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):
Prevent homelessness wherever possible
Where temporary accommodation is required, this will meet the needs of the household
Support people to access settled accommodation as quickly as possible
Reduce the number of people sleeping rough

Key Challenges
Increase in the number of open homeless cases. For each of the last 13 years, there have been more homeless presentations than cases closed. As on 31 March 2025, there were 7,416 open homeless cases where the Council has a duty to provide settled accommodation.
The removal of the requirement for a local connection to Edinburgh continues to add pressure to our services. This means that individuals can present in any area without having to establish a 'local connection', such as family members or employment.
Demand on services is anticipated to increase further as a result of the forthcoming 'ask and act' duty and other national legislative and policy changes.
The Housing (Scotland) Bill also proposes to extend the time-period where households threatened with homelessness can seek assistance. Households will be able to present to local authorities and receive support up to six months prior to being homeless (rather than the current two). It is foreseeable

that there will be a rise in the number of households seeking or receiving homelessness assistance from Local Authorities as a result. This will impact on resources required in homelessness services to deliver the desired policy objectives of the Bill and, given the financial memorandum accompanying the Bill, it is anticipated that this will be largely unfunded.
Ongoing lack of affordable housing options and solutions for homeless applicants, leading to lengthy stays in temporary accommodation whilst waiting on social housing.
Market pressures have exacerbated the supply of temporary accommodation, for example a reduction in the number of properties in the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme
Increase in presentations from Ukrainian Displaced People following changes to the 'Warm Scottish Welcome' Policy.
An increase in households presenting from elsewhere in the U.K, who have recently received a positive asylum decision.

Proposed Actions
19.Youth Homelessness Prevention including the development of a Youth Housing Hub
20.Work in Partnership with Children Services
<p>There is an extensive list of actions relating to these strategic objectives which will be managed through the Housing Emergency Action Plan. These will sit under several of the high-level actions for Housing Supply and Demand for Housing, as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS1: Work with partners to increase and improve supply of housing in the city and develop and implement innovative funding solutions. • HS3: Work with partners to develop new delivery models of housing in the city. • DH1: Work with partners to make best use of all homes in the city. • DH2: Work with partners to plan for future housing needs.DH3: Work with partners to develop and implement activity to prevent homelessness in the first place.

Chapter 5. Provide suitable homes with the right support to meet people's needs

Strategic Objective(s):

Ensure housing is accessible with the right support to meet everyone's needs

Introduction

The links between housing, health and wellbeing are widely recognised and housing has a key role to play in supporting and enabling independent living. This is a key priority for the Scottish Government, as reflected in National Health and Wellbeing Outcome two:

"People, including those with disabilities or long-term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community"

This chapter also covers the importance of joint working between housing, health and social care partners, and other key partners, to ensure people have the right kind of housing, care and support in the right place, at the right time.

National Context

The [Public Bodies \(Joint Working\) \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) provides a framework for the integration of health and social care services in Scotland. It places a duty on integration authorities (IA) to create a Strategic Plan for the integrated functions and budgets. The Act focuses on the importance of effective joint strategic planning and commissioning of services and sets out functions and services that must be delegated.

Local Context

Health and Social Care Integration

In Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (Edinburgh HSCP) is made up of integrated services provided by the Council and NHS Lothian. This brings together staff from both organisations to work in partnership to deliver services under the direction of the Integration Joint Board (IJB).

The IJB is the formal legal body that makes the decisions about how health and social care services are delivered in the city based on the IJB's three-year Strategic Plan. Funding for delivery of health and social care services is made up of allocations from the two partner organisations.

Edinburgh IJB Strategic Plan

Consultation on the [draft Edinburgh IJB Strategic Plan 2025-28](#) closed on 23 February 2025 following a three-month period of public consultation on an earlier draft over the summer of 2024.

The draft Strategic Plan sets out four key strategic priorities for the IJB between April 2025 and March 2028:

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Maximising Independence
- Protecting Our Most Vulnerable
- Using Our Resources Effectively.

The draft Strategic Plan outlines the many complex challenges facing Edinburgh's health and social care system and how the IJB plans to use the resources it has available to address them. It is explicit about the severity of the financial challenge facing the IJB and that things will continue to get harder because of the way the city's population is changing.

It is recognised that the work of the IJB often overlaps with that of other organisations and there some key areas that affect the work of the IJB that are outside its areas of delegated responsibility e.g. housing, children's services and

justice service. There is a commitment to develop relationships with partner organisations and collaborate to address complex challenges whilst concentrating attention and resources on areas of responsibility delegated to the IJB.

The areas of responsibility delegated to Edinburgh's IJB are: Unscheduled care, Adult social care, Pharmaceutical services, Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Substance Use, Palliative Care, Carers support, Sexual Health and Disability services.

The draft IJB Strategic Plan notes that the IJB is responsible for commissioning services to help prevent and treat addictions as well as commissioning mental health services where some overlap exists for certain service users. There is a commitment to focus efforts in this area on reducing the harms that occur due to substance use.

Discussions will continue with health and social care colleagues to ensure there is joint understanding of the areas where housing partners can contribute to meeting priorities and actions identified within the IJB Strategic Plan as it is finalised and implemented, with a Housing Contribution Statement included in the final version. The Housing Contribution Statement outlines the role of the housing sector in Edinburgh in carrying out a wide range of activities that have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of citizens, that support prevention and early intervention priorities and support people to live independently in their homes or a homely setting. This includes the provision of housing support, advice services, adaptations and technology enabled care. Housing organisations also provide services within local communities, building strong relationships with customers and partners to help tackle inequalities. Safe, vibrant communities where people have good social connections are important for health and wellbeing alongside the right kind of housing.

5.1 Housing, Health and Social Care working together

A report to the Edinburgh IJB in February 2024 on the '[Health and Social Care contribution to addressing the City's Housing Emergency](#)' outlined the existing contribution of the Edinburgh HSCP to homelessness pressures. It proposed that services provided by the Edinburgh HSCP are reviewed to maximise

opportunities for collaborative and transformational change with partners to meet the needs of people with complex needs, of which homelessness is a significant factor.

Work has started on developing a joint working protocol between Housing and Homelessness and the Edinburgh HSCP. The work is focused around two main themes: **prevention**, including preparing for the Homelessness Prevention Duties and preventing delayed discharge and **housing needs**, including the housing needs of older people and those with multiple and complex needs. This work will continue to be progressed over the coming year, informed by themed workshops with health and social care partners, including those actions that are included in the Housing Emergency Action Plan.

The IJB draft Strategic Plan also has a section on people transitioning from young people's services to adult services, with a commitment to begin planning for transition at an earlier age to enable people to be as independent as possible. There are housing specific actions around supporting access to disability-accessible housing where appropriate and developing additional core and cluster accommodation schemes.

5.2 Accessible and wheelchair accessible homes

The Council commissioned a study into accessible housing in 2021/22 to develop a greater knowledge and understanding of existing accessible and wheelchair housing in the city and to inform future need.

The study demonstrated an ongoing need and demand for accessible housing overall, noting the challenges in meeting this need in the context of Edinburgh's housing stock profile (older, flatted properties) and market pressures. The importance of the location of homes in terms of access to support, amenities and workplace as well as the accessibility features and safety of the external environment, like pavements, were recurring themes in the feedback. These points were reinforced by participants in LHS consultation activity. Increasing use of technology and digital service delivery was also highlighted as being important in design standards. The study also highlighted some of the difficulties in obtaining robust data in this area of work and definitions around accessibility.

Most new build properties funded through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme are designed to meet Housing for Varying Needs (HfVN) standards. HfVN means homes are more accessible and more easily adaptable for people with mobility needs, so specific housing requirements can often be met through allocation of a standard general needs' property, particularly if it is a level access property. However, the majority of housing stock in Edinburgh, including new build homes, is flatted accommodation, which can be a barrier to accessibility.

Around 39% of homes owned by the Council and EdIndex partners are classed as ground floor properties but not all ground floor homes are accessible.

In 2023 the Scottish Government consulted on [Enhancing the accessibility, adaptability and usability of Scotland's Homes](#), which focused on the review of HfVN design guidance (part 1). Some of the proposals in the updated draft guidance include additional design features to help people with dementia and visual impairments, which are welcomed.

The Home Accessibility Referral Team (HART) in the Council's Housing and Homelessness Service assess EdIndex applicants whose mobility needs mean they need specific types of housing. They also assess properties to ensure that they meet applicants' assessed needs.

Applicants get Gold Priority (category within choice-based letting system) if:

- They have a lifelong and enduring mobility issue
- Their current home cannot be adapted, or they are currently assessed as homeless
- They provide evidence from a specialist consultant, specialist physiotherapist or occupational therapist confirming that they need ground floor/accessible housing (private OT assessments and GP letters are not accepted)

Applicants are given Urgent Gold Priority if:

- They are in hospital and unable to return to the home from which they were admitted (due to a significant change in their mobility) OR
- They are at risk of long-term hospital or care home admission

Homeless households can also be awarded Gold Priority if the household has a need for accessible or ground floor accommodation to meet their needs. Accessing suitable temporary accommodation for homeless applicants with mobility issues can be challenging due to the pressures on the service.

As of 31 March 2025, there were 444 applicants on Edinburgh's common housing register (EdIndex) with Gold Priority or Urgent Gold Priority. At any one time, around 10%-15% of applicants with Gold or Urgent Gold priority require fully wheelchair adapted housing, including some larger wheelchair homes. There is also a need for homes for people with bariatric conditions.

The LHS consultation saw many comments on the desire to see the private market sector provide more accessible and wheelchair accessible homes and homes designed so that they can be adapted as people's needs change throughout their life. The lack of accessible housing options in the private rented sector (PRS) and lack of larger accessible and wheelchair homes were themes that emerged through the LHS consultation. It was also suggested that highlighting the accessibility features of properties to let within adverts for PRS and homes for sale would be helpful.

The Scottish Government are proposing to introduce a new Scottish Accessible Homes Standard as part of its Housing to 2040 Strategy, which all new homes across all tenures in Scotland will be expected to meet. The [2023 consultation on Enhancing Accessibility, Adaptability and Usability of Scotland's homes](#) proposed that the new standard would be introduced by bringing the general needs design criteria from the updated Housing for Varying Needs guide into the Building Standards Technical Handbooks.

Wheelchair accessible housing

The Scottish Government defines wheelchair housing as homes suitable for wheelchair users to live in which should, as a minimum, comply with the design criteria indicated as a 'basic' requirement for wheelchair users, as outlined in Housing for Varying Needs (HfVN). HfVN states that wheelchair accessible housing "is for people who use a wheelchair most or all of the time. The home will be level access throughout, have space for a wheelchair to circulate and

access all rooms, a kitchen and bathroom that suits the occupant's particular needs and fittings and services that are within reach and easy to use".

The City of Edinburgh Council was one of the first local authorities to have a Wheelchair Accessible Homes target; with a target of 10% for social rented homes, with many sites developed by the Council and RSL partners including wheelchair homes. In most developments the wheelchair homes will be limited to ground floor properties. Challenges in delivering affordable housing at scale, with additional costs for wheelchair housing due to larger space requirements, need to be considered in terms of overall deliverability. There are competing priorities for ground floor space through the planning system and new technologies (bin stores, large cycle storage spaces, retail, plant), which can mean more accessible homes need to be upper floors, requiring lifts and increasing costs.



Craigmillar Town Centre development, accessible kitchen

Additional funding is available through the AHSP for some additional quality measures, but these do not include extra funding for the provision of wheelchair or specialist homes, which almost always require above benchmark levels of grant funding. RSL partners have also noted that they may have limited influence

on the design of sites provided through the Affordable Housing Policy, which can be a barrier to providing more specialist homes.

The Accessible Housing Study analysis suggested that 7% of new-build homes across tenures should be wheelchair accessible homes. The current target of 10% for affordable housing has been retained as this is well understood by partners and reflects the fact that the affordable sector currently delivers more wheelchair housing than the private sector.

