



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL



Aberdeen Local Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017

Executive Summary

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1. Aberdeen City Council Local Housing Strategy 2012- 2017

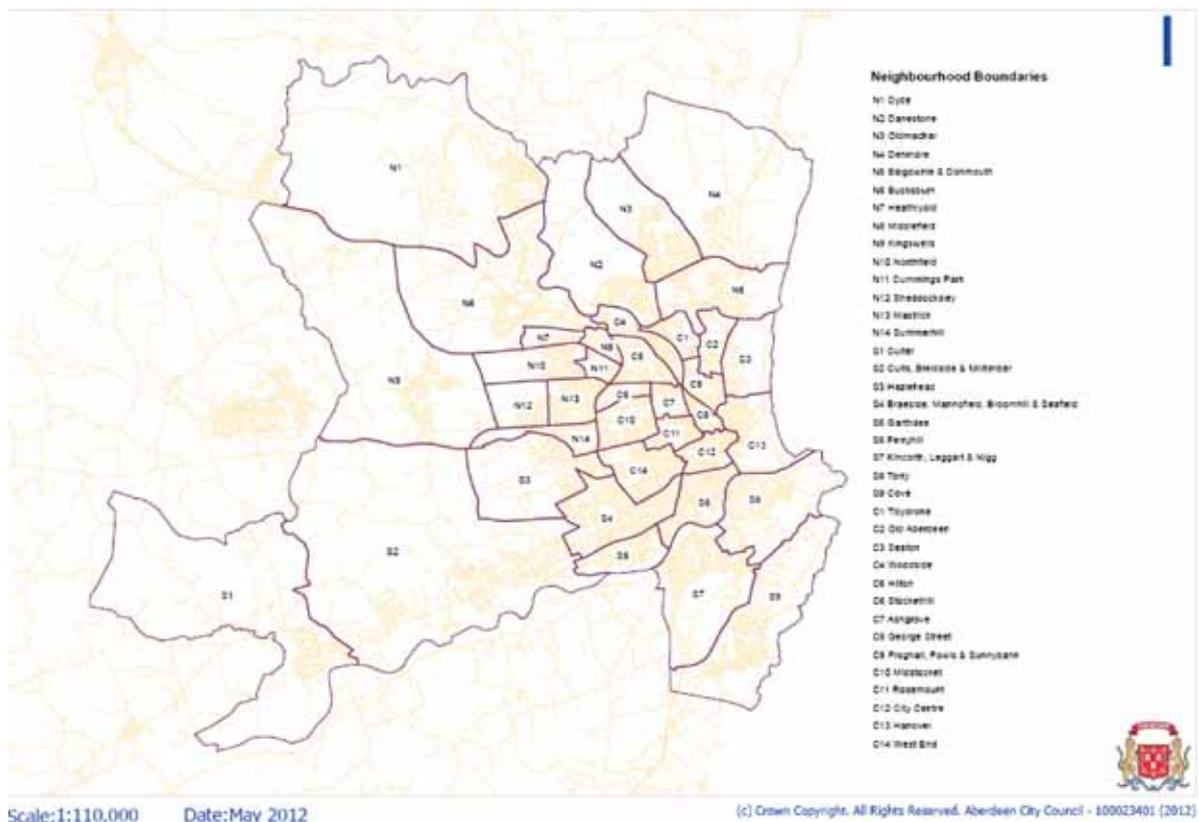
This Executive Summary provides information on the eight broad themes which form the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) outputs. These outputs were produced following research and consultation which was undertaken to produce the LHS 2012-2017. The full LHS is available on the Council’s website at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing/council_housing/hoa_Local_Housing_Strategy.asp

