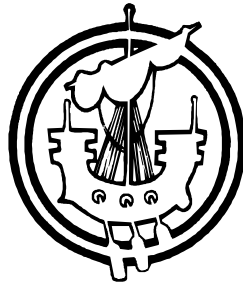


WESTERN ISLES LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2004-2009



THIRD ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW AND UPDATE

JUNE 2007

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Sandwick Road
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
01851 703773

**This document can be made available on request in
large print, Braille or other languages.**

**For further information on any matter relating to this
Strategy Update,
or to request further copies of the document
please contact:**

**Isobel MacKenzie
Housing Strategy and Development Officer
Tel: 01851 709257
e-mail: isobel-mackenzie@cne-siar.gov.uk**

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FOREWORD

By; Councillor Norman A MacDonald, Chair Environment and Protective Services Committee, Vice Chair Policy and Resources Committee, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

I am pleased to present this third review and update of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004/09.

In the year since the last update, the provision of housing services in the Islands has undergone massive organisational change. The transfer of the Comhairle's housing stock of circa 1,800 properties to Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) was concluded on 12 September 2006. This was followed by the amalgamation of the five community based housing associations with HHP as of 1 April 2007. The new organisation is now the principal Registered Social Landlord in the Western Isles with a total housing stock of 2,072 as at 1 April 2007.

The end of the Stock Transfer process has had very significant impact on the staff previously employed within the Housing Department of the Comhairle. Thirty four staff members moved to Hebridean Housing Partnership while those engaged in Housing Strategy and Development work and in the Homelessness service remained in the employ of the Comhairle.

Since September, the Comhairle has been cementing arrangements for its new strengthened strategic housing role and has created a Housing Services Team within the Development Services Section of the department of Sustainable Communities. The housing team is comprised of the retained staff plus those engaged in private sector housing grants and related issues, as well as homelessness staff. I look forward to maximising the opportunities afforded by a substantial increase in the financial resources available to the Comhairle and its partners for housing provision as a direct result of the stock transfer process.

In a year which has been a watershed in the delivery of housing services within the Islands I am pleased to be able to report that substantial progress has been made in implementation of the Housing Strategy. This was reported to Housing Committee at appropriate intervals. In the wake of the stock transfer and a review of the Comhairle's committee structures the reporting and governance arrangements for strategy development has been altered and this function will now be performed by the Environment and Protective Services Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee.

There have also been developments in other areas which impinge on the provision and delivery of housing services. As ever, the Comhairle values the interaction with partner agencies which allows the introduction of new holistic initiatives and practices to serve our local communities. For example, 2006/07 has brought major advances in the development of partnership arrangements between Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and NHS Eileanan Siar. A Community Health and Social Care Partnership came into effect on 17 June 2007 and the social inclusion aspects of housing service agendas will be increasingly reflected in the working of the partnership in coming years.

The Western Isles communities continue to experience an increase in migrant workers particularly from Eastern Europe. There has been a concerted effort amongst agencies including housing to make themselves known to and to gather intelligence on the needs of the migrants as they attempt to settle in to a very different culture.

The Comhairle continues to monitor closely the ongoing proposals for further community land buyouts; the outcomes of those already achieved; the progress of applications with regards to windpower; the impact of recent and forthcoming legislative changes to housing and related services; and the general impact of local economic conditions on the Western Isles housing market.

I look forward with enthusiasm to the first full year of the Comhairle's enhanced strategic housing role and am confident that further progress will be made in the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy for the good of the residents of our Islands.

Norman. A. MacDonald.

SECTION 1: Introduction

The Western Isles Housing Strategy 2004/09 introduced the vision “that every resident of the Western Isles is able to live in good quality, warm and affordable homes that meet their needs and that housing contributes to sustaining the economic social environment.”

The original strategy document translated the vision into 5 Key Themes:-

- Increase Supply
- Economic Regeneration
- Community Regeneration
- Warm Homes and Improved Housing Conditions
- Social Inclusion

These in turn were developed into 14 Objectives with related action points which have directed our work on housing and related issues in the last three years.

That work has been overseen by the Local Housing Strategy Officers Group, a multi-agency partnership comprising representatives of the Comhairle, HIE Innse Gall, Tighean Innse Gall, Hebridean Housing Partnership and NHS Eileanan Siar.

The activities of the group since July 2006 have been rather more ad hoc than in previous years, given the very significant effects of the housing stock transfer to Hebridean Housing Partnership in September 2006 on the working arrangements and remits of Comhairle staff involved in strategy and development activities.

However the group has continued to ensure ongoing progress towards achievement of the action points which focus the day to day efforts related to the attainment of our objectives, and to lead this review and update of the Local Housing Strategy.

The Officers Group has also expanded and consolidated its membership (details at Appendix 7) and is looking forward to re-establishing a more formalised timetable of meetings from September 2007 which will not only monitor progress with the Strategy but will allow early consideration of the requirements for the full resubmission of the Local Housing Strategy in 2009.

This year's update has been approached in a manner consistent with that used in 2006, and the structure of the document is therefore very similar. However, we have this time included a brief textual summary of progress against the Action Plans, which provides more clarity regarding the current situation.

Once again we have taken the opportunity to:-

- Discuss the content requirements to the 2007 update as provided by Communities Scotland
- Identify local and national issues which have or may impinge on the outcomes of the strategy
- Consider the themes and objectives and conclude their ongoing relevance

- Review progress against the objectives and update the Action Plans as appropriate
- Revisit the comments of Communities Scotland in relation to the 2006 (and earlier) documents
- Highlight the continuing concern over homelessness and related issues by the provision of a Homelessness Position Statement as an ancillary document to the Strategy Update
- Re-affirm our commitment to tackling Fuel Poverty by updating and re-submitting the Western Isles Fuel Poverty Strategy

This update document has been circulated to partner agencies, was approved by the Environment and Protective Services Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee and was ratified by the Comhairle on 21 June 2007.

The principles of the Comhairle's Equal Opportunity Policy, is reflected in the work undertaken to date on the implementation of the LHS Objectives and in its continued development.

This document can be made available on request in large print, Braille or other languages.

For further information on any matter relating to this Strategy Update, or to request further copies of the document, please contact:

***Isobel MacKenzie,
Housing Strategy and Development Officer
e-mail: isobel-mackenzie@cne-siar.gov.uk
Tel: 01851 709257***

SECTION 2: Response to 2005 & 2006 LHS Update Feedback Reports

2006 Feedback Report

Submission Format and Contents

- A textual chapter describing progress against the action plans has been added.
- More use has been made of tabular and graphic presentation throughout the document.
- Information on 2006/07 progress or changes to action points are shown in highlighted text in the updated Action Plans.
- Extra effort has been made to ensure the inclusion of new jargon or acronyms in the glossary.

Submission Details

- The Action Plans have been amended to reflect the workload priority of remaining action points for 2007/08.
- The Comhairle awaits final guidance on the SHIP before a formal work plan can be developed. Officers will attend training and information sessions as these become available.
- A comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment was carried out during 2006/07 providing sub LA level information in as far as this proved possible in a small authority area. The study has also provided a profile of different tenures within the housing system.
- Our baseline data has been significantly improved as a result of the Housing Needs information collation and analysis.
- Risk management, monitoring and evaluation, and information and advice provision have all been subject to discussion and intelligence gathering in the course of the year. The LHS Officers Group will consider further how to implement working practices to ensure these areas are routinely considered in the development of the strategy in the future.
- The update document clearly shows that the Officers Group is a separate entity from the Member Officer Working Group.
- The consultation process has been improved through the Housing Needs Assessment postal survey questionnaire and telephone surveys. Initially 6,600 households were contacted during the process resulting in 2,275 usable survey returns (34.5%) and 76 follow up telephone interviews. There is also input to the forthcoming Community Appraisal exercise which will involve every

household in the Islands. The Officers Group will, as part of their ongoing agenda, have discussion with Comhairle staff responsible for promoting Community Engagement in the coming months.

- An inter-authority Housing Strategy Forum comprising the three Island Councils and possibly Highland Council is still to be pursued.
- Information on the Housing Quality Standard is included in the narrative describing the future role of Hebridean Housing Partnership.

2005 Feedback Report

- A brief summary document of the LHS has been produced and is provided with this update.
- The statement regarding optional format availability has been included on the inside front cover of the update document and retained in the text of the introduction section. A translated statement has not been included given current discussions on which alternative languages corporate documents should be available in.
- Where possible the Action Plans now describe which section of the Comhairle is responsible for progressing action points. However, some consolidation of post stock-transfer arrangements is still required before this can be fully addressed.
- The recommendations/findings of the Housing Needs Assessment are reported in the 2007 Update document.
- Information on House Prices has been included in the text. The section has been drawn from the Newhaven Housing Needs Assessment findings (March 2007) and clearly illustrates the difficulties of analysing data originating from small geographical sub-areas.
- We continue to work on developing links between economic development and housing and believe this is demonstrated by our input to work such as the Migration Study and identification of the needs of the migrant worker population.
- Serious attempts have been made through the Housing Needs Assessment and Migration Study to improve knowledge at sub – LA level. We conclude that in general it is not feasible to attempt analysis below Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra area level. In some instances it may be possible to differentiate between Greater Stornoway and the rest of Lewis but not beyond this. Work is now required to address the findings of these two studies in relation to the geographic split.
- Following stock-transfer, an agency agreement between the Comhairle and Hebridean Housing Partnership has been developed to provide some aspects of general housing advice and homelessness advice. Negotiations

with CAB for a specific homelessness independent advice service are subject to further discussions on cost. Advice on private sector issues is being provided by the Comhairle's Department for Sustainable Communities and Tighean Innse Gall. A longer term strategy will be developed by the new Housing Services Team, and included in future updates of the LHS. This will include measures to obtain service user feedback.

- Information on the private rented sector has improved somewhat through the Housing Needs Assessment exercise. Ideally a specific piece of work will be undertaken during 2007/08 to enhance this but this is dependant on resources being available for commissioning.
- This position also applies to stronger analysis of private sector sub-market issues.
- Following stock transfer, Hebridean Housing Partnership is now responsible for review of services to the social rented sector. On the Comhairle side, a comprehensive review of sheltered housing and care unit facilities is underway; a Best Value review of the Care and Repair Service is ongoing, as is an internal review of Housing Grant procedures.
- A review of Private Sector Housing Grant management practices and financial controls was carried out by the Comhairle's internal audit team in summer 2006.
- A procedure to agree the RSL development programme for the next financial year has been developed by the Comhairle, Communities Scotland and Hebridean Housing Partnership and is detailed in the Local Context section of this update document.
- Work is now required (as previously stated) to consider the implications of the Housing Needs Assessment and will take the findings of the Glasgow University study into account.
- Analysis of the Community Care Housing Needs Assessment is being undertaken in conjunction with the ongoing Sheltered Housing and Care Unit review. This work should conclude in autumn 2007.
- The Equalities and Diversity agenda is being progressed locally on a multi-agency basis. As yet the LHS has not been "equality proofed" due to the effect on workloads as a result of the organisational changes caused by stock transfer.
- Prioritisation of actions in the event of changing funding scenarios has not yet been formally progressed.
- A system of impact assessment of the LHS remains a task to be progressed by the Officers Group.
- External validation and monitoring arrangements still have to be developed.

The Comhairle would hope that this detailed review of previous feedback reports is considered by Communities Scotland against the unprecedented changes in working arrangements which housing staff involved in the LHS have had to deal with in the past year. The impact of the conclusion and aftermath of the stock transfer process on workload and remit cannot be over emphasised, and we ask Communities Scotland to acknowledge that normal “levels of service” were impossible for many months, and that it will take time for the new strategic housing team to be able to address the myriad of issues which will further enhance the LHS process.

SECTION 3: Context Update

Western Isles LHS Objectives

Housing Supply

- 1 Increase the supply of affordable housing by at least 300 units by 2009
- 2 Bring back into use 15 empty homes to provide affordable accommodation in Greater Stornoway Area by 2009
- 3 By 2009 secure access to land in crofting townships for additional housing

Economic Regeneration

- 4 Support inward migration of at least 30 households on average per annum
- 5 Secure at least 5 additional full time job or training opportunities for jobseekers per annum in the construction sector
- 6 Increase private accommodation targeted at younger economically active households in Greater Stornoway by 50 units as part of a wider area regeneration strategy by 2008

Community Regeneration

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

Warm Homes

- 8 Ensure that at least 70% of the social rented stock achieves the Social Housing Quality Standard by 2009
- 9 Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009
- 10 Reduce fuel poverty by 50% by 2009

Social Inclusion

- 11 Provide appropriate housing related solutions to prevent homelessness
- 12 Increase assistance to all households who become homeless by 2009
- 13 Provide additional and more responsive housing related services to enable vulnerable people to remain in the community
- 14 Increase the proportion of older people assisted by housing and related services to maintain their independence in their own home or community

Review and Update Process

The Local Housing Strategy Officers Group has again reviewed the 5 strategic themes and 14 objectives of the Housing Strategy and concluded that they remain relevant and continue to provide an appropriate focus to direct housing provision and related service development for the remaining life of the Strategy.

It is not considered necessary to make any substantive changes as progress to date is satisfactory and plans are in hand to move on further in some areas of work during 2007/08. It is felt that, by the time the new Local Housing Strategy is required in 2009 the majority of action points in the 2004/09 document will have been achieved, and the Comhairle and its partners will have moved some way towards achieving the vision which underpins the development and delivery of housing services in the Western Isles.

As part of the review process the Officers Group identified some key issues which have arisen in the past year and have the potential to impinge in varying degrees on the ongoing implementation and development of the Strategy.

We have organised our comments on these into Local and National Developments summaries. The former provides some detail of significant areas of local housing related developments and achievements while the latter acknowledges national issues which the Comhairle and its partners must take cognisance of in the coming year.

The Officers Group will meet on a six weekly basis from September 2007 to ensure appropriate responses to these issues and to any others which arise during 2007/08, to formulate plans to tackle the outstanding recommendations of the 2005 and 2006 Feedback Reports, and to identify the work needed to meet the major challenges posed by the recently notified requirements for the full re-submission of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy in 2009.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Strategic Housing Investment Framework

As reported in the last LHS review and update, the Comhairle is broadly supportive of the proposals for introducing a new Strategic Housing Investment Framework. The Comhairle considers the general principles will be beneficial to Housing provision in the Western Isles, in particular the consolidation of current funding streams into the Affordable Housing Investment Programme and the move away from annuality to three year funding.

It is also encouraging to see the Local Housing Strategy at the heart of the investment process and the development of Strategic Housing Investment Plans as a key strategic tool.

The Comhairle is currently awaiting the issuing of the finalised guidance on developing the new Strategic Housing Investment Framework.

The Comhairle has also recently received Communities Scotland's guidance for the development of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan and will be working towards the submission of its first SHIP by 30 November 2007. It is the Comhairle's understanding that the first SHIP submission will be to test the new guidance and procedures. The Comhairle also intends to use the first round of the SHIP process to test the guidance on working with its key partners to ensure stakeholders are fully involved in the process.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduces a range of new legislation which will see the Comhairle having to take a new focus on improving the quality of the private housing sector in the islands.

The Act gives the Comhairle new powers to improve the condition of privately owned homes and to raise standards within the private rented sector. The Act also introduces powers dealing with Tenancy Deposits, licensing Houses in Multiple Occupation and provision of information on the sale of a house.

In terms of strategic housing importance, there are two key areas which will influence the direction of the Local Housing Strategy in future years. These are Part 1, Housing Standards and Part 2, the Scheme of Assistance.

Housing Standards will see a new system of work notices and maintenance orders instructing home owners to bring their homes up to standard and keep them in a good state of repair. It will also give the Comhairle powers to deal with areas containing houses that are in need of repair or damaging to the outlook of the area by declaring a housing renewal area.

The new Scheme of Assistance will see the Comhairle providing advice, both practical and financial to home owners who wish to carry out repair and maintenance work to their homes.

Both these areas will see a marked change to the way the Comhairle addresses conditions in the private sector and will have a bearing on the future shaping of the Local Housing Strategy.

At present the Comhairle is awaiting further detailed guidance on implementing the new Act from the Scottish Executive. It is understood that a range of briefings and seminars will be available over the coming year to assist the Comhairle in its preparations.

The Comhairle has also recently joined the Scottish Housing Best Value Network, which has also been providing useful guidance on the workings of the new Act.

Private Sector Housing Grant

The Comhairle also remains concerned about the continuing uncertainty over funding levels for Private Sector Housing Grant and the potential impact of reduced resources on key elements of the LHS. This issue is dealt with in greater detail in the narrative on 'RESOURCES' in the Local Context Section of this update.

Homelessness Legislation

The Comhairle remains extremely concerned about the implications of the continued implementation of new homelessness legislation. While wholly supportive of the principles behind the legislation there is a fear that, (in common with most other Scottish local authorities) the resources available will be insufficient to allow all legislative responsibilities to be met.

A comprehensive statement of the homelessness issues currently affecting the Comhairle forms Appendix (2) to this document.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

Economic and Demographic Trends and Prospects

Labour Market Trends

In 2005, there was an estimated 15,400 residents of 'working age' in the Outer Hebrides. This represents 58.5% of the total population, slightly lower than the Scottish average which was 62.6%. Of these 15,400, there are approximately 10,000 'employees' with 11,000 'in employment', including those working on the mainland. The 2003 Western Isles Regional Accounts tells us that approximately 30% of the workforce is employed in the public sector and the five most important sectors in terms of FTE jobs were: Construction; Distribution (retailing and most wholesaling); Health; Education; and Other Services (private). There has been a noticeable drop in employment in Agriculture, Fishing and Fish Farming which now accounts for 8% of employment compared to 17% in 1997; although this is still much greater than for Scotland as a whole. Crofting, although declining, remains a widespread agricultural activity. Manufacturing is also important with 4% working in textiles, pottery and jewellery.

The Outer Hebrides economy has grown in recent years (2.5% since 1997) but remains fragile; GRDP per capita is currently estimated to be 66% of the UK equivalent, where Scotland overall is 96%. Economic performance continues to lag behind the rest of the Highlands and Islands, and in 2003 the islands were estimated to have a £163.4m external trade deficit. Being on the very periphery of Europe, it is difficult to maintain a strong, diverse and prosperous economy due to the distance from major service centres, high transport costs and a labour market that is characterized by out-migration and low wages. Unemployment rates have fallen but continue to fluctuate. In part this reflects the greater concentration of jobs in tourism and primary sectors, such as agriculture and fishing that tend to be seasonal relative to Scotland. It is also reflective of the prevalence of jobs in industries subject to peaks and troughs generated by external market forces such as oil-related work, construction, engineering and Harris Tweed.

Population Patterns

The Outer Hebrides has experienced population decline for over a century and this underlying trend has continued throughout the last decade. In 2006 the Western Isles population was estimated to be 26,350 almost 8% lower than in 1996. Historically, Stornoway has been much less affected by depopulation than other parts of the Western Isles, but over the last decade rates of depopulation across the Islands have generally converged.

Official population projections indicate what might occur based on present trends. They suggest that the population could decline by 15% from 26,260 in 2004 to 22,413 by 2024; due falling birth rates and continued negative net-migration. Annual births are projected to decline by 50% from 246 in 2004/05 to 122 in 2023/24. The age structure of the Western Isles will continue to polarise, with older age groups projected to increase and younger age groups projected to decline. By 2024 15% of the population is projected to be aged 15 years or under and 31% over the age of 65

(these figures were 18% and 24% respectively in 2004). These projections have serious implications for the provision of housing and others services such as health care and education

2006 Household Projections

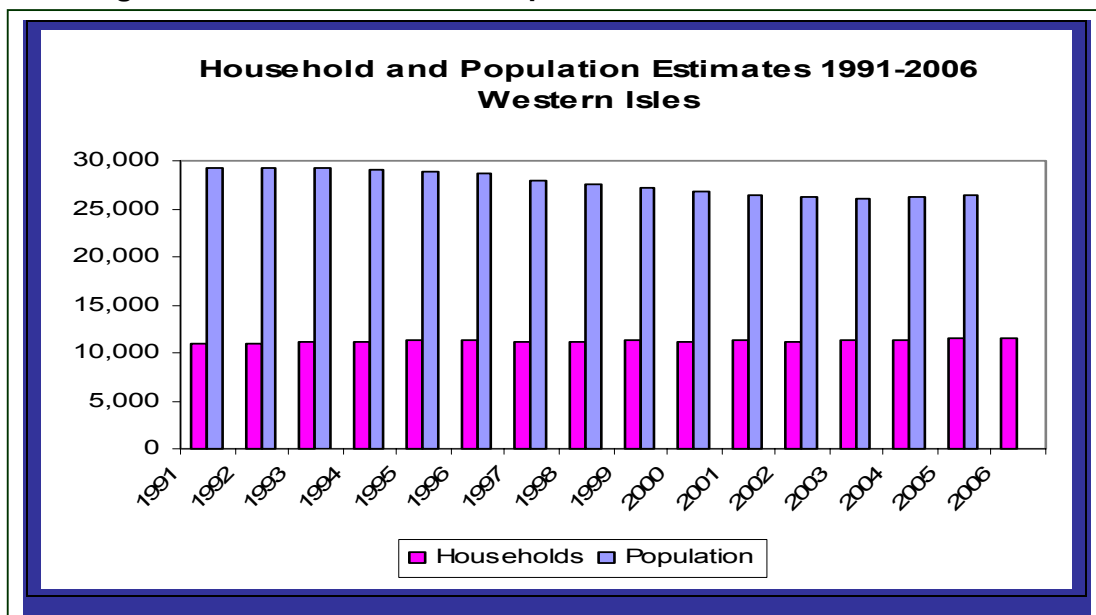
Households: There were 11,597 households in the Western Isles in June 2006, an increase of 111 (1%) over the past year. The number of households in the Western Isles has increased by 314 (2.8%) since 2001 (summarised in table 3.1). The graph below charts the change in numbers of households against the population for the Western Isles.

