



REPORT TO: HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE ON 21 JUNE 2022

SUBJECT: LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2019-2024 MID TERM REVIEW

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of progress made in achieving the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024 and of progress made with the development of the next Housing Need and Demand Assessment.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III G (11) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the preparation and implementation of strategic housing plans.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee:**

- (i) considers and notes progress made on the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024;**
- (ii) considers and approves the Local Housing Strategy Action Plan 2022/23 - 2023/24;**
- (iii) consider and note progress made on development of the next Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA); and**
- (iv) agrees the service developments of £46k per annum detailed at paragraph 5.3.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) supported by an assessment of housing need and demand.
- 3.2 The LHS was approved by Communities Committee on 2 April 2019 and is available on the Council's website at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1917.html

- 3.3 Due to COVID-19, annual reporting has not been completed but progress against targets has been reported regularly as part of the Service Plan. This is a mid-term review of the LHS based on the Action Plan for 2019/20, along with an updated Action Plan for 2022-24 for consideration and approval (**APPENDIX I**). Due to COVID-19 and the need to reprioritise workloads, some LHS Actions have been continued into the new Action Plan.
- 3.4 The priorities the LHS set out to achieve are:
- Priority 1: To improve access to housing across all tenures and address housing need
- Priority 2: To prevent and alleviate homelessness
- Priority 3: To assist people requiring specialist housing
- Priority 4: To improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing, and minimise fuel poverty
- 3.5 On 16 February 2021, the Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee were advised that, following consultation with the Moray Tenants' Forum and Scottish Housing Regulator, the review of the Tenant Participation Strategy would be delayed until 2022/23 but would commence at the earliest opportunity (paragraph 11 of the Minute refers).
- 3.6 On 8 February 2022, the findings of the 2021 Tenant Survey along with a Tenant Survey Improvement Plan were presented to Housing and Community Safety Committee (paragraph 8 of the Minute refers).

4. PROGRESS ON LHS ACTIONS

LHS Priority 1: To improve access to housing across all tenures and address housing need

New Build affordable housing

- 4.1 Since April 2019, 320 new affordable homes have been completed and occupied, with a further 126 expected during 2022/23, illustrated in the table below:

Compl Year	Landlord	Buckie HMA	Elgin HMA	Forres HMA	Keith HMA	Speyside HMA	Total
2019/20	Moray Council	28					28
	Hanover HA		46				46
2020/21	Moray Council		102				102
2021/22	Moray Council		46				46
	Cairn HA		16				16
	Hanover HA	31	41				72
	Osprey Housing		10				10
2022/23	Moray Council				33		33
	Cairn HA		28	28			56
	Grampian HA			37			37
Total		59	289	65	33	0	446
		13.2%	64.8%	14.6%	7.4%	0%	100%

- 4.2 Progress on the Moray Affordable Housing Programme is reported to Committee twice a year, most recently in December 2021 (Paragraph 9 of minute refers).

Moray Council's Allocations Policy

- 4.3 The operation of the Council's Allocations Policy is reported to Committee annually, with Housing List quotas reviewed and agreed each time. The last report was considered by Economic Growth, Housing and Environmental Sustainability Committee on 8 June 2021. There is an upward trend in the relet rate of Council housing following implementation of the Allocations Policy in May 2019, which is positive as the increased availability of permanent housing options assists the Council to deliver its Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) (see Para 4.2.1 below).

- 4.4 During 2022/23, work will begin on a revised Allocations Policy, using current good practice and the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (see Section 5 below) with the aim of implementing a new Policy during 2024.

Downsizing Incentive Scheme

- 4.5 The scheme's activity has been impacted by COVID-19, through the cessation of house moves and also the reluctance of some households to consider moving, especially those in shielding groups. Despite these obstacles the numbers of tenancies created under the Downsizing Scheme are:

Year	No of new tenancies
2019/20	22
2020/21	14
2021/22	19
Total	55

Officers anticipate that the numbers of tenancies created through the Downsizing Incentive Scheme will return to pre-COVID levels during 2022/23.

LHS Priority 2: To prevent and alleviate homelessness

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan review

- 4.6 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) is currently being reviewed and will be submitted to the Scottish Government by the end of June 2022. Officers intend to update Committee on the RRTP during summer/autumn 2022.

- 4.7 At 31 March 2022, 99 units of temporary accommodation were in occupation, with zero B&B in use. We are also on course to achieve a further 10 unit reduction during 2022. This is a significant achievement as the majority of other local authorities have seen a rise in the use of temporary accommodation.