City Plan 2030, adopted in November 2024, and National Planning Framework4 (NPF4), published in February 2023 provide the planning policy to be applied to new developments in Edinburgh. Provision of specialist housing is supported, and the policy requires that, where housing is proposed, the mix should respond to the differing needs of residents, in particular accessible, adaptable and wheelchair housing.

Edinburgh Design Guidance sets out expectations for the design of new developments. The guidance is being updated to take account of NPF4 and City Plan 2030. The draft non-statutory guidance promotes housing for varying needs as good practice for all housing development, encourages developers to provide adaptations for independent living, includes the cross-tenure target of 7% and refers to the established 10% for social rented homes and requires that wheelchair accessible housing should comply with HfVN basic requirement for wheelchair users and encourages desirable design criteria. Early preparation of City Plan 2040 is underway which provides an opportunity to further consider the housing needs of people with disabilities.

5.3 Help to find a home and support for independent living

New build housing only accounts for a small proportion of overall stock in the city, so making best use of existing stock is also important in enabling people to live in a home that meets their needs with the provision of services such as adaptations and Technology Enabled Care playing an important role. Stakeholder feedback from the Accessible Housing Study indicated that the delivery of wheelchair and accessible housing needs to be wider than just new supply and adaptation of existing built assets should also be considered. The need to ensure that appropriate support and care, where needed, is provided

alongside suitable housing, was also highlighted as a key point in feedback from the study.

Another key theme that emerged from the consultation activity is a need to improve advice and support to help people find a home that meets their needs.

Allocations Policy Review

The Housing Emergency Action Plan includes an action to review the Allocation Policy for Council homes to ensure it continues to enable fair access to housing, including consideration of protected characteristics. One of the drivers behind carrying out a review is the unprecedented levels of demand for social housing. There are on average 290 households bidding for every social rented home that becomes available for let through EdIndex (September 2024). Initial scoping work for the allocations review is underway, while the full review will be a longer-term piece of work, engaging with EdIndex partners, partner agencies and tenants/ housing applicants. It will provide opportunities to review support for applicants who do not have online access or who need additional support to navigate the application and allocation process and also examine how accessible homes are allocated.

We will also continue to strengthen links with private sector partners (for example Estate Agents and private developers) to encourage more consideration around accessibility, when advertising homes.

The overall policy direction, informed by the Accessible Housing Study, is to increase the supply of accessible homes and improve understanding of accessibility features within existing stock and to plan for future need.

5.4 Adaptations, Care & Repair and Delayed Discharge from Hospital

It is estimated that 16% of homes within Edinburgh have been adapted; 26% within the social rented sector, 17% in the owner-occupied sector and 9% in the private rented sector. This compares to an estimate of 15% of homes in Scotland overall. (SHCS 2022).

It is widely recognised that adaptations are vital in helping to support people with a wide range of care needs to live in their own homes and can enhance the quality of people’s lives. Housing adaptations can range from minor installations, such as safety rails, to major adaptations, such as a wet floor shower or permanent ramp. They can also reduce demands on other health and social care services by:

- Preventing unnecessary admissions to hospital.
- Speeding up discharge arrangements from hospital.
- Reducing or eliminating the need for homecare services and support from carers.

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 delegates the planning and resourcing of adaptations for private homes and council homes to Integration Joint Boards (IJBs). The Act and accompanying regulations do not prescribe the delivery arrangements for adaptations – this is decided locally. In Edinburgh health and social care, housing and children’s services work together to deliver adaptations across tenures.

Adaptations are delivered and funded differently depending on housing tenure but all customers in Edinburgh seeking or referred for an adaptation in a Council home, Registered Social Landlord (RSL) home or private home have their adaptation request assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) within the Health and Social Care Partnership or Children Services for adaptations for children. The Children’s OT Service includes young people up to the age of 16, or 18 years if Looked After by the Authority and/or in full-time Education. The same eligibility criteria is applied across services, for equity and consistency.

Over £3 million was spent on adaptations to Council homes, RSL homes and private homes in 2023/24. The table below shows a breakdown of spend and number of adaptations by tenure for the last 6 years.

Table 9. Adaptations - Breakdown of spend and number of adaptations by tenure for the last 6 years, 2018-24

Year	Councils		RSLs		Private Sector	
	No. of major adaptations	Spend (£) including minor adaptations	No. of adaptations	Spend (£)	No. of grant funded adaptations	Spend (£)
2018/19	130	749,000	345	659,400	244	956,777
2019/20	120	680,000	392	794,144	269	1,047,629
2020/21	20	185,000	292	661,156	269	879,025
2021/22	51	293,224	350	797,719	192	879,452
2022/23	94	705,000	430	978,772	234	1,227,458
2023/24	115	811,000	349	930,272	200	1,262,228

Adaptations to Council homes are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Staff in the Housing and Homelessness service lead on procurement of contractors to carry out major adaptation work to Council homes once OT colleagues have passed on details of the adaptations required. Wet floor showers are the most common type of adaptation to Council homes. Between 300 and 700 minor adaptations are also completed each year to support tenants in Council homes.

In Edinburgh, the grant funding for adaptations to RSL homes (referred to as Stage 3 adaptations) is administered by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Government. This mostly covers social rented homes but can cover mid-market rent homes owned by RSLs. RSLs carry out the adaptations for their tenants. Spend has been increasing in recent years and the budget in 2024/25 was maintained at the 2023/24 level despite an overall cut to the Affordable Housing Supply Programme allocation, from which Stage 3 adaptations are funded.

Adaptations for homeowners and private tenants' homes are supported by grant funding provided through the Council's Capital Budget Strategy. There is a statutory duty to provide grants of 80% or 100% for those living in the private sector, who are assessed as needing adaptations.

The draft IJB Strategic Plan states that people with long-term health conditions will be provided with home care and assistive technology where required and assess and adapt people's home environments when required. This will also

support the work identified in the draft plan for people who have had or are likely to have falls.

In Housing to 2040, the Scottish Government made a commitment to streamline and accelerate the adaptations system by developing recommendations on how best to improve the system so that it will be fit for purpose and able to deal with the increased demand that an ageing population will place upon it. Partners will review delivery and funding of adaptations in the city to provide a more streamlined and person-centred service.

Care and Repair

Care and Repair Edinburgh receives funding from the Edinburgh HSCP. This supports the Small Repairs Service, Volunteer Handypersons, Trade Referral Service and Keysafe Fitting Service (which assists patients leaving hospital and prevents hospital admissions).

Care and Repair Edinburgh also offer assistance with adaptations, for example, by providing support to help people apply for grant funding.

Delayed Discharge

As outlined above, there is provision within the allocations policy to award Urgent Gold Priority to support applicants who are delayed in hospital. This is the highest level of priority within the choice-based allocations policy. There is an established Delayed Discharge Matching Group (comprised of Housing, NHS and Edinburgh HSCP colleagues) that has been in place since 2016.

The Delayed Discharge Matching Group meets monthly and EdIndex partner landlords support the process, offering suitable properties for patients upon discharge wherever possible. On occasion, patients awarded Urgent Gold Priority for rehousing, who are initially discharged to an Interim Care Home, will retain the priority in an attempt to have them permanently rehoused to suitable accommodation that meets their assessed needs, as quickly as possible.

There are four "step down" flats in the city for patients to use when they have been assessed as medically fit for hospital discharge, but there are delays in identifying or adapting a suitable permanent home for them within the

community. They can also be used, following a community referral, to avoid hospital admission, or as a temporary solution to allow a deep clean to happen, or other works within the property to be undertaken.

Work continues on hospital pathways through the Homelessness Prevention Working Group and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, as covered in the Homelessness chapter of the LHS. This work ensures that an early intervention approach is applied to anyone in hospital whose housing situation may be a barrier to their discharge, as well as supporting homeless households.

5.5 Housing and support to meet the needs of our changing and diverse population

An estimated 28% of households in Edinburgh contain members who are Long Term Sick or Disabled (LTSD), lower than the Scotland figure of 44%. In an estimated 4% of Edinburgh households, an LTSD individual is restricted by the dwelling. These figures are higher for older households compared to families and other households in both Edinburgh and Scotland (SHCS 2022).

The most recent Census data shows the number of people reporting a physical disability, mental health condition, and/or long-term illness has increased between 2011 and 2022 in Edinburgh, as well as across Scotland as a whole. In Edinburgh the figure for physical disability increased from 5.1% to 6.7% and for mental health condition the figure increased from 4.2% to 11.9%. The percentage of people reporting deaf/hearing impairment or blind/vision impairment has stayed around the same level between Census years. 2022 Census figures for deaf or hearing impairment are 29,000 people in the city and for blind/vision impairment the number of people is 11,000.

Overall, Census 2022 figures report that nearly 88% of people over 65 in Edinburgh said they are in fair, good or very good health.

However, the Census 2022 figures report that 19.5% of people in Edinburgh have their day-to-day activities limited, either a little or a lot, due to disability. The figure increases to over 50% for people aged 65 or over.

The 2022 Census also reports that 9.6% of people in Edinburgh provide unpaid care, including 20.4% of the population aged 50 to 64 and 10.9% of the population aged 65 and over. The right kind of housing, care and support is important for those receiving and providing unpaid care.

Older People

In 2022, 16% of the population of Edinburgh were 65 plus. NRS Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2018-based) indicate that the age groups with the greatest population growth to 2030 are for those aged 65 and over. The age group showing the largest increase is 75-84 years.

Most older people live in their own homes rather than in specialist accommodation. Providing accessible and adaptable homes and services that support people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible is important to meet the needs of an ageing population and prevent unplanned admissions to hospital or moving into a care home. Demographic change also brings changes in aspirations and demand for diversity and choice in housing and support. The availability of advice and information about housing options across tenures for older people if they want or need to move is also important.

The Council has just over 1,500 sheltered housing properties. RSL partners also have sheltered housing or similar, such as retirement housing, later living housing or amenity housing.

The LGBT+ Health and Wellbeing [Fit for Purpose](#) report explores the specific needs of older members of the LGBT+ community with regard to housing and social care and highlights the intersectional needs of the community.

The 2024 CaCHE report '[Housing for older people in Scotland: a call for discussion](#)' presents key topics for discussion that highlight housing for older people as a key priority area for policy and practice for the Scottish housing sector.

In June 2023, the Edinburgh IJB directed a strategic commissioning exercise on older people's bed-based care. As noted in the draft Strategic Plan, Edinburgh has comparatively few care homes for its population. The city has about six care home beds per thousand of its population compared with eight for Scotland as a

whole. The city manages with comparatively few care home beds because it has a large market for care at home. Around 3,500 people are supported in care homes and nursing homes across each year in the city.

In Edinburgh, 65.7% of older people aged 65 plus who have high levels of care needs live at home (compared to 63.5% Scotland overall).

Demographic change in Edinburgh will create more demand for health and care services. NHS Lothian undertook a comprehensive demand forecast programme which included projected demand for care homes in Edinburgh until 2043. The review used projected demographic changes based on the most recent population projections from 2018 onwards. More up to date projections reflecting the 2022 Census are expected in 2025 and may shift the longer-term trends. The impact of demographic change only, assuming a similar need to the current, suggests significant growth in Care Home numbers of 50% from the 2022 baseline of 2,633 occupied care home beds, or 1,300 care home places by 2043.

Housing and health and social care will continue to work together, with housing needs of older people included in the work on the joint working protocol.

Dementia

With an ageing population comes an increase in the number of people living with dementia. In 2019 there were 7,784 people aged 65 plus estimated to be living with dementia in Edinburgh: 9.8% of the population. An estimated 281 people under 65 years were living with dementia. Between 2018 and 2030, the number of people estimated to have dementia in Edinburgh is expected to increase by 26.5% (Edinburgh HSCP JSNA Paper on Dementia).

Those with dementia face a range of challenges within housing including:

- Sensory impairments, including visual perception, may make it difficult to manage stairs. Touch sensitivities may impact wellbeing and create risks around hot water, kettles, or ovens.
- Individuals may face a decline in mobility and find that they are less able to walk up and down stairs easily or use kitchen appliances.
- Isolation and not feeling connected to the community due to stigma or being unable to access the community outside one's door because it lacks accessibility features and is not 'dementia friendly'.