Table 3.1 - Components of Household and Population Change

Western Isles	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	change 2005-06 (%)	change 2001-06 (%)
Household Estimates	11,283	11,224	11,302	11,381	11,486	11,597	1%	2.8%
Vacant Dwellings	1,865	2,014	2,022	1,985	1,866	1,838	-1.5%	-1.4%
Number of Dwellings	13,462	13,522	13,630	13,682	13,676	13,759	0.6%	2.2%
Occupied Dwellings	11,597	11,508	11,628	11,697	11,810	11,921	0.9%	2.8%
Population Estimates	26,450	26,200	26,100	26,260	26,370	n/a	0.4%*	-0.3%*

**Note: Figures for Population Estimates measure the change to 2005 not 2006 as with other indicators (Vacant Dwellings Estimates include 2nd Homes)*

Figure 3.2 – Household and Population Estimates 1991-2006 WI



Vacant Dwellings

There were 1,838 vacant dwellings in the Western Isles in June 2006; this represents 13.4% of all recorded dwellings (includes 2nd homes). These figures show a 1.5% decrease in the number of vacant dwellings since 2005 (-28 dwellings). Long term trends show that this represents a 1.4% decrease since 2001. The Western Isles has the highest percentage of vacant dwellings of any Local Authority area in Scotland (national average 4.2%, Shetland 7.6%. and Orkney 8.3%).

Size of Households

Since 1991, the population of the Western Isles has fallen by 3,230 persons (-11%) while the number of households has increased by 5.6% over the period. The 2004 based Household Projections forecast that the mean average household size in the Western Isles will fall from 2.28 persons in 2004 to 1.92 persons in 2024. Single person households are projected to increase from representing 35% of all households in 2004 to 43% in 2024; and households with two adults plus children are projected to fall from representing 21% of all households in 2004 to 9% in 2024.

Total Number of Dwellings

There were 13,462 dwellings in the Western Isles in June 2006. This represents the total number of dwellings on the Council Tax valuation list which excludes free standing lock ups but includes vacant dwellings and second homes. This figure has increased by 2.2% since 2001 (297 dwellings).

Implications of the 'Household Estimates for Scotland 2006' for the Western Isles

Summary

The Western Isles continues to follow the national trend of a year-on-year increase in number of households, and a decrease in number of vacant households (despite a projected long term trend of population decline). It is clear that the increase in households can be attributed to a decrease in average household size and the fact that more vacant dwellings are becoming occupied. The projected increase in single person households and corresponding decrease in two parent households is due in part to changes in lifestyle choices and (of particular significance to the Western Isles) Scotland's ageing population.

Implications

The Census tells us that in 2001 there were 5245 pensioners in the Western Isles (20% of the total population) and that 1945 (37%) of all pensioners lived alone. Population projections for the islands predict that by 2024, persons aged 65 and over will constitute 31% of the total population; a massive increase since 2001 when it was 22%. The predicted demographic imbalance continues to have serious

implications for the role of the Comhairle in providing services for the public i.e. health care, education and transport and housing.

It is important to stress that the figures stated have been adjusted and are subject to the 'household' definitions as defined by GROS; thus may vary from those adopted in the 2001 Census and by Local Authority Council Tax departments.

House Sales Trends

Sasines data shows that in the period January 1996 – December 2005 there were 3,078 house sales in the Western Isles of which 478 were recorded RTB sales, shared ownership of other forms of social housing sales. Of the remaining 2,600 the vast majority were resale (or “second hand”) sales. Over that period annual numbers of re-sales outwith Lewis were extremely low. Some differentiation can be made between the Stornoway Housing Market Area (HMA), (Greater Stornoway and Broadbay area), and Rural Lewis but drawing conclusions relating to Harris, Uist and Barra transaction is tentative as best.

Table 3.3: Number of Private Housing resales from 1996 to 2005							
	Greater Stornoway	Rest of HMA	Rural Lewis	Harris	Uist	Barra	All
1996	57	29	22	12	14	3	137
1997	57	31	28	11	20	4	151
1998	61	29	22	6	17	4	139
1999	48	43	26	8	20	1	146
2000	75	26	33	14	18	3	169
2001	66	41	33	9	14	6	169
2002	102	94	99	16	23	3	337
2003	85	78	67	15	45	4	294
2004	63	36	46	12	26	3	186
2005	88	58	68	22	32	4	273
Total	702	465	444	125	229	35	2,000
Annual Ave	70	46	44	13	23	3	200
<i>Sub-area sales do not sum to the total as some sales records cannot be allocated to a sub-area.</i>							

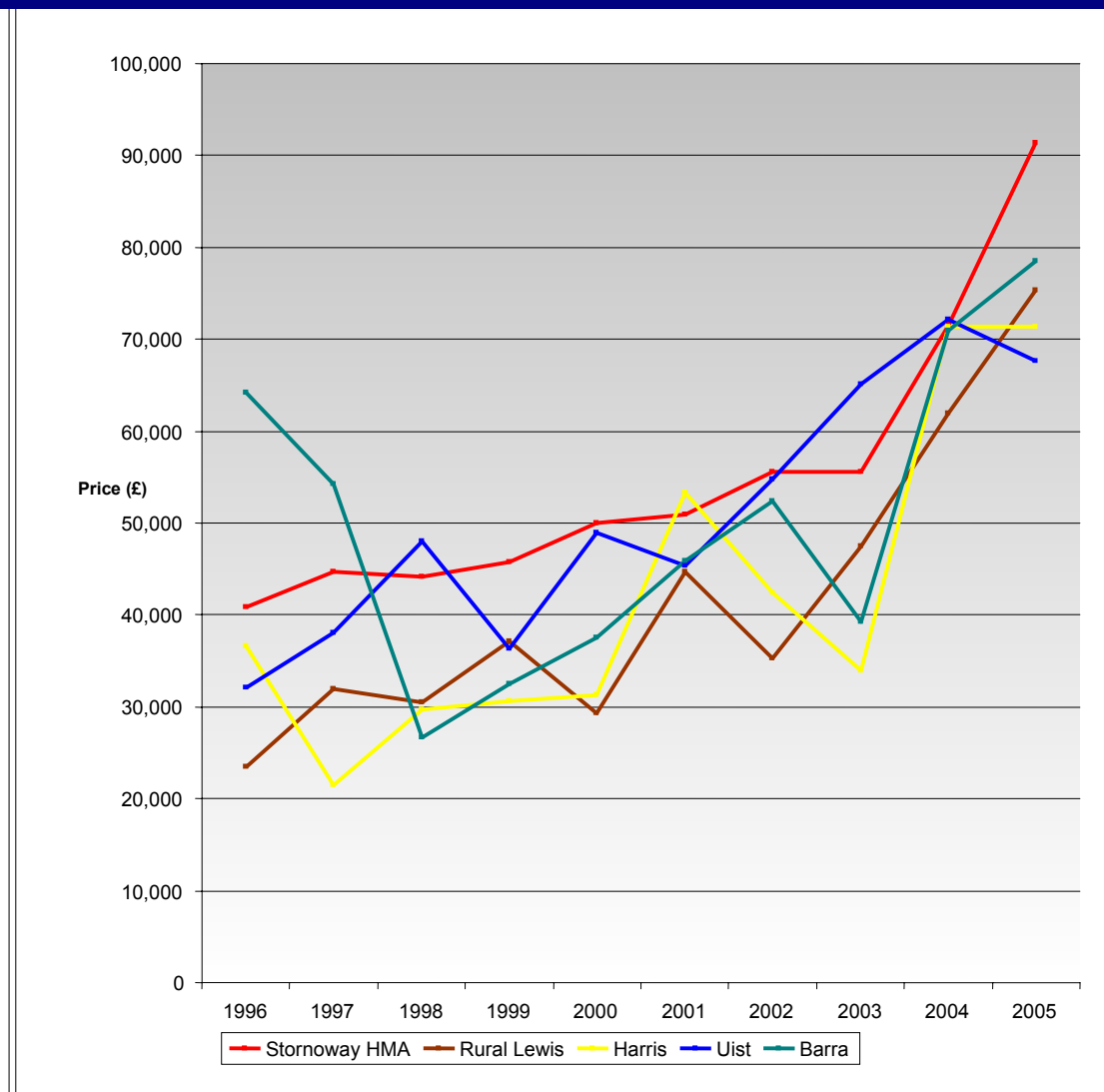
House Price Trends

Across the Western Isles, there has been a general upward trend in house prices across all sub-areas over the past decade, although prices have fluctuated from year to year. Between 1996 and 2005 the average house price for the Western Isles as a whole increased by 122%. Much of this increase has occurred since 2000. In the five years to 2005, prices increased by almost 88%.

The Sasines data proves that:

- Resale average house prices increased more or less in line with inflation until 2001 when they began to increase in both cash and real terms. At the end of 2005, the average house price was £82,770. By June 2006 the average price had increased to £84,330, an increase of £1,560.
- Average house prices are distorted by a small number of high sales. The median price for the Western Isles in 2005 was £77,000 some £5,770 less than the average price.
- The Stornoway HMA has the highest house prices in the Western Isles. In 2005 the median 2005 price ranged from £81,000, some £4,000 higher than for the Western Isles as a whole.

Figure 3.4: Average Resale Price by Area



- House price inflation has been evident at the lower, middle and upper ends of the price range across all five sub areas.
- In 2005, 30% of all resales in the Western Isles sold for £60,000 or less, almost 88% higher than the 30th percentile price of £32,000 in 2000.
- Prices at the lower end of the market are higher in the Stornoway HMA than elsewhere. In 2005 30% of resales (43 units) in 2005 sold for £68,200 or less in Stornoway HMA. By contrast, 40% of resales in the rest of the Western Isles sales (108 units) sold for £60,000 or less.

The upturn in house prices has been accompanied by a corresponding increase in transaction numbers. Sales dipped during 2004 but recovered somewhat in 2005. Nonetheless, the level of housing transactions in Western Isles per 100 households remains low. In 2005 there were 29 non RTB sales per 1,000 households in the Western Isles compared to 63 non RTB sales per 1,000 households in Scotland as a whole.

There are signs that house prices have begun to tail off. House price data for the six month period January to June 2006 suggests that prices are continuing to rise but at a lower rate than in recent years. MacPherson (2006) also reports that local selling agents believe the housing market has slowed and expect house price growth to be more modest in future than in recent years.

Looking at house price trends for the period from July 2005 to June 2006 suggests that the price threshold for the Stornoway HMA is £68,200 and for the rest of Western Isles it is somewhat lower at £60,000.

The average annual number of properties sold in the various sub-areas for around these two price thresholds over the past three years are as follows:

- 40 properties in: - Greater Stornoway (23) and the rest of the Stornoway HMA (17)
- 25 properties in: - Rural Lewis (20) and Harris (5)
- 11 properties in: - Uist (10) and Barra (<1).

Market Activity of Local Buyers and Incoming Buyers

The MacPherson Research (2006) property transaction monitoring report explores the migration patterns of 'local' and 'incomer' house buyers and sellers. The researchers point to a recent increase in buying activity by incomers.

This is supported by analysis of the origin of purchasers via Sasines data. Figures indicate around four out of ten purchasers in 2005 came from mainland Scotland or further afield. This compares to around a fifth of buyers in the second half of the 1990s. Incoming households make up the majority of buyers' outwith the Stornoway HMA. Looking across the sub-areas, in 2005 incoming buyers formed the majority of purchasers in Barra, Harris, and Uist. Only in the Stornoway HMA was the proportion of incoming purchasers lower than the Western Isles average. This finding is consistent with local perceptions that incomers are seeking to buy a

permanent home in rural areas with high scenic amenity, whereas local buyers tend to be interested in being located in proximity to services and work.

A study of the previous place of residence of owners who had moved home within the past five years, confirm that there is a flow of owners between Stornoway and other parts of Lewis. However, local purchasers in Harris and further south continue to buy primarily in their existing local area. In addition, it suggests that almost two thirds of owners that moved house within the last five years previously lived on the mainland.

The survey findings suggest that Rural Lewis and Harris sub-area (66%) and the Uist and Barra sub-area (77%) have very high rates of incoming owners. Whilst this finding is broadly consistent with the Sasines data, it should be treated with some caution. Aside from the low number of respondents on which these findings are based, we suspect the group of incoming owners includes households who returned from the mainland after a period of work or study and were living with relatives or friends on the Islands immediately before purchase.

Many of the issues identified here will be pursued through the Migration Strategy Group.

Local Housing Strategy Partners

2006/07 has been a year of change for all the partner agencies involved in the Housing Strategy process.

The end of the stock transfer process saw the dissolution of the Comhairle's Housing Department, the establishment of Hebridean Housing Partnership as the principal RSL in the Western Isles, and the creation of a strategic housing team in the Comhairle within the Department for Sustainable Communities.

Tighean Innse Gall appointed a new Director and Assistant Director and is currently refocusing workload priorities to reflect the five Community Housing Associations amalgamating with HHP, a large development programme and a wish to consolidate and improve the operation of the Care and Repair service.

NHS Eileanan Siar has emerged from a very troubled period which saw the Scottish Executive intervening to resolve significant management issues. With all senior positions now permanently filled, staff are looking optimistically to ongoing partnership working opportunities.

Western Isles Enterprise has been re-branded HIE Innse Gall as a result of the network's organisational review. The review began in the spring of 2006 when the number of Local Enterprise Companies LEC's was reduced from ten to nine and boundaries redefined. The names of the LEC's were streamlined to reflect a more unified HIE network, which includes the full integration of Careers Scotland services across the Highlands and Islands. Importantly for the housing strategy process the HIE Senior Housing Policy Officer post has recently been re-recruited, and a new locally based Development Officer has joined the Housing Strategy Officers Group.

Hebridean Housing Partnership

Governance

The Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) was registered with Communities Scotland as a Registered Social Landlord on 12 September 2006. The transfer of the Comhairle's housing stock (circa 1800) took place on the same day and 34 of the Comhairle staff TUPE transferred to HHP. HHP is a not for profit locally based Housing Association. It is independent and exists to meet housing need and to provide housing services in the Western Isles. It is run by a Board of 15 members – five tenants, five Councillors and five community representatives. The public can become ordinary members by applying and paying a £1 subscription – and new members are always welcome. As a Registered Social Landlord HHP is regulated by Communities Scotland and will be subject to regular inspections. HHP has its headquarters at the Gleann Seileach Business Park, Stornoway with Area Committees currently being established in Lewis, Harris, the Uists and Barra to enhance stakeholder involvement throughout the Island Communities. Following the successful transfer of the Comhairle's stock the 300 units owned by the five locally based housing associations – Muirneag Housing Association, Taighean Ceann A Tuath Na Hearadh, Buidheann Taigheadais Na Meadhanan, Berneray Housing Association and Barra and Vatersay Housing Association – transferred to HHP on 31 March 2007.

Initial work has been undertaken by legal advisers on behalf of HHP and Tighean Innse Gall (TIG) to examine governance issues arising out of the proposal that the two organisations enter into a group structure with TIG becoming a wholly owned subsidiary of HHP. Consideration of this major issue will be progressed from November 2007.

Housing Demand

Demand for social rented housing in the Western Isles continues to outstrip supply. HHP updates the housing list on a daily basis to ensure the accuracy of the level of demand for social lets on an area basis. Currently there are in excess of 1,000 households seeking housing from HHP. Re-lets are turning over at 150 units per annum.

There are no areas of very low demand housing emerging since HHP's pre ballot Business Plan was published early in 2005.

The level of homelessness presentations to the Comhairle reflects the national picture and is at an all time high. Almost 300 households applied as homeless during the financial year 2006/07. The pressure for housing from homeless persons is particularly acute in the Stornoway area and this presents significant challenges both for the Comhairle and HHP. At any given time there are 50 households in temporary furnished accommodation or Bed and Breakfast awaiting rehousing.

Investment

In December 2006 HHP's Board approved a five year Investment Programme. The programme for the former Comhairle stock and the transferring housing association houses is costed at £2 plus million per annum.

In 2007/08 there will be additional internal works relative to the Business Plan. Window replacement programmes have been brought forward and investment timescales smoothed out. There will be more extensive environmental works (fencing, drying areas and clothes poles) carried out than originally proposed in the Business Plan.

Scottish Housing Quality Standard

By 2015 HHP must have achieved the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. From information available HHP is considered to be on track to achieve the standard within the required timescale. However a comprehensive stock condition survey will be carried out during the financial year 2007/08 which will inform the Board of progress.

Housing Management

The quality of housing management is very important to tenants. HHP is committed to providing an excellent housing service throughout the Western Isles. All tenants are being issued with a tenant's handbook advising of the housing services on offer from HHP and setting out tenant's rights and responsibilities. HHP operates an open waiting list and the Allocations Policy will be reviewed in 2007. Consultation will take place with the Comhairle Housing Team regarding information which could be collected during the housing assessment process which would help inform the Local Housing Strategy, and this will be facilitated by the planned implementation of the SCORE (Scottish Continuous Recording System).

This system allows the collection of data concerning many different aspects of the lets being made including:-

- the demographic characteristics of the households being let to;
- the path by which a household has become a RSL tenant;
- the financial profile of the households being let to;
- the type and condition of the property being let,
- and, the financial aspects of the let being made, including how affordable the let is.

The repairs service will be reviewed during 2007. The Building Maintenance Term Contract with the Comhairle's Commercial Operations Committee comes to an end on 31 March 2008. A working group comprising HHP Officers and Board Members has been constituted to review how the repairs service will be procured, and the new contract(s) will require to be in place by December 2007.

HHP has pledged to maintain rents that are affordable whilst ensuring sufficient rental income is generated to provide a quality service. The rent increase for 2007/08 was in line with the Business Plan approved by the Comhairle and the

Scottish Executive (RPI + 1%). HHP will review the rental policy during 2008/09, and tenants will be consulted on the extent to which there would be interest in cost reflective increases.

Voids performance to date has exceeded the targets set out in the Business Plan - 1.43% compared to the 2.5% assumption and is better than the Scottish Average. For 2007/08 the Change of Tenancy procedure has been reviewed and HHP now have a specialist team who will aim to reduce turn around times. The increasing pressure from rising homeless presentations will keep demand high in all areas so low demand areas and long term voids do not exist. Conversely the waiting list is at an all time high so, applicant to letting ratios are projected to worsen.

Whilst the Comhairle is the lead agency responsible for developing anti-social behaviour strategies in the Western Isles, operationally HHP endeavours to resolve situations where tenants are victims or perpetrators of unacceptable behaviour with considerable success. HHP will continue to give this area of its operation a high priority to enable tenants to live in peace and safety.

Tenant Participation

Following stock transfer, HHP is looking anew at how best to encourage meaningful and representative tenant participation.

The 'village voice' scheme has encountered difficulties in sustaining a geographical spread of representatives. With a commitment to expand tenant involvement and to introduce customer satisfaction surveys across a range of services, HHP intends to work with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service to identify a new programme and targets during 2007/08. These in turn will feed into a wider Community Engagement Strategy to be developed with local partner agencies.

New Build

The Western Isles was allocated £6.28 million for 2007/08 by Communities Scotland to continue to build new affordable housing in the Western Isles. Over the next five years HHP aims to build at least 250 new houses throughout the islands which will be a significant contribution to meeting housing need and to stimulating the local economy. Spend for 2007/08 through HHP is on track with almost all the money legally committed to projects. HHP, TIG and the Comhairle will press Communities Scotland for additional funding for new build projects and landbanking at the half year 'review of programme' meeting with Communities Scotland in September 2007.

Housing Services Team

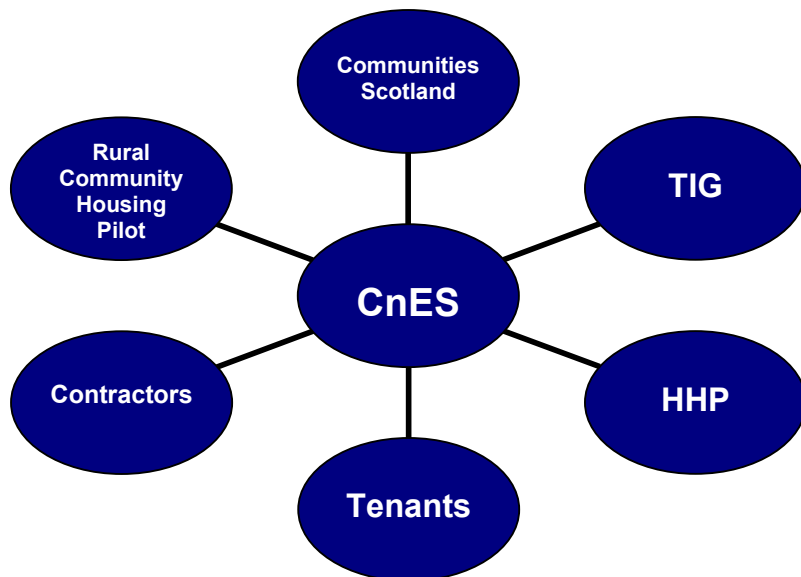
Following the transfer of the Comhairle's housing stock to Hebridean Housing Partnership the Comhairle will be taking on a new, more strategic role in Housing, with new responsibilities, objectives and challenges.

The Comhairle has established a new Housing Services Team in order to deliver the new Housing role in an integrated way, with the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy at its core.

The Housing Services Team is responsible for Housing Strategy, Housing Development, Private Sector Housing Grants (PSHG) and Homelessness and is part of the Development Services Section in the Department for Sustainable Communities.

The Team structure will ensure that the main Comhairle Housing functions can be delivered effectively, based around the development and delivery of the Local Housing Strategy.

Figure 3.5 Development – Key Partners



Tighean Inne Gall

Tighean Inne Gall (TIG) continues to be a valued partner in the Comhairle’s strategic housing process. Legally constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society in 1991 TIG’s initial objective was to be the Western Isles Local Housing Agency, with the overall aim of enhancing housing provision in the Western Isles by acting as a conduit for Housing Association funding.

This role was performed extremely successfully over the years, and resulted in the creation and development of five Local Housing Associations. In total TIG has facilitated the provision of some 447 new homes throughout the Islands (as at 31 March 2007). In the main these are Housing Association properties for social rent

but others are privately owned, funded through Rural Home Ownership Grants and Low Cost Home Ownership Initiatives.

TIG also manages the Western Isles Care and Repair scheme on behalf of the Comhairle and plays a major part in the delivery of Energy Efficiency schemes to the Island communities.

As a result of the Comhairle's stock transfer to Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) and the subsequent amalgamation of the five community based housing associations with HHP, TIG's role is changing. It no longer requires to provide development services to the individual associations and has had initial exploratory discussions with HHP on the potential for a group structure with the new organisation. These negotiations are scheduled to recommence in November 2007.

Having been closely involved with the development of HHP's Business Plan, TIG is committed to playing an ongoing and strengthened role in the future planning and delivery of housing initiatives and services in the Islands.

Resources

Once again the Comhairle is faced with significant degrees of uncertainty surrounding the resource levels available to deliver and develop key aspects the Local Housing Strategy.

