FALKIRK COUNCIL

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2016

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Local Housing Strategy (LHS) seeks to put in place a framework that will ensure an adequate supply of good quality housing and increase the range of affordable housing options in the Falkirk Council area over the coming five to ten years.

Legislative Requirement and National Guidance

1.2 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to prepare a local housing strategy supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The LHS provides the strategic direction for tackling housing need and demand and informing future investment in housing and related services across the local authority area.

1.3 The LHS guidance was developed in 2008 by the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). The guidance:

- highlights that the LHS is the sole strategic document on housing, homelessness, support and fuel poverty issues in an area,
- reinforces the links between national policies and the relationship between central and local government as expressed in Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) which indicate how national policies will be delivered locally,
- strengthens the link between assessed housing need and demand, the LHS and Local Development Plans. A Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) must be carried out which provides the key evidence base upon which housing supply targets are defined in the LHS and land release decisions are made within the development plan process,
- emphasises that there should be a clear focus on strategic outcomes to deliver housing and related support needs. It is expected that the LHS will feed into and support the local authority's SOA.

National Policy Framework

1.4 As noted above, the guidance sets the LHS within national policies and the relationship between central and local government referred to as the "Concordat". It also places the LHS within the context of the National Performance Framework (NPF). Central to the relationship between the Scottish Government and local authorities has been the creation of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs), which indicate how national policies will be delivered in each local authority area. Figure 1 shows the relationship between the various planning mechanisms at its most basic level:

Figure 1:

1.5 The LHS guidance emphasises the importance of aligning the LHS with other key strategies. Figure 2 below shows that National Outcomes 6, 7 and 10 have the greatest links to the LHS outcomes. In relation to the Strategic Community Plan 2010-15 (SCP) the outcomes and priorities which are most relevant to the LHS focus on healthier people and general wellbeing, disadvantaged communities, homelessness, the supply of affordable housing, climate change, tackling discrimination and ensuring equality. These all feed into the outcomes and indicators identified in the SOA relating to housing and support issues which ultimately inform the LHS outcomes.

1.6 The LHS guidance notes that it is also important that the LHS is aligned with the Development Plan and other key strategic documents such as Regeneration Plans, Community Care Plans and Health Improvement Plans. In terms of regeneration, the previous local Regeneration Strategy focused on the improvement of geographic areas as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), through a combination of physical improvements to the housing stock and local environment and initiatives which aimed to address the causes and effects of deprivation.

1.7 More recently, however, there has been a shift in approach and a Poverty Strategy which focuses on the eradication of poverty over a ten year timescale has been developed. Whilst there will inevitably be higher concentrations of poverty in the SIMD areas, the new approach recognises that people who live in other areas can also be adversely affected by poverty and that they too can benefit from a comprehensive and coherent approach which seeks to address both its causes and effects. This LHS takes full account of the Poverty Strategy and a Poverty Impact Assessment has been carried out (see Paragraph 1.45, below and Appendix 8). Nevertheless, if concentrations of poor housing and environmental conditions are identified during the period 2011-16 they will be tackled as part of ongoing maintenance and improvement programmes.

1.8 In terms of links with community care and health issues, whilst there is no current local Community Care Plan there is a Joint Health Improvement Plan (HIP) which was developed by the Council, health board, voluntary sector and members of the public working in partnership and this is now firmly embedded within the local Strategic Community Planning Partnership process. The third local HIP indicates how Falkirk Council and its partners will take forward the national health outcomes within the SOA. The most relevant links here are through National Outcomes 6 and 7.

1.9 In addition, the housing needs of those who have traditionally been identified as having community care needs have been comprehensively addressed in the Community Care Housing Needs Assessment which forms Appendix 4 to this LHS. Taken together, the HIP and the Community Care Housing Needs Assessment (CCHNA) provide a firm foundation for addressing the need for both housing and support services for people who have particular housing requirements. This is explored further in Section 2.