Key areas of work with a focus on housing and dementia include '[Living well at home: Housing and dementia in Scotland](#)' and the [housing and dementia framework](#), commissioned by the Place, Home and Housing portfolio of Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Improvement Hub (ihub) with Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland. The framework notes that:

"There is an increasing desire to support people living with dementia to self-manage and retain their independence for as long as possible. All the evidence suggests that staying at home helps people living with dementia achieve the best outcomes for themselves in familiar surroundings and where they can maintain connections with community life."

There are opportunities to link in with Edinburgh HSCP partners as they develop a specific strategy for Dementia.

Learning Disability

A learning disability is a significant, lifelong condition that starts before adulthood, which affects a person's development, and which means that they may need help to understand information, learn skills and live independently. Having a learning disability means a person may take longer to learn things and often needs support to develop new skills, be aware of risk, understand complicated information and interact with other people. ('Keys to Life', 2019).

There is an estimated 2,255 people (18 years plus) with a learning disability in Edinburgh. The national population of adults with a learning disability is predicted to increase by 2% each year. (Learning Disability Statistics Scotland 2019).

There has been significant consultation and engagement on a national level with people with a learning disability, from 'The Same As You?' (2000) and 'Keys to Life' (2013 and 2019). These documents, combined with the 'Coming Home Report' (2018) and the 'Coming Home Implementation Plan' (2022), clearly lay out the priorities for people with learning disabilities.

The 2023/24 Scottish Government consultation on the [Learning Disabilities, Autism and Neurodivergence Bill](#), informed by the Lived Experience Advisory Panel has a detailed section on housing and independent living noting that:

"Unsuitable housing can have a negative impact on neurodivergent people, people with learning disabilities, their families and their carers, including impacting on mobility, mental health, social isolation and a lack of employment opportunities. Appropriate housing is therefore an essential requirement of independent living. It supports health and wellbeing allowing neurodivergent people and people with learning disabilities to live safely, offering greater choice and control over their lives".

A 2022 [report](#) from the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities highlighted the particular challenges faced by people with learning disabilities in being able to choose where and how they live. LHS consultation feedback reinforced many of these points, with Edinburgh Learning Disability Advisory Group members stressing that people with learning disabilities should have a choice if they want to live on their own or with others and that the right care and support packages, built around them, also need to be in place to live an independent life.

The IJB draft Strategic Plan identifies the lack of suitable housing for people with a learning disability as a chronic challenge. This can lead to people with a learning disability who have a high level of need remaining in hospital for years at a time because there is no suitable environment for them to be discharged to. It also leads to higher costs for care at home when individuals with specialist care needs are spread out over too wide an area and care teams need to travel a lot.

The Edinburgh HSCP is updating their Learning Disability Delivery Plan and will work with housing partners to identify housing needs for people with learning

disabilities over the next 3-5 years so this can be factored into future social housing developments through the SHIP. Around 2,000 people are supported through learning disability services provided/commissioned by the Edinburgh HSCP. The Council and RSL partners already help provide Core and Cluster homes through the new build programme and refurbishing existing buildings but seek to take a more strategic, evidence-based approach going forward.

The [Scottish Government's Coming Home Implementation Report](#) (February 2022) sets out a clear objective to reduce the number of out of area residential placements and inappropriate hospital stays for people with learning disabilities and complex care needs who have intensive support needs.

The Dynamic Support Register was launched in May 2023, as one of the key recommendations from the report. The register aims to improve visibility of people with learning disabilities and complex care needs, at a local and national level, and allow areas to monitor progress against out-of-area placements and reducing inappropriate hospital stays.

Mental health

The IJB draft Strategic Plan outlines that the term 'mental health' describes a person's capacity to lead a fulfilling and enjoyable life. It is broader than just the absence of mental illness and changes over time in response to a wide variety of factors. The IJB is responsible for commissioning all mental health services for people experiencing problems with their mental health except for secure forensic hospitals which remain the responsibility of NHS Lothian. The IJB commissions a range of services to meet different needs, including services that focus on reducing the risk of people harming themselves or others and supporting people under safeguarding legislation. There are a wide variety of support services provided by third sector organisations, including those that support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Feedback from service users is that services for mental health problems do not always feel joined up and waiting times for some services are too long. The IJB

draft Strategic Plan commits to focusing on streamlining the mental health pathway and reducing waiting times.

Discussions are underway between housing and health and social care on how we support people with severe mental illness. This is looking at how we can provide stable and suitable accommodation before people reach a crisis point and ensuring existing tenancies are protected if there is an admission to hospital during an acute mental health crisis (and facilitating discharge back into an existing tenancy more quickly).

The work is also looking at actions needed to ensure an adequate supply of suitable housing for individuals with complex long-term mental health issues such as psychosis that are conducive to affordable care and support packages.

We will continue to work with health and social care partners to improve our understanding of the housing and support needs of people with a learning disability, mental health problems and for people with complex care needs. This can include mainstream housing with appropriate support, extra care housing, supported accommodation and core and cluster models of housing. The information can be used to shape and inform new build projects and look at existing resources across housing and health and social care portfolios to help meet needs, alongside discussions on funding (capital and revenue) where it is required.

Gypsy Travellers

National Context

In Scotland, Gypsy/Travellers are recognised as an ethnic minority and the Scottish Government is committed to improving outcomes for all Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. Alongside COSLA, the Scottish Government launched an action plan '[Improving the Lives of Gypsy Travellers](#)' in 2019 (updated in 2023). The plan focused on reviewing five areas identified by the Gypsy/Traveller communities as being important to them:

- More and better accommodation.
- Improved access to public services.

- Better incomes in and out of work.
- Tackling racism and discrimination.
- Improving Gypsy/Traveller representation.

In the 2022 Census, 3,343 people identified themselves as "White Gypsy/Travellers" in Scotland but it is likely that some chose not to declare their ethnicity. Organisations that work with Gypsy/Travellers believe Scotland's community comprises 15,000 – 20,000 people. The table below shows the breakdown of those giving their ethnicity as 'White Gypsy Travellers' at the 2022 Census for Edinburgh.

Table 10. All Ethnicities and white gypsy travellers, 2022 Census, City of Edinburgh

	All Ethnicities		White Gypsy Travellers	
0 – 15	75,126	15%	30	12%
16 – 24	76,188	15%	47	18%
25 – 34	87,342	17%	47	18%
35 – 49	103,067	20%	66	26%
50 – 64	90,742	18%	42	16%
65 and over	81,935	16%	17	7%
Total	514,591	% all people	257	% all people

The [Scottish Government Evidence Review 2020](#) found that the location of any new provision was a key factor in assessing need. Gypsy/Travellers have often not been able to access culturally appropriate sites in the areas they wish to live in, and enforcement activity may have distorted where they have settled. It also found that "there is no agreed methodology for quantifying the need for different types of accommodation among the population, particularly when attempting to account for future demand and cultural differences within Gypsy/Traveller

communities". The preference for private sites amongst Gypsy/Traveller communities was referred to in the Scottish Government Evidence Review 2020.

Interim Site Design Guidance produced by the Scottish Government in 2021 for RSL and local authority development provides guidance on site size. It states that sites identified in development plans should provide a suitable and safe environment for Gypsy/Traveller families and be capable of providing accommodation that meets their cultural needs. The size of the site should be appropriate for the location and be big enough to accommodate shared facilities e.g. community space and visitor parking as well as the accommodation itself.

Site allocation is a matter dealt with under the Council's Local Development Plan, currently City Plan 2030.

City Plan 2030 sets out that the development of a site for caravans for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Show people will be permitted provided:

- it has been demonstrated that a site is needed in the location proposed.
- the site would not detract from the character and appearance of the area.
- the site would not detract from the amenity currently enjoyed by residents in the area.
- the site can be adequately screened and secured and provided with essential services and.
- it has been demonstrated that the site will be properly managed.

NPF4 policy on housing land states that LDPs allocate housing land, stating:

Diverse needs and delivery models should be taken into account across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where need is identified.

City Plan 2040 will consider the evidence of need and any potential allocations in response to identified need. In the interim **Policy 16 part d** requires that:

Development proposals for public or private, permanent or temporary, Gypsy/Travellers sites and family yards and Travelling Showpeople yards, including on land not specifically allocated for this use in the LDP, should be supported where a need is identified and the proposal is otherwise consistent with the plan spatial strategy and other relevant policies, including human rights and equality.

Local Authority Gypsy Traveller Site in Edinburgh

Edinburgh has one permanent site for the gypsy traveller community located at North Cairntow in the Northeast of the city, with twenty bays. The community have been living at the site for a number of decades. Extensive refurbishment of the site has been carried out to improve living conditions, which completed in December 2022. Works involved the wholesale removal and replacement of all existing accommodation and an upgrade of utility services, roads and landscaping, including the introduction of a sustainable pond drainage system. This has brought the site in line with the site standard set out in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Each bay now provides a chalet with utilities, 2 bedrooms (1 en-suite), vehicle parking spaces, space for a roadside caravan and a fixed utility block with washing facilities, sink and WC. Residents now have a Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement, providing greater security of tenure and increasing rights. This was a tailored agreement which acknowledged and respected the community's culture with an allowance built-in for set periods of travel throughout the year, in line with cultural traditions.



Photo: North Cairntow gypsy traveller site, Jan 2023

The needs of the community were at the forefront throughout the renovation project, and extensive work took place to build relationships and ensure the community were fully engaged in the process. This involved organised visits to other sites for residents to look at best practice, and early engagement between residents and architects. As well as the physical build the programme of work addressed fuel poverty, choice of utility supplier, digital inclusion and training/employment opportunities.

Now that the refurbishment is complete, work is continuing to support the community. Council officers have been working with Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF), supporting the community to set up a Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO), which would enable access to wider funding. The on-site Community Hub programme is used by the community and a variety of partners and external agencies. The Cyrenians, in partnership with Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project (MECOPP), deliver a thriving surplus food hub, providing good quality food that otherwise would have been sent to landfill. MECOPP also deliver nutritional and active lifestyle advice sessions. Community Education colleagues are planning to deliver literacy support to the community. Similarly, MECOPP are engaging with the Education Department to explore the provision of support to school aged children. Income Maximisation surgeries have been

held on site to provide access to financial advice and to identify underlying benefit entitlement.

A Site and Roadside Encampment Manager is based at North Cairntow and is the first point of contact for residents, providing support to access additional Council and external services. The role also supports colleagues across the Council to implement a consistent approach to unauthorised encampments. The role is to ensure that the Scottish Government's Management of Unauthorised Encampment Guidelines, are put into practice and to co-ordinate the Council's response to Roadside Encampments, balancing the management of roadside encampments with the identified needs of those residing in these encampments.

The North Cairntow site redevelopment was recognised as "best practice" and the Scottish Government and COSLA asked Council officers to lead on benchmarking with other local authorities to share the approach taken to deliver a programme of investment of this scale, in partnership with the community.

There has been extensive engagement with the residents based at North Cairntow, throughout the site redevelopment process and out-with this. In consultation with the Site Manager, it was agreed that targeted engagement would not be carried out at this time to feed into the Local Housing strategy as residents have been extensively engaged with and have generously given up much of their time to support engagement activities over recent years. However, the LHS consultation was actively promoted on the site noticeboards and an organisational response was also received from MECOPP. This response highlighted the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of culturally appropriate accommodation, as well as drawing attention to specific considerations around utilities and associated challenges the gypsy/ traveller community can face around fuel poverty. As noted, considerations around fuel poverty and choice of utility supplier were factored into the re-design process at North Cairntow.

Opportunities for targeted engagement with this community will be kept under review at future opportunities, including at annual reviews.