The objectives within the Local Housing Strategy can only come to fruition with significant levels of financial support from the Scottish Executive, so it is concerning to note that there is still uncertainty about the long term funding for Homelessness and Private Sector Housing Grant, both key aspects of the Strategy.

The Comhairle depends heavily on Homeless Task Force funding to effectively discharge its Homeless Persons Service. Towards the end of 2006/07, when the previous tranche of Homeless Task Force funding was coming to an end, there was uncertainty as to the levels of this funding for 2007/08, or if indeed such funding would be forthcoming. Representations had to be made at a political level in order for the Comhairle to receive official notification of its award and it was December 2006 before this funding was confirmed. Furthermore, due to the Scottish Executive spending review, the Task Force funding was granted for only one year. This makes long term planning for homelessness very difficult and leaves a great deal of uncertainty as to the Comhairle's ability to meet national Homelessness objectives.

The Comhairle was also faced with uncertainty over the amount of Private Sector Housing Grant for 2007/08, mirroring the situation in 2006/07. During 2006/07, the Comhairle was given a reduced offer of PSHG and was initially told that it could only use up to 50% forward commitment into 2007/08. Negotiations with Communities Scotland resulted in the level of forward commitment subsequently being increased to 80%. However, the Comhairle was still faced with having to put a hold on taking any new grant enquiries and applications.

The situation has not improved in 2007/08, as Communities Scotland has informed the Comhairle of a reduced offer of grant for PSHG and has announced that there is

to be no provision for forward commitment into future years. The Comhairle has no option but to continue the moratorium on new grant applications. Once again, this is making the objectives relating to Private Sector difficult to achieve.

However, the level of resources available for the provision of new affordable housing is more encouraging. The Comhairle has received a sizable allocation for 2007/08 from the Affordable Housing Development Programme, consisting of mainstream Housing Association Grant and Community Ownership Programme funding. This will see a significant new build programme throughout the islands in partnership with Hebridean Housing Partnership.

As a result of the Comhairle approving that the Council Tax due on Second and long term Empty Homes be changed from 50% of the standard rate to 90%, an additional funding stream of approximately £300k per annum is available to be invested in new housing involving a Registered Social Landlord. This funding stream is locally called Additional Council Tax Income from Second Homes (ACTISH) and was first available last year and projects across the islands are benefiting from the increased funding.

Details of Resource levels for the Social rented sector are provided in the description of HHP activities earlier in this section.

Development Programme Timetable

The Comhairle has approved a timeframe for annual Development Programme discussions with Communities Scotland, Hebridean Housing Partnership and Tighean Innse Gall

Table 3.6 (D P Timetable)

Stage	Month	Task	Lead	Partners
1	April to May	Updating LHS	Comhairle	HHP, TIG, Communities Scotland
2	June Series	Report LHS Update to Comhairle for approval by Members	Comhairle	
3	June to Sept October	Communities Scotland assesses LHS Feedback on LHS received from Communities Scotland	Communities Scotland Communities Scotland	Comhairle HHP, TIG, Communities Scotland
4	October	Discussions on outline Housing Development Programme at officer level (HAG and COP)	Comhairle	
5	Dec Series	Report LHS feedback to Comhairle for noting by Members	Comhairle	
6	Dec Series	Report outline Housing Development Programme to Comhairle for approval by Members	Comhairle	
7	Dec	Communities Scotland informed of outline Housing Development Programme	Comhairle	Communities Scotland
8	Jan- Feb	Discussions on possible ACTISH programme at officer level and review progress with previous allocation	Comhairle	TIG, HHP
9	Feb	Approval of Housing Development Programme by Communities Scotland	Communities Scotland	Comhairle, HHP, TIG
10	March Series	Report proposals for ACTISH funding for new Financial Year and review of current years progress to Comhairle for approval by Members	Comhairle	Communities Scotland
11	March Series	Report informing Comhairle of Ministers approval of Development Programme	Comhairle	HHP, TIG, Communities Scotland
12	Oct	Half Year Review of Spend/Progress by Communities Scotland	Communities Scotland	Comhairle, HHP, TIG
13	Dec Series	Progress update on current Housing Development Programme included in future programme Report to Comhairle	Comhairle	
		<i>Cycle Continues</i>		

Housing Development in the RSL Sector

The current increased funds available from Communities Scotland for new build for RSLs, continues to result in more houses for rent being provided each year. Last year there were 32 units for rent completed while 80 are due to complete during the current financial year.

Welcome as this is, the demand for housing for rent is not reducing in any area and in most areas is still growing. The allocation for Housing Association Grant to the Western Isles this year is the highest on record but the current indications are that this level of funding (£6.4 million HAG) will have to be maintained or increased to achieve any reduction in the Waiting List and meet the legal requirements on the Comhairle to provide housing for those who qualify for it.

Over the last year, five small Community Based Housing Associations have merged with Hebridean Housing Partnership and (HHP) has taken over all the development programmes that those Associations had prepared.

This year has also seen the completion of a GRO grant project in the centre of Stornoway providing 18 flats to first time buyers who were on the waiting list for rented housing. A further scheme to provide housing for first time buyers is under preparation.

There appears to be strong local interest from young people in the provision of housing for first time buyers and the collection of further data on this sector will progress over the next year.

Homestake

The Comhairle is keen to examine the introduction of Homestake in the Western Isles in partnership with Hebridean Housing Partnership. As the use of GRO-grant in the Islands has had some marked success and the Comhairle regularly receives enquires about further schemes, Homestake could be a useful tool to address the issue of owner occupied housing for low income families.

At present, there is a rural development which includes two Homestake properties in the development pipeline. There is also the potential of a further Homestake development of perhaps ten units within a larger Stornoway development.

The Comhairle will be monitoring the development, marketing, take up and management of these Homestake sites and will also be closely watching how the Homestake scheme progresses nationally.

Empty Homes

The Comhairle has an outstanding commitment to update its information base on Empty Homes.

In June 2006 there were 1,838 vacant dwellings in the Western Isles, representing 13.4% of all recorded dwellings (including second homes). This is the highest

percentage of vacant dwellings of any local authority area in Scotland, the national average being 4.2%.

There is renewed interest in investigating the potential for returning these empty homes to the effective housing stock.

Past experience however, suggests that achieving any significant level of success in this regard could be problematic because:-

- not all empty homes are available homes
- previous research showed a mismatch between the location of empty properties and areas of demand/need for housing
- earlier attempts to engage with owners on the feasibility of leasing schemes proved fruitless
- improvement and upgrading of empty homes may not be the most cost effective solution for owners
- older properties will always be constrained in terms of space standards and fuel efficiency which may not be acceptable to potential occupants

The Comhairle did have an intention to investigate the development of a bespoke Grant targetted at owners of empty properties. However current high demand for Private Sector Housing Grant for occupied properties far exceeds available resources, making grant awards to empty homes less easy to justify through the Improvement and Repair Grant regime.

It may be however, that restoration of empty homes could make a positive contribution to housing supply in some areas of the Islands, subject to certain criteria being satisfied. It is therefore the Comhairle's intention to commission research into the current characteristics of this property category during 2007/08 in order to have up to date information to inform policy decisions.

Fuel Poverty

Historically the Western Isles has been assessed as having the highest level of Fuel Poverty in Scotland, and therefore, at local authority level, the highest in Britain. A year ago the estimated levels of Fuel Poverty in the Western Isles were reported as having reduced to 24.5% but then assessed as having increased again due to rising fuel costs.

Over the last financial year the number of houses having energy efficiency works carried out has reduced in comparison with the previous year due to the change over from EAGA to Scottish Gas for the central administration of the Central Heating for the over 60s and the Warm Deal programmes in Scotland

The current estimated level of Fuel Poverty across the Western Isles is 30–32%, compared with a Scottish average of 14–18%.

More houses should get energy efficiency works provided to them during the current year than last year however, the most significant factor affecting Fuel Poverty levels

is the fluctuation in fuel costs. If fuel costs increase over the next six months then the Fuel Poverty levels for the Western Isles will increase rather than decrease.

Further detail on Fuel Poverty issues and the current action plans are contained in the Appendix to the LHS 2007 update as a separate document.

Energy and Biomass

With increases in the cost of fuels in the last two years and increasing concern over greenhouse gas emissions, the Comhairle has prepared a project brief for a feasibility study to be undertaken over the next year into the practicality of cropping biomass (in our case low grade trees), chipping the wood and then using it as fuel for large boilers to heat housing and possibly other buildings via a district heating scheme. At present half the funds for the study have been approved by a range of organisations and it is hoped that the study can start in September 2007.

Housing Needs Assessment

A long held aim of the LHS Officers Group was achieved with the conclusion of a comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment and Market Study by Newhaven Research in March 2007.

The study identifies existing and future housing needs at Western Isles and sub-area levels in the context of how the housing system in the Western Isles is evolving over time. The outcomes will help inform the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy, and the Community Care, Land Planning and Regeneration agendas.

The study also helps significantly improve baseline housing data and is reported in greater detail in the Strategy Development, Monitoring and Evaluation section of this document.

Migration Study

In 2005, the Western Isles Community Planning Partnership and Communities Scotland commissioned research into the issues influencing migration in and out of the Western Isles. The aim of the study was to provide service providers and policy makers with substantiated information on the implications of population change and to subsequently identify appropriate policies and practices to address out-migration and encourage in-migration. The findings of the study which completed in February 2007 are described in the Strategy Development section of this document.

National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)

The Comhairle has a role to play as the lead strategic co-ordinator for implementing the National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders. This is part of the Scottish Executives guidance on multi-agency public protection arrangements.

The NASSO sets out a national framework for the approach to be taken by partnership agencies (RSLs, police, social work, health board etc) when sex offenders are to be housed. It ensures that a joined up approach is taken by all

these partner agencies, with particular emphasis on RSLs in the case of stock transfer councils.

This is an area which the Comhairle will be developing further throughout the year supported by grant funding from the Scottish Executive. It will involve establishing information, sharing protocols between partner agencies and creating a Sex Offenders Liaison Officer (SOLO).

Further guidance on the NASSO is currently being produced by the CIOH, which will inform the Comhairle's development of the initiative.

Rural Housing Pilot

A Development Coordinator for a Rural Community Housing Pilot in the Initiative at the Edge areas of Uig, Bernera, Lochs and Harris came into post on 1 September 2006.

The post has a remit to:- facilitate the development of Partnership working between the public agencies and local communities; identify new initiatives to encourage housing development and ultimately community sustainability in these fragile areas; and to develop a common methodology for housing needs analysis across the four communities. Tighean Innse Gall provide management support for the project.

The postholder has been integrated into the Local Housing Strategy Officers Group and has been involved in briefing sessions on the outputs of the Comhairle's Housing Needs Assessment and in the subsequent training relating to ongoing maintenance and completion of the Communities Scotland Housing Needs Pro-forma.

Since September 2006 the coordinator has established an office in Leurbost and held meetings with the Community coordinators for the four areas of Harris, North Lochs, South Lochs and Uig/Bernera. Area programmes were drafted for each area based on the priorities aired at a series of public meetings including a workshop on Housing Grants, and the following Generic Area Programme Agreed:-

- Analyse outflow/inflow to area for target groups
- Conduct/Update Housing Needs Survey
- Promote awareness of Housing Grant
- Implement Grant Application Support Scheme
- Identify land with potential to acquire and map it
- Negotiate land and allocate to target market
- Market sites (and area) to attract back and retain population

The Comhairle's Housing Services Team Staff are involved with the work of the pilot project on an ongoing basis and feedback/discussion opportunities will be provided through the Officers Group.

Croft Housing

While the Comhairle had some concerns about the effect that the recent changes to the Crofter Housing Grant funding would have on crofting in the Western Isles, and about the effect of the withdrawal of the Loan element of the Scheme, there has been an increase in the number of new croft houses being built since the changes came into place in January 2005.

In the period January 2005 – March 2007 approval has been given for a total of 189 new houses, and improvement grants for a further 15 houses in the Western Isles. This annual rate of approval of 84 houses is nearly double the rate of approvals in the years leading up to the revised (increased) levels of grant and may be likely to reduce over the next few years back to an average of 60 houses a year.

There continues to be an “affordability gap” in the cost of securing tenancy of a croft and then building a house on it due partly to the increased price of croft tenancies and also to the above inflation cost increases of building in the more remote parts of the Western Isles.

A crofting review panel has been established with representation from the Western Isles and that panel will report back in 2008 with recommendations which are likely to be included in the next revision to crofting legislation.

Crofting Community Buy-outs

In the last year the community buy-outs of the Galson Estate on Lewis (56,000 acres) and the South Uist Estate (92,000 acres) have been completed, bringing the proportion of land in the Western Isles in community ownership over the 40% mark. More than one estate may come into community ownership in the next year.

A common theme from the community buyouts is the recognition by the new landlords that the provision of land for housing at affordable prices is of benefit to the existing community.

The provision of actual sites for housing does take some time to secure local approval and then there is often the need to resume the land out of crofting tenure. These agreements can take time to resolve but should result in more land in rural and remote parts of the Western Isles being made available. The provision of land to allow between four and eight houses can make a huge difference to the make-up of a rural community.

Crofting Reform Bill

In 2006 the Crofting Reform Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament but in a very slimmed down form, with the result that there have been no major housing implications as yet. The formation of new crofts did remain part of the approved Act, but there has been no resultant effect on housing to date – it being very likely that any new croft formed would be “bare land” and the new croft tenant would want to build on the croft.

Private Rented Sector

The 2001 Census estimated that there were 600-700 private rented properties in the Western Isles.

The Comhairle continues to encourage the registration of private sector landlords to ensure that they are 'fit and proper' persons to be letting residential property in terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004. Regular notices advising of the requirement to register are placed in the local press and the Comhairle's web site carries a useful information section.

To date 350 properties are on the Registration 'list' with 340 of these having completed the Registration process.

While the Housing Needs Assessment exercise has provided some additional material on the characteristics of this sector, it is acknowledged that a specific piece of work still needs doing to provide us with robust baseline information. Resources permitting, this will be commissioned during 2007/08.

Stornoway Regeneration

The housing related work of the multi-agency Stornoway Regeneration Group has moved on very satisfactorily in 2006/07.

The Townscape Heritage Initiative was successful in its funding bid and this project may provide an opportunity to address the "housing above shops" options appraisal contained in the LHS as one part of our efforts to repopulate Stornoway town centre.

The conclusion of the Sail Loft and Lewis Hotel site developments have already helped in this regard, and construction is underway on a 22 unit flatted development at the old Haldane Hostel site.

A major achievement for the Regeneration Group this year was the conclusion of the second stage feasibility study into the future options for bulk cargo (including oil/gas import/storage) at West Harbour. The findings of the study suggest that the relocation of the oil and gas storage facilities would bring about key regeneration and development opportunities including potentially freeing up land for 439 houses and 76 flats.

Obviously this would have tremendous impact on the current bottle-neck of demand for housing in Stornoway (particularly for social renting) and the Comhairle is enthusiastic about moving on to further evaluation and investigation of the consultant's conclusions.

The other notable development is the Bridge Project, currently under construction at Bayhead, Stornoway. The first phase (which provides student accommodation) is due for completion in mid-August.

Progress on the other housing related action points within the Stornoway Regeneration Action Plan are shown in tabular form below:

Table 3.7 Housing Actions Stornoway Regeneration Action Plan Updated 2007

Objective	Action	Desired Outcomes	Time	Lead	Partners	Position at May 2007
7. Increase housing supply within Stornoway by bringing forward sites for development	Implementation of LHS	Monitor and evaluation of Local Housing Strategy	2006-2010	CnES (SC/H)	All	ongoing
	Implementation of Local Plan proposal sites	Sites redeveloped for housing	2006-2010	HHP	CnES (SC), TIG	ongoing
	Progress Bridge project	Implement current planning consent	2006-2007	Bridge Project	UHI, CnES, TIG	On site

Objective	Action	Desired Outcomes	Time	Lead	Partners	Position at May 2007
8. Utilise publicly owned land for housing	Haldane site	Implemented housing project	2006-2007	TIG	CnES, HHP	On site
	Lews Castle School site	Implemented housing project	2006-2007	CnES (H)	TIG, HHP	Site now being transferred into HHP ownership
	Allt na Broige, Marybank	Implemented housing project	2006-2007	CnES (SC,H)	TIG, HHP	5 service plots provided
	Develop Labost Lane site	Implemented project for service plots	2006-2007	CnES (H)	TIG, HHP	Feasibility study underway

Objective	Action	Desired Outcomes	Time	Lead	Partners	Position at May 2007
9. Increase private accommodation for younger economically active in town	Seek opportunities for housing regeneration in town centre	Further opportunities identified	2006-2010	HHP	CnES, TIG, Private	ongoing
	Promotion of housing above commercial activity	Promotion activity carried out in tandem with THI project	2006-2010	CnES (SC)	TIG, HHP Private	ongoing

Social Inclusion Issues

Equalities and Diversity

A partnership group comprising representatives of the Comhairle, HIE Innse Gall, community groups, the voluntary sector, Northern Constabulary, the clergy and led by NHS Eileanan Siar has been formed to progress the Equalities and Diversity agenda in the Islands.

An officer from the Housing Services Team has joined the group to ensure that Housing issues are represented and that Housing policy and practise are developed in line with Equalities legislation.

The remit of the group has yet to be formally adopted but the thrust of the work will be to:-

- ensure partner organisations are aware of their legislative responsibilities under the Diversity and Equality Legislation
- ensure policies and strategies are “equality proofed” and to advise on good practise in this regard
- network into national Equalities forums to ensure strategic input
- operate within the Western Isles Community Planning Partnership structure
- be an information and monitoring resource and
- promote Diversity, Equality and Tolerance within the Western Isles

The LHS Officers Group will be kept informed of the activities of the Equality and Diversity Forum as its agenda is consolidated.

Western Isles Benefits Uptake Campaign

The Western Isles is one of ten areas across Scotland to receive funding from the Executive to help combat financial exclusion in the area. Over ¼ of our population is over 60, and there is a greater reliance on pensions (14% compared to Scottish average of 7%). It is thought that there is a lower than average take-up of Disability Living Allowance & Attendance Allowance. Coupled with that, we have higher than average costs for food, transport, housing/fuel and clothing here, all of which add up to pensioner or “retiree” households with low incomes being particularly vulnerable to financial difficulty.

We have the highest levels of fuel poverty in Scotland (34% of Western Isles households spend over a tenth of their income in household fuel use, according to a Scottish Executive study in 2002) and self-disconnection is an issue as is the “heat or eat” dilemma for these households.

Following consultation with a wide range of services providers such as the Citizens Advice Bureau; Money Advice; Community Co-ordinators and Jobcentre Plus, the Western Isles Financial Inclusion Action Plan was formulated. In July 2006 a Financial Inclusion Action Plan Co-ordinator was appointed to lead and manage the implementation of the Western Isles Action Plan. The Financial Inclusion Team was expanded in April 2007, by the recruitment of an Awareness Officer, and an

Entitlement Assessment Officer. The latter is based in the Benefits section of the Comhairle.

Four themes underpin the Western Isles Financial Inclusion Action Plan:

- The need to deliver existing services more effectively through enhanced service co-ordination and improved joint working. Individuals must be given the best possible information at a time and in a manner which is most suitable for them.
- The need to develop approaches which are preventative and which raise the capability of individuals and households to plan their finances and make good financial choices.
- The need to develop a range of services and products which meet peoples' needs. The emerging Western Isles Credit Union will be central to this theme.
- The need to target information and advice at key client groups within the community.

A benefit uptake campaign is one of the priority actions and £35,000 has been allocated from the Scottish Executive's Financial Inclusion funding award to carry this out. The campaign is a multi-agency initiative, aiming to reach 360 elderly people or their carers with a target of increasing the income of as many as 250 households.

The benefit take-up initiative complements the Financial Inclusion Action Plan in policy terms, but also works in a very practical sense. Direct contact with older people offers the opportunity for an advice worker to promote other services to clients, referring them on to other agencies where necessary.

A service providers' forum has been established to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan. Representatives from various departments of the Comhairle including the Housing Services Team are members of the group as is Hebridean Housing Partnership.

Health and Homelessness

The National Health and Homelessness Standards were produced in 2005 and are aimed at ensuring that the importance of strong leadership in tackling the health inequalities of homeless people at a strategic level is recognised and acted upon by NHS Boards. The Standards are underpinned by the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force and it is implicit in the Standards that the Health recommendations of the Task Force should also be taken forward by Boards.

NHS Eileanan Siar is represented on the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy Group and on the local Homelessness Task Force Group. A Health and Homelessness Action Team led by NHS Eileanan Siar developed the initial Health and Homelessness Action Plan in 2002. It was agreed, however, that a Needs Assessment would be an essential factor in reviewing the Plan and this study was undertaken for that purpose. The aim of the Needs Assessment was to provide an information base for the NHS Board and wider policy and planning in the development of accessible and appropriate health services and interventions for

homeless people. The study comprises a profile of local homeless presentations, a questionnaire based survey of people presenting as homeless in 2005/06, a survey of agencies working with homeless people and a mapping of local delivery against National Standards.

The objectives agreed for the Needs Assessment were to:

- improve understanding of the health issues which may lead to homelessness and to identify possible interventions
- identify any service accessibility issues for homeless people
- identify any gaps in provision of health services for homeless people
- identify particular services needs relating to homeless people and produce recommendations for policy and planning
- map Western Isles NHS Board's services against the National Standards and to make recommendations for change

Generally, the services provided by NHS Western Isles appear to be accessible to and to meet the needs of homeless people. To improve governance and compliance with national standards, more work requires to be done to evidence this. In terms of user involvement a further piece of work is being planned to gain a perspective from ethnic minority groups. More specific work is also needed with young people and homeless middle aged men.

The Needs Assessment concludes that there is scope for multi-agency preventative work within the wellbeing/health improvement agenda, particularly in relation to young people and that there is a need for some work within NHS Western Isles to improve compliance with national standards. The recommendations are;

That a short life NHS Working Group be established to:

- review existing frontline policy and procedure in community and acute settings
- report and make recommendations to Executive Team on changes that may be required to make services more appropriate for homeless individuals and for those with literacy, numeracy or substance misuse problems.
- make recommendations on governance in relation to health and homelessness including staff training, audit and monitoring and establishment of reporting structures which improve compliance with the National Standards.

That a multi-agency Team be re-established to develop a revised action plan covering:

- awareness raising in relation to health and homelessness
- health improvement interventions, particularly in relation to children who are caught up in homelessness

- early intervention aimed at preventing youth homelessness by providing support for young people in situations which are seen as being causative of homelessness
- implementation of the health recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force Report

That the Public Health Division would continue to take the lead responsibility for this agenda but, that much of the partnership work would be taken on by the Community Health and Social Care Partnership (CHaSCP) when it is established.

