

3.4.4 PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

There are 419 individuals with a learning disability known to the Council. National studies⁴³ estimate that:

- 20 people in every 1,000 have a mild or moderate learning disability and;
- 3-4 people in every 1,000 have a profound or multiple disability.

On this basis, just over 1740 people in Moray have a mild disability and 300 people have a profound disability. The majority of people live in their own homes or with family.

The strategic aim for providing housing support for people with learning disabilities will be to ensure that as many people as possible can sustain their own tenancies where possible.

3.4.5 OTHER VULNERABLE ADULTS AND THOSE WITH MULTIPLE/COMPLEX NEEDS

It is recognised that there are people who have needs that do not fit into these established categories or people with many needs. As a result, these people can fall through the net of service provision. The Supporting People Strategy identifies all the specific care groups such as those with cancer, HIV/AIDS, acquired brain injury. The strategic focus for these groups is to ensure that they remain supported in their homes for as long as possible. The Supporting People Strategy also recognised that there is a need for a service for those with borderline learning disabilities and social/behavioural problems.

3.4.6 WORK DONE SO FAR / IN PROGRESS

- Research into housing support needs for older people and those with physical disabilities
- Partnership approach between NHS Grampian, The Moray Council, Communities Scotland and Grampian Community Care Charitable Trust provided innovative housing for those with autism
- Replacement of residential homes for older people with Very Sheltered Accommodation
- A comprehensive approach to adaptations to Council properties and private sector properties
- The Single Shared Assessment is being used for older people throughout Moray
- The Supporting People Strategy has a timetable of service reviews that will ensure the quality and effectiveness of housing support services
- A Physical and Sensory disability strategy is being produced as part of the Community Care Strategic Plan that will help inform the housing needs research

⁴³ The same as you? A review of services for people with learning disabilities. Scottish Executive (2000)

- A review of the Learning Disability Strategy and development of the Partnership in Practice (PIP) document will be completed by the end of 2004
- Development of a joint health board/care sector home-care service allowing those with more complex needs to remain at home

3.4.7 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6 - TO MAXIMISE THE CHOICE OF HOUSING, SUPPORT AND CARE COMBINATIONS FOR ALL SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS AND IN PARTICULAR TO ENABLE ALL THOSE WISHING TO STAY AT HOME TO DO SO WITH THE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT WHERE PRACTICABLE.

Much of the work around implementation, service delivery and quality will be taken forward through the Supporting People Strategy. The other main part of this objective is the provision of aids and adaptations. It has been shown throughout the strategy that the greatest need is in-situ and that much of this need is in older peoples' homes and is related to their mobility/health.

Strategic Priority 6.1 - Implement the Supporting People Strategy 2003- 2008

Although the Supporting People Strategy is a separate document, it is closely linked to the LHS as it deals with the provision of housing support in Moray.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 6.2 - Develop a greater understanding of the need and requirement for special needs housing in Moray by carrying out a housing needs and support assessment for each care group identified in the Community Care Plan by 2006

This priority recognises the information gaps around housing needs for those with special needs. Also, Moray has a high level of households containing person/s with special needs.

Overall priority rating - high

Strategic Priority 6.3 - To ensure the best use of adaptations in the public and private sector

This priority reflects the need to balance current (and future) demand for such services against the finite resources that are available.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 6.4 - Consider the provision of a disabled person's housing service

Given the high levels of adaptations carried out in Moray, this priority reflects the need to ensure access to appropriate housing and to maximise the available housing resources for those with disabilities.

Overall priority rating – medium

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7 - TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING WITHIN COMMUNITIES FOR THOSE NOT WISHING OR UNABLE TO REMAIN IN THEIR OWN HOME BUT WHO WISH TO REMAIN IN THEIR COMMUNITY

This reflects the need to provide specialist accommodation in communities where people can no longer be accommodated in their homes. The housing needs research will provide more detail regarding the scale and range of provision required.

Strategic Priority 7.1 - Implement planning policies in respect of special needs housing through the affordable housing policy

This priority reflects that the planning process can be used to supply special needs housing as well as affordable housing. Information from the housing needs research will help establish the target for the number of units achieved through the planning process.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 7.2 - Use the findings of the housing needs research

This priority reflects the importance of the housing needs research in developing a strategic approach to the provision of specialist accommodation.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 7.3 - Ensure that maximum use is made of funding resources

This priority recognises the importance of financial contributions from all partners in providing specialist housing provision. The priority also reflects the commitment from the Council and its partners to use joint resources where possible.

Overall priority rating – high

3.5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The use of land and the planning of new housing developments have the longest-term impact of any part of the LHS. The financing of social housing is usually considered over a 30-year period with the assumption that the buildings will still be in use after this period. It is important therefore, to consider the mixture of all houses, the impact on the local environment and the local community.