2. Why Aberdeen City Council is preparing a LHS

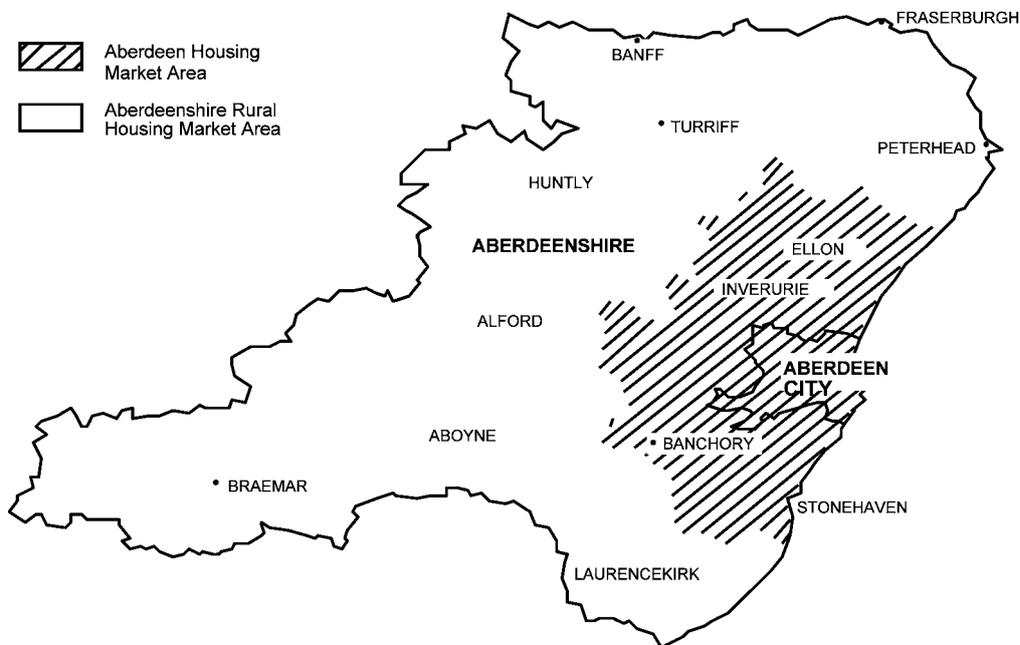
Aberdeen City Council (ACC) as a Strategic Housing Authority has a statutory duty under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to prepare a LHS to cover a five year period. ACC produced its current LHS in 2006 covering the period to 2011, therefore a new LHS is required to cover the period 2012- 2017. This LHS has been produced in line with the LHS Guidance issued by the Scottish Government in June 2008 and the Supplementary Guidance “Addressing Climate Change” issued in March 2011.

The LHS sets the strategic direction for housing in the city over the next five years. The LHS takes into regard Aberdeen City and the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA) providing scope for joint working on some issues with Aberdeenshire Council.

Map 1: Aberdeen City and Neighbourhood Boundaries



Map 2: Aberdeen Housing Market Area



Aberdeen City Council 2006

3. The Context of the LHS

This LHS has taken account the Council's Five Year Business Plan 2011 which was adopted in August 2011. Its key objectives are to:

- Provide for the needs of the most vulnerable people.
- Encourage the building of new affordable housing.
- Ensure a sustainable economic future for the city.
- Ensure efficient and effective delivery of services by the council and its partners.
- Help to ensure that all school children reach their potential.
- Manage our waste better and increase recycling.

Of the six key priorities above the LHS will contribute directly to the first four and indirectly to the last two objectives.

The Housing and Environment 5 Year Business Plan 2011 (H&E) takes the objectives of the ACC Business Plan down to service level with the main objectives being to:

- Develop housing services to be flexible to support the needs and aspirations of tenants.
- Work to protect the public from poor quality private sector housing and to maintain the built environment and granite heritage.
- Reduce homelessness by improving provision and prevention activities.
- Retain a large stock of quality, well maintained affordable housing matching the highest of standards.
- Encourage the building of new houses to increase provision of affordable houses for the Council.
- Create a Property Services Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) to deliver strategic housing priorities and to raise additional income.
- Contribute to the regeneration of the city.

Both plans are taken into account in the ACC and Scottish Government's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) housing outcomes. The SOA reports on the following housing outcomes:

- The number of new affordable houses per annum.
- Percentage of social rented housing meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).
- Number of new houses built annually.
- Percentage of unintentionally homeless people assessed as in priority need.
- Percentage of unauthorised Gypsies/Travellers encampments meeting the Good Neighbour Code.
- The number of days children are placed in bed and breakfast accommodation (homeless families and pregnant women).
- Number of ACC housing stock connected to carbon neutral energy supply.
- Number of listed houses at risk.

These three plans are inter-linked and give the strategic housing priorities at a national and local level. These priorities provided the basis for the development of the LHS and are incorporated throughout the LHS and the Outcomes.

Consideration has been given to changes to current housing and other legislation, especially changes in housing and other state benefits.

4. Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2011 (HNDA)

The HNDA was carried out in partnership by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority and the Strategic Housing Partnership in 2010 and fully reviewed in 2011. Both were assessed as robust and credible by the Centre for Housing Market Analysis. Two main findings from the HNDA were:

- A housing requirement of 31,500 by 2035 in Aberdeen City to meet population and demographic changes.
- A need for about 415 new affordable houses per annum over the next ten years

The outcomes from the Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report (SDP) and the Local Development Plan (LDP) have been incorporated into the LHS. Both these plans make use of the outcomes from the HNDA. The SDP sets an annual housing supply target of 1,250 for Aberdeen City, which has been adopted for this LHS as is the affordable housing supply target of 415 units per annum. As part of the LDP the affordable housing policy (supplementary guidance) states that there should be a 25% contribution from developers for affordable housing from sites with more than five units. Priorities for new affordable housing are 1 or 2 bedroom properties to be provided in any area of the City to meet housing needs. Due consideration of information in the HNDA on the particular housing needs of older people and those with learning or physical disabilities as well as the accommodation needs of Gypsies/ Travellers has been taken heed of in the LHS.