Figure 2: Housing in Falkirk within a National and Strategic Framework

National Performance Framework (2011)	**Single Outcome Agreement 2009-11 (SOA) Strategic Community Plan 2010-15 (SCP)**	**Local Housing Strategy 2011-16**
Strategic Objectives • Wealthier and Fairer • Smarter • Healthier • Safer and Stronger • Greener **Relevant National Outcomes** (6) We live longer, healthier lives (7) We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish Society (10) We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services and amenities that we need **Relevant National Performance Indicators** • Increase the percentage of people aged 65 and over with high levels of care needs who are cared for at home • Increase the rate of new house building • Increase the percentage of adults who rate their neighbourhood as a good place to live • Reduce overall ecological footprint	**SOA and SCP Vision** • The legacy of our past and the potential of our future are protected • Our area Is at the centre of Scottish life • Our future is as one of the most culturally diverse and distinct areas in Scotland • Our future has investment in jobs, learning, homes and leisure for all • Our area is the "place to be" in the third Millennium **Relevant Local Outcomes (SOA)** • Disadvantaged communities will benefit from better services (FCCP) • Our housing continues to meet the needs of people who live and may wish to live in our area (FCCP) • Increase pride and satisfaction with their local community (FSF) • Ensure the provision of a range of affordable housing options which meet the needs of local people including those with special needs (LHS 2004-09) • Improve and maintain the Council's core housing stock (LHS 2004-09) • Reduce the number of people living in fuel poverty (LHS 2004-09) **Relevant Local Priorities (SCP)** • Prevent people from becoming homeless, making the best use of available accommodation whilst supporting those who are most vulnerable • Ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing **Relevant Local Performance Indicators** • Number of people experiencing multiple deprivation (i.e. people living in worst 155 of areas in Scotland) • Percentage of households assessed as homeless who are in priority need • Percentage of homeless households with permanent accommodation in Council stock who maintain their tenancy for at least 12 months • Percentage of residents stating their neighbourhood as a "very good" or "fairly good" place to live • Total larger (4+ bedrooms) affordable homes completed • Total tender approvals for new build affordable homes • Percentage of Council and RSL tenancies allocated to homeless people • Percentage of other Council and RSL tenancies allocated to other groups in housing need • Percentage of cases reassessed as homeless or potentially homeless within 12 months of previous application being completed • Total number of dwellings brought up to SHQS criteria by category (Tolerable Standard; Free from Serious Disrepair; Energy Efficient; Modern Facilities and Services; Healthy, Safe and Secure)	**Vision** Homes for Now; Homes for the Future **Outcomes** 1. Best use is made of existing and new housing (including empty homes and new affordable housing) to address local needs 2. Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options to assist access to housing and prevent homelessness 3. Older people and those with disabilities are able to make informed housing choices including making required adaptations to their home 4. Housing support and other services are provided to help people live independently 5. The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty 6. All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently

Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA)

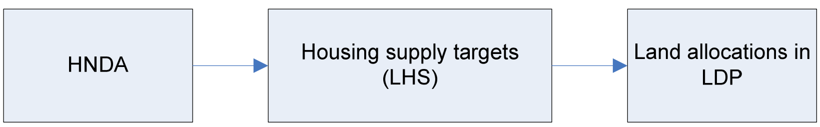
1.10 Local authorities are encouraged in the guidance to set up Housing Market Partnerships to carry out a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). The Housing Market Partnership for the Falkirk Council area is the Housing Need, Demand and Supply Executive Group (HNDSEG). The HNDSEG comprised at various times the following stakeholders: Falkirk Council Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, Development Services (Planning), Social Work Services; Registered Social Landlords; Scottish Association of Landlords; Homes for Scotland and a builder/developer (Ogilvie). Comments on economic issues were provided by Scottish Enterprise.

1.11 The HNDA which was approved as robust and credible by the Scottish Government on 5th September 2011, indicated the following:

- Falkirk Council area is a self-contained Housing Market Area,
- Household projections indicate that there will be an additional 763 households a year over the period 2008-2018,
- There is a shortfall of affordable housing of around 230 units per year over the period 2010-2020. This shortfall could increase or decrease depending on the prevailing economic situation,
- Some housing need could be addressed through better use of the existing housing stock. This could involve people moving to alternative housing that better meets their requirements as well as carrying out adaptations/alterations to the stock to address specific individual needs,
- There are approximately 100 households whose current housing does not meet their need on account of some level of disability. Around 50 cannot afford to resolve their own housing need. It is estimated that over the life of this LHS, the need for affordable housing options for people with disabilities will increase by around 5-10 units per year. There is also likely to be an increasing requirement for property adaptations as the local population ages,
- More needs to be done to prevent people from becoming homeless and to encourage them to explore a range of local housing options in the context of the national 2012 target that anyone who is not intentionally homeless will have a right to settled accommodation,
- There are particular pressures in respect of larger houses in the social rented sector,
- There is a need to prepare a specific strategy for older people that takes account of:
    - the ageing population;
    - current housing provision for older people which, in some instances, does not meet the aspirations of older people in the 21st century,
    - the Reshaping Care for Older People agenda as part of Wider Planning for an Ageing Population which requires a co-ordinated integrated approach in respect of health, housing and social care provision for older people,
    - the advances that continue to be made in technology that supports people to live independently for longer.
- There is a need to ensure the provision of appropriate support services to allow more vulnerable people, including older people, to live independently in the community.

Local Development Plan

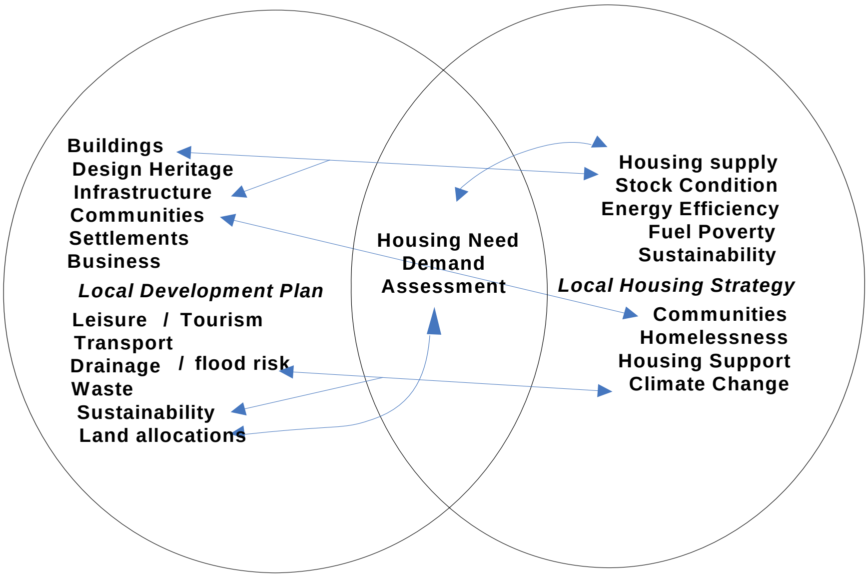
1.12 The HNDA informs (a) the all-tenure housing supply targets in the LHS and (b) the land release decisions that will be set out in the Local Development Plan (LDP).



1.13 A key requirement is that the LHS must be prepared alongside the Main Issues Report (MIR) for the Local Development Plan (LDP). This increased emphasis on the interface between the LHS and LDP processes means that there is now greater synergy between the two processes than was previously the case.

1.14 The MIR for the first Falkirk LDP was approved by Falkirk Council for consultation purposes on 5th October 2011. Figure 3 below shows the areas where the LHS and LDP processes overlap, as well as the wider range of factors that each must address:

Figure 3



1.15 Taking account of the context set out above, this LHS seeks to establish a firm basis by which future housing provision in the area meets identified housing need consistent with the wider development planning framework.

LHS and LDP Timeframes

1.16 This Local Housing Strategy (LHS) will cover the period 2012–2017. The Local Development Plan (LDP) is scheduled to be adopted in 2014 covering the period 2014 to 2024 in detail and to 2034 in indicative terms. The LDP will replace the current Falkirk Council Local Plan which was adopted in December 2010. The LDP will set out the Council's strategy for land use in the Council area, including the development of land for housing. The Main Issues Report (MIR) of the LDP considers a number of alternative scenarios for housing growth. The overall scale of housing in the Council area over the plan period 2014-2034 will be influenced by:

- The Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) providing target figures based on national population and household projections (all tenures),
- Scottish Planning Policy which requires plans to provide a *generous* supply of land for housing,
- Existing commitments and the extent these are likely to cover future housing requirements in the area,
- Environmental and infrastructural constraints,
- Economic conditions and the capacity of the house-building industry to deliver growth over the coming years.