3.5.1 THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The housing needs survey estimates that 821 households require a move to relieve their need but cannot afford to look to the private sector to meet their need. The continuing rise in house prices since the housing needs survey was conducted would suggest that there is even less of a chance to have need met by purchasing a house in the private sector. Private renting was also shown to be less affordable than having a mortgage - almost 63% of households in housing need (approximately 1450 households) would have to pay more than 30% of their incomes if they rented in the private rented sector. The survey also found that over half of the households in housing need because of 'accommodation being too expensive' were in the private rented sector.

The total social rented stock in Moray is approximately 7,900. This stock is depleted by about 170 each year due to Council house sales transferring a unit into the owner-occupier sector (this does not include any similar sales in the RSL sector). The replacement of units through Communities Scotland development programme has amounted to an average of 30-40 units per annum.

The number of Council owned properties has decreased by almost 50% since 1980. The sales have not been uniform across Moray with the incidence of sales related to the size/mix of the stock and the desirability of the area. There is a difference between the sub areas with the North/West losing half of its Council stock. The sales follow the national trend in that a disproportionate amount of family sized housing has been sold. This is shown in the table below.

	Stock Before RTB	Remaining stock at 31 Mar 03	% Sold	% bedroom sold	% bedroom sold
North West	8001	4081	49	63	61
South East	4722	2622	44	59	69
Cairngorms Park	75	48	36	49	-
Moray	12798	6751	47	61	63

Source: Council RTB records

Table 3.5 Levels of RTB throughout Moray

The impact of these sales is not so much the loss of the unit but of the potential re-lets that the house can provide. There are variances within the rate at which properties become available. Within the Council's stock, 3 and 4 bedroom houses have a turn over rate of 2.6-4% compared to 10.5% for 1bedroom houses. This further compounds the loss of the family sized houses through RTB. Also, the relet rate across the whole social rented sector in Moray is the lowest in Scotland at 2.3%¹⁸. The Housing Solutions research identified that there was a clear lack of three and four bedroom housing with a smaller requirement for one and two bedroom housing.⁴⁴ It is clear, therefore that there is a lack of family sized accommodation throughout Moray.

The Housing Solutions report provided an assessment of the various options available. The main focus for the LHS is to provide affordable housing to rent as this was shown to be the most effective way of meeting housing need (see Appendix 2 – Options Appraisal). There is scope for limited amounts of Grant for Rent and Ownership (GRO) housing (see information box 6). Further details are in the Resources section.

The Housing Needs Survey presented a clear picture of where housing need arises. However, it states clearly that this is not necessarily where it should be met. There are characteristics of the North/West area that mean that most of the affordable housing will be provided there. These characteristics are:

- The area contains 65% of the population of Moray
- The area has the highest house prices
- The area is the economic and administrative centre of Moray
- Elgin has almost a quarter of the in-migrant households unable to afford market housing⁸
- The waiting lists show the greatest demand for this area⁴⁵

Analysis of information from any future Common Housing Register and updates to the housing needs survey will provide a continual picture of changing need and demand. Any change in patterns will be reflected in the investment programme.

Information Box 6 Grant for Rent and Ownership (GRO grant)

This is designed to bring more housing choice for local people. Communities Scotland award grant funding of around 25% of total cost to private developers to build affordable homes for sale in areas where they would otherwise not operate. The homes are offered initially to first time buyers, housing association or Council tenants and those on waiting lists.

⁴⁴ Housing Needs: Possible Solutions. Fordham Research (2002) The research tested the data against three models of need – total housing need (as per the housing needs survey), total number of households identified as in need and on the Council waiting list and households on the waiting list with 50 plus points),
⁴⁵ The ratio of people per available let for the six lettings areas in Elgin ranges from 35-45. The area next in demand in Forres at 23 people per available let (as at July 2003).

3.5.4 FUEL POVERTY

The SHCS estimated that 21% of households (8,000) in Moray are in fuel poverty. This is the second highest level of all mainland authorities (along with Argyll & Bute and Highland). The low incomes in Moray (see Section 2) contribute to this in addition to the high levels of older housing, particularly in the private 'rural' rented sector. The energy efficiency of Moray's houses is also poor in comparison to the Scottish average. There are fewer households in the higher rating energy bands, and pensioners are over-represented in the low energy bands (20% compared to the national figure of 16%). This confirms the general trend where the levels of energy efficiency are lower in rural areas creating an increased risk of fuel poverty.⁴⁶

Information box 7 Fuel Poverty

A household is said to be in 'fuel poverty' when their home cannot be heated to an acceptable standard at a reasonable cost. This tends to be the result of a combination of three major factors: energy efficiency of the home, household income and the cost of fuel.

