

East Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020 Report on Community Engagement - Appendix 2

Introduction

East Dunbartonshire Council and partners, including RSLs are committed to delivering suitable accommodation that adequately meets residents' needs throughout the local authority area. Part of this provision is through maintaining and upgrading existing social rented homes, while another element is new build provision as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), over the next 5 year period.

To ascertain stakeholders views on the priorities under consideration for this and for future SHIPs, a consultation was held for a 2 week period from 16 to 30 October 2020. Feedback from this engagement will help the Council and partners to best focus future investment priorities to meet housing need and demand subject to available resources.

The engagement was advertised in local newspapers, and social media before being placed on the consultation page of the Council's website. A range of stakeholders were invited to contribute, including.

- Councillors
- Tenants and Residents
- Community Councillors
- RSL partners
- Council Services, including Housing Services, Planning Services and Sustainability Services

The consultation was intended to establish key priorities for further, more focussed, engagement to take place during 2021 and in advance of the next SHIP and Local Housing Strategy being undertaken during 2022. Broad questions were asked across a wide range of subject areas and no assumptions were made about the existing housing circumstances of respondents.

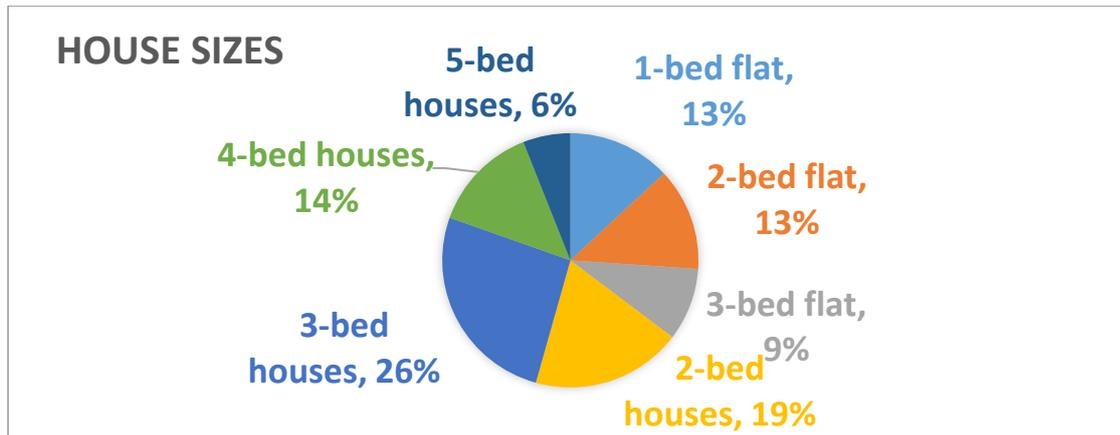
Responses and Feedback

There was an excellent response to the SHIP engagement, as 90 online questionnaires were completed. This suggests a strong interest from stakeholders on the content of the SHIP, and associated housing investment priorities. Responses to the questions are summarised below.

Question 1:

Do you think that the balance of sizes of houses is correct for East Dunbartonshire or would you like to see more of the following?

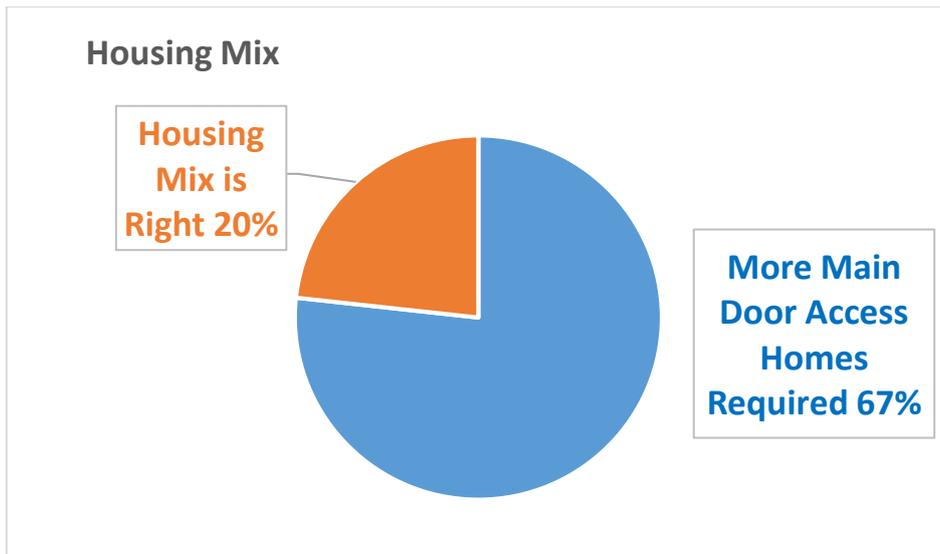
1 Bedroom Flats		2 Bedroom Flats		3 Bedroom Flats
1 Bedroom House	2 Bedroom House	3 Bedroom House	4 Bedroom House	5 Bedroom House