1.17 The LDP projects the household figure to 2034, one year further on than the HNDA. Between 2014 and 2024 it is projected in the LDP that there will be 9,350 more households and between 2024 and 2034 there will be 8,624 additional households in the Council area as shown below.

Table 1: Household Growth 2014-2034

	2014-2024	2024-2034	Total 2014-2034
Projected additional households	9,350	8,624	17,974
Equivalent average annual rate of completions required	935	862	899

1.18 These figures suggest that an annual completion rate of around 900 units per year would be required to meet household projections. This is higher than what has been achieved on average over the last 15 years - around 740 units a year - although during the period 2001-2005 when the housing market was particularly buoyant, completion rates did reach over 900 per annum. House completions have been between 400-500 units per year over the last three years, marking a decline in house building.

1.19 It is important to note that these figures are based on 2008 household projections. Various factors, not least the current economic situation, suggest that these projections, and the corresponding housing requirements, may reduce in the future. The current figures therefore need to be treated with some caution.

Local House Condition Survey (LHCS)

1.20 An all-tenure Local House Condition Survey (LHCS) was carried out in 2009. This provides evidence of the state of repair and energy efficiency of the local housing stock at that time and is a fundamental building block on which the LHS is based. In addition, the LHCS social survey provided useful local social and economic information which informed both the HNDA and the LHS. The LHCS indicated:

- The housing stock in the Council area (all-tenure) is better than the Scottish average,
- It is estimated that there are around 2,610 properties in the Council area which are Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS),
- There is a need to develop a comprehensive database of such properties to assist in targeting the available resources and identifying any concentrations of BTS properties that might need to be addressed as Housing Renewal Areas,
- No Council-owned dwellings fall below the Tolerable Standard,
- The Council's own housing stock is in good condition and, assuming continued investment at the appropriate levels, should largely comply with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015,
- The main issue affecting the Council's housing stock is the energy efficiency of properties, particularly those built using non-traditional construction methods and there needs to be a focus on these properties in the years to 2015,
- The Registered Social Landlord (RSL) stock in the Council area is in good condition and should achieve the SHQS by 2015,

- Household energy consumption accounts for around 25% of greenhouse gas emissions. In terms of energy efficiency and fuel poverty – in all tenures – there is a need to maintain investment in central heating, double glazing and insulation in order to meet the reductions in greenhouse gas emissions required as a consequence of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

LHS Consultation

1.21 A draft LHS was developed after a wide-ranging consultation process undertaken in early 2011. This used a number of different consultation methods in order to allow as wide as possible a range of stakeholders to participate in the development of the Strategy. These included:

- Drop-in events in 15 local venues throughout the Council area,
- Consultation displays and surveys in six local libraries,
- A questionnaire – issued to the Council's Citizens Panel, made available on the Council web site,
- Features in *Falkirk Council News* which is issued to all households in the Council area,
- An article in the Falkirk Council tenants' and residents' newsletter, *In the Neighbourhood,*
- A specific section on the Falkirk Council website with a link from the home page,
- Focus groups with older people, disabled people, young people, minority ethnic groups and gypsies/travellers,
- E-mailing stakeholders including RSL partners, developers, private landlords, councillors and council staff to highlight the information available on the website which then directed them to the on-line survey,
- Information about the consultation events advertised on local radio (Central FM) and Twitter,
- Two stakeholder events: the first to discuss the findings of the HNDA and which issues should be covered in the LHS; the second to discuss the draft LHS and to progress development of appropriate outcomes and supply targets,
- An e-mail sent to stakeholders informing them of the publication of the draft LHS on the Council's website together with an on-line survey on the proposed LHS outcomes.

Questionnaire

1.22 There were 1,082 responses to the LHS survey and a detailed analysis of the responses received is set out in Appendix 5. The response rate is considered to provide a robust basis for strategic housing planning purposes.