That both Working Groups would involve CHaSCP staff and management and work closely with the Diversity and Equality Action Team

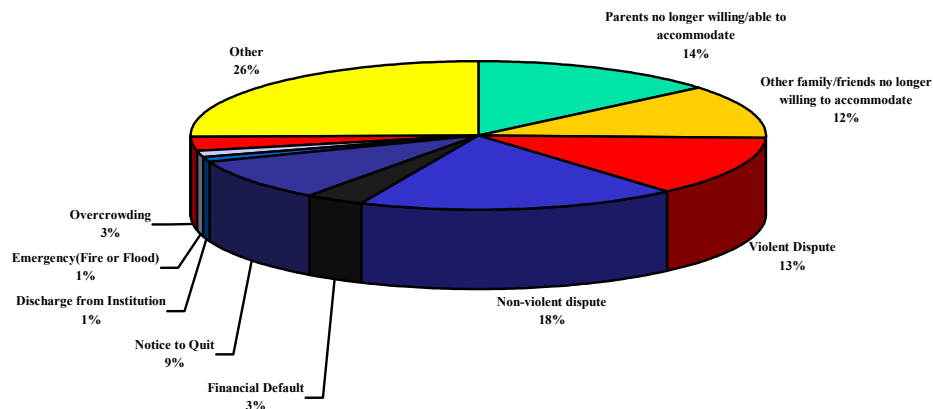
That £10K of the Health Improvement Fund be allocated to resourcing the development and implementation of a new Health and Homelessness Action Plan, including training of staff.

That further work is also needed with young people, ethnic minority groups and homeless middle aged men to improve the Board's understanding of the local situation with regard to Health and Homelessness.

The Local Homelessness Task Force will oversee the ongoing work in relation to the recommendations of the Needs Assessment.

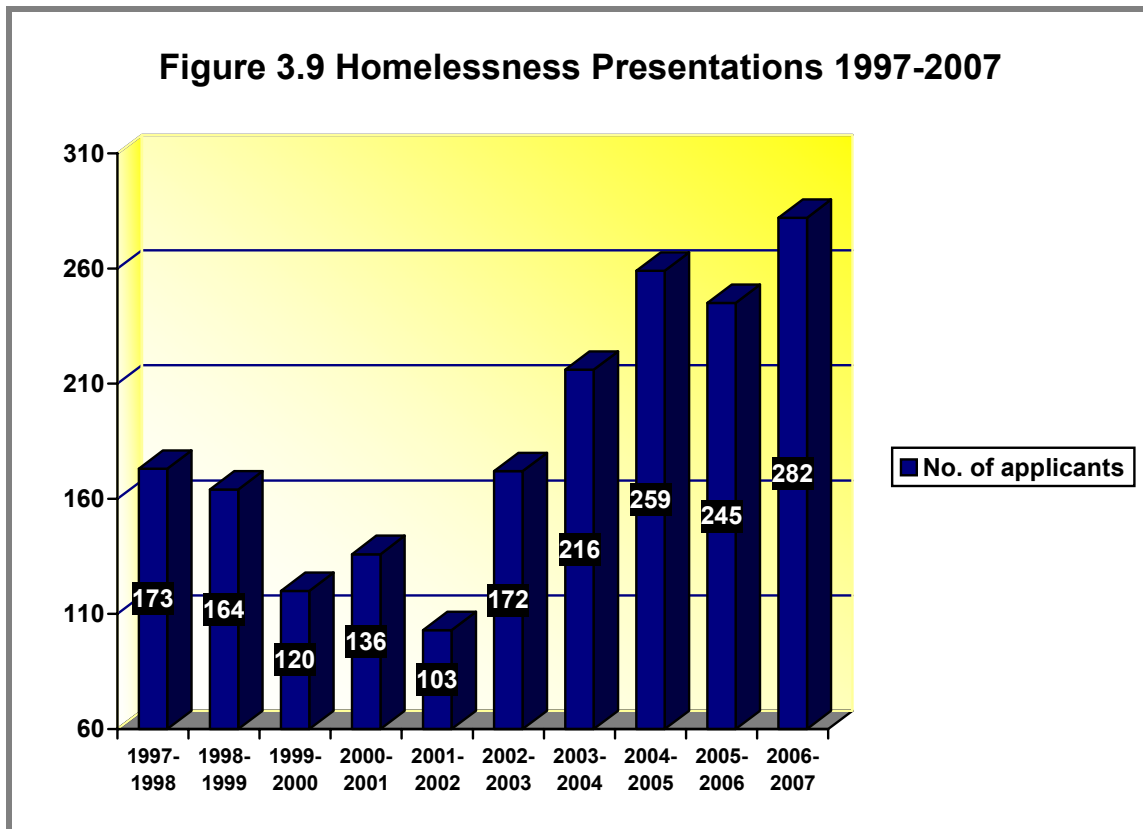
Homelessness

Figure 3.8 Reasons given for Homelessness 2006/07



Following stock transfer there has been a radical change to the management arrangements for the Homelessness Service.

Although still in Comhairle employ as members of the new Housing Services Team, the Homelessness staff are located in the HHP offices in Stornoway and Balivanich. This is proving to be successful in terms of customer care as the client has only one office to attend, and also because an SLA between the Comhairle and HHP provides for staff cover and out of hours service.



2006/07 saw the highest number of applicants ever recorded in the Western Isles (282) having their housing needs assessed in terms of homeless legislation. This has created huge challenges for the Homeless Service and for HHP and a detailed position statement on Homelessness is provided at Appendix 2 to this report.

Alpha Project

The embryonic Hebrides Alpha Project (a limited company with charitable status) aims to provide a rehabilitative, supportive and life changing housing opportunity with therapeutic employment for individuals with housing problems. Homeless persons with addiction and/or other problems would be targeted for this project as would people in their own home who are not coping well with the responsibilities of maintaining this.

All individuals entering the project must be serious about changing their lives and particular emphasis is to be given to alcohol and drug rehabilitation. Services would be delivered in keeping with the guidance outlined by the Care Commission for Housing Support and Alcohol and Drug services.

The company has seven members on its Board of Directors, all of whom have experience in the delivery of care, pastoral work, accountancy or business (private and public sector).

The project would house up to five individuals for six months (or longer in exceptional circumstances) in a supportive residential environment under the supervision of a Team Leader and care staff, underpinned by a Christian ethos and an emphasis on good boundaries. Alcohol and drug use would not be allowed with smoking also banned to maximise health opportunities for residents. A staff member would be in attendance for most of the day up until 11pm. It is possible that a 'crisis bed' for a six week period may also be available for persons coming out of hospital in-patient detoxification.

The project has set up a 'trading subsidiary' to manage the business side of the project. Five directors serve on this Board all with relevant experience.

In the first stages this will involve individuals being 'therapeutically employed' in a power washing, car valet and small removals service for the community. The intention is to develop the business side more significantly in order that some revenue costs may be raised for the project.

Funding Status 1 April 2007

The development of this project has been viewed very positively by the Comhairle and Hebridean Housing Partnership who have secured capital funding through Communities Scotland capital funding to meet the costs of building or refurbishing a property for the Supported Accommodation unit.

Estimated revenue costs of £120,000 have to be found across the whole project. It is hoped that application to Alcohol and Drugs Action Team (ADAT) and Homelessness services will secure contributions to the revenue costs - other sources being explored are charitable trusts (six trusts have been identified so far who may consider giving capital funding), local donations and ultimately revenue from the business arm of the project.

The overall aim of the project is that individuals would recover from a pattern of alcohol or drug misuse, offending behaviour and antisocial behaviour and become much more likely to be employable and responsible citizens, able to sustain and care for a tenancy within the local community. Aftercare and support following discharge from the project would be sought through the multi-agency network of services.

Sgailean (Western Isles Foyer)

The Western Isles Foyer Project continues to be a key partner in the delivery of homeless services to young people in the Islands.

The holistic approach of the Foyer to client needs very much meets the Scottish Executive's emphasis on Prevention of Homelessness (and particularly the occurrence of repeat homelessness). The project is undoubtedly a major factor in the Comhairle being able to meet the statutory requirements relating to young homeless people.

A detailed account of Foyer activity is provided in the Homelessness Position Statement (Appendix 2).

Bridge Project

The Bridge Centre development is an ambitious project which will meet key targets for the following partners at a high profile site in central Stornoway: Western Isles Foyer, Bridge Community Centre, CnES, TIG/HHP, Lews Castle College UHI, and the Western Isles NHS. The project integrates well with the core objectives of the partners by; providing accommodation for six young homeless persons (Objective 12, LHS), providing 25 Study Bedrooms for College students for the first time in the Western Isles, providing accommodation for medical students, locum doctors, and visiting consultants.

The project will also provide a new integrated youth facility to promote inclusion and responsible behaviour to meet the main objective of the Bridge Community Centre.

The first phase of the development, the student accommodation block, will be completed by August 2007, with the Foyer and NHS flats completed by October 2007.

The final phase, the provision of community facilities will be completed by March 2008.

Tenancy Support Service

The tenancy support service is now an established and valued part of the Comhairle's Homelessness Service.

With one tenancy support worker based in Stornoway, and one in Balivanich, the service is registered with the Care Commission and in 2006/07 dealt with 52 clients. There were 34 active cases as at 31 March 2007.

The support workers are providing advice and information on a range of issues to homeless clients awaiting re-housing, and to vulnerable households unable to sustain a tenancy without help. They are also providing a support network to those recently provided with accommodation and needing guidance in establishing household and budgetary routines.

The service is completely reliant on Scottish Executive Homeless Task Force funding and is seriously under-resourced. Ideally, at least one additional support worker would be employed in Stornoway, but unless long term certainty as to funding levels is achieved this aspiration cannot be progressed. The current staff are employed on temporary contracts until 31 March 2008, and representations will continue to be made to the Scottish Executive regarding the unacceptable nature of all homelessness related funding.

Further details on this issue are contained in the Homelessness Position Statement (Appendix 2 of this document).

Community Wardens

There are currently five Community Wardens operating in the Western Isles, two in Stornoway and three based in the rural areas of Ness, Westside and Uig.

They work with all age groups and sectors of the community and now cover the whole of Lewis and Harris to:-

- tackle anti-social problems such as derelict cars, vandalism, graffiti, litter, nuisance behaviour, noise pollution and dog fouling
- assist in developing positive attitudes towards the local environment through initiatives such as waste awareness and recycling
- provide a reassuring presence for the community at large but especially for those who feel most vulnerable, such as elderly people living alone
- work with communities to identify any relevant issues for attention and refer them back to the responsible individual, business, community group or local agency

Apart from working with the Antisocial Behaviour Co-ordinator and Environmental Health Officers, the Wardens also work closely with other sections of Sustainable Communities such as Waste Aware and other Partners, especially the Hebridean Housing Partnership and the Police.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator based in the Comhairle in Stornoway is recording incidents of anti-social behaviour pertaining to specific households as well as those relating to the wider community.

Records for 2005/06 are incomplete, as the original post-holder left in December 2006. However there is evidence of one reported household centred dispute in Harris since March 2007, four in Uist, and 15 in Lewis, three of the Uist cases were continued from 2006 as were seven of the Lewis cases. These apparently represent a reduction from the same period last year.

Accurate comparisons of figures to evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy can therefore only begin from this year onwards.

HHP will continue to work closely with the co-ordinator through its housing management practices to minimise the incidence of anti-social behaviour in the rented housing stock.

Minority Groups

Gypsies/Travellers

As in previous years, the Western Isles have had no gypsy/traveller presence, and consequently there is no updated information to convey.

The Comhairle and particularly the Homelessness Team are alert to the possibility that services may have to be put in place at short notice should any of this group arrive in the Islands. We are aware of the legislative responsibilities and of the Comhairle's own Equality Policy and are confident that an appropriate response can be made if required.

Migrant Workers

It is estimated that there are now approximately 200 migrant workers in Lewis and Harris, 50 in the Uists and four in Barra. HIE Innse Gall have facilitated two events, one in Benbecula and one in Stornoway, inviting migrant workers to the Community Planning Partnership's, launch of a Welcome Pack (translated into Polish and Latvian) and to take part in focus groups which provides basic information on key services, contact numbers and local facilities. From these sessions a report was compiled which highlighted the concerns and issues affecting migrant workers living and working within the Islands. Through Community Planning Partnership working, a group has been set up to look at the findings of this report and to date one migrant worker has been contracted on a short term basis by HIE Innse Gall to assist the response to immediate requirements.

The Outer Hebrides have access to £30,000 from the Highlands and Islands Enterprise European Social Fund (ESF) bid to assist with service provision Migrant Workers. It was decided at a recent successful meeting of the CPP group to match fund with £10,000 from HIE Innse Gall, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and NHS Eileanan Siar respectively to enable a full time field worker be employed for one year. The recruitment process is currently on going and a multi-lingual worker should be in place shortly, based in the Citizens Advice Bureau in Stornoway and covering the whole of the Outer Hebrides.

Housing & Community Care Agenda

The Housing and Community Care agenda in the Western Isles has seen significant progress in the past year. Thanks to the continued input of the Scottish Executive's Joint Improvement Team the local Joint Future Programme is firmly back on track, and has achieved the establishment of Scotland's first Community Health and Social Care Partnership (CHaSCP).

Housing has been "at the table" throughout the intense activity of the past year, and now that the partnership arrangements between the Comhairle and NHS Eileanan

Siar are formalised in the CHaSCP the housing interest will continue to be represented by membership of the Joint Planning Support Team and of the CHaSCP Committee.

With so many aspects of the community care and social inclusion agendas dependant on the availability of appropriate accommodation and related support services, it is vital that housing remain an integral part of the planning process. It is also important that front line operational staff are familiar with the Joint Future aims and principles. To this end officers from Hebridean Housing Partnership and the Comhairle's Homelessness Team will receive training on the Single Shared Assessment Process so that they can become more integrated with other service providers and contribute more fully to the shared care approach.

Community Health and Social Care Partnerships

Community Health Partnerships (CHPs) as proposed in the Community Health Partnership Regulations 2004 are about delivering better services and outcomes for local people, improving health and reducing health inequalities. They do this by developing closer working relationships between partner agencies and by effective public involvement.

CHPs are a mechanism to allow partner organisations, professionals and staff to plan, redesign and deliver services and care more effectively through organisational arrangements that seek to align and strengthen joint working. NHS Eileanan Siar and the Comhairle agreed that the creation of a CHP could be developed further by the formation of a Community Health and Social Care Partnership (CHaSCP). This will encompass all the advantages of a CHP with the addition of more integrated partnership working between the two organisations leading to better services to patients, service users and the public.

Many of the relationships that would normally be expected within a CHaSCP were already to be found informally in the Western Isles. There is a long history of partnership working which continues to develop and which will be enhanced by the introduction of the CHaSCP. It builds on the work of the Local Health Care Cooperatives (LHCCs), which were voluntary in nature, by placing statutory obligations upon partners by formalising and developing arrangements such as Joint Future planning and delivery of services, joint service planning and Community Planning.

The First Stage of the CHaSCP became operational in June 2007 with the delegation to it of responsibility for a range of Health Services and Joint Future and joint planning arrangements. At this stage the Community Health Services Division and the Joint Future Committee were dissolved and a new Joint Services Committee constituted.

Joint Service Committee (JSC)

The primary purpose of the Joint Services Committee is that of Governance, assessing and agreeing the commissioning of services and reporting to the parent organisations.

The Joint Services Committee (JSC) is constituted as a Committee of Western Isles Health Board and a Sub-committee of the Comhairle's Policy and Resources Committee and has delegated powers for the effective management, performance and development of services. In the case of services provided by the Comhairle it is anticipated that delegated powers in relation to the adult community care services within its current remit will be given to the Joint Services Committee from 1 January 2008. Any such delegation is conditional on the Comhairle being satisfied that adequate governance arrangements are in place.

The JSC will take a strategic overview of the CHaSCP's activities, priorities and objectives and hold to account the CHaSCP Committee for the delivery of the CHaSCP annual plan. In addition the CHaSCP will have responsibility for the Joint Future Agenda and it is this committee that will ensure that the principles of this agenda are promoted.

The JSC will be responsible for annual planning; governance and performance issues within the CHaSCP; and for coordinating planning, governance and performance reports to the parent organisations.

To enable it to exercise these duties a team of planners and an operational Management team will support it (see figure 3.10 below)

Figure 3.10

CHaSCP Committee and Team Structure and Accountability



The development of the CHaSCP in the Western Isles will greatly enhance current local arrangements by formalising links and aligning structures and processes within the context of national guidance and regulations.

The Comhairle looks forward to strengthened strategic housing links with other partners as the CHaSCP becomes the local vehicle for the planning and delivery of community health and social care services.

SECTION 4: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Strategy Development

2006/07 has seen the completion of two very significant pieces of research which will help inform and direct the ongoing development of the Western Isles Local Housing Strategy in the next few years, namely the Housing Needs Assessment and the Migration Study.

Housing Needs Assessment

The Housing Needs Assessment was commissioned by the Comhairle and was overseen by the LHS Officers Group. Carried out by Newhaven Research the aims and objectives of the study were to:-

- Describe the structure of the housing system across the Western Isles and provide an up to date understanding of its operation, identifying trends in the balance between housing supply and the demand and need for housing at local authority and sub-area levels.
- Identify the number of households currently in housing need and the number of households likely to remain or fall into need in five years and ten years time.
- Assess the adequacy of existing stock to meet housing needs, taking into account housing supply trends, including new build, RTB, demolitions, prices, available land supply, stock condition, and property ownership.
- Consider the extent to which projections of housing need are likely to be sensitive to changes in the local policy context and future migration flows.
- Advise on possible policy responses, taking into account recent legislative developments.
- Recommend how the Comhairle and its partners can improve the availability and use of secondary data to regularly monitor and update housing needs estimates.

The methodology comprised a postal survey of 6,600 households across the Western Isles (this included an all-household survey boost in Harris and Barra funded by Communities Scotland) which yielded a 34.5% return; a follow-up telephone survey of 40 older and 36 concealed households identified through the postal survey; an analysis of secondary and new data; scenario testing and stakeholder interviews.

The main conclusions of this very comprehensive piece of work in relation to the operation of the housing system are that;

There will be a continued requirement for new housing, not least because of the continued projected growth in households and the fall in the number of empty homes, especially in the Stornoway Housing Market Area (HMA).

House price and earning trends all suggest that an increasing number of low and modest income households, especially first-time buyers, are finding it increasingly difficult to enter the housing market and secure property that is suitable for their needs. Since 2001 house prices at the lower end of the market have increased at a rate much greater than the rate of growth in earnings. Thus a growing proportion of aspiring new owners are being priced out of the housing market. Inability to purchase housing is a particular issue for single people and other single earner households.

One reason for this growing affordability problem is the lack of supply responsiveness to house price increases. The annual number of second hand private properties sold per 1,000 households in the Western Isles has increased in recent years but remains far below the comparable rate for Scotland as a whole. New build completion rates also remain low and most new build properties across all tenures continue to be constructed without some form of public assistance.

Another possible reason is the recent increase in in-migrant households from the UK mainland and from Europe seeking housing. Hall Aitken (2006) suggests that the recent upturn in net in-migration, particularly by higher and middle income earners and retirees with equity has had a "ripple effect" on house prices. Our analysis of the prices paid by incoming purchasers and local purchasers indicates that this may be a factor, although the difference in the typical price paid by these two groups of purchasers is far less than witnessed in other rural areas of the UK.

There are some reasons for believing that the numbers of households priced out of the owner occupation market is unlikely to fall in the next few years. Earnings at the lower end of the labour market appear to be growing very slowly. If the recent trend in net in-migration continues, Hall Aitken project that the population of the Western Isles will grow rather than decline as GROS project. This in turn would increase household formation rates and the overall requirement for housing. If supply were to continue to fail to keep pace with demand then prices would no doubt continue to increase at rates ahead of inflation and earnings.

The increase in the number of households having difficulty purchasing a home has been accompanied by a significant increase in expressed demand for social rented properties. As at March 2006, there were 1,111 applicants on the Comhairle's housing list. In the last four years the Western Isles has witnessed a decline in the number of social rented properties that have become available for re-let. The increase in applications and the fall in the rate of turnover of social rented housing are consistent with a tightening of the housing market and an increase in the constraints faced by aspiring new owners and other newly forming households.

The housing needs survey confirms that many households in the social rented sector experience difficulties meeting their fuel costs and reaffirms the importance given to addressing fuel poverty in the Local Housing Strategy. HHP's investment programme should help to reduce the amount of fuel social renters have to consume

in order to heat their home. Current rents levels in the social rented sector are close to the limits of affordability but again HHP's rent guarantee will also help to ensure that rents remain affordable to social rented tenants.

Findings from the housing need study and the John Martin Partnership (2004) private sector house condition survey indicate that much remains to be done to improve the quality of private housing and reduce fuel poverty amongst private renters and owners. Both studies indicate private tenants remain more likely to live in properties in serious disrepair and properties that lack central heating and effective insulation. This may be one factor behind the disproportionately high number of social housing applications received from households living in the private rented sector.

The Census indicates that in 2001, 31% of the 1,030 privately rented properties were either 'tied' or 'informal' lets and were therefore not open to households seeking to rent. Nonetheless, the survey indicates the private rented sector plays an important role in providing transitional accommodation for in-migrant households and other households moving to take up employment. There is also anecdotal evidence that the private rental sector is housing the majority of recent in-migrants from Europe. This suggests that the scale and operation of the private rented sector may have changed significantly over the past six years.

The work concluded in March 2007 and as yet there has not been workload capacity to develop an action plan to address the conclusions and recommendations. This will however be progressed by the LHS Officers Group in the coming year.

Community Appraisals

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) will be carrying out a community appraisal throughout the islands in August 2007.

The Appraisals are being organised by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on behalf of the OHCPP, with input from other local agencies and community bodies throughout the islands. Community organisations & representatives are playing a key role in ensuring the Appraisals ask the right questions for every area.