There was a high level of support for future provision to include larger family homes, particularly 3 bedroom properties at 35%. However there was a strong distinction between favoured property types for such homes given that 26% of respondents felt that three bedroom houses were required, while three bedroom flats were the least favoured type (9%). This potentially may be due to the likelihood that these flats may be occupied by larger families with children, who would prefer a houses with a garden for privacy, safety and play related reasons.

There was also a significant degree of support for the provision of one and two bedroom homes suitable for single person households, or smaller families. Both flats and houses were seen as being needed for smaller homes.

2. The mix of homes is predominantly towards flats, as land is difficult to find to build affordable houses on and demand is high for smaller affordable homes. Do you think this mix is right or should houses with main-door access and private outdoor space be more of a focus within the SHIP?



The majority of respondents felt that more main door access homes were needed at 67%. Many stated that these should be houses but some acknowledged that cottage flats may be an appropriate compromise as long as private gardens were provided.

A number of respondents commented on the need for private outdoor space to promote good mental health. They felt the recent Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted this need.

Several applicants also noted a requirement for more suitable accommodation to meet the needs of older people.

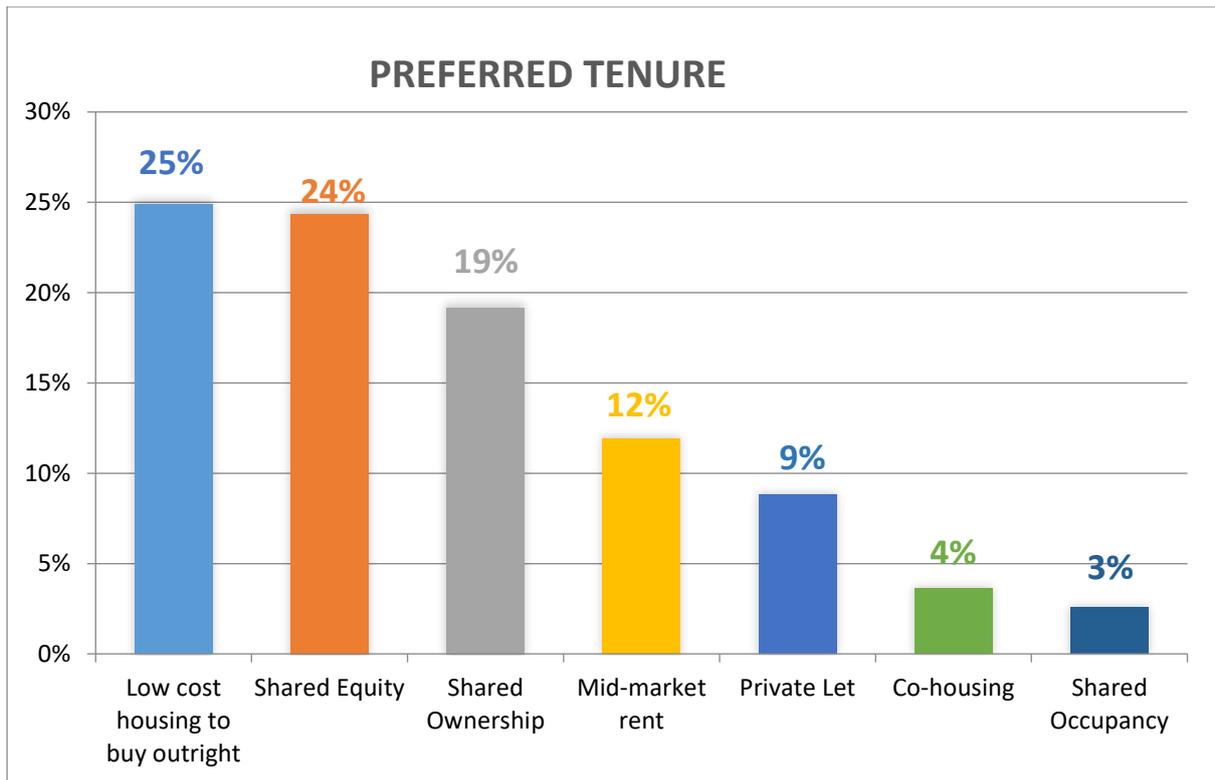
Twenty per cent felt believed the current mix worked well, although some respondents felt that open space could be promoted within flatted blocks through the provision of private external areas such as balconies.

