

## **Item: 14**

**Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 11 November 2020.**

**Local Housing Strategy.**

**Report by Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To advise of the outcome of consultation and consider the final Local Housing Strategy for adoption.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

That, in December 2019, the Council agreed that consultation be undertaken on the draft Local Housing Strategy 2017 to 2022.

#### **2.2.**

That public consultation has been undertaken in respect of the draft Local Housing Strategy 2017 to 2022.

#### **2.3.**

The results of the consultation, as outlined in section 4 of this report, and attached as Appendix 1.

#### **2.4.**

That the draft Local Housing Strategy has been updated to reflect the outcome of the consultation.

**It is recommended:**

#### **2.5.**

That the Local Housing Strategy 2017 to 2022, attached as Appendix 3 to this report, be approved.

### **3. Consultation Process**

#### **3.1.**

At its meeting held on 13 November 2019, the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee recommended that the draft Local Housing Strategy 2017 to 2022 be approved for public consultation.

### **3.2.**

In undertaking the consultation, the Housing Service formed a detailed consultation plan which originally included a range of different consultation methods. The COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards caused significant changes to be made to the intended consultation methods. This resulted in a consultation process being devised by entirely electronic means, which included:

- Email contact being made with a range of agencies crossing the statutory and third sectors. These included Community Councils and Development Trusts.
- Two evening meetings being set up through Microsoft Teams to enable members of the public and those representing organisations to attend.
- An electronic survey being set up for responses.
- An offer for direct contact with anyone who wished to discuss issues separately.

### **3.3.**

Information relating to the consultation was available through the Council's website and the survey was also available for completion online.

### **3.4.**

A press release was issued which outlined the general process and the dates of the consultation.

### **3.5.**

The consultation process ran for a four-week period until 11 October 2020.

## **4. Summary of Consultation Results**

### **4.1.**

Responses to the consultation were as follows:

- Direct responses to the survey.
- Minutes from the two meetings referred to at section 3.2 above.
- Responses submitted directly in writing.

### **4.2.**

In undertaking the survey, the Council received 56 direct responses to the survey, attendance at meetings totalled 6 attendees which included representatives of various development trusts and members of the public.

### **4.3.**

Respondents were asked to consent to their comments being anonymised and published in the report on the consultation. 49 of 56 agreed, being 88%. For the purposes of reporting, comments can be separated on the basis of those who consented and those who did not.

#### **4.4.**

The consultation results, which were made by respondents who consented to the publication of their responses, are attached at Appendix 1 to this report, including an overview of comments made.

#### **4.5.**

Appendix 2 contains comments from respondents who did not give permission for their comments to be published.

### **5. Key Issues Arising from Consultation**

#### **5.1.**

The key issues arising from the consultation, as detailed in Appendix 1, include those of affordability and concerns were raised that these may be exacerbated as a result of the pandemic. In addition, concerns were raised about the ability for specific groups within society to be able to access housing.

#### **5.2.**

In addition, challenges highlighted included those of energy efficiency, limitations of some of the current funding streams and issues affecting some of the more fragile communities within Orkney's societies.

#### **5.3.**

Respondents raised concerns regarding the level of property available as holiday accommodation on Orkney and therefore not available for rent and the rising costs of schemes intended to assist young people into home ownership. In addition, concerns were expressed around rising house prices and the perceived inability for local people to obtain housing.

#### **5.4.**

Additional concerns were raised regarding the level of development of social housing of particular sizes and in given areas, especially the isles. There were also suggestions made that the level of housing be enhanced to encourage people to move to certain areas.

#### **5.5.**

A number of comments were made relating to existing projects which are covered within the Local Housing Strategy including endeavouring to bring empty properties back into use and enhancing work in areas such as fuel poverty to try and improve property condition and comfort.

#### **5.6.**

In addition, some valuable suggestions were made such as looking at introducing improvement and repair grants for private sector properties and otherwise providing assistance to this sector.

## **5.7.**

Comments were made around inward migration to Orkney, particularly the perceived level and impact.

## **5.8.**

In general terms there was broad agreement with the priorities within the Local Housing Strategy and also the intended actions outlined.

## **5.9.**

The comments received during the consultation were very valuable and support the priorities and actions within the consultative draft of the Local Housing Strategy.

## **5.10.**

Many of the comments relate to areas already covered in the Local Housing Strategy, some others such as concerns around rising prices and perceived levels of migration, are not matters which can be controlled directly.

## **5.11.**

As regards suggested projects, there is unfortunately no funding attached to the Local Housing Strategy and consequently there is no ability to fund additional projects at this point in time. However, these will remain under consideration and will again be taken into account when the next Local Housing Strategy is developed for 2023.

## **5.12.**

The draft Local Housing Strategy has been updated in relation to the consultation process and is attached at Appendix 3.

## **6. Equalities Impact**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 4 to this report.

## **7. Corporate Governance**

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

## **8. Financial Implications**

There are no significant financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report.

## **9. Legal Aspects**

### **9.1.**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covering all housing tenures.

### **9.2.**

The law on consultation requires that:

- It must take place at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage.
- The proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response.
- Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
- The product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in the decision making process before finalising any proposals.

### **9.3.**

Under Section 50A(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public must be excluded from the meeting in respect of any discussion relating to Appendix 2 to this report. The report contains confidential information relative to the Data protection Act 2018.

## **10. Contact Officers**

James Wylie, Executive Director of Education, Leisure and Housing, extension 2401, Email [james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:james.wylie@orkney.gov.uk).

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services, extension 2177, Email [frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk).

Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness), extension 2174, Email [lesley.mulraine@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.mulraine@orkney.gov.uk).

Luke Fraser, Team Leader (Policy and Planning), extension 2172, Email [Luke.fraser@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:Luke.fraser@orkney.gov.uk).

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1: Consultation responses.

Appendix 2: Consultation responses.

Appendix 3: Local Housing Strategy.

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment.

## **Appendix 1: Comments made on Local Housing Strategy - Comments for publication:**

### **Q5. In light of the priorities outlined above do you think there should be different or additional priorities? Please outline below.**

Ensuring people are able to grow up and stay in Orkney through buying their own property is important. At the moment, with house prices rising significantly, it is making it more challenging for younger people to return to Orkney after studying or continue to live in Orkney and moving away is becoming more of a financial necessity. Allowing so many holiday accommodation properties available on the island reduces the availability and affordability of much needed of permanent housing. The affordable/shared ownership schemes are becoming unaffordable for many people with the increase of housing prices. These schemes need to be reviewed locally with opportunities to buy property at the value when entering the scheme, rather than current market value. With prices rising so much right now, the schemes are defeating the purpose for which they were created.

Ensuring that housing provided has an economic rent that does not increase faster than inflation or the income of the tenant.

Build more 3/4 bed family houses and less 1/2 room houses

Under the ambit of Priority One and Priority Five above, further work should be done with owners in the private sector to bring unused properties back into the rental market, and to ensure that help with retro-fitting insulation and heating systems that reduce carbon emissions is available. This would appear to be a natural extension of the successful outcomes that have already been achieved in these areas.

The strategy makes no mention of the National Islands Plan and the priorities set out under Objective 4 Housing. Indeed, the strategy has a very narrow focus despite all the text about policies and plans. There are no plans for additional housing in the isles - that is the plan for the isles which does not address depopulation it does not support economic development and it certainly doesn't support National Islands Plan objectives.

No, not that I can think of.

Elderly who've lived and worked in Orkney should be a priority rather than elderly people who've chosen to relocate.

Providing low cost first starter homes should be the private sector priority. This should be enforced through local planning. Creating more 3 bed council houses should be the local authority building priority to provide accommodation for public sector and low paid but essential workers.

Housing for young local people should be a priority. Currently they are priced out of the housing market and getting into council housing or ohal is a long wait. If young people are priced out of the local market they will be forced to leave Orkney. Then

who is the workforce? Orkney becomes a retirement home/ 2nd home haven that is busy for 2 months in the summer months then a ghost town.

Ensuring that local (people having been resident in Orkney for 5 years or more) are given priority over people recently moved here.

Priority to those already living in Orkney to housing.

Housing for young single Orcadians trying to move out of family home and or get on the property ladder.

I think social housing for younger people and people with young families should continue to be a priority. There is still a lack of affordable housing and mortgages are beyond the reach of many potential buyers.

Sustaining Orkney's Communities should be a priority, but there needs to be some better and more precise understanding of what constitutes a sustainable community. OIC cannot be expected to sustain the unsustainable given the financial climate.

No

No. Too many priorities merely becomes an unachievable list of aspirations.

No .....I believe 7 is plenty to be going on with. Too many and the priorities become diluted and unachievable....more like a wish list or an aspirational list.

Priority Area	Not a priority	Low priority	Neutral	Priority	High priority
Social rented housing (rented from the Council or Orkney Housing Association Limited)	0	4	3	17	21
Low-cost home ownership properties (starter homes that households can purchase with support through grant funding)	0	4	5	14	22
Mid-market rent (rented properties with rental charges being between the levels of social rent and private rent)	2	6	16	12	8
Private rented (renting from a private landlord or company)	4	6	22	10	3
Self-build serviced sites (sites with required services like water and electricity that households	4	3	19	14	5

can then build individual properties on)					
New build market housing (properties built by private builders)	3	5	20	8	9
Student housing	3	10	15	12	4
Older persons' housing	0	3	9	25	7

**Q8.3. Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on “Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses” in the space below.**

Provide the same opportunity for people whose financial circumstances have changed due to job loss, relationship breakdown, as those currently given to first time buyers.

Look into supporting better transport links so not so many people feel they are required to live in Kirkwall. Many of our smaller villages are lovely places to live but lack of transport into Kirkwall or Stromness means you need to have a car to live there. Getting people living there takes the pressure off the very few sites in Kirkwall, and also ensures village school roles stay up and communities more supported with shops, doctors and other services.

The strategy refers to population decline throughout the isles and Orkney. One of the key reasons is that there is limited housing available to attract economically active persons and families particularly to the outer north and south isles. The local authority should be working with partners to develop a more appropriate housing strategy. Indeed, the proposal is not to increase housing in the isles over the period of the strategy which means that there may as well be no mention of the isles!

More housing is needed across all different tenures. the Council should support the development of different types of housing and not just focus on social rented housing. The proposed mid-market rent option and low cost home ownership would provide options for lots of young households who need housing but won't get a council house.

Whilst I do agree that we need to be responsive to the need of the local population and that maybe why it is perceived that more supply needs to be given to the older population. I would urge that the needs of the young are not forgotten. Only today we have heard announced that mortgages for people with a 10% deposit are now very hard to get. House ownership can become a distant dream for many. Also need to attract younger people of working age to Orkney to replace folks who are heading



towards retirement. Need a good supply of affordable low cost housing to attract people.

Not clear why choice rather than need is to be at the heart of the lettings Policy

While there is a need for private renting there is also a need to ensure that private rented properties are maintained to a comparable standard as social rented properties, especially where they are being used by the council for whatever purpose.

8. Please answer the questions below on preventing and alleviating homelessness by ticking one box for each question.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Do you think that households receive enough support in temporary accommodation?	9	3	25
Do you think that households should be housed more quickly from temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation?	19	5	13
Do you think that it would be beneficial to provide more information about housing options locally?	32	1	4

**Q9.4. Comments re homelessness:**

I don't have sufficient information to comment on the first two questions.

None

Whilst homelessness is something we would all like to eradicate there are other kinds of acute housing need and I think the Housing Service has the balance of assistance just about right. Naturally if additional resources were provided by central government then all types of housing need could be addressed more quickly

While it would be preferable to move households to permanent accommodation as quickly as possible, it must be done with a care especially where children are concerned to prevent disturbance by possible enforced school changes.

Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on "Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness" in the space below.

Perhaps inter-agency collaboration could be enhanced and extended?

While in general I agree with this question and the information contained on pages 50 and 51, it is a bit at odds with the 'what we will do list' provided on page 45.

Question 9:

Do you agree that the actions outlined in the list under 'what we will do' on pages 50 and 51 of the 2017 to 2022 Local Housing Strategy are the correct actions for the priority on "Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness"?

Do you agree with statement	Yes	No
For the priority on "Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness"?	30	1

#### **Q11.5. Comments on housing for older people:**

In the early 70s small Council Housing Schemes across Orkney's country districts were built with "older people's housing" provision within them. These houses now appear to be let to anyone and everyone. Why has this happened, and could it be reversed?

Once again, there is no real mention of housing for elderly folk on the isles which is a real issue with many living in sub standard housing and without the supporting facilities and infrastructures that they need.

Consideration should be given to older residents on the island so they can stay there. Where family and friends are.

Cohousing looks like a very good idea. Older persons housing across Orkney would help tackle our upcoming demographic issues

None

I think a greater priority is ensuring that the current housing stock, some of which is occupied by older people, is fit for purpose and free from disrepair. This will ensure that care can be delivered at home and reduce the need for institutional care and reduce the need for people to move from current accommodation. I believe the budget for repair and adaptations needs to be increased to allow people to remain at home for as long as possible and the capacity within Third Party bodies such as Care and Repair needs to be increased by additional funding support from the local authority

**Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on Older People in the space below.**

Couldn't find anything on page 59 or close by.

There is no specific mention of housing for elderly on the isles - this is a real issue that needs to be included as a specific action. It should also involve partnership working with NHS and other organisations.

There has been quite a few years of focus on taking action on inadequate housing stock. Bodies such as OIC and THAW have worked hard in this area. Disappointing to see our fuel poverty figure still so high. With support having been available for quite a few years, why is it that these figures are still so high? Are we needing more investment or is the eligibility criteria too high? I don't know the answers but this needs to be a priority to keep folk healthy and happy in their own homes, for as long as possible.

More support should be given to groups looking to develop cohousing or other forms of housing for older people.

I agree that better use of technology and improved health and social care support would reduce the need for specialist housing ie supported housing though I welcome initiatives such as the Hope Co-Housing Project.

I do not entirely agree as many older people are set in their ways and want to remain either within their "own home" or in very close proximity to it, it is however accepted that this is not possible depending on their needs but moving them to an unfamiliar environment against their will can often have a detrimental effect on their health. The co-housing project, as far as I am being led to believe is being driven by a group of people who see it as how they want to live and it is their desire to build and live in the project. While this is seen as very commendable it may not be a situation that many older people would be comfortable with and therefore need to be very careful consideration for the hopeful success of the current project and any subsequent co-housing developments.

**Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on "Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs" in the space below.**

Page 66 strange table with little info on what is being done/suggested. All data in the past, don't understand table.

Care and repair 2012? Develop targets, what's the point if no new money for service.

The housing stock for people who have disabilities is severely inadequate especially in secondary high populated areas such as Stromness. There needs to be a huge focus on ground floor/bungalow properties built in this particular area with specialist fitted equipment as necessary for the person or people with disabilities to live safely and comfortably without fear or worry.

Question 11:

Do you agree that the actions outlined in the list on 'what we will do' on page 59 of the 2017 to 2022 Local Housing Strategy are the correct actions for the priority on Older People?

Do you agree with statement	Yes	No
What actions will we do for older people?	20	10

**Q15.4. Comments on improving standards in the private sector:**

More inter-agency collaboration with private landlords and developers would probably be useful.

If adequate support existed then we wouldn't have such a high percentage of housing in poor condition and levels of fuel poverty would be the some of the lowest in the country. We are awash with green electricity yet this situation exists. There should be support to improve homes and make them as Carbon efficient as possible. We also need to be looking at moving from fossil fuel heating to more carbon neutral forms of heating.

Given that approximately 80% of Orkney's housing stock is either privately owned or privately rented it is odd that the majority of housing staff are primarily focused upon the social rented sector....ie the sector with the best maintained dwellings. This is a seriously neglected sector and it always has been. Whilst other Councils have dedicated "private sector" staff Orkney does not. This needs to be addressed and we need to get back to a system where private sector occupants can access improvement and repair grants. Loans can also be provided, including maturity loans whereby only interest payments are made on the cash advance, to ensure sufficient resources to complete all outstanding works. The majority of assistance provided in 2017 -18 was for Disabled Adaptations, a statutory provision, and far too little was spent on disrepair. Fuel poverty levels remain amongst the highest, if not the highest in the UK, and property conditions are so poor that attempting to improve heating or insulation would be pointless. This leaves those in the poorest housing cut off from national sources of help and frustrates local staff. Repairs to existing houses would be generally undertaken by locally-based builders, thereby helping the economy at this particularly difficult time. The Council should establish a project focused on the north and south isles, for 2/3 years, utilising some of its Strategic Reserve, designed to improve housing conditions in the private sector and then to undertake an evaluation. I believe it would make life better for Orkney's least well off and most vulnerable: would benefit the local economy, would ensure a higher take up of heating and insulation grants, would reduce fuel poverty, reduce admissions to hospital and care facilities and make really good use of the Council's SRF.

Question 15:

Do you agree that the actions outlined in the list on 'what we will do' on pages 72 and 73 of the 2017 to 2022 Local Housing Strategy are the correct actions for the priority on "Improving Standards in the Private Sector"?

Do you agree with statement	Yes	No
For the priority on "Improving Standards in the Private Sector"?	17	7

#### **Q17.4. Comments on energy efficiency:**

We are in the process of changing to a renewable heating system with help from the government through home energy scotland, I think we would have done so years ago if the information had been more widely advertised and easily accessible.

Too many different bodies involved you're produce coherent strategy.

Given the state of the environment, particularly climate change, enough can never be done to reverse the damage of the past three hundred years.

Too much focus on fuel poverty - we need to attract economically active people to our islands.

I constantly hear about there being options but have never heard or received material on how I can improve this.

While there appears to be lots being done by the Council and others to try and help households the area is very complex and

Good on OIC and OHAL for their own housing standards. Now we have announced a climate crisis should we not be aiming for the highest standards of housing in terms of insulations properties. Going beyond what is required in regulation. We have had the technology to build zero heating homes for 20 years. Unfortunately government missed an opportunity to legislate when a U-turn was performed several years ago. Otherwise we would already be in the position of building zero heating homes. There are some good examples of support schemes. Unfortunately these programmes are often designed to be low cost and contractors attracted to take them on do sub-standard work. Perhaps when such works do take place local checks should be established to ensure works are at least done to building control standards

Need more details publicised

You can't put in extra heating if the rain is pouring in through the roof and we need to improve the fabric of the stock before we can ensure people really can benefit from the many sources of assistance with energy efficiency which are available

**Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on “Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency” in the space below.**

Page 77 glossary. Fuel poverty table page 65. Lots of numbers .org explanation of how you will meet target. I dont think any amount of energy efficiency improvements will aid full poverty. People may feel able to turn their heating up a bit but will remain poor until a passivhaus strategy is implemented as is the case in a number of english councils.

Given the state of the environment, particularly climate change, enough can never be done to reverse the damage of the past three hundred years.

There is a huge amount of work required to meet climate change targets. Houses are responsible for a lot of emissions, so shouldn't the Council look to bid for more funding and bring in more staff to help tackle fuel poverty and meet those climate change targets?

Establish a Repair and Improvement Scheme...initially for the isles. Resource it properly in terms if staff and money. Monitor its effectiveness,

Question 17:

Do you agree that the actions outlined in the list on ‘what we will do’ on page 77 of the 2017 to 2022 Local Housing Strategy are the correct actions for the priority on “Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency”?

Do you agree with statement	Yes	No
For the priority on “Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency”?	18	5

**Q19.6. Comments on Sustaining Orkney’s communities:**

More work needs to be done to ensure that local housing market is not saturated by buyers from out with Orkney, as a result of people relocating due to Covid 19, who can pay well over the asking price of Orcadian properties, thus blocking access to younger families wishing to climb the property ladder e.g. needing more space for a growing family.

Take a proactive approach to ensuring that Orkney is well prepared for second homes and temporary lets legislation that is likely to be enacted in the relatively short-term.

When is the last time the housing team came to the islands and visited the communities and discussed what the housing needs are? When is the last time you met with Eday Community Council or Development Trust? We are struggling to have a teacher and a nurse on the island because we don't have the accommodation and

are now struggling to get those empty houses liveable again - is housing aware of that? I do not believe that housing really understands what is happening on the isles and what the housing needs are. There also needs to be partnership working to advertise that there are council house vacancies for any prospective new residents and families and a marketing campaign, or joint leadership with development trusts to advertise accommodation along with potential job opportunities. Housing priorities should be aligned with attracting economically active people to our islands.

Self Explanatory.

As a single younger person, who has been on the housing list for nearly 10 years without an offer of a property, it is extremely difficult to rent privately as there is no option to save for a deposit to buy a property and with the housing market as it is, it is extremely difficult to find a property suitable within a price range when cash buyers are snapping up all the 'affordable' properties to rent out.

More needs to be done to help get as much funding into Orkney as possible for additional housing. Younger people need more help and the isles need as much help as possible to keep them afloat.

Houses exist. Too many are holiday lets.

Younger priced out of market

The Council should prioritise support for groups that are looking to develop housing. particularly in the Isles and rural areas. lots of people don't want to live in Kirkwall.

We used to service sites and prioritise sale to the least well off. I would support subsidy for site development and give priority to existing tenants of social rented housing and those on the housing lists.

We could determine, through Development Briefs, the appearance of housing development and ensure the future survival of the isles and rural mainland parishes by helping to arrest the drive toward Kirkwall.

**Please include any additional actions that you would like to see included or comments and ideas for the priority on "Sustaining Orkney's Communities" in the space below.**

- better engagement with island groups to understand the needs of each island.
- focus housing actions on attracting economically active individuals and families which means different types of housing.
- consider actions to tackle derelict/rundown properties and not just empty properties.
- marketing campaigns regarding housing alongside job advertisements.
- better help and information for young people looking to buy a property on the isles.
- work with development trusts to sort out gateway house issues.
- improve housing for elderly folk on the isles.
- increase the number of housing options available on the isles.

- the priority is economic development and population, not creating homes for homeless/unemployed people in island communities.

None

**If no, please tell us how you would like to be consulted with in the future? (Public meeting (assuming COVID restrictions permit this), question and answer session on social media or live chat through the Council website etc).**

Do not assume that someone has read a particular document before completing this survey. Include all information in the survey document.

Who was consulted? Only tenants? I dont remember seeing anything about it although sometimes I feel there are far too many consultations. I think we vote for the councillors to represent us, which, in my view means they can decide policy without always asking the people.

If no, please tell us how you feel the form could be improved.

It was easy, and although important, it was too long.

It was mostly easy, but the part where you had to click which area certain housing strategies were needed in did not allow you to choose more than one area (surely it is possible that more rented accommodation could be needed in both Kirkwall and Stromness, for example..)

Include all relevant information in the survey document.

References incorrect, never found much of the info referred to.  
Tables not very helpful, lots of targets but no clue of how you plan to meet them.

I would very much like to see any amendments to the proposed strategy in light of the consultation.



## **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

**NOTE of the LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION event held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 7.30pm**

### **Attending the consultation event from Orkney Islands Council –**

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services

Lesley Mulrairie, Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness)

Luke Fraser, Team Leader (Policy and Planning)

### **Representatives from other agencies –**

Cath Kirkwood, Co-Hope Housing

Kieron Brogan, Sanday Development Trust

Isobel Thompson, Westray Development Trust

### **Introduction**

Frances welcomed everyone who attended and that we are undertaking a consultation on the Local Housing Strategy as it is currently and also with a view to developing the next Local Housing Strategy for 2023 onwards.

Frances checked with everyone in regard to data protection - whether everyone was happy to have anything they said quoted to Committee and that we wouldn't use their names when doing so. Everyone agreed.

The purpose of this event was to look specifically at the main housing issues in Orkney (irrespective of tenure), to determine key priorities and actions to ensure delivery over the next five years effectively. We're keen to ensure that the new strategy is as rounded as possible and therefore it can't be written purely from the perspective of housing staff. It needs to involve a range of related professionals crossing other statutory services and the third sector and reflect views accordingly.

It was explained that in order to develop the Local Housing Strategy the Council have a number of requirements to fulfil. A detailed housing needs and demand assessment is required to be undertaken along with a wealth of other statistical information which gives us the baseline figures to work from.

The Scottish Government produced detailed guidance on all the areas we are required to cover within a Local Housing Strategy and prescribes its inter-connection with a range of other documents including the local development plan.

Luke shared a Power Point presentation with the group to discuss.

### **Background - Key Priorities**

Luke explained that the Local Housing Strategy outlines on seven key priorities. They are –

1. Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses.
2. Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness.
3. Older People.
4. Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs.
5. Improving Standards in the Private Sector.
6. Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency.
7. Sustaining Orkney's Communities.

**Question 1 – In light of the priorities outlined do you think there should be different or additional priorities?**

■ “I don't think there is anything there that isn't on our radar and I don't think we have anything on ours likewise, think it's pretty much all covered certainly with the priorities we've got on the island at the moment and I can't think of anything else that needs to be added.”

■ “I think what you have is very comprehensive with the priorities, I would say the first one, the 'adequate supply of housing' it would also be a diverse supply of housing.”

Frances and Luke agreed that that was a good point and will discuss that in more detail.

■ “I would also mention about environmental considerations, a lot of that would be captured within the fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency but there are things like waste e.g. storage for recycling, food waste etc. that could potentially be captured as well for environmental considerations but I would say most of it would be captured within fuel poverty.”

**Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses**

This is a multi-tenure aspect. The aim on this priority is 'to ensure there is a sufficient supply and range of housing including affordable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of the people living in Orkney.' This includes the isles.

Over 1,200 properties have been developed in Orkney over the last 10 years in Orkney with about 1,000 the previous 10 years. There has been significant development however there is still high demand for all tenures of housing across all areas of Orkney with significant demand on Mainland Orkney.

Tenures that we are researching as part of the LHS include social rented housing, which is provided by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd. Orkney Housing Association Ltd also provide low cost home ownership, mid-market rent which is new for Orkney, this looks at properties between the social rent level and private rent level. Private rented, self-build serviced sites, new build market housing, student housing and older persons' housing.

Demand for rented accommodation, both private rent and social rent, is highest in Kirkwall however there is demand across the board.

Discussion surrounded the following questions:

**Question 2 – What tenures of additional housing do you feel are most needed?**

**Question 3 – What particular areas of Orkney do you feel need additional housing? The areas are broken up into Kirkwall, Stromness, West Mainland, East Mainland, North Isles and South Isles.**

**Question 4 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses”?**

■ “Quite hard for myself and ■ to answer question three as we are North Isles centered but I would say that for the tenures of additional housing that we’re seeing in the isles is that social rent level because we’ve got quite a lot of low income job opportunities here that we’ve identified.”

■ “I agree, I know people in Kirkwall, Mainland are struggling to get rented properties, I know that it is an issue in those parts. In Sanday, in the short time that I’ve been host the type of housing most needed is for older people, because we have older people in properties that are really not suitable for them, it’s taking up properties on the island but there is nowhere for them to move to and they don’t want to leave the island so they are staying home in properties that are unsuitable for them and if we had properties for older folk, then the idea might be that they move into something that’s suitable and energy efficient and then properties that are left vacant could be taken up by young families and can be brought up to scratch and renovated. In terms of question four I think you’ve covered everything that was in my brain, but as ■ said we are mainly North Isles but I guess the problem is in other parts of Orkney.”

Frances advised that they will discuss the older person aspect in more detail later in the consultation.

■ “Following on from what ■ was saying that’s where the co-housing model could fit in well because that could be about older people moving into smaller properties and freeing up properties for young families but will come on that later. I think co-housing could also be used for students, possibly for people with additional needs living in small community, it would also be suitable for some families, covers quite a range.”

Luke queried with ■ that he understands that traditionally Westray has quite a young population that have been looking for work and housing as there is quite a lot employment, is there still a strong demand for local youngsters in Westray or is it now more focused on older people?

■ “No it’s still a lot of young people looking for affordable housing especially getting rented housing to get that independence without having to leave the island. We’re seeing both because we have the flats at Kalisgarth which are an example of how

good, having that option on an island can be but certainly with our own project with Bayview a lot of thought behind that is for young people.”

Luke asked if anyone had moved away from the island because they weren't able to find anything? Are there some that want to gain independence by moving out of their parents' house but they want to stay on the island as they have employment?

■ “It's hard to capture that we still have young people who are living with their parents so we're worried that that's going to be the issue in a few years time that they are living and working here but at some point they're going to want to move out with the family home and there's not many places for them in Westray.”

### **Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness**

Lesley advised that Homelessness in Orkney is rural in nature and therefore predominantly about family breakdown as opposed to rough sleeping.

The number of homelessness presentations are relatively significant and last financial year we had 118 households present as homeless.

This may mean that they have nowhere to live or it may mean that they cannot access the home they have either physically because perhaps the landlord has evicted them or because of a risk such as the person they live with is abusing them.

The slide shows the average length of time it takes for a household to be permanently rehoused in Orkney by either the Council or Orkney Housing Association Ltd. This varies depending on the area where they need to be rehoused and the size of property that they need.

There is also a requirement for us to provide support to homeless households where this is assessed as being necessary. We have an in-house housing support service and also work in partnership with other agencies who provide some services for us through a contract. These include our young persons' supported accommodation for those between the ages of 16 and 25 and also for women and their children (if any) who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse.

Frances advised that homelessness is predominantly a problem in Kirkwall and to a lesser degree in Stromness.

The following questions were discussed:

**Question 5 – Do you think that households receive enough support in temporary accommodation?**

**Question 6 – Do you think that households should be housed more quickly from temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation?**

**Question 7 – Do you think that it would be beneficial to provide more information about housing options locally?**

## **Question 8 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness?”**

■ “Don’t have much knowledge of homelessness issues on Sanday, I know that there have been breakdowns in family units where the person has left home, I think they’re then accommodated on Mainland as there is nowhere on Sanday that’s available for housing people. In terms of housing people more quickly then I say yes absolutely because being in temporary accommodation is not a great environment if you’ve been through trauma, or been evicted or you’ve been made homeless then you really want to get back into some theme of normality and a permanent place of residence as quickly as possible but of course that’s the ideal but not always possible. Certainly, think it’s more beneficial to provide information, I’m just thinking of my own knowledge at the moment, it’s quite embarrassing if I think about someone being homeless here today as a CEO, where would I go to? What would I do? I wouldn’t be able to signpost very well at the moment. In terms of the Council identifying the actions I think so yes”

Lesley advised that she completely understands what KB said about the length of time in temporary accommodation and that our accommodation is of a good standard, they are fully furnished for people and agrees that getting people permanently housed is the most important thing so they can get settled and have their own things around them. We also have a website with a range of information in terms of housing such as where to go to make a homeless presentation, there’s lots of information across the sector including private housing so if a member of the public does advise that they are homeless then the information is available but also to phone and we can help. In terms of someone becoming homeless on Sanday we can work alongside them and try and keep them on the island if they have employment, this has been done in past with other islands. Looked at different options to ensure they can remain on the island.