The aim of the Community Appraisal exercise is:

- to refresh the information gathered in previous community appraisals
- to gather new information in areas where there has never been an appraisal carried out
- to provide up to date, comparable information about the communities of the Outer Hebrides to inform:
 - Local agency strategy and policy
 - the development agenda for communities:
what do local people want to see happening & improving where they live?
 - Statistical information for local, regional, national & international lobbying for the islands

Local agencies are being asked to contribute the questions they wish to ask about the services they provide, this core document will be circulated in an identical format to every house in the Outer Hebrides along with a community specific section that will vary from area to area. The Comhairle's Housing Team and Hebridean Housing Partnership have been consulted on the potential inclusion of housing related issues. The collected information will be published in an overall report on the findings. However, the Appraisal process has been designed to allow the gathered information to be broken down to the level of individual communities. The final information will be in the public domain and will be available for use by community organisations and agencies alike.

Migration Study

The Outer Hebrides Migration Study was commissioned at the request of the Local Economic Forum by a partnership of Communities Scotland, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Western Isles Enterprise (now HIE Innse Gall).

The main aim of the study was to provide clear and robust information on the implications of population change to policy makers and service providers and to then identify policies and practices that could encourage in-migration and address the issues around out-migration.

A scenario planning exercise carried out as part of the methodology identified key elements required in future policies to move towards a sustainable population base:-

- Widening employment opportunities for skilled workers, and particularly for women
- Providing a greater number and range of vocational training opportunities and apprenticeships that will allow more young people to stay in the Outer Hebrides
- Providing housing options that are desirable, accessible and affordable to people in the early stages of their careers and;
- Ensuring a quality range of social and leisure facilities that are attractive to women and younger children

The emphasis on housing provision and the need for apprenticeship schemes was to be expected and is already reflected in the Local Housing Strategy in relation to sustaining communities. An officer from the strategic Housing Services Team has joined the Migration Strategy Group, established to progress the action plan suggested by the researchers.

(It should be noted that the Migration Study refers to 'Outer Hebrides' rather than 'Western Isles', as part of the ongoing "branding" exercise being implemented by the Western Isles Community Planning Partnership. In time this will be extended to all corporate and jointly produced documents)

Extra Care Housing Study

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is exploring the potential for introducing Extra Care Housing (ECH) provision to enhance accommodation choice for the growing elderly population.

In line with Government policy and the wishes of the majority of older people, CNES is steadily increasing support to assist older people to continue to live independently in their own homes.

Extra Care is seen as a means of providing an additional choice; an alternative to both traditional sheltered housing and residential care that will suit some elderly people. A Western Isles Extra Care proposal could be based on existing sheltered housing provision and re-modelled Care Units, rather than small rooms (sometimes shared) as in residential care, but offering care and support at the same level as residential care and, for those that need it, availability of 24 hours a day support. It is also proposed that an extensive range of facilities, along with meal provision could be provided.

The initial target is to focus on the Care Units with adjacent sheltered housing.

In December 2006 Newhaven Research were engaged by the Comhairle to undertake further analysis of the information and intelligence collected as part of the housing needs study in order to set out the changing wider context and explore issues that will need to be responded to and addressed in the development of an effective Extra Care Housing Strategy for the Western Isles.

The specific study objectives are to:

- Identify and examine demographic, economic, social, health and other relevant trends over the next 20 years that will affect the demand for and nature of social care for older people (aged 65 and over) in the Western Isles
- Identify people for whom ECH may be an appropriate housing option, including current occupants of sheltered housing and residential care and other people assessed with support needs
- Raise and explore fundamental issues regarding the types of models of ECH available and their potential applicability in the Western Isles context

The study is expected to conclude in Autumn 2007.

Monitoring and Evaluation Proposals

Housing Strategy Post Stock transfer

The transfer of the Comhairle's housing stock to Hebridean Housing Partnership legally concluded on 12 September 2006, following which the Comhairle has taken on a new more Strategic Housing role with new responsibilities, objectives and challenges.

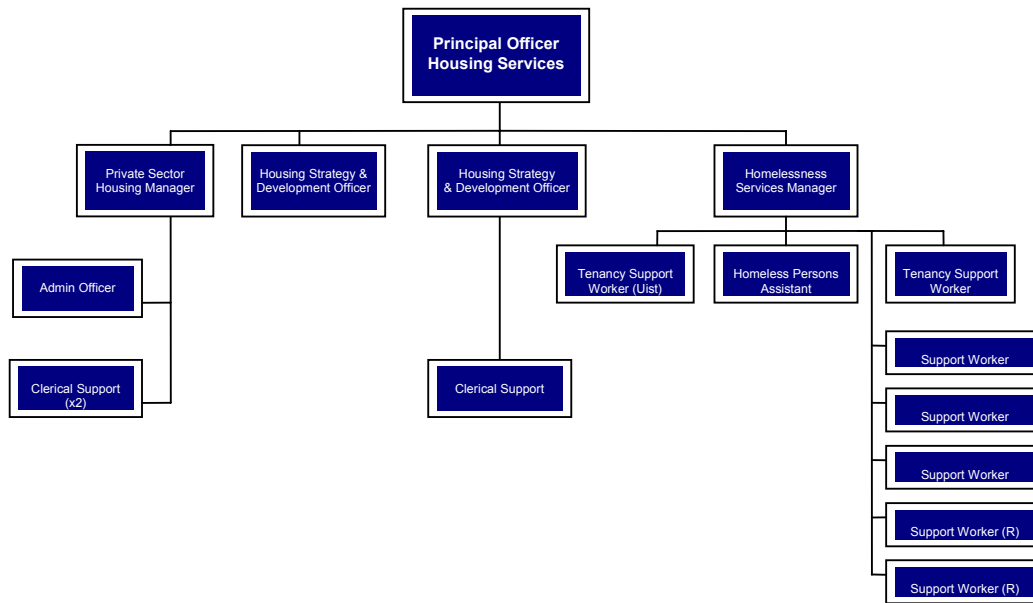
The retained housing functions are:

- Development of the Local Housing Strategy
- Housing Development
- Homelessness and
- Private Sector Housing Grants

In order to deliver on these in an integrated way, a Housing Services Team, based in the Development Services section of the Department for Sustainable Communities was established. The team comprises the former Housing Department staff involved in the housing strategy related activities, the Private Sector Housing Grant staff (who were already part of Sustainable Communities), and the Homelessness Team.

The months immediately following transfer were inevitably a time of adjustment for all the staff concerned, but the new team is now settling into the more focused strategic and development role which it was created to progress.

Figure 4.1 Housing Services Team – Organisation Chart



A Service Level Agreement between the Comhairle and HHP formally sets out arrangements for the new organisation’s input to the ongoing development of the Local Housing Strategy.

Operational Framework

As the Housing Strategy Officers Group has now operated successfully since 2005, it will continue to be the driving force behind ongoing strategy work.

The membership has changed somewhat over the last year due to organisational changes in other partner agencies, but has now consolidated and looks forward to addressing outstanding issues in the current strategy and beginning preparations for the 2009 Local Housing Strategy resubmission, Membership now comprises CnES, HHP, TIG, HIE Innse Gall and NHS Eileanan Siar. *(details at Appendix 7)*

It is intended that the Officers Group will advise and inform a new (post local election) Member Officer Working Group. The remit of this group has been expanded from the original specific purpose of identifying land for housing. This will now allow consideration of all significant housing strategy issues and will provide the mechanism for the formulation of recommendations regarding strategic housing matters prior to their presentation to Comhairle committees.

Local Governance

The Local Housing Strategy will be reported to both the Environment and Protective Services Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee, thereby ensuring that Housing retains a high profile on the corporate agenda post stock transfer.

HHP will be represented on the Member Officer Working Group and five of the Comhairle's Elected Members will sit on HHP's Board. These arrangements should allow the continuation of close partnership working in the monitoring and ongoing development of the Strategy.

Figure 4.2 Governance Arrangements



Community Engagement

The Comhairle acknowledges that more still needs to be done to consult and engage with the wider population in relation to the development, review and monitoring of the LHS.

Some progress was made in this regard with contact being made with households across the Islands in the Housing Needs Assessment postal survey.

Also in March 2006, a satisfaction survey of the Care and Repair Service was carried out. Thirty five clients were asked to take part in a telephone survey to gauge the level of satisfaction with the service.

A total of 22 interviews were achieved, giving a fair representation of both geographic spread and of different stages of the Care and Repair process.

The findings of the survey are helping to inform an ongoing Best Value review of the project which is of immense importance to the Western Isles communities given the age profile of our population and the commitment to provision of “care in the community” health and social care services.

Additionally, the Comhairle continues to provide funding to Residents Groups throughout the Islands in recognition of the mixed tenure of many housing estates. Improvements to the Comhairle’s web site are also planned which potentially will allow more input from service users, and the Housing Team will ensure that the Local Housing Strategy can be readily accessed and opportunities for client feedback and input provided.

The Community Appraisal exercise due to be carried out in the next few months will target every occupied household and should provide valuable baseline information to direct future options appraisals of future housing strategy objectives.

Through the LHS Officers Group, efforts will be made to identify opportunities to consult with present and future stakeholders, particularly in relation to potential large scale housing developments; housing for particular needs groups; and on the effectiveness to date of the 2004-2009 Strategy in relation to the Objectives it contains.

HHP’s plans to review and revive the Tenant Participation movement now that stock transfer has been achieved have been referred to in the Local Context section of this document, and will provide an ideal vehicle to progress the community engagement requirements of strategy development and review.

All of these factors should allow progress in the stakeholder involvement aspects which our Strategy aspires to – Development, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Impact assessment, and will be pursued in 2007/08.

SECTION 5: Action Plan Review

This section comprises of brief comment on progress with the 14 Objectives of the Local Housing Strategy in the course of 2006 -2007.

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

Overall, progress with this objective is very satisfactory. The milestones for 2006/07 have either been achieved or are on target with the exception of 1.10 relating to the investigation of the potential of compulsory purchase orders. This action point is to be deleted. It is not considered necessary, given that large sites have been identified and other search sites are flagged up in the local plan.

Action point 1.6 is to be developed through the use of Homestake by HHP and by supplementing existing GRO schemes through TIG.

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

This objective remains very difficult to progress. Changes to the Private Sector Grant system have stifled consideration of targeting grants at the owners of empty properties to bring them back into use.

Research and analysis of the current situation will be carried out in the coming year, taking the effects of the Second and Holiday Homes Council Tax changes into account.

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

This objective is also moving ahead. Three large potential development sites are under investigation around Stornoway and the Rural Housing Pilot project is assisting with the identification of some rural sites (at present five sites for approx 25 units in total). Discussions with Grazings Committees have been undertaken in several areas, and also with infrastructure providers e.g. Scottish Water to determine further land opportunities. The Local Authority's 'top up' loan funding for crofters (as "lender of last resort") is in place, and the revised Croft House Grant Scheme has facilitated 197 new house grant approvals since January 2005.

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

This objective can now be properly focused by the action plan emanating from the Migration Study conclusions. The specific housing related actions will be considered by the LHS Officers Group and progressed in liaison with the Migration Strategy Group.

An additional action point has been added at 4.4

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

In respect of the apprenticeship targets there has been great success through the Comhairle and Western Isles Enterprise (now HIE Innse Gall) links with Lews Castle College and the Construction Industry. HHP is currently meeting with its various development and refurbishment contractors to agree self funded training and employment placements for 2008/09. Currently HHP supports an apprenticeship scheme through the Building Maintenance Contract with the Comhairle's Commercial Operations Unit but this terminates in March 2008. The new contract will have requirements for the successful contractor to operate an apprenticeship scheme.

The local construction industry has so far shown little enthusiasm to discuss an Accreditation scheme and Construction Forum, principally because of sustained workload pressures. Efforts to engage with them will continue.

Objective 6: Increase private accommodation targeted at younger economically active households in Greater Stornoway as part of a Stornoway Regeneration Strategy by 2009

This objective is progressing well. One residential project in the town centre completed in 2006 and another in 2007, providing a total of 25 additional units. A planning application is being prepared for another potential GRO development and as the Townscape Heritage Initiative gets underway the feasibility of developing 'flats above shops' will be investigated by the LHS Officers Group.

Action point 6.2 is being amended to reflect the introduction of the Homestake initiative.

Action point 6.4 is being amended to alter the outputs target.

Private section Housing Grant is not now a potential funding source for Action point 6.3 and is deleted.

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

Overall, there is satisfaction with how the diverse action points within this objective are moving on. Two new action points are being added in light of the outcomes of the Migration Study and to keep the information on housing market activity up to date. The original 7.2 is therefore deleted.

On the anti-social behaviour front both the Comhairle and HHP report a decrease in incidents and HHP have provided office accommodation for the Stornoway wardens within a housing development in the town. Mediation training and services are currently unavailable due to the demise of Western Isles Counselling and Family Mediation Service.

Action 7.1 will be progressed by the imminent use of SCORE (Scottish Continuous Recording System) by HHP, and subsequent data sharing between HHP and CnES.

Action 7.6 is amended as Future Builders funding is no longer available. HHP have already piloted one wider Action Grant successfully with Balivanich Community Association. HHP and TIG currently discussing future options, and HHP hope to have a policy approved early in 2008.

HHP are now considering how best to implement their Tenant Participation and Community Engagement aspirations. Details and targets will be produced during 2007/08.

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

The stock transfer to Hebridean Housing Partnership is complete, and their investment plan is under way. It is based on all their stock complying with the SHQS by 2015. Their works programme will be further informed by the outcomes of a House Condition survey planned for 2008.

Action point 8.2 is achieved and being deleted.

Objective 9: Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009

This objective is at the mercy of grant funding levels from the Scottish Executive. The 2006/07 initial grant allocation was reduced, and then recovered to previous levels in the course of the year as a result of successful additional funding bids and evidenced expenditure levels.

The development of the public awareness campaign (9.2) is being hampered by the delay in comprehensive information on implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 being provided by the Scottish Executive/Communities Scotland. In the meantime advice is being dispensed on an individual basis.

Action point 9.6 is being deleted as a new national Private Water supply grant scheme has been introduced.

At 9.8, the review of the Private Sector Strategy is delayed pending receipt of Guidance on the 2006 Act. All Comhairle grant policies will have to be re-assessed once the information is received.

Objective 10: Reduce fuel poverty by 50% by 2009

The current level of fuel poverty across the Western Isles is estimated at between 30– 2%, having risen from 24.5% a year ago due to fuel price increases. The Scottish average is 14– 8%.

While various local initiatives are in place to increase energy efficiency and consequently reduce fuel poverty the achievement of this objective is dependent on fuel costs reducing and stabilising between now and 2009.

Objective 11: Provide appropriate housing related solutions to prevent homelessness

This objective is increasingly important given the continued rise in the number of homeless presentations.

The provision of information to school leavers and improved liaison with schools is proving beneficial but the further development of the rent deposits scheme is problematic, due to the very low number of private landlords willing to become involved in the scheme.

The rent a room scoping study was completed by homelessness staff who concluded it was not a viable project.

Action point 11.3 is therefore being deleted.

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

This objective is generally on course, but the intention to progress feasibility/research work into hostel provision and a youth homelessness strategy has been hampered by the effects of organisational change on housing staff workloads. However both pieces of work have been revived and should have outcomes by the end of 2007.

Action points 12.1 and 12.2 are progressing satisfactorily.

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

The range of issues covered by this objective is extensive and progress largely depends on the availability of up to date and robust information to direct our future work.

There are several pieces of review and research work (Community Care Housing Needs Assessment 2006; Extra Care Housing Study which incorporates sheltered housing and care units; Care and Repair Review – both of which are ongoing ; and the Youth Homelessness Study which is about to be commissioned) which will provide us with significantly improved baseline information.

It is envisaged that many of the issues emanating from these studies will be progressed through the new Community Health and Social Care Partnership.

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

The various action points relating to this objective are subject to ongoing monitoring through the Joint Future partnership arrangements, as they are all central to the shared care agenda.

Progress is being made in the gathering of new data, and at a practical level initiatives such as the Home Safety Project are showing real benefits.

There are issues to be resolved regarding ongoing funding for Aids/Adaptations as HHP is now subject to a different funding regime, and the level of the Comhairle's Private Sector Housing Grant funding from the Scottish Executive remains very uncertain.

Future reporting of progress on these action points will therefore go through the new Joint Services Committee as well as other Comhairle committees.

SECTION 5(b): Updated Action Plans

The updated action plans provide a brief note of changes or progress achieved in highlighted text.

The individual action points have been ranked to reflect their anticipated workload priority in the coming year.

UPDATED WESTERN ISLES LHS ACTION PLANS

Objective 1: Increase the supply of affordable housing by at least 300 units by 2009								
Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
1.1 Maintain or enhance Communities Scotland Development Programme Levels (DE 10)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009 Reduction in waiting list applicant to letting ratios in Greater Stornoway	40 new affordable units approved	At least 60 new affordable units approved Finalised Local plan adopts affordability policy to ensure land is available for new housing funded through the development programme and other funds - achieved	Larger sites with clear affordability benchmarks identified in adopted Local Plan by 2006/07 60 plus affordable units secured per annum, mainly in the Greater Stornoway Area from 2006/07 onwards Up to 10 of the 60 units per annum are for LCHO by 2008/09 <i>Large site on Stornoway periphery of 250 units achieved outline planning in 2007.</i> <i>Introduction of 2 No. Homestake LCHO units underway with completion by 2008/09. Second site identified.</i>	Development Programme Community Ownership Programme Fund	HHP CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland TIG	1
1.2 Social landlords buy existing properties and recycle as affordable housing for sale or rent (DE11)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009			A small number of units purchased that relieve pressure in specific settlements between 2006/07 and 2008/09 <i>5 redundant NHS houses purchased in demand areas across WI. Further police houses identified and negotiations continue</i>	Development Programme HHP Own Funds/ Private Finance	HHP	Communities Scotland	9
1.3 Make more effective use of mainstream social rented stock (WB 12)	Reduction in waiting list applicant to letting ratios in Greater Stornoway		Establish a plan of action to make best use of social rented stock and reduce re-let times and refusals – ongoing, to be developed by HHP	Year on year reduction in re-letting times from 2006/07 onwards <i>HHP void rate only 1.43% compared to business plan projection of (2.5%)</i>	CNES HHP Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities HHP		8

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
				Year on year reduction in the number of refusals 2006/07 onwards				
1.4 Seek Transfer of the Management of Development Funding Consultation on SHIF (DI 1)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009	LHS assessed as at least "good" by 2005/06 (achieved 2004/05)	SHIF Consultation supersedes this action	Response to consultation document submitted to Communities Scotland by June 2006 <i>More guidance awaited</i>	CNES Staff Communities Scotland staff	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland	2
1.5 Provide serviced plots for sale in rural areas (DE 10)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009	Establish criteria for selecting sites for serviced plots	5 serviced plots completed with a further 6 serviced plots on site	5 Sites for serviced plots identified in Adopted Local Plan 2 sites completed 6 of 11 plots are proceeding towards conclusion of missives - New site under investigation Sell developed serviced plots	PSHG Development Funding	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland HIE/ WIE	6
1.6 Evaluation of existing LCHO by 2006/07 (L1 7)	Reduction in waiting list applicant to letting ratios in Greater Stornoway			Research findings completed 2006/07 Plan to boost additional affordable housing for sale in place by 2007/08 <i>Introduce Homestake to supplement existing GRO Schemes</i>	CNES funds Communities Scotland Research Fund	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland TIG	4
1.7 Conduct Comprehensive Needs Assessment (WB 11)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009		Research commissioned in February 2006	Result of HNA due in October 2006. Study completed March 2007 Research findings used to inform updated/ revised LHS priorities to address affordable housing shortfalls	CNES Funds Communities Scotland Local Research	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland TIG	3
1.8 Use additional CTR revenue to support RSLs develop additional social rented housing (WB11)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009		Collection of additional CTR revenues from second and holiday home owners	Funding distribute in line with agreed criteria - Achieved Local Strategy for future use of monies to be developed by end of 2006 – due to be complete Autumn 07	CNES Funds	CNES Sustainable Communities, and Finance	TIG RSLs	5

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
1.9 Commission second phase of consultancy work on Bulky Goods Project re. potential relocation of oil and gas supplies from Newton area (DE 10)	Feasibility study shows implications for re-development of sites for housing and other purposes		Research ongoing	Action Plan developed by April 2007 regarding oil and gas supplies relocation <i>Feasibility study completed: provisional implementation strategy report possibly Autumn '07</i>	CNES Funds Communities Scotland	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland HIE Innse Gall	7
1.10 Investigate potential of Compulsory Purchase Orders to assist supply of land for housing (DE 10)	Increased supply of affordable housing		Sites identified for potential Compulsory Purchase by December 2006	Additional land purchased for housing purposes by 2008 <i>Action point no longer relevant!</i>	CNES Funds	CNES Sustainable Communities	Housing Associations	

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones/Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
2.1 Redundant or derelict private housing redeveloped by housing associations for affordable housing for sale or rent (DE11)	15 empty properties improved and occupied			Commission research into empty properties in 2006/07 – to be progressed Up to 5 empty properties/ derelict sites redeveloped by TIG by 2008/09 - 7 empty homes purchased including NHS houses	PSHG Community Ownership Programme	TIG	Communities Scotland CNES Sustainable Communities	1
2.2 Increase empty properties owners' awareness of responsibilities & assistance available to assist them improve and sell or rent out their property by 2005/06. (WB12)	15 empty properties improved and occupied Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009		Material for owners prepared and distributed by 2005/06	Information and advice made available to all homeowners and empty property owners updated to reflect New Housing Act requirements and guidance by 2006/07 - Achieved	CNES general revenue account CNES Sustainable Communities Staff time	CNES Sustainable Communities	CAB TIG Community Councils Grazings Committees	4
2.3 Target grant aid to owners of empty property, prioritising those willing to join private leasing scheme (WB12)	15 empty properties improved and occupied Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009		Investigation into potential private leasing completed and decision whether to pursue LA private leasing or lead tenancy initiative reached by end 2005/06	Target identified funds at owners willing to let their empty properties be used to meet affordable housing needs from 2006/07 onwards – not achievable due to changes in grant funding levels. Await outcome of further investigations 10 owners assisted to bring property back into use by 2008/09	PSHG CNES Sustainable Communities CNES Staff Resources	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG Communities Scotland Chamber of Commerce	3
2.4 Undertake a Programme of work to review empty properties and the early impact of reduced CTR discounts on second homes. (DE10)	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009		Study findings used to inform revised set of priority actions to reduce empty property levels by end 2005/06. Research to be initiated by end 2006.	Priority actions implemented in line with critical plan from 2006/07 onwards – to be progressed 2007/08	CNES Revenue Fund (to be identified) Communities Scotland Research Fund	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG CP Economic Forum Communities Scotland	2

