

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 13 APRIL 2010

SUBJECT: INTERIM LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2013

BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010 – 2013, following public consultation on the main issues for approval.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to strategic housing matters.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) **notes the results of the public consultation on the main issues carried out December 2009 to February 2010; and**
- (ii) **approves the draft Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010 – 2013 for publication and implementation.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Scottish Government and COSLA published revised Local Housing Strategy Guidance in June 2008 and the Scottish Government published Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) in February 2010. Together these documents require housing and planning authorities to work closely to identify housing need and provide sufficient development land to meet that need and to develop, publish and review the LHS and the Development Plan in tandem. SPP states that *“the preparation of local housing strategies and development plans should be closely aligned”*.
- 3.2 The Moray Local Plan was adopted by the Scottish Government in December 2008 and so the next Local Plan is due in 2013. A Housing Need and Market Study was completed in 2007 and provides a recent strategic assessment of demand for affordable housing.

Public Consultation

- 3.3 On 1 December 2009, Communities Committee approved a public consultation on the Interim Local Housing Strategy Main Issues Report and agreed that the Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010-2013 be presented to Committee in April 2010 (Paragraph 4 of minute refers).
- 3.4 The consultation format was an on-line form available from the Council's website homepage and resulted in 18 responses. This response is similar to that received during development of the LHS 2004-2009. Although the response rate is too low to be statistically valid, the results show broad

agreement with the main issues identified and with the actions proposed. The only exception was that 27% of respondents disagreed when asked if the Council should “consider to what extent the private rented sector can provide housing options for homeless households or households on the housing list”. This was the highest level of disagreement with an action.

- 3.5 Respondents commented on the length of time taken to be housed, the lack of larger family sized affordable accommodation and the lack of accommodation for young single homeless people.
- 3.6 Officers have drafted an Equality Impact Assessment on the draft Interim LHS 2010-13, which has been approved by the Equalities Officer. The Equalities Forum has had the opportunity to comment on the LHS.

4. INTERIM LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2010-2013

4.1 This Interim LHS 2010 – 2013 will:

- aim to “ensure that good quality, affordable housing is available to meet the needs of people living in or requiring housing in Moray”;
- align its strategic objectives and outcomes to the Council’s Single Outcome Agreement;
- have regard for updated Scottish Government guidance;
- include and mainstream the Council’s actions to address fuel poverty; and
- assess housing need based on the Housing Needs and Market Study 2007

4.2 The Council has carried out an assessment of Moray housing system as part of preparing the Interim LHS, included as an Annex. A copy of this assessment is available on the Council’s website and a paper copy is available in the Member’s Library. The main points from this assessment are:

- House prices in Moray have increased by approximately 77% over the last 5 years. Aspiring homeowners, especially single earner households, find it increasingly difficult to purchase a property.
- Economic downturn has reduced the availability of mortgage credit and means that more households cannot access owner occupied housing.
- Moray is characterised by its low wages. In 2008 the median household income for Moray was £27,483. 5% less than in Aberdeen City Council area and 12% less than in Aberdeenshire.
- There is particular pressure in Moray due to homelessness. The acute shortage of permanent and temporary affordable housing options presents a serious challenge to the Council in meeting its statutory duty to abolish the priority need test by 2012. Over the last 3 years the vast majority of homeless households have originated from within Moray (80%).
- Moray’s population is ageing. The proportion of people aged over 65 is rising faster in Moray than the Scottish average. This increase is

particularly significant in the over 75 age group with an increase of 104% by 2031. Moray needs to make provision for this in its housing stock and provision of services.

- Private sector housing stock disrepair gives concern, particularly in private rented accommodation. A private sector property is between 2 and 3 times more likely to require an urgent repair than a public sector property. Approximately 18,000 private sector properties in Moray would fail the Scottish House Condition Standard.
- In 2007 the Scottish Government estimated that between 27% and 42% of Moray households have difficulty in heating their home, and that between 5% and 15% of Moray households are fuel poor.
- It is estimated that 13% of households in Moray contain one or more members with some form of physical disability. Approximately 25% of these households require one or more adaptations to their home. It is estimated that between 15% and 25% of dwellings in Moray have aspects that restrict activity of long term ill/disabled household members.

5. **ACTION PLAN**

- 5.1 The Interim LHS provides a strategic response to the issues identified above. The actions proposed to address some of the identified problems in the housing market are summarised below. A full version of the Interim LHS is in the Member's Library. The Executive Summary is attached to this report at **APPENDIX I** and the full Action Plan is attached at **APPENDIX II**.