■ “It’s just a wake up call to me to get more honest information, so I guess it’s a chance of when it happens it’s good to help them straight off, so that’s something for me to do a bit of homework on and then make that information available locally to Sanday residents too.”

Lesley advised she would be happy for ■ to contact her after the meeting to point in the right direction to the website.

### **Older People**

Frances advised that the number of older people in Orkney is increasing, from around 4,000 to almost 5,000 by 2030. At the same time there is expected to be a reduction in the number of people of working age.

Currently the Council provides some traditional sheltered housing in Kirkwall and Stromness but demand is now very low. In addition, we have a small number of extra care properties in St Margaret’s Hope. A partner agency, Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd provides extra care housing in both Kirkwall and Kalisgarth in Westray and we work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to provide amenity housing for older people and those with some mobility issues.

However, as the number of older people in Orkney increases. The housing stock (across all tenures) needs to be able to accommodate this anticipated change.

While Orkney isn't alone in having an increasingly ageing population, it is one of the areas of the UK which will experience a greater impact earlier. This means that new and innovative solutions will be required. The picture on the slide shows the proposed design of the Hope Cohousing project that will hopefully be developed in St Margaret's Hope. This is a private sector project, supported by the Council that will hopefully lead to other similar projects being delivered over the coming years. CK has already outlined the different groups that this type of housing could be used for.

Discussion was around the following questions:

**Question 9 – Are there adequate housing options available for older people throughout Orkney?**

**Question 10 – Does Orkney's existing housing stock meet the needs of older people?**

**Question 11 – Is there a need to develop additional housing specifically for older people in Orkney?**

**Question 12 – Do you think new models of housing such as Cohousing should be explored further?**

**\*Cohousing is where a community, often of older people, comes together to support each other. The households all live in their own homes within the development.**

**Question 13 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority "Older People"?**

■ "Certainly housing for older people on Sanday is a priority with reasons mentioned earlier, we want to try and attract new younger working class people to the island but of course that's difficult in itself because we've got to have job for them here to take up but with the advent to promote remote working there's a number of people on the island that work from home for companies that are based in the UK, so we've seen a small rise in the number of people that will be able to live in places like the islands because they've not got to worry about travelling to the Mainland for work, they can work from home. We had our own housing needs and assessment done on the isle several years ago before my time but I'm working on the project now for Sanday which is a private project to try and build a collection of homes that are suitable for the elderly and also for young people so there would be a mix of one and two bedroom homes, they'd be prefabricated so we wouldn't be looking for new builds because of the difficulties in actually getting builders to come out to Sanday, we have trouble with contractors coming out to do maintenance work let alone new builds. The idea there was to do prefabrication and get it delivered and installed, the hope there is that it would then free up stock of housing on the island for new younger people to come in, preferably with children and be able to work here and help towards the economy. So again, as there is a small group here today pretty

much from the North isles it is sort of one sided but we don't have any stock here for the elderly at the moment. I suppose the only thing you can say about the housing here is unlike down south, everything is just one storey so we don't have to worry about stairs but it's pretty cold housing with a lot of maintenance. So I think there is a need to develop here, the elderly population is growing in Orkney so I would say there definitely needs to be specific housing for elderly people because they have different needs to young people and families and I think all models of housing are good to look at, obviously on Sanday, the original plan was to go down the care home route but with Covid I think we're relieved now we didn't look to have a care home where people are basically all together, the cohousing idea where they're together but separate is good for things that we are experiencing right now as there would be some independence and safety."

Frances said she wasn't aware that they were planning to look at prefabricated housing but that that was a really good idea.

■ "It wasn't the original idea, but it's come to that because of the necessity to have the housing here so we've looked at specific companies that I know have worked elsewhere."

Frances agreed that a positive that's come out of Covid is that companies are more willing to let employees work from home and then to free up options for people to live across the island communities and let them live where they want to live and not where's suitable for their job.

■ "We have one family who I'm sure you're aware of would've loved to have moved to the isles but the husband's job is office based for a European company based abroad so there was no real option to live on the island, with Covid that has now changed and he's been in negotiations with the company and the company have now changed their minds and allow him to work from home and so they're moving to Sanday and they've put in a offer on a property."

■ "Interested in what ■ was saying about the prefabricated module as that's what we had looked into to begin with but was too expensive so that may be to have a separate conversation with him but I think if that can work it could really be the way forward for quite quick building up here."

■ "Happy to discuss with anybody, the modular housing has really become the only option as trying to go down the new build route was just going to prove too difficult and that kind of decision was made just before I arrived when they started to look at modular housing. I think it's possibly more expensive, we've got some pricing through but very general pricing because we're not at the stage where we've got detailed plans, we worked with Carbon Dynamics to come up with some pricing, the advantage of it of course is that it can be purpose built and fitted to the needs and fitted for elderly care and very economical and very adaptable like cohousing so they can be separate houses but with a credential area to span the houses so that they got some outside space indoors, particularly with the islands weather. Part of the plan was to have a communal hub but it's difficult to get funding for that. First phase it to build four homes, we're looking to build twelve overall but starting with four to see how successful that phase is and then move onto the next but there's certainly

and appetite for it here and certainly the designs we've shown, they've been impressed with it's looks and standards."

■ "The way in which the cohousing model is very much people in the community getting together and organising it for themselves so that seems a very positive rather than expecting things to be provided that it groups thinking of what kind of housing they like and getting together and getting projects underway rather than looking to the Council and housing associations providing for them."

Luke advised ■ that he can pass on his contact details to the family moving to Sanday as if it's an empty property they are moving to he will be able to provide information on discounts available under the Empty Homes Scheme.

Luke advised ■ that he has spoken to someone about the potential to get Sanday and Hope Cohousing together for a discussion as in similar positions.

■ "Just wanted to sing the praises of Kalisgarth and how amazing it is for our community having that option to stay longer in the island and how much easier it is for families to visit residents at the care centre and the wider work it does for relatives. Such a core part of our community now, also it's turned into a community hub we have our Christmas tree lighting there now. So just wanted to thank Orkney Islands Council for Kalisgarth."

Frances advised that Orkney Islands Property Development Ltd. that manage Kalisgarth, we worked in partnership with them but we will pass on the positive messages to them.

■ " Question 11, what we've been looking at is that any housing development can be adaptable for older people so if there's a staircase having one without a bend put in so it is much easier to fit a stairlift in the future. The Hjaltland Housing Association in Shetland have been doing some work on installing cabinets that have removable panels so they can have a glass panel instead of a wood finish for people with dementia they could see into the cupboards. So housing can be easily adapted for older people at a later stage so that they can continue to live there."

■ "In terms of stairlifts I have a background with them and you can now put a hole through the floor and install a lift which is good progress."

### **Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs**

Frances advised that the aim of this priority is to: Ensure that people with particular needs have access to good quality, appropriate housing and support services which meets their specific requirements and enables independent living.

The housing requirements for people with particular needs can be varied.

Some people require mainstream housing but with a package of appropriate support to help them to manage their tenancy.



Other households require either amenity standard housing to assist with a mobility issue or fully wheelchair accessible housing. Others require adaptations to their existing housing such as the installation of a wet room or ramp for example. It is important to ensure that the housing stock in Orkney can accommodate the needs of a wide variety of people and this priority aims to ensure that the housing stock can become appropriately flexible to meet those needs.

Again, we work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to provide appropriate housing as required and through our Scheme of Assistance, Orkney Care and Repair is funded to deliver adaptations in private sector accommodation.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 14 – Are there sufficient housing options available throughout Orkney to meet the needs of households with particular needs?**

**Question 15 – Do you think there needs to be a greater provision of specialist wheelchair housing in Orkney?**

**Question 16 – Is there a need to develop additional housing specifically for people with particular needs in Orkney?**

**Question 17 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs”?**

■ “If there’s somebody that does develop special needs, then really the option is that they can’t adapt their current home then they have to move and that’s the thing where you hear stories and feedback from people that know when it gets to a certain point that they won’t be able to stay on the island anymore because it’s not just about the home and living here eases as it’s adapted for their use they are still a ferry trip away from hospital appointments etc. and if they go hand in hand with those types of needs then it becomes difficult. I think on the islands, if you are a living in a remote area and have particular needs then the island doesn’t really make it suitable to live here. People get anxious and worried and want to be nearer to hospitals and more responsive care on the Mainland.”

### **Improving Standards in the Private Sector**

Lesley advised that private sector housing includes the tenures of owner-occupation and also the private rented sector.

Orkney’s housing stock is varied in age and quality. Orkney has a relatively high percentage of properties that fail the minimum standards required, particularly those which are below the tolerable standard or are in significant disrepair. Not all of these properties are occupied of course.

It is hugely important that households in Orkney live in properties that are well maintained and provide the basic necessities required. Sometimes properties are not maintained over a significant period of time for a range of reasons and this can lead to occupants living in properties that are poor quality.

The private rented sector is required to meet the repairing standard and private sector landlords are required to register with the Council to assist with the process of ensuring that the property is of an appropriate standard and that the landlord meets certain legal requirements in letting the property concerned.

This priority links closely with the priority in relation to energy efficiency as well.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 18: Is there adequate support and information available to homeowners to help them improve their properties?**

**Question 19: Is there adequate support and information available to private landlords to help them improve their properties?**

**Question 20: Is there sufficient monitoring of private rented properties to ensure the standards are maintained in Orkney?**

**Question 21: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Improving Standards in the Private Sector”?**

■ “Can you provide some example of what kind of support is available homeowners or private landlord to help them improve their properties?”

Luke advised that there’s lots of funding available on energy efficiency side for quite a lot of households. There’s not a lot available in terms of fixing a hole in the roof which may be required before loft insulation works are carried out or to make the walls plumbed and straight before putting external wall insulation on. There are interest free loans available from the Government that help towards works needed to be carried out on the property before the energy efficiency upgrade but can only receive the loan if they are carrying out the energy efficiency works. If someone just wants to repair their property there used to be a grant available but not anymore, at the moment there’s information we can provide if it’s an empty property there’s VAT discounts available but if it’s a house that they are living in then it’s a lot more difficult, we can give support but no funding.

Frances advised it does depend on what bracket of society they fall in to because if they are elderly or disabled then there is assistance that the Council can provide which was mentioned in partnership with Orkney Care and Repair. They deliver for those in certain circumstances, so that could be somebody getting help with a hole in the roof or a broken window. While there’s assistance available with adaptations. there’s also a small repairs grant for those on low incomes, it’s a small amount of money but it is available and this was just reviewed this last year and we’re hoping there’ll be more take up of the scheme. The Council has a housing loan as well for people that wouldn’t be able to borrow from the bank for whatever reason other than non-payment of loans. Could be for someone who’s self employed and hasn’t got access to a traditional loan through the bank or a young person starting out who hasn’t got lending history and older people that haven’t got the number of years to borrow money. The Council lends the same way a mortgage. Someone paying the

interest for a certain number of years but if someone passes away and the house is sold the Council would get the money back that way.

■ “Where would someone access that information and support, would that be on the website.”

The Council website would have some of that information but Orkney Care and Repair would be able to sign post.

■ “Agree that maybe more on pulling that information and making it widely available would be good for people who are too shy to ask themselves, what we see with the Trust is the fuel grant that we’ve offered over the last few years that’s mainly friends and neighbours of people giving them the nudge to look into it. What is available a lot is restricted by you the Council by the Scottish Government but what you have been doing with it sounds very good.”

■ “We have a Wellbeing Coordinator which some of the other islands have. Wellbeing has been extended not just to the elderly, but it’s now covered by everything. A Wellbeing Coordinator would be a good way to ensure that people are aware of the information that’s available to them as I think it’s that scattered approach as people go to different sources for information. So you can make that information available to people doesn’t engage with a person until a neighbour or someone tells them that this is for you and think certainly with the Covid crisis is that people who don’t need help are fine, people that need a little bit of help are good at finding out what’s available to them and take advantage of it, people who really need help aren’t capable of finding this information and the things you do to help the most needed kind of doesn’t get taken up by the most needed but mainly by those who certainly need it but not as much. It’s very difficult to reach and to encourage those people. See it with all types of help and its frustrating not to see people who you know would benefit from the help. In terms of Private Landlords standards are always going to be corners cut because it’s a business and I don’t think it’s always going to be made to make sure private landlords are offered the same sort of level of standards far easier for them to make do. Private landlords you do hear these horror stories that people are living in very poor conditions that have been going on for some time. Not necessarily here but generally. Firefly crews come to the island and go from property to property cladding them which some people are not too happy about because they see it as destroying the look and feel of traditional housing on the island but the grants there for the island. I think there is some people who are good at seeking what’s available for them but it doesn’t always reach everybody and that’s where we’d involve a Wellbeing Coordinator in that as they’re much more aware of the people that are in need and they build a relationship with that person and gain their trust so they’d be a good link to make information more available.”

Frances advised that the Wellbeing Coordinators was reported at the IJB today. Frances also advised that if anyone knows of anyone living in a private property that’s in poor condition that Lesley’s team can assist with that, landlords have standards that they are required to meet but sometimes the tenant may be too afraid to say anything in case they end up in difficult circumstances.

■ “In a small community if you have privately rented property, your embarrassed to raise it because the owner may live nearby and I think if that gives the opportunity for somebody independent to step in help that would be good. Also, to make the standards that are required aware to the public so that if people know that it’s not acceptable to be renting somewhere that’s in a poor state then that would help too.”

Lesley advised that there is information available on the Council website that about the repairing standard.

■ “Sanday has an island magazine that the Trust provides inserts for. Could potentially do a housing supplement. This goes to every household on the island.”

### **Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency**

Luke advised that Orkney has one of the highest levels of fuel poverty in the UK. High energy prices, some properties with poor energy efficiency, lower than average incomes and short summers leading to a need for heating for a significant proportion of the year, all contribute to the high figures.

Climate change and the journey towards net zero carbon housing is also a significant driver and undertaking energy efficiency works to properties can assist with reducing fuel poverty and the potential to meet climate change targets.

The aim of this priority is to increase the energy efficiency of Orkney's housing stock, eliminate fuel poverty and achieve a positive impact on the environment.

The Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd are required to meet very challenging energy efficiency standards across their stock and the Scottish Government has introduced requirements for other tenures as well.

A lot is already being done in Orkney around fuel poverty and climate change and the Scottish Government provide funding each year to help improve the housing stock. The Council bids for other funding that may be available too. We are aware however that more needs to be done.

The questions for discussion were:

**Question 22: Is enough being done locally and nationally to support the increase in energy efficiency of Orkney’s housing stock?**

**Question 23: Is the funding and support available to private households to help increase energy efficiency in their homes accessible and understandable?**

**Question 24: Is there adequate information and support to determine the best options for improving the energy efficiency of your home?**

**Question 25: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency”?**

■ “Agree with it all and to bring back the point that there might be funding for cladding but not for the stage before to prepare walls for cladding.”

Luke advised that we are hoping to do a target approach on the isles, this has been done in Sanday that a lot of people had applied for works to be carried out and Firefly were in Sanday consistently for a while, this really helped with the economies of scale. Planning to go to Westray and do the same, this will give us the potential to attract some of that additional funding for the repairs side of things.

### **Sustaining Orkney’s Communities**

Luke advised that Sustaining Orkney’s communities is a key aim of the Council and housing plays a hugely important role in that. So, the aim of this priority is to support the continued survival, future growth and sustainability of Orkney’s Island communities by seeking to ensure there is a sufficient supply of appropriate housing of a good standard.

Scottish Government has provided funding through the Islands Housing Fund. Both the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd own and rent properties on the isles. Housing Services have and continue to support the development of additional, much needed, affordable housing on the isles. In recent years additional Council housing has been developed in Westray and Sanday.

In addition, over the last few years a key way this aim has been supported is through the development of Islands Housing Fund projects. Development trusts and others have undertaken really good work to increase the amount of housing on Orkney’s islands.

The hope is that the Islands Housing Fund will continue into the longer term and that we can see an increase in the number of housing projects developed across Orkney.

The questions discussed were:

**Question 26: Is there sufficient housing available in rural and island areas to support Orkney’s communities?**

**Question 27: Does more need to be done to support islands development trusts to develop housing projects and bid for funding?**

**Question 28: Is there a need for additional housing to support rural communities on mainland Orkney?**

**Question 29: Is there a need for additional housing to support Orkney’s island communities?**

**Question 30: Is there sufficient housing options available to younger households starting out?**

**Question 31: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Sustaining Orkney’s Communities”?**

■ “Community’ is the strength that goes through everything we’ve talked about, it is really important especially the island communities, I think it takes a lot to live out here, you need to be in good health have employment etc. but this is people’s homes, they want to stay here and where housing comes employment comes and you do want to be able to retain children here, we don’t want them to leave the island because there’s no other option whether there’s no housing available or employment. It’s a ‘chicken and an egg’ theme because to keep people you need to have the housing and the jobs to live here, we don’t want them to be out of work. So, in terms of the island’s communities I think, we’ve touched on that in terms of our project the care for housing, the care for Sanday and other rental properties to bring new residents to the island. I don’t think there’s sufficient housing for younger households, it’s very tough for young people to get on the starting ladder you need something that’s really meant as a first time starter house so you can move out of your parent’s property and actually get some independence living on the island. The young people I’ve known living on Sanday that have reached that age have all left the island and gone to live in Kirkwall, it comes again with the employment aspect. These days I think there’s this lovely feeling that I think youngsters would want to stay on the island where they are born and raised but from housing needs surveys we’ve done they don’t want to, they want to go out into the world and explore it and then perhaps come back later on in life. Again with remote working coming in to it I think we’ve really underestimated how that changes things because people could go away to university to get qualifications and skills for jobs that they can then do remotely and come back and live here on the island therefore younger accommodation/lodgings are affordable and attractive to them. It’s the opposite end of the spectrum the care for Sanday in the elderly but also properties for younger people to come back to after education. I certainly think the Council has identified the correct actions, the communities are really important for Orkney and it’s a privilege to live here and to help try to maintain to keep going with what makes the islands the reason why we want to be here. I don’t want it to be like it was down south, it is a special place and I don’t think those things should be lost but they will be if everybody that’s born here disappears or the elderly have to leave the island because of illness and special needs. Community is such an important thing.”

■ “Do need more housing in the rural and island areas in Orkney. I talk to younger people about the need for rented housing, there’s also an issue for moving out of that rented housing wanting to get on the housing ladder, it’s more of a national issue of being able to get a mortgage and the level of deposit you need. In Westray we do have housing for sale, quite a few I think we’ve got for over £200,000 up for sale which is obviously quite expensive for a young person to move out but that’s like I say is a national issue to do with banks and getting mortgages and affording deposits. I’m a prime example as I’m currently renting a three bedroom property in the village and I want to move out to let a family in but there’s no where for me to go.”

Luke questions if there would be an interest in somewhere like Westray from younger people for the potential for some new build, starter home style properties that would give them the opportunity to get people on the housing ladder with that shared ownership option or a shared equity option where the Government buys 60% of the property, it’s much easier to get a mortgage for that?

■ “I think there would be interest, there’s quite a few single young people living in housing, in my area of the village there’s two others in the same position as me, single person in a three- bedroom house.”

### **What Next?**

Frances advised that:

- Consultation to run to 11th October 2020.
- Further consultation event next week.
- Responses to our survey are being collected through smart survey.
- Report to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 11th November 2020.

That takes us to the end of our questions. Thanks very much everyone for your contributions.

We will form a minute from the recording of this meeting and will let you have a copy of that.

If you’d also like to fill in the smart survey, that’s great but it’s not essential as you’ve contributed tonight.

What will happen now is that we’ve another event next week and we’re also receiving responses through smart survey. After that we’ll report to our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee with the results of the consultation and will determine what changes need to be made to the Local Housing Strategy.

At the start of this session we asked about whether you were happy for your comments to be shared and the reason for that is that when we report to Committee we’ll include contributions. Where someone has said they aren’t happy for their comments to be shared, we’ll treat that information sensitively, so it won’t appear in a public report.

After that if you’d like further information please let us know.

## **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

**NOTE of the LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY CONSULTATION event held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7.30pm**

### **Attending the consultation event from Orkney Islands Council –**

Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services

Lesley Mulraine, Service Manager (Housing and Homelessness)

Luke Fraser, Team Leader (Policy and Planning)

### **Representatives from other agencies –**

Gordon Deans

Jen Scollay

Alistair Hourston

### **Introduction**

Frances welcomed everyone who attended and that we are undertaking a consultation on the Local Housing Strategy as it is currently and also with a view to developing the next Local Housing Strategy for 2023 onwards.

Frances checked with everyone in regard to data protection whether everyone was happy to have anything they said quoted to Committee and that we wouldn't use their names when doing so. Everyone agreed.

The purpose of this event was to look specifically at the main housing issues in Orkney (irrespective of tenure), to determine key priorities and actions to ensure delivery over the next five years effectively. We're keen to ensure that the new strategy is as rounded as possible and therefore it can't be written purely from the perspective of housing staff. It needs to involve a range of related professionals crossing other statutory services and the third sector and reflect views accordingly.

It was explained that in order to develop the Local Housing Strategy the Council have a number of requirements to fulfil. A detailed housing needs and demand assessment is required to be undertaken along with a wealth of other statistical information which gives us the baseline figures to work from.

The Scottish Government produced detailed guidance on all the areas we are required to cover within a Local Housing Strategy and prescribes its inter-connection with a range of other documents including the local development plan.

Luke shared a Power Point presentation with the group to discuss.



## **Background - Key Priorities**

Luke explained that the Local Housing Strategy outlines on seven key priorities. They are –

1. Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses.
2. Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness.
3. Older People.
4. Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs.
5. Improving Standards in the Private Sector.
6. Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency.
7. Sustaining Orkney's Communities.

### **Question 1 – In light of the priorities outlined do you think there should be different or additional priorities?**

■ “I’ll pick it up at an appropriate time in the meeting but it was just around the balance of housing within communities, I don’t think it fits in with Sustaining Orkney’s Communities, I’m thinking Stromness as an example of ensuring a balance of appropriate housing so that’s there not too much of one type or another that’s then going to affect the dynamic of a town, maybe less relevant in a more rural area but certainly for Stromness and the example I’ll use is the increasing number of short term lets and holiday lets and the effect that has then in the winter months and for young people trying to access the housing ladder.”

Luke advised that this would fit in with the first priority ‘Ensuring and Adequate Supply of Houses’.

■ “Yes but it’s not just the supply it’s having a proper balance of housing.”

Frances agreed it’s about having different types of housing for different needs.

### **Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses**

Luke advised that the first priority we are going to look at is “Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses”. The aim of this priority is: To ensure there is a sufficient supply and range of housing including affordable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of the people living in Orkney.

This priority looks at the supply of housing across all tenures.

We have significant demand for housing in Orkney across different tenures, including market purchase, new build, private rent and social rent and that demand is spread over different areas of Orkney, with significant demand on Mainland Orkney.

Over 1,200 properties have been built in the last 10 years and house prices have risen significantly to reflect increased demand. The Local Housing Strategy highlights the need for increased housing across all tenures and there are various actions that are outlined.

The questions for discussion are:

**Question 2 – What tenures of additional housing do you feel are most needed?**

**Question 3 – What particular areas of Orkney do you feel need additional housing? The areas are broken up into Kirkwall, Stromness, West Mainland, East Mainland, North Isles and South Isles.**

**Question 4 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses”?**

Luke queried with ■ whether he is in contact with people who work at various renewable companies in Stromness and if there was a lot of those who are classed as young people living and working in Stromness who are interested in staying in the main town, is there a core group?

■ “I would say it’s a mix, I don’t have the information to hand about where the demand is but do hear quite regularly that there’s been a fair bit of development in and around Stromness in the last ten years, unsure from the 1,200 houses how many have been built here, there’s currently building going on at the moment and there’s a good mix I think of social and private sites which is nice to see. Seems to work well, Hamnavoe and Garson area are ones that spring to mind. Private sites, people are wanting to build closer into the centre of Stromness and some of the slightly more challenging sites e.g. back of Brinkies. Some of the feedback we get seems to be restrictions on that and the dynamic of Stromness seems to be changing, more people are looking to develop on the outskirts. The actual town itself is becoming, not as such a ghost town but with the increasing number of holiday lets, we’re seeing that outward migration from the town centre to the outskirts and I think there’s a feeling that there’s quite a lot of potential in private site land within the centre but it seems to be unnecessarily restricted through a whole host of reasons, drainage, conservation area and all these other factors come into play. What we would like to see would be something to bring more people, probably more private people that have more money to spend to build, nothing wrong with that but could look into that as well as student housing and older people’s accommodation all these things that are always needed.”

Frances advised that there is a Scottish Government consultation out about the regulation of short term lets like Air B&B etc. so they have decided to bring in the regulation. Would expect this to be in place within the next year which may or may not help. The Scottish Government will roll it out and the Local Authority will need to enforce it.

Luke advised that we are aware of the increase and keeping a lot of data on the number.

■ “I live in Stromness too and across from me and in other areas there are houses that look abandoned, it may be that they are owned by someone but is there a mechanism if they are nobody’s houses or if the owners are not interested - the one across from me is more of a building site and hasn’t changed since I moved in a few years ago – is there an incentive for the owners if they don’t want to pay to give it to

the social housing stock? There are abandoned houses here and there all the time, collapsing within themselves and who owns them and why are they like that?”

Luke advised that we do have a number of empty properties in Orkney, we have an Empty Homes Officer however this post is vacant at the moment. We're certainly trying to bring empty properties back into use, we've had 20 properties brought back into use over the last 12 months. Luke has been covering this role and has been sending letters out to owners, helping to facilitate various aspects. Once we have someone in post we'll be able to progress much more with that project. We have discounts available for those wanting to repair properties which we encourage them to use. We also have a matchmaker scheme which connects people who want to sell to those who want to buy which is all part of a national programme.

Lesley advised that we are responsible for landlord registration which doesn't include short term lets but we've noticed that quite a few people have come back after letting short term to renting long term because of Covid. This has increased the private lets slightly but there definitely is a lack of them in Orkney.

### **Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness**

Lesley advised that Homelessness in Orkney is rural in nature and therefore predominantly about family breakdown as opposed to rough sleeping.

The number of homelessness presentations are relatively significant and last financial year we had 118 households present as homeless.

This may mean that they have nowhere to live or it may mean that they cannot access the home they have either physically because perhaps the landlord has evicted them or because of a risk such as the person they live with is abusing them.

The slide shows the average length of time it takes for a household to be permanently rehoused in Orkney by either the Council or Orkney Housing Association Ltd. This varies depending on the area where they need to be rehoused and the size of property that they need.

There is also a requirement for us to provide support to homeless households where this is assessed as being necessary. We have an in-house housing support service and also work in partnership with other agencies who provide some services for us through a contract. These include our young persons' supported accommodation for those between the ages of 16 and 25 and also for women and their children (if any) who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 5 – Do you think that households receive enough support in temporary accommodation?**

**Question 6 – Do you think that households should be housed more quickly from temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation?**

**Question 7 – Do you think that it would be beneficial to provide more information about housing options locally?**

**Question 8 – Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness?”**

■ “I don’t think I know enough about this to make any comments, I don’t know what level of support is sufficient or how long it takes for people to move from temporary to permanent housing, I think it would be quite a lengthy process due to the shortage of permanent options. Again, additional housing would alleviate that. Not sure what information is available as I’ve never had to look for it myself but I’m sure if you hunt for it it’s there. I think the Council’s priorities are quite well balanced in relation to that given the fact that we do have finite resources in Orkney so not to ask a controversial question would those households within Orkney are those households that have suffered a breakdown as a result or is that including households out-with Orkney that have looked to relocate here because of the same reasons? I know your hands are tied with that but is that putting a lot of pressure on our finite resources here as well?”

Lesley advised that most of the people who present as homeless have a local connection to Orkney. A local connection can be six out of the last 12 months living on the island or three out of the last five years, it can be because you have family associations here, or employment here or under special circumstances like fleeing domestic abuse from another area. A high percentage of those who presented last year would’ve had a local connection with our area and there are mechanisms in place for people that do present and don’t have a local connection whereby if they are homeless and they are unintentionally so we can refer them back to their own local authority if it’s safe for them to return.

■ “We regularly see people posting on Facebook that they are relocating here and I think there’s a perception that it’s happening here but I know from previous experience that it’s not, it’s the opposite. In terms of the questions I don’t really have enough information to answer but I think increasing the availability of accommodation is going to alleviate a lot of it.”

■ “I am one of those that have been homeless and then been rehoused. In terms of support and if there is enough I would say yes because I already came in to the system with a bit of knowledge because I was desperate and trying to find information but some people, especially those with other priorities like how to stay alive and to stay safe in the case of fleeing domestic abuse, they don’t have information and / or options to look for information. I would say there is enough support but for those who can’t look themselves, I would say that questions seven and eight, yes more information on options is needed however I was very happy when they explained things like how it works, what to do, what organisations are available and why a home visit from THAW Orkney regarding an energy grant and energy usage I thought that was well timed and lovely. For the time between temporary accommodation and permanent, I was lucky it was only four months and I did hear from people “really only four months?” but that feedback was from people who weren’t homeless they were just waiting for a Council house. So probably there is demand for quicker rehousing into permanent. It is definitely a priority.”

## **Older People**

Frances advised that the number of older people in Orkney is increasing, from around 4,000 to almost 5,000 by 2030. At the same time there is expected to be a reduction in the number of people of working age.

Currently the Council provides some traditional sheltered housing in Kirkwall and Stromness but demand is now very low. In addition, we have a small number of extra care properties in St Margaret's Hope. A partner agency, Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd provides extra care housing in both Kirkwall and Westray and we work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to provide amenity housing for older people and those with some mobility issues.

However, as the number of older people in Orkney increases. The housing stock (across all tenures) needs to be able to accommodate this anticipated change.

