

REPORT TO: SAFER AND STRONGER STRATEGIC GROUP – 21 MAY 2009

SUBJECT: LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE 2008-09

BY: CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER, THE MORAY COUNCIL

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 This report summarises the 2009 Local Housing Strategy (LHS) update and will be the last annual update of the LHS 2004 - 2009. The report reviews the actions for 2008/9 and sets out the actions for 2009/10.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **It is recommended that the Safer and Stronger Strategic Group notes this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Moray Council's current Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covers the term 2004 - 2009. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to keep their LHS under review, and to provide Scottish Ministers with information about the implementation of the Strategy. This has been achieved through submission of an LHS Annual Monitoring Statement to the Scottish Government (previously Communities Scotland).

3.2 Earlier Annual Monitoring Statements were presented to Committee and submitted to Communities Scotland in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The last annual monitoring report was submitted to Committee on 19 August 2008 (paragraph 9 of the Minute refers). These statements provide a review of the actions carried out during the previous year, together with a revised action plan for the current year. The Annual Monitoring Statements are published on the Council's website. The previous statements have been assessed by the Scottish Government and they have stated that, in line with the Concordat with COSLA, they do not require to assess this or future statements. However the Local Housing Strategy contains a commitment to report to Committee and provide a public annual update. In view of this, the review arrangements have been continued for this year. This enables the LHS to be monitored in a consistent manner throughout its life. A copy of the latest Annual Monitoring Statement has been placed in the Members' Library. To assist discussion within the Safer and Stronger Theme Group, the monitoring statement is attached as **APPENDIX I**.

- 3.3 The Scottish Government published new LHS Guidance in June 2008, which indicates that in the future the LHS should be produced along with the Council's Development Plan. The Council Development Plan was adopted in December 2008 and will remain in force for 5 years. This means that the next LHS will be due for publication in 2013. At its meeting in December 2008, the Housing Strategy Group agreed an approach to meet the new guidance. This approach involves producing an Interim LHS for the period 2010 – 2013, and the development of a new LHS to coincide with production of the new Development Plan for 2013.

4. PROGRESS 2008/2009

- 4.1 The LHS Annual Monitoring Statement 2009 sets out progress against the actions in 2008/9. The actions are categorised in the main themes of Access to Housing, Quality of Housing, Housing and Community Care, and Sustainable Communities and Social Inclusion.
- 4.2 There were 67 actions for the year. Of these 40 were fully completed, there was significant progress with 20 of them, and 7 were not achieved.

5. ACTIONS 2009/2010

- 5.1 The LHS Annual Monitoring Statement 2009 continues most of the actions from previous years. The outstanding actions from 2008/9 are timetabled to be completed this year.
- 5.2 The main action of the LHS continues to be to maximise the opportunities for new affordable housing. The model supplied with the Council's Housing Needs And Market Study 2007 shows that there is a requirement for 255 new affordable houses each year for the next 5 years to meet newly arising and backlog housing need. How this may be achieved will primarily be set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and pursued through the Development Programme.
- 5.3 Fuel poverty and energy efficiency continue to be high priorities of the LHS. The Fuel Poverty Strategy 2004 – 2009 has been reviewed and work has begun on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy with a consultative draft expected in August 2009.
- 5.4 The Council has begun to implement the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and expects to publish a consultative draft Scheme of Assistance in August 2009. The Housing Service and Environmental Health Service have jointly developed an Action Plan to address properties Below Tolerable Standard which will be implemented, on a phased basis, through 2009/10.
- 5.5 The actions outlined for 2009/10 will be progressed through the Housing Strategy Group and Homelessness Strategy Group.

6. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The Local Housing Strategy covers all the main housing and related issues within the Community Plan and the Service Development Plan.

(b) Policy and Legal

The production of the LHS is a legal requirement of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

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

The LHS update does not directly allocate resources for the year but sets out the strategic priorities for the year.

(d) Consultations

Consultations have taken place with the Director of Community Services and Senior Managers within the Housing Service in the preparation of this report.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This report provides the last Annual Monitoring Statement for the Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009. It highlights what has been achieved during 2008/9 and presents the main actions for 2009/10, which include the development of an Interim Local Housing Strategy 2010-13.**

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