Travelling Show People

Historically, Travelling Show people moved around the country, usually between March and October, attending fairs and living in caravans on the fairgrounds, and in the winter, months secured permanent bases for the storage of equipment and more particularly for residential purposes. Now, many Travelling Show people live on permanent sites, which allows their needs, such as access to health facilities and the education of their children, to be better met. HNDA 3 reports that anecdotal evidence suggests that obtaining private land is difficult for Travelling Show people and discrimination continues to impact their ability to acquire land sufficient for their needs. Sites tend to be privately owned compared to Gypsy/Travellers who rely on public sites.

Armed Forces Communities

Finding somewhere to live can be challenging for some people when they leave the Armed Forces. The City of Edinburgh Council adopted the Armed Forces Covenant to support service personnel, veterans and their families. The aim is to ensure that those who have left military service, or are about to leave, are aware of all the sources of information and advice to help on the transition to civilian life. The Council has a policy that if ex-service personnel have left the UK regular Armed Forces within the last 3 years their application for a local authority house may be backdated to the date they entered the Armed Forces. Through their Military Matters service, Housing Options Scotland can provide specialist housing support to those serving, leaving or having already left the Armed Forces. The Council also commissioned 85 bedspaces for veterans at Whitefoord house, in the Canongate area, as a registered housing support service provided by Scottish Veterans Residences for former members of the UK Armed Forces who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Data from the 2022 Census shows that the City of Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of veterans, relative to population (2.6%).

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Edinburgh has a long history of welcoming refugee and asylum seekers. The Council has supported delivery of UK Government resettlement schemes since

2015, when it agreed to engage with the Syrian Vulnerable People's Resettlement scheme. This built on previous city responses to humanitarian crises dating back more than 80 years.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers are at risk of socio-economic disadvantage through a range of factors that include unfamiliarity with language and culture, disrupted education and career development and physical or mental trauma associated with their status as a refugee. The goal of resettlement as a process is to mitigate these risks to the fullest extent possible and enable people to live full, independent lives.

The Council participates in various refugee settlement programs, including the resettlement of refugees and asylum seekers (including support for unaccompanied children). Refugee and asylum seeker services are significantly influenced by UK and Scottish Government policies and funding, as well as the global political climate, which affects the demand for these services. Although the Council closely monitors these factors, they can be unpredictable, making it essential for the Council to adapt quickly and maintain ongoing engagement with service users.

The Council currently provides support through the following structures:

- the Refugee and Migration team within Children, Education and Justice services which works with households resettled under formal UK Government schemes, adults with no recourse to public funds and households with a refugee background arriving in Edinburgh outwith formal schemes
- the Ukraine Team within Housing and Homelessness which works with Ukrainian displaced people
- a specialist Children and Family social work team which works with families with no recourse to public funds
- Children and Families practice teams and Throughcare and Aftercare which hold the remit for working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

The Council collaborates with various partner organisations to offer comprehensive support in areas such housing, healthcare, education, social work, language and social integration, provision of household goods and clothing and addressing ad hoc essential needs.

The Council has assisted over 11,000 Ukrainians arriving through Edinburgh's transport hubs, with around 3,000 individuals currently residing in the city (October 2024). Housing has been arranged across various tenures, as detailed in the table below.

LHS engagement with organisations who support asylum seekers and refugees, and with individuals with lived experience, highlighted some recurring themes. This principally included the importance of living locally to family, friends and support networks, and the need for larger family homes to support intergenerational living arrangements. Additional feedback drew attention to the importance of trauma informed practices and support, and general challenges with navigating housing issues, ranging from housing rights to housing quality to utilities.

Table 11. Housing support for Ukrainians by type, to October 2024

Tenure type	Number of households
Social rent	140
Private rent/Mid-market rent	100-150
Hotel and apartments provided by Scottish Government	300
Host arrangement	200
Assessed as homeless	75
Family	unknown

To date, the Council has supported:

- 990 resettled refugees (all nationalities)
- 200 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- 160 people seeking asylum

Currently, the Council supports 103 adults and 61 dependents with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds (NRPF), and hosts 155 single male asylum seekers and 1 asylum-seeking household in property managed by Mears Group (the Home Office's asylum accommodation provider in Scotland).

The Council and partnership work to support individuals with NRPF supports the principles of the Scottish Government's [Ending Destitution Together](#) strategy. The approach includes street based outreach as key link workers, to connect people to the support and services they need based on their circumstances.

The global refugee crisis is expected to worsen as a result of further armed conflict and climate change, leading to increased demand for emergency housing. The Ukraine refugee visa scheme was initially granted for three years, with plans to return these homes to the general housing supply. However, the visa program has been extended until 2027, requiring either new housing for refugees or adjustments to current plans. The visa extension may also result in host households no longer being able to provide accommodation.

The UK Government has a national dispersal plan for asylum seekers in which all local authorities are mandated to play a role. Under this plan, Edinburgh would host a share of the number of current asylum cases proportionate to the city's population. Asylum seekers would be accommodated in properties procured by the Home Office via its contracted accommodation provider. After a successful asylum application, people often present as homeless as their existing Home Office accommodation is no longer available to them. The Council is given no prior notice of accepted applications, creating an unpredictable strain on the homelessness service and pressure on the city's housing stock. The UK Government has recently signalled its intention to increase asylum decision-making capacity, which may see numbers increase.

After a negative decision, people also lose access to their Home Office accommodation and frequently become reliant on local authority 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) support while either challenging the previous decision or submitting further claims. Along with the support provided to vulnerable families and adults with NRPF, this adds to pressures on temporary accommodation capacity in particular.

The Council's longer-term strategy will include continuing to collaborate across services to support the dedicated refugee and asylum seeker teams. Strong relationships will be maintained with the UK and Scottish Governments to quickly respond to changes in needs or policies, ensuring services remain of high quality. Ongoing engagement with service users and openness to feedback will be essential, with a positive approach to adapting to change

The Scottish Government, COSLA and Scottish Refugee Council launched the refreshed [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy](#) in March 2024. Following this, an [Edinburgh specific strategy](#) and implementation plan is being developed.

In addition to the national strategy and implementation plan, development of the strategy is built on key documents which include research published by [Glasgow University](#), the [Home Office](#) and the [Commission on Integration of Refugees](#). The Scottish Government has recently published an [analysis of the engagement process](#) that informed development of the New Scots Strategy's latest iteration, based around feedback gathered at an engagement event in November 2023.

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):
Ensure housing is accessible with the right support to meet everyone's needs

Key Challenges:
Building homes to meet the needs of a diverse and ageing population in a time of funding pressures.
Responding to a growing global refugee crisis at a time when the city faces an acute housing crisis.

Responding to need and demand for more accessible and wheelchair homes, including larger homes, in the context of funding pressures.
The role of the private sector in providing more accessible and adaptable homes.
Improving the way we deliver and resource adaptations.
Gaps in knowledge about existing provision and future needs
Meeting housing and care/support needs of people with complex learning disabilities.
Joined-up approach to housing and care and support.

Proposed Actions:
21. Develop a Joint Working Protocol between Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, Housing and Homelessness, focusing on prevention and housing need and to support strategic priorities of each area as reflected in Housing Contribution Statement
22. Improve monitoring and reporting around accessible housing, across tenures
23. Continue to support refugees and asylum seekers to access housing, services and related support through partnership and direct work.
There are additional actions around the provision of accessible and wheelchair housing, a review of the Council's Allocations Policy, and review of Adaptations Governance, Delivery and Funding across all tenures. These will be managed through the Housing Emergency Action Plan under two of the high-level actions for Housing Supply and Demand for Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS1: Work with partners to increase and improve supply of housing in the city and develop and implement innovative funding solutions. • DH1 - Work with partners to make best use of all homes in the city.

Chapter 6. Develop vibrant, connected, safe and inclusive communities

Strategic Objective(s):
Support communities to be vibrant, connected, safe and inclusive
Help to deliver the Council's commitment to end poverty in Edinburgh

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the wider neighbourhoods that people live in, recognising how fundamental the surrounding environment, local facilities and sense of safety and belonging are to overall perceptions of 'home'. This is recognised more than ever following the Covid-19 pandemic, which reinforced the importance of the local environment and access to high quality, well managed spaces.

National Context

Housing to 2040 highlighted the importance of sustainable communities. In addition, the Scottish Government set out the following principles for Placemaking:

- **Place principle** – working and planning together alongside local communities to encourage better collaboration and to enable better outcomes. This feeds into NPF4.
- **Town Centre First** – Putting the health of town centres at the heart of decision making, e.g. bringing back empty properties for housing and services. This feeds into NPF4 and is also reflected in Housing to 2040.
- **20 Minute Neighbourhoods** – living well locally, giving people the ability to meet most of their daily needs nearby. This is reflected as part of NPF4.
- **The Place Standard Tool** – helps to structure conversations about place. It encourages thought of both physical elements and social

aspects of a place, prompting discussions and consideration of all elements of a place in a methodical way

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 made significant changes to community planning legislation, setting out how public bodies should work together and with the local community to plan for, resource and provide public services which improve local outcomes in the local authority area, all with a view to reducing inequalities.

Spatial principles and policies set out in **National Planning Framework (NPF4)** inform the delivery of housebuilding and placemaking and are reflected in this strategy. This includes the application of the 20-minute neighbourhood principle, along with prioritising of brownfield sites, adopting a 'fabric first' approach to decarbonising homes. Under the NPF 4, Nature Networks are a requirement within every local authority in Scotland. Edinburgh's Nature Network was the first and was developed in partnership between the City of Edinburgh Council and the Scottish Wildlife Trust, as part of the Thriving Green Spaces project.

Local Context

City Plan 2030 is the Local Development Plan for Edinburgh for the period 2024-2034 and beyond. A Local Development Plan protects places of value, sets out locations for new homes and businesses, and ensures essentials for a good quality of life are in place - such as public transport, active travel, schools, healthcare and green space. The plan sets out policies and proposals relating to the development and use of land in the Edinburgh area, and where new infrastructure and community facilities are required. It sets out where development should happen and where it should not. The policies in the plan are used to determine planning applications.

Evidence gathering is already underway for the next iteration (City Plan 2040). It is anticipated that City Plan 2040 will have an increasing place-based focus, presenting a 'place-based plan', in line with the expectations set out in NPF4. A place-based plan will look at Edinburgh as a series of places and enables a more targeted understanding, recognising that different people have different experiences and perspectives across different parts of the city. Place Profiles will

be developed as part of the evidence reporting. These will be ward based and will include both qualitative and quantitative data.

Declaration of a Nature Emergency: In February 2023, the Council declared a nature emergency, recognising the current state of nature, its inherent value and the crucial role its recovery and restoration will play in realising climate targets. The Council has signed up to the [Berlin Urban Nature Pact](#), a global initiative for cities, which follows on from the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) (which the Council signed in 2020).

Edinburgh Nature Network (ENN) is a long-term strategic approach to manage, restore and enhance the urban landscape of Edinburgh. It highlights opportunities to take action across the city, using natural solutions to address the threats of biodiversity loss and climate change. It focuses on creating a well-connected, healthy, resilient ecosystem whilst enhancing the ability of the city to adapt to climate change, providing multiple benefits to wildlife, human society and the economy.

6.1 Regeneration and Placemaking

Council Housebuilding Programme

The Council has been delivering homes through an in-house team since 2011/12, when the first Council homes in a generation were delivered at Gracemount in the South-East of the city. To date, over 2,000 homes have been delivered by the Council over 19 sites across the city. This has been a mix of social rent, mid-market rent and homes for private rent or sale. Over 700 homes are currently under construction, with over 4,000 more in design and development.

Mixed use and mixed tenure principles have been central to this. A bespoke approach is required for each site, but some core principles apply to all: considerations around access and the impact on the local community while the works take place; considering the overall 'place', including landscaping and management; and infrastructure as key to developing sustainable communities and good places.

This is not without its challenges and in the current financial climate, financial pressures can put placemaking and regeneration objectives at risk. This can also present as a challenge across other service areas and budgets. In roads maintenance, for example, budgetary pressures can be at risk of impacting on design. There is an increasing stipulation for easier and cost-effective straight tarmac pathways as opposed to more innovative designs, which would previously have been built in. Reduced Capital budgets mean it is more imperative than ever to explore options for external funding opportunities on a site-by-site basis to help ensure wider placemaking objectives can be achieved, alongside housebuilding.