While Orkney isn't alone in having an increasingly ageing population, it is one of the areas of the UK which will experience a greater impact earlier. This means that new and innovative solutions will be required. The picture on the slide shows the proposed design of the Hope Cohousing project that will hopefully be developed in St Margaret's Hope. This is a private sector project, supported by the Council that will hopefully lead to other similar projects being delivered over the coming years.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 9: Are there adequate housing options available for older people throughout Orkney?**

**Question 10: Does Orkney's existing housing stock meet the needs of older people?**

**Question 11: Is there a need to develop additional housing specifically for older people in Orkney?**

**Question 12: Do you think new models of housing such as Cohousing should be explored further?**

**\*Cohousing is where a community, often of older people, comes together to support each other. The households all live in their own homes within the development.**

**Question 13: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority "Older People"?**

■ "Don't know enough information for the first two questions however, cohousing does it mean that it's two non-related people like friends sharing accommodation?"

Frances clarified that it would be a group of five to six people of unrelated older people.

■ “Cohousing is definitely a new option that would be beneficial to a member of my family who could do with being separated from the family but doesn’t like being on his own. I know someone who would benefit from this. I would say that it is definitely a priority but it’s a hidden priority because we don’t know much about it given not being in that group of people, we need to know what they really want.”

■ “Experience of looking after older members of the family and the challenges that it presents, it’s a thought for me to think that the only option would be to go into a residential home if you can’t be kept in your own house, I think we need to explore other options. I’m not entirely sure if cohousing is the way forward, I get the concept, but I think my experience of helping with older ones is that they actually get more benefit mixing with younger people rather than other older people. Often that can be much more stimulating, so trying to integrate in some way, I raised to the community council prior to the opening of Hamnavoe House, that we need to explore opportunities, given the close proximity of Hamnavoe House and the primary school, regular integration between those two groups, obviously Covid has impacted on this but it definitely has been explored in other parts of the UK very successfully for the wellbeing of both the children and the older people. I can see the benefit of cohousing as an alternative to a residential home, but I think there would need to be integration with younger families to provide a bit more stimulation but still have the supervision. Back to basics where people could be looking after their elderly relatives, I know it doesn’t suit everybody due to employment, living away but there are people that can and I think that needs to be part of the solution.”

Luke explained that the cohousing project in St Margaret’s Hope is looking at five two-bedroom properties where people will have their own space, it’s an older persons housing cooperative in the Hope but we’re looking at using a similar design for other areas. There are some areas in Scotland and in the UK where it’s mixed groups and it works quite well. Stromness was one of the areas where people had shown an interest in a project of this type. The aim is to help people stay in their homes for as long as possible.

■ “I think this was the concept behind Papdale, it was a mix of social housing and smaller properties for older people, I think that works quite well to feel part of a community rather than being stuck out somewhere on their own. I think it is a good idea to give older people the option to downsize to something that does have a closer access to support, suppose the only problem, and this comes back to the homeless concept is that if there is pressure on housing then there’s a risk that that housing could be used and that status changes, we would need to ensure it’s protected in some way.”

### **Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs**

Frances advised that the aim of this priority is to: Ensure that people with particular needs have access to good quality, appropriate housing and support services which meets their specific requirements and enables independent living.

The housing requirements for people with particular needs can be varied.

Some people require mainstream housing but with a package of appropriate support to help them to manage their tenancy.

Other households require either amenity standard housing to assist with a mobility issue or fully wheelchair accessible housing. Others require adaptations to their existing housing such as the installation of a wet room or ramp for example. It is important to ensure that the housing stock in Orkney can accommodate the needs of a wide variety of people and this priority aims to ensure that the housing stock can become appropriately flexible to meet those needs.

Again, we work in partnership with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to provide appropriate housing as required and through our Scheme of Assistance, Orkney Care and Repair is funded to deliver adaptations in private sector accommodation.

Questions for discussion were;

**Question 14: Are there sufficient housing options available throughout Orkney to meet the needs of households with particular needs?**

**Question 15: Do you think there needs to be a greater provision of specialist wheelchair housing in Orkney?**

**Question 16: Is there a need to develop additional housing specifically for people with particular needs in Orkney?**

**Question 17: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs”?**

■ “Do we know how many people have needs, there should be statistics somewhere. I feel mobility would be the main one and I do hear from people in a community perspective “if we had a wet room...” a lot. I would say that it is a big priority. More demand for adaptations.”

### **Improving Standards in the Private Sector**

Lesley advised that private sector housing includes the tenures of owner-occupation and also the private rented sector.

Orkney’s housing stock is varied in age and quality. Orkney has a relatively high percentage of properties that fail the minimum standards required, particularly those which are below the tolerable standard or are in significant disrepair. Not all of these properties are occupied of course.

It is hugely important that households in Orkney live in properties that are well maintained and provide the basic necessities required. Sometimes properties are not maintained over a significant period of time for a range of reasons and this can lead to occupants living in properties that are poor quality.

The private rented sector is required to meet the repairing standard and private sector landlords are required to register with the Council to assist with the process of

ensuring that the property is of an appropriate standard and that the landlord meets certain legal requirements in letting the property concerned.

This priority links closely with the priority in relation to energy efficiency as well.

Questions discussed were:

**Question 18: Is there adequate support and information available to homeowners to help them improve their properties?**

**Question 19: Is there adequate support and information available to private landlords to help them improve their properties?**

**Question 20: Is there sufficient monitoring of private rented properties to ensure the standards are maintained in Orkney?**

**Question 21: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority "Improving Standards in the Private Sector"?**

■ "Questions 20, if one of the priorities is to ensure that the standards of privately rented accommodation is maintained, then it suggests that there's maybe an issue as you said the general standard of housing stock is quite low, I know a lot of that would be to do with insulation etc. then it suggests to me that there isn't enough monitoring of private rented properties. Without knowing how much monitoring goes on, when someone registers as a landlord is there someone that inspects the property before it is rented out or is it a proactive process to ensure standards. I know of some properties within Stromness that I would be very surprised at if they met the tolerable standard but are being rented out. My thoughts for question 20 is no but could you enlighten me?"

Lesley advised that if you were to put in an application to register as a landlord then there's a pro forma, there are questions within that regarding the standard of the property whether it meets the requirements. Landlords are asked to comply with that. It then goes through a process being approved and as part of that approval process we involve Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health and Legal to have a look at the properties within that as to if there's been any concerns raised and those then are taken to us. We would then go back before an approval and advise if anything has been raised by any of the departments then they would need to resolve the issue before being a registered landlord. Part of the issue is that possibly people are not willing to come forward in a small community to make us aware that there are concerns about a property because they feel uncomfortable, for example they might be put in a position if someone finds out they've come forward. We certainly do encourage it and we work quite closely with landlords when they do have issues to get improvements for their tenants. There's a wealth of information on the Council's website on information on becoming a landlord as well as information for tenants as well and renting in the private sector.

■ "So from that there's not necessarily an inspection done, you're relying on the landlord and I'm sure they are genuine 99% of the time and the standard is being



met. Would you go out and inspect on the basis of a complaint or would you raise the complaint with the landlord?"

Lesley advised that we would tend to get Environmental Health to inspect a property for us and that they would then feedback the results. Housing Officers deal with landlord registration so they don't have the qualifications to inspect a property whereas an Environmental Health Officer does.

■ "So do you think there is sufficient monitoring of private rented properties?"

Lesley advised that if we had more resources, we would be able to do more on that basis. Frances advised there's interconnections, if someone was to apply for housing and advise that they are currently living in a private rented property that they advised was in poor condition we would look at involving Environmental Health in that aspect to inspect. Can be difficult when a tenant is concerned about raising these issues.

### **Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency**

Luke advised that Orkney has one of the highest levels of fuel poverty in the UK. High energy prices, some properties with poor energy efficiency, lower than average incomes and short summers leading to a need for heating for a significant proportion of the year, all contribute to the high figures.

Climate change and the journey towards net zero carbon housing is also a significant driver and undertaking energy efficiency works to properties can assist with reducing fuel poverty and the potential to meet climate change targets.

The aim of this priority is to increase the energy efficiency of Orkney's housing stock, eliminate fuel poverty and achieve a positive impact on the environment.

The Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd are required to meet very challenging energy efficiency standards across their stock and the Scottish Government has introduced requirements for other tenures as well.

A lot is already being done in Orkney around fuel poverty and climate change and the Scottish Government provide funding each year to help improve the housing stock. The Council bids for other funding that may be available too. We are aware however that more needs to be done.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 22: Is enough being done locally and nationally to support the increase in energy efficiency of Orkney's housing stock?**

**Question 23: is the funding and support available to private households to help increase energy efficiency in their homes accessible and understandable?**

**Question 24: Is there adequate information and support to determine the best options for improving the energy efficiency of your home?**

**Question 25: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority “Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency”?**

■ “We’ve previously benefitted from support with insulation which was very good and found it a very straight forward process. Equally I know there is a lot of pressure for these programmes to be rolled out and to spend the money and to improve the standard of insulation in properties. I’m aware that then attracts ‘cowboy’ firms, I know of a contractor who has had to go and undo works by one of these firms as there has been a lack of understanding on how it should be done particularly around dampness control. Again, I think it’s great that we should be rolling these schemes out and trying to improve these people’s efficiency and particularly in terms on insulation but I would wonder if there is enough monitoring what’s been done and checking the standard of the works that’s been done. There’s certainly plenty of information out there it’s certainly accessible we had no issue looking for it. I think if it’s pushed then people will take it up but there is people who would take advantage of that for their own benefit.”

Luke advised that we have been aware of other companies that come to the island, we have no control over. They’re utilizing national funding, they’re doing works, they don’t have to tell us they’re here. We often don’t know that they’re here until we find out from someone when they’ve done works and something has gone wrong. We highly monitor installs that have been undertaken as a Council project.

■ “Agree with ■’s point, here in Papa Westray we’ve had work done on different types of housing over the years with different grants. I do building work myself and have had to internally insulate walls which I like to think is a good way of doing it and living in the area you have to do a decent job but we have had ones come in and do works and I have to admit the external wall insulation work is not too great, not a way I think is the best way of doing the job. Also, I think there needs to be more assistance with window replacements as I think it’s more difficult to get help with that.”

Luke advised that there isn’t a lot of funding in that area it is something we are aware of.

Properties in Papay are quite traditional and the majority are stone built.

**Sustaining Orkney’s Communities**

Luke advised that sustaining Orkney’s communities is a key aim of the Council and housing plays a hugely important role in that. So, the aim of this priority is to support the continued survival, future growth and sustainability of Orkney’s Island communities by seeking to ensure there is a sufficient supply of appropriate housing of a good standard.

Both the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd own and rent properties on the isles. Housing Services have and continue to support the development of additional, much needed, affordable housing on the isles. In recent years additional Council housing has been developed in Westray and Sanday.

In addition, over the last few years a key way this aim has been supported is through the development of Islands Housing Fund projects. Development trusts and others have undertaken really good work to increase the amount of housing on Orkney's islands.

The hope is that the Islands Housing Fund will continue into the longer term and that we can see an increase in the number of housing projects developed across Orkney.

Questions for discussion were:

**Question 26: Is there sufficient housing available in rural and island areas to support Orkney's communities?**

**Question 27: Does more need to be done to support islands development trusts to develop housing projects and bid for funding?**

**Question 28: Is there a need for additional housing to support rural communities on Mainland Orkney?**

**Question 29: Is there a need for additional housing to support Orkney's island communities?**

**Question 30: Is there sufficient housing options available to younger households starting out?**

**Question 31: Do you agree that the Council has identified the correct actions for the priority "Sustaining Orkney's Communities"?**

■ "In Papa Westray there is no Council housing, it's been something we've tried to achieve but there's always been difficulty if there's nobody on the waiting list but as there's no houses then no waiting list. I'm involved with the Papay Development Trust and they've done a good bit with housing, we've worked on two houses and just about finished a third house that we've got assistance through the Council and the Local Enterprise company. It would be good if we had two to three houses here that we could use as social housing, I think it would be good to have on the island, not so much island run but would be good to have the ability to vet who gets houses etc. I still think being a small community in the isles here, they would need to fit in with the community."

Frances advised that herself, Luke and Lesley have been to Papa Westray before looking at some of those things ■ mentioned. We've always been amenable to provide Council housing in Papay if we could evidence demand, we've encouraged people to fill in forms but then didn't get the evidence we required for demand. A Local Lettings Initiative is where you can work with small communities as part of the Lettings Policy and look at what the island needs e.g. if they need people from a particular trades background we could look to prioritise those people on that basis if they wish to move into the area. We remain amenable looking into that if we can evidence demand. If anyone wishes to complete forms to send us to assist in evidencing demand.

■ “ Regarding evidencing demand, I’m not sure if that’s a national guideline or an Orkney Islands Council requirement because I can think a number of big projects that over the last few years that there’s been no demand for yet the Council has gone ahead with the statement ‘build and they will come’. I wonder if the islands especially with the outer isles as ■ said it is a ‘chicken and egg’ situation, the difficulty with the islands is that it’s more expensive to build there e.g. costs to bring materials over, additional haulage costs and limited builders. I wonder if that needs to be flipped possibly and maybe a special case made for the isles to build a couple of houses because if they’re there then I’m sure there will be demand. I’m not sure but the communities themselves, if people are wanting to move back there, it all ties into the community and sustainability which the Development Trusts are working very hard to do. An example of a project that was built with no demand was Coplands Dock, the funding was there so went ahead with it but there’s still no demand for it. I think from a housing point of view I think we should be creating demand.”

Frances advised that in terms of Coplands Dock, it’s different funding streams and the money we have for council housing comes from tenants’ rents and some support from the Scottish Government, we generally get £57-59K per house that we build but they would of course costs more than that so the rest is to be generated from rents. Orkney Housing Association built properties in North Ronaldsay with a few to attract families in and seeing if they could deliberately attract people in to sustain the island because they had housing and generally they’re all occupied but it has been a bit of a struggle. Due to this we have been thinking it’s a potential to do the same on Papay, we’ve had conversations with Orkney Housing Association on the same basis as it doesn’t matter which one of us develops it it’s about whether there’s a potential there, equally we have other islands where we have too much housing for our needs and then we’ve had to sell properties, this has happened on Hoy and Flotta.

Luke advised that re the Islands Housing Fund there are various projects ongoing which he has been involved in. The reason behind the facilitate and assist islands doing it themselves rather than us building is that as Frances mentioned we get about £57K per houses, we’ve managed to pull in £90-95K for some of these projects so there is significantly more funding available but also there’s more flexibility re what you can do with property e.g. mid-market rent, low cost home ownership, private rent, renovate old properties for example we did the old Schoolhouse on North Ronaldsay and we also worked on an existing property in Papay. A number of the islands are looking at modular housing. As Frances mentioned we are open to building council housing however we are looking more to utilizing the funding the Government has available specifically for this type of housing to try an maximise the amount of funding we can bring in. This has worked well with the islands. Hopefully be able to drive more projects forward and continue to work with the isles on these.

### **What Next?**

Frances advised that this takes us to the end of our questions. Thanks very much everyone for your contributions.

We will form a minute from the recording of this meeting and will let you have a copy of that.

If you'd also like to fill in the smart survey, that's great but its not essential as you've contributed tonight.

What will happen now is that we'll co-ordinate the information from our two events (we had another event last week) and we're also receiving responses through smart survey. After that we'll report to our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee with the results of the consultation and will determine what changes need to be made to the Local Housing Strategy.

At the start of this session we asked about whether you were happy for your comments to be shared and the reason for that is that when we report to Committee, we'll include contributions. Where someone has said they aren't happy for their comments to be shared, we'll treat that information sensitively, so it won't appear in a public report.

After that if you'd like further information please let us know.

Thanks again for attending.





Local Housing Strategy  
2017 - 2022



**ORKNEY**  
ISLANDS COUNCIL

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**This document is available in a range of languages and formats on request.**



## Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the new Local Housing Strategy for Orkney for 2017 to 2022.

The Local Housing Strategy sets out Orkney Islands Council's vision for housing over a 5 year term. Our main aim states:

**“Orkney Islands Council is committed to ensuring that its citizens have access to a warm, dry, secure, and affordable home, suited to their particular needs and, wherever possible, in a community of their choice.”**

This vision links to the Scottish Government's vision that all people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meet their needs.

Housing is central to a thriving community and impacts on every resident within our community. Therefore, it is vital that members of our community feel appropriately involved and consequently we have developed this strategy based on consultation and will continue to undertake a broad ranging consultation.

This strategy builds on the very positive achievements of the previous Local Housing Strategy over the last five years, however, we continue to face significant challenges including public sector resource constraints; the integration agenda for Health and Social Care, the ongoing welfare reform; requirements to improve housing outcomes for homeless people and the implications of a declining and ageing demography, combined with an uncertain economic environment, which all impact on housing circumstances and the lives of individuals in the area.

Good quality housing is vitally important to the social and economic sustainability of the island group and physical well-being of its residents.

This document sets out the actions which will be undertaken during the next five years to increase the supply of affordable housing and to reduce homelessness. It will address the critically important issue of providing housing support to the more vulnerable members of our community. In addition, it seeks to address the key issues of thermal efficiency, fuel poverty and climate change. Finally, it incorporates our approach to improving private sector housing in line with Section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and looks at improving housing through adaptations etc.

The current financial climate continues to increase the need for joined up working to provide better quality services whilst achieving ongoing efficiencies. Orkney Islands Council is committed to joint working with other agencies and its communities accordingly.

The implementation of this strategy will help to achieve the continuous improvement to which all partner agencies are committed.

**Councillor Gwenda Shearer.**

**Chair of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.**

## 1.0. Introduction

In developing this Local Housing Strategy, the Council recognises the importance of good quality housing to the social and economic sustainability of the island group and physical well-being of its residents.

Our main aim is:

**“Orkney Islands Council is committed to ensuring that its citizens have access to sustainable, warm, secure, and affordable home that meet their particular needs and, wherever possible, in a community of their choice.”**

Where previously the production of separate strategies for homelessness, housing support and fuel poverty was required these will no longer have to be submitted separately to Scottish Ministers although local authorities will have to address these areas within the Local Housing Strategy. Many of the strategies remain a statutory requirement in their own right. Consequently, Orkney has retained various strategies believing these allow a robust assessment of key issues. The findings of these align closely with relevant sections in the Local Housing Strategy.

Our Local Housing Strategy remains underpinned by a range of other strategies which focus on key issues. However, for the first time we have refined the list of strategies and consequently those on older people, younger people, housing support and private sector housing have been incorporated within the Local Housing Strategy. Independent strategies on housing include:

- Homelessness.
- Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.
- Advice and Information Strategy.
- Empty Homes Strategy.
- Fuel Poverty.

The Housing Service is actively involved in the Housing Options hub for the North and Islands area.

### 1.1. The Purpose of the Local Housing Strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to develop a Local Housing Strategy covering all housing tenures.

The Local Housing Strategy is supported by an assessment of housing need and demand and sets out the priorities and plans for the provision of housing and housing related services throughout Orkney from 2017 to 2022. It is the Local Authority's sole strategic document for housing in its area and is intended to set out our strategic vision and priorities for the future of housing and housing related services. The Local Housing Strategy should be kept under review.

Expectations of the Local Housing Strategy include that it is:

- Evidence based.
- Developed in collaboration with stakeholders, including residents and tenants.

- A corporate document, agreed and supported by all relevant local authority departments.
- Linked to the previous local housing strategy to show progress on outcomes and to carry forward outstanding actions, as appropriate.
- A standalone document.
- Reviewed regularly and progress monitored through an action plan.

The main purpose of the Strategy is:

- To show clearly the link between national and local housing priorities.
- To evidence the level and type of housing need and demand.
- To provide a clear strategic direction for housing investment for new and existing housing.
- To consider how housing circumstances could be improved across all tenures.

The Strategy must:

- Contribute to national priorities.
- Provide clear links to local strategies and plans.
- Set out the approach to meeting our legal duties.
- Reflect the views and contributions of stakeholders.

It should be based on the following four pillars of public service reform:

- A clear focus on prevention.
- Integration of local public services through strong partnership working, collaboration and effective delivery.
- Investment in people who deliver services through enhanced workforce development and effective leadership.
- A focus on improving performance, through transparency, innovation and the use of digital technology.

## **1.2. The Strategic Framework**

### **The National Policy Context**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires all Local Authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy which provides the framework for the delivery of housing and related services. It follows an analysis of the housing needs, demands and aspirations of the local authority area taking into account all housing tenures.

The Scottish Government's revised guidance on Local Housing Strategies was published in 2019. In addition, the Scottish Government published the Scottish Planning Policy (2014). Both these documents emphasise the need for housing and planning to work closely together to ensure there is 'effective housing planning' and that local housing outcomes can be met.

The Scottish Government's current strategic approach for housing in Scotland was set out in their ten year housing strategy 'Homes Fit for the 21st Century' (2011) with their vision for housing in Scotland to 2021 that 'all people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meets their needs'.

A five-year Joint Delivery Plan for Scotland (2015) sets out the key actions to be taken to meet the Scottish Government's vision.

In 2016 The Scottish Government launched their More Homes Scotland approach to support the increase in the supply of homes across all tenures which involves:

- Investing more public and private money in housing.
- Getting land ready for housing.
- Making sure that new housing is planned for effectively.

Increases in supply will be encouraged through a range of programmes/initiatives such as:

- The Housing and Planning Delivery Framework.
- The Affordable Housing Supply Programme.
- The Housing Infrastructure Fund.
- The Rural and Islands Housing Fund.
- The provision of a number of grants and loans.

### **Housing Beyond 2021**

In September 2018 the Scottish Government published a paper Housing Beyond 2021 to help inform discussions on the future of housing in Scotland.

Funding has been provided by the Scottish Government to support the delivery of at least 50,000 affordable homes, 35,000 of which will be for social rent, over the five years to March 2021. The Scottish Government has expressed their commitment to continuing to promote increased supply of housing across all tenures.

Challenges inside this include providing health, social care and housing for an ageing population and meeting commitments such as ending homelessness and tackling child poverty, fuel poverty and climate change. At the same time, there is a need to recognise that public finances are finite and face many competing challenges.

The Scottish Government's vision for housing is linked to a wider Housing and Regeneration Outcomes Framework.

**Housing Vision** - All people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and meet their needs.

**Regeneration vision** - A Scotland where our most disadvantaged are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being.

**National Outcomes:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We live longer healthier lives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have strong, sustainable supportive communities where people take responsibility for their actions and how they affect others.</li> </ul>
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### Housing and regeneration outcomes:

A well-functioning housing system;	High quality, sustainable homes;	Homes that meet people's needs	Sustainable communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability and choice.</li> <li>• Homes people can afford.</li> <li>• Growth of supply.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe.</li> <li>• Warm.</li> <li>• Resource efficient.</li> <li>• Promotes well-being.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing a home.</li> <li>• Keeping a home.</li> <li>• Supporting independent living.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economically sustainable.</li> <li>• Physically sustainable.</li> <li>• Socially sustainable.</li> </ul>

There is a significant amount of national legislation and policy priorities which impact on the Local Housing Strategy.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 provides a clear statutory purpose focused on improved outcomes. Housing Services are a key part of local community planning and partnership working to ensure improvements in outcomes for local communities.

Legislative drivers which inform the Local Housing Strategy include:

- The Housing (Scotland) Acts 2001, 2006 and 2010.
- Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011.
- Private Housing Tenancy (Scotland) Act 2016.
- Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.
- Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2009).
- Equality Act 2010.
- Public Bodies (Joint Working Act) 2014.
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.
- Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019.

While not a legislative driver, the Scottish Social Housing Charter also influences the Local Housing Strategy.

### **Place-Making and Communities**

Place-making is a key part of Scottish Planning Policy and is a creative, collaborative process that includes design, development, renewal or regeneration of our urban or rural built environments.

The Council’s approach to supporting new and existing neighbourhoods is based on place-making principles and the six qualities of a successful place:

Distinctive place.	characterised by unique natural and built heritage.
Safe and Pleasant place.	A sense of security through a housing layout that maximises positive natural aspects.
Easy to move around / connected place.	Street design that prioritises pedestrians and cycles over motor vehicles.
Welcoming place.	Characterised by a vibrant community that is inclusive and caters for a diverse society.
Adaptable place.	Mixed tenure housing with well-balanced house types and sizes.
Resource Efficient Place.	Maximum efficiency housing using natural or technological means.

Through the preparation of Masterplans, Development Briefs or Site Development Statements for strategic housing development sites, the Council’s Local Development Plan promotes the development of sustainable and well designed places.

### **Town Centre First Principle**

The Local Housing Strategy should align with the Town Centre First principles. This looks at taking local needs and circumstances into account, it is about:

- Adopting an approach to decisions that considers the vibrancy of town centres as a starting point.
- Ensuring that the health of town centres features in decision-making processes.
- Open, measured and transparent decision making that takes account of medium to longer-term impacts on town centres.
- Recognising that town centre locations are not always suitable and making sure that the reasons for locating elsewhere are transparent and backed by evidence.

The Council’s Local Development Plan applies the Town Centre First Principle in both Kirkwall and Stromness’ town centres.

## **A Place to Stay, A Place to Call Home: a Strategy for the Private Rented Sector in Scotland**

The private rented sector has been subject to significant changes since the publication of the Government's vision for "a private rented sector that provides good quality homes and high management standards, inspires consumer confidence, and encourages growth through attracting investment" (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/place-stay-place-call-home-strategy-private-rented-sector-scotland/>).

Significant changes have taken place including the introduction of a new Private Residential Tenancy, regulating letting agents and publishing statutory guidance for Local Authorities on landlord registration.

The Council is required to meet 3 key strategic aims in respect of the private rented sector being:

- To improve the quality of property condition, management and service in the sector.
- Deliver for both tenants and landlords – meeting the needs of those living in the sector and those seeking accommodation and landlords committed to continuous improvement.
- Enable growth and investment to help increase overall housing supply.

### **Fairer Scotland Duty**

The Fairer Scotland duty came into force from April 2018 as part of the Equality Act 2010, Part 1. This duty places a responsibility on the public sector to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

A local authority must:

- Actively consider how it could reduce inequality of outcome in major strategic decisions.
- Publish a written assessment that shows how this has been done.

For the Local Housing Strategy, this duty has been met by completing the relevant part of the equality impact assessment which informs the Local Housing Strategy and by ensuring its ethos is mainstreamed through the Local Housing Strategy itself.

### **Additional Policies**

In addition to the above, the Local Housing Strategy should also take into account the following:

- Race Equality Framework and Action Plan (re homes suitable for extended families).
- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) which states that all aspects of the housing system, from planning and building to nominations and allocations should place this at the heart of decision making.

- Child Poverty Action Plan – every child, every chance: The Tackling Child Poverty Deliver Plan.

## **Local Policy Context**

### **Orkney Community Plan**

Since 2018, local Single Outcome Agreements have been replaced by Community Planning Partnership led Local Outcomes Improvement Plans.

Orkney Community Plan (2018-21) incorporates Orkney's Local Outcomes Improvement Plans and is a three-year rolling plan that will be refreshed, updated and reissued annually.

Orkney Community Plan shares along with Orkney's Local Development Plan, the ambition:

“to strengthen and support Orkney’s communities by enabling those developments which will have a positive and sustainable socio-economic impact, and utilise locally-available resources, whilst striving to preserve and enhance the rich natural and cultural heritage assets upon which Orkney’s economy and society depends.”

The Community Plan identified the following strategic priorities and outcomes for 2018-21:

### **Strong Communities**

Outcomes:

- Our communities have vibrant, innovative, sustainable and inclusive populations.
- Our communities have access to the services, facilities and resources they require to enable them to lead, develop and innovate.
- Partners and communities share trusting relationships and understand their own and others' accountability, responsibility and capacity.

### **Living Well**

Outcomes:

- People live in safe, warm, homely settings.
- People have the support they need to adopt healthy lifestyles throughout their lives, and take responsibility for their wellbeing.

### **Vibrant Economy**

Outcomes:

- Orkney is a location of choice for people to live, work, learn, visit and invest.
- Orkney is widely recognised as a location for innovation and the application of experimental thinking in an island context.



- Orkney's economy offers a broad range of employment opportunities in all localities.

### **Locality Plan (2018 to 2021)**

All community planning partnerships in Scotland have to produce one or more Locality Plans for the purpose of locality planning. Local areas in Orkney are identified which are relatively disadvantaged in terms of social and economic opportunities. The Locality Plan has to set out what will be done to improve socio-economic outcomes in the area. These plans sit alongside and supplement the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. The Orkney Partnership chose the non-linked isles as the first locality in Orkney after a consideration of statistical evidence and consulting the isles residents.

### **Local Development Plan**

Orkney's Local Development Plan seeks to ensure that effective planning policies are in place to strengthen and support Orkney's communities by:

- Enabling developments which have a positive and sustainable socio-economic impact.
- Using resources that are available locally.
- Striving to preserve and enhance the rich natural and cultural heritage assets upon which Orkney's economy and society depends.

The Plan includes development proposals for Orkney's towns, villages and rural settlements, and establishes settlement boundaries for each of these areas where the principle of development will be accepted

Since 2017, the Scottish Government have been reviewing the Planning System and in June 2019 the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 was passed. There are a number of additional provisions that reinforce the close relationship of the planning system to housing and they are:

- Every 2 years the Scottish Government will report on how the planning system is operating to help ensure that the housing needs of older people and disabled people are met.
- The Planning system has to consider the housing needs of people undertaking further and higher education.
- The Planning system are to prepare and maintain a list of persons registering an interest of acquiring land for self-building housing.
- The new Planning Act will allow local authorities to designate short term let control areas where the use of a dwelling house for short term letting is deemed to involve a material change of use.

With the new act, the Local Development Plan will cover a 10 year period and the Scottish Government through a revised version of the National Planning Framework will produce standardised national planning policies. Through the production of an Evidence Report, a planning authority may consider alternative policy approaches."

The Council anticipates commencing a review of the current Orkney Local Development Plan in 2020. The Local Development Plan is required to include targets for meeting the housing needs of people living in Orkney”.

### **Housing Needs and Demand Assessment**

The Local Housing Strategy is informed by a Housing Needs and Demand Assessment which sets out the key issues informing housing need and demand.

The Scottish Government published revised guidance for local authorities undertaking the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment in 2014.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment was carried out at housing market rather than Local Authority level as required by the relevant guidance

In developing a Local Housing Strategy, local authorities must assess the extent to which the volume, quality and location of available housing meets household requirements.

The Housing Needs and Demand Assessment outlines a range of estimates to try and account for a number of alternative future outcomes. Orkney’s Housing Needs and Demand Assessment focuses on three key scenarios and a fourth bespoke scenario.

### **Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)**

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan is a statement of investment and resources required to deliver physical housing through the Local Housing Strategy. The plan is updated annually in partnership with relevant organisations and is reported to the Housing Development Forum and Housing Joint Strategy Delivery Group. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan has effectively become part of the Local Housing Strategy and is appended accordingly.

