



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

23 APRIL 2024

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY EARLY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Report by Depute Chief Executive

PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to advise the Comhairle of the findings of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Early Engagement Survey that ran from 6 December 2023 to 17 January 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires that local authorities consult on their LHS. It recommends that this be commenced as early as possible for effective engagement.
- 2.2 The Local Housing Strategy Steering Group prepared an Early Engagement Survey ("the Survey") to gauge initial views on the direction of the forthcoming Local Housing Strategy.
- 2.3 The Survey was made available online via the Survey Monkey platform for a period of six weeks.
- 2.4 There were 232 responses in total and following closure of the Survey these were analysed, and results compiled collectively, and by postcode area. The Survey Report can be found at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **It is recommended that the Comhairle note the outputs of the Local Housing Strategy Early Engagement Survey at Appendix 1.**

Contact Officer: Angela C Smith, Housing Strategy Manager, 01851 211 257, angelasmith@cne-siar.gov.uk

Appendix: Local Housing Strategy Early Engagement Survey - Presentation

Background Papers: Local Housing Strategy Guidance (2019)

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The following implications are applicable in terms of the Report.

Resource Implications	Implications/None
Financial	None
Legal	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Act requires that local authorities consult on their LHS, and the statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires the involvement, consultation and engagement of as wide a range of local residents and tenants and communities of interest as possible.
Staffing	None
Assets and Property	None
Strategic Implications	Implications/None
Risk	None
Equalities	None
Corporate Strategy	Deliver the aims and objectives of the Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy.
Environmental Impact	None
Consultation	None

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The Scottish Government's LHS Guidance (2019) outlines the legislative requirement for engagement and consultation. It states that:

"Early engagement helps to ensure that people have a greater opportunity to have their say and influence the future of their communities, including the delivery of housing and housing related services. As a result, the LHS should be a robust strategy that reflects local need accurately and shows the influence that local people have had on the development of LHS priorities and outcomes."

- 5.2 Engagement has already been carried out during preparation of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment with various groups, and this feeds into the LHS process. The Local Housing Strategy Steering Group also acts as a vehicle for consultation given its diverse internal and external membership.
- 5.3 As part of its consultation strategy, the LHS Steering Group agreed to carry out a short Early Engagement Survey to gauge initial views on the direction of the LHS, and to allow responses to be compiled and used as a starting point for in-person consultation to be carried out in May 2024 throughout the Islands.

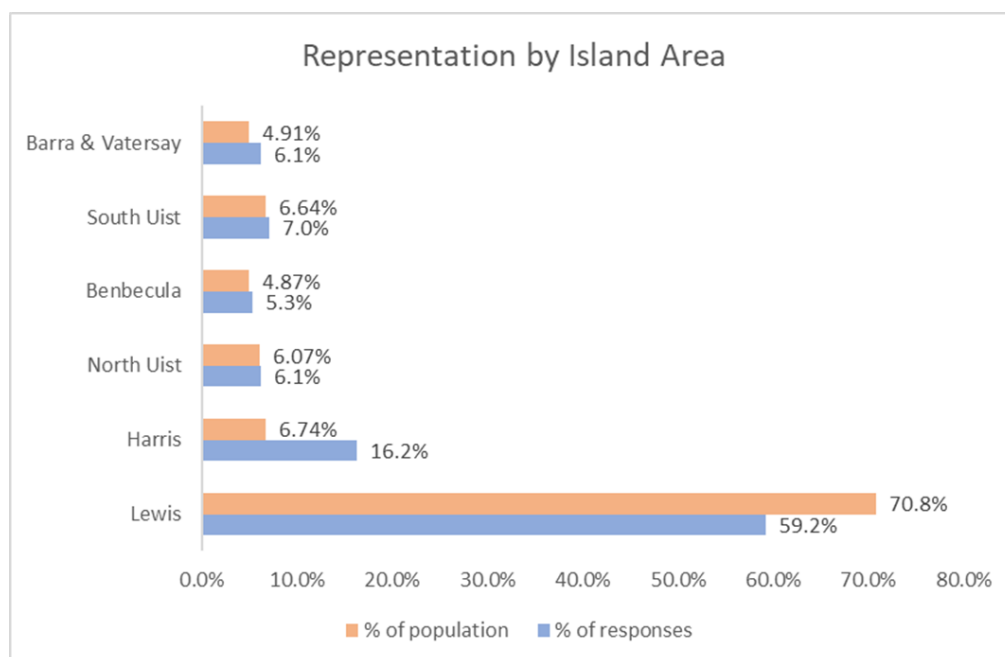
OVERVIEW

- 6.1 The Survey took the form of ten questions which were discussed and agreed by the LHS Steering Group:
- 4 multiple choice;
 - 4 free text response; and
 - 2 further questions on postcode area and age group.
- 6.2 The Survey was due to be opened in early November 2023, but it was delayed by one month because of the criminal cyber-attack the Comhairle was subject to. It was eventually published on 6 December 2023 and remained open for a period of six weeks until 17 January 2024.
- 6.3 The Survey was advertised via Social Media by the Comhairle's Comms Team and partner organisations. There were 3 reminders issued over the timeframe of the Survey.