There are some legislative tools, such as Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO), that can be used to enable regeneration. CPO is an important power which has been used to bring forward housing and regeneration. However, this is only utilised where necessary, appropriate and proportionate. CPO can be a lengthy process and as such, a revised approach is being developed where the CPO process is initiated in the background, but the development would seek to progress without it, through wider negotiations with owners and/ or landowners to seek resolution without the requirement for CPO.

Looking ahead, there is an increasing focus on a masterplan approach, further integrating new-build and regeneration with wider improvement programmes, such as whole-house retrofit and mixed tenure improvements. New strategies for estates, high-rise and low-rise will be developed to support this approach over the coming years, ensuring clarity in direction and alignment with financial planning.

Partnership working is key to affordable housebuilding and regeneration. A series of case study examples are set out at the end of this chapter which bring to life some of the housebuilding developments across the city. These are examples of Council housebuilding developments, delivered in partnership with a variety of contractors and design teams.

20-minute neighbourhood model

The 20-minute neighbourhood model is a key concept in Housing to 2040 and National Planning Framework 4. In 2024, the Scottish Government published Planning Guidance on Living Well Locally and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, which highlights Edinburgh's application of this model as a case study example. The concept of the 20-minute neighbourhood is supporting people to live well locally and providing people with access to services and facilities to meet most daily needs within a 20-minute walk or wheel.

The Council's Neighbourhood Strategy was first approved in June 2021, updated in August 2023. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept has also been integrated into the Council's City Plan 2030, City Mobility Plan and Corporate Property Strategy which has a key theme around *living well locally*.

Edinburgh has ambitiously adopted a 20-minute round-trip principle: 10-minutes there and 10-minutes back. However, the distance that people are willing or able to walk or wheel will vary and there will be different needs and expectations for urban, suburban and more rural communities. Providing good local cycle and public transport provision for people to have the choice of accessing a wider range of services and facilities is therefore also important.

There is no template for an ideal '20-minute neighbourhood'. The services and facilities needed to meet daily needs will depend on individuals and the unique characteristics of their communities. However, for most people these types of services and facilities would likely meet most daily needs:

- schools and lifelong learning opportunities.
- local centres, shops and employment opportunities.
- advice and support services, health and social care facilities.
- community and cultural spaces, public toilets.
- greenspaces and playgrounds, opportunities for food growth, sport and recreation facilities.
- safe, high-quality walking, wheeling and cycling networks.
- access to public transport.

The 20-minute neighbourhood strategy builds on recommendations from the End Poverty Commission, findings from the Climate Commission around net-zero

design and reducing unnecessary travel, and findings from Thrive Edinburgh about the connections between health and place. This is a long-term commitment which will require all parts of the Council and partners to embed the 20-minute neighbourhood concept within day-to-day activity and investment decisions.

Funding to support the implementation of the strategy has included the Scottish Government Place Based Investment Programme and Sustrans Places for Everyone with projects aligned to priority areas of focus. These are town centres, areas where need is greatest and where there are opportunities to capitalise on work that is already planned. For example, work is underway to improve local town centres such as Dalry and new school investments in Liberton and Currie will have wider community uses. Further consideration will be given to the potential for local hubs across the city with co-located facilities and shared service delivery to better meet community needs.

20-minute neighbourhood principles are also being embedded in local authority-led regeneration work in areas such as Granton, Craigmillar, Wester Hailes, Pennywell, and Muirhouse, and on the development of key brownfield sites across the city. The Granton Waterfront regeneration, as detailed in case study 4, will deliver a new coastal town with an ambitious 20-minute neighbourhood vision over the next 10-15 years.

Place Standard Principle

The [Place Standard](#), developed by the Scottish Government in partnership with NHS Health Scotland and Architecture and Design Scotland, is a tool that provides a simple framework on which to structure conversations about place.

The Place Standard has been used to support regeneration activities in Edinburgh, notably in the consultation for the redevelopment of Meadowbank. This included Steering Group workshops designed around the themes of the Place Standard and the use of Place Standard questionnaires to help capture and analyse feedback.

Co-location and strategic asset management

This plays an important role in delivering on the aspirations of the 20-minute neighbourhood model, where multi-use facilities are located close to where people live and work. For this to work effectively, there needs to be buy-in from organisations and communities to engage in this approach. The Council's [Corporate Property Strategy](#) has 'live well locally' as a key theme and is aligned to the aspirations of the 20-minute neighbourhood concept in that it aims for people to be able to access key services and facilities in their local area. Property investment and improvement will take a [place-based approach](#) to change, to make sure that proposals meet local needs, are acceptable to communities and improve local service delivery. This will mean more community hubs that provide attractive, inclusive, and accessible spaces for citizens to engage in a wide range of personal and work-related activities.

Development and Infrastructure

The importance of aligning new housing delivery with the infrastructure and transport links to meet the needs of the community was a recurring theme throughout the LHS engagement. City Plan 2030 sets out three aims around this:

- Promoting an 'infrastructure first' approach, directing new development to where there is existing infrastructure or where the development can deliver the infrastructure necessary to mitigate any negative impacts. Where, by the nature of the infrastructure, it cannot be delivered by the developer directly, developer contributions will be sought. Proposals are required to deliver or contribute to transport proposals and safeguards, education provision including new schools, early years nursery proposals, school extensions to accommodate additional classrooms, primary healthcare infrastructure capacity, Green Blue Network actions and, where identified, infrastructure of a regional scale.
- Directing housing development to where residents can access a range of key services within a reasonable distance. Delivering a network of 20-minute neighbourhoods and embedding a 'place-based' approach to the creation of high quality, high density, mixed use and walkable communities, linked by better active travel and public transport infrastructure, green and blue networks and bringing community

services closer to homes. This covers facilities such as schools/ lifelong learning, green spaces, community gardens, allotments, sport and recreation, local doctor and dental surgeries, local shops, community halls and shared work/ meeting spaces. Where this is not demonstrated, proposals will only be considered where these services can be delivered relative to the scale of development and managed as an integral component of a mixed-use development.

- Where new infrastructure is required, we will take a consultative approach with communities to address future healthcare and education requirements alongside rising school rolls and the requirements of the Edinburgh Local Development Plan 2016.

Housing development sites are also required to demonstrate that local, city-wide and cross-boundary individual and cumulative transport impacts identified in the City Plan Transport Appraisal can be timeously addressed where this is relevant and necessary for the proposal and the required transport infrastructure, set out in the Plan has been addressed where relevant to the proposal.

Supplementary Guidance on infrastructure delivery and developer contributions is being prepared and will set out detail of the likely costs and method of calculation of developer contributions for the infrastructure detailed in City Plan.

6.2 Greenspaces and Nature

Edinburgh is very fortunate in its geographic setting, situated amongst seven hills and several river valleys between the Pentland Hills and the Firth of Forth. Almost half of Edinburgh is classed as greenspace and as the largest landowner in the city, the Council cares for just under half of this greenspace. However, like many cities in the UK, Edinburgh faces challenges in looking after its greenspaces, including a declining workforce and increased workloads. The Council's desire to find better options to sustainably resource our greenspaces was a major driver for initiating the [Thriving Green Spaces](#) project.

Thriving Greenspaces Strategy

[The Thriving Greenspaces Strategy](#) sets out the vision for Edinburgh's public greenspaces up to 2050 in terms of their care, management and improvement,

and reflects the ambitions of the Council and its project partners, as well as the citizens of Edinburgh. It seeks to deliver on many of the capital's aspirations for placemaking, health, sustainability, and biodiversity, as well as looking to build stronger links and to connect greenspace ambition with the Council's Learning and Housing green estates, Edinburgh Leisure's green estate.

The Thriving Greenspaces Strategy notes that *“two of the most urgent global issues we are currently facing are biodiversity loss and climate change. Ecosystems are being degraded, habitat fragmented, and nature is being lost at an increasing rate. These crises are threatening both wildlife and human wellbeing in Edinburgh, the UK and around the world. By connecting our greenspaces for people and wildlife and using nature-based solutions and green infrastructure to “green the grey”, we can not only reverse the biodiversity decline and mitigate climate change, but we can adapt our city to the changing climate whilst also helping to meet City's goals of becoming a sustainable, net-zero carbon city by 2030”*.

The strategy should be seen in the context of the Council's City Plan and the Council's Open Space Strategy, which guide the proposals and policies to shape development and plans for the future open space needs in the city and informs planning and sustainability decisions in the city.

Edinburgh Nature Network

The [Edinburgh Nature Network](#), a statutory requirement under the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy by 2030, is a long-term approach to manage, restore and enhance the urban landscape of Edinburgh. The Council and partners are creating, restoring and connecting green areas of the city to produce attractive and biodiverse landscapes that are healthy, nature rich and resilient to climate change.

The changes have included the creation of floral meadows, a reduction in grass cutting, pathways mown through areas of longer grass, more trees planted in urban areas and parks, and an increase in herbaceous perennial planting.

By allowing grassland habitats to develop in a more natural manner within urban settings, the biodiversity of wildlife has been increasing, the costs of managing intensively maintained areas have reduced, and less regular cuttings have slowed rainwater run-off helping to lock-up carbon in soils and reduce CO2 release.

The planting of flowering species has also added colour through the changing seasons and encouraged the public to use these outdoor spaces throughout the year.

Managing our Estate for Nature

In May 2024, the Council's Parks and Greenspace Service introduced a new cutting regime as a pilot in residential plots in three wards (Sighthill/ Gorgie, Forth, part of Pentlands) with the intention that this is gradually rolled out citywide. The Living Landscape programme started this shift in management back in 2015 and resulted in naturalised grassland verges within many parks in addition to higher numbers of perennial and annual meadows and planted bulbs.

Throughout the grass cutting period, Standard Amenity Grassland is cut more often than is necessary when most of these areas are not used for any specific purpose. This traditional practice is detrimental to biodiversity, specifically our pollinators and nature at a fundamental level. Through the pilot *'Managing our Estate for Nature'*, the mowing frequency of residential plots identified as part of this trial has been reduced to approximately once every 4-6 weeks from the previous practice of every two weeks.

To date, the pilot has primarily focused on adapting and refining approaches to relaxing grassland. Evidence from the pilot has shown significant benefits, with data indicating positive biodiversity trends. The plots now exhibit more colour, structural diversity, more flowers, and interesting patterns throughout the entire year. This approach has allowed uncommon plants and grasses to grow and flower, enhancing visual and ecological value.

Going forward, phase two will begin enhancing some of these plots through additional planting. [Phase two](#) will have an increased focus on communication particularly with residents, community groups, schools, and Ward Councillors.

This will be crucial in selecting the types of nature interventions most supported by residents. Longer-term, it is envisioned that this approach will be upscaled to additional areas across the city.

Partnership approach to neighbourhood improvements and opportunities for nature

Work is ongoing to continue to build closer work relationships across Housing and Parks and Greenspaces teams to pursue opportunities to help address the Nature Emergency, increase biodiversity and improve health and wellbeing in line with a climate justice approach. Joined up working is increasingly taking place across large scale improvement programmes such as the Whole House Retrofit programme to explore opportunities for nature, such as making best use of community benefits arrangements to enhance the local area. This could include opportunities for biodiversity or community growing, or delivering improvements to local parks, helping to improve community safety as well as nature objectives. This supports more aligned working and driving forward a 'whole place' approach.

As part of the Edinburgh Million Tree City programme, a successful funding application has been awarded, aimed at increasing biodiversity in urban areas. Parks and Open Space has partnered with Housing teams and the Granton Community Growers to work with communities to design, plant and look after new woodlands on Housing land.

This project is made possible by an Urban Forestry Challenge Fund grant provided by Future Woodlands. The grant will enable the appointment of a part-time Development Officer over three years to work with and engage local residents in the north, southwest and southeast of the city to co-design unused Housing space for tree planting. Matched funding from Housing has been committed for the purchase of trees and any associated capital works and contractor fees, with further funding committed from the Parks and Openspace budget to support this project.