The Local Housing Strategy itself is underpinned by various housing strategies, some statutory, some non-statutory, including Homelessness, Fuel Poverty, Asset Management and Empty Homes Strategies.

### **Our Islands, Our Future**

The local strategic planning context includes the “Our Islands Our Future” campaign which led to the Islands Act 2018.

Initially launched in 2013 by the three islands’ councils (Orkney, Shetland and Eilean Siar) this set out a vision for the future of the islands in recognition that they face different challenges to other parts of the country.

Both the Scottish and UK governments have recognised the potential of the islands and in 2014 made strong statement of support: the Scottish Government in “Empowering Scotland’s Island Communities” and the UK government in “A Framework for the Islands”.

Since then steps have been taken to honour those commitments. It is clear that both governments value our islands and the principles upon which the campaign is based,

and the discussions have led to the development of a proposal for a deal for the islands.

In 2018 the Islands Act was passed and currently there is a process of developing an Islands Deal which encompasses a broad range of areas including those of economy, sustainability and housing the population.

The deal focuses on additionality which could be generated by a suite of unique projects, programmes and governance arrangements, and realised through the firm commitment and shared understanding of the three island groups, the UK and Scottish governments, and our partners in the public, third and private sectors.

Orkney has included some energy efficiency projects within the net zero carbon workstream.

### **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan**

The Scottish Government's 2017 to 2018 Programme for Government set a national objective to eradicate rough sleeping. A Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up and which was tasked to identify actions, services and legislative changes that may be needed to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation.

In 2018 a requirement was placed on all Councils to produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan within tight timescales.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was developed by the Housing Service and a range of partner agencies.

The intention of the plan is to endeavour to ensure homeless households are permanently rehoused as swiftly as possible and to ensure that a range of support and prevention services are available with the intention of reducing homeless presentations.

### **Orkney Strategic Plan**

The Orkney Strategic Plan (2019 - 2022) was prepared in terms of the Public Bodies (Joint Working)(Scotland) Act 2014.

This plan aims to set out the ambitions for health and social care in Orkney for those functions and services delegated to Orkney Health and Care by Orkney Islands Council and NHS Orkney. The Housing Service is represented on the Integration Joint Board and works closely with Orkney Health and Care in this respect.

The Strategic Plan links closely to the 9 national health and wellbeing outcomes of:

- Outcome 1: People are able to look after and improve their own health and wellbeing and live in good health for longer.
- Outcome 2: People, including those with disabilities or long term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community.

- Outcome 3. People who use health and social care services have positive experiences of those services, and have their dignity respected.
- Outcome 4. Health and social care services are centred on helping to maintain or improve the quality of life of people who use those services.
- Outcome 5. Health and social care services contribute to reducing health inequalities.
- Outcome 6. People who provide unpaid care are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, including to reduce any negative impact of their caring role on their own health and well-being.
- Outcome 7. People using health and social care services are safe from harm.
- Outcome 8. People who work in health and social care services feel engaged with the work they do and are supported to continuously improve the information, support, care and treatment they provide.
- Outcome 9. Resources are used effectively and efficiently in the provision of health and social care services.

The integral Housing Contribution Statement details the areas of work which housing partners undertake to provide in support of the Strategic Plan.

### **Housing Contribution Statement**

The Housing Contribution statement is an integral part of Orkney Health and Care's Strategic Commissioning Plan. It sets out the contribution that housing and related services in Orkney make in helping to achieve priority outcomes for health and social care. It serves as a key link between the Strategic Commissioning Plan and the Local Housing Strategy. It highlights amongst other things the need to respond to those that have physical and other support needs and identified a number of areas for action.

Those who require specialist housing or support to live independently can be found across Orkney's population. Some may need these services for a short period of time and for others it will long term.

Health and social care integration has also placed a greater emphasis on enabling people to stay in their own homes or a in more 'homely' setting which reflects the Scottish Government policy to 'shift the balance of care' from hospital and institutional settings, to care in the home and community.

Housing Support Services in Orkney are closely aligned with, but are not part of, the delegated functions of the Orkney Health and Care and are provided by the Council's Housing Service.

### **1.3. The Local Housing Strategy Development Process and Partnership Working**

The Local Housing Strategy has been produced following a detailed analysis of local housing need and demand and has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders, having regard to legislation and the guidance produced by the Scottish Government.

The development of the Local Housing Strategy is overseen by the Housing Forum which is a multi-agency partnership of housing professionals from local social housing providers and other related professionals. It is chaired by the Chair of our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.

The development of a revised Local Housing Strategy for 2017 – 2022, began with an internal review of the achievements of the previous Local Housing Strategy to 2016 to 2017.

An event for key stakeholders was held in April 2018 to look at central issues such as what the Local Housing Strategy's priorities would be going forward. This session was well attended by a broad range of partner agencies from across the statutory and third sectors.

Feedback from this initial session was used, alongside information from the summary evaluation of the previous strategy (outlined in section 1.4 below) and key data from the housing need and demand assessment and other relevant sources.

Scottish Government guidance on what a Local Housing Strategy should contain was also considered. Accordingly, the first draft of the revised Local Housing Strategy was developed.

A Member Officer Working Group was established to review the Local Housing Strategy and to provide ongoing guidance throughout the course of its development. This met in January 2018 and October 2019.

In addition, throughout there was a range of meetings with key partner agencies to discuss development opportunities and endeavour to deal with barriers to housing development across Orkney.

## **1.4. Summary Evaluation of the Local Housing Strategy 2011 to 2016**

An evaluation of progress against the Local Housing Strategy 2011 to 2016 showed some significant achievements including:

- The development of 436 affordable houses and flats across Orkney.
- The development of 6 units of move on accommodation for homeless young people.
- The introduction of the HEEPS:ABS programme locally.
- Expansion of housing options advice through the development of our online Housing Options Guide.
- Development of a homelessness prevention policy.

Evaluation of Key Actions and Commitment Section.

### **Priority 1: Adequate Supply of Housing.**

Our Aim: To ensure Orkney's citizens have access to a range of affordable housing options, suited to their requirements.

<b>Relevant Indicators</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Identify the generous land supply required through the Local Development Plan to meet the annual affordable housing supply target.	Blue.	The build programme utilised both council owned and privately owned land.
Support development across Orkney where it meets the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Local Housing Strategy etc and helps meet the housing supply targets.	Blue.	Over the period of 2010-2016 the Council developed 230 properties and Orkney Housing Association Ltd developed 236.
To ensure housing need and demand are met by making the best use of the existing housing stock, including developing and implementing an Empty Homes Strategy.	Green.	Empty homes project began and funding was identified for a 2 year post. Work progressing to try and recruit appropriately.
Implement a housing options programme to analyse the waiting list and work with households to identify the most appropriate housing option.	Blue.	This has become business as usual.
Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to endeavour to find the best solution for housing development despite economic constraints	Green.	Regular meetings of house build group and close joint working are in place.
Implementing the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme in the light of a target of assisting 30 - 40 first-time buyers into owner occupation. Monitoring the impact of the Affordable Serviced Sites policy.	Blue.	Scheme did not progress in Scotland due to a legal technicality. Locally the housing loans policy was amended to replace the need for this.

## **Priority 2: Fuel Poverty.**

Main Aim: Aim: To reduce the energy requirements of houses to eliminate fuel poverty and achieve a positive impact on the environment.

<b>Relevant Indicators</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Encourage the uptake of available grants amongst private sector households in fuel poverty.	Green.	HEEPS ABS programme began 2015 to 2016 with Firefly Energi appointed as managing agent.
The requirement to implement the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.	Green.	The Council has undertaken projects with the aim of reducing carbon emissions from both the Council's housing stock and stock in the private sector. This has mainly be undertaken through HEEPS: ABS, Scottish Housing Quality Standard and Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing works.
Encourage frontline staff to actively support vulnerable households improve energy efficiency in their homes.	Green.	Working with various partners in this respect. Both Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd employ Fuel Poverty / Energy Officers to supporting individuals in our communities.
Improve provision of information in relation to energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty through online facilities.	Blue.	Our website was upgraded in 2012. We work closely with various partners.
Continue to work with relevant partners to investigate the use of modern technologies.	Green.	Examples include the THAW Wellbeing Orkney project for which the Council secured European funding. Worked with Orkney Housing Association to access Capital Acceleration Programme funding for improving heating and energy efficiency on 2016 to 2017.
Encourage the use of sustainable technologies in new builds.	Green.	
Continue to be proactive in seeking funding which could assist with fuel poverty.	Green.	

### **Priority 3: Housing for Particular Needs.**

Aim: To provide appropriate housing with holistic packages of support (as required) to enable those with particular needs to lead independent lives in their own communities.

<b>Relevant Indicators</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Implement Older Persons' Housing Strategy with partner agencies.	Blue.	Will be incorporated into revised Local Housing Strategy post 2017 due to resource pressures.
Implement Housing Support Strategy with partner agencies.	Blue.	Will be incorporated into revised Local Housing Strategy post 2017 due to resource pressures.
Investigate innovative solutions to provide supported housing for people with particular needs.	Green.	
Continue to investigate the possibility of improving move on accommodation for young homeless people.	Blue.	Six units of move on accommodation were completed on the Glaitness Farmhouse site in 2015.
To continue to work jointly with Orkney Health and Care to provide housing support most appropriately inside current resources.	Blue.	
Investigate innovative options including modular housing and virtual sheltered housing.	Blue.	During 2012 there was a project to investigate modular housing. This will be further investigated going forward.
Investigate the possibility of using private sector accommodation as a solution in certain circumstances.	Green.	
Expand the strategic purpose of an existing sheltered housing scheme to provide for particular needs.	Blue.	Completed in 2012 but low numbers of particular needs resulted in there being insufficient applicants in general terms. In most cases people with particular needs had their needs met through a housing application coupled with support being provided through a tendered contract.
Expand housing options advice (partially through development of online housing options guide) and ensure inclusion of information on adaptations, grants and provision of support.	Blue.	Online housing options guide completed during 2012.

#### **Priority 4: Homelessness.**

Our Aim: "Prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place wherever possible".



<b>Relevant Indicators</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association Limited (OHAL) to ensure the best resettlement option is found.	Blue.	
Continue to implement the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.	Blue.	
Continue to implement the Advice and Information Strategy.	Blue.	Revised Advice and Information Strategy approved February 2017.
Investigate the possibility of using private sector accommodation as a solution to homelessness.	Blue.	Private Residential Tenancies (Scotland) Act 2016 made this viable.
Continue to investigate the possibility of improving move on accommodation for young homeless people.	Blue.	Six units of move on accommodation were completed on the Glaitness Farmhouse site in 2015.
To continue to work jointly with Orkney Health and Care to provide housing support most appropriately inside current resources.	Blue.	
To develop a homelessness prevention policy.	Blue.	Completed 2012.
Develop an online housing options guide with detail on all housing tenures.	Blue.	Completed 2012.
Continue Developing a Housing Options approach to preventing homelessness.	Blue.	
By continuing to deliver first class, responsive homelessness service.	Blue.	

### **Priority 5: Improving Standards in the Private Sector**

Aim: To eradicate unfit and below Tolerable Standard Housing and to encourage even closer links with the Private Rented Sector.

<b>Relevant Indicators</b>	<b>RAG Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>

Further improve the information provided to private sector landlords and tenants, focusing upon rights and responsibilities.	Blue.	Online housing options guide completed during 2012.
Further remove barriers to accessing homes in the private sector through the development of a Homelessness Prevention Policy which will include key private sector projects.	Blue.	Homelessness Prevention Policy completed 2012 and Private Residential Tenancies (Scotland) Act 2016 assisted.
Keep the Scheme of Assistance under review and promote the service provided by Orkney Housing Association Limited's Care and Repair Team.	Blue.	
Reducing the amount of occupied houses below the Tolerable Standard by carefully targeting advice, support and enforcement.	Green.	
Reducing the amount of occupied sub-standard houses by carefully targeting advice, support and enforcement.	Green.	
Reducing the number of properties failing the Repairing Standard by carefully targeting advice, support and enforcement.	Green.	
Develop and implement an Empty Homes Strategy.	Green.	Empty homes project began and funding was identified for a 2 year post. Work progressing to try and recruit accordingly.
Development of a local house condition survey for 2012 to 2013.	Blue.	Completed 2017.
Outline the approach that would be taken in future to identify any housing renewal areas.	N/A.	
Implementing the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme in the light of a target of assisting 30 first-time buyers into owner occupation.	Blue.	Scheme did not progress in Scotland due to a legal technicality. Locally the housing loans policy was amended to replace the need for this.
Monitoring the impact of the Affordable Serviced Sites policy.	Blue.	

Consider approach to Below Tolerable Standard, sub-standard etc housing following the development of a local house condition survey for 2012 to 2013.	Green.	
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### Priority 6: Sustaining Orkney's Communities

Aim: That every effort will be made to ensure a sufficient supply of housing is available to ensure the continued survival, and future growth, of Orkney's island communities; and that provision is made for student and migrant worker accommodation to match identified demand.

Relevant Indicators	RAG Status	Comments
Work with individual communities to assess the level of interest / viability of local lettings initiatives.	Blue.	Local Lettings Consultation completed during 2011 to 2012.
Working with a range of partner agencies to establish precise demand figures for accommodation for students and key workers.	Green.	
Working with private developers and the private rented sector to help to meet an unmet need within the local housing market.	Green.	
Consideration of alternative housing options and innovative solutions to address housing need whether permanent or temporary on the outer isles.	Green.	

Key.

Red.	Red.	Not Completed.
Amber.	Yellow.	Partially Delivered .
Green.	Green.	Ongoing.
Blue.	Blue.	Completed.

### Priority 1: Adequate Supply of Housing.

**Our Aim:** To ensure Orkney's citizens have access to a range of affordable housing options, suited to their requirements.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** To ensure Orkney has a housing supply of the right type, size, quality and in the right areas to meet current and future housing needs that are affordable.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Private sector new house build completions.	Our target for completions was: 2011 to 2012 = 120. 2012 to 2013 = 130. 2013 to 2014 = 140.	Yellow.	Actual completions were: 2011 to 2012 = 136. 2012 to 2013 = 101. 2013 to 2014 = 61. This indicator is not within the control of the Council
Rate of new build affordable housing starts.	100 site starts per year (2011 to 2012). 100 site starts per year (2012 to 2013). 100 site starts per year (2013 to 2014).	Yellow.	Completions were: 2011 to 2012 = 116. 2012 to 2013 = 110. 2013 to 2014 = 69.
Number of households on housing waiting list (common housing register).	Decrease by 50 households per year (2011 to 2012). Decrease by 50 households per year (2012 to 2013). Decrease by 150 households (2013 to 2014).	Yellow.	Housing waiting list declined for a period of time then started to increase again. Figures were: 2011 to 2012 = 629 2012 to 2013 = 598 2013 to 2014 = 549
Number of households on housing waiting list (common housing register) with evidenced housing need (having a priority pass).	Decrease to 100 (2011 to 2012) Decrease to 100 (2012 to 2013) Decrease to 100 (2012 to 2013).	Red.	Housing waiting list declined for a period of time then started to increase again. Figures were: 2011 to 2012 = 153. 2012 to 2013 = 144. 2013 to 2014 = 188.
The number of households provided with full housing options advice.	To be implemented following implementation of policy.	Blue.	This is monitored separately through the annual report called Homelessness Update which goes to our Education, Leisure and Housing Committee annually in June.

Provide data on Orkney's housing need and demography over the next 20 years.	Housing Need and Demand Assessment – annual update.	Blue.	Data on demographics and housing need is updated regularly. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment is required every 5 years.
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## Priority 2 – Fuel Poverty.

**Main Aim:** Aim: To reduce the energy requirements of houses to eliminate fuel poverty and achieve a positive impact on the environment.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** To assist Orkney's householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Percentage of households found to be in fuel poverty.	Reduce in line with 2016 target.	Blue.	In common with other areas in Scotland fuel poverty was not eradicated by the end of 2016. Factors such as wage freezes and rising fuel costs impacted negatively. The strategic landscape was amended accordingly.
Proportion of social rented housing failing the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.	66% 2011 to 2012. 57% 2012 to 2013. 20% 2013 to 2014.	Green.	This indicator requires reconsideration in light of Scottish Housing Quality Standard categories being pass, fail, abeyance and exemption. 2011 to 2012 = 60.95%. 2012 to 2013 = 28.84%. 2013 to 2014 = 5.41%.
The number of private sector households who have received grant assistance.	Specific targets were not set as this area is demand led but within a specific budget.	Green.	The types of grant assistance changed over the life of the strategy. Figures were: 2011 to 2012 = 85.

			2012 to 2013 = 195. 2013 to 2014 = 0. Universal Home Insulation Scheme (and secondary funding opportunities) transitioned to Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Scheme in 2013 to 2014. There were delays in procuring a managing agent to meet the new Scottish Government requirements
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### Priority 3: Housing for Particular Needs.

**Aim:** To provide appropriate housing with holistic packages of support (as required) to enable those with particular needs to lead independent lives in their own communities.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** To ensure Orkney offers options to enable people with particular needs to live independent lives in their own communities.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Ensure provision of support as outlined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.	TBC following implementation of Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.	Blue.	Implemented in line with legislation.
Number of dwellings where adaptations are required.	2012 to 2013 = 54. 2013 to 2014 = 59. 2014 to 2015 = 64. 2015 to 2016 = 69.	Green.	Adaptations are demand led. 2012 to 2013: 2013 to 2014 = 43. 2014 to 2015 = 57. 2015 to 2016 = 57. 2016 to 2017 = 50.

Referrals to Orkney Care and Repair	Indicator is largely demand driven – targets to be developed through implementation of Older Persons’ Housing Strategy and Housing Support Strategy	Green.	Totals for all services: 2012 to 2013 = 1423. 2013 to 2014 = 1438. 2014 to 2015 = 1674. 2015 to 2016 = 1725. 2016 to 2017 = 1798.
Number of households with gold priority for medical or support reasons who are not rehoused within a year	2012 to 2013 = 3. 2013 to 2014 = 2. 2014 to 2015 = 1. 2015 to 2016 = 0.	Blue.	Data collection on this basis proved impossible.
Number of households with telecare support.	To be developed in consultation with Orkney Health and Care’s strategies for telecare development.		2012.

#### Priority 4 – Homelessness.

**Our Aim:** “Prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place wherever possible”.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** Prevent homelessness through improved housing options, continued advice and information and, where homelessness is experienced through ensuring the provision of appropriate support.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Number of homeless households requiring a permanent home.	100 (2011 to 2012). 105 (2012 to 2013). 110 (2013 to 2014).	Green.	While we can increase homelessness prevention activities, homeless presentations are affected by a range of factors. No of households presenting as homeless: 2011 to 2012 = 155. 2012 to 2013 = 107. 2013 to 2014 = 108. 2014 to 2015 = 87. 2015 to 2016 = 99. 2016 to 2017 = 127.

Number of young people (aged 16-25) placed in temporary accommodation and accepted as homeless (source: quarterly HL1 Return) (note: relatively low numbers are considered positive).	2011 to 2012 = 28. 2012 to 2013 = 33. 2013 to 2014 = 38.	Green.	Sourcing this data became problematic. No of young people presenting as homeless: 2011 to 2012 = 39. 2012 to 2013 = 43. 2013 to 2014 = 30. 2014 to 2015 = 23. 2015 to 2016 = 29. 2016 to 2017 = 37.
Deliver a housing options approach.	TBC following implementation of project.	Blue.	We were unsuccessful in obtaining the relevant post due to financial issues and therefore the project was not progressed.
Ensure provision of support as outlined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.	TBC in line with implementation of Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.	Blue.	Implemented in line with legislation.
Substantially review the Homelessness Strategy.	December 2012	Blue.	Substantial review of strategy undertaken. Current Homelessness Strategy covers the period 2014 to 2019.

### Priority 5 - Improving Standards in the Private Sector.

**Aim:** To eradicate unfit and below Tolerable Standard Housing and to encourage even closer links with the Private Rented Sector.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** To work with partner agencies to endeavour to improve standards in the private sector.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Number of private households provided with help under the Scheme of Assistance.	Indicator is largely demand driven – targets to be developed through implementation of Older Persons' Housing Strategy and Housing Support Strategy.	Green.	2012 to 2013 = 1423. 2013 to 2014 = 1100. 2014 to 2015 = 1022. 2015 to 2016 = 1116. 2016 to 2017 = 1114.



Number of private sector households accessing the handyman service (and type of assistance).	2012 to 2013 = 615. 2013 to 2014 = 652. 2014 to 2015 = 691. 2015 to 2016 = 732.	Green.	Small Repairs Service – cases completed: 2012 to 2013 = 763. 2013 to 2014 = 843. 2014 to 2015 = 975. 2015 to 2016 = 975. 2016 to 2017 = 927.
Number of landlords accessing rent deposit scheme.	2012 to 2013 = 12. 2013 to 2014 = 14. 2014 to 2015 = 16. 2015 to 2016 = 18.	Green.	Actual figures are demand driven and were: 2012 to 2013 = 13. 2013 to 2014 = 7. 2014 to 2015 = 7. 2015 to 2016 = 5. 2016 to 2017 = 5.

### Priority 6 - Sustaining Orkney's Communities.

**Aim:** That every effort will be made to ensure a sufficient supply of housing is available to ensure the continued survival, and future growth, of Orkney's island communities; and that provision is made for student and migrant worker accommodation to match identified demand.

**Local Housing Strategy Outcome:** Assist in the regeneration of local communities and islands with fragile economies.

Relevant Indicators	Targets	RAG Status	Comments
Number and proportion of Orkney residents living in the Outer Isles (source: NHS Orkney GP Registrations for Eday, North Ronaldsay, Rousay, Stronsay, Sanday, Shapinsay, Hoy and Westray).	Maintain or improve on an annual basis.	Yellow.	Annual The 2011 Census showed a marked increase in the Isles population compare to the 2001 Census. Some islands have been able to maintain their populations and a few have managed to grow their populations, while others have dropped back to 2001 levels. We are trying to improve methods for measuring islands populations

Level of demand for social rented housing by area.	TBC.	Blue.	No retrospective waiting list figures obtainable but isles waiting lists are consistently in single figures.
No of local lettings initiatives in place.	TBC.	Blue.	Consultation on Local Lettings Initiatives (LLI) undertaken during 2011 to 2012. No specific LLIs were taken forward, instead the priority pass “specific need to live in the community” was considered sufficient.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>National Priority</b>	<b>Local Priority</b>
Ensuring an adequate supply of houses.	Housing Beyond 2021.	Ensure that Orkney has both a sufficient range, number and type of houses to meet demand and need and offers a suitable range of housing options.
Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness.	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.	Improved housing options and early intervention leading to reduced periods of time in temporary accommodation. The provision of housing support as required.
Older People.	Reshaping care for older people.	Ensure that Orkney has a suitable range of properties and related services for older people to enhance independence and provide greater choice.
Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs.	Integration of health and social care and National Wellbeing outcome no 2.	To support the most vulnerable members of our community by working in partnership with key agencies to promote independence.
Improving Standards in the Private Sector.	To ensure that houses meet the Tolerable Standard and that landlords adhere to the provisions contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.	To improve the supply and quality of all housing in Orkney, including the management of the private rented sector.

## **1.5. Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement**

There were two meetings of the Member Officer Working Group to develop the Local Housing Strategy.

In addition, there were regular meetings of the Housing Joint Strategy Delivery Group, which fed into the development and review of the Local Housing Strategy, there were a range of other dedicated events.

Initially a pre-consultation event was undertaken which involved a broad range of partner agencies crossing the statutory and third sectors. The event was facilitated by an independent party to allow open communication. This looked at significant housing issues within Orkney and sought to identify what the priorities within the new Local Housing Strategy would be. These were identified as:

- Adequate housing supply.
- Fuel poverty.

- Sustaining Orkney's communities.
- Older people.
- Housing for particular needs.
- Homelessness.
- Standards in the private rented sector.

Once the consultative draft had been approved, a detailed consultation plan was formed which originally included a range of different consultation methods.

The COVID pandemic from March 2020 onwards caused significant changes to be made to the intended consultation methods. This resulted in a consultation process being devised by entirely electronic means.

This included:

- Email contact being made with a range of agencies crossing the statutory and third sectors;
- Two evening meetings being set up through Microsoft Teams to enable members of the public and those representing organisations to attend;
- An electronic survey being set up for responses.
- An offer for direct contact with anyone who wished to discuss issues separately.

Information relating to the consultation was available through the Council's website and the survey was also available for completion online.

A press release was issued which outlined the general process and the dates of the consultation.

The consultation ran for a four week period until 11 October 2020.

Information from the consultation process was hugely beneficial in providing reassurance that the priorities and actions within the Local Housing Strategy were the correct ones. It also provided information to take forward into the next Local Housing Strategy.

## **1.6. Equalities and the Equality Impact Assessment**

The Council has a statutory obligation to ensure that all its functions and activities are exercised in full compliance with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, and has also made its own commitment to tackling issues of inequality and exclusion across Orkney. The Council routinely carries out equality impact assessments for its strategies, policies and plans. A full equality impact assessment of the Local Housing Strategy is available online and this summarises how the Council has addressed and sought to mainstream issues of equality in developing housing strategy and any issues raised in consultations.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that we:

**“act in a manner which encourages equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the requirements of the law for the time being related to equal opportunities” (Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, Section 39).**

It is our view that the Local Housing Strategy has been developed in full accordance with the principals of equality and diversity and actively promotes inclusion and that it has a fundamental role to play in the delivery of improved services to all people to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and has equal opportunities to access housing and support suitable for their needs.

We will continue to monitor and report on the equalities impact of the Local Housing Strategy over the next 5 years, with a focus on the nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act, which include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity as far as data allows. Where evidence of any negative impact on a particular section of the local population is identified, appropriate action will be implemented to address the situation.

Further impact assessments will be developed during the consultation process. These include:

- Health Inequalities Impact Assessment.
- Child Rights and Well-being Impact Assessment.
- Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment.

## **1.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The Council has a duty as the “responsible authority” in terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 to determine whether delivery of the Local Housing Strategy will cause any significant environmental impact and, on that basis, to decide whether a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.

The Council will undertake a pre-screening exercise as prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Act at Local Housing Strategy consultation stage and submit this to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway. Representations can then be made by the consultation authorities. The Council is of the view, based on previous iterations of the document, that the Local Housing Strategy will not in itself have significant environmental effects and that the overarching Local Development Plan is the principal related strategy requiring full Strategic Environmental Assessment.

## **2. Local Context**

Orkney is Scotland’s smallest local authority and lies off the North coast of mainland Scotland. It consists of approximately 100,000 hectares spread over 70 or so islands and skerries, of which 19 are inhabited. We do not share a boundary with any other area.

Kirkwall is the main town and population centre with approximately a third of Orkney’s overall population at around 8,000. It is the administrative centre and has a good mix of shops, supermarkets and small businesses.

The second largest town is Stromness, situated in the West Mainland, and has a population of around 2,100 people.

There are a number of villages and settlements of various sizes dispersed throughout the mainland and isles. Each of Orkney's outer isles have their own particular character and landscape. Those that are more remote from mainland Orkney can present logistical challenges regarding the delivery of, and access to, services. Economic opportunities vary from community to community.

There are ferry services between Kirkwall and Aberdeen and Shetland and between Stromness and Scrabster and also St Margaret's Hope to Gills Bay. There are terminals for the ferry services that provide the isles with links to mainland Orkney.

Kirkwall has an airport providing flights to and from the Scottish mainland and Shetland, for inter-isles flights and for a summer service to Norway.

There is projected to be an overall increase in Orkney's population though not across all the areas. Both Kirkwall and the isles are projected to see a general decline in their population (the projections are for a greater decline in the isles), though not necessarily a decline in number of households.

Orkney had the lowest population out of all 32 Scottish council areas at the 30th June 2018 the population stood at approximately 22,190. This is an increase of 0.9% from 22,000 in 2017 compared to a 0.25% increase in Scotland's population.

#### **Population Projections for Orkney's Areas (2016-based).**

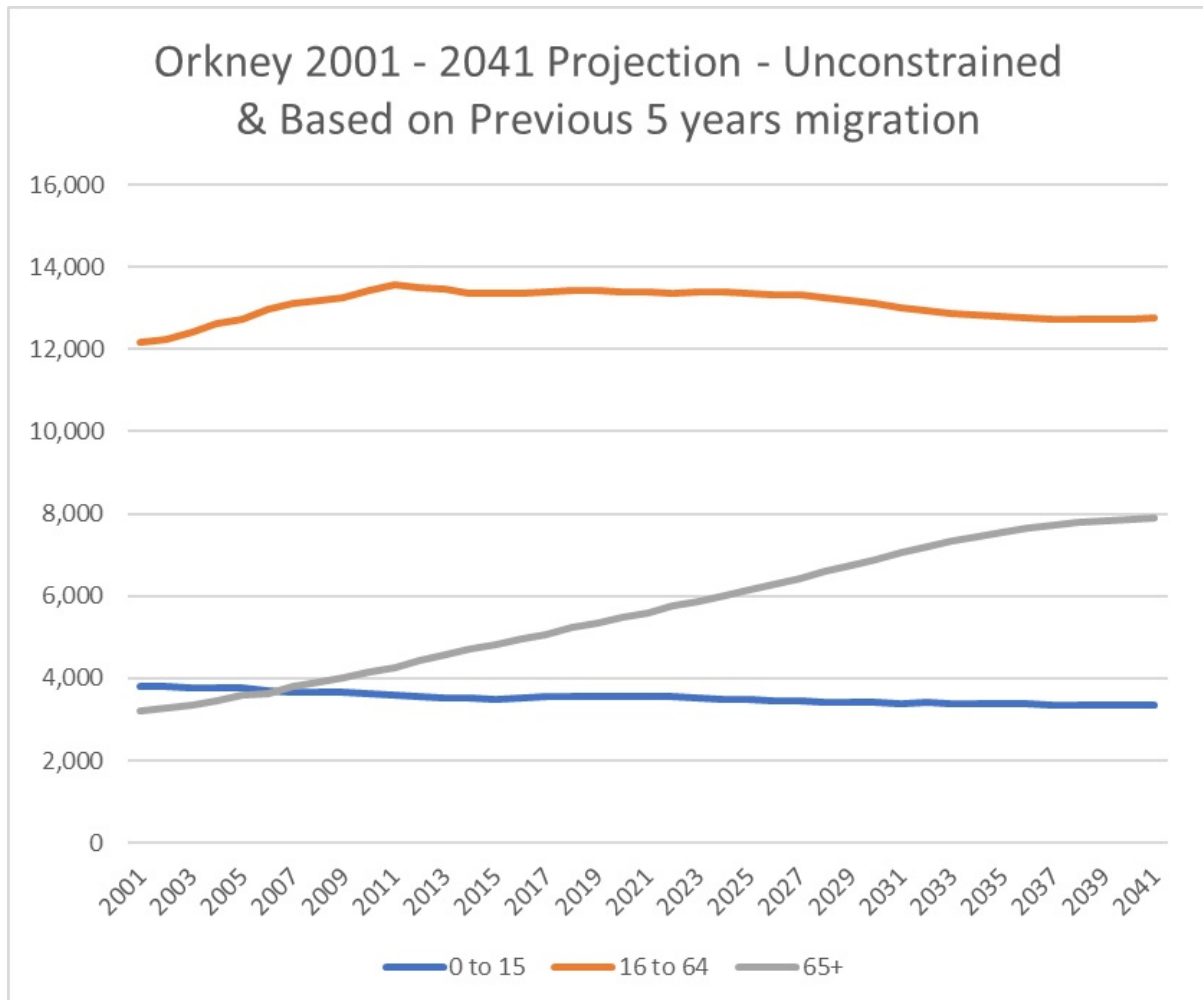
	2021.	2022.	2023.	2024.	2025.	2026.	2027.
<b>Orkney Islands.</b>	<b>22,556.</b>	<b>22,671.</b>	<b>22,783.</b>	<b>22,869.</b>	<b>22,990.</b>	<b>23,085.</b>	<b>23,175.</b>
Kirkwall.	8,140.	8,189.	8,236.	8,282.	8,325.	8,365.	8,403.
Stromness Parish.	2,178.	2,197.	2,217.	2,237.	2,257.	2,276.	2,295.
East Mainland.	4,088.	4,134.	4,180.	4,224.	4,267.	4,310.	4,351.
West Mainland.	5,458.	5,477.	5,495.	5,511.	5,525.	5,538.	5,550.
Isles.	2,692.	2,674.	2,655.	2,636.	2,616.	2,596.	2,575.