5. Housing Conditions

All social rented housing must meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) set by the Scottish Government by 2015. About 65% of the ACC housing stock and about 85% of the RSL stock meets the SHQS. For the stock which does not meet the SHQS both the Council and RSLs will endeavour to bring these properties up to the highest possible standards by 2015. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) was used in relation to housing conditions in the private sector. The SHCS estimates housing disrepair and serious disrepair in the City. The LHS also takes into consideration below tolerable standard housing and the possible use of Housing Renewal Areas in the future. Housing disrepair in the private sector will be addressed through the Council's powers under the Scheme of Assistance by the provision of information and advice and enforcement when necessary.

The main documents used in the developing this LHS were:

- The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2010 (and review of 2011)
- Scottish House Condition Survey 2009/10
- Local House Condition Survey 2005
- Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report (SDP)
- Local Development Plan 2012 (LDP)
- Housing Land Audit (2011)
- Statistical information from the Scottish Government, Aberdeen City Council and other partners.
- Other strategic documents mentioned above

6. Consultation on the LHS

In 2011 the following were consulted to identify the main issues for inclusion in the LHS:

- Elected Members of Aberdeen City Council
- Community Planning Aberdeen
- The Aberdeen Civic Forum (Community Councils)
- The Disability Advisory Group
- Tenants and Residents Forum/ Task Group
- Ethnic Minority Forum
- Older People's Advisory Group
- Older People's Consultation and Advisory Group
- RSL Forum
- The Terence Higgins Trust

- Swans of Scotland Aberdeen
- Aberdeen Women's Alliance
- North East Transgender Support Group
- The Land Use Forum
- Aberdeen Youth Council
- Gypsies/Travellers (survey)
- Homes for Scotland (Grampian House Builders)
- Officers of both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils.

A synopsis of the comments and observations made at the various consultation meetings is provided in appendix 1 of this Executive Summary. Most of these comments etc have been incorporated into the LHS Outcomes. Further consultation was undertaken on the Draft LHS in January/February 2012.

Other housing strategies such as homelessness, community care housing, housing support, housing regeneration, energy efficiency and fuel poverty have now been incorporated into the LHS and its outcomes.

7. LHS Outcomes

From the above analysis of information and consultation there emerged the following eight broad themes and issues:

- Ensure housing contributes to the economic development of the city.
- Increase housing supply to meet housing need and demand.
- Improve housing conditions in both the public and private sector.
- Ensure continued supply and access to affordable housing.
- Continue to provide information and advice to improve housing conditions in the private housing sector.
- Develop a framework for a Regeneration Strategy for the city.
- Ensure there is a supply of particular needs housing of the right type to meet future requirements.
- Improve energy efficiency in both the public and private housing sectors and alleviate fuel poverty.

From these broad themes the following Outcomes were developed, (the first two themes have been merged).

Outcome 1.1: Improve the supply of new and affordable housing to meet housing need and demand.

- Meet the new housing requirement of 31,500 by 2035 or 1,250 annum as identified in the Strategic Development Plan Main Issues Report.
- Meet the housing need of 415 additional affordable houses per annum in Aberdeen over the next ten years. Priority will be given to projects providing 1 and 2 bedroom properties

Outcome 1.2: improve access to housing which meets the needs and aspirations of the people of Aberdeen.

- Ensure the affordable housing policy of 25% developer contribution for affordable housing on all sites over 5 units is applied where viable.
- Ensure a five year housing land supply in the Aberdeen Housing Market Area (AHMA).

Outcome 1.3: Improve access to the private housing sector for first time buyers.

- Provide assistance to first time buyers through various initiatives by the Council and its partners.

Outcome 2.1: Improve housing conditions in the social rented sector in the City

- Achieve the SHQS for social rented housing by 2015 where practicable.
- Bring BTS properties in the social rented stock up to standard.

Outcome 3.1.1: Improve access and provision of social rented housing and other forms of affordable housing options

- Ensure ACC achieves the homeless target set by the Scottish Government by 2012.
- Reduce the number of homelessness applications through early intervention and provision of housing options advice.

Outcome 3.1.2: Improve access to and provision of social rented housing and other housing options

- Increase the supply of affordable housing by the local authority, RSLs and private developers LCHO and other options.
- More emphasis on housing options advice for housing applicants, to include social renting, mid-market rent, shared equity, LCHO, private renting and open market purchase.

Outcome 3.1.3: Assess impact of benefit changes to the Council's income and for those on benefits.

- Provide assistance to tenants affected by changes to housing benefit and other benefits.