The Scottish Executive has adopted the following definition: " a household is in fuel poverty if it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use".

The SHCS reported a high level of central heating in Moray (93% households) yet a third of households report having difficulty in heating their homes. This could be a consequence of the poor energy efficiency of houses and low incomes.

Influencing the cost of fuel remains outwith the scope of the LHS document. However, there are actions that can be taken to reduce peoples' fuel bills. The main focus is to raise awareness of the choices of fuel types, suppliers, tariffs and payment methods as well as the grants that are available.

⁴⁶ Issues in Improving Quality in Private Housing. The first report of the housing improvement taskforce (2002).

Despite the baseline information, further work is needed to highlight the location and exact scale of fuel poverty – especially in rural areas. Moray’s fuel poverty strategy will be published during the summer of 2004 detailing the way in which fuel poverty will be tackled. It is based on the following strategic themes:

- Nature and Extent of Fuel Poverty
- Raising awareness
- Improving the Housing Stock
- The Cost of Fuel
- Income Maximisation
- Energy Advice

3.5.4 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION

There is increasing emphasis to invest in people and communities alongside the investment in the bricks and mortar. Communities Scotland have developed policies explaining the role of RSLs in community regeneration and the wider role. This wider role refers to activities that contribute to the Scottish Executive’s priorities for regeneration and social inclusion e.g. activities that improve health and building the skills, networks and confidence of local people. The success of build and train initiatives elsewhere in Grampian has meant that there is an opportunity to do something similar in Moray. Such a scheme would complement the work undertaken by the Social Inclusion Partnership and help to address the shortage of skilled workers within the construction industry.

Like all rural authorities, there is the potential for people who do not live in the central area to be geographically isolated. The LHS seeks to ensure that the need for affordable housing throughout Moray is met. However, investment in housing must also be matched with economic investment and good transport links. It is recognised that the primary responsibility for economic regeneration lies with other agencies but a partnership approach is required to ensure that rural communities remain sustainable.

Moray is considered to be an attractive and desirable place in which to live. Information from the housing needs study showed that half of the total households surveyed were ‘satisfied’ with the area in which they live and a further 37% very satisfied. Only 4% showed any dissatisfaction. However, as a landlord of over 6,600 houses, the Council has a role in ensuring that people are satisfied with their neighbourhoods, take the appropriate action to continue its successful approach to encouraging tenant involvement and managing anti-social behaviour. It is recognised that this responsibility rests with all social rented landlords.

3.5.5 WORK DONE SO FAR/ IN PROGRESS

- The New Housing Partnership grant and DHE stock transfer resulted in a one-off provision of 319 new and refurbished homes/flats for rent through out Moray
- The Council has produced an Affordable Housing Policy to seek 20% of any development greater than 20 units
- The Council is part of the Grampian wide DEVANHA bulk procurement scheme that will deliver 46 units throughout the South/East and Cairngorms areas of Moray. A second bulk procurement initiative is underway securing 123 units in the North/West of Moray
- The Council fund the Moray Energy Efficiency Advice Project in conjunction with SCARF (Save Cash and Reduce Fuel), a voluntary organisation that aims to promote energy efficiency
- A working group has been set up with the Council, RSLs and SCARF to undertake further research into fuel poverty and to produce the Moray fuel poverty strategy in July 2004. The working group organised two fuel poverty seminars in October 2003 and March 2004 to help with the production of the strategy
- The Council has established an estate caretaker service
- The Council has submitted its bid to the Scottish Executive for funding for Community Wardens

3.5.6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8 - MAXIMISE THE INVESTMENT IN AND THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET HOUSING NEED REQUIREMENT IN MORAY.

This priority reflects one of the most important issues in the LHS – ensuring that there is enough affordable housing in Moray to meet the housing need. This also reflects the need to make sure that the maximum resources are made available.

Strategic Priority 8.1 - Monitor and review the supply of housing land for all tenures

This priority reflects the need for Council housing and planning services to work together to ensure that there is enough land to meet the overall demand for housing. This also reflects the need to assist the RSL sector to acquire land in the North/West area of Moray in particular.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 8.2 - Implement the ‘Supplementary Planning Guidance: Affordable Housing’

This priority reflects the need to use the planning process as a provider of affordable housing.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 8.3 - Continue to work in partnership with Communities Scotland and RSLs to deliver 161 units of affordable housing per annum

This priority reflects the strategic and enabling role that the Council has in the provision of affordable housing.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 8.4 - Undertake further research into the impact of right to buy sales by 2005 and consider the need for application for pressurised area status.

