

A NEW HOUSING STRATEGY FOR THE OUTER HEBRIDES

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is developing a new Local Housing Strategy for the period 2011-2016, and aims to complete this by the end of 2010.

What the Local Housing Strategy is

Section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy. The Strategy covers a 5 year period and sets out priorities for action by the Comhairle and its partners as they work together to make the best use of available resources and expertise to improve housing outcomes for the residents of the Outer Hebrides.

Our 5 year plan must take account of national and local priorities as well as our statutory housing duties. The new Local Housing Strategy will therefore:-

- Set out the housing contribution to the Outer Hebrides' Community Planning Partnership long-term ambition to create a stable and more diverse population and improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the people of the Outer Hebrides
- Take account of Scottish Government policies and targets to increase housing supply, to reduce fuel poverty, to reduce homelessness and to deliver better quality and thermal efficient housing
- Reflect the Comhairle's statutory responsibilities for unfit and sub-standard private sector homes; for housing homeless people and achieving the abolition of priority need by 2012; for registering private landlords and for ensuring housing services are fair and non discriminatory

In particular, our Strategy will take account of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 which has fundamentally changed the framework of powers for addressing unsatisfactory conditions in private

housing, and providing adaptations for people with a disability.

What We Want to Achieve in the Long Term

We consider that the Housing Strategy will be a success in the long term if:-

1. There is an adequate supply of housing to meet affordable housing need and sustain the population
2. Households live in good quality warm housing that minimises the risk of fuel poverty
3. Older people and other vulnerable adults are able to access integrated support services to live independently in their own permanent home
4. Minimal numbers of people present as or are found to be homeless
5. There is a well managed and customer focused approach to the delivery of housing services, including the provision of information and advice

Our Evidence Base

These 5 general areas have been identified as the potential basis of the new Strategy through an appraisal of the effectiveness of the Housing Strategy 2004-2009; an updating of the Outer Hebrides Housing Need and Demand Assessment; and an Options Appraisal Exercise involving elected Members of the Comhairle and representatives of our key partner agencies.

We suggest that by adopting these 5 themes we will satisfy the Strategy content requirements of the Scottish Government, and we will be focusing on the most significant housing related challenges currently facing the providers and users of Housing Services in the Outer Hebrides.

Further work will be undertaken up until Autumn 2010 to increase our knowledge and understanding of:-

- the capacity and condition of Private Rented Sector Accommodation
- the requirements and aspirations of Particular Need client groups
- the potential to re-use the current Empty Homes stock to help alleviate the housing shortage
- the level and type of housing demand in our more rural and remote areas

The anticipated cuts in public sector funding over the next few years have been well publicised. It is crucial that we direct our resources at agreed, evidenced priorities and this summary sets out our main housing issues as we see them.

Our Consultation Plans

We now want to consult with people across the local authority area to find out if there is agreement on what we think our priorities should be, if there are other issues we should be considering, and how we should provide the housing and related services that our residents want.

We will also be consulting further with the partner organisations who will help us deliver our Housing Strategy. For example Scottish Government, NHS Western Isles, Hebridean Housing Partnership, Tighean Innse Gall and Highlands and Islands Enterprise. We also want to speak to the Voluntary sector, community groups, the construction industry and the utility companies.

We need your views to ensure that the new Strategy is soundly based, not just on the outcomes of formal research and analysis but on the experience and aspirations of the people who will use the services we provide.

How You Can be Involved

A short survey form is enclosed for your use, and this can be returned to any Comhairle office or to the location where you obtained this leaflet. Alternatively you can complete the online questionnaire which is available at www.surveymonkey.com/s/JYVF252 or submit a written response to the address overleaf.

If you represent an organisation which would like to speak with us about the housing issues affecting your members we will be happy to arrange this.

We are also looking for opportunities to provide information to community newspapers, newsletters etc. If you can help us with this please get in touch.

The information provided here is drawn from the Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016 Consultative Draft which is also available on the web site link shown above.

Paper copies of the draft document are available on request.

You may also wish to look at the documents relating to the preparation of the Local Development Plan, which is closely aligned to the LHS. These can be viewed on the Comhairle's web site at www.cne-siar.gov.uk

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

The Consultation period will run until 31 July 2010.

For further information please contact:

Mrs Isobel MacKenzie
Housing Strategy & Development Officer
Housing Services
Development Department
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Sandwick Road
Stornoway

Telephone: 01851 709257
Email: isobel-mackenzie@cne-siar.gov.uk



**OUTER
HEBRIDES**

**Local Housing
Strategy
2011 – 2016**

**CONSULTATION
SUMMARY
AND SURVEY**