



ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE: 12 JUNE 2007
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE: 21 JUNE 2007

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE JULY 2007

Report by Director for Sustainable Communities

PURPOSE OF REPORT To advise Members of the preparation of the third annual review and update of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 and to obtain delegated authority for the Director of Sustainable Communities to submit the completed documents to Communities Scotland by 1 July 2007.

COMPETENCE

1.1 Section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy, monitor progress towards achieving the objectives of the Strategy, and to submit updates of the document to Communities Scotland at intervals prescribed by the Scottish Executive.

SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Comhairle is required to submit the third annual review and update of the Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 to Communities Scotland by 1 July 2007.
- 2.2 An updated Fuel Poverty Strategy and a position statement on current Homelessness issues will be submitted to Communities Scotland as ancillary documents to the Local Housing Strategy Update at the same date.
- 2.3 A summary document outlining the objectives of the Local Housing Strategy and setting the strategy in the local context is provided at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.4 The final draft of the Local Housing Strategy Update 2007 has been circulated separately to Members.
- 2.5 Delegated authority is sought for the Director for Sustainable Communities to submit the completed documents to Communities Scotland by 1 July 2007.
- 2.6 Feedback will be provided to the Local Housing Strategy Officers Group by Communities Scotland in September/October 2007 and this will be notified to Committee at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that:**
 - a) **the content of the 2007 Local Housing Strategy Review and Update be approved, and,**
 - b) **that the Director for Sustainable Communities be granted delegated authority to submit the finalised documents to Communities Scotland by 1 July 2007.**

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Background Papers:

Local Housing Strategy – Update Report to Housing Committee dated 13 June 2006

Appendix 1:

Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004 – 2009
Summary Document.

WESTERN ISLES UPDATE 2007

The Comhairle's strategy update this year has several significant issues to report.

- **Conclusion of housing stock transfer**
- **Establishment of Strategic housing team**
- **Growing homelessness problem**
- **Private sector housing grant budgetary restraints**
- **Growth of EU migrant worker population**
- **Launch of Western Isles Migration Study**
- **Completion of 2nd phase West Harbour Feasibility Study**
- **Completion of Housing Needs Assessment**
- **Launch of WI Credit Union and Financial Inclusion Initiative**
- **Developments in the Energy Agenda**

The Comhairle will also submit an updated Fuel Poverty Strategy and a Homelessness Position Statement to Communities Scotland as ancillary documents to the strategy update by 1 July.

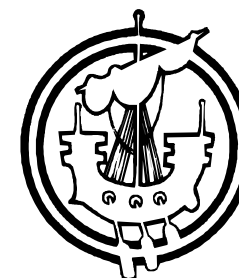


Copies of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009, and of the subsequent update documents can be obtained from:

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(These can also be provided in special formats on request.)



WESTERN ISLES

Local Housing Strategy **2004 – 2009**

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy, monitor progress towards achieving the objectives of the Strategy, and to submit updates of the document to Communities Scotland at intervals prescribed by the Scottish Executive.

In the Comhairle, responsibility for production and implementation of the strategy lies with the Housing Services Section, which is part of the Development Services Team in the Department for Sustainable Communities.

The Strategy is updated on an annual basis and is assessed by Communities Scotland.

STRATEGIC HOUSING OBJECTIVES

The Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 set out the Comhairle's plans to work in partnership with local and national agencies to help the residents of the Western Isles attain good quality housing suited to their needs and aspirations. The fundamental principle underlying all partnership activity, to assist the sustainability of our Island communities, was translated into 14 objectives. Each has a number of action points designed to facilitate the achievement of the objective within the timeframe of the Strategy.

Objective 1 Increase the supply of affordable housing by at least 300 units by 2009

Objective 2 Bring back into use 15 empty homes to provide affordable accommodation in the Greater Stornoway Area by 2009

Objective 3 As a matter of priority for the Comhairle to secure access to land for housing

Objective 4 Support the inward migration of an average of 30 households per annum

Objective 5 Secure at least 5 additional full time job or training opportunities for jobseekers per annum in the construction sector

Objective 6 Increase private accommodation targeted at younger economically active households in Greater Stornoway by 50 units as part of a Stornoway regeneration strategy by 2008

Objective 7 Strengthen and make better use of sound evidence on links between housing investment and economic/social development in the Western Isles to inform policy development

Objective 8 At least 70% of the social rented stock achieves the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2009

Objective 9 Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009

Objective 10 Reduce fuel poverty by 50% by 2009

Objective 11 Provide appropriate housing related solutions to prevent homelessness

Objective 12 Increase assistance to all households who become homeless by 2009

Objective 13 Enhance access to more responsive housing related services to enable vulnerable people to remain in the community

Objective 14 Increase the proportion of older people assisted by housing and related services to maintain their independence in their own home or community

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

The strategy is developed, implemented and monitored by a multi-agency officers group. The group meet regularly to review progress with the Action Plans; consider the implications of changing local circumstances; of new legislation or government policy or of resource levels, on the ability of the Comhairle and its partners to continue working towards achievement of the objectives.

ANNUAL UPDATES

The Scottish Executive requires local authorities to submit an update document to Communities Scotland by 1 July each year.

The update is expected to reflect the outcomes of routine monitoring, justify changes to action points in response to altered local or national context, describe policy changes and address the feedback provided by Communities Scotland to the previous years' submission.