Some respondents suggested that with the decrease in retail in town centres in recent years that there could be opportunities for conversion of units from retail to housing. Potentially this may help satisfy the higher demand for smaller properties to suit younger demographics.

Capacity issues in relation to schools and roads linked to any increased supply of more homes was also noted as an issue.

Question 3

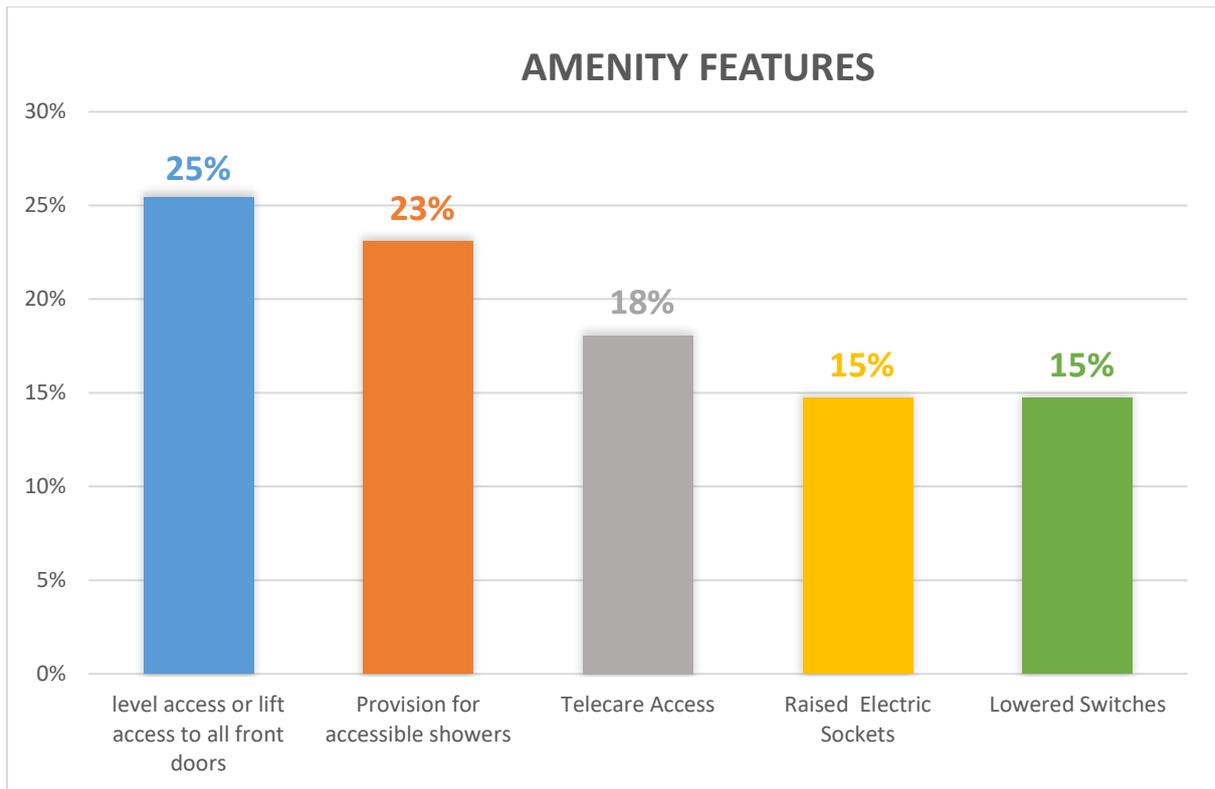
Do you think the focus on Social Rented housing is the right approach, or are there other forms of affordable housing you would like to see better represented?