Outcome 4.1.1: Private Housing Sector: Improve housing conditions in the private rented housing sector

- Monitor number of registered private landlords.
- Monitor number of licensed HMOs and ensure unlicensed HMOs comply with the legislation.
- Monitor number of private landlords accredited by the Scottish Government.

Outcome 4.1.2: Private Sector Housing: Improve housing conditions in the private housing sector

- Through the Council's Scheme of Assistance improve housing conditions in the private housing sector by providing advice and information.
- Assess the number of houses failing the BTS by using the new standard (as in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006) and through the Scheme of Assistance to address this issue.

Outcome 5: Development and Implementation of a Framework for the Aberdeen Regeneration Strategy

- Due consideration to be given of the Scottish Government's regeneration strategy priorities and the needs of the people of Aberdeen when developing the Council's framework for its regeneration strategy.

Outcome 6: Improve the housing experience for older people and those with particular housing needs and particular minority groups so they can live independently through the provision of accessible accommodation and support systems

- Provision of suitable housing stock to meet the needs of an increasing elderly population and those with a physical and learning disabilities.
- Ensure the recommendations of the Housing for Varying Needs Review are implemented.
- Reduce incidents of harassment, prejudice and discrimination.
- Ensure the accommodation needs of Gypsies/Travellers are met.

Outcome 7: Increase Energy Efficiency in Homes, Alleviate Fuel Poverty and Address Climate Change Targets

- Improve the energy efficiency of ACC properties to SHQS.
- Alleviate Fuel Poverty
- Reduce carbon emissions from housing in the city.
- Implement new Climate Change targets for social rented housing to be set by the Scottish Government.
- Increase the number of home visits by the energy efficiency advice team.

The above Outcomes will be implemented by ACC and its partners over the next five years. However there is a need to consider the current financial constraints in the implementation of the LHS and the Council will have to examine new innovative financial models for the delivery of the Outcomes.

8. Strategic Environmental Assessment

The Draft LHS was submitted to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway for screening. Their opinion was that the LHS did not have an impact on the environment and therefore there was no need for a full scoping assessment. ACC has since issued a determination to this effect to Gateway in April 2012.

9. Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment

The Council carried out an Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) on the LHS. The strategy complies with the Equality Act 2010 and demonstrates a positive impact on the general duties of the Act such as the elimination of discrimination and harassment, advancement of equality, fostering good relations and people's human rights.. The EHRIA was submitted as part of the committee report for approval of the Final LHS before submission to the Scottish Government for assessment.

There will be annual reports on progress of the LHS Outcomes to elected members and our partners and to the Scottish Government.

The LHS was approved by the Council on 28 August 2012 before submission to the Scottish Government for assessment.

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Appendix1: Consultation responses 2011

Issue	Comments
Ageing Population	Maintain and increase the provision of housing support. Provision of housing to allow downsizing in public and private sectors. More support for older single women. Plan for an increasing and ageing population.
Concerns of Young People	Advice and information on housing options, costs and access to benefits. Provision of mediation services to avoid family break-up. Young people to be more involved in the housing decision making process.
Future Housing Provision (TACA and Civic Forum)	More housing in the city centre. Smaller house sizes to cater for projected smaller households. New housing to be more energy efficient. New housing to link up to new infra-structure developments i.e. AWPR. All new housing to meet accessibility standards. Concerns over LCHO as an affordable housing option. Ensure future infra-structure such as schools, shops and medical facilities are linked to housing developments.
GLBT and ethnic minorities	Reduce harassment of these groups. Provide information on access to housing/options and housing benefits. Encourage their visibility on statistical information.
In- migration (TACA and Civic Forum)	Retain current population by providing housing in the right place of the right type. Increase housing supply to provide housing for the projected population increases.
Affordable Housing Funding, RSLs and Developers	Concerns about future affordable housing funding. Rethink developer contribution. Future development funding of RSLs and adaptations both in the social and private sectors. Should commuted payments be the preferred option for developer contribution in the future? Need to consider all affordable housing options to meet housing needs. Ensure quicker processing of planning applications. Ensure mixed tenure and house sizes on large scale housing developments Clarification on future housing development within the City's regeneration areas. Participate in the NHT scheme to provide mid-market rented housing. The LHS is supported by elected members on the Housing and Environment and Planning Committees of the Council.
Housing Benefit Reforms	Concerns over future affordability of housing.
Energy Efficiency	New housing to be built to the highest energy efficiency standards. Energy efficiency levy on new builds to provide funding to improve existing properties.
Integration of LHS, SDP and LDP (TACA and Civic Forum)	To ensure LHS links into the main issues of the SDP and LDP. Most of the future land release in the LDP is owned by the Council. A phased release is required along with partnership working with RSLs and private developers. Concerns raised about the access to finance and deposits for house purchasers especially first time buyers
Gypsy/Travellers	Improve conditions at Clinterty. Help to provide private sites. Reduce harassment.



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