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
3.1 Examine options in relation to making crofting land available to non crofting households for building houses (DE10)	<p>Increased supply of affordable housing in rural settlements</p> <p>Increased number of children and adults under 60 years in rural population</p> <p>Sustained demand for schools</p>		LA & Crofters Commission explore better managed release of crofting agricultural land to provide new housing by end 2005/06 - ongoing	Shortlist of potential sites identified by 2006/07 to support new housing and discussed at Local Housing Strategy MOWG – achieved and continuing	CNES Sustainable Communities Staff Time	<p>CNES Sustainable Communities</p> <p>Crofters commission</p>	<p>WIE/ HIE TIG Land owners</p> <p>Communities Scotland</p> <p>Township committees</p>	3
3.2 /3.3 Work with the Township Committees to identify and secure suitable sites and develop a minimum of 6 serviced plots by 2007/08 (DE 10)	<p>Increased supply of affordable housing in rural settlements</p> <p>Increased number of children and adults under 60 years in rural population</p> <p>Sustained demand for schools</p>	Work underway to identify plots	Phase 1 sites identified	<p>10 Plots identified within the boundaries of existing townships (including areas of common grazings) by 2006/07 - achieved</p> <p>LA secures land and provides at least 6 serviced plots within townships to facilitate self build by 2007/08 - ongoing</p>	<p>CNES Sustainable Communities Staff Time</p> <p>PSHG Funds</p> <p>Other Funds to be identified</p>	<p>CNES Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>WIE /HIE TIG Communities Scotland</p> <p>Land owners</p> <p>Township committees</p>	1
3.4 Secure improved funding package to support self build to offset high construction costs (DE10)	<p>Increased supply of affordable housing in rural settlements</p> <p>Increased number of children and adults under 60 years in rural population</p> <p>Sustained demand for schools</p>		Introduce arrangements for monitoring the impact of CHGS - ongoing	<p>Investigate potential scope for LA top-up funding by 2006/07 – scheme in place</p> <p>RHOGs funding criteria is modified to complement CBGS by 2006/07</p> <p>10 affordable new homes constructed to meet the long term housing needs of occupants and future residents by the end of 2009 by 2009/10</p>	<p>Communities Scotland Development Fund</p> <p>CNES Funds potentially</p>	<p>CNES Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>WIE/ HIE Communities Scotland Community Landlords TIG Township committees</p>	4

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
3.5 Establish Rural Housing Pilot to create affordable housing opportunities in South Lewis and Harris. New action point	Increased provision of housing sites through community involvement.		Funding secured for 3 staff appointment.	Development Co-ordinator in post by September 2006 - achieved Strategy developed for each community by September 2007 – generic programme agreed. 5 sites identified	Communities Scotland CNES WIE Crofters Commission	WIE	TIG CNES RMP Steering Group	

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
4.1 Provide 20 serviced plots for sale in the Greater Stornoway Area by 2009 (DE10)	Reduction in number of economically active in-migrants seeking social housing by 2009	5 serviced plot sites	Identify further plots by 2005/6 - ongoing	Sites available for purchase by households returning or relocating to Isles by 2009/10 - will be investigated further through migration strategy action plan At least 70% of assisted households are inward migrants	PSHG Development Programme Community Ownership Programme	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland HIE WIE	3
4.2 Develop a Comhairle owned or identified strategic land bank capable of delivering possibly 100 residential properties by 2009 in areas of greatest need (DE10)	Reduction in number of economically active in-migrants seeking social housing by 2009 Employers report easing of recruitment problems by 2009		Identified suitable volumes of land already in public ownership that can be transferred into residential land bank Larger sites identified within Finalised Local Plan by 2006	Larger sites identified within Adopted Local Plan – achieved in part. New land banking register to be collated	CNES owned land Other Public Sector land Community Ownership Programme PSHG	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG Stornoway Trust Health Board	2
4.3 Commission Migration Study (BV 4)	Employers report easing of recruitment problems by 2009		Study commissioned and due to report in October 2006	Outcomes to inform 2007 update – study complete new action point developed	CNES Communities Scotland NHS Eileanan Siar WIE	CNES Sustainable Communities	Communities Scotland WIE NHS Eileanan Siar	
4.4 Work with Partners to Progress Priority 'Housing' Actions of the OH Migration Strategy Action Plan; 1. Apprenticeship Programme 2. Construction Sector Growth Potential 3. Education/Careers Project	Employers report easing of recruitment problems			Outcomes to inform 2009 update	Outer Hebrides Migration Strategy Group	Outer Hebrides Migration Strategy Group CNES NHS Eileanan Siar HIE-IG Lews Castle College Communities Scotland		1

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/7 – 2008/09				
5.1 Support the Western Isles Construction Forum to improve their understanding of forward housing investment plans and to gear up to respond to these opportunities by 2008/09 (DE 8)	Construction sector report easing of recruitment difficulties by 2009		Local Construction sector believes itself well informed about forward residential investment plans	Reviewed requirement for some form of accreditation scheme by 2007/08 Construction Forum chaired and run by construction industry by 2007/08 – not yet achieved efforts ongoing	CNES Staff Time	Private Builders And Consultants (e.g. surveyors and architects)	CNES Sustainable Communities TIG HIE Innse Gall	1
5.2 Increase the number of construction related apprentices taken on through Comhairle's existing Apprenticeship scheme (DE 8)	Increase number of skilled tradespersons resident on Islands by 2009 Construction sector report easing of recruitment difficulties		Enhanced modern apprenticeship scheme for skilled labour in the local construction industry - progress made but constrained by budgetary pressures	Continuation of successful Apprenticeship scheme to feed local construction industry – achieved and expanding	CNES Communities Scotland	CNES Sustainable Communities	HIE Innse Gall Lews Castle College Construction industry CITB	3
5.3 HHP building contracts require contractors to provide opportunities for apprentices and other to secure 'on the job' training and work experience (DE 9)	Increase number of self employed skilled tradespersons resident in the Islands by 2009	Requirement for HHP to provide training and employment opportunities built into the HHP Invitation to Tender prepared by the Comhairle	HHP Business Plan details how its capital investment programme includes provision for a minimum of 5 training and employment placements	HHP achieves contractual obligation to provide at least 5 self funded training and employment placements by 2008/09 – negotiations ongoing	HHP Staff Time	HHP	HHP CNES Sustainable Communities Local construction Industry	2

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/7 – 2008/09				
6.1 Ensure accommodation proposals form part of overall Stornoway Regeneration process for revitalising the town. (BV1)	Local Economic Forum report reduction in younger economically active households leaving Western Isles		2 Residential development projects completed in 2006	Stornoway Regeneration Action Plan reviewed in 2006 with further housing opportunities identified. Plan to be reviewed annually thereafter 2 projects providing 25 units completed. Other actions ongoing	CNES Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities	Local Economic Forum Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership	1
6.2 Provide GRO Grants to support new private housing Review demand for GRO in light of introduction of Homestake but meet LCHO demand (DE10)	50 private units developed with minimal grant input by 2009	At least 10 GRO units approved	At total of 25 GRO units approved	40 GRO funded low cost owner occupied units completed by 2008/09 40 LCHO units completed by 2008/09 At least 65% Units are occupied predominately by those in target population group by 2009	Communities Scotland Development Programme	TIG	CNES Communities Scotland Private Developer	5
6.3 Support the conversion of commercial property to residential use (DE11)	50 private units developed with minimal grant input by 2009	2 Suitable buildings identified	2 properties for conversion approved	At least 65% Units are occupied predominately by those in target population group by 2009 Investigate feasibility of commercial property conversion in tandem with townscape heritage initiative	PSHG CNES Capital Programme	CNES Sustainable Communities	CNES TIG Private Developer	4
6.4 Pilot a mid rent or market rent initiative (BV4)	50 private units developed with minimal grant input by 2009		Mid rent pilot funding secured by 2005/06 – study of options ongoing	Site to be identified for Mid rent pilot for approx 6 No. units by 08 Tenanted by incoming households/workers by 2009/10	HHP / TIG Own Funds Community Ownership Programme	HHP/TIG		2
6.5 Undertake research into the private rented sector (BV 4)	<i>To be identified</i>		Research brief prepared by autumn Research findings inform LHS update	Research work still to be carried out by April 2008	CNES Sustainable Communities	CNES Sustainable Communities	Yet to be identified	3

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
7.1 LA Housing Application form re-designed to capture data, such as incomes, to assess housing need utilising DTLR model as Scottish Executive recommends. (BV 4)	Reduction in waiting list application to letting ratios		Revised Form prepared for use by HHP	New housing list data will be used to update housing needs assessment on annual basis – new application in use. Discussions between CNES and HHP on required info ongoing - SCORE system to be implemented by HHP in 2007	N/A	HHP	CNES Sustainable Communities	1
7.2 Survey businesses expressing interest and/or recently locating in the Isles to establish the housing issues influencing their relocation decisions. <i>Use findings from the OH Migration Study: OH Housing Needs Assessment & 2007 OH Community Appraisals to establish how housing issues and investment in housing influence relocation patterns</i> (BV 4)	Out come to be agreed as part of process of re-specifying objective. Increasing informed decision making regarding investment in affordable housing and socio economic impacts		Study completed by 2005/06. Incorporated in Migration Study – underway and expected to report October 2006.	Outcomes of Migration Study will support this action Outcomes to inform 2009 update	HIE/WIE Funding Communities Scotland Funding	WIE/HIE CNES	CNES Sustainable Communities Communities Scotland CNES NHS EILEANAN SIAR HIE-IG Lews Castle College CS	2

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
7.3 Expansion of the community warden service and appointment of ASB co-coordinator (WB 4)	Reduction in antisocial behaviour		All posts have been successfully recruited and new staff trained up	Reduction in numbers of recorded ASB complaints by 2008/09 – initial success reported. Monitoring ongoing	Scottish Executive ASB Funds	CNES Sustainable Communities	HHP Police	8
7.4 Introduction of mediation services (WB 4)	Reduction in antisocial behaviour		Staff trained in mediation and ASB powers completed	Service users report that they received a quality service that meet the needs by 2008/09 – W Isles Service currently inactive	Scottish Executive ASB Funds	CNES Sustainable Communities	Police HHP	10
7.5 Pilot Loud Neighbourhood Declarations (WB 4)	Reduction in antisocial behaviour	Scope of pilot established		To be progressed in consultation with HHP. Possible pilot project in Stornoway 2008/09	Scottish Executive ASB Funds	HHP	Police HHP	9
7.6 Complete investigation and agreed priorities strategy for the use of Wider Action Funding (CY1)	<i>Outcome to be agreed as part of process of re-specifying objective</i>		Report recommending future use of funds to contribute to emerging community regeneration agenda-ongoing	Future targets and milestones will be developed in 2005/06 as part of the study - HHP/TIG currently in discussion to identify future projects	HHP and TIG Staff Time	HHP	CNES Sustainable Communities TIG	5
7.7 Continued implementation of Tenant Participation Strategy (CY1)	<i>Outcome to be agreed as part of process of re-specifying objective</i>		CNES Policy and Strategy Adopted by HHP	Strategy implemented by HHP by end of 2006/07 – Strategy implemented and subject to ongoing development	HHP and TIG Staff Time	HHP	Tenants and Resident Groups	6
7.8 Implement Village Voice Scheme with WI Residents Forum and TPAS (CY 1)	<i>Outcome to be agreed as part of process of re-specifying objective</i>			Village Voice scheme fully in place by April 2006 – timescale extended pending conclusion of stock transfer process – to be reviewed following planned community/tenant engagement review in 2008				7

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
7.9 Develop Customer Service Management Strategy (CY 3)	<i>Outcome to be agreed as part of process of re-specifying objective</i>		Customer Services Management strategy developed	Customer Services Management strategy implemented by July 2006 – timescale to be revised when stock transfer concluded – Strategy now in development together with Customer Compact.	HHP and TIG Staff Time	HHP	Tenants and Resident Groups	4
7.10. Establish and produce a regular housing market monitoring report; to include information on trends in sales and prices (sasines) new starts and completions (uniform); planned developments (housing strategy)	<i>Increasingly informed decision making regarding investment in affordable housing and socio economic impacts</i>			Outcomes to inform 2009 update and strategic planning decisions	Research Officer CNES	CNES	Communities Scotland HHP	3

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
8.1 Transfer of stock to community Ownership is successful and capital investment proceeds in line with HHP Business Plan (CY4 / DE10/ WB 12)	A minimum of 70% of all effective social rented stock attains SHQS High levels of tenant satisfaction with condition of own home	HHP continue work on Business Plan in liaison with the Comhairle and Scottish Executive	HHB Business Plan accepted by Scottish Executive by 2005 Tenants vote to transfer stock to HHP - achieved in October 2005	At least 70% of social rented stock attains SQHS by 2008/09 – stock condition survey to be carried out in 2008 Implementation of HHP Capital Programme is in accord with the priorities and timescale detailed in Business Plan by 2008/09. CNES stock transferred by end of 2006.	HHP Capital Programme Community Ownership Programme	HHP	Scottish Executive Communities Scotland RSLs	1
8.2 Carry out review of the RSL Allocation Policy and implement a CHR by the quarter 1 2005/06	New Allocation Policy and CHR		Review achieved and CHR to be operational through HHP by end of 2006	Achieved and Deleted				

Objective 9: Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
9.1 Maintain investment at current levels to tackle BTS (WB 12)	Reduction in the number of households living in private sector properties that are BTS by 2009	Establish baseline profile of disrepair in the private sector	PHSG grant targeted at households living in BTS housing and serious disrepair resulting in 134 BTS and 88 houses being improved and repaired in 2005/06	Year on year reduction in the number of private properties that are BTS or in serious disrepair from 2006/07 onwards – maintain target but subject to funding stability	PSHG Private Household Contribution	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG Care and Repair	1
9.2 Develop a public awareness campaign to influence individual and company property owners' repair, energy efficiency and maintenance behaviour (WB 12)	Increase the number and proportion of private properties that attain the SHQS and its main components	Material for owners prepared and distributed by 2005		Higher levels of investment in private housing stock by property owners as measured by SHCS by 2008/09 Independent review confirms advice and assistance provided is consistent with National Standards and is rated highly by users by 2008/09 – information awaited on 2006 act to allow information material to be developed	CNES Revenue Funding to produce material CNES Sustainable Communities Staff time	CNES Sustainable Communities	CAB TIG Com Scot (for SHCS) Health Facilities	2
9.3 Eliminate lead piping in private homes in the WI by 2009 (WB12)	Improved water quality and sewerage provision	Establish the priorities and grant criteria by July 2004	2 households assisted to eliminate lead piping in 2005/06 Low uptake despite specific targeting and funding for this issue	Eliminate lead pipes from the drinking water supply 20 houses treated by 2008/09 – take-up remains low but target to be retained	PSHG	CNES Sustainable Communities	Scottish Water	4
9.5 Septic tank upgrading and / or replacement (WB 12)	Improved water quality and sewerage provision	Establish priorities and grant criteria by July 2004	At least 10 households have access to improved foul water services	Enabled 25 households of new or existing houses to improve the foul water services of their house to comply with current regulations by 2006/07 – scheme successful. Funding levels maintained for 07/08 but may not meet all demand	PSHG Private Household Contribution	CNES Sustainable Communities	Private house owners	5
9.6 Private water supply initiative to improve quality of water	Improved water quality and sewerage provision	Establish priorities and grant criteria by September 2004	Grant applications were approved to upgrade supplies but none proceeded to carry out the works due to contractor shortages.	Await announcement on new national Private Water Supply grant scheme – superseded by national scheme DELETE	PSHG Private Household Contribution	CNES Sustainable Communities	Scottish Water	

Objective 9: Improve stock condition in the private sector by 2009

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
(WB 12)			Specific (bid element) funding ended March 2005					
9.7 Housing Design Guide used to influence housing quality (WB12)	Increase the number and proportion of private properties that attain the SHQS and its main components	Begin work on Housing Design Guide	Housing Design Guide drafted and elements incorporated into Finalised Local Plan - achieved	Completed feedback forms (to be included in the Design Guide) indicate that Guide is rated highly by users by 2008/09 – implementation of design guide still to be progressed	CNES Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities	Construction Industry Forum	6
9.8 Review Private Sector Strategy			Work begun to identify main changes required to current strategy in light of Housing Scotland Act 2006	Revised strategy implemented in the line with agreed critical plan by 2008/09 – delayed awaiting guidance on 2006 Act	CNES Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities	Private Homeowners	3

Objective 10: Reduce fuel poverty by 50% by 2009

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/7 – 2008/09				
10.1 Improve measurement of Fuel Poverty by 2006 (BV 4)	Increase the number and proportion of properties attaining SQHS and NHER band 5 rating	Establish extent and distribution of fuel poverty across Western Isles (private LHCS)	Contract with TIG on fuel poverty monitoring in place and report produced January 2006.	Evidence used to inform wider health and care strategies from 2006/07 – link established with Welfare Benefits uptake campaign, other links to be investigated 2007 - 2009	PSHG Communities Scotland Funding	CNES Sustainable Communities TIG	NHS Western Isles HHP	1
10.2 Target or prioritise PSHG towards measures to enhance NHER rating of older private properties (WB 12)	Increase the number and proportion of properties attaining SQHS and NHER band 5 rating		New policy measures introduced to prioritise PSHG applications that incorporate measures to upgrade energy efficiency delayed due to reduced PSHG Allocation	If possible 15 households receive PSHG to improve thermal efficiency and/or heating system of their home – not achieved due to funding restrictions. Retain meantime	PSHG	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG HHP EAGA	3
10.3 Increase the take up of state benefits plus energy efficiency grants amongst vulnerable groups (WB 6)	30% reduction in number of households across all tenures defined as fuel poor		30% reduction in fuel poverty achieved by September 2005.	CAB report increase in number of eligible households claiming benefits – Welfare Benefit uptake campaign underway	CNES Staff Time	HHP	TIG CAB HHP Benefits Agency	2
10.4 Pilot renewable energy initiative by 2008 (WB 6)	30% reduction in number of households across all tenures defined as fuel poor	Pilot initiative commenced	Renewable energy heating systems installed in 6 units by 2005	Both Pilot schemes evaluated by end 2007/08 if pilot evaluation demonstrates added value attained. Pilot replicated across tenures from 2008/09 – additional pilot underway, 1 new ASHP and solar water system installed in “super insulated” house	HIE Development Programme CNES Capital Programme ACTISH EEC EST Carbon Trust	TIG	HIE Communities Scotland	4
10.5 Introduce programme of work ensure virtually all occupied social rented stock attains an average NHER of 5 by 2009. (WB 10)	30% reduction in number of households across all tenures defined as fuel poor. At least 80% of all occupied effective social rented stock attains NHER rating band 5 by 2009	Establish target proportion of social rented stock to attain this NHER standard set by LA in 2005		Plan to bring remaining social rented stock up to NHER – HHP staff being trained in NHER and HHP investment programme being reviewed to prioritise Energy Efficiency (Particularly insulation)	HHP Funds Private Finance	HHP	TIG	5

Objective 11: Provide appropriate housing related solutions to prevent homelessness

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/7 – 2008/09				
11.1 Improve Information and Advice provision to households at risk of homelessness by 2005/06 (WB 2)	Reduction in the rate of increase in homeless presentations	Agree SAL with CAB to provide information and advice across the Western Isles by 2005	Ongoing discussions with CAB to provide information and advice across the Western Isles by end of 2006 All school leavers given housing and homelessness information in April 2006	Independent review confirms advice and assistance provided is consistent with Homepoint's National Standards by 2008/09 Positive feedback from CAB service and school leavers from 2006/07 onwards – information provision and liaison arrangements being maintained	SE Homelessness Funding CNES staff time	CNES Sustainable Communities	CAB Careers Scotland	1
11.2 Complete implementation of rent deposit scheme by end 2004 (WB 11)	Reduction in the numbers of young people aged 16 - 18 years presenting as homeless	Work to develop rent deposit scheme indemnity	Rent deposit scheme in place since March 2006. Promotion to be expanded by end of 2006/07	15 households assisted through the rent deposit scheme by 2006/07 – rent deposit scheme operational but low take up (6 clients) and few landlords willing to participate. Maintain target through 2007/08	SE Homelessness Funding CNES Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities	Scottish Churches Housing Agency	2
11.3 Rent a room scoping study (WB11)	Reduction in the numbers of homeless presentations		Study on potential of "Rent a Room" to be completed by end of 2006	Depending on study outcomes, provision of advice and information pack for home owners on "rent a room" tax break by 2007/08 – concluded not a viable project DELETE	SE Homelessness Funding	CNES Social Work	CNES Sustainable Communities Private Owners	

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
12.1 Provide Foyer accommodation for vulnerable young people by 2006 (WB 2)	Reduction in repeat homelessness	Development of Foyer near completion	Foyer fully operational in Lewis and 7 units of accommodation provided and occupied	An additional 3 units linked to Foyer by 2006/07 - 6 units coming through Bridge Project November 2007 Review of achievements by Foyer Management Group by 2007/08 High levels of tenant satisfaction with provision and support provided	Community Scotland Development Funding SE Homelessness Funding	Foyer Project	CNES Sustainable Communities & Social Work TIG	3
12.2 Provide 20 "starter" partially furnished tenancies by 2006 (WB 12)	Reduction in repeat homelessness Reduction in the numbers of young people aged 16 -18 years presenting as homeless	Work to identify suitable accommodation underway	Local initiative to provide basic household goods successfully underway – 18 homeless clients assisted. Also 9 units furnished by SE funds.	20 starter packs provided to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness by 2006/07. New target to be set by Homeless Task Force – maintain target for starter packs through 2007/08 High levels of tenant satisfaction with furnished tenancies by 2008/9 Tenants report that the provision of furniture has made a real difference to their ability to take up and sustain their tenancy by 2008/09	SE Homelessness Funding	CNES HHP		4
12.3 Investigate feasibility and funding for provision of hostel type provision (WB11)	Reduction in number homeless placed in unsuitable temporary accommodation		Undertake feasibility study and assessment of suitable models of housing provision by end of 2006	Assuming study demonstrates some form of hostel provision is feasible, funding bid prepared by February 2007. Progression dependent on availability of additional Scottish Executive Funding – timescale slipped due to workload. Feasibility Study to be progressed as priority by end of 2007. Ongoing concern over funding to achieve hostel facility being available should study be favourable	SE Homelessness Funding	CNES	HHP TIG	1