Excluding social rented housing provision, almost half of respondents felt that low cost housing to buy and shared equity provision should be better promoted in East Dunbartonshire, followed by shared ownership and Mid Market Rent at 19% and 12% respectively. These results indicate strong support for intermediate housing options given that non intermediate housing such as shared occupancy and private lets were least favoured.

Question 4

Amenity housing is self-contained accommodation designed to meet the needs of people with an accessible housing need, such as those with a physical or mental frailty. Which features of the following do you feel are most important to include?

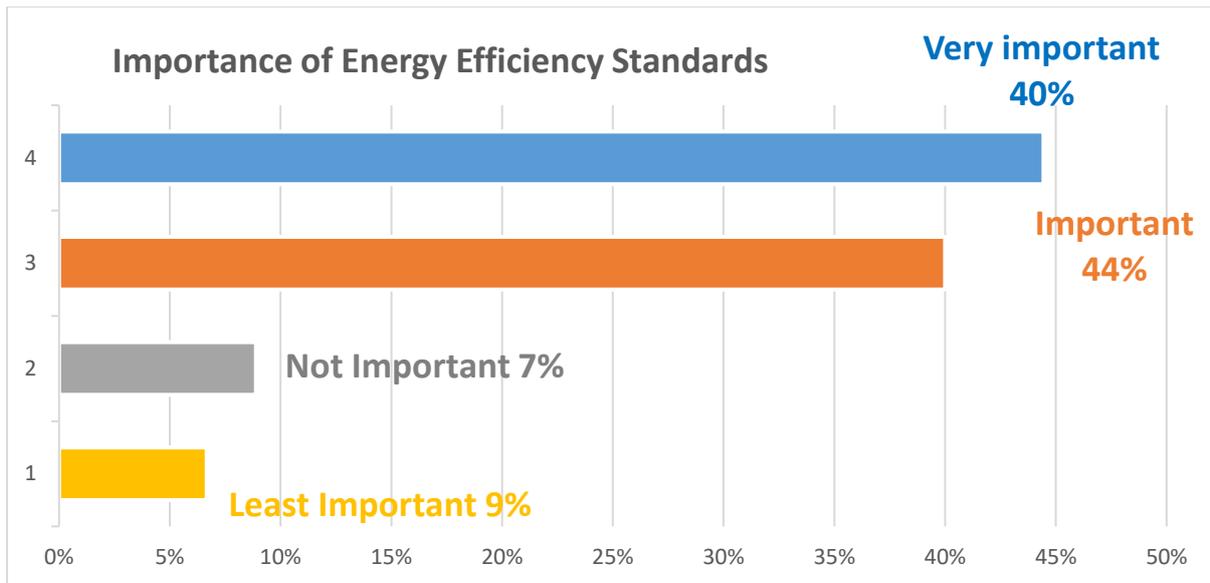


There was strong support for features to be included in amenity housing, predominantly for the provision of level access or lift access to all front doors at 25% followed by the inclusion of accessible showers, telecare services, raised electric sockets, and lowered switches.

Question 5

Affordable Housing in East Dunbartonshire is planned to meet a good standard of energy efficiency, compared to existing housing, but we could invest more in lowering energy usage further in new build housing; helping to meet the aims of reducing fuel poverty and meeting climate change targets.

One way of achieving this might be through introducing Passivhaus Standards, meaning that little energy is needed to power a home – this could add up to 10% of the development cost of a new home but would result in low fuel bills. How important do you feel this objective should be?