Advertising of Consultation Opportunities

1.23 Every effort was made to encourage a wide range of stakeholders to participate in the local consultation events and online survey which were advertised on local radio (Central FM) and in the February 2011 edition of Falkirk Council News. In addition, contact was made with tenant/resident forums, Community Councils, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, RSL partners, registered private landlords, private builders/ developers and young people (through the Young Scot portal). Information about the consultation events was also displayed in a range of Council service points and other agencies including Neighbourhood Offices, One Stop Shops, Social Work offices, Planning offices, schools, libraries and GP surgeries,

Focus Groups

1.24 Focus groups with older and disabled people were organised jointly with Falkirk Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and those with minority ethnic groups were carried out jointly with the Council's Community Education service. Focus groups for young people in supported accommodation were organised in partnership with their housing support providers and a focus group with young people leaving care was carried out in partnership with Social Work Services' Through Care Team.

Stakeholder Events

1.25 The first stakeholder event discussed initial consultation findings, the results of the HNDA and the development of the LHS with the following taking part:

- Housing Need, Demand and Supply Executive Group (Housing Market Partnership)[1],
- RSL Forum,
- Community Planning Partnership,
- Falkirk Council for Voluntary Service,

1.26 The second consultation event discussed the draft LHS, outcomes and supply targets and had a similar representation to the first event.

Looking Back - Local Housing Strategy 2004-09

1.27 This is the second Falkirk LHS. The first, covering the period 2004-09, identified six key priorities for action as follows:

- The improvement and maintenance of the Council's core housing stock,
- The preparation of housing development strategies that meet local priority needs,
- The provision of a range of housing options which meet the needs of local people, including those with specific needs,
- The prevention and alleviation of homelessness wherever possible,
- The provision of support to vulnerable people in their homes,
- A reduction in the number of households that live in fuel poverty.

1.28 As a bridge between the 2004-09 LHS and the new LHS for 2011-16 an LHS Interim Statement was published in 2010. This is provided at Appendix 14. The Interim Statement looked back at progress made on implementing the priorities set out in paragraph 1.27 then went on to consider what would need to be done in the following five to ten years to meet local housing needs in the context of current resource constraint and the consequent requirement for clear priorities and prudent financial management in the years to come.

[1] Scottish Government, Falkirk Council Corporate and Neighbourhood Services, Development Services (Planning), Social Work Services, Registered Social Landlords, Scottish Association of Landlords, Homes for Scotland, local builder/developer (Ogilvie)

LHS 2011-2016: Outcomes

1.29 The LHS guidance indicates that local housing strategies should be focussed on the outcomes they seek to achieve. The outcomes set a clear strategic direction for the local authority and its partners for improving housing conditions and in addressing housing and related support needs for the following five year period. The outcomes set in this LHS were informed by the following:

- Housing Need and Demand Assessment,
- Local Housing Condition Survey,
- Consultation,
- Discussions with key partners including the Housing Need, Demand and Supply Executive Group which functioned as the Local Housing Market Partnership.

1.30 The draft LHS identified ten potential outcomes however, as the consultation process progressed, it became clear that many stakeholders found such a large number of outcomes to be confusing. Taking account of this view and the fact that the confusion could be compounded when performance indicators and targets were developed, it was decided to amalgamate some outcomes to enable a clearer focus on key issues. Figure 4 below indicates how the draft outcomes developed into the new final outcomes and sub outcomes.