Source - POPGROUP developed utilising NRS data.

Between 2001 and 2018 Orkney's population increased by 15.5% and Scotland's population rose by 7.4%.

The largest age group in 2018 were those aged between 45 to 64 years age which totalled 6,668. This compares to those aged between 16 to 30 years which was the smallest age group at 3,366. The 65 and over category at 5,234 is also sizeable.

The 65 and over age group saw the largest percentage increase, rising by 65.2%, in the years between 2001 and 2018 compared to the 31 to 45 age group which experienced the largest percentage decrease of -14.5%. The graph below outlines the projected change in Orkney's population by age group between 2001 and 2041.



The increase in Orkney's population over the last 17 years has been driven by significant levels of net inward migration. It is estimated that between 2001 and 2018, a further 3,533 people have moved into Orkney than away from Orkney. This compares to a natural population change relating to births and deaths of -563 people.

National Records of Scotland (NRS) projections estimate that Orkney's population will drop to around 21,400 by 2041. However, projections developed by Housing Services for the same period show potential increases to 23,975 based upon births, deaths and migration figures over the last 17 years. As with previous years the projected increase in Orkney's population revolves around significant inward migration, with up to 3,951 people potentially moving into the islands.

Orkney has a very restricted housing stock with housing pressure across all tenures, due to high demand. It is likely that this will serve as a limiting factor in future population growth and therefore, despite the projections showing a significant increase in population, it is unlikely Orkney's population will increase to 23,975 without significant additional housing development.

Orkney has around 11,300 households, with the largest tenure being owner-occupation. Over 8,500 or 75% of property is in this tenure. Orkney has one of the highest levels of outright home ownership at around 55% of all properties.

There are around 1,800 social rented properties in Orkney making up 16% of Orkney's housing stock. This is lower than most other areas of Scotland.

Orkney has around 1,100 private rented sector properties and 1,000 properties owned by registered private landlords. The majority of private landlords only have one rented property. This makes the private rented sector in Orkney more susceptible to shifts in legislation as landlords are largely making use of an extra property and as additional requirements are imposed, they are more likely to sell the property or move it into holiday lets which has less regulation.

Orkney has the joint lowest unemployment level in Scotland at 1.4%. This has led to significant pressure on the island group's labour market and has helped drive the positive net inward migration over the last 10 years. In order for Orkney's population and economy to continue to grow there is a need for additional inward migration of labour. However, significant pressure on all tenures in the housing market are making this difficult. This has led to anecdotal difficulties in the recruitment of staff across a broad range of organisations.

Tourism is one of the main industries on the islands and is growing. The other main industries on the islands are manufacturing, farming, fishing, and the energy sector, including oil and renewable energy.

The council is one of the biggest employers on the islands, alongside the NHS, with a third of jobs in the public administration, education and health sectors.

The map below illustrates Orkney's geography.





## Orkney’s Key Housing Priorities

As a result of national and local political priorities, assessment of data and listening to the voice of our stakeholders we have identified and developed our key housing priorities.

The 7 key priorities we have identified are reflective of our ongoing aim to improve housing services locally while delivering national policy outcomes. These are:

Objective	National Priority	Local Priority
Ensuring an adequate supply of houses.	Housing Beyond 2021.	Ensure that Orkney has both a sufficient range, number and type of houses to meet demand and need and offers a suitable range of housing options.
Preventing and Alleviating Homelessness.	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.	Improved housing options and early intervention leading to reduced periods of time in temporary accommodation. The

		provision of housing support as required.
Older People.	Reshaping care for older people.	Ensure that Orkney has a suitable range of properties and related services for older people to enhance independence and provide greater choice.
Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs.	Integration of health and social care and National Wellbeing outcome number two.	To support the most vulnerable members of our community by working in partnership with key agencies to promote independence.
Improving Standards in the Private Sector.	To ensure that houses meet the Tolerable Standard and that landlords adhere to the provisions contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.	To improve the supply and quality of all housing in Orkney, including the management of the private rented sector.

## **Priority 1. Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses**

**Our Aim: To ensure there is a sufficient supply and range of housing including affordable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of the people living in Orkney.**

### **Why this is a priority**

Homes Fit for the 21st Century sets out the Scottish Government's housing strategy for 2011 to 2020. The Strategy highlights the need to increase the supply of good quality and affordable homes to meet need and demand from a growing and ageing population, including households on lower incomes.

In 2015 a Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland was published to ensure delivery of the policy objectives of Homes Fit for the 21st century.

The Scottish Government set a target of building 50,000 affordable homes by 2021 of which 35,000 are to be in the social rented sector through a £3 billion investment programme, to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Orkney's Local Development Plan aims to ensure there are sufficient options and opportunities for the development of new houses, of a variety of types and tenures, throughout Orkney to support existing communities and also to allow these communities to grow in a sustainable manner.

The Plan recognises the importance of sufficient strategic land being allocated to allow for growth within settlements to ensure there is housing provision to support potential demand from emerging industries such as renewables.

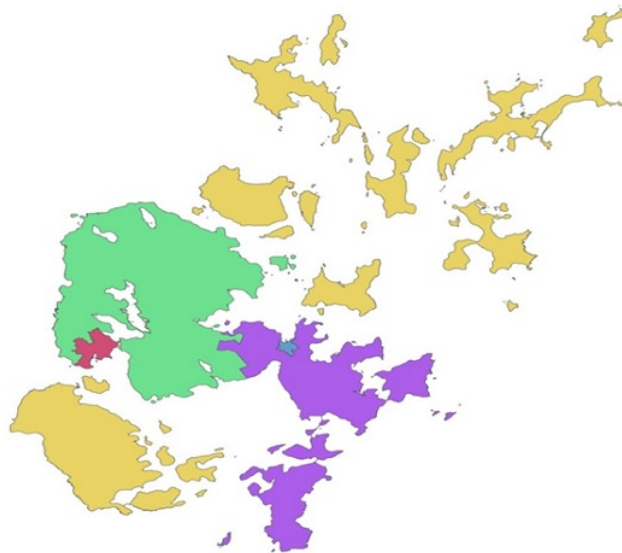
Over the last ten years, over 1,200 new domestic properties have been built throughout Orkney, across all tenures. This new housing has been key to support the increase in population that has also occurred over the same period. The anticipated increase in Orkney’s population over the next twenty years, as outlined in the population projections at Section 2, will require a significant increase in the housing stock across all tenures.

The Council does not have a population target that it would like Orkney to achieve or be restricted to. However, it is understood that inward migration is a key factor in expanding and sustaining Orkney’s economy. Inward migration will continue to be crucial in continuing to develop Orkney’s economy and provide the services delivered throughout the islands. For that to happen there will need to be additional new housing development, across all tenures, in excess of that already required to meet the housing needs of households already in Orkney.

The Local Housing Strategy has a focus on housing generally and in particular the provision of affordable housing whether this be social rented housing or that provided with some form of low cost home ownership.

### **What the HNDA and Key Data Tells Us**

There are five Housing Market Areas across Orkney as detailed below.



Kirkwall	Blue
Stromness	Red
West Mainland	Green
East Mainland & Linked South Isles	Purple
The Isles	Yellow

### **Common Housing Register**

The Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd operate a common housing register though the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd have separate allocations policies. Orkney Housing Association Ltd operates a choice based letting system and the Council is in the process of undertaking a lettings review based on principles of choice.

The number of applicants on the Common Housing Register peaked at 750 applications in 2010. The large scale development programmes of social rented housing, delivered by Orkney Islands Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd led to a decline in numbers on the Common Housing Register which were recorded at around 500 in 2016.

The number of applicants registered for social housing has been increasing again however as the programme of new building reduces. By mid December 2018 the register stood at 624 applications of which 203 had priority passes. This included gold passes awarded to:

- 30 homeless households.
- 50 overcrowded households.
- also including those with medical conditions and young people leaving care.

### **Affordable Housing Supply**

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment calculated existing need by using what was the current social housing waiting list figures. This provided the most up to date, robust data set, available for the calculation. The table below outlines the existing need calculations produced for each of Orkney’s five Housing Market Areas using this method.

#### **Calculation of existing housing need**

Orkney.	164.
Kirkwall.	105.
Stromness.	22.
West Mainland.	12.
East Mainland.	15.
Isles.	10.

Source: Orkney’s Common Housing Register

Using the social housing waiting list figures, the level of existing need is 164 households. When split by area, Kirkwall has the highest level of housing need with 105 households seeking housing there followed by Stromness with 22 households. The remaining three areas have between 10 and 15 households in housing need.

These 164 households are classed as the ‘backlog’ need in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment Tool and the majority of this need is in Kirkwall.

Housing demand is never static and since the Housing Need and Demand Assessment was carried out, in 2016 to 2017, there has been an increase in the numbers joining the common housing register and classified as a priority (203 in mid December 2018). Therefore, there is likely to be a temporary underestimate in the forecast need for additional affordable housing.

In developing the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, a number of different scenarios were developed using different demographic and economic projections. These scenarios took account of different projections around migration and population levels, as well as house prices and income data. Three main scenarios were developed for the Housing Need and Demand Assessment:

- Principal scenario.
- High Demand scenario.
- Low Demand scenario.

A fourth bespoke scenario was developed for use with the Isles Housing Market Area. The declining isles population scenario reflects the opinion of the housing market partnership (which shares membership with the housing forum) that there is a possibility that the population in the Isles Housing Market Area may drop over the duration of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment reporting period.

The principal scenario is the one used in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment to estimate affordable housing requirements as outlined in the table below. The principal scenario projects the trends from previous years into the future in both demographic and economic indicators. The results of the principal scenario show population increases across each of Orkney's five localities over the duration of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment reporting period.

This housing demand outlined in the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment is split across all tenures, covering both affordable and market housing. Adequate land and support will be needed for developers and households covering the private rented and owner-occupied tenures to ensure that there is sufficient housing to meet the needs and demands of all of Orkney's population. Low Cost Home Ownership is a very important tenure in Orkney.

#### **Housing Need and Demand Assessment Tool results by area 2017 to 2032**

<b>Principal Scenario.</b>	Social Rent.	Below Market Rent.	Private Rent.	Market Purchase	Total.	Yearly Requirement.
Kirkwall.	219.	59.	57.	90.	425.	22.
Stromness.	62.	22.	31.	26.	141.	7.
West Mainland.	73.	42.	45.	85.	245.	13.
East Mainland.	75.	41.	66.	79.	261.	14.
Isles.	53.	24.	6.	44.	127.	7.
Orkney.	482.	188.	205.	324.	1,199.	63.

Each scenario projects a requirement for additional housing across all of Orkney's areas and tenures. As shown above, the split between the need for affordable housing and market housing is 56% to 44% respectively. This shows the importance of increased development in all tenures across Orkney to meet the housing need identified.

Each of the main scenarios show an increase in the number of properties required in the Isles Housing Market Area. The declining isles population scenario within the Housing Need and Demand Assessment has a net requirement of zero additional properties over its lifetime.

The scenario does not anticipate however that there will be no new development in the Isles Housing Market Area, as new properties will be developed. Rather there will be no requirement for a net increase in the level of housing stock. It is assumed that as older stock fall into disuse they will be replaced by new build properties. However, there will not be a requirement for additional capacity to meet future demand.

The four year projections from 2017 to 2021 show a significantly larger yearly requirement for additional housing than the full 2017 to 2032 results. This is largely due to the requirement to deal with the backlog of existing need for 164 new properties over this four year period.

### **Housing Need and Demand Assessment Tool results by area - five year projection 2017 to 2021**

<b>Principal Scenario.</b>	<b>Social Rent.</b>	<b>Below Market Rent.</b>	<b>Private Rent.</b>	<b>Market Purchase</b>	<b>Total.</b>	<b>Yearly Requirement.</b>
Kirkwall.	152.	23.	24.	37.	236.	47.
Stromness.	38.	9.	13.	11.	71.	14.
West Mainland.	35.	16.	19.	35.	105.	21.
East Mainland.	38.	16.	27.	32.	113.	23.
Isles.	24.	11.	3.	20.	58.	12.
Orkney.	287.	75.	86.	135.	583.	117.

As part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (2019 to 2020 - 2022 to 2023) aims to deliver 443 affordable housing units across Orkney these would be comprised of:

- 230 social rented and low-cost home ownership properties to be delivered by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Limited comprising, 194 social rented properties and 37 low cost home ownership properties. 148 of the social rented properties would be developed in Kirkwall where the main pressure for social housing is with approximately 63% on the register having Kirkwall as their first choice. The 46-remaining social rented properties are to be across Orkney's Mainland areas and the Orkney islands.
- 212 low cost home ownership properties delivered by the private sector and partners including islands development trusts among others.

While these proposed developments cover all areas of Orkney, the majority are proposed for Kirkwall reflecting where the highest level of demand on the Common Housing Register for social rented housing lies.

## Strategic Housing Investment Plan - Affordable Housing Supply Programme

	2018 to 2019.		2019 to 2020.		2020 to 2021.		2021 to 2022.		2022 to 2023.		2023 to 2024.	
	SR	LC HO.	SR	LC HO.	SR	LC HO.	SR	LC HO.	SR	LC HO.	SR	LC HO.
Kirkwall.	66.	8.	18.*	8.	-	-	28.	4.	24.	4.	12.	-
Stromness.	-	-	6.	2.	6.	-	-	-	-	-	6.	4.
East Mainland and Linked South Isles.	-	-	-	-	6.	-	4.	2.	-	-	2.	-
West Mainland.	-	-	-	-	12.	2.	-	-	4.	2.	-	-
<b>Total.</b>	<b>66.</b>	<b>8.</b>	<b>24.</b>	<b>10.</b>	<b>24.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>32.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>28.</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>20.</b>	<b>4.</b>

SR - Social Rent; LCHO - Low Cost Home Ownership.

The Council has developed 230 properties over the last decade and consequently its Housing Revenue Account is servicing mortgages and there is a need to ensure the ongoing affordability of the Housing Revenue Account. Given the level of Scottish Government grant awards, there will be a need to restrict the level of building to ensure ongoing affordability.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan expects that the new affordable housing provision in the isles will come from projects funded by the Islands Housing Fund. These projects will be developed by Islands Development Trusts. The Council's Housing Services along with Highlands and Islands Enterprise are providing support to eight development trusts to progress applications for funding.

To meet the needs of the increasing numbers of older households in Orkney the Strategic Housing Investment Plan is proposing that the majority of the Council's social housing developments are properties for older people. These would be located alongside new care facilities.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan recognises that there is also a need however for additional housing for younger households and families including in the social rented sector and for low cost home ownership. The Council will support Orkney Housing Association, private developers and Link Housing Association, as the co-ordinator of the Open Market Shared Equity Scheme, in the development of housing to meet their needs. The Council will endeavour to consider other options to facilitate the development of social rented housing for a broader needs group.

While there is clearly a need for houses of various sizes, the need for smaller one bedroom properties is likely to rise in line with the increase in single person households and demand should inform new developments. The Asset Management

Strategy states that the majority of housing need is for one-bedroom properties, while there is no demand whatsoever for the smallest stock type, bedsits.

This pressure for one-bedroom properties is reflected from those being housed through homelessness. In December 2018, out of the 31 households waiting to be housed from temporary accommodation, 30 were waiting for one-bedroom properties.

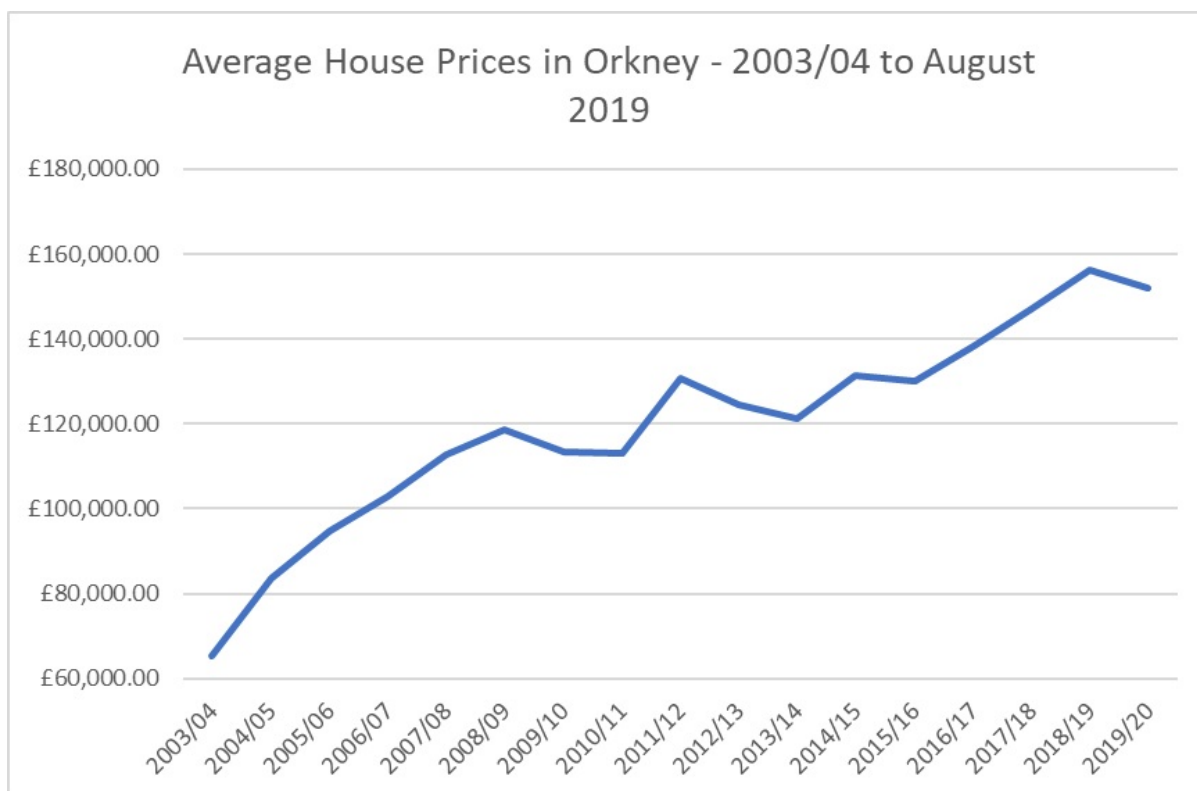
There is now a strong expectation from the Scottish Government that homeless households should spend as little time as possible in temporary accommodation in line with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.

The time households were in temporary accommodation in Orkney has been decreasing with the average time spent falling from 26.7 weeks in 2013 to 2014 to 15.7 weeks in 2017 to 2018. The shortening in the length of stay was undoubtedly assisted by the completion of new social housing developments. As time spent in temporary accommodation is largely determined by the availability of housing in the social rented stock and this also needs to be taken into account in the affordable housing supply programme.

The Council is considering the capacity of the Housing Revenue Account to support future developments and has stated that any Council developments over the lifetime of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan will require a substantial increase in per-property funding levels from the Scottish Government, but not specifically an increase in the overall funding for affordable housing supply programme development.

House prices in Orkney have increased significantly over the last 15 years. The graph below shows the change in the average house price from 2003 to 2004 and August 2019. There has been a 132.6% increase over the period. This compares to a Scottish average change of 79.6%. This has increased the pressure on Orkney's housing market significantly as younger households find it more and more difficult to get on the housing ladder.





The affordability of properties across Orkney's areas varies significantly. The table below shows that no lower quartile properties are affordable for households on lower quartile incomes, in any of the five Housing Market Areas.

Average incomes and average property prices are much closer to an affordable level with Kirkwall having the highest ratio of 4.3 times income. Upper quartile properties fall into the affordable criteria for the majority of households on upper quartile incomes.

### House price affordability by area – 2019

	Lower quartile.			Average.			Upper quartile.		
	Household Income.	house price.	AR*	Household Income.	house price.	AR	Household Income.	House price.	AR.
Kirkwall.	£16,875	£78,500	6.3.	£36,291	£114,450	4.3	£49,149	£149,000	4.1.
Stromness.	£16,999	£75,000	5.7.	£35,694	£115,497	4.1	£47,856	£150,000	3.9.
West Mainland.	£20,011	£75,000	4.9.	£39,980	£129,848	4.1	£53,336	£175,000	4.1.
East Mainland.	£19,518	£90,000	5.5.	£39,951	£136,490	4.0	£53,592	£180,000	3.9.
Isles.	£12,708	£50,000	4.2.	£26,892	£85,690.	3.4	£35,253	£119,000	3.5.

Orkney.	£17,163	£73,000	5.2.	£36,395	£131,243	4.5	£48,501	£150,000	3.8.
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Source: CACI PayCheck, Sasines and CHMA house sales data

\* AR - Affordability Ratio: this is calculated on a multiplier of 4.0 times a household's income thus a ratio above 4.0 would be deemed unaffordable.

The isles are the most affordable area and the four Mainland areas are all quite similar with average and upper quartile properties being generally affordable for the income levels within the matching quartile. Greater affordability in the isles could partially be down to the lower level of demand for housing in the isles than on Mainland Orkney.

There are a number of developers in Orkney that are registered on the Scottish Government's Help to Buy scheme and the scheme is proving popular. Developers are also looking to use Open Market Shared Equity to develop new low cost home ownership properties. The Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund and Islands Housing Fund provide the opportunity for local development trusts, land owners and developers to access funding for the delivery of affordable housing.

Scottish Government figures on average rents in the Highlands and Islands are outlined in the table below and are comparable to the Scottish average figures.

**Table Monthly rent and Local Housing Allowance figures in the Highlands and Islands**

2018.	Lower Quartile.	Median.	Mean.	Upper Quartile.	LHA figures.
1 bedroom.	£400.	£480.	£471.	£525.	£397.84.
2 bedroom.	£510.	£575.	£583.	£650.	£479.78.
3 bedroom.	£625.	£695.	£710.	£795.	£549.98.
4 bedroom.	£700.	£875.	£882.	£995.	£694.98.

Source: Scottish Government.

Like all working age benefits Local Housing Allowance rates, have been frozen since April 2016 this is due to last until April 2020.

The Local Housing Allowances pay less than any of the properties detailed above even in the lowest quartile. In these circumstances the tenant is responsible for making up the difference in rent. The largest difference between Local Housing Allowance and the average lower quartile rent level comes is with two and three bedroom properties.

Single people under the age of 35 renting on their own in the private sector can only claim a shared accommodation rate even where they are living in a self contained one bedroom property thus making this type of property in the private sector

unaffordable if they are claiming benefits. This can mean additional pressure on one bedroom social housing stock.

More generally, living in the private sector is not affordable particularly in the medium to long term for households who would be reliant on the Local Housing Allowance as average rents are higher than a person can claim again making them more reliant on the social rented sector to meet their housing needs.

Orkney has very specific issues in relation to the supply of affordable housing. Orkney's population has risen to 22,190 and at the same time unemployment is extremely low. Anecdotally various employers crossing the statutory, third and private sectors are reporting that they are having difficulty in recruiting to posts partially as a result of housing pressures.

### **What we will do**

- Consider options, for the development of housing at an affordable level, within the Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account;
- Work collaboratively with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to ensure the delivery of affordable housing developments;
- Support development across Orkney where it meets the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Local Housing Strategy etc and helps meet the housing supply targets;
- Ensure that new developments meet the changing needs of the population and provide Homes for Life;
- Continue to review the levels of stock to need ratios to ensure the stock profile remains relatively reflective of need;
- Support developments in low cost home ownership and the use of the rural and islands housing fund or any other opportunities available for the provision of affordable housing;
- Assess how well the Empty Properties Strategy brings properties back into use;
- Consider the level of need for provision of mid market rent properties;
- Support private developers to progress projects to deliver private sector housing including mid market rent;
- Continue to work with households on the Common Housing Register to identify the most appropriate housing option;
- Undertake a lettings review to ensure choice is at the centre of the Council's lettings policy;
- Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd in seeking to find the best solution(s) for housing development despite economic constraints.

### **Priority 2. Preventing and alleviating homelessness**

**Our Aim: To prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place wherever possible, where it occurs provide good quality temporary accommodation for as short a period as possible and provide access to appropriate support if required.**

## Why this is a priority

Homelessness is recognised as the greatest form of housing need and consequently the Council continues to produce a specific Homelessness Strategy underpinned by the Profile on Homelessness. It is also nationally recognised that homelessness is not just a housing problem and can interlink with other issues such as poverty, inequality and complex needs. This was recognised by the Homelessness Task Force's final report:

**"In many instances, homelessness is the result of wider needs which have not been recognised, or have not been met effectively....All the varying needs of people affected by homelessness must be assessed and addressed individually and flexibly. If they are not, purely housing solutions are unlikely to be sustainable."**

Homelessness Task Force Final Report (Scottish Executive, 2001).

The Council recognises that the crisis of homelessness is a hugely traumatic event for anyone, and especially for children and those already considered vulnerable due to other factors such as ill health or advanced age. In recognition of this the Council aims to deliver a high quality homelessness service which includes housing support from the applicant's first contact with the Council until such time as their homelessness is addressed.

We have duties where possible to both prevent and alleviate homelessness, with specific responsibilities to provide temporary and settled accommodation depending on the outcome of the homeless assessment.

The recent levels of rough sleeping in Scotland has been of particular concern. This was recognised in the Scottish Government's 2017 to 2018 Programme for Government which set a national objective to eradicate rough sleeping. A Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up and which was tasked to identify actions, services and legislative changes that may be needed to end rough sleeping and transform the use of temporary accommodation.

The Scottish Government's 2018 to 2019 programme again emphasises these commitments and it has taken on board the recommendations of HARSAG which included local authorities developing Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans. Their aim is to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation by homeless households and that settled accommodation is offered quickly, which should reduce the need for temporary accommodation. Also as part of this, Councils are to consider the potential for establishing Housing First models of accommodation for assisting homeless people with complex needs.

The Council places great importance on preventing homelessness by the timely provision of accessible, professional information and advice. In 2008 the Council achieved its initial accreditation in the National Standards for Advice and Information Providers for its homelessness and advice services. The Council's Housing Service was successful in being reaccredited in 2018. Having staff trained in these standards is important in assisting the prevention of homelessness occurring and is an integral part of the broader housing options service.

## What the HNDA and Key Data Tells Us

### Number of applications under the Homeless Persons legislation.

	2013/14.	2014/15.	2015/16.	2016/17.	2017/18.
Applying as Homeless.	106.	81.	97.	124.	116.
Assessed as Homeless.	82.	64.	77.	98.	95.

Homeless presentations decreased in 2017 to 2018 compared to the year before. There has been some fluctuation over the past five years although the number is still some way below the peak in presentations which reached 237 presentations in 2006 to 2007.

In 2017 to 2018, there were 85 households where the Council had a duty to secure settled accommodation and at the 31st of March 2018 a total of 77 households had been permanently rehoused as a result of homelessness. Permanent rehousing may be provided by the Council and / or Orkney Housing Association Ltd.

The number of people receiving housing options advice and information has increased slightly in 2017 to 2018 to 58 households. This was from a noticeable dip in the previous year to 50 households, 34 less than in 2015 to 2016.

### Number of households receiving housing options/advice and information 2013 to 2014 to 2017 to 2018.

Year.	2013/14.	2014/15.	2015/16.	2016/17.	2017/18.
Number.	153.	80.	84.	50.	58.

As with other local authorities, the majority of those presenting as homeless were single people comprising 71% (85) of all applications and this has remained fairly constant over time.

- Single male households were half of the total applications and 72% of all single person applications. Single women made up 19% of all applications and 28% of the total of single person applications.
- Almost a quarter (24%) of applications came from young single people (16 to 24 year olds) with young women applying at a slightly higher rate (16 applying) than young men (13 applications) though this has not been the case over the last five years. The proportion of young people presenting as homeless has decreased slightly to its lowest level in the last five years.
- 21% (25) were applications from households with children and of those, the vast majority were single parent households 20 out of 23 households.
- The main reasons given for leaving accommodation have been relatively consistent over a number of years. The most common reason cited has been dispute within the household/relationship breakdown of which non-violent dispute accounted for 31% in 2017 to 2018 and violent dispute was 5% (this is a low

proportion compared to other years where the numbers presenting for this reason are much higher). The next most common reason is 'being asked to leave' at 17%.