Most respondents agreed that there was a requirement to promote energy efficiency, and reduce energy usage to meet climate change requirements and to help eradicate fuel poverty. There was overwhelming endorsement of this objective at 84% while only 16% felt that energy efficiency objectives were not important or least important.

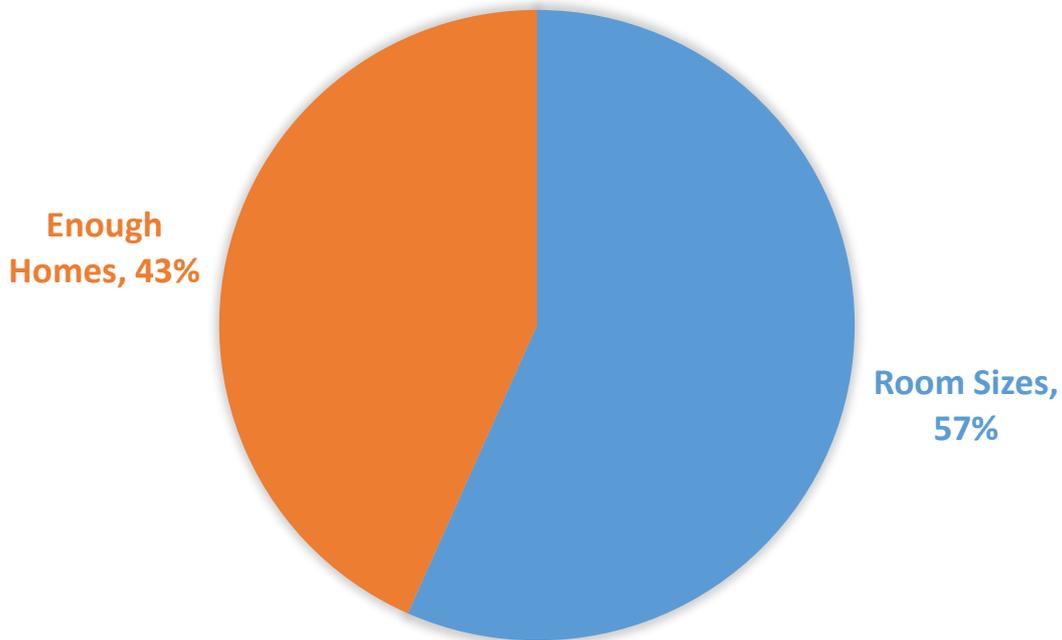
There was a high level of support for the introduction of passivhaus standards to reduce carbon emissions helping the environment, and to minimise fuel bills for tenants. Several respondents noted that although the introduction of passivhaus housing may be expensive in the short term that there would be long term positive results, and felt that low fuel bills were a desirable outcome.

Other measures mentioned were improved insulation, use of solar panels, wind power and heat source pumps.

Question 6.

East Dunbartonshire Council may consider adopting the Glasgow Standard for affordable housing in the future and a separate consultation will look at this in further detail. This includes a minimum size for rooms contained within each new affordable home. How important should it be that homes meet a minimum size or is it more important that enough homes are produced to meet the high demand we have in East Dunbartonshire?

MORE HOMES VS ROOM SIZES



Fifty Seven Percent of respondents believed that it was important that affordable homes met a minimum room size while 43% indicated that landlords should focus on increasing the supply of affordable homes to meet housing need in East Dunbartonshire. While it is acknowledged that the two options on offer are not necessarily mutually-exclusive, this does seem to indicate that slightly more than half of respondents felt that the quality of affordable homes is more important than the quantity produced.

Conclusion

The level of response received from this engagement suggests a high level of interest from a range of stakeholders who are involved with or are affected by the SHIP objectives and outcomes.

The views obtained from the survey will provide a starting point for the Council in determining future, more focussed, SHIP consultation and in shaping the priorities for future SHIP development particularly in relation to property mix, size and tenure as well as how intermediate housing options should be promoted. The results will also influence the methods used by the Council to promote energy efficiency measures, reduce carbon emissions, and help eradicate fuel poverty.