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
12.4 Develop youth housing strategy by 2005 (WB 2)	Reduction in the numbers of young people aged 16 -18 years presenting as homeless		Strategy to be developed with other agencies in line with work on Integrated Children's Service Plan	Strategy to be completed by end of 2007 with improved access to a wider range of accommodation options for younger households, including care leavers by 2008/09 – <i>research brief currently being finalised. Multi-agency committee formed to commission and manage study</i>	SE Homelessness Funding	CNES	Foyer Project NCH	2

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
13.1 Establish and implement an agreed set of priorities for the future provision of specialist accommodation and housing support services for community care client groups and other vulnerable households (BV 4)	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service.	Community Care housing Needs Assessment completed	Policy analysis of services provided and options available to meet client needs appraised Enhanced understanding of the need for crisis provision for vulnerable people, including younger people	Agreed set of forward priorities established and timetabled Action Plan for improving accommodation and housing related service provision by the end of 2006/07 – Extra Care Housing Study underway also review of Care and Repair Service. Outcomes of these and of CCHNA will be reviewed and prioritised in one exercise. Existing services revised/ terminated and approved new services introduced in line with timescale specified during policy analysis stage by 2009/10 including Care and Repair Services	CNES General Fund Communities Scotland Research CNES & NHS Staff Time	CNES Sustainable Communities & Social Work Joint Future Implementation Group	Communities Scotland TIG Trust HA	1
13.2 Single shared assessment arrangements for vulnerable people, including those with complex needs, takes account of housing, adaptations and /or tenancy support needs (WB11)	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service.	Training to familiarise staff in housing with the single shared assessment process completed by 2005		Homeless Service and HHP staff to undertake formal SSA training from January 2007 – now programmed for Autumn 2007. Simplified and quicker assessment process that has reduced duplication and improved communication between housing, social service and health staff buy 2008/09	Staff Time & IT Costs	CNES Sustainable Communities & Social Work Joint Future Implementation Group	CNES + NHS & HHP Staff Care and Repair	3
13.3 Develop Care and Repair role to include services to broader range of	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service.	Small Repairs Service extended to people out with	Secured agreement with Care And Repair to provide Home Safety Checks service to non elderly vulnerable people by 2005/06	Implemented Home Safety project across elderly, disabled and vulnerable households in conjunction	PSHG	CNES Sustainable Communities	Care and Repair Communities	4

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
vulnerable client groups (WB 5)		current elderly client group		<i>with Safetywise. Extend service to Southern Isles in 2007/08 with new funding from NHS</i>			Scotland	
13.4 Provide appropriate permanent social housing with care package to young adults leaving Care (WB 2)	Reduction in the number of young adults leaving care that are unable to maintain their tenancy			Sufficient housing and responsive support network available to meet through care /after care responsibilities – will be quantified and strategy produced through Youth Homelessness Study.	CNES Staff Time Communities Scotland	CNES Social Work and Housing	HHP TIG NCH	2
13.5 Establish tenancy support scheme to assist vulnerable households retain their social rented tenancy (WB 11)	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service	Housing support officer recruited	Tenancy Support Scheme operational in Lewis and Uist since November 2004	Reduction in number of young and vulnerable social rented tenants whose tenancy ends prematurely by 2008/09 – Tenancy Support Scheme operational and successful.	SE Homelessness funding	CNES Sustainable Communities	CNES Social Work Voluntary Sector HHP	5

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
14.1 Encourage new housing to be built to "lifetime homes standard" wherever possible by 2009 (CY 5)	Reduction in adaptation grant applications from households living in houses constructed after 2005/6	Standards a condition of HAG funding	Promotional material circulated to libraries, architectural/ surveying firms and CAB	Formal adoption of standard by Comhairle as a condition of grant for to support construction on serviced sites by 2008/09 - ongoing	Communities Scotland	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG HHP Construction forum	5
14.2 Encourage improvements to existing housing to incorporate barrier-free standards where practical and possible (CY 5)	Reduction in adaptation grant applications from households living in houses repaired or improved with PSHG grant assistance		Promotional material circulated to libraries, architectural/ surveying firms and CAB	Material updated to reflect new Private housing Act by 2006/07 – guidance on 2006 Act still awaited		CNES Sustainable Communities		4
14.3 Target and prioritise funding towards aids and adaptations for disabled persons (CY 5)	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service	Increase d number of clients assisted for a given sum of funding	Examine future demand for grants and potential budgetary implications	Put in place arrangements to ensure there are sufficient resources to provide equipment and adaptations to all households in need regardless of tenure – grant levels maintained for 07/08 in both private and RSL sector. Review of funding arrangements required for both during 2007/08	PSHG Communities Scotland - Stage 3 Adaptations	CNES Sustainable Communities	TIG (Care and Repair) NHS Eileanan Siar (O.T s) HHP	2
14.4 Reconfiguration of existing sheltered housing and Care Units in the social rented sector (WB 11)	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service		Review sheltered housing and care units service and develop options for alternative care models by end of 2006	Development plan for re-directing existing capital and revenue sources and (if necessary) securing additional resources by 2006/07- now incorporated in Extra Care Housing Study, due to report Autumn 2007	CNES social work staff time	CNES Social work Joint Future Implementation Group	Communities Scotland HHP NHS	1
14.5 Expansion of Care and Repair's	Service users and their representatives report that		Home Safety initiative started and 100 clients were assisted in first	Sustained reduction of injuries from hazards in the home amongst older	PSHG	TIG – Care and Repair	NHS	

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

Action	Outcome	Milestones / Outputs			Resources	Lead Agency	Other Agencies	Workload Priority 07/08
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07 – 2008/09				
small repair service to include home safety initiative (WB 5)	they receive high quality service		year of project.	from 2006/7 onwards – <i>over 120 clients assisted pa. Reduced NHS bed blocking by enabling return to safe home. Implemented “Message in a bottle” campaign</i>	SE NHS	CNES Sustainable Communities	CNES –Social Work	3

SECTION 6: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Western Isles Fuel Poverty Strategy Update (Separate Document)

APPENDIX 2: Homelessness Position Statement and Local Outcome Update

APPENDIX 3: Western Isles Community Plan, Corporate Plan & Western Isles LHS Links

APPENDIX 4: Updated Western Isles Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

APPENDIX 5: Information Sources

APPENDIX 6: Glossary

APPENDIX 7: Local Housing Strategy Officers Group Membership

APPENDIX 2: Homeless Position Statement–June 2007

INTRODUCTION

The Comhairle's statutory duty towards homeless persons and those threatened with homelessness is prescribed in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Part 11 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

As in 2006, the Comhairle has decided to submit a position statement describing the issues currently faced by the Homelessness Service in the discharge of statutory obligations towards homeless persons in the Western Isles.

The Homelessness Service staff remain Comhairle employees following stock transfer, but are located with Hebridean Housing Partnership colleagues in Stornoway and Balivanich to facilitate service provision to homeless clients.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness continues to grow in the Western Isles, putting a strain on existing resources and making the Comhairle very reliant on grant funding from the Scottish Executive to discharge its statutory duties.

In the period 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2007 a total of 282 applicants for housing with Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar had their housing needs assessed in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Part II as amended, and the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

This figure is a further increase in homeless presentations and the highest figure ever recorded by the Comhairle.

Of all homeless applications made to the Comhairle in 2006/07, 240 were made to Lewis (8 of which were from Harris), 39 to Uist and 3 to Barra.

The Comhairle has been awarded £341,672 grant funding for 2007/08. This sum incorporates £16,734 Furnished Tenancy Grant and represents an increase of only 1.2% on the total Homelessness Task Force grant funding from the preceding year, well below the level of inflation despite significant, ongoing increases in homelessness figures and associated statutory duties.

The Comhairle's General fund contribution to the Homeless Service is £162,000 for 2007/08.

It is very likely that forthcoming legislative requirements will put even greater strain on these resources, compounded by the uncertainty over future levels of grant funding. This makes conditions very difficult for the staff directly involved in delivering the Comhairle's Homeless Service, leaving a great deal of uncertainty over their continued employment. If the Comhairle is to continue to meet its statutory duties and provide an acceptable Homeless Service, consideration should be given to examining the way the Homeless Service is currently funded.

Analysis of Homelessness Presentations

During the period 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007, 282 homelessness applications were made to the Comhairle. This is a 9% increase on last year's figure and is the highest figure for homelessness presentations in the Western Isles ever recorded. The majority of presentations continue to be made to the Stornoway office while falling slightly in Harris, Uist and Barra. Over this period 84% of presentations were from Lewis, 1% from Harris, 14% from Uist and 1% from Barra.

As homelessness figures increase, the figure for those with whom contact is lost or homelessness is resolved also continues to increase. This is likely to be due to those who would have been assessed as non priority homeless moving in with another household or returning to their previous accommodation when Bed and Breakfast is the only temporary option, and no permanent solution can be immediately offered to them. In the year 2006/07, 49 households resolved their homelessness and 42 lost contact before a determination could be made on their application. Of the remaining 168 households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless, 58% were determined to be priority homeless and 42% non-priority. A total of 2% of all households assessed as homeless or potentially homeless were deemed to be intentionally homeless. For all homeless presentations made, 5% were assessed as neither homeless nor potentially homeless. A total of 23 homelessness applications were still to be determined at the date of writing this report.

Priority Need must be phased out by 2012 and the Ministerial Statement requires local authorities to consider how they will reduce the proportion of non-priority assessments by 50% by 2009. In 2006/07, 58% of all households assessed as homeless had a priority need for accommodation. By 2009 the Comhairle is required to give priority status to 77% of households assessed as homeless. The mechanism for achieving this will be devised with respect to the local housing and homelessness strategies, and implemented in 2008/09.

An analysis of the reasons given for homelessness demonstrates similar ratios as preceding years across all categories for 2006/07. Therefore, increases in homelessness cannot be attributed to any obvious factor with respect to the reasons being cited by homeless households.

Relationship breakdown within families continues to be the most common reason given for homelessness. For 29% of this group, or a total of 37 households, domestic abuse was cited as a factor.

Proportions of types of households presenting as homeless remain consistent across all categories.

Local Connection

For the period 2006/07, there were no households determined as having no local connection. However, local connection is only determined for those households assessed as priority unintentionally homeless. The Comhairle accepted 3 households fleeing abuse from other authorities. One of these households returned to their own authority after being provided with temporary accommodation and 2

were housed under the Scottish Executive's Code of Guidance criteria for local connection.

A full consultation on the suspension of local connection has now been completed by the Scottish Executive and the findings are awaited. The Comhairle, together with Shetland and Orkney Island Councils, has expressed concern at the implication on resources should suspension take place and highlighted the issues unique to small, island authorities which would make any suspension difficult to sustain.

Permanent Accommodation

As at 30 May 2007, 33 priority homeless households were awaiting an offer of permanent housing in order for the Comhairle's duty to them to be fully discharged. In the period 2006/07, 66 homeless households were provided with a permanent tenancy under homelessness legislation.

Stornoway continues to be the most pressurised area. Of all social housing allocations made in 2006/07 in Stornoway, 60% were to homeless households. Throughout the Western Isles 35% of the total 186 allocations made were to homeless households. In the preceding year, 34% of all Western Isles allocations and 50% of all Stornoway allocations were made to homeless households.

The Comhairle will continue to work in partnership with Hebridean Housing Partnership to ensure that every effort is made to achieve a reasonable balance of allocations being made to homeless households against those made to the general waiting list.

Temporary Accommodation

There are now 36 operational homeless temporary accommodation units throughout the Western Isles, 9 having being added during 2006/07. The Comhairle provides 11 of these from its own stock (purchased with Homeless Task Force grant funding) and leases the remainder from Hebridean Housing Partnership. Despite increasing the overall supply, the Comhairle continues to depend on Bed and Breakfast establishments to meet the shortfall in temporary accommodation. As at 30 May 2007 the Comhairle was providing 17 households with Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The costs incurred for the Comhairle as a result of this provision fell to £101k in 2006/07, a saving of £42k on the preceding year. This considerable saving is due both to The Old House shared accommodation facility in Stornoway becoming operational in October 2006 and the employment of a Homeless Persons Assistant who, in conjunction with the Tenancy Support Workers, is responsible for ensuring that rents are paid and Housing Benefit applications completed timeously.

The Old House is now fully occupied and operating very successfully as staffed shared temporary accommodation. At present there are 5 single people and 1 family in residence.

The Old Policehouse, Lochboisdale is also fully occupied providing temporary accommodation for three single people.

There is only one unit of temporary accommodation in Harris which has been fully occupied all year and consideration will be given to increasing provision in this area.

Due to Craigston Schoolhouse ceasing to be used for homeless accommodation there is an acute shortage of temporary accommodation on Barra which means that some households are having to be temporarily accommodated on Uist. The Comhairle is working closely with Hebridean Housing Partnership to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

Homelessness Staffing

The Tenancy Support Service continues to provide support to homeless and potentially homeless households. Where relevant, support continues through to a permanent tenancy in order to reduce levels of repeat homelessness.

It is of ongoing concern that six out of seven members of the Homeless Service staff (Homeless Persons Assistant, two Tenancy Support Workers and three Temporary Accommodation Wardens) are employed temporarily on the basis of uncertain and short-term grant funding alone. Ideally consideration should be given by the Comhairle to mainstreaming these posts in order to ensure that sufficient, long-term staffing will be available for the provision of this statutory service and that no loss to the current staff complement occurs as a result of job uncertainty.

Partnership Working

The Comhairle works closely with a number of partner agencies to ensure that a full range of services including support, advice and information, are available to homeless households.

Close partnership working is integral to the successful implementation of the Homelessness Strategy and all partner agencies are represented on the Homelessness Strategy Network which meets biannually to monitor and implement the Strategy.

HOMELESS TASK FORCE FUNDING 2006/07 AND 2007/08

As previously mentioned, the Comhairle welcomes and indeed relies on the funding provided through the Homeless Task Force to assist with the delivery of the Homeless Service and help ensure the discharge of the authority's statutory duties towards Homeless Persons.

The costs of providing the service to the growing number of homeless persons presenting to the Comhairle are substantial, and the Homeless budget relies very heavily on the additional funding provided by the Scottish Executive through the Homeless Task Force. In 2006/07 this grant was £321,000 and for 2007/08 the amount of grant is £341,000. The current General Fund budget for Homelessness is £162,000.

It should be noted that the apparent increase in Homeless Task Force funding for 2007/08 is due to the Scottish Executive now adding the Furnished Tenancy Grant in with Homeless Task Force Funding. Previously, this particular grant had been treated as a separate form of support.

BACKGROUND

Homeless Task Force grant funding has been awarded for the last several years to assist local authorities develop and implement homelessness strategies in response to the increased legislative responsibilities of the new Acts.

In previous years, Homeless Task Force funding has been awarded for periods of several years. However, for 2007/08 the Comhairle has only received an allocation for one year. This makes it very difficult for the Comhairle to engage in long term planning and leaves uncertainty as to future levels of grant.

The Homeless Task Force grant has been used to expand and improve the Homeless Service throughout the Islands and ensure that the Comhairle's statutory duty is being fulfilled, but there are still significant aspects of the Comhairle's Homelessness Strategy which need to be progressed. Should the additional specific grant funding be discontinued, the Comhairle will have to undertake responsibility for the total funding of this statutory service.

Given that the Scottish Executive intends to implement the requirements of the new legislation in stages up until 2012, and that the numbers of homeless presentations are likely to continue growing as awareness of the enhanced rights of applicants increases, the Comhairle is aware that this is an area where expenditure will rise substantially in the coming years.

Local Priorities

The Comhairle has used the Task Force Funding to develop a homeless strategy based around national priorities, but focusing on the local situation. The main priorities set by the Comhairle are;

- to increase the provision of temporary accommodation
 - development of new Homeless Units
 - increased budgetary provision for Bed & Breakfast accommodation
 - refurbishment of existing Homeless Units
 - Contribution towards other local housing providers/projects

- to increase and improve advice and information for homeless and potentially homeless persons
 - supply of advice literature
 - contribution to Faire out of hours service
 - support for Domestic Abuse Forum
 - staff training

- to increase the number of Homeless Service staff
 - two Tenancy Support Workers
 - Assistant Homeless Persons Officer
 - three Wardens for the 'Old House' in Stornoway

2006/07 Allocation

In 2006/07, the Comhairle received an allocation of **£321,000** Homeless Task Force funding, which was spent as follows:-

Old Policehouse, Lochboisdale: £34k

Refurbishment of old property into 3 temporary accommodation units. This addressed a significant need for temporary accommodation in South Uist.

The Old House, Stornoway: £37k

This was the final instalment of the capital costs incurred in adapting this former guest house into supported accommodation. The Old House provides 5 single units and a family unit. The building is staffed 24/7 by three Wardens.

Bed & Breakfast provision: £86k

The new homeless legislation means all applicants are entitled to temporary accommodation. Because of the limited availability of temporary units, the Comhairle has to rely more on B&B accommodation. The Comhairle's general Fund also makes a contribution towards the cost of B&B accommodation.

Staffing Costs: £65k

The new legislation requires greater staff resources in order for the Comhairle to discharge its statutory duty. The grant funding

contributes towards the funding of six posts, including two Tenancy Support Workers. The Tenancy Support Workers ensure that adequate support is available for people with special circumstances taking on a new tenancy. For example, assistance for a young person with few resources in furnishing a property, advice on managing a tenancy and follow up support.

Hebrides Alpha Project: £30k

The Alpha Project is a local initiative aimed at providing a rehabilitative and supportive housing environment for people with drug and alcohol dependency. The project is aiming to develop supportive accommodation units, tied in with therapeutic employment opportunities. It is hoping to augment the service already provided by the Comhairle by providing a model of specialist supported accommodation not currently available in the Western Isles.

Sgailean (Western Isles Foyer) Project: £40k

The Western Isles Foyer project was established to provide supported accommodation with related education, training and employment support to young people aged between 16 and 24 years.

2007/08 Allocation

For 2007/08, it is proposed to allocate the Homeless Task Force funding along the same lines as previous years, working towards the same objectives and outcomes. Funding of **£341,000** is available and the proposed spend is:-

Sgailean (Western Isles Foyer) Project: £25k

Further support to this key partner agency. Further information on this project is provided later in this statement to reflect the importance of the service provided in partnership with Homelessness Staff.

Hebrides Alpha Project: £25k

Further support to this key partner project.

Expand Temporary Accommodation provision: £50k

The demand for temporary accommodation is ever growing. This allocation of funding would allow a contribution towards purchasing a new property on the open market or the further development of The Old House.

Homeless Staff Costs: £135k

The grant has enabled the Comhairle to appoint a dedicated Homeless Services Team to support the Homeless Services Manager in discharging the Comhairle's statutory duties. Six members of staff are funded through the Homeless Task Force grant. However, short term funding means staff are all on temporary contracts until 31 March 2008, which leads to uncertainty for the staff and the Homeless Service.

Homeless Hostel Feasibility Study; £20k

The provision of a dedicated Hostel for single people would make a significant contribution towards tackling homelessness in the Western Isles. A large proportion of the cases the Comhairle receives are from single people and at present Bed and Breakfast accommodation is largely the only accommodation available. This is costly and puts great strain on already limited budgets. A Hostel would in the long term save the Comhairle money. The Feasibility Study is intended to examine such issues as size of required, running costs, staffing requirements, health and safety issues and preferred location.

Youth Homeless Strategy: £20k

Another key aspect of the Comhairle's Homeless Strategy is looking at the issues surrounding young people who find themselves without accommodation. Research is to be carried out during 07/08 to inform the development of a strategy which would allow a multi-agency approach to determining the causes of Youth Homelessness, and identifying preventative measures and potential support systems.

Furnished Tenancy Grant: £17k

This is a specific block of funding from the Scottish Executive to provide financial assistance to provide basic necessities to homeless people who have secured permanent accommodation. The grant can be used by officers to purchase bedding, furniture and white goods for homeless clients.

Sgailean (Western Isles Foyer) Project

The Sgailean Project was established by a multi agency group led by the Comhairle in 2003 to meet an identified gap in housing provision for vulnerable young people. The Comhairle's Homeless Strategy had highlighted this area as one where limited resources and growing demand were making it very difficult for the Comhairle to deal with the numbers of vulnerable youngsters requiring supported housing.

The Sgailean Project provides supported accommodation with related education, training and employment support to young people aged between 16 and 24 years. It is based around the French 'Foyer' model which has been introduced successfully in other parts of Scotland.

Sgailean supports the Comhairle's Homeless Team by providing essential support and development for an important client group. The project also provides much needed 'follow-on' support to young people taking on a tenancy for the first time. This complements and greatly assists the Comhairle's own Tenancy Support Workers, taking pressure off their growing client base.

Sgailean has also assisted the Comhairle fulfil its objectives in the Local Housing Strategy. The LHS has to take account of client groups with additional needs and to ensure opportunities for Social Inclusion. Sgailean has enabled the Comhairle to fulfil these objectives in relation to young people.

The Comhairle also intends to develop a Youth Homelessness Strategy as part of its overall Local Housing Strategy and it is expected that Sgailean will play a major role in the development of this strategy.

At present the Foyer Project provides 7 units around Stornoway. It is also one of the partner organisations in the development of the 'Bridge Project' in Stornoway, where it will have access to a further 6 units.

Since 2003, Sgailean has dealt with 120 referrals from young homeless people. Of these, 40 clients were accepted as suitable for supported accommodation within the Project. At present almost all approaches from young people received by the Comhairle are referred to Sgailean. Without Sgailean, the Comhairle would have had to find accommodation for these young people, and would not have been able to provide the associated on-going support.

As well as receiving financial support from the Comhairle through Homeless Task Force funding and 'Quality of Life' funding, Sgailean receives funding from Communities Scotland, Western Isles Enterprise and in the past from a charitable trust. It also generates income from rents. These sources of funding are not guaranteed, meaning that the Project is constantly looking for new financial support.

Sgailean provides an important strand in the 'joined-up' approach to tackling homelessness in the islands and supports the Homeless Service in the key area of youth homelessness. Without the Foyers contribution, the Comhairle would be under severe pressure to address the needs of young homeless applicants and to meet its statutory duty towards this important client group.

CONCLUSION

The Comhairle has managed to make good use of Homeless Task Force funding over the years it has been available. Several important policy objectives have been met including the strengthening of the Homeless Services team and the development of the Old House. Support for projects led by partner organisations such as the Sgailean Foyer Project has enabled the Comhairle to address important gaps in specific provision and through this partnership approach to meet its statutory duties towards Homeless persons.