By working closely with communities, this project aims to transform areas into thriving spaces like orchards and woodland to improve biodiversity, ongoing

engagement and connection to nature itself. The long-term goal of the project is to create a lasting legacy of nature and community involvement.

The programme will contribute to the delivery of wider projects like the Edinburgh Nature Network, Tree and Woodland Strategy and the Edinburgh One Million Tree City. It will also compliment and further enhance areas undergoing new grassland standards in the trial areas detailed above.

The project will last 3 years until June 2028. A Project officer is due to be appointed by July, with work beginning in the north of the city in the first year, followed by the southwest and southeast in the subsequent two years.

These include the following neighbourhoods:

- North: Muirhouse; Granton; Wardieburn
- Southwest: Broomhouse; Calders; Sighthill
- Southeast: Gilmerton; Liberton; Moredun; Ferniehill; Hyvot's Bank; Gracemount; Southhouse

This marks an important opportunity for further joint-working across Parks and Greenspaces and Housing teams, with a focus on increasing the number of trees on housing land where there is particular capacity for this.

Landscape design for Council-led developments

The landscape design of Council-led developments is an essential part of the master planning process. It is crucial that the landscape spaces between buildings are attractive, biodiverse, safe and resilient to the effects of climate change.

Through the design process it is essential to adhere to both national and local planning policy, and to listen to the needs of the local community when developing proposals, whether it is well lit paths or places for children to play.

Large scale, mixed tenure sites are guided by the Building with Nature standards which provide evidence-based guidance on delivering high quality green infrastructure.

In the current financial climate, there is significant pressure to ensure that the capital costs for the landscaping are as efficient as possible and that they are designed to be as straightforward to manage and maintain, which may require the use of external factors.

Community gardens and growing

There are a range of different models for community gardening and growing across Edinburgh. This includes [Council-run allotments](#) of which there are over 1,600 across 32 sites, along with independently operated allotments and community growing initiatives.

There is also a network of community gardens on housing owned (Housing Revenue Account – HRA) land across the city. In 2021, a Council Community Garden framework was created for the first time. The initial focus of Growing Together was to survey all community gardens currently in situ on HRA land, before focusing on helping to improve the use and quality of existing gardens where required and looking for opportunities for new gardens. The survey was carried out in the first half of 2022 and identified 46 gardens which had a range of characteristics such as size, condition, participation levels, as well as location and garden grouping. A work programme was then developed using this survey information and commenced in October 2022. The programme was bespoke for each garden and offered passive support for gardens which were well managed and in good condition, and active support for gardens who were in more need of help.

Achievements to date include three new community gardens being created, 101 people newly engaged in community growing, 92 raised beds built or replaced, 10 new composting facilities across the city, 7,000 litres of rainwater harvesting equipment installed and 591 hours of community gardening sessions delivered. This is on top of other benefits such as helping to improve mental and physical wellbeing, creating nicer places, and creating closer communities (with two new tenant/resident association being formed as a result of the framework). In addition to this, the community gardens project has also supported community initiatives such as the 'Growing Youth' programme which works with high school pupils, and the 'Lend a Hand' programme which helps people over 50 and out of work. Both of these schemes give positive outdoor learning opportunities in

horticulture, construction, and landscaping, and provide wellbeing and training opportunities across the city.



Muirhouse Community Garden

Estates Improvement Projects (EIP) on Housing Land

There are areas of land in estates throughout the city where the Council was previously the single owner of housing and where open space was developed when the estate was designed. These estates are now largely mixed tenure, with homes sold through Right to Buy over the years but these areas of open space remain the responsibility of the Housing Service to maintain. The land assets vary significantly in nature, size and use, with some well maintained and well used by the community, and others that bring little benefit to the community or the natural environment.

The Council has a programme called the Estates Improvement Programme (EIP), formerly known as Neighbourhood Environment Projects (NEPs). This is a programme to carry out improvements on land owned by the Housing Service. Projects delivered through the EIP are intended to be community-led, improvement projects that bring benefits to local residents. Over the years, the

type of projects funded through this budget have varied significantly in scale and scope and have included community growing projects, tree planting, soft landscaping, hard landscaping, creation of parking spaces, installation of fencing and have been largely driven by suggestions from local people, groups or officers who have identified opportunities to resolve local issues or improve the local environment. More recently, the funding has also been used to part-fund larger scale improvement projects where other capital funding has been levered in through other funding routes.

In efforts to track the contributions towards nature and climate change objectives, the referral forms the EIP has been revised to specifically capture these amongst the benefits delivered.

Work is currently in development to establish a separate programme focused on community wealth building. Still in the early stages of development, this community-led investment programme would aim to set up a framework of local, registered organisations who could take forward relatively low-level improvement works with the involvement of local people.

Community Walkabouts

Community walkabouts (or 'estates walkabouts' as they are often referred to locally) play a role in supporting communities to take ownership of their local area and collectively identifying hot spot areas for prioritised work. Community based inspections and estates walkabouts are undertaken at the request of Elected members, local residents and stakeholders, but also proactively through the Estate Improvement Programme, Community Weeks of Action and Bonfire season inspections and intervention citywide. It is recognised that the frequency of walkabouts can vary across different parts of the city, and there is action captured as part of the Housing Emergency Action Plan to promote walkabouts, ensuring there is a minimum in every 'patch' area (localised area of responsibility for a housing officer) each year. This was also identified as an important issue in the recent consultation to inform the development of the new Tenant Participation Strategy, and actions are also captured as part of this.

6.3 Safe, Connected and Inclusive Neighbourhoods

Taking the local actions needed to end poverty in Edinburgh

Edinburgh is a flourishing, wealthy city – but this wealth is not distributed equally. It is recognised that the housing crisis is driving poverty. Almost one in three families living in poverty in Edinburgh are pulled below the water line solely due to their housing costs. Working to alleviate pressures in the housing system is key to working towards ending poverty.

Whilst the percentage of people in relative poverty in Edinburgh continues to sit below the Scottish average, the number of people living in deep poverty has been increasing. The latest available data shows that an estimated 17% of people in Edinburgh were living in poverty in the period to 2023, including 20% of all children. To meet the headline targets set by Scottish Government and the Edinburgh Poverty Commission, it will require 36,000 people, including 8,600 children to be lifted out of poverty over the 7 years from 2023-30 in Edinburgh alone.

There is a higher risk of poverty among women and families in particular groups. This includes families with three or more children; families with one of more children under one; single parent households; households with a carer; minority ethnic households; and families with a disabled household member.

There are significant spatial inequalities in poverty risk across different parts of Edinburgh. However, evidence shows that poverty, often severe poverty, is found in all four of the cities' localities, and in every electoral ward. Very often these households will be affected by physical and mental health issues related directly to the poverty they experience.

There is also a long-term trend of increasing risk of very deep poverty across Scotland. Data from NHS Lothian estimates that 12.6% of people (equivalent to 65,000 people in Edinburgh) experienced food insecurity in 2023, with rates even higher among people living in low-income areas. This means they worried they would run out of food because of a lack of money or resources. 14.2% (equivalent to over 70,000 people in Edinburgh) experienced a time when they were unable to heat their home or cook food.

The Edinburgh Poverty Commission noted that the majority of people living in poverty in Edinburgh are of working age, in employment, living in rented accommodation.

Housing and poverty are intrinsically linked, and poverty cannot be eradicated in Edinburgh without addressing the housing challenges set out throughout this strategy. Much of the work outlined in this strategy will have a contributing role in working towards ending poverty in the city, including child poverty, and improving associated health outcomes – from homelessness prevention work to delivering more affordable homes to improving housing quality.

However, there is a recognition that more needs to be done and a different way of working is required to really turn the tide and end poverty in Edinburgh.

Combatting poverty through prevention and early intervention

The [Programme for Government 2024/25](#) and [Programme for Government 2025/26](#) set out a focus on prevention and early intervention in key policy areas, including health inequalities, poverty and homelessness. This is set in a Community Planning context, which fits well with the current review of community planning in Edinburgh outlined in this chapter.

Work was initiated across the Council and partner organisation in late 2024 to develop an effective preventative approach across all services and budgeting. This is not an issue that can be solved through change within the Council alone - transformation needs to take place across the whole system to achieve the scale of change required.

The Edinburgh Partnership agreed to the development of a roadmap of change actions needed to make substantive progress for prevention of poverty and other harms.

Following stakeholder and partnership engagement, a [report](#) was taken to the Edinburgh Partnership in December 2024, setting out draft proposals for a new

Edinburgh Partnership Poverty Prevention Programme, to be delivered through the proposed new Edinburgh Partnership Management Group and structures set out as part of the Partnerships' Transformation and Improvement programme. In

September 2023, it was agreed that a new Edinburgh Partnership Housing sub-group would be established as part of this structure, to ensure a citywide community planning focus on the housing and homelessness issues facing the city. This sub-group has now been set up, with an ambition to jointly align housing / homelessness alongside the public health agenda.

The Poverty Prevention Programme will aim to improve the way poverty prevention services proactively reach out to households in their own communities, to understand where targeted, person/ household centred support could prevent an escalation of need.

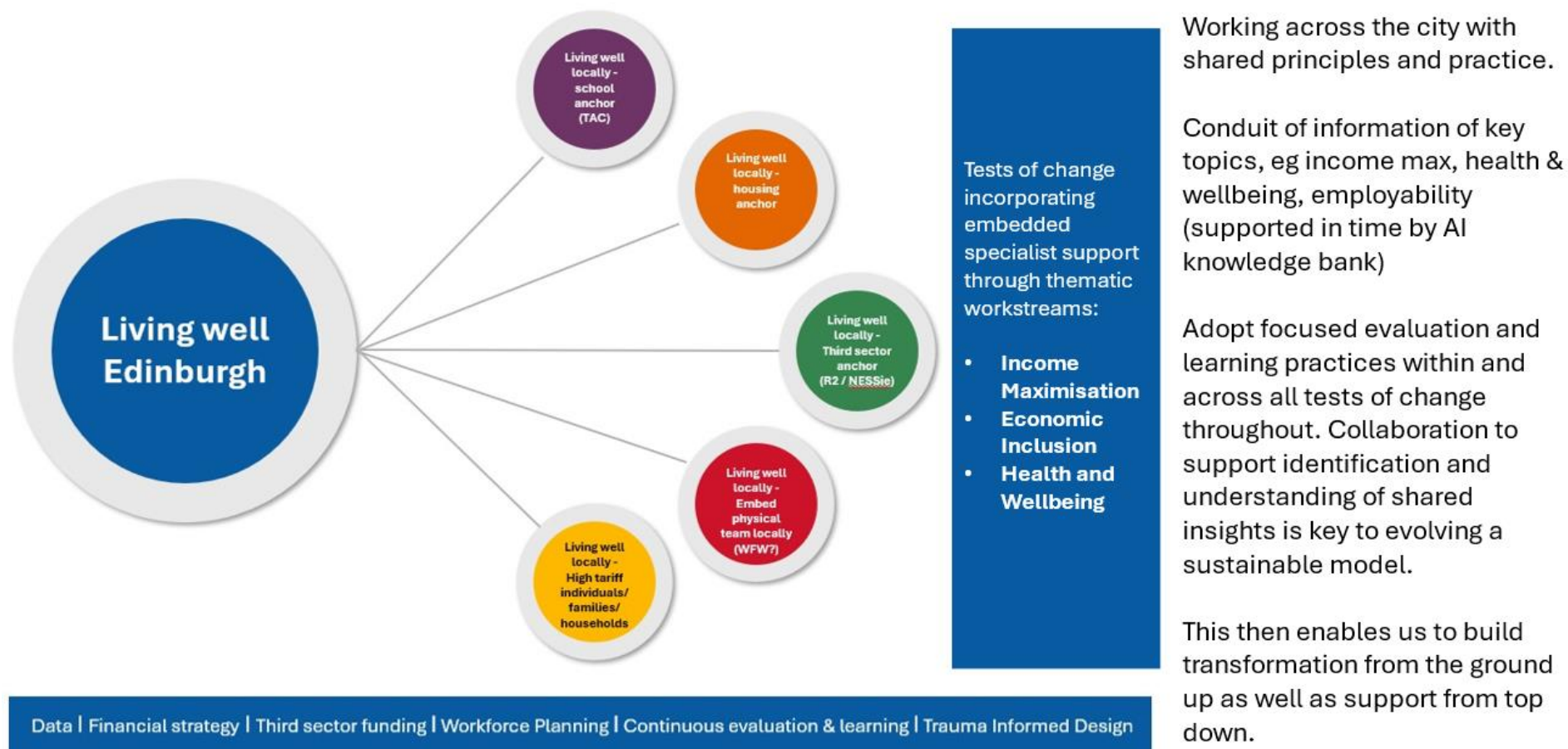
It also seeks to ensure that support is led by the individuals and agencies with which a person in need has the strongest and most trusted relationship, and that lead colleague has access to the networks and knowledge they need to introduce specialist support in the most effective way.