During the term of the interim LHS the Housing Service will:

- progress proposals for Council New Build Phase 3
- continue to publish a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) annually, informed by the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment to be completed during 2010. The Council promotes provision of good quality, safe, energy efficient and adaptable new build affordable housing in well designed street layouts through the SHIP
- implement the Homelessness Inspection Improvement Plan and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy
- implement its Asset Management Strategy, which sets out how the Council will ensure all its housing stock meets the SHQS by 2015 and how the Council will improve the energy efficiency of its stock
- implement its Scheme of Assistance, which sets out the help it can provide to owner-occupiers and private renters with the condition of their home
- continue to fund disabled adaptations in all tenures and will continue to deliver new build purpose-built accessible housing in accordance with need through the SHIP
- continue to work in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust (Scotland) to provide access to energy efficiency advice to households in all tenures, and will participate in the Moray Financial Inclusion Network
- implement a Common Housing Register to improve access to the housing lists of all RSLs

- continue to update and republish a Housing Options Guide annually
- continue the Rural Housing Enabler project for a 3rd and final year (2010/11) with evaluation of the project thereafter
- consider the case for an extension to Moray's Pressured Area Status designations, the first of which expires in March 2011
- complete a strategic review of sheltered housing and will work with partners to maximise the take up of telecare services in Moray
- continue to maximise opportunities for tenant participation and empowerment throughout the social rented sector

6. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2013-2018

- 6.1 The Scottish Government published Housing Need and Demand Assessment Guidance, new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) guidance and revised Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) in 2009. SPP requires that there are stronger links between assessed housing need and demand, local housing strategies and development planning, and that LHS' and Local Plans are to be developed in tandem and complement each other. Local Plan development requires a Housing Need and Demand Assessment to estimate how much new housing in all tenures is required for the next 15 years, which types of housing and their locations.
- 6.2 The project plan for the development of the next Local Plan, attached at **APPENDIX III**, requires that the Council complete a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) by August 2010. The Scottish Government has published HNDA guidance and suggests that Council's should submit their HNDAs to the Government's Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) for approval as being "robust and credible". The HNDA guidance suggests that the first step in developing a HNDA is to establish the authority's Functional Housing Markets¹. Identifying Functional Housing Markets will help the Council and its partners to make provision for the right amount of housing (owner occupied and affordable rented) in the right locations across Moray by:
- enabling the Housing Service to assign appropriate targets for achievement of new affordable housing to each area, through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)
 - enabling the Environmental Services Department to designate sufficient land for new housing development in each area through the Local Plan.
- 6.3 Officers have identified 6 functional housing markets in Moray and they were considered by the Housing Strategy Group on 3 March 2010. Their boundaries match datazones to allow comparison with Census and other

¹ SPP states that "a housing market area is a geographical area where the demand for housing is relatively self-contained, i.e. where a large percentage of the people moving house or settling within the area have sought a dwelling only within that area."

national datasets. A map and list of settlements indicating the housing market areas are attached at **APPENDIX IV**. The CHMA have been consulted on the Functional Housing Markets and have commented that they “would tend to agree that these are the most suitable housing market areas in Moray”.

- 6.4 The remainder of the HNDA work will involve analysis of secondary data and consultation with stakeholders, to be completed in-house. Officers expect to be able to brief Committee of HNDA findings in October 2010.

7. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan

The Moray Council's priorities for National Outcome 10 of the Single Outcome agreement include:

- The volume and quality of housing throughout Moray will increase
- People assessed as homeless will be provided appropriate accommodation.

The Interim Local Housing Strategy also impacts on a number of other parts of the Single Outcome agreement and these are documented within it.

(b) Policy and Legal

It is a requirement of the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act that local authorities have a Local Housing Strategy.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

There are no direct resourcing implications associated with this report.

(d) Consultations

Consultation has taken place with the Director of Community Services, Director of Environmental Services, Chief Housing Officer, Principal Planning Officer, Lead System Manager, Housing Programmes Manager, Housing Strategy and Policy Manager, Housing Needs Manager, Capital Programmes Manager, Home Improvements Services Manager, Community Planning & Development Manager, Fairer Scotland Manager and the Cairngorms National Park Authority.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report has presented Committee with a summary of the main points included in the Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010 – 2013 along with the results of a public consultation on the main issues carried out during December 2009 – February 2010.
- 8.2 This report also presents a project plan for the next Local Housing Strategy 2013-18.

ITEM:

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Author of Report: Fiona Geddes, Housing Strategy Officer
Background Papers: Held by author
Ref: FG/

Signature: _____

Date : 30 March 2010

Designation: Chief Housing Officer

Name: Jill Stewart