This priority reflects the need to assess the effects of RTB on the overall Council area. With nearly 50% of Council stock gone through RTB, research will determine whether or not there is a case for pressured area status for Moray.

Overall priority rating – medium

Strategic Priority 8.5 - To consider the transfer of development funding function previously administered by Communities Scotland to Moray Council by 2005

This priority reflects the power for local authorities to transfer management of development funding currently administered by Communities Scotland to Councils. The Council recognises that the potential management of the programme may complement and enhance its strategic role. It will, therefore, consider this new responsibility in more detail and consider the resources required for capacity building and training.

Overall priority rating – medium/high

Strategic Priority 8.6 - Investigate the potential of private landowners as potential sources and providers of affordable housing

This priority reflects the potential role that landowner can play in the provision of affordable housing especially in areas with the high levels of tied/rented/empty accommodation.

Overall priority rating – medium/high

Strategic Priority 8.7 - Investigate the impact of second/holiday homes

This priority reflects the need to assess whether or not the growing number holiday homes are having an adverse impact in areas of Moray. It is anticipated that this will be taken forward through the Cairngorms National Park Housing Strategy for the Cairngorms Park area.

Overall priority rating – medium

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 9 - TO CREATE AND SUSTAIN NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT ARE SAFE, SOCIALLY MIXED AND SUPPORTIVE.

This reflects the Council's contribution to the Executive's wider social justice agenda and in particular the commitment to decrease the amount of anti-social behaviour.

Strategic Priority 9.1 - Identify the main causes of anti-social behaviour and promote effective and practical solutions to significantly reduce anti social behaviour

This priority recognises the negative effects of anti-social behaviour and that it is important that it is tackled when it arises. This priority also recognises that Moray offers a good quality of life and that this should be maintained.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 9.2 - Develop methods of evaluating the effectiveness of housing policies and management in promoting social inclusion

This priority reflects the fact that housing is more than the provision of 'bricks and mortar' and that houses are part of neighbourhoods and communities. This priority will become more relevant towards the end of the LHS when the final evaluation will take place. It is anticipated that the indicators, targets and monitoring will be linked into the Community Planning framework.

Overall priority rating – medium/low

ITEM: 5
PAGE: 49

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 10 - TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE WIDER ROLE ACTIVITIES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY REGENERATION

This reflects the ways in which housing providers can contribute to the creation of socially inclusive societies. It also recognises the requirement for RSLs to participate in the wider role.

Strategic Priority 10.1 - To promote the involvement of RSLs in the Community Planning process

This was chosen to reflect the importance of involving RSLs within the Community Planning process so that they can contribute to issues such as fuel poverty at a Moray wide level.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 10.2 - To encourage employment opportunities by creating a Build and Train scheme for 10 trainees as part of the wider role programme

This priority recognises the success of similar schemes throughout Grampian and looks to build on the existing 'Ambition Construction' programme in Moray.

Overall priority rating – high

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 11 - TO ERADICATE FUEL POVERTY FROM ALL VULNERABLE GROUPS BY 2016

This reflects the Scottish Executive's priority to tackle fuel poverty in Scotland and the Council and its partners will adopt the timescales of the Executive. The priorities in 4.4 will also contribute to the overall success in this area.

Strategic Priority 11.1 - Develop a Fuel Poverty Strategy by 2004

This was chosen to reflect the statutory requirement of all local authorities to ensure that people do not live in fuel poverty. A separate strategy detailing how this will happen will be published as part of the LHS.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 11.2 - Continue with the measures under the HECA strategy until 2007

This reflects the statutory duty of the Council to ensure that there is a reduction in the amount of energy used across all tenures in Moray.

Overall priority rating – high

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 12 - TO PROVIDE MAXIMUM OPPORTUNITIES FOR TENANT PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT THROUGHOUT THE (SOCIAL) RENTED SECTOR

This reflects the statutory requirement of all social rented landlords to produce and implement a tenant participation strategy as well as the aim of the Executive to promote community empowerment.

Strategic Priority 12.1 - Implement the Moray Tenant Participation Strategy 2003-2006

The Council has produced its strategy and a working group has been established to take forward the implementation of the action plan.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 12.2 - Maintain the Council's commitment to the retention of its housing stock

This reflects the importance of recommendations of the Options Appraisal (undertaken in 2001) for the Council to retain ownership of its stock. It also reflects the commitment of the Council to work in partnership with Council tenants in the future management of the housing stock.

Overall priority rating – high

Strategic Priority 12.3 - Promote co-operation between all social landlords to promote tenant participation

This priority reflects the benefits of joint working between all social landlords in providing joint training for tenants, seminars etc.

Overall priority rating – medium/high