Housing and related service areas have a central role to play, with housing identified as one of the five local 'anchors' for this programme. This will be an important cross-service and partnership priority for 2025, with the development and implementation of a strategic approach to expanding on and embedding prevention activities in organisational design and culture across housing and homelessness services.

Figure 6: Draft Edinburgh Partnership Poverty Prevention diagram

Draft Edinburgh Partnership Poverty Prevention Programme

Supporting all citizens to live well in Edinburgh through an overarching strategy of prevention and early intervention



Antisocial Behaviour

The importance of safe, well-maintained neighbourhoods has been a recurring theme throughout the LHS engagement and previous engagement exercises. From dog fouling and fly tipping to drug abuse in stairwells, people want to feel safe in their home and to have a sense of pride in their local area. This was particularly highlighted by younger residents in LHS engagement sessions held with both teenagers and primary school children, with an emphasis on noisy or disruptive neighbours, poor street lighting, risk of violent anti-social behaviour and particular concerns around Bonfire season.

Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership

Through collaborative working between the City of Edinburgh Council and Police Scotland, and with key strategic partners including the Scottish Fire and Rescue, Youth Justice and the NHS Mental Health Services, the Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership works across the city to achieve common objectives and tangible benefits to the safety and wellbeing of all residents. This collaboration reflects core values of addressing inequality, poverty, operating sustainably, and attaining wellbeing for all residents.

Work is currently underway to review and refresh the Community Safety and Justice Partnership. This will re-establish partnership meetings and refresh on the strategic direction and governance.

Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Strategy

Under the Antisocial Behaviour Act, every local authority must prepare, publish and review a strategy for dealing with antisocial behaviour in their council area. Edinburgh's Joint Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023 set out a vision: "we live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe". This was supported by three key priorities:

- Reduce harm and safeguard people from Antisocial Behaviour specifically the impact of noise
- Reduce the likelihood of children and young people engaging in harmful or offending behaviour

- Digital Safety: Safeguard people from online harm

The Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership will be reviewing the next steps around this strategic work. Consultation has indicated that the issues of residential noise, hate crime and youth related disturbances remain ongoing priorities for residents. This is reflected in the work across the local multi-agency Community Improvement Partnerships (CIPS) who meet to consider any trends in reported crime and antisocial behaviour, taking appropriate and proportionate action against those responsible through a partnership working approach.

Concerns around drug abuse in stairwells is another frequently recurring theme. The Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership, along with its partners, have recently developed the city's drug and alcohol strategy for the next 3 years. This will be the guiding document on how the city addresses drug and alcohol related harm from 2025-2028.

Women's Safety

This consultation also identified concerns around women's safety and links between the neighbourhood environment and feelings of safety. This aligns closely to the ongoing work of the [Women's Safety in Public Places Community Improvement Partnership](#), a multi-agency partnership between the City of Edinburgh Council, Police Scotland and the Third Sector which has been in place since January 2021.

Building on this work, the Feminist City Working Group was set up in November 2023, bringing together elected members and council officers. This work builds on efforts to make Edinburgh 'safer by design' by adopting a feminist approach to the design and development of our city. This is a collaborative approach with officers from Planning, Active Travel, Neighbourhood Environmental Services and Equally Safe Edinburgh working together.

Planning officers have engaged with the Equally Safe Edinburgh Committee as part of the production of the draft Edinburgh Design Guidance (EDG) to inform and guide development proposals through a feminist lens. Within the housebuilding team, the links between safety and the physical environment are

considered as part of the design process for new-build developments. Engagement with Police Scotland through Secure by Design principles seeks to design out crime as far as possible.

Recently, the Council and Glasgow City Council came together for a collaborative event titled 'A Tale of Two Feminist Cities'. The event was attended by professionals working in Gender Equality, Violence Against Women and Girls, Police Scotland, Public Health and the Built Environment as well as Councillors and Council officers from both cities. This collaboration explored a range of topics and themes including how the planning and design of public space and perception of safety contributes to gender inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls, and perspectives on applying the Place Standard Tool through a Feminist City Planning Lens. The event helped to inform the production of the draft Edinburgh Design Guidance, to help ensure that women's safety and inclusivity is at the forefront of placemaking.

In addition to ongoing campaigns, consultation and awareness raising, priorities for 2024/25 included the improvement of offroad path networks to make them safer and more welcoming, including improvements to street lighting and consideration of CCTV installation. For 2025/26, it has been agreed that £12.5m this year and next will be invested in improvements to pavements, roads, streetscapes and lighting, in line with areas identified by a women's safety survey.

Family and Household Support and Advice Services

The Council's Household and Advice Service focuses on a strength-based approach, building resilience and seeking to secure the best and most sustainable outcomes for Edinburgh's residents. It focusses on keeping people in their tenancies, increasing safety, social mobility and reducing the impact of poor mental health, drugs, and alcohol on families, households and community relationships. This adopts a solution focused methodology and advocating for a single agency coordinated approach, rather than many separate service plans. Professionals supporting the household are jointly responsible for reviewing the support and where possible negotiating a way forward by identifying and addressing the issues that may be contributing to the behaviour, including

housing, debt, education or addiction. This recognises that need, vulnerability and strength can be present for both the victims and the persons responsible and supporting them to make positive behavioural changes that increase quality of life and avoid further disruption for residents.

The Council has recently brought together its Family and Household Support Service and Advice Services teams into one service area. This integration will further strengthen the provision of holistic support for citizens.

This will ensure that the service operates through a poverty prevention lens by adding income maximisation, debt and general money advice to the high quality housing support service, ensuring that all of the needs of service users can be met without the need for them to engage with multiple services.

Environmental Issues

The issues of dog fouling and fly tipping are frequently raised in community engagement, and it is recognised that these issues can have a significant impact on local residents. There is information and reporting mechanisms on the Council's website for these matters.

The Council can issue fixed penalty notices of £200 for fly tipping on public land. Courts can impose a penalty of up to £40,000 or imprisonment. Where items are fly tipped on private land, the landowner is responsible for clearing it away.

Fixed penalty notices of £80, under the Dog Fouling (Scotland) Act 2003, will be issued to those caught not picking up after their dog in any public place.

Accessing Services and Digital Connectivity

Getting Connected

A lack of digital access can have a huge negative impact on a person's life, affecting their ability to learn, apply for jobs, access training opportunities, and engage with many public services. In partnership with CityFibre and Openreach, the Council has been installing fibre infrastructure to all Council-owned homes.

This project focused on providing infrastructure only, allowing tenants to connect to the internet through open networks, (allowing access to over 600 providers), reducing set up costs to tenants and minimising disruption to the Council's estate.

This work has benefited tenants, staff, and hard-to-reach groups, such as those in Sheltered Housing as these buildings often lacked internet access. By prioritising these sites, staff can now work on-site, and tenants can access online services. The infrastructure work is nearing completion, with 19,880 homes within (5,493 buildings) already completed to date. The remaining properties are awaiting completion of the network roll out by CityFibre who, along with Openreach and other suppliers, continue to provide improved connectivity to all of Edinburgh residents. Housing and related service areas continue to have discussions around digital strategy and exploring new ways to utilise this infrastructure in the future.

Improving Online Services

It is recognised that many people choose to access services online and it is important that online services are accessible and easy to navigate. Feedback through the LHS engagement has reaffirmed the importance of this. Work is underway through the Housing Emergency Action to deliver digital improvements to Council systems and online services to Council tenants and prospective tenants.

Improvements delivered to date include the introduction of Browsealoud software on the [EdIndex website](#); a supply and demand tool which allows applicants to search and see where homes became available last year and how many bids were received; and a bedroom calculator when applicants can input their household members to determine how many bedrooms they should be eligible for.

Improvements currently underway include an online housing options tool; an online application form for social housing; and the introduction of auto-bidding for digitally excluded applicants.

Making services more inclusive

Feedback gathered through LHS engagement identified a particular challenge in navigating the housing system – both digitally and non-digitally - for non-English speakers or where English is not the first language. This was further explored as part of the LHS Integrated Impact Assessment process.

Examples of good practice include the EdIndex and Key to Choice website which uses a tool called Reachdeck which can translate English into 250 different languages and can also speak out the information in any of these languages. For those who are visually impaired, users can choose colours and shading to suit their vision requirements and words can be magnified as they are spoken. Reachdeck can also simplify the website information for those who are dyslexic or have dyspraxia. In addition, housing specific support for Ukrainian refugees includes Ukrainian speakers along with access to interpreters.

Currently, housing publications and communications, such as the tenant newsletter, can be made available in different languages through translation services. However, it is recognised that more proactive steps could be taken to improve this and help ensure this information reaches everyone, including non-English speakers.

The LHS sets out a commitment to explore and trial more proactive approaches, such as the inclusion of an introductory paragraph provided in future editions of the tenant newsletter in the most popular languages across Edinburgh. Over the lifespan of this LHS, we will seek to build on this across various housing communications.

6.4: Engaged and Empowered Communities

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 made significant changes to community planning legislation. It set out explicitly how public bodies should work together and with the local community to plan for, resource and provide public services which improve local outcomes in the local authority area, all with a view to reducing inequalities. The guidance sets out that community planning partnerships should be engaging with communities in identifying and prioritising

outcomes and working with communities to develop their capacity to contribute to community planning and to achieve better outcomes.

Community Engagement and Empowerment

A Community Planning Partnership (or CPP) is the name given to all those services that come together to take part in community planning. There are 32 CPPs across Scotland, one for each council area. Each CPP focuses on where partners' collective efforts and resources can add the most value to their local communities, with particular emphasis on reducing inequality.

In Edinburgh, the CPP is the Edinburgh Partnership. CPPs are responsible for producing two types of plans to describe their local priorities and planned improvements:

- Local Outcomes Improvement Plans, which cover the whole council area
- Locality Plans, which cover smaller areas within the CPP area, usually focusing on areas that will benefit most from improvement.

Community participation lies at the heart of community planning, and applies in the development, design and delivery of plans as well as in their review, revision and reporting. Consultation is no longer enough - CPPs and community planning partners must act to secure the participation of communities throughout.

In Edinburgh, communities have been key partners in community planning arrangements for many years. However, it is recognised that this is an area that needs strengthened. Community planning works best where trust and relationships are strong, and there are already a lot of examples of this across Edinburgh. The direction of travel for Edinburgh is a community centred, place-based approach, aimed at working more closely with existing community groups and, where existing structures are not in place, helping to develop community capacity.

As outlined earlier in this chapter, a transformation and improvement programme is currently underway, which will put in place a new and improved structure, focusing on collective leadership.

Participatory Budgeting

In Edinburgh, Participatory Budgeting has been used as an approach to distribute funding since 2010, starting with small grants funding and expanding to other areas such as the Neighbourhood Environment Programme and the Health and Social Care Change Fund.

Since 2021, COSLA and Scottish Government have put forward a framework for at least 1% of local government budgets to be subject to participatory budgeting. Whilst this is not a duty, the Council works towards this target every year. There is a three-pronged approach to this: grants; commissioning; and mainstream. Different areas are explored under each of these strands, including equity funding in schools; enhanced use of community benefits funding; and potential use of the Tourist Visitor Levy to support participatory budgeting (subject to public consultation).