- The last two years have seen an increase in the number of people presenting as homeless due to harassment/abuse outwith the home with 12% presenting for this reason.
- In 2017 to 2018 there was one application (0.8%) from those leaving prison / hospital / care or some other institution this compared to seven (6%) in 2016 to 2017.
- There are relatively low numbers of recorded rough sleeping within Orkney. There are times when someone presenting as homeless in Orkney may have slept rough outwith Orkney during the 3 months prior to their presentation or within Orkney for one night only usually as a result of relationship breakdown.
- The vast majority of households that present to the Council as homeless have a local connection with Orkney.

### Temporary accommodation

The main type of temporary accommodation is furnished properties located in the Council's general needs stock. Kirkwall has the highest numbers with some in Stromness and a few in West and East mainland. There is no temporary accommodation available on the isles

### Location of temporary accommodation at March 2018

Location.	Number of properties.
Kirkwall.	43.
Stromness.	13.
St Margaret's Hope.	5.
Finstown.	2.

There were 30 households in temporary accommodation on the 31st March 2018 compared with 35 the year before and 25 in 2016. Over the past five years the numbers have varied between 25 to 35 households.

While 2017 to 2018 saw a slight increase in the length of time homeless households remain in temporary housing, over the last 5 years we have seen an overall decline. This decline has been by almost a half in the length of time a household is in Bed and Breakfast accommodation from the previous year.

Length of stay in temporary accommodation can be affected by a number of factors the most common being housing supply - the availability of settled accommodation. If the Scottish Government implements the provisions in the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 with regard to local connection and intentional homelessness provisions the Council will need to consider the impact this could have on the provision of temporary accommodation and housing support services.

New developments becoming available in Orkney has had a positive effect on how long an applicant remains in temporary accommodation with a fall in the average time in 2015 to 2016 to 12.5 weeks compared with 20.2 weeks in 2014 to 2015 and 26.7 weeks in 2013 to 2014 (Orkney Islands Council's Annual Return on the Charter). This coincides with one and two bedroom new build properties becoming available, throughout the year.

The houses in greatest demand are one bedroom properties - this is for both temporary and settled housing. Out of the 31 households in temporary accommodation (in December 2018) where the Council has a duty to secure settled accommodation, 30 (96.7%) were waiting for one bedroom properties. The lack of properties of the right size can delay re-housing into settled accommodation.

At March 31st 2018, there were 37 households where there was a duty to house in settled accommodation being an increase from the previous two years.

The proportion of Council lets to going to homeless households in 2017 to 2018 was 32% slightly up from the previous year. A similar proportion of Orkney Housing Association Ltd's lets was made to homeless applicants at 31% - more than double to number of lets from the previous year.

#### **Lets to Homeless Households in the Social Sector 2014 to 2015 to 2017 to 2018**

	<b>2014 to 2015.</b>		<b>2015 to 2016.</b>		<b>2016 to 2017.</b>		<b>2017 to 2018.</b>	
	OIC.	OHA L.	OIC	OHAL	OIC	OHA L.	OIC.	OHA L.
No of lets to existing tenants.	20.	7.	37.	22.	29.	17.	18.	20.
No of lets to housing list applicants.	87.	44.	60.	50.	71.	54.	70.	60.
No of lets to homeless applicants.	28.	20.	41.	33.	43.	15.	40.	39.

Source - Annual Return on the Charter.

The number of households housed in social housing increased in 2017 to 2018 compared to the previous two years. The Council is conscious of the need to increase the number/proportion of lets made to homeless households within the social rented sector and this will be required to meet the objectives of rapid rehousing, which is, in part at least, dependent on affordable housing supply.

There are a number of homeless households which have support needs and they can be provided for through, for example, the Council's Housing Support Service as well as other services which offer support. Also there is supported accommodation for young people, refuge for women fleeing domestic abuse and, to a lesser degree, for those involved in the criminal justice system.

There are few homeless households with severe and multiple disadvantage or complex needs where a Housing First model would be the most appropriate response. The Council will be exploring the potential of this model with Orkney Health and Care's Through Care and After Care services regarding a small number of young people leaving care as well as investigating if there are other households that would benefit from the model.

## **Housing Support**

Over a fifth of applicants assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness reported support needs relating to mental health problems and 10.5% of applicants reported having a drug or alcohol dependency.

The Council provides housing support services to homeless households who are assessed as needing housing support. The Service is available also to tenants to assist with tenancy sustainment. The Service employs a qualified Social Worker to assist in cases where someone has relatively high support needs and the post provides an important link between social work services and housing support services. There is generally good joint working between the Housing Service and other services/organisations.

Support to homeless households is provided also by a number of organisations in the third sector such as Women's Aid Orkney and Orkney Blide Trust.

Highlighted as a concern by a number of organisations was the lack of a resident psychiatrist in Orkney and Orkney Health and Care has identified the need for a psychiatry service that works in partnership as part of the regional planning in the North and that is not dependent on the use of locum cover.

## **What we will do**

- Review and develop further our housing options approach to increase the number of households diverted from homelessness.
- Work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to broaden the scope of housing options activity.
- Investigate the possibility of developing the existing housing options guide into an interactive housing options portal.
- Work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to increase the number of social housing lets made to homeless households.
- Keep the use of temporary accommodation to a minimum.
- Explore with relevant partners the potential for developing a Housing First model in Orkney.
- Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to ensure the best resettlement option is available for homeless households.
- Continue to work jointly with Orkney Health and Care to provide the appropriate housing and other support services.
- Monitor how well our homelessness prevention policy is being implemented.
- Monitor and review our Nominations Agreement and Move on Protocol with Women's Aid Orkney.



- Assess the impact of any potential changes to local authority duties if the Scottish Government implements the Local Connection and Intentional homelessness provisions of the in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in line with available resources.

### **Priority 3: Older People**

**Aim: to provide good quality, appropriate housing and related services and to work in partnership with other services to meet the needs of older people to enable them to remain in their own homes for as long as they wish and is possible or to live in a homely setting.**

Reshaping Care for Older People (2011 to 2021) is a Scottish Government and COSLA programme which aims to improve services for older people by shifting care towards anticipatory care and prevention. The Programme's vision is:

**“Older people in Scotland are valued as an asset, their voices are heard and older people are supported to enjoy full and positive lives in their own home or in a homely setting”.**

And to achieve older people having the best possible quality of life means:

- They feel safe.
- They have opportunities to meet and support each other.
- Ensuring no-one is socially isolated or lonely.
- They stay as well as they can.
- Living where and how they want.
- Being free from discrimination or stigma.
- They are listened to, have a say in the services they receive and they are treated at all times with respect and dignity.

The Scottish Government reviewed their strategy for housing older people “Age, Home and Community 2012 to 2021” half way through the period of its operation, to assess progress and to consider what actions should be included in the next stage of the strategy.

The vision set down in the refreshed/updated “Age, Home and Community: Next Phase” (2018) is – “We want older people in Scotland to enjoy full and positive lives in homes that meet their needs. To help in achieving the vision three principles were identified as:

- Right Advice.
- Right Home.
- Right Support.”

The next phase of the strategy views these three areas as key to enabling older people to live safely and independently at home for as long as they chose.

The Council is clear that its strategy on older persons housing must emphasise:

- The need for sufficient housing of the right type, size, quality, adaptability and cost.
- A range of effective housing support services, to meet the housing needs and aspirations of older people in Orkney.
- Joint work to actively enable people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

The Council's Housing Contribution statement identifies the need for future housing to take account of the needs of people with dementia by encouraging housing supply that:

- Is of the right size.
- Is in the right location across all tenures.
- Is built to modern standards and of future-proofed design.
- Mainstreams barrier-free, dementia friendly design.
- Promotes the provision for the use of assistive technologies.

## **What the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Key Data Tells Us**

### **Population growth**

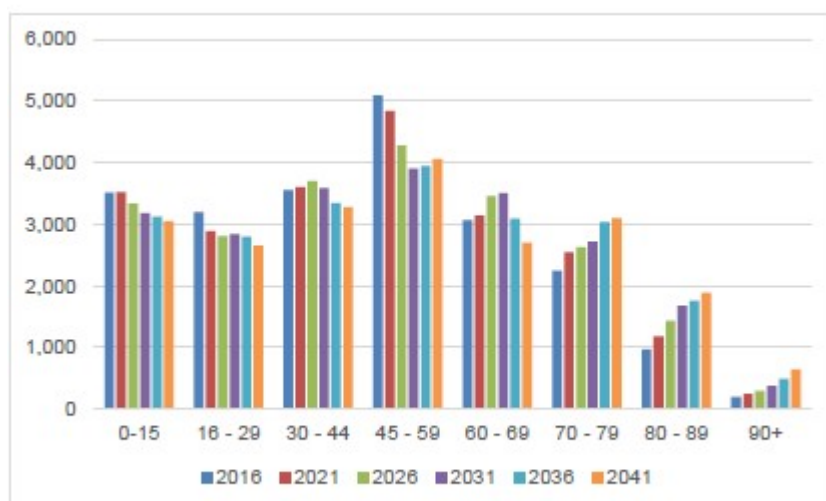
Like the rest of Scotland Orkney's older population is projected to grow. As the table below illustrates the next 20 years or so will see a steady increase in the number of older people in Orkney.

By 2025 it is anticipated that 20% of the population, approximately 4,286 people, will be aged 70 and over.

And, numbers are expected to increase to 26% or 5,625 people by 2041. This will have implications in the provision of housing, support and care.

The number of older people living alone is expected to rise (The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Orkney Integration Joint Board, 2016) which potentially will increase demand for smaller properties, with either one or two bedrooms.

## Population Projection by Age Group 2016 - 2041



Source: National Records of Scotland

The projected demographic changes are most pronounced in the isles with the potential that there will be more dependants in the isles than working age adults which will present particular challenges for the adequate provision of services in the isles. This may very well result in increased pressure on mainland Orkney for example for extra care housing and care home provision if people need to move to receive care. There will be further considerations on how best to enable older people to remain safely in their homes where possible through integrated service delivery and the best use of assistive technology.

### Dementia

It is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the number of people with dementia and it is recognised that there is under recording. In 2015, Alzheimer's Scotland estimated that there were 401 people living with dementia in Orkney, and of those approximately 388 were aged 65 and above. The estimated figure for 2017 was 449 people with dementia.

#### An estimation of the number of people with dementia in Orkney in 2017

Males.	Females.	Total.
176.	273.	449.

Source- Alzheimer Scotland: <https://www.alzscot.org/our-work/campaigning-for-change/scotlands-national-dementia-strategy/statistics>

Age Scotland Orkney was awarded £225,000 to be used to provide a range of services and social activities to promote health and well-being, resilience, access to support and inclusion. This will include a Dementia Hub, a one stop shop where people living with dementia can go for information and advice.

The number of those who have been diagnosed with dementia then being referred for post diagnostic support is low and decreasing. The Dementia Hub may help address this as well as looking into the low diagnostic rate for dementia in Orkney.

## Dementia Post-Diagnostic Support (PDS) in Orkney 2016/17

Estimated Number of People Newly Diagnosed with Dementia.			Number of People Referred to PDS.		
2014 to 2015.	2015 to 2016.	2016 to 2017.	2014 to 2015.	2015 to 2016.	2016 to 2017/18.
79.	82.	84.	16.	13.	9.
			20.3%.	15.9%.	10.7%.

Source: ISD.

The rate of dementia is expected to rise with an increase in the number of older people in Orkney

As illustrated in the table above, the number of people with a dementia diagnosis who are living in care homes in Orkney has been fairly stable over the last five years though this represents a small proportion of the estimated number of people with dementia, the majority of whom are living in the community. This highlights the importance of housing and communities becoming dementia friendly.

### Statistics for older adults 2013 to 2017

	2013.	2014.	2015.	2016.	2017.
No. care homes.	6.	6.	6.	6.	5.
No. of registered places.	111.	111.	111.	111.	111.
No. of residents.	104.	104.	101.	109.	104.
% occupancy rate.	94%.	94%.	91%.	98%.	94%.
No. of long stay residents.	95.	94.	94.	98.	93.
No. MD* dementia.	47.	47.	48.	46.	47.
No. not MD Dementia.	5.	6.	*.	*.	*.
Average age.	86.	86.	85.	85.	86.

\*MD-medically diagnosed. The Scottish Adult Care Home Census 2017 ISD.

### Homecare and telecare

The number of people requiring Homecare services is projected to steadily increase to 2,037. Correspondingly the proportion of those aged 85+ requiring such services will increase from 49% of all those in receipt of Homecare to 66% in 2037.

### Estimated need for homecare: 2016 – 2037

	2017.	2022.	2027.	2032.	2037.
Clients.	264.	314.	385.	452.	502.
18 – 64.	22.	21.	21.	20.	20.
65-74.	31.	32.	32.	35.	35.
75-84.	81.	99.	107.	112.	117.
85+.	130.	162.	225.	285	331.

Source: Orkney Islands Council.

In 2015 to 2016 there were 136 Self Directed Support packages providing 1,696 hours of care per week at an annual cost of £784,312 or an average of £5,767 per client. By 09 June 2016 there were 110 packages providing 1,634 hours of care a week at the cost of £960,061. An increase in the per-client cost to an average of £8,727.

While the number of people receiving direct payments remained the same in 2015 to 2016 and 2016 to 2017 (up from the previous three years) the value of the payments increased.

### Number of people receiving and value of Direct Payments: 2012 to 2013 to 2016 to 2017

2012-13.	2013-14.	2014-15.	2015-16.	2016-17.
50.	60.	60.	90.	90.
£0.4.	£0.4.	£0.5.	£0.7.	£0.9.

Social Care Services, Scotland, 2016, Scottish Government.

There has been a substantial increase in telecare and telehealth provision in Orkney in recent years as the below table shows.

The proportion of those aged over 75 years receiving telecare has been slowly increasing, in 2012 it was 45% by 2015 it was 48%. A significant number of those aged over 75 also receive home care.

### Telecare and Community alarm provision 2012 – 2015

	2012.	2013.	2014.	2015.
Total Clients.	550.	580.	680.	730.
Telecare and Community alarm.	90.	250.	280.	290.
Telecare only.	0.	10.	20.	10.
Community alarm only.	460.	320.	380.	420.

Clients over 75.	250.	270.	320.	350.
Over 75 clients also receiving home care.	150.	140.	170.	170.

Source: Social Care Survey.

If Orkney's population continues to age as projected, then the demand for and use of telecare and telehealth, as well as the demand for self-directed support is very likely to increase.

An increase in telecare provision will be necessary to aid any increase in Homecare required if the projected growth in demand exceeds the ability of the Homecare Service to expand sufficiently because of difficulties in adequately staffing the service. This could be exacerbated further if there is an increase in the uptake of self-directed support/direct payments which could result in further demands care/support staff.

Progress is being made in increasing the level of digital connectivity across Orkney though it is somewhat patchy including the Isles. Connectivity is important both to communities and individuals to enable technology to assist people to retain their independence and remain in their home safely. It is important that services are up to date and seek to use digital technology in innovative ways to support greater independent living

### **House conditions**

While the numbers may be, small relatively speaking, generally older households figure disproportionately in relation to living in poor housing conditions compared with other households in Orkney or indeed compared with the Scottish average for older households.

In Orkney those aged 65 and over are proportionately more likely to live:

- in older properties, it is estimated that 50% of this group live in properties built before 1945.
- To live with fuel and extreme fuel poverty with an estimated 79% of older people experiencing fuel poverty and 38% extreme fuel poverty.
- In properties below the tolerable standard, that are damp and they are slightly less likely to have full central heating.

## Estimated proportion of household by feature and household type 2015 to 2017

Feature.	Area.	Percentage within each Household Type.		
		Older (65 & over).	Families.	Other.
Pre 1945 Dwellings.	Orkney.	50%.	37%.	42%.
	Scotland.	29%.	25%.	35%.
Households with one or more long term sick or disabled person.	Orkney.	45%.	30%.	32%.
	Scotland.	61%.	29%.	39%.
Fuel poverty.	Orkney.	79%.	31%.	53%.
	Scotland.	42%.	13%.	25%.
Extreme Fuel Poverty.	Orkney.	38%.	8%.	18%.
	Scotland.	12%.	3%.	7%.
Under occupation (by 2+ bedrooms).	Orkney.	61%.	17%.	45%.
	Scotland.	42%.	18%.	30%.
Below Tolerable Standard Housing.	Orkney.	4%.	-.	4%.
	Scotland.	1%.	2%.	2%.
Disrepair.	Orkney.	53%.	67%.	66%.
	Scotland.	65%.	70%.	73%.
Extensive Disrepair.	Orkney.	16%.	6%.	13%.
	Scotland.	5%.	7%.	7%.
Damp (penetrating or rising).	Orkney.	6%.	*.	8%.
	Scotland.	3%.	3%.	3%.
Full Central Heating.	Orkney.	82%.	89%.	89%.
	Scotland.	96%.	98%.	95%.

Scottish House Conditions Survey 2015-17.

Older people are also more likely to live in a household with one or more long-term sick person or disabled person.

Living in poorer housing conditions is likely to be more difficult to sustain as the person ages and can add to the demand for more suitable alternative housing.

The amount of social housing specifically for older people (sheltered and extra care) is small in Orkney. At 31st March 2018 there were 45.

## Type of social housing for older people in Orkney 2017-18

Type of provision.	Self-contained units.		
	OIC properties.	OHAL properties .	Total .
Sheltered.	29.	0.	29.
Extra care.	16.	0.	16.
Total number of self contained units .	957.	768.	1725.

Source - Annual Return on the Charter 2017-18.

The two sheltered housing developments are located in Kirkwall and Stromness which provide a total of 29 properties.

There are also two extra care housing developments which are provided by Orkney Islands Property Developments Ltd (a private sector landlord) in Kirkwall, and Westray and the Council has a development in St Margaret's Hope. Within Orkney there Orkney Housing Association Ltd also has 55 wheelchair properties and 197 amenity standard properties. In addition the Council holds 105 properties which are adapted. While various properties are available to meet particular needs, they are not exclusively for older people.

Retirement housing linked to new build care home provision in both Kirkwall and Stromness, as well as particular needs and older persons housing in Kirkwall will form part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to be delivered by the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd.

The new build residential care homes for older people are being developed:

- In Stromness creating additional capacity and providing care for people with high levels of dependency due for completion in 2019.
- In Kirkwall creating additional capacity with target date by the end of August 2021.

Orkney's Strategic Housing Investment Plan highlights the importance of ensuring the needs of older people are met in future developments. The proposed developments in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan responds to these needs with most of the proposed properties being single storey, semi-detached and terraced, to aid accessibility.

### Projects Underway

The Council has begun a review of older people's housing and is considering how best to expand the options available for older people by providing housing which is flexible and enables independence.

The review offers the opportunity to explore different types of housing to meet the varying needs of older people such as retirement housing which for example looks at enhanced housing management and telecare services rather than the provision of housing support to assist with living independently.



There are models of housing provision seeking to expand choice for older people already being taken forward in Orkney. The Council supports the potential for a co-housing project to be developed (usually, cohousing communities live commonly in a group of flats or house. People sell homes, raise equity in other ways or get a mortgage for their community home. Some housing associations purchase places in cohousing and then lease them).

A co-housing project for older people is being developed in St Margaret's Hope by Hope Co-Housing Limited, with input from the Council and Robert Gordon University. This project will hopefully provide a template and catalyst for further co-housing projects in Orkney.

Another model to be considered is 'core and cluster' extra care housing to offer greater flexibility which would have, for instance, centralised care and support services (in the core or hub) delivering services to people in dispersed properties - depending on the model the core could also provide some form of accommodation e.g. for respite. Such potential development should inform the consideration of possible sites of new housing.

The projection of an increasingly aging population requires housing arrangements which are flexible which includes new build ensuring they comply with 'houses for life' designs.

### **What we will do**

We will:

- Consider different models of providing housing and related services for older people which enhance independence and provide greater choice.
- Explore possible innovative housing solutions for people with dementia.
- Look at different ways to reduce the numbers of older people who are living in poor housing conditions.
- Ensure that the Council's Housing Options Service is kept up to date with best practice and the latest developments for example in available grants, loans and technological advances to provide the information and advice to assist older people in knowing what choices are available.
- Review joint working arrangements to assess if there are areas for improvement in joint working and the delivery of services particularly in remoter rural and the isles.
- To explore different means by which housing support services could be delivered on isles to support older people to live independently.
- Assess the level of connectivity of residents and communities throughout Orkney and where necessary means to improve access to enable the best use of assistive technology where required.

### **Priority 4. Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs**

**Aim: Ensure that people with particular needs have access to good quality, appropriate housing and support services which meets their specific requirements and enables independent living.**

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 sets out the legal framework for integrating health and social care services. It requires health boards and local authorities to delegate some of their functions to an Integration Board.

In Orkney the Integrated Joint Board, Orkney Health and Care, was established as a separate legal entity in 2016.

The aim of Orkney Health and Care is to **'help the people of Orkney live longer, healthier and more independent lives within their own homes and communities wherever possible'**.

Orkney Health and Care's strategic vision as articulated in the latest update of their strategic commissioning plan is "getting it right for Orkney" (Caring for Our Future; Orkney Strategic Plan, 2019 – 2022).

Their values include:

- Person centred.
- Caring.
- Enabling.
- Empowering.

The Plan's performance framework links their performance in different areas to the Scottish Government's National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes one of which, of particular relevance to housing, is Outcome 2.

People, including those with disabilities or long term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community.

In the Scottish Government's A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People (A Fairer Scotland for Disabled People, Delivery Plan to 2021 for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) one of their five stated "ambitions" is: 'places that are accessible to everyone' so disabled people can live life to the full in homes and communities across Scotland, with housing and transport and the wider physical and cultural environment designed and adapted to enable disabled people to participate as full and equal citizens.

To achieve this the Plan identifies a number of actions such as:

- Greater and more meaningful involvement by disabled people in designing policies and services.
- Disabled people to benefit from increased availability of affordable and accessible housing to support people to continue to live independent lives.
- Increased awareness of the additional barriers living in rural or remote areas can bring for disabled people.

The Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy 2017 emphasises the role that housing plays in people's mental well-being. It highlights how some groups are more likely to experience mental health problems such as people who experienced trauma or adverse childhood events, people with substance use problems, homeless

people, people who are experiencing loneliness or social isolation, veterans, refugees and asylum seekers.

The Strategy recognises also specific issues in accessing services and support for people living in remote and rural communities and the particular challenges faced by rural isolation and in recognition of this supports the National Rural Mental Health Forum.

Orkney Health and Care has developed a mental health strategy following a review of mental health services in Orkney.

The Scottish Strategy for Autism Outcomes and Priorities 2018 to 2021 has as one of its strategic outcomes – Independence.

Autistic people are able to live independently in the community with equal access to all aspects of society. Services have the capacity and awareness to ensure that people are met with recognition and understanding

The Council and NHS Orkney produced All Age Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategy in 2013. It reported and it highlights the importance that people with autism and their families placed on in being able to access housing in supported “safe and quiet” areas.

## **What the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Key Data Tell Us**

### **Wheelchair housing**

The table below details the level of wheelchair housing in Orkney's social rented stock. Orkney Housing Association Ltd provides all the wheelchair housing in the social rented sector, with the vast majority of their properties being located in Kirkwall.

### **Wheelchair housing in social rented housing stock**

	<b>Wheelchair housing stock.</b>
Kirkwall.	38.
Stromness.	3.
West Mainland.	6.
East Mainland.	5.
Isles.	2.

Source: Orkney Housing Association.

Also, Orkney Islands Property Developments Limited have a number of wheelchair accessible properties that are used by Orkney Health and Care, including two in Westray and 24 in Kirkwall.

The table below shows a slight increase in the number of wheelchair accessible properties since 2015 to 2016 which should have had some impact on the numbers on the common housing register waiting for a wheelchair accessible house. This was 16 at the end of September 2016.

### **Breakdown of social housing properties by type at end of March 2018**

<b>Type of provision.</b>	<b>Self-contained units.</b>		
	OIC properties.	OHAL properties.	Total .
General.	806.	521.	1327.
Sheltered.	29.	0.	29.
Extra Care.	16.	0.	16.
Medium dependency.	15.	0.	15.
Wheelchair.	0.	60.	60.
Ambulant disabled.	29.	183.	212.
Other specially adapted.	62.	4.	66.
<b>Total.</b>	<b>957.</b>	<b>768.</b>	<b>1725.</b>

Scottish Housing Regulator website.

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment records that Orkney has slightly lower percentage of adaptations than the Scottish average. There are significant differences in accessibility between Orkney's pre-1945 and post-1945 housing stock across all tenures.

In 2017 to 2018, there were 60 grants for disabled adaptations awarded under the Scheme of Assistance, this is down from the previous two years where the numbers stood at 67 in 2016 to 2017 and 124 in 2015 to 2016. It is anticipated however that the demand for adaptations will increase as Orkney's demographic continues to change.

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment notes that many of the Council's and Orkney Housing Association Ltd's new build properties are designed to be accessible and, the two-bedroom properties being developed now by the Council are predominantly bungalows to make them as flexible as possible.

There is some provision for additional new build wheelchair housing through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, with Orkney Housing Association Ltd developing a small number of properties. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan includes some provision for wheelchair properties where it is viewed appropriate.

## Supported Housing/housing and support

While there is a concentration on housing for the older population in Orkney, as this is where the greatest pressure may occur given the population projections, there are other groups with needs for housing and support.

There is a range of households requiring or who would benefit from a housing support service to enable them to live independently and successfully sustain their housing.

The Council has specific duties regarding households that are homeless or threatened with homelessness introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. Local authorities have to ensure the provision of housing support services to those where they have been assessed as requiring that support.

Just under half of those assessed as homeless in 2017 to 2018 (95 households) has at least one identified support need. And, apart from those who required basic housing management/independent living skills, mental health problems were most commonly identified as a support need totalling just over a fifth of homeless households.

### Support need identified for homeless/ threatened with homelessness households, 2017 to 2018

	Mental health problem	Learning disability	Physical disability	Medical condition	Drug or alcohol dependency	Basic housing management/ILS	At least 1 support need identified.
<i>Total</i>	21.	2.	7.	9.	10.	22.	44.

Orkney Health and Care's Needs Assessment (2016) reported that, according to the 2011 Census 3% of the population in Orkney (598 people) identified as having a mental health condition that lasted, or would last, for more than 12 months. This affected 58% females, reporting a mental health condition, compared to men at 42%. The age group with the highest proportion reporting a mental health condition was those aged between 35 to 49 years of age which was 33% of the total followed by those aged between 50 and 64 years at 26% of the total.

The Needs Assessment noted that historic figures from the GP Quality and Outcomes Framework register suggested that the prevalence of mental illness in Orkney has remained similar over the years, there were 185 people with a diagnosis of mental ill health in 2014 to 2015.

An integrated multi-disciplinary staff team provides the mental health services in Orkney and support services are also delivered by the third sector.

A significant increase in referrals to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) has been reported in the Chief Social Work Officer's 2017 to 2018 Report indicating a growing demand for mental health services.

Orkney Health and Care has identified mental health services as an area for development in order to best meet local needs. One specific gap identified by a number of services, as well as Orkney Health and Care, is in psychiatry as there is no psychiatrist based in Orkney.

The Council's Housing Support Strategy 2011 to 2016 identified the need to consider some form of supported accommodation options for people with mental health problems, for example, access to a safe bed or supported accommodation for short periods of time. This would be while the person was seeking access to health services. While the Housing Support Strategy is now incorporated into the Local Housing Strategy this need remains outstanding.

There are particular challenges assessing the actual prevalence of autism and the true prevalence is unknown.

- In 2011 it was estimated there were 178 people across all age groups with autism spectrum disorder in Orkney - 75% of which were male and 25% female.
- In 2015 the number of children and adults known to the Local Authority with autism was 60 being 45 males and 15 females (OHAC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016. (OHAC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016).

The Council and NHS Orkney's All Age Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategy identified a number of priority areas for action which should inform the future shaping and coordination of services and two actions are of particular relevance here:

- To increase awareness and understanding of the process and policies with regard to housing.
- Explore the possibility of 'autism' flagging system to housing databases.

In 2015 there were 423 adults known to the Council with learning disabilities (physical health conditions, dyslexia, etc.), higher than previous years and, it is expected that the prevalence of people with a learning disability will grow because of improved life expectancy. (OHAC Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2016).

Approximately 100 people were accessing a learning disability specific service in 2015, including supported accommodation, day services, short breaks or self-directed support and there was an increase of 21% in referrals to services over the previous two years. (OHAC Strategic Commissioning Plan 2016-2019).

Orkney Health and Care identified the need to diversify the accommodation and independent living support models and resources for people with learning disabilities. (OHAC Strategic Commissioning Plan 2016-2019 Performance Monitoring Report 2016-17). The Council has decided that the supported accommodation be redesigned and replaced with a core and cluster model to support people in the community.

There are a number of other supported accommodation services in Orkney, most of which are located in Kirkwall. These include:

- Two projects and separate move on accommodation for young homeless people one based in Kirkwall and the other in Stromness.

- A refuge and separate move on accommodation with visiting support in Kirkwall for women fleeing domestic abuse.
- Again in Kirkwall accommodation for offenders or those at risk of offending (this property is provided by Orkney Islands Property Development Ltd with support from Criminal Justice Social Work).

While the young persons' supported accommodation is in the main for homeless young people, also some young people who have left care use this service. There is a need for some separate supported accommodation for young people who are leaving the care system, who have additional support needs.

The Council is carrying out a review of residential child care provision reflecting changes introduced in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The review is to include recommendations "to establish a residential estate fit for the medium term to include young people potentially up to the age of 25". (Orkney Council's Delivery Plan 2018-23).

The need to respond to the identified need for specialist housing has informed the Strategic Housing Investment Plan which includes developments to be delivered through both the Affordable Housing Supply Programme and Rural Housing Fund.

It is hoped that up to 66 specialist housing properties will be developed over the lifetime of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

The demand on the Housing Support Service is likely to rise with more people requiring or being identified as requiring the service. This could be, for example:

- To ensure that the aim of enabling people to live as independently for as long as possible in their own homes is to be realised.
- As the aging population increases. This is particularly important in areas where the development of extra care housing is not practical or viable and other options will need to be explored including linking housing into existing care facilities or the further development of telecare services.
- Or more generally where there are no other accommodation options available.

## **Refugees**

The Orkney Partnership established an Inter-Agency Working Group for Refugees to ensure there was a co-ordinated and effective plan in place to allow Orkney to participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

A range of support measures were put in place such as housing, health, language and schooling. In 2017 two families were resettled in two properties that the Council purchased previously for student housing as there had not been the level of demand for the five properties purchased previously for student housing.