- 4.8 A report detailing the operation of the Council's Allocations Policy, including allocations to homeless households, is elsewhere on this agenda.

Development of Housing First

- 4.9 In common with many other support and health and social care providers, recruitment of appropriately skilled housing support workers has been

challenging and has been an obstacle to progress. Two Housing Support worker posts have recently been recruited through secondment. Officers anticipate that the first Housing First tenancies will start during summer 2022.

LHS Priority 3: To assist people requiring specialist housing

- 4.10 During the LHS term to date i.e. since April 2019, the aim to provide 30-40% of new building affordable housing as specialist/amenity housing through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan has been achieved, as illustrated in the table below:

Compl Year	Land lord	1 bed gen needs	2 Bed Amenity	2 Bed Gen needs	2 Bed WC	3 Bed Amenity	3 Bed Gen needs	4+ Bed Gen needs	4 Bed WC	Extra care	Total
2019/20	Moray Council	8			2	1	6	11			28
	Hanover HA		14					1		31	46
2020/21	Moray Council	32	32		2	2	18	15	1		102
2021/22	Moray Council	12	8	6			18	2			46
	Cairn HA	14					2				16
	Hanover HA	22	11		1	5	19	14			72
	Osprey Housing	4					6				10
2022/23	Moray Council	16	14			1	2				33
	Cairn HA	8	20	12			10	6			56
	Grampian HA	8	14	8	1	1		5			37
Total		124	113	26	6	10	81	54	1	31	446
		27.8%	25.3%	5.8%	1.3%	2.2%	18.2%	12.1%	0.2%	7.0%	100%

Housing for people with learning disabilities

- 4.11 Officers continue to work proactively in partnership with Health and Social Care Moray and NHS Grampian in the delivery of additional specialist housing with support for people with learning disabilities. Provision has already been made at Highland Yard, Buckie and Spynie, Elgin. Further provision is planned at Garmouth Road, Lhanbryde and Pinegrove, Elgin. The planning consent at Bilbohall, Elgin granted in March 2021 includes a “care village” which will make provision for this group in Phase 2 of development.

LHS Priority 4: To improve the condition and energy efficiency of housing, and minimise fuel poverty

EESH/EESH2

- 4.12 Moray Council’s progress on compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing (EESH) is behind schedule and we must comply with EESH2 by 2032. A large scale stock condition survey was completed in March 2021. This detailed information has provided Officers with the base to begin to develop an Investment Plan which will ensure EESH2 is achieved.

Energy Efficient Scotland Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS)

- 4.13 The Council has been administering the Scottish Government’s EES:ABS (formerly HEEPS:ABS) funding since the fund’s inception 9 years ago. The

Council receives an annual allocation of funding from the Scottish Government for provision of “grant in kind” via EES:ABS to private owners, with a focus on the alleviation of fuel poverty.

- 4.14 During the term of the LHS, 228 properties have been improved under the scheme, in locations right across Moray.

Year	Tenure	Internal Wall Insulation	Cavity Wall Insulation	Loft insulation	Under floor Insulation	Total
2019/20	Council owned	25	21	1	1	48
	Private sector	70				70
2020/21	Council owned	10				10
	Private sector	97		3		100
Total		202	21	4	1	228

- 4.15 The Scheme is now managed by Changeworks as the Council’s contractor, and offers insulation improvements targeted to households who meet qualifying criteria. The criteria are published on the Council’s website at http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_132310.html. The EES:ABS scheme is reported to Committee annually, most recently on 7 December 2021 (paragraph 8 of Minute refers).
- 4.16 Energy advice is available to all via Home Energy Scotland (administered by SCARF, Aberdeen), but the Council also supports the charity REAP (Rural Environmental Action Project) to provide locally based energy advice with the added value of home visits to those who need them.

