

# **West Lothian Council buys block of flats being built in Winchburgh**

**West Lothian Council is to buy a new block of flats in the rapidly expanding village of Winchburgh to add to its stock of social housing.**

Councillors approved the £3m price tag at this month's meeting of the Executive.

The new block will be available to let by the summer next year and provide the council with 16 two-bedroom flats.

In a report to the Executive Marjory Mackie, Housing Strategy and Development Manager said: "While developing the options for use of the additional Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) funding, an opportunity was identified to purchase one full block of flats containing 16 new build two-bedroom flats at Winchburgh Grange, Winchburgh, which will be complete by summer 2025.

"Whilst these units will not be completed by 31 March 2025, which is a requirement of the additional 2024/25 funding from Scottish Government, the development is already under construction and all 16 units would be complete by summer 2025, therefore it is proposed that the available £3.303 million capital budget is utilised to purchase these units. The budget for the purchase of the 16 flats is estimated at £3.040 million."

Councillor Tom Conn asked: "There's a mention of construction price inflation and I'm wondering about Winchburgh Grange potential purchase and the estimated cost. Will we have an agreed price to avoid price inflation in the construction period."

Mrs Mackie said: "Because these are acquisitions the agreement is to purchase the sixteen properties rather than a construction contract. The cost is a fixed price as of now. That will be the contract price, so we are quite satisfied that has been accounted for."

The purchase of the new block comes from identified savings in the new build and buy-back budget of £1.957m and £1.346m of surplus resources to be spent within this financial year.

Elsewhere in the county preparatory work is under way at for four new build sites at Almondvale Crescent, Houston Road and Simpson Parkway in Livingston as well as Deanburn in Linlithgow.

As of 30 September 2024, the council has acquired nine homes through the buy-back programme this year, with further acquisitions in progress. This is in addition to the 302 homes that have been added to the housing stock through the buy-back scheme in previous years.

By Stuart Sommerville Local Democracy Reporter