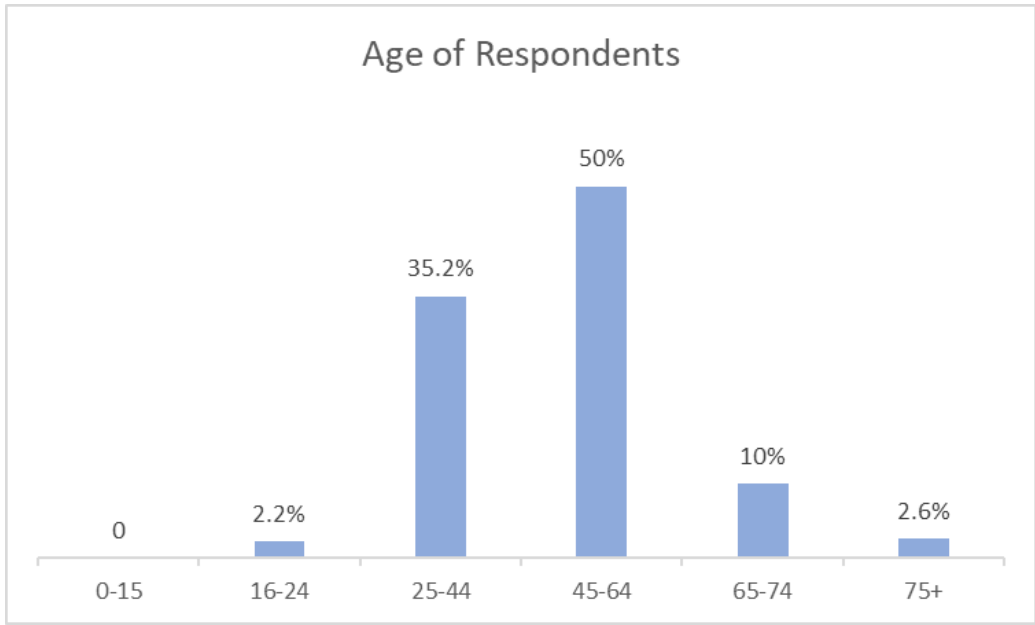
- 6.4 There were 232 responses, which is less than 1% of the population. Despite this it was fairly representative of most areas of the Outer Hebrides.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- 7.1 The majority of respondents are happy with the current vision – 84% stated yes, and 16% stated no. Where respondents answered no, the majority thought the population aspect of the vision should be developed.
- 7.2 The housing challenge which received most ‘1’ and ‘2’ responses is Population Decline, but the challenge which received the greatest number of responses is Fuel Poverty.
- 7.3 Respondents stated that the greatest challenge, housing or otherwise, is supply.
- 7.4 One single action that will have a major and positive impact on the operation of the housing system in respondents’ areas is to increase supply.
- 7.5 A well-functioning housing system is one that has access to a home and services that suit mental and physical need, including employment, education, childcare, connectivity and healthcare.
- 7.6 52.3% of respondents answered that they do know how their home will be affected by the new energy efficiency standard, and 48% stated that they did not know.
- 7.7 Only 23% of respondents stated that they thought they would be able to fund any additional works to meet the standard.
- 7.8 By 2040 homes should be energy efficient, well-insulated, affordable, sustainable, with outside space to support food production, and good digital connectivity. There should be hubs and options for home working. There should be thriving communities with sufficient homes for all, that are appropriate for place, mixed tenure, with low running costs, fit for purpose including size & quality, robustly constructed & retrofitted where required.
- 7.9 Representation is as follows:



7.10 Age range of respondents is as follows:



7.11 A full range of responses is presented at Appendix 1, with some area analysis.

FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

8.1 The Housing Services Team aims to consult and engage in person, in May 2024, throughout the Islands. The responses to the Survey, particularly responses by area, will assist with discussions.

CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The Early Engagement Survey responses help to evidence housing and other challenges we are faced with in the Outer Hebrides.
- 9.2 Consultation and engagement allows people in our communities to have a voice and to be involved in the preparation of the next Local Housing Strategy.