In 2018 the Council agreed to offer homes to a further two Syrian households also in Kirkwall. Both families arrived early in 2019.

## **Gypsy/Traveller or Travelling Show people**

Due to a lack of demand or presence in Orkney of Gypsy/Travellers or Travelling Show people there has been no identified need for specific sites to be identified at this time. Consequently, it has not been possible to consult with members of this group.

### **What we will do**

- Continue to monitor the demand for specialist housing and if the developments identified are delivered.
- With stakeholders, assess the need for some form of supported accommodation for people with mental health problems.
- Ensure that the housing and support needs of young people who have left care are met including the possibility of a housing first model.
- Ensure that information and advice about the help available under the Scheme of Assistance, particularly in the grants available for disabled adaptations is widely disseminated.
- Ensure that new developments are flexible in design to meet the criteria of Homes for Life.
- Review of the Housing Support Service to assess their ability to meet increased demand and the level of flexibility and adaptability required to meet changing needs.
- Explore with all stakeholders, different means by which housing support services could be delivered on isles to support the varying needs of their populations.
- Review allocation policies in ensure the needs of people with autism are taken into account including the possibility of a 'flagging system'.

## **Priority 5 Improving Standards in the Private Sector**

**Aim: To improve the overall conditions in the private sector housing including the eradication of substandard and Below Tolerable Standard housing and develop closer links with the Private Rented Sector and ensure landlords meet their obligations in respect of the repairing standard.**

### **Why this is a priority**

One of the main objectives of the Local Housing Strategy is to focus on housing conditions. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 provides local authorities with the means to address the conditions and quality of housing in the private sector. This includes designating Housing Renewal Areas, using a repairing standard for private landlords, works notices, maintenance orders, closing and demolition orders, a scheme of assistance, and a requirement for Local Authorities to include strategies and policies for dealing with houses below the Tolerable Standard. However, at a time of placing additional responsibilities upon private owners to improve and maintain their homes, financial support to assist owners has been greatly reduced.

Local Authorities are empowered to designate a Housing Renewal Area in areas where:



- A significant proportion of properties are sub-standard.
- The appearance or condition of the properties concerned are adversely affecting the amenity of the area.

Although this option is available, due to the rural and dispersed nature of Orkney it is unlikely there will be a need to consider a Housing Renewal Area locally.

In dealing with properties, within the private sector, which are below the tolerable standard, there are good joint working arrangements between the Council's Housing Services and Environmental Health. Our Environmental Health Service already holds significant information on properties which are deemed below the tolerable standard. Properties can be identified for example as a result of a complaint or request for rehousing or may be identified as part of a visit on another matter. In addition, statistical information may result from the development of a Local House Condition Survey.

Where a property is identified as being substandard or below the tolerable standard the Council will find an appropriate solution which could be:

- Monitoring.
- Formal action.
- Help under the Scheme of Assistance.

It is accepted that resolution can be complex and crosses various tenures. In some situations, formal enforcement action may be taken in line with the Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards' Enforcement Policy. Equally a supportive approach may be taken in situations where this is required due to the vulnerability of the occupants. This may require joint working with Orkney Health and Care.

The Local Authority may serve a works notice in respect of any sub-standard housing. Our Scheme of Assistance is available to provide advice and support to owners of below the tolerable standard housing.

Orkney's Scheme of Assistance, as required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 is contracted out and delivered by Orkney Housing Association as managing agents of the "Orkney Care and Repair" service. The scheme provides advice, information and assistance to homeowners and disabled occupants living within the private sector.

A small repairs service is also in operation and also as part of the Orkney Care and Repair service. This provides assistance in relation to adaptations.

The Council is conscious of the need to improve energy efficiency in Orkney's private sector housing stock and to meet climate change requirements. The Housing Service manages projects to improve the energy efficiency of private sector properties throughout Orkney. Information on a range of issues including energy efficiency and a link to our Scheme of Assistance is available from our online housing options guide.

Also the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced the repairing standard which is the legal duty that private landlords have to ensure their properties meet minimum

physical standards. Where a house fails this standard, either the tenant or the Local Authority may seek recourse from the First Tier Tribunal.

The Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016 Act came into force in December 2017 and new tenancies created in the private sector from that date will be a private residential tenancy. Therefore, landlords will require a reason to bring the tenancy to an end, unlike the previously commonly used short assured tenancy. It is too early to tell what, if any, impact this new tenancy regime will have on lettings in the private sector though this will affect winter lets - which were let for six months on as a form of assured tenancy and then ended. These are no longer available as an option for landlords.

It is a requirement of the Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004 that private landlords register with the Local Authority. This requires a need to pass a “fit and proper person” test and also there is a need for the property to be of an appropriate standard. The Council works closely with private sector landlords in this respect.

The Council provides a newsletter for private sector landlords called “Lets Update” to brief them on any changes in legislation or other matters of interest. Registered landlords are able to access a free advertising service through the Council’s website called “Orkney Lets” if required. In addition, training is offered to private sector landlords through Landlord Accreditation Scotland.

To assist in accessing the private rented sector the Council runs a rent deposit scheme. Through this scheme, prospective tenants can apply for help with a deposit which the Council pays directly to the landlord who has a duty to place the deposit in one of the recognised National Rent Deposit schemes.

Significant changes are anticipated over the coming years in respect of requirements placed on the private sector in relation to energy efficiency and fire prevention systems.

### **What the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Key Data Tell Us**

At 2001 Orkney had an overall housing stock of 9,237 units. By 2017 this was around 11,300 representing an increase of 22.3%.

The majority of people in Orkney live in the private sector either in owner occupation (67%) or rent from a private landlord (10%). It is therefore critically important that the quality, of the majority of the private sector housing stock, be maintained and further improved.

The figures contained in the table below indicate a decrease in private rented dwellings in Orkney from 11% in 2014 to 2015 to 8% in 2017 whilst the Scottish average remained the same at 15%.

### **Estimated stock of dwellings by tenure Orkney: 2014 to 2015 & 2017**

	<b>Owner occupied.</b>	<b>Rented privately or</b>	<b>Vacant private dwellings and</b>	<b>Rented from housing associations.</b>	<b>Rented from local authorities, new</b>

		<b>with a job/business.</b>	<b>second homes.</b>		<b>town, Scottish Homes.</b>
2017.	67%.	8%.	10%.	6%.	9%.
2014 to 2015.	65%.	11%.	10%.	6%.	9%.

Source - Housing Statistics for Scotland: Key Trends Summary.

In 2019, there were 990 private sector landlords with properties rented out in Orkney. The Landlord Registration Scheme is designed to ensure that both landlords and their properties are fit and proper.

These landlords collectively owned 1100 properties which represents 10% of Orkney's total housing stock, a sizeable proportion of Orkney's housing stock.

### **Below tolerable standard**

There has been a reduction in the level of housing which is below the tolerable standard in Orkney:

- From 2011 to 2013 to the last available figures for 2015 to 2017 the estimated proportion of the housing stock falling below the tolerable standard fell by 4%.
- In 2011 to 2013 the figure was 7% and the 2015 to 2017 is 3% of the housing stock, though this is still considerably above the 1% average for Scotland.

### **Proportion of properties in Orkney failing the Below Tolerable Standard**

	<b>% of LA.</b>	<b>Pre-1945.</b>	<b>Post 1945.</b>	<b>House.</b>	<b>2 or fewer.</b>	<b>3+.</b>	<b>Owner-occupied.</b>	<b>Private Rented.</b>	<b>Older.</b>	<b>Families.</b>	<b>Other.</b>
2015-17.	3%.	6%.	.	.	.	3%	3%.	.	3%.	.	4%.
2014-16.	3%.	7%.	-.	3%.	*.	3%	3%.	*.	5%.	-.	3%.
2011-13.	7%.	13%	4%.	7%.	8%.	6%	7%.	13%.	9%.	7%.	6%.

Scottish Conditions Survey.

The stock which is below the tolerable standard is concentrated in the older properties within the owner-occupied sector which in turn is occupied by older households or households without children.

Although the Scheme of Assistance provides valuable help in adapting houses for disabled people, there has been very little uptake in grants for improving standards for those living in the private sector. However, the small repairs grant was reviewed during 2019 and it is hoped this will go some way to assist.

Under the Scheme of Assistance (Orkney Care and Repair) there were 104 grant approvals. A total of £332,477 assistance was provided under the Scheme in 2017 to 2018. Sixty of the grants were for disabled adaptations.

## Grants made under the Scheme of Assistance 2017 to 2018

	<b>All Disabled adaptations.</b>	<b>Assistance for Work Under Notice .</b>	<b>Other Assistance.</b>	<b>Total grants approved .</b>
Grants approved.	60.	-.	44.	104.
Amount given in grants .	£225,928.	-.	£106,549.	£332,477.

Non-financial advice cases. Housing Statistics for Scotland - Scheme of Assistance.

As well as providing grant funding the Scheme provides information, advice and practical assistance. The number of cases has remained relatively constant from 2015 to 2016.

### Empty properties

Orkney has one of the highest percentages of vacant private dwellings and second homes in Scotland, standing in 2017 at an estimated 10% of Orkney's housing stock. This compares with the Scottish average of 4.1%. (Estimated stock of dwellings by tenure and local authority 2017 Scottish Government figures).

The Local House Condition Survey suggests that 12.8% of Orkney's dwellings are classed as 'general vacancies (this term includes 'short-term' empty properties, those with ongoing repairs, and long-term empty homes). Of these empty properties, 77.9% are thought to require repairs and 19.6% are deemed to be Below the Tolerable Standard.

Empty homes represent a significant drain on local communities and can lead to a drop in the local economy. This is particularly the case in the smaller isles and may lead to the closure of facilities such as schools.

The Council's Empty Homes Strategy has four objectives:

- To understand the scale of the long-term empty home issue across Orkney.
- To develop a process based on advice and assistance to bring empty properties back into use.
- To raise awareness of issues relating to empty homes across Orkney.
- To work with Development Trusts and communities to improve housing in their area.

The Council's Empty Homes Strategy (2018 to 2023) aims to bring 20 properties back into use each year. The Council's Empty Homes Service which was established in 2017 has been successful in bringing 20 properties back into use. This has been through a combination of means including being sold into owner occupation and being rented privately.

In addition to the level of empty properties in Orkney, the Scottish House Condition Survey estimated, in their 2014 to 2016 figures, that 2% of households were overcrowded, all in post 1945 stock and all were households containing children. The Scottish figure stood at 3%. Overcrowded households are awarded priority status on the Common Housing Register.

In contrast the level of under occupation for 2014 to 2016 was estimated at 42% of the housing stock (the Scottish average was 29%) with housing stock in the private sector much more likely to be under occupied. This accounts for 49% of owner-occupied properties and 36% in the private rented sector. Older households (49%) and 49% of households without children were estimated to be under occupying. Those who are living in under-occupied properties may be more likely to experience fuel poverty.

In 2015 to 2017 there was a slight increase in the proportion of households which were under-occupied. This accounts for 45% of Orkney households in comparison to the Scottish figure of 31% which also was subject to a slight increase.

The Council is committed to increasing the energy efficiency in the private housing stock and we have been successful in being awarded funding to assist in increasing energy efficiency. For example, in 2018 to 2019 £1 million was made available by the Scottish government for this purpose and £1.45 million for the installation of central heating systems.

### What we will do

	Info and Advice.				Practical Assistance.		
	Website Hits.	Leaflets Issued.	Telephone Advice.	Pro-Active Visits.	Provided by Housing Team.	Referrals.	Total.
2017 to 2018.	0.	485.	782.	166.	0.	0.	1,433.
2016 to 2017.	N/A.	297.	659.	129.	N/A.	104.	1,189.
2015 to 2016.	N/A.	790.	592.	102.	N/A.	125.	1,609.

- Keep the Scheme of Assistance under review and continue to promote the service provided by Orkney Care and Repair Team.
- Ensure that advice, support and enforcement is targeted to reduce.
  - The number of occupied sub-standard houses.

- The number of properties failing the Repairing Standard.
- The number of houses below the Tolerable Standard.
- The number of empty homes.
- Continue to seek funding to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in the private sector.
- Monitor and review the Empty Homes Strategy.
- Explore the feasibility of a local house condition survey for 2020 to 2021 and explore alternative methods of obtaining similar information.
- Continue to ensure that private landlords and tenants are kept up to date with developments which affect them and review the information provided to landlords and tenants including on rights and responsibilities to consider any improvements.
- To explore what barriers currently exist which hinders access to homes in the private sector.
- To monitor and consider any impact of the new tenancy in the private sector on the number of lettings in the private sector.
- To outline the approach that would be taken, in future, to identifying any housing renewal areas.

## **Priority 6. Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increasing Energy Efficiency**

**Aim: To increase the energy efficiency of Orkney's housing stock, eliminate fuel poverty and achieve a positive impact on the environment.**

### **Why this is a priority**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on the Scottish Government to eradicate fuel poverty, as far as is reasonably practicable, by 2016 and requires councils to develop local housing strategies which ensure, "so far as reasonably practicable", that persons do not live in fuel poverty".

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 defines a household as being fuel poor where their home cannot be kept warm at reasonable cost. The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement goes further to define a household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, they are required to spend more than 10% of their income on all household fuel use. The year 2016 was set as the target date, by the Scottish Government, to eradicate fuel poverty, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The aim of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is to reduce carbon emissions, with targets set at 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The Act requires Scottish Ministers to set annual emissions and places a duty on public bodies to reduce carbon emissions.

The 2016 target has not been met and the Scottish Government is proposing to set a revised target towards the eradication of fuel poverty.

The Fuel Poverty (Target, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act 2019 introduces a new long-term target that by the year 2040 no more than 5% of households are in fuel poverty. The Bill introduces a new fuel poverty definition.

The proposed definition is that the fuel costs necessary for the home are more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income, and that after deducting such fuel costs and the household's childcare costs (if any), the household's remaining adjusted net income is insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living.

This is adjusted for remote rural, remote small town and island areas, including Orkney, to reflect the higher cost of living in these areas, with the uplift for island areas to be determined separately.

The Council's Fuel Poverty Strategy (2017 to 2022) sets down our aim to significantly reduce fuel poverty in Orkney to the national average by 2022 and eradicate it entirely by 2032, while at the same time maximising the use of Orkney's renewables potential to benefit the community in Orkney.

The strategy identifies five key areas contributing to Orkney's high level of fuel poverty:

- Orkney's older housing stock and its condition.
- Lower than average income.
- The high cost of heating.
- Orkney's climate.
- Lifestyle choices of households.

## **SHQS**

The Scottish Government introduced the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in 2004 and set a target of 2015 when all the social rented housing stock should have met the standard. To meet the standard, properties should be free from serious disrepair, be healthy, safe and secure, and be energy efficient. There may however be valid reasons for a property not to meet the standard, that is if it is:

- **Exempt** - where the property is capable of meeting the standard, but the landlord believes it is not possible for technical or legal reasons or where the costs of doing so would be disproportionate.
- **Abeyance** - where for social reasons the work cannot be carried out due to, for example, tenants' or owner-occupiers' behaviour (for example, if owners fail to pay their share of costs).

## **Energy efficiency in social housing**

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) was introduced in 2012. The standard sets out the minimum energy efficiency ratings that social landlords are expected to meet across their existing housing stock by December 2020.

The aim is to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland to help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases.

The standard should contribute also to reducing carbon emissions by 42% by 2020, and 80% by 2050, in line with the requirements set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.



The Scottish Government has designated energy efficiency as a National Infrastructure Priority. Their Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map 2018 details the direction homes, businesses and public buildings need to take if they are to become more energy efficient. This is to be the main mechanism for delivering programmes to tackle fuel poverty - through Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme. Its aims are, where feasible, to make buildings near zero carbon by 2050 and to develop innovative approaches to improving warmth in homes and other buildings with the support of substantial levels of investment.

### What the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Key Data Tell Us

While there was some reduction in the level of estimated fuel poverty in Orkney which stood at 63% in 2012 to 2014 to 57% in 2015 to 2017, we still have the highest level in Scotland. The Scottish figure is 27%.

In relation to extreme fuel poverty Orkney has the highest level also along with Eilean Siar estimated at 23% of households; this is a decrease in Orkney from 30% in 2012 to 2014. (SHCS Local Authority Analysis 2015-2017; Scottish Government, 2019, <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SHCS/keyanalyses/LATables1517>). The Scottish estimate is 8%.

### Fuel poverty estimates for 2012 to 2014 and 2015 to 2017 for Orkney Isles and Scotland

	% of LA.	Pre-1945.	Post 1945.	Owner-occupied.	Social Housing.	Private Rented.	Older.	Families.	Other.
Orkney 2015 to 2017.	57%.	63%.	52%.	56%.	55%.	*.	79%.	31%.	53%.
Scotland 2015 to 2017.	27%.	32%.	25%.	26%.	31%.	28%.	42%.	13%.	25%.
Orkney 2012 to 2014.	63%.	71%.	59%.	65%.	64%.	57%.	87%.	38%.	61%.
Scotland 2012 to 2014.	35%.	42%.	32%.	34%.	39%.	32%.	52%.	21%.	33%.

Source - Scottish House Condition Survey 2015 to 2017.

The Scottish House Condition Survey also shows that 79% of older households are fuel poor. A total of 26% of families fall within this bracket as do 30% of other households. Again, older households are more likely to be living with extreme fuel poverty with an estimated 38% of older households being affected. This is the second highest level, being just below that of Shetland with 39% of households. The Scottish average is 12%.

## **Scottish Housing Quality Standard**

In Orkney's social housing in 2018 to 2019 all of Orkney Housing Association's stock meet the standard and 89.84% of the Council's stock met the standard.

The Council has undertaken significant work over the year, to reduce the level of properties which are found to be in abeyance or exempt. Fails have risen from 3 properties at year end in 2017 to 2018 to 55 recorded as failing the Scottish Housing Standard over the next year in 2018 to 2019. Most of these are marginal fails and the reason for failure on the majority of the properties concerned will be addressed throughout the year.

One of the challenges we have faced in an Orkney context is the small number of blocks of flats where some are owned by the Council and others are privately owned, owner-occupiers may not wish to pay a share for example for a secure door entry system or do not consider it necessary due partially to the low crime rate. We are currently undertaking solutions to seek to reduce the number of abeyances.

## **Energy efficiency standards**

Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing sets a minimum efficiency rating, depending on fuel type, that should be achieved by 31 December 2020.

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland to help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing sets out the minimum energy efficiency ratings that social landlords are expected to meet across existing housing stock by December 2020.

The standard will also contribute to reducing carbon emissions by 42% by 2020, and 80% by 2050, in line with the requirements set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Currently we are in a positive position for delivering the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing and are relatively well placed nationally in this respect.

At 31st March 2019, the Council had 955 self-contained properties, of which 84.7% or 809 properties met the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. A total of 38 properties (4%) are either exempt due to factors like disproportionate cost or are in abeyance because the tenant does not want, or feel able to cope with, any works to go ahead. Of those 108 properties (11.3 %) that failed, the majority are marginal fails.

This is an improvement from the previous year where 81.5% properties met the standard.

The Council is committed to continuing to improve the quality of our housing stock through our housing investment programme. Investment in repairs and maintenance totalled £1.2 million in 2017 to 2018 to ensure that our tenants' homes, as a minimum, continue to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, those that are currently in abeyance are gradually brought up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard as the issues allow.

The Council and Orkney Housing Association are both on target to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020 even though they both acknowledge that meeting the standard in full will be financially challenging given the limited size of the Housing Revenue Account and Orkney Housing Association Ltd's financial headroom. This will be exacerbated when considering the proposals for the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2.

The Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Area Based Scheme (HEEPS: ABS) is a national programme which is aimed at reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions in the private sector. In the first two years of the HEEPS: ABS programme over 250 households were signed up to the programme.

The Home Energy Efficiency Programme for Scotland: Warmer Homes Scotland (HEEPS: WHS) is another of the Scottish Government's scheme aimed at reducing fuel poverty. It is co-ordinated on a national level and the national contractor is required to undertake installations of measures throughout Scotland. HEEPS: WHS offers more measures than are available through HEEPS: ABS. It has different eligibility criteria, being aimed at households on specific key benefits.

### **What we will do**

- The Council will review our definition and targets for the reduction of fuel poverty in light of the changes to be introduced from the Scottish Government.
- Ensure that advice and information services are kept up to date with developments regarding fuel poverty and energy efficient measures and that all households receive the information and advice in these areas.
- The Council, working alongside the Scottish Government's HEEPS: WHS contractor, will maximise the take-up grants in Orkney and develop this and the HEEPS:ABS programme so they complement each other.
- The Council will continue to seek to assist over 200 households a year with funding for insulation measures through HEEPS: ABS.
- Ensure that actions to eliminate fuel poverty prioritise the most vulnerable households.
- The Council will work alongside our partners to ensure we assist in delivering any programmes etc to increase the energy efficiency of the housing stock stemming from the Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map.
- To increase the number of Council Houses that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by reducing the numbers on abeyance and ensuring that there are no failed properties.
- By endeavouring to ensure that all social rented properties meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020 and that plans are in place to aim to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 in due course.

### **Priority 7 Sustaining Orkney's Communities**

**Aim: to support the continued survival, future growth and sustainability of Orkney's Island communities by seeking to ensure there is a sufficient supply of appropriate housing of a good standard.**

Orkney is comprised of a range of distinct communities and this is particularly apparent in the isles, each community has their own sense of pride and belonging.

The main centre of employment in Orkney is in Kirkwall where many of those living on the mainland and linked south isles, as well as some of the closer isles, commute to on a daily basis. In the isles, the majority of people will live and work within close proximity.

While each have their own strengths and challenges, for many the key challenge is effective sustainability.

The importance of sustainability was identified as a priority by the partners consulted over the development of the Local Housing Strategy and this was mirrored in the development of Orkney's Community Plan.

Orkney's Community Plan and Local Development Plan have the same aspiration regarding Orkney, which is:

**“to strengthen and support Orkney’s communities by enabling those developments which will have a positive and sustainable socio-economic impact, and utilise locally-available resources, whilst striving to preserve and enhance the rich natural and cultural heritage assets upon which Orkney’s economy and society depends.”**

Orkney Partnership's strategic priorities for action are:

- Strong Communities.
- Living Well.
- Vibrant Economy.

This emphasis on sustaining communities fits with the Scottish Government's Housing and Regeneration Outcomes and in particular 'sustaining communities', which are economically physically and socially sustainable.

One of the Local Development Plan aims is to make sure there are options and opportunities for different types of new housing to be developed across tenures throughout Orkney to support communities and enable to them to grow in a sustainable manner. The Plan emphasises the need for enough strategic land to be allocated to allow for growth within settlements so there is housing provision to support any potential demand from emerging industries such as renewables.

Orkney's Community Plan, which incorporates Orkney's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, highlights the importance of housing and fuel poverty as two of the major challenges facing the isles. Amongst the outcomes that the Islands Deal is aiming to achieve - over the 10 years to 2028 includes:

- Sufficient affordable and smart housing provision throughout the islands to accommodate our target population increases and meet 21st century requirements for home working, smaller households and ageing populations.
- Greatly reduced fuel poverty through measures addressing the cost and availability of fuel, low incomes and energy efficient housing.

- Innovative practices and facilities to support the increasing number of elderly people in our communities with their care and medical needs.
- A significant rebalancing in the age structure of our island populations, by focusing on job creation for the younger working age population in the implementation of Deal projects and programmes, with associated skills development for all.

The Local Outcomes Improvement Plan highlights a need to support ‘strong communities’ and also ‘supporting remote and rural housing development’.

## **The Islands Deal**

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 introduces measures to support and help meet the needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. It allows for further devolution of powers to island communities and enable ‘island proofing’ of existing and future policies and legislation. This is to ensure that island communities’ special circumstances are taken into account and people living and working in the islands are not disadvantaged.

The Islands Deal proposes a number of measures which are designed to increase the local autonomy of the islands and has the potential to achieve a higher degree of self-determination in future.

A number of themes were identified that the Council would like to see progressed through the Islands Deal such as - Digital Islands, Future Fit Housing, Healthy Ageing and Affordable Remote Health and Care Delivery, Islands Future Skills.

The non-linked isles have been chosen as the subject of the Partnership’s first Locality Plan that every community planning partnership has to produce. The Orkney Plan identifies the local areas which are relatively disadvantaged in terms of social and economic opportunities.

The Localities Plan details the priorities and outcomes the Council is aiming for to achieve a sustainable demographic balance in the populations of each of the non-linked Isles.

All the priorities identified through the consultative process are inter linked and necessary to achieve the Council's goal of having 'a sustainable demographic balance in the populations of each of the non-linked isles'. Those relating to housing in particular are having:

- Sufficient affordable and attractive housing to accommodate anyone wishing to live and work on the isles.
- Smart housing that meets 21st century requirements for home working, smaller households and ageing populations.
- Greatly reduced fuel poverty among households in the non-linked isles.

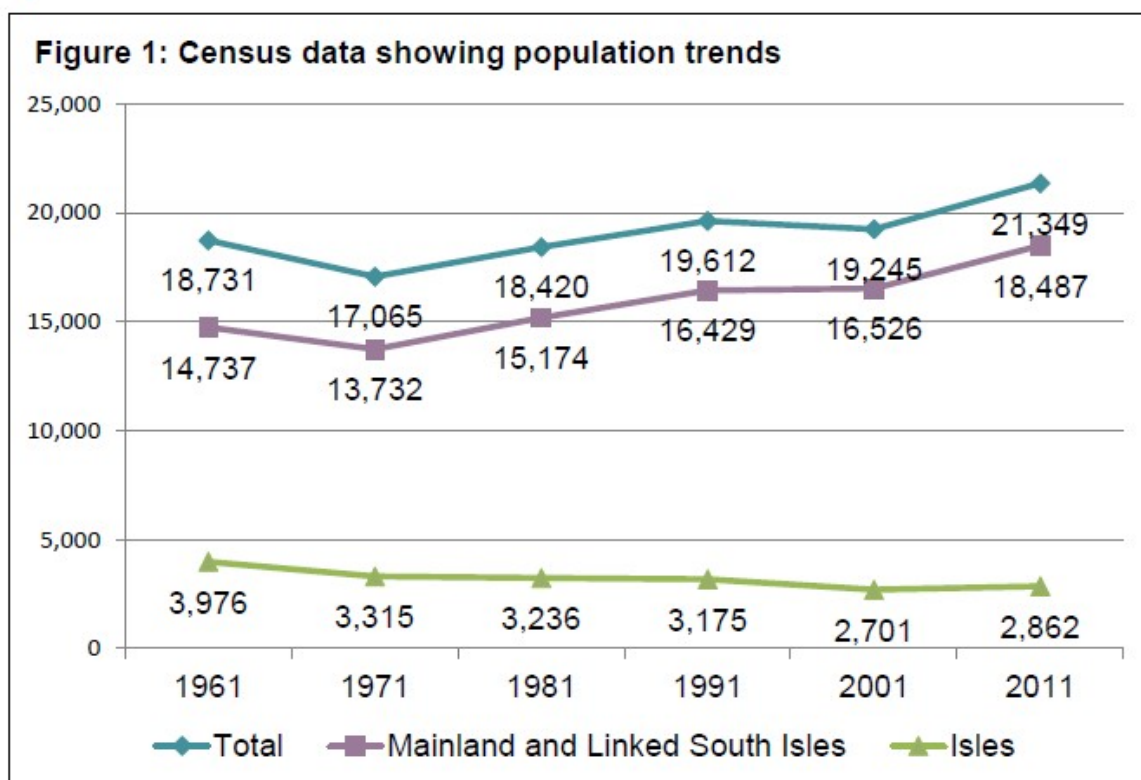
The challenges facing Orkney’s sustainability are not limited to the isles. Mainland Orkney also faces challenges such as the need to ensure that a young population is retained and also the challenge of ensuring that Orkney’s economy is supported by sufficient housing, to enable Orkney to sustain its future population.

Additionally, there are challenges in respect of Orkney’s need to ensure the provision of University education and consequently the ability to accommodate students to attract and retain those wishing to undertake a programme of study / research.

## What Does the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Key Data Tell Us

### Population

A continuing challenge regarding the isles is their decreasing population. While there was a low point in 1971 regarding the population, in the mainland and linked south isles the trend has been upwards on the other hand the non-linked isles have experienced a downwards trend albeit with a slight recovery in 2011.



The table below shows that populations in four of the five Housing Market Areas over the twenty year period have increased - although at different rates and the fifth, the isles has declined by 7.1%.

**Table – Population change in Orkney by area 2001 - 2018**

Year.	Orkney.	Kirkwall.	Stromness.	West Mainland.	East Mainland.	Isles.
2018.	22,190.	7,988.	2,122.	5,391.	3,945.	2,745.
2015.	21,670.	7,775.	2,122.	5,250.	3,828.	2,698.
2011.	21,420.	7,733.	2,055.	5,158.	3,611.	2,863.
2005.	20,070.	7,540.	1,944.	4,612.	3,150.	2,824.
2001.	19,220.	7,227.	1,896.	4,361.	3,013.	2,723.

Source - Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (mid-year estimates).

The table below shows that the average yearly decline in the Isles population over the last 50 years has been around 22 people this is approximately 10 households a year.

**Table– Population change in the Isles – 1961 to 2011**

	1961.	1971.	1981.	1991.	2001.	2011.
Population.	3,976.	3,315.	3,236.	3,175.	2,723.	2,863.
yearly population change.	.	-66.1.	-7.9.	-6.1.	-47.4.	16.1.
% of Orkney households living in the isles.	27.0.	24.1.	21.3.	19.3.	16.3.	15.5.
% drop from previous census.	N/A.	-16.	-2.4.	-1.9.	-15.	6.
% overall drop from 1961.	N/A.	-16.6.	-18.6.	-20.1.	-32.1.	-28.

Source: National Records of Scotland.