Community Wealth Building

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an approach to economic development that aims to build a fairer, stronger and more sustainable local economy that benefits everyone. It does so by supporting the creation and retention of wealth in local economies, and by giving local people more control over that wealth. The approach is built on action across five key themes:

- Spending
- Employment
- Land and property
- Economic ownership
- Financial power

The Scottish Government recognises the opportunities that this approach brings to create jobs, reduce supply chains and strengthen local and regional economies. To maximise these benefits, the Scottish Government is introducing a Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill to create a strategic foundation for CWB in Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh Council also recognises the potential value of this approach at a local level. The Council is embedding the principles of CWB into policies and practises to make sure that wealth is enabled to be created and circulated locally, and to support local communities to benefit from that wealth.

Work to deliver housing and housing related services in Edinburgh can support the Council's CWB ambitions, for example it can:

- Enable communities to benefit from investment in, and delivery of, housing through community benefits.
- Enable community led initiatives.

Tenant Engagement and Participation

The Council has a longstanding working relationship with registered tenant organisations across the city.

All social landlords must have a Tenant Participation Strategy (TPS), setting out support and actions to enable Council tenants to participate in the delivery and development of the Housing Service. It's important that tenants feel able to influence and have a say on the housing services they receive. We want to understand how we can better support tenants' participation in developing services and what opportunities or ways they want to get involved.

Council tenants were consulted on a new draft TPS 2025-28 over the summer of 2024. The draft strategy has been developed with tenants and builds on previous strategies, achievements and activities. The [draft strategy](#) will be presented to committee in June 2025. The Council will continue to support the important role of tenant participation delivery partners to ensure tenants are empowered to have their say.

Chapter Summary

Strategic Objective(s):
Support communities to be vibrant, connected, safe and inclusive
Help to deliver the Council's commitment to end poverty in Edinburgh

Key Challenges:

Financial pressures can put placemaking and regeneration objectives at risk. It is more imperative than ever to explore options for external funding opportunities on a site-by-site basis to help ensure wider placemaking objectives can be achieved alongside housebuilding.

Aligning new housing delivery with the infrastructure and transport links to meet the needs of the community. City Plan 2030 includes specific aims around this: 20-minute neighbourhoods and embedding a 'place-based' approach; promoting an 'infrastructure first' approach; and following a consultative approach where new infrastructure is required

Supporting households at risk of or experiencing poverty is a key challenge and priority for the Council and partner organisations. A focus on prevention is key to addressing this, with a new prevention strategy to be developed in 2025.

Tackling anti-social behaviour across the city is a multi-faceted challenge, requiring strong partnership working. The Edinburgh Community Safety and Justice Partnership continues to play an important city-wide role.

Maintaining and improving greenspaces in the face of the twin challenges of the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. This requires partnership working and this strategy sets out a commitment to continue to build on opportunities for Housing Service collaboration and joint working with colleagues across Parks and Greenspaces.

Improving and strengthening community engagement in Edinburgh: This strategy seeks to support wider Council and partnership ambitions to strengthen community engagement in Edinburgh.

Proposed Actions:

24. Develop an Estates Strategy
25. Embed the strategic coordination of all poverty prevention related activities across housing and homelessness services.
26. Review and refresh the Community Safety and Justice Partnership

27. Develop a strategy to support the integration of the Advice Services and Family and Household Support
28. Continue to investigate digitalisation of systems and customer access. Include trialling more proactive approaches to make housing communications more accessible for non-English speakers.
29. Continue to maximise opportunities to improve greenspaces across the city in line with objectives around biodiversity, sustainability and community safety.
30. Roll out the new Tenant Participation Strategy and continue to build on tenant engagement.

Chapter 6: Placemaking Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of partnership working between the Council and a wide range of partner organisations, contractors and design teams.

Case Study 1. Innovative design at Leith Fort

The multiple award winning site* at [Leith Fort](#) has combined modern design with an appreciation of heritage to create a development which has positively impacted both existing tenants and the wider local community. The developed site created 94 new affordable homes, combining low rise blocks and modern colony style housing, together with innovative grouped south-facing garden allocation.

Comprehensive engagement with tenants and residents helped shape the site and informed the bespoke works which took place, such as the reduction in height of a listed wall which had previously created a division between the site and the rest of the community. The local community were encouraged to engage with the development process through consultation events, public archaeology open days and street naming, for example. Five historical canons from the site were used as features, helping to bridge the gap between old and new.

Since its completion, the design and layout of the development has proved particularly successful from a tenancy management perspective, with tenants taking real pride in their homes and the local area. The garden allocations have been particularly effective and have helped increase interactions between tenants, and the reduction of the wall has helped to improve natural surveillance on North Fort Street which has benefitted the wider neighbourhood.

**RIAS Award 2018, Saltire Housing Award 2018 - Multiple Dwelling, Saltire Housing Award - Saltire Medal, Edinburgh Architectural Association Award Large Project – Commendation, Homes for Scotland Large Affordable Housing Project of the Year 2018, Herald Property Awards Affordable Housing Project of the Year 2018*

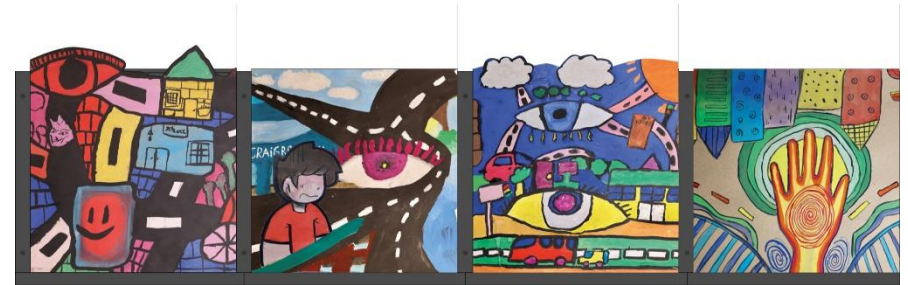


Case Study 2. Engaging younger residents at Pennywell

The major regeneration of the Pennywell area has included the construction of new homes, a new school, a medical center, retail units, public realm areas including a civic square, active travel routes, and, central to the development, the MacMillan Community Hub. The hub is a joint project between the Council and North Edinburgh Arts, a community owned arts organisation. The completed hub will provide a new nursery, library, homes for social rent and an expanded and refurbished community arts facility.

For many younger residents, the long-term regeneration of this area and at times, the unavoidable disruption, has been an ongoing feature throughout their upbringing. In a bid to positively engage younger residents, the Council have appointed an Arts Consultant who has started engagement with a local school. This will result in school pupils producing art which will be used during the current development and as part of the final public square works. This technique aims to positively engage young people who live locally and are impacted by the development works, in a bid to foster positive relationships.

In addition to this, community benefits such as modern apprenticeships have been provided by developers, employing and upskilling local people and those in the wider development area.



Pennywell Hub, Paul Zanre Photography

Case Study 3. Working together with the local community at Fountainbridge

Partnership working and local community engagement is an integral part of regeneration and development work. There is not a 'one size fits all' approach – the specific nature and requirements of each development help to guide the approach.

The Fountainbridge site is an example of successful engagement with various local stakeholders, including the Canalside initiative, the Fountainbridge Community Trust and the Merchiston Community Council, to promote local input and involvement. A policy of opening up the site to the local community has helped to promote transparency and trust in the planned works, and design workshops have been an important channel for getting the local community involved in the development from an early stage. Consultation has been a key focus of this project from the start, with events having been held at various local venues at different times of day, to raise awareness and encourage a wider mix of people to share their views. In addition to residents, the community engagement has also involved local businesses and local councillors.

Partnership working has taken place in a number of other ways, such as holding a canal festival next to the site and working with the University of Edinburgh who have used the site as a living case study for their planning students. The community have a presence on site in the form of a community gardens and a mushroom farm. This is a good collaboration as a 'meanwhile use', which maintains activity on the site until development gets underway.

Case Study 4. Sustainable development at scale at Granton Western Villages

The Granton waterfront regeneration is a blueprint for future sustainable development at scale. The work will take place across four phases and will transform the area, with the planned creation of over 3,500 net zero carbon homes (over 35% to be affordable). 660 homes are already under construction as part of early action projects.

The delivery of new homes is part of a wider development to establish a new community, with other planned amenities in the area such as a new school, doctor surgery, parks, active travel infrastructure, community space and art installations.

An early example of a successful restoration project is that of a former gas holder, which has been transformed into a large park area containing multiple spaces within, such as a play area for children and an art and sculpture area.

This project has demonstrated the importance of strong relationships with strategic partners and contractors, from financial viability to providing targeted community benefits. Innovation is at the heart of the regeneration, with a ground-breaking district heating network which will serve as a heat source to be fully built out in the area as well as off-site manufacturing.

The project is underpinned by engagement with local communities. Extensive consultation took place at the start of the process which helped shape the creation of a development framework and has continued as work has started on site.



Western Villages, Granton

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

A&D	Acquisition and Disposal (buying and selling of homes)
AHP	Affordable Housing Policy
AHSP	Affordable Housing Supply Programme
ALACHO	Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers
ARC	Annual Return on the Charter
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BRMA	Broad Rental Market Area
BTR	Build To Rent
CaCHE	Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
CoSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Orders
CPP	Community Planning Partnership
EAHP	Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership
ECO	Energy Company Obligation
Edinburgh HSCP	Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership
EES: ABS	Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area-Based Schemes
EESSH	Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing
EHD	Edinburgh Home Demonstrator
EHO	Empty Homes Officer
EIP	Estates Improvement Projects
ENN	Edinburgh Nature Network
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
EPH	Edinburgh Partnership Housing
ESESCRD	Edinburgh and Southeast Scotland City Region Deal
ESPC	Edinburgh Solicitors' Property Centre Limited
ETF	Edinburgh Tenants Forum
ETF	Edinburgh Tenants Federation
FHS	Family and Household Support
GP	General Practitioner
GVA	Gross Value Added
H&SCP	Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership
HARSAG	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group
HART	Home Accessibility Referral Team
HAWS	Homeless Accommodation with Support
HEAP	Housing Emergency Action Plan
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HfVN	Housing for Varying Needs
HMO	Houses in Multiple Occupation
HNDA 3	Housing Need and Demand Assessment

HRA	Housing Revenue Account
HSCP	Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership
IA	Integration Authorities
IHUB	Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Improvement Hub
IJB	Integration Joint Board
IMOs	Income Maximisation Officers
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
LAR	Local Affordable Rented
LCHO	Low Cost Home Ownership
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LHA	Local Housing Allowance
LHEES	Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
LTSD	Long Term Sick or Disabled.
MDT	The Multi-Disciplinary Team
MECOPP	Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project
MIS	Minimum Income Standard
MMR	Mid-Market Rent
MTIS	Mixed Tenure Improvement Service
NCS	National Care Service
NEPs	Neighbourhood Environment Projects
NHS	National Health Service
NPF4	National Planning Framework 4
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
NRS	National Records Scotland
OMSE	Open Market Shared Equity
OT	Occupational Therapist
PBSA	Purpose-Built Student Accommodation
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PSL	Private Sector Leasing
RDA	Regional Delivery Alliance
REH	Royal Edinburgh Hospital
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RPP3	Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
RTO	Registered Tenants Organisation
SFHA	Scottish Federation of Housing Associations
SG	Scottish Government
SHAPE	Strategic Homeless Action Partnership Edinburgh
SHCS	Scottish Housing Condition Survey
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan
SHN	Scotland's Housing Network
SHNZHF	Social Housing Net Zero Heat Fund
SHNZS	Social Housing Net Zero Standard
SHQS	Scottish Housing Quality Standard

SHR	Scottish Housing Regulator
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SST	Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement
STLs	Short Term Lets
TCAC	Through Care and Aftercare
TFF	Temporary Furnished Flats
TPS	Tenant Participation Strategy
UDPs	Ukrainian Displaced People
WHR	Whole House Retrofit