Figure 4: LHS draft outcomes to finalised outcomes and sub outcomes

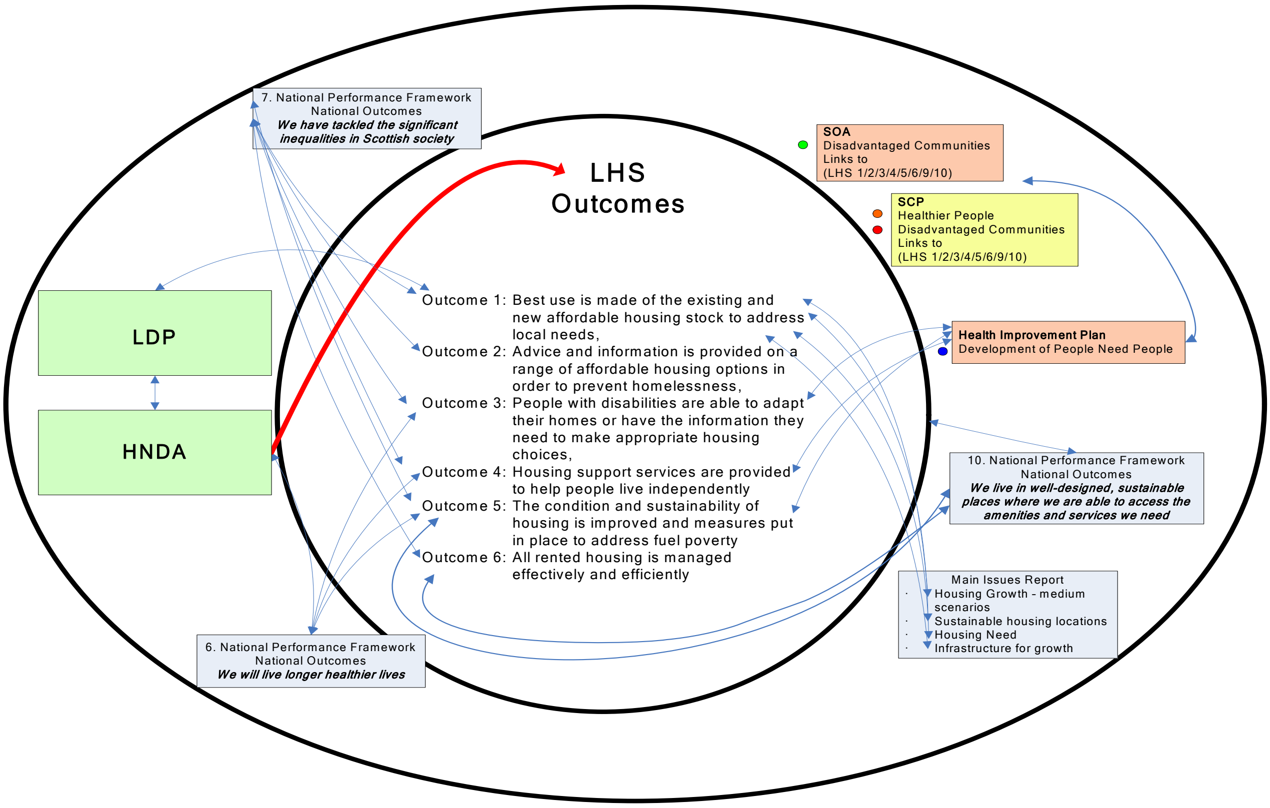
Old LHS Outcome	New LHS Outcome	Sub Outcomes
1. There is enough affordable housing in the area to meet people's needs	1. Best use is made of the existing housing including empty homes and new affordable housing stock to address local needs	Additional propertied are built across all tenures
6. The number of empty homes in the Council area is reduced and best use is made of every type of housing		New build affordable housing will be provided
		Better use will be made of existing stock including empty homes
2. By 2012, no one in the Falkirk Council area need be homeless	2. Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options to assist access to housing and prevent homelessness	Prevention - we will prevent homelessness by raising awareness of the help that is available in the area and by developing new services to meet local needs
4. Everyone can access high quality housing information and advice to help them make informed choices about the housing they want to live in		Accommodation - we will make best use of the available accommodation by assisting people to explore the full range of housing options available in the area
		Support - we will help vulnerable people to access the support they need so that they do not become homeless
3. People with disabilities are able to adapt their homes or gain access to housing that better meets their needs	3. Older people and those with disabilities are able to make informed housing choices including making required adaptations to their home	There will be a programme of disabled adaptations
		Information will be collected on disabled adaptations locally to inform housing and advice and information.
		Information will be collected on demand for disabled adaptations locally
5. Housing and support services for people with particular needs are joined-up and focussed on the requirements of the individual	4. Housing support and other services are provided to help people live independently	Housing support services will be provided to help people sustain living arrangements
7. All housing in the Council area is in good repair, has modern facilities and services and is healthy, safe, and secure	5. The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty	Housing conditions will be improved
		Addressing fuel poverty will continue to be a priority
8. All homes in the Council area are warm, dry and well-insulated and households can afford to heat them		Work will continue to address energy efficiency
9. Council and housing association properties are managed effectively and efficiently and make best use of the available resources	6. All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently	Access will be improved to the social rented sector
10. Private rented housing is well managed and offers a good standard of accommodation		Access will be improved to the private rented sector
		Management standards will be raised in the social rented sector