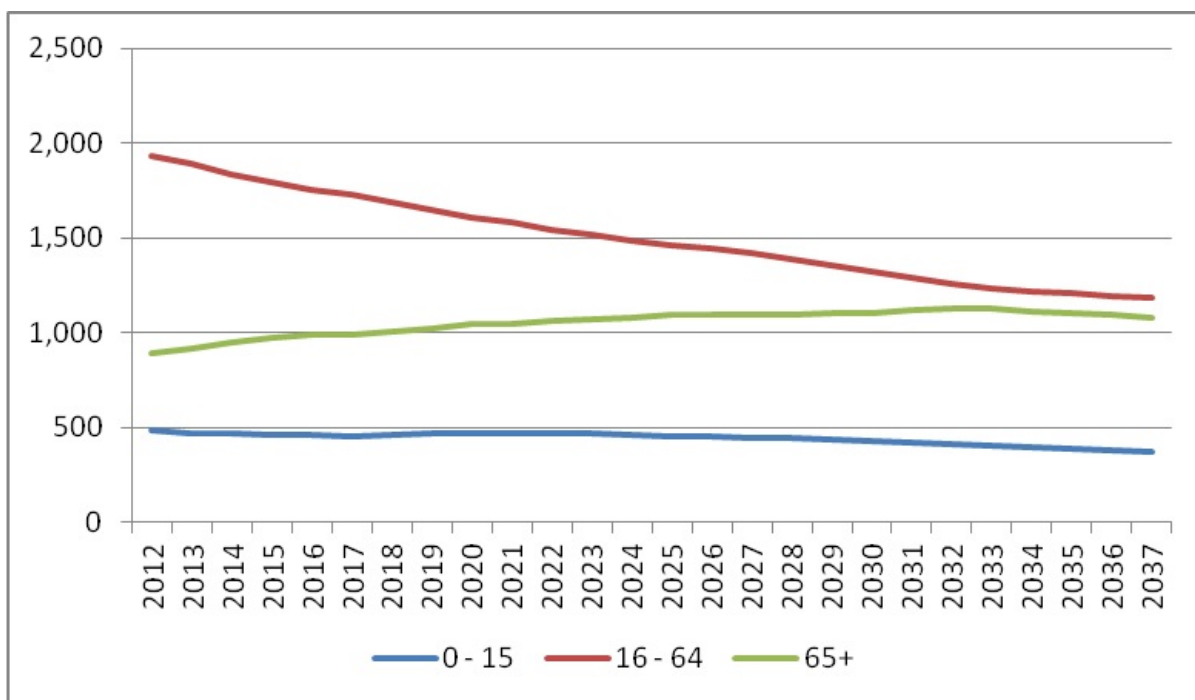
The table below shows Kirkwall’s population has declined in all age brackets below the age of 65 and this is similar in Stromness. The isles show a drop in population across all age groups up to the age 79. The 80 plus age group shows a projected increase of 167%. The East and West Mainland are the only areas to see increases in the 0 – 15 and 16 – 64 age groups and they also see the highest increases in the over 80 age group at 255% and 200% respectively.

**Table The percentage change in population between 2012 and 2037 by area**

	Kirkwall	Stromness	West Mainland	East Mainland	Isles.	Orkney.	Scotland
0 to 15.	-27%.	-11%.	6%.	30%.	-24%.	-3.05%.	5.5%.
16 to 29.	-39%.	-22%.	6%.	15%.	-59%.	-18.72%.	-3.81%.
30 to 44.	-5%.	0%.	12%.	11%.	-28%.	0.27%.	0.04%.
45 to 64.	-7%.	-33%.	-7%.	8%.	-37%.	-11.53%.	-6.47%.
65 to 79.	23%.	23%.	58%.	61%.	-15%.	30.81%.	43.13%.
80+.	74%.	121%.	200%.	255%.	167%	150.74%	105.39%

The table below details the population projections for the isles. Compared to the other four Housing Market Areas the isles projections show the highest drop in the 16 to 64 age group as well as a drop in the 0 to 15 age group. The over 65 age group increases, but at a lower rate than the other four areas.





The size of the projected decline in the working age population in the isles is much larger than elsewhere which if realised may have implications for the provision of services and possible viability of some Isles communities.

### Housing Stock

Both the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd have social housing properties on a number of the isles though there has been a reduction in numbers since 2005, including through the right to buy and private sale, and this is in contrast with the other Housing Market Areas. Recently there has been little demand coming through the Common Housing Register for social housing on the isles, however this can change.

In December 2018 there were four applicants who had one of the isles as their first preference namely two applicants for Westray (in 2012 there were 20 applicants), one for Sanday and one for Stronsay.

The overall isles' housing stock, across all tenures, is significantly older than in other parts of Orkney. Almost 50% of the housing stock in the isles is pre-1919 compared to 30% or less for Kirkwall, the West Mainland and the East Mainland. There are properties that are old and derelict in the isles some of which could be renovated and brought back into use.

Orkney has one of the highest percentages of empty homes out of all the local authority areas in Scotland. The estimate in 2017 of vacant and second homes was 10%, the Scottish average stood at 4%. (Housing Statistics for Scotland - Key Information and Summary Tables).

At the last census in 2011 the isles had the highest percentage of empty homes (and holiday/second home) compared to the rest of Orkney with second/holiday homes standing at 5.6% and vacant properties at 6%.

The Council's Empty Homes Service is working with Island Development Trusts and individual households to help such properties be brought back into use. In addition, it also works to match households who wish to renovate a property with empty properties that may be available for purchase

### **Affordable Housing**

One of the Local Development Plan objectives is to make sure there are options and opportunities for different types of new housing to be developed across all tenures throughout Orkney to support communities and enable them to grow in a sustainable manner. The Plan emphasises the need for enough strategic land to be allocated to allow for growth within settlements so there is housing provision to support any potential demand from emerging industries such as renewables.

Local development trusts in a number of the isles have taken action to improve their sustainability by investing in community wind turbines. This is generating income to invest in local enterprises, services and projects which benefit the community

The Housing Service along with Highlands and Islands Enterprise are working closely with Island Development Trusts in seven islands to access both the Scottish Land Fund and the Islands Housing Fund to assist with land / property acquisition, new build housing and the renovation of existing stock. One of the possible constraints on progress is the lack of local capacity in some of the islands to develop the necessary bids.

### **Key Worker Housing**

Orkney's economy is buoyant and for many organisations, the recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled and qualified staff is becoming increasingly challenging. The Council's Workforce Plan evidences a need for a review of processes for attracting and retaining key workers and accommodation is part of that.

Some services, including Orkney Health and Care on occasion require non-permanent housing for agency staff that are brought in from outside Orkney to supplement local provision due to shortages in available staffing. Housing these individuals can be a challenge as the requirement can come up very quickly but housing stock is often not available to meet the need. Some flexible housing stock in Kirkwall would be of real benefit and would help with housing this group.

In addition, during 2019 the Council has been made aware of the forthcoming accommodation needs of various contractors. This includes SSEN who require temporary accommodation for a large number of workers at the height of the Orkney electricity grid upgrade project.

While this may suggest a need for some temporary accommodation it is vital that the Council works with relevant partner agencies to endeavour to ensure both that accommodation needs are planned for and that some long-term investment is considered in respect of a partnership approach to infrastructure development and investment.

## **Student housing**

Orkney College is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands and Heriot Watt University's International Centre for Island Technology (ICIT) is located in Orkney. Both institutions are pursuing expansion and the Council led Student Housing Working Group reviews any potential requirement for student housing.

There is no on-site student accommodation and the private rented sector is the main tenure used by students who need accommodation

Following the work of the Working Group, Orkney Islands Council purchased five new build properties to provide ten bed-spaces of dedicated student housing in Kirkwall and this provision provides additional capacity. Three of these properties are now used for students. While Orkney Islands Council owns the properties, Orkney Islands Property Development Ltd manages them.

There is potential demand for student housing from isles based students leaving school between 16 and 18 who come to study on mainland Orkney and cannot be housed in the Council's Halls of Residence for island pupils, as they are no longer school pupils.

The existing levels of provision for degree and post graduate student housing may require some enhancement, however, additional accommodation of a more flexible in nature would help support Orkney College and ICIT in developing existing and additional courses and this may include the need for some student accommodation in Stromness. The Student Housing Working group will continue to assess potential demand

### **What we will do**

- Continue to support the Islands Development Trusts in seeking funding for new initiatives including housing developments on the isles.
- To explore with local communities throughout Orkney what types of housing and related services they may wish to see developed in the future in their areas, which could assist in sustaining their communities.
- Monitor the number of empty properties being brought back into use for housing in different areas of Orkney and identify any barriers and possible means of overcoming them.
- Monitor the demand for social housing on the Isles for any change and consider how best to respond.
- Work in partnership with various agencies to assess likely accommodation needs for key workers and consider options for progression.
- Work collaboratively with relevant Council Services to plan for the temporary accommodation needs caused by forthcoming contracts.
- Through the Student Housing Working group, continue to assess potential demand and type of student accommodation.

## Action Plan

<b>Priority 1: Ensuring an Adequate Supply of Houses.</b>						
<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Consider options, for the development of housing at an affordable level, within the Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account.						
Work collaboratively with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to ensure the delivery of affordable housing developments.						

<p>Support development across Orkney where it meets the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, Local Housing Strategy etc and helps meet the housing supply targets.</p>						
<p>Ensure that new developments meet the changing needs of the population and provide Homes for Life.</p>						
<p>Continue to review the levels of stock to need ratios to ensure the stock profile remains relatively reflective of need.</p>						
<p>Support developments in</p>						

<p>low cost home ownership and the use of the rural and islands housing fund for the provision of affordable housing.</p>						
<p>Assess how well the Empty Properties Strategy brings properties back into use.</p>						
<p>Consider the level of need for provision of mid-market rent properties.</p>						
<p>Support private developers to progress projects to deliver private sector housing including mid-market rent.</p>						
<p>Continue to work with households on the Common Housing Register to identify the most</p>						

appropriate housing option.						
Undertake a lettings review to ensure choice is at the centre of the Council's lettings policy.						

Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association in seeking to find the best solution(s) for housing development despite economic constraints.						
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<b>Priority 2: Preventing and alleviating homelessness</b>						
<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Review and develop further our housing options approach to increase the number of households diverted from homelessness.						
Work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to broaden the scope of housing options activity.						

<p>Investigate the possibility of developing the existing housing options guide into an interactive housing options portal.</p>						
<p>Work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to increase the number of social housing lets made to homeless households.</p>						
<p>Keep the use of temporary accommodation to a minimum.</p>						

Explore with relevant partners the potential for developing a Housing First model in Orkney.						
Continue to work with Orkney Housing Association Ltd to ensure the best resettlement option is available for homeless households.						

Continue to work jointly with Orkney Health and Care to provide the appropriate housing and other support services.						
Monitor how well our homelessness prevention policy is being implemented.						
Monitor and review our Nominations Agreement and Move on Protocol with Women's Aid Orkney.						

<p>Assess the impact of any potential changes to local authority duties if the Scottish Government implements the Local Connection and Intentional homelessness provisions of the in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.</p>						
<p>Implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan in line with available resources.</p>						

**Priority 3 Older People:**

<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Consider different models of providing housing and related services for older people which enhance independence and provide greater choice.						
Explore possible innovative housing solutions for people with dementia.						
Look at different ways to reduce the numbers of older people who are living in poor housing conditions.						

<p>Ensure that the Council's Housing Options Service is kept up to date with best practice and the latest developments for example in available grants, loans and technological advances to provide the information and advice to assist older people in knowing what choices are available.</p>						
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<p>Review joint working arrangements to assess if there are areas for improvement in joint working and the delivery of services particularly in remoter rural and the isles.</p>						
<p>To explore different means by which housing support services could be delivered on isles to support older people to live independently.</p>						



Assess the level of connectivity of residents and communities throughout Orkney and where necessary means to improve access to enable the best use of assistive technology where required.						
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**Outcome 4: Housing and Support for People with Particular Needs**

<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Continue to monitor the demand for specialist housing and if the developments identified are delivered.						
With stakeholders, assess the need for some form of supported accommodation for people with mental health problems.						

<p>Ensure that the housing and support needs of young people who have left care are met including the possibility of a housing first model.</p>						
<p>Ensure that information and advice about the help available under the Scheme of Assistance, particularly in the grants available for disabled adaptations is widely disseminated.</p>						

<p>Ensure that new developments are flexible in design to meet the criteria of Homes for Life.</p>						
<p>Review of the Housing Support Service to assess their ability to meet increased demand and the level of flexibility and adaptability required to meet changing needs.</p>						

<p>Explore with all stakeholders, different means by which housing support services could be delivered on isles to support the varying needs of their populations.</p>						
<p>Review allocation policies to ensure the needs of people with autism are taken into account including the possibility of a 'flagging system'.</p>						

To outline the approach that would be taken, in future, to identifying any housing renewal areas.						
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<b>Outcome 5: Improving Standards in the Private Sector</b>						
<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Keep the Scheme of Assistance under review and continue to promote the service provided by Orkney Housing Association Limited's Care and Repair Team.						
<p>Ensure that advice, support and enforcement is targeted to reduce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of occupied sub-standard houses.</li> <li>• The number of properties failing the</li> </ul>						

<p>Repairing Standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of houses below the Tolerable Standard.</li> <li>• The number of empty homes.</li> </ul>						
<p>Continue to seek funding to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions in the private sector.</p>						
<p>Monitor and review the Empty Homes Strategy.</p>						



<p>Explore the feasibility of a local house condition survey for 2020 to 2021 and explore alternative methods of obtaining similar information.</p>						
<p>Continue to ensure that private landlords and tenants are kept up to date with developments which affect them and review the information provided to landlords and tenants including on rights and responsibilities to consider any improvements.</p>						

To explore what barriers currently exist which hinders access to homes in the private sector.						
To monitor and consider any impact of the new tenancy in the private sector on the number of lettings in the private sector.						

<b>Outcome 6 : Reducing Fuel Poverty and Increase Energy Efficiency</b>						
<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
The Council will review our definition and targets for the reduction of fuel poverty in light of the changes to be introduced from the Scottish Government.						
Ensure that advice and information services are kept up to date with developments regarding fuel poverty and energy efficient measures and that all households receive the information and advice in these areas.						

<p>The Council, working alongside the Scottish Government's HEEPS: WHS contractor, will maximise the take-up grants in Orkney and develop this and the HEEPS:ABS programme so they complement each other.</p>						
<p>The Council will continue to seek to assist over 200 households a year with funding for insulation measures through HEEPS: ABS.</p>						
<p>Ensure that actions to eliminate fuel poverty prioritise the most vulnerable households.</p>						
<p>The Council will work alongside our</p>						

<p>partners to ensure we assist in delivering any programmes etc to increase the energy efficiency of the housing stock stemming from the Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map.</p>						
<p>To increase the number of Council Houses that meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by reducing the numbers on abeyance and ensuring that there are no failed properties.</p>						
<p>By endeavouring to ensure our properties meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social</p>						

Housing by 2020 and that plans are in place to aim to meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2 in due course.						
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<b>Outcome 7: Sustaining Orkney's Communities</b>						
<b>Action.</b>	<b>Baseline.</b>	<b>Indicator/Measure.</b>	<b>Target /Milestone.</b>	<b>Timescale.</b>	<b>Responsible Person.</b>	<b>Progress Update.</b>
Continue to support the Islands Development Trusts in seeking funding for new initiatives including housing developments on the isles.						
To explore with local communities throughout Orkney what types of housing and related services they may wish to see developed in the future in their areas, which could assist in sustaining their communities						

<p>Monitor the number of empty properties being brought back into use for housing in different areas of Orkney and identify any barriers and possible means of overcoming them.</p>						
<p>Monitor the demand for social housing on the isles for any change and consider how best to respond.</p>						
<p>Work in partnership with various agencies to assess likely accommodation needs for key workers and consider options for progression.</p>						
<p>Work collaboratively with relevant Council Services to plan for</p>						



the temporary accommodation needs caused by forthcoming contracts.						
Through the Student Housing Working group, continue to assess potential demand and type of student accommodation.						

## Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Term	Explanation
Affordability Ratio.	<p>In general, private properties for sale on the open market are deemed to be affordable if the price is no more than 3.5 times the average household income for that area.</p> <p>Rents are generally considered to be affordable if a household is not required to pay more than 25% of its income to meet the cost.</p>
Affordable housing.	Decent housing which costs less than the market value and which meets identified housing needs. It includes social rented housing and affordable private housing. The Council has an Affordable Housing Policy which provides further information on affordability
Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).	Grant funding allocated to Scottish Local Authorities by the Scottish Government to provide affordable housing. In turn Local Authorities provide funding to Housing Association partners.
Allocations.	The system for letting social rented housing.
BTS.	Below Tolerable Standard – housing that does not meet the tolerable standard (standard for housing quality relevant in all tenures).
Care and Repair.	A scheme for older people and people with disabilities living in private housing which assist them through the provision of information and advice with regard to repairs and improvements and adaptations to their homes.
CHR.	Common Housing Register administered jointly by a partnership between the Council and Orkney Housing Association Ltd.
Community Planning Partnerships.	Partnerships between local public agencies, statutory and voluntary, which

	work together with the community to plan and deliver better services.
COSLA.	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.
Development Plan.	Document which establishes the Council's policies and proposals on land use which helps to guide development through the planning process.
Disability.	A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Empty Homes.	Housing which is defined as long-term vacant or used as second or holiday home and is therefore unavailable to meet local housing need as a permanent residence.
EESSH.	Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing. A measure introduced by the Scottish Government, in respect of social rented properties, to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency.
Fuel Poverty.	Being unable to keep a home warm at a cost reasonable to the household – a household which spends more than 10% of its disposable income on heating is defined as being in fuel poverty.
Fragile community.	One which is socio-economically disadvantaged and / or suffered economically and in danger of decline with an erosion of services.
HA.	Housing Association.
HEEPS: ABS.	Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland; Area Based Schemes. Scottish Government initiative to tackle fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency of homes.
HEEPS: WHS.	Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland; Warmer Homes Scotland. Scottish Government initiative to improve energy efficiency by improving fabric measures.
HIE.	Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Their primary role is delivery of the Government's Economic Strategy

	through influencing private and public expenditure; targeted investment in key transformational projects and account managing enterprises which have capacity for growth.
HMA.	Housing Market Area.
HMP.	Housing Market Partnership. Group responsible for overseeing production and sign off of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and development and delivery of Local Housing Strategy.
HNDA.	Housing Need & Demand Assessment – study of the need and demand for housing in an area which follows Scottish Government guidance.
Housing Association.	A society, body of trustees, or company that doesn't trade for profit and whose purpose is to provide, construct, manage, housing. See also RSL (Registered Social Landlord).
Housing Contribution Statement.	The housing statement underpinning the Integration Joint Board's Strategic Commissioning Plan. The Housing Contribution Statement outlines housing's contribution to the Integration Joint Board and the social care agenda.
Homes for Life.	A range of standards specifically designed so that housing can be more flexible and capable of meeting the needs of a range of individuals with differing housing needs, including the elderly and disabled, though generally with some modification in cases with more extreme disability.
HRA.	Housing Revenue Account – a Council's ring-fenced budget, funded primarily from tenants' rents, to cover the day to day running costs of Council housing.
IJB.	Integration Joint Board. Board with strategic responsibility for the merger of health and social care that is the work of Orkney Health and Care.
Landbank.	Undeveloped land owned by a local authority, a development company, builder or private individual or organisation.

LCHO.	Low Cost Home Ownership.
LHCS.	Local House Condition Survey.
LHS.	Local Housing Strategy.
LOIP.	Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The community planning partnership's plan provides a vision and focus, based on agreed local priorities, to which partners will work systematically and collaboratively to meet the needs and aspirations of Orkney's communities.
Median Income.	Regarded by statisticians as a more accurate measure than an average figure. It divides the group being studied into two and people are said to be above or below the median level. It is therefore less affected than the average reading by very high or very low incomes.
Mid Market Rent.	Properties available to rent at a level between affordable social and full market private rent levels – usually targeted at those on modest incomes who cannot afford home ownership.
MOWG.	Member Officer Working Group. A group consisting of Orkney Islands Council's Members and Officers established to discuss particular issues and reach conclusions prior to the Council's formal committee proceedings.
OHAC.	Orkney Health and Care.
OMSE.	Open Market Shared Equity. A Scottish Government scheme for first time buyers and other priority groups. The purchaser pays between 60% and 90% of the value of the property and the Scottish Government retains a stake.
Orkney Strategic Plan.	The Integration Joint Board's Strategic Plan which links closely to the 9 national health and well-being outcomes.
Outcome.	The result / impact of actions. The positive improvements which are desired.

Owner-occupied housing.	Housing that is privately owned by an individual, either with or without a mortgage.
PRS.	Private Rented Sector.
Public sector.	Any facility controlled by a government department or statutory authority.
Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.	A document which each Local Authority must produce which outlines its response to eradicate rough sleeping, reduce time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation and to permanently rehouse homeless households faster.
RSL	Registered Social Landlord – a landlord registered with Scotland Government (for example a housing association).
Sasines.	The Register of Sasines records details of all property transactions in Scotland including the sale price and the origin of the purchaser.
Scheme of Assistance.	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced a new Scheme of Assistance, replacing the previous system of local authority private sector home improvement grants. The scheme encourages home owners to take more responsibility for the condition of their homes.
Scottish Housing Quality Standard.	A housing standard required to be met by all social landlords by 2015, and continued to be met thereafter.
Second Home.	A property used for holiday or recreational purposes which is empty for the majority of the time.
SHCS.	Scottish House Condition Survey - a national survey which provides data on condition of housing in all tenures.
Self build housing.	Housing someone has built for themselves or arranged for a builder to build.
SEPA.	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.
Shared Equity.	Schemes designed to help first time buyers by offering an opportunity to buy

	a percentage of a property (usually between 25% and 80%) while a RSL or private developer owns the remainder. Buyers can increase their percentage of ownership over time.
SHIP.	Strategic Housing Investment Plan – which builds upon the work of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and details the proposed development of affordable housing over a five year period.
Single Outcome Agreements (SOA).	Agreements between the Scottish Government and community planning partnerships / local authorities which set out how each will work to improve outcomes for the local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities, and national objectives.
SEA.	Strategic Environmental Assessment. An impact assessment required under the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005.
Social Rented Housing.	Housing rented out by councils or housing associations.
Tenure.	Housing tenure describes the legal status under which people have the right to occupy their accommodation, such as home ownership, rental etc.



## Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

<b>1. Identification of Function, Policy or Plan</b>	
Name of function / policy / plan to be assessed.	Local Housing Strategy
Service / service area responsible.	Housing Services
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details.	Frances Troup, Head of Housing, Homelessness and Schoolcare Accommodation Services Ext 2177 E-mail <a href="mailto:frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk">frances.troup@orkney.gov.uk</a>
Date of assessment.	21 October 2020
Is the function / policy / plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly).	New for 2019
<b>2. Initial Screening</b>	
What are the intended outcomes of the function / policy / plan?	<p>The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the housing vision of the Council and its strategic partners for the future of housing across all tenures and types of accommodation, taking account of national priorities as well as local needs.</p> <p>It is based on a detailed Housing Needs and Demand Assessment and statistical analysis of figures on population and economy.</p> <p>The main purposes of the Strategy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To show clearly the link between national and local housing priorities;</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To evidence the level and type of housing need and demand;</li> <li>• To provide a clear strategic direction for housing investment for new and existing housing;</li> <li>• To consider how housing circumstances could be improved across all tenures.</li> </ul>
<p>Is the function / policy / plan strategically important?</p>	<p>Yes. The Local Housing Strategy is the key strategic document covering housing across a range of tenures and is a statutory requirement.</p>
<p>State who is, or may be affected by this function / policy / plan, and how.</p>	<p>The Local Housing Strategy has implications potentially for the whole population as it crosses all housing tenures. Specific aspects of the strategy will also have a particular impact on specific equalities groups within the population.</p>
<p>How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function / policy / plan?</p>	<p>An initial consultation event was undertaken to include all partner agencies across the statutory and voluntary sectors which allowed an opportunity for them to contribute their views. This event was facilitated by someone external to the Council and therefore neutral.</p> <p>Two meetings of the Member Officer Working Group which oversees the development of the Local Housing Strategy, have taken place.</p> <p>The strategic group which oversees the development of the Local Housing Strategy is called Housing Joint Strategy Delivery Group and this has met very regularly over the last months. This group consists of a range of Council Services including professionals from within Housing Services, Development and Infrastructure including Planning, Environmental Health and Roads, Finance Services, Orkney Housing Association Ltd and the Scottish Government.</p> <p>A consultative draft of the Local Housing Strategy was approved by committee in November 2019.</p> <p>In undertaking the public consultation, the Housing Service formed a detailed consultation plan which originally included a range of different consultation methods.</p> <p>The COVID pandemic from March 2020 onwards caused significant changes to be made to the intended consultation methods.</p> <p>This resulted in a consultation process being</p>

	<p>devised by entirely electronic means.</p> <p>This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email contact being made with a range of agencies crossing the statutory and third sectors;</li> <li>• Two evening meetings being set up through Microsoft Teams to enable members of the public and those representing organisations to attend;</li> <li>• An electronic survey being set up for responses.</li> <li>• An offer for direct contact with anyone who wished to discuss issues separately.</li> </ul> <p>Information relating to the consultation was available through the Council's website and the survey was also available for completion online.</p> <p>A press release was issued which outlined the general process and the dates of the consultation.</p> <p>The consultation ran for a four week period until 11 October 2020.</p>
<p>Is there any existing data and / or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise. E.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic / consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal).</p>	<p>There is significant data and research relating to this area.</p> <p>Nationally there is significant research into housing need, homelessness, fuel poverty, socio-economic disadvantage, health and social care etc. The Scottish Government has produced a range of documents crossing all elements of housing.</p> <p>The Housing need and Demand assessment was undertaken in 2016/17. This followed statutory legislation and guidance and drew on a wide range of secondary data as well as primary research. Some statistical information has been updated using recognised population forecasting techniques.</p> <p>The Council undertook a local house condition survey during 2016 which provided a broad range of research into the quality of housing within the Orkney area.</p>

<p>Is there any existing evidence relating to socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>E.g. For people living in poverty or for people of low income. See <a href="#">The Fairer Scotland Duty Interim Guidance for Public Bodies</a> for further information.</p>	<p>There is significant research indicating that homeless households suffer socio-economic disadvantage and this is intensified if they are rough sleepers. The provision of housing or lack of it is recognised as being intrinsically linked to a range of indicators related to health, wealth and educational achievement.</p> <p>The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has produced a range of research focussing on poverty and disadvantage and the links between this and housing and homelessness. Research such as this relates directly to the introduction of the Fairer Scotland Duty.</p>
<p>Could the function / policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts / benefits, negative impacts and reasons).</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality.</p>	<p>Some ethnic groups may require access to information, advice and support in particular languages or formats. The Local Housing Strategy will promote and provide for this via the Housing Options service and the Council has an Accessibility Strategy.</p> <p>The requirement for Gypsy/Traveller sites, pitches and support services is assessed and monitored via the Housing Need and Demand Assessment and Local Housing Strategy – and any identified needs will be addressed.</p> <p>The Local Housing Strategy must adhere to legislation regarding unlawful discrimination therefore no negative impact is identified.</p> <p>Any specific ethnic groups requiring particular accommodation are treated equitably with any other mainstream household.</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman.</p>	<p>The Local Housing Strategy promotes equality of opportunity and will ensure that the housing and housing related service needs of all are addressed, including those fleeing domestic abuse (who tend to predominantly female) and homeless households where single males are more significantly represented than single females or families.</p>

3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	No specific impact identified.
4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another.	No specific impact identified.
5. Pregnancy and maternity.	No specific impact identified. Housing policies reflect the needs of this group appropriately.
6. Age: people of different ages.	There are various housing issues that affect the ageing population particularly in relation to mobility. Fuel poverty also tends to be most extreme amongst older people. Homelessness can affect disproportionate numbers of young people and there is a need for an island authority to ensure it has policies to assist in the active retention of younger people. Through research and analysis of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, the needs of various age groups have been identified and the Local Housing Strategy contains specific actions and targets to address these through the provision of specialist accommodation and care and support services.
7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists).	No specific impacts identified.
8. Caring responsibilities.	No specific impacts identified, other than those addressed under "age" above or disability below.
9. Care experienced.	No specific impacts identified. Young care experienced people may be disproportionately likely to suffer from homelessness but the Council has a protocol on Young People Leaving Care which should address this appropriately.
10. Marriage and Civil Partnerships.	No specific impacts identified.
11. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not).	The Local Housing Strategy is specifically developed to promote equality of opportunity for people who with disabilities whether physical or learning. Accommodation, care and support needs have been assessed in detail via the Housing Need and Demand Assessment process and a key priority of the strategy relates to supporting independent living at home or in a homely setting through appropriate specialist provision. This will include appropriate housing, a range of aids and adaptations and telecare services among other measures. Where gaps in the evidence base were identified, research was carried out.

	<p>The Local Housing Strategy makes positive commitments to align with, and deliver enhanced contribution to, the evolving Health and Social Care integration agenda, which will in turn provide a positive benefit for disabled persons and those with particular health issues.</p>
<p>12. Socio-economic disadvantage.</p>	<p>Socio-economic disadvantage is likely to be more prevalent amongst homeless households than other groups within society and households experiencing fuel poverty would be likely to suffer from socio-economic disadvantage more generally. The Local Housing Strategy's specific priorities are intended to assist in addressing this and other forms of socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
<p>13. Isles-proofing.</p>	<p>The Local Housing Strategy is intended to be developed at a local level allowing the ability to ensure island proofing within that. In addition local housing priorities have been identified and these include the needs of island communities, particularly in respect of sustaining fragile communities. The priority regarding affordable housing includes a focus on funding streams which allow investment in more fragile communities where the need for social housing provision cannot be identified.</p>

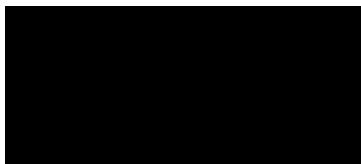
### 3. Impact Assessment

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes, there is a potential greater impact identified as a result of race, sex, age, care experience, disability, socio-economic disadvantage and islands proofing. These have been addressed throughout the EQiA.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	The Local Housing Strategy is specifically intended to focus on housing need crossing a range of tenures and the priorities within the Local Housing Strategy effectively address the potential differential impacts highlighted above. These priorities include those on affordable housing, housing for particular needs, housing for older people, fuel poverty and homelessness.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

### 4. Conclusions and Planned Action

Is further work required?	<b>No.</b>
What action is to be taken?	N/A
Who will undertake it?	N/A
When will it be done?	N/A
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans).	N/A

Signature:



Date: 21 October 2020

Name: Frances Troup

(BLOCK CAPITALS).

Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to HR and Performance. A Word version should also be emailed to HR and Performance at [hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk](mailto:hrsupport@orkney.gov.uk)