HOMELESS TASK FORCE FUNDING
2006 – 2007 ACTUAL EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Project	Amount
Old Policehouse, Lochboisdale	34000
Old House Temporary Accommodation , Stornoway	37000
Bed & Breakfast provision	86000
Refurbishment of Homeless properties	4000
General Emergency Fund	2000
Staffing	8000
Domestic abuse Forum	5000
Advice and Assistance	5000
Staff Training	3000
Tenancy Support Workers	65000
Streets Ahead Guides	2000
Foyer Project	40000
Hebrides Alpha Project	30000
	£321,000

HOMELESS TASK FORCE FUNDING
2007 – 2008 PLANNED EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

PROJECT	AMOUNT
Expanding Temporary Accommodation provision	50000
Bed & Breakfast provision	15000
Refurbishment of Homeless Units	10000
General Emergency Fund	2500
Domestic Abuse Forum	5000
Out of Hours Service	5000
Advice and Assistance Leaflets	6000
Staff Training	5000
Homeless Staff Costs	135000
Rent Deposit Scheme	2000
Hebrides Alpha Project	25000
Foyer Project	25000
Homeless Hostel Feasibility Study	20000
Youth Homeless Strategy	10000
Translation Service	2000
Salvation Army Breakfast Club	500
Furnished Tenancy Grant	17000
Migrant Workers	1000
Housing Options Guides	5000
	£341,000

APPENDIX 3: Western Isles Community Plan, Council Corporate Plan & LHS Links

Community Plan Themes	Corporate Plan Strategic Theme	Corporate Plan Strategic Objectives	Local Housing Strategy Actions			
<p>The Economy:</p> <p>Through working in partnership we will strive to create a sustainable diverse economy where everybody has the opportunity to undertake satisfying work.</p>	<p>Giving Priority To Creating A Diverse Economy</p>	<p>DE 8 Supporting the economic, social and cultural base of the Islands towards employment including training, skilled trades and apprenticeships</p>	<p>5.2 Increase the number of construction related apprentices taken on through Comhairle's existing Apprenticeship scheme</p> <p>5.3 HHP building contracts require contractors to provide opportunities for apprentices and other to secure 'on the job' training and work experience</p>			
		<p>DE 9 Directing purchasing power within the local economy in a responsible and controlled manner with efficient use of resources in mind</p>	<p>5.1 Support the Western Isles Construction Forum that meets regularly to discuss local construction issues</p>			
		<p>DE 10 Securing housing investment to support economic development in the Western Isles and specifically to achieve stability in the rural economy and deal with growth around Stornoway</p>	<p>1.1 Maintain or enhance current Communities Scotland Development Programme</p> <p>1.5 Provide serviced plots for sale in rural areas</p> <p>2.4 Undertake a Programme of work to review empty properties and the early impact of reduced CTR discounts on second homes.</p> <p>3.1 Examine options in relation to making crofting land available to non crofting households for building houses</p> <p>3.2 Work with the Township Committees to identify and secure suitable sites and develop a minimum of 6 serviced plots by 2007/8</p> <p>3.3 Secure improved funding package to support self build to offset higher local building costs (e.g. Comhairle provide top up grants or loans and/or revamped RHOGS)</p> <p>4.1 Provide 20 serviced plots for sale in the Greater Stornoway Area by 2009</p> <p>4.2 Develop a Comhairle owned or identified strategic land bank capable of delivering possibly 100 residential properties by 2009 in areas of greatest need</p> <p>6.2 Provide GRO Grants to support new private housing (note that GRO units are also included in objective 1 total target)</p>			
			<p>DE 11 Ensuring that all development in the Western Isles is based on the principle of sustainability</p>	<p>1.2 Social landlords buy existing properties and recycle as affordable housing for sale or rent</p> <p>2.1 Redundant or derelict private housing redeveloped by housing associations for affordable housing for sale or rent</p> <p>6.3 Support the conversion of appropriate commercial property to residential use</p>		
				<p>7.6 Complete investigation and agreed priorities strategy for the use of Wider Action and Future Builders Fund</p> <p>7.7 Continued implementation of Tenant Participation Strategy</p> <p>7.8 Develop Customer Service Management Strategy</p>		
			<p>Community Well Being:</p> <p>To achieve the best possible health and well being for everyone in the Western Isles</p>	<p>Listening And Responding To The Community</p>	<p>CY 1 Ensuring that we engage in meaningful consultation and involve the community, service users and tenants on a consistent and on going basis</p>	

APPENDIX 3: Western Isles Community Plan, Council Corporate Plan & LHS Links

Community Plan Themes	Corporate Plan Strategic Theme	Corporate Plan Strategic Objectives	Local Housing Strategy Actions
		CY 3 Encouraging community management and efficient use of services and development of community facilities	7.9 Implement Village Voice Scheme with WI Residents Forum and TPAS
		CY 4 Encouraging community ownership of assets	8.1 Transfer of stock to community Ownership is successful and capital investment proceeds in line with HHP Business Plan
		CY 5 Supporting improvements to access to buildings for people with disabilities	14.1 Encourage new housing to be built to "lifetime homes standard" wherever possible by 2009

APPENDIX 4: Updated Western Isles Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

	Outcomes	Indicator	Information Source	Baseline Data
1	Fewer households living in unsuitable housing by 2009	Number of households defined as in need according to DTLR/ODPM guidance as recommended by Communities Scotland; updated 5 yearly	Housing Needs Assessment	Baseline established 2005/06
2	Reduction in waiting list applicant to letting ratios in Greater Stornoway	Annual number of housing list applicants with needs points compared to number of lettings (including first let of completed new build social rented properties)	CNES records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2004/05, 2005/06,2006/07
3	15 empty properties improved and occupied	Annual number of PSHG funded properties	CNES records	Glasgow University Base – 2003/4 Out-turn - 2004/05, 05/06, 06/07
4	Increased supply of affordable housing in rural settlements	All general needs approvals plus contracted serviced plots plus CBGS successful new build applications for whole of Western Isles excluding Greater Stornoway	Communities Scotland and CNES records	2004/5 Glasgow University Newhaven HNA 2007
5	Increased number of children and adults under 60 years in rural population by 2009	Population by age broken down by Greater Stornoway and rest of Western Isles	GROS	Census 2001 Mid 2005 Population Estimates, Mid 06 Pop. Estimates OH Migration Study 07
6	Sustained demand for schools in rural areas	Annual change in school roll for schools in the rest of the Western Isles	CNES records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2004/05, 05/06, 06/07
7	Reduction in number of economically active in-migrants seeking social housing by 2009	Annual Number of applicants in employment relocating to Western Isles from the rest of the UK on the Comhairle's housing list	CNES records	
8	Employers report easing of recruitment problems by 2009	Employers Survey	To be commissioned	Survey – new baseline to be produced - WIE
9	Construction sector report easing of recruitment difficulties	Employers Survey (construction sector results only)	To be commissioned	Survey – new baseline to be produced WIE
10	Increase number of skilled tradespersons resident on Islands by 2009	Needs to be identified with WIE	WIE records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2005/06, 06/07
11	Local Economic Forum report reduction in younger economically active households leaving Western Isles	Employers Survey	To be commissioned	
12	50 private units developed with minimal grant input by 2009	Annual Number of GRO general needs and other subsidised units for private rent of low cost homeownership	CNES records	Baseline to be developed 2005/06 Outturn 2006/07
13	Reduction in antisocial behaviour	Annual Number of complaints recorded by social Landlords and Police	CNES and Police record	Baseline – figures from ASB strategy 2005/06

APPENDIX 4: Updated Western Isles Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

	Outcomes	Indicator	Information Source	Baseline Data
		Percentage of tenants interviewed who state there has been a reduction in tenants who think noisy neighbours in neighbourhood; problem with vandalism and graffiti or drug misuse/dealing or rubbish lying around	(Scottish Household Survey)	CNES data for 2005 will not be available from SE to 2007
14	A minimum of 70% of all effective social rented stock attains SHQS	Number of properties failing SHQS in 2004/5 according to stock survey(baseline) Baseline SHQS estimate minus cumulative annual number of units upgraded through La/HHP capital programme	Stock survey and thereafter updated by CNES/HHP records	Baseline figures – HHP
15	High levels of tenant satisfaction with condition of own home	Rolling 3 year annualised average of number and proportion of tenants satisfied with their home and surrounding areas	Scottish Household Survey	
16	Reduction in the number of households living in private sector properties that are BTS by 2009	Yet to be determined		2004/05 – use LHCS findings
17	Increase the number and proportion of private properties that are attaining the SHQS and its main components	Baseline – Number and % properties failing SHQS in 2003/4 according to stock survey(or SHCS 2002) Baseline SHQS estimate minus cumulative annual number of units upgraded through La/HHP capital programme	SHCS and LHCS CNES records	LHCS figures for 2003/04 or failing that the SHCS 2002
18	No lead water supply piping in private homes in the WI by 2009	Yet to be determined		
19	Improved water quality and sewerage provision	Yet to be determined		
20	Increase the number and proportion of properties attaining NHER band 5 rating	Baseline – Number and % properties failing SHQS in 2003/4 according to stock survey(or SHCS 2002) Baseline SHQS estimate of numbers failing on ground of energy efficiency minus cumulative annual number of units upgraded through LA/HHP capital programme	SHCS and LHCS	Baseline SHCS 2002
21	30% reduction in number of households across all tenures defined as fuel poor	Number and % of households required to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel in 2008/9	SHCS 2002 baseline LHCS (private and social) SHCS continuous survey 2008-9	Baseline –SHCS
22	At least 80% of all occupied effective social rented stock attains NHER rating band 5 by	Number of private stock attaining NHER 5 according by 2008/9 broken down by property age	SHCS 2002 baseline	Baseline –SHCS

APPENDIX 4: Updated Western Isles Monitoring & Evaluation Framework

	Outcomes	Indicator	Information Source	Baseline Data
	2009		LHCS (private and social) SHCS continuous survey 2008-9	
23	Reduction in the rate of increase in homeless presentations	Number and % of all housing applicants broken down by type of household and eligibility criteria; measured annually	CNES Records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2004/05
24	Reduction in the numbers of young people aged 16 -18 years presenting as homeless	Number and % of all housing applicants aged 16 to 18 years by eligibility criteria; measured annually	CNES Records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2004/05
25	Reduction in repeat homelessness	Number and % of all housing applicants that have made a repeat application within the last two years; measured annually	CNES Records	Baseline -2003/04 Outturn – 2004/05
26	Reduction in the number of young adults leaving care that are unable to maintain their tenancy	<i>To be determined in consultation with social work as part of process of finalising arrangements for monitoring Integrated children's Services Plan</i>		
27	Service users and their representatives report that they receive high quality service	Routine Survey of Service Users and Representatives from winter 2005/6 onwards	Feedback Form to be developed	In-house 6 monthly analysis of findings from winter 2005 onwards
28	Reduction in adaptation grant applications from households living in houses constructed after 2005/6	Number of PSHG grant applications from households constructed after 2005 as a % of all applicants		Baseline established 2006
29	Reduction in adaptation grant applications from households living in houses repaired or improved with PSHG grant assistance	Number of PSHG grant applications seeking assistance with adaptations to property that live in a property that was subject to an improvement or repair grant awarded in 2005 or later		Baseline established 2005/06

APPENDIX 5: Information Sources Update

If you would like a copy of any of the following Council documents mentioned below please contact Isobel Mackenzie on; 01851 709257 or by e-mail at; isobel-mackenzie@cne-siar.gov.uk.

Stornoway Regeneration: Vision, Objectives and Actions (2005)
Stornoway Regeneration: Action Plan Review (2006)

Finalised Western Isles Local Plan (2005)

Western Isles Regional Accounts – Draft Report (2005)

MacPherson Research (2005) Western Isles Property Market Study.
MacPherson Research: Western Isles Property Market Study Update (2006)

Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (2005) Communities of the Future (*Revised*)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2005) Regeneration Outcome Agreement

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2004) Western Isles Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: Western Isles Local Housing Strategy -Review and Update (June 2005)
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: Western Isles Local Housing Strategy-Review and Update (June 2006)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2004) Western Isles Homelessness Strategy 2004-2009

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2004) Corporate Plan 2004-2007

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2005) Antisocial Behaviour Strategy

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2005) Fuel Poverty Strategy
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar: Fuel Poverty Strategy Update (June 2006)

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (2001-2003) HECA Progress Report

Hebridean Housing Partnership Business Plan (2006)

Newhaven Research Housing Needs Assessment (March 2007)

Hall Aitken Outer Hebrides Migration Study (February 2007)

Gibb, K, Maclennan, D, Nygaard, C and McLaren, J (2004) Western Isles Local Housing Strategy: Analysing the Local Housing System. Report to Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar. Department of Urban Studies: University of Glasgow.

Gibb K, Nygaard C, Western Isles Local Housing System Analysis Update (2005). Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow

National Documents

Audit Commission (2002) Housing after Transfer; London

Scottish Executive (2004) Maintaining Houses – Preserving Homes Consultation

Scottish Executive (2005) Homes for Scotland’s People: A Scottish Housing Policy Statement

Communities Scotland (2002) “Equalities in Practice”: Communities Scotland Thematic Regulation Study

Communities Scotland (2005) Scottish House Condition Survey 2002 Revised SHQS Failure Rates

HomePoint (2004) National Core Standards and Good Practice Guidance for Private Landlords and for Local Accreditation Schemes: A Quality Framework

Scottish Executive: Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

Communities Scotland: LHS Update Evaluation Feedback 2005

Communities Scotland: LHS Update Evaluation Feedback 2006

Scottish Executive – Consultation Document “Scottish Housing Investment Framework” 2006

GROS 2006 Household Estimates

APPENDIX 6: Glossary

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts - a contract between an individual and various support agencies which stipulates a standard of behaviour required if a tenancy is to continue

ACTISH - funding raised through additional Council Tax from Second Homes Ownership – used for housing related purposes involving an RSL

ADAT – Alcohol and Drug Action Team

Affordable Housing - housing in any tenure that is of reasonable quality and affordable to those on modest incomes

Alpha Project – supported accommodation project for clients with addiction

Allocation Policy - policy which explains how a Local Authority or Registered Social Landlord will allocate properties in their ownership

Anti-Social Behaviour Order- (ASBO) a legal order served on an individual or family which specifies actions which are prohibited .A breach of the order can result in imprisonment

Best Value - statutory duty to provide higher quality and more responsive public services

Biomass – fuel source from organic materials

Bridge Project – multi-agency accommodation projects in Stornoway

BTS - Below Tolerable Standard, a national measure of house condition determined in law

CAB - Citizens Advice Bureau

Care and Repair Project - project funded jointly by the Comhairle and Communities Scotland to assist elderly and vulnerable home owners repair and maintain their homes and access grant funding

CBHA - Community Based Housing Association/s - small Housing Associations situated throughout the Western Isles, purchasing financial and development services from TIG and housing management and repair services from the Comhairle and run by local management committees – now merged with HHP

CCHNA – Community Care Housing Needs Assessment

CHaSCP – Community Health and Social Care Partnership

CHGS – Croft House Grant Scheme, administered by SEERAD

CHP – Community Health Partnership

CIOH – Chartered Institute of Housing

CnES/Comhairle - Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar (formerly called Western Isles Council)

Community Care - Services delivered in the community to vulnerable individuals (e.g. Elderly, Physically Disabled, and Homeless)

Community Planning Partnership - grouping of local agencies tasked with developing a strategy to improve the social, environmental, and economic well-being of the community

COP – Community Ownership Programme

COT – Change of Tenancy

CS - Communities Scotland - formerly Scottish Homes, now a Scottish Executive Agency dealing with housing and regeneration issues, and with a monitoring role over the activities of Registered Social Landlords

CRF – Community Regeneration Fund

Development Funding - funds currently allocated by Communities Scotland and disbursed to RSLs, private developers and individuals to progress new-build and refurbishment programmes

EAGA – Organisation which gives Energy Advice to housing providers

ECH – Extra Care Housing

Equal Opportunities - government policy to ensure that everyone is treated equally and is not discriminated or prejudiced against as a result of their ethnic origin, disability, sexuality, religion, gender or age

ESF – European Social Fund

Foyer Project - project to provide integrated access to accommodation, training and employment opportunities, life-skills and health information for vulnerable young people between 16 and 25 years, who do not come under Care Leavers legislation. Initially based in Stornoway, the project will be extended throughout the Islands in coming years.

Fragile Communities - remote, rural communities that are lacking in economic and social opportunities and are consequently experiencing population loss

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

FWILP – Finalised Western Isles Local Plan

Fuel Poverty - term to describe situation where a household spends more than 10% of disposable income to adequately heat their home

General Fund - the Comhairle's funding for its Capital Programme

GRO - grant provided by Communities Scotland to encourage developers to provide houses either for rent or ownership

GRDP – Gross Regional Domestic Product

GROS – General Registers of Scotland

HAG - Housing Association Grant allocated by Communities Scotland as development funding to enable new build and refurbishment of houses

HMA – Housing Market Area

HHP - Hebridean Housing Partnership - a community owned not for profit housing association set up by Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, which will take over the Comhairle's housing following stock transfer

HIE Innse Gall – Western Isles Office of Highland and Islands Enterprise

HNA – Housing Needs Assessment

Homelessness Task Force – core group of Comhairle staff established to develop, monitor and implement the Homelessness Strategy for the Western Isles

Homelessness Strategy Network Group - stakeholder group of local agencies which will work with the Task Force to implement and develop the strategy

HRA - Housing Revenue Account - the ring-fenced budget that covers all the Comhairle's housing management related services. Funded from rent receipts and Housing Support Grant

Joint Future - Scottish Executive initiative to improve partnership working and service delivery in Community Care by Local Authorities and Health Boards through shared agendas and pooled budgets

JSC – Joint Services Committee

LCHO - Low Cost Home Ownership e.g. a grant assisted system allowing applicants to become first time buyers

LEC – Local Enterprise Company

Lews Castle College – Independently run facility based in Stornoway, with satellite sites throughout the Islands. Provides further education syllabus and is also the Western Isles Campus of the University of the Highlands and Islands

LHCC – Local Health Care Cooperatives

LHS - Local Housing Strategy

Local House Condition Survey - survey of the condition of housing stock in the Western Isles measured against national standards

MOWG – Member Officer Working Group

NASSO – National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders

National House Condition Survey - survey of housing stock across all tenures throughout Scotland measured against national quality standards

NHER - National Home Energy Rating, a measure of insulation quality and cost of heating

Non-HRA - expenditure which was housing related but not directly attributable to the housing stock, now replaced by PSHG (see below)

Pressured Area Status – description of an area of social housing where all tenancies taken up after this status is confirmed are excluded from Right to Buy legislation for a period of five years. All existing tenants in that area would however continue to have the Right to Buy

PSHG - Private Sector Housing Grant – funding allocated by the Scottish Executive through Communities Scotland to the Comhairle to enable works in the private sector. For example: by assisting owner-occupiers to carry out improvement, repair or adaptations to their properties.

Residents' Forum - umbrella group representing residents groups throughout the Islands

RHOG - Rural Home Ownership Grant funded by Communities Scotland and distributed in the Western Isles by TIG to assist individual home-building or renovation projects

ROA – Regeneration Outcome Agreement

RTI – Retail Price Index

RSL - Registered Social Landlord—a non-profit making landlord, registered with and monitored by Communities Scotland

RSPA – Rural Services Priority Area

RTB - Right to Buy - legal right of most Local Authority and some Housing Association tenants to buy their home at a discounted price subject to meeting qualifying criteria

Sasines - national register of land and property transactions in Scotland

SCORE – Scottish Continuous Recording System for Social Housing lets

Scottish Housing Quality Standard – proposed minimum standard of physical house condition to be met throughout Scotland

SEERAD - Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department

Sgailean – Western Isles Foyer Project

Sheltered Housing - housing for older people characterised by the provision of warden services

SHIF – Strategic Housing Investment Framework

SHIP – Strategic Housing Plan

SLA – Services Legal Agreement

SOLO – Sex Offenders Liaison Officer

Stock Transfer - process of transferring ownership of the Comhairle's housing stock to the Hebridean Housing Partnership following a positive tenant ballot. (*Transfer concluded September 2006*)

Single Shared Assessment – part of the Joint Future Agenda, aimed at minimising the number of professional assessments required to develop a complex care package and thereby reducing stress on clients. Information gathered by Lead Assessor will be shared with other agencies as appropriate.

Social Inclusion - all-encompassing term to describe the wide range of activities which help disadvantaged people access all available services and opportunities to achieve their maximum potential and independence, and enables them to take an active role in society

SRG - Stornoway Regeneration Group

Social Rented Housing - rented accommodation provided by Councils and Housing Associations

Stornoway Trust - the community based organisation that is the largest landowner in the Greater Stornoway area

THI Project – Town Heritage Initiative, Stornoway

TIG - Tighean Innse Gall—the Western Isles Housing Agency, provides agency services for Communities Scotland, development services to HHP, delivers the Care and Repair Scheme on behalf of the Comhairle, runs the Energy Advisory Service for the Western Isles and delivers related initiatives. TIG is also involved in partnership working in connection with the development of the Bridge Project, the operation of Western Isles Foyer and is currently investigating the possibility of a group structure with Hebridean Housing Partnership

TPAS – Tenant Participation and Advice Service, a national organisation that advises tenants groups

TUPE – Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)

VOIDS - untenanted properties

WIHQs - WESTERN ISLES HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD - the standard, which the houses transferred to Hebridean Housing Partnership, will attain within 10years. In local terms the Quality Standard incorporates features of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard but with certain enhancements to reflect tenant choice and local circumstances

WIRF – Western Isles Residents Forum, the umbrella group representing residents groups throughout the Islands

APPENDIX 7: Local Housing Strategy Officers Group – (Membership as at June 2007)

Keith Bray	Head of Development Services, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Matt Bruce	Housing Strategy & Development Officer, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Derek Laidlaw	Planning Officer, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Angus Lamont	Chief Executive, Hebridean Housing Partnership
Isla Macdonald	Research Officer, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Domhnall MacDonald	Development Manager, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Isobel Mackenzie	Housing Strategy & Development Officer, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Lucy Macleod	Public Health Professional, NHS Western Isles
Rona MacLeod	Development Officer, HIE Innse Gall
Seán O'Drisciol	Rural Community Housing Project, Tighean Innse Gall
Tony Pendle	Director of Operations, Hebridean Housing Partnership
Malcolm Smith	Director of Social Services, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Iain Watson	Principal Officer, Housing Services, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Andrew White	Private Sector Housing Manager, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Stewart Wilson	Director, Tighean Innse Gall
Ellen Florence	<i>(Clerical Assistant in attendance)</i> , Comhairle nan Eilean Siar