1.31 The housing indicators in the SOA have been included in the LHS. The outcomes template from the LHS guidance has been used for recording outcomes in the LHS and is provided at Appendix 2. For each outcome the following have been set:

- Performance Indicators,
- Data sources, type, frequency,
- Baseline information against which progress can be measured,
- Targets,
- Timescales for implementation,
- Actions to help achieve the outcome,
- Resources to deliver the outcome,
- Commitments required,
- Lead officer responsibilities.

Taking account of all the above, Figure 5 below sets out how LHS outcomes link to the NPF, the SOA and the SCP.

Figure 5: LHS Outcomes in Wider Local and National Context



1.32 The current financial climate was referred to frequently throughout the development of the LHS consultation therefore the targets set have, as far as possible, been developed with appropriate consideration of the likely available financial resources.

Ensuring Equality

1.33 The LHS guidance emphasises the importance of recognising the needs of all groups in the community and ensuring that they have equal opportunity as far as housing is concerned. In order to ensure that no groups are disadvantaged by the LHS an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Equalities Scheme.

1.34 The Equality Act 2010 received Royal Assent in April 2010. The Act brings together nine separate items of existing anti-discrimination laws within a single Act. It aims to simplify and strengthen the law relating to discrimination and inequality. The Act also introduces a broader public sector equality duty, replacing existing equality duties for race, gender and disability. There is a *general* public sector equality duty in the Act itself and provision for further *specific* duties to be made through Regulations. The Council's Equality Scheme highlights the different general duties that the Council is required to meet. In addition, specific duties are highlighted which confirm how the Council will work towards meeting each of the general duties.

1.35 The aim of the Council's Equalities Scheme is to support the Council in meeting the diverse needs of people within the local area and ensure that actions and outcomes are identified to ensure proper and sensitive services are provided. The actions focus on the outcomes the Council is looking to achieve. These actions are linked into the current Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). Local outcomes have been identified that cover all aspects of life that include health, welfare, regeneration, leisure, safety, transport, education and employment. The aim of linking the equality actions into the SOA is to ensure that all areas of equality continue to be mainstreamed into the key priorities of the Council and other partners.

1.36 The LHS reflects the Council's policy of mainstreaming equalities. Consideration of the six equalities[2] strands – as noted below – forms the basis of the EQIA:

- Age – older and younger people,
- Gender,
- Disabilities – those with physical disabilities including children, people with mental health issues, learning disabilities including autistic spectrum disorder,
- Race –minority ethnic groups including gypsies/travellers,
- Religion,
- Sexual orientation.

1.37 A Community Care Housing Needs Assessment (CCHNA) (see Appendix 4) has been carried out as part of the HNDA and this has helped to identify:

- the housing requirements of specific household groups,
- housing support needs and other relevant issues to be taken forward in the LHS,
- issues which have informed the LHS EQIA,
- issues explored in detail through LHS consultation process

1.38 The findings of the CCHNA are discussed in detail in Section 2 which also provides information on the issues identified as important for LHS consultation.

[2] This refers to the 6 equalities stands referred to when the CCHNA was commenced. The LHS EQIA considers the additional strands of pregnancy and maternity, gender re-assignment along with marriage and civil partnership.

1.39 Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders has been a fundamental element of the LHS consultation process to ensure that people with special needs or particular views on how housing should be provided could have the opportunity to influence the development of the Strategy – see paragraphs 1.23 and 1.24 above. In order to meet the Council's obligations in terms of the equalities legislation and to ensure as widespread consultation as possible, publicity material was issued with text indicating information was available in languages other than English.

1.40 As noted earlier, a series of focus groups was held with particular communities of interest, including people with disabilities, representatives of the minority ethnic communities in the area, older people and young people. In order to encourage involvement transport was arranged for older and disabled people who required it. Events were held across the Council area so that as many people as possible could have their say.