5 TENANT PARTICIPATION

- 5.1 Section 9 of the published LHS refers to Tenant Participation. The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords are expected to achieve, which includes publication of a Tenant Participation (TP) Strategy and to take account of the views and priorities of tenants in shaping services. Moray Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy is available at www.moray.gov.uk/tenantparticipation
- 5.2 Since the Charter’s introduction in 2012, there have been two significant performance failures reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator about other social landlords. It is notable that both were relating to tenant participation and both were upheld.
- 5.3 The HRA budget set by Moray Council on 22 February 2022 (Paragraph 9 of Minute refers) included provision for service developments totalling £456k, which included recruitment of a dedicated Tenant Participation (TP) Officer and ancillary equipment. Officers are now seeking approval to recruit to this new post. The post-holder will be required to develop and implement a new Tenant Participation Strategy and ensure compliance with statutory obligations. It is expected that this additional resource would have a positive impact on the areas listed below:
- The Moray Tenants Forum, the body that represent Moray Council Tenants, have been unable to meet as a group since the onset of the

pandemic. Current tenant representatives have been unable to attend digital meetings, due to tenants' lack of capacity and facilities. As a result, throughout the pandemic, engagement has taken place on a one-to-one basis by telephone and/or by post. Similarly, the Service Improvement Panel has been unable to carry out scrutiny of housing services.

- The 2021 Tenant Survey showed that the main reason for dissatisfaction in relation to tenant participation was mainly due to a lack of awareness of the opportunities to get involved (45%). The TP Officer would be responsible for increasing awareness and participation, and for implementing the Improvement Plan.
- The TP Officer will be required to innovate to help remove barriers, and encourage greater diversity amongst participating tenants. For example amongst traditionally hard to reach groups such as younger people, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities or caring responsibilities and those living in rural areas.
- Promotion of digital engagement opportunities could fit well with the Council's environmental aims in terms of carbon reduction and reduced costs travelling to meetings etc.
- The additional resource provided by the TP Officer aligns well with development of participatory budgeting and community capacity building.
- Moray Council was one of 8 social landlords chosen to take part in the Next Steps Programme, which aims to support landlords to develop their tenant participation strategies, scrutiny arrangements and improve their performance against the outcomes and standards of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Moray's Action Plan was finalised in 2019 but the majority of the recommendations are yet to be implemented. The Action Plan identified the Council would benefit from the appointment of a dedicated Participation Officer.
- The development of the new Tenant Participation Strategy will be reported via the Service Plan reporting mechanisms.

6 HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND ASSESSMENT 2022/23

- 6.1 Arneil Johnston have been appointed to complete the next Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), following a mini-competition completed with the support of the Procurement Team. The work will include primary research facilitated by Research Resource who recently completed our Tenants Survey. This work will progress throughout 2022/23 and the outputs will support the development of the next Local Development Plan and the next Local Housing Strategy (LHS).

7 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

- (a) **Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

All of the LHS Outcomes are closely aligned with the objectives of the Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

It is a requirement of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 that local authorities have a Local Housing Strategy. Detailed guidance has been produced by the Scottish Government.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications are detailed in para 5.2 above and will be a cost to the Housing Review Account in 2022/23 of £46,264 per annum.

(d) Risk Implications

Since the Social Housing Charter's introduction in 2012, there have been two significant performance failures reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator about other social landlords. It is notable that both were relating to tenant participation and both were upheld. Therefore there is a risk that Moray Council would be subject to similar scrutiny from the Scottish Housing Regulator, mitigated by the recruitment of a TP Officer.

(e) Staffing Implications

Approval of the service development detailed in paragraph 5.3 will result in a 1.0 FTE increase in the Housing Management service. The required post will go to HR for consultation if approval is granted by the Committee.

(f) Property

There are no property requirements/implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

It is a statutory requirement that equality issues should be addressed in the LHS. Data and evidence about the particular housing and support needs of equality groups was gathered as part of the Council's Housing Need and Demand Assessment. The LHS sets out how the Council intends to address these needs. The LHS includes an Equality Impact Assessment. Equality groups were consulted as part of the preparation of the LHS.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

The LHS Outcomes and Actions on fuel poverty and energy efficiency are closely aligned to the Council's Climate Change Strategy, and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).

(i) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Housing and Property, Head of Development Services, Head of Environmental Services, the Strategic Planning and Development Manager, The Head of Community Care, the Chief Officer Health and Social Care Moray, the Chief Financial Officer, Legal Services Manager, Equal Opportunities Officer, Lindsey Robinson (Committee Services Officer), and senior managers within Housing and Property Services.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report provides the Committee with details of the achievements of the Local Housing Strategy 2019-2024 to date, a revised Action Plan for its remaining term. The report provides details of actions already taken on development of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment which will support the next Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan. The report seeks approval to recruit a Tenant Participation Officer.**

Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Acting Housing Strategy and Development Manager
Background Papers: Held by author
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