1.41 The impact assessment has found that the focus of the strategy on ensuring a supply of good quality housing in the Falkirk Council area and increasing the supply of affordable housing options over the coming five to ten years will positively benefit all the equality groups considered. However, there remains an under-provision of wheelchair accessible housing that needs to be addressed and a need to identify attractive housing options for older people who are unsuitably housed and these matters are explored further in this LHS. The EQIA is provided at Appendix 6.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.42 In Scotland, the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 requires that Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) are carried out in respect of all plans, programmes and strategies. In the context of the LHS, any housing activity, whether it be the maintenance and management of the existing housing stock or the development of new housing to meet current and future needs, has some impact on the environment. A full SEA was therefore undertaken based on the original ten draft LHS outcomes. The Scoping Report for this assessment was lodged with the Scottish Government's Strategic Environmental Assessment Gateway on 25th February 2011. The Environmental Report which takes account of comments from the Scoping Study will be submitted to SEA Gateway at the same time as the LHS is submitted to Scottish Government.

1.43 The SEA Gateway fed back on the Environmental Report on 9th November 2011 and their comments have been incorporated into the final SEA provided as Appendix 7. The assessment of environmental impacts is important because it encourages those involved in strategic issues to consider the long term consequences of their proposals and affords them the opportunity to build in actions that will mitigate any negative environmental impact.

1.44 As part of the SEA process two focus groups were held, the findings of which are available in the LHS Consultation Report and Appendix 5. The SEA focus groups and Environmental Report provided detailed information which informed the LHS outcomes and actions including:

- The importance of providing advice and information in relation to fuel poverty and energy efficiency,
- The importance of addressing inefficient heating systems,
- The importance of keeping housing stock in good repair,
- The importance of making best use of the existing housing stock,
- The energy efficiency benefits of downsizing for households who are under-occupying their accommodation.

The above are all included in the LHS outcomes template (Appendix 2)

Poverty Impact Assessment

1.45 Falkirk Council approved a Poverty Strategy on 2nd March 2011 and now requires a Poverty Impact Assessment to be carried out in respect of all strategies and policies. A Poverty Impact Assessment (PIA) (Appendix 8) was undertaken for the LHS and it found that the LHS identifies a number of actions which will have a positive impact in terms of tackling poverty. This impact can be increased through continued partnership working and Partnership Agreements or Protocols between the range of agencies which can influence the Council's Poverty Strategy will help to ensure that all parties are fully engaged in the process so that poverty is reduced.

1.46 The PIA is consistent with the NPF, particularly the national outcome, "We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society" and the national indicator and target – "Decrease the proportion of individuals living in poverty".

LHS Vision

1.47 As previously indicated, in addition to the consultation feedback received to date, the LHS has been developed from two key pieces of evidence:

- a comprehensive HNDA which has identified the requirement for new housing in the area over the next ten years,
- an all-tenure LHCS

1.48 From the evidence provided by these two pieces of research and the consultation feedback, an over-arching Vision for housing in the Council area over the next five years has been developed as follows:

Homes for Now; Homes for the Future

1.49 This Vision recognises that there is a need to increase the supply of housing to meet current needs and also to improve the condition of the existing housing stock so that it can continue to play a useful role in meeting local need; however, it also recognises that whatever is done now will have an impact on both the environment and the quality of life of individuals and communities for many years to come. In this context and given the life span of well-built housing, there is a need to ensure sustainability and safeguard the environment both now and in the future.

Looking Forward: A Partnership Approach

1.50 In providing the strategic direction for tackling housing need and demand and informing future investment in housing and related services across the local authority area over the next five years, this LHS considers the following issues:

- The extent and type of housing need and demand,
- The strategic vision for the future of housing across all tenures, taking account of national and local priorities,
- Plans to improve the standard of housing across all tenures and the strategic direction for housing investment,
- The outcomes needed to achieve the vision,
- The specific commitments made by the local authority and key partners to enable the delivery of shared outcomes.

1.51 Whilst the local authority clearly has the lead, co-ordinating role in preparing a local housing strategy, there needs to be a shared vision for housing in the area that all partners endorse.

Resources

1.52 The LHS has been developed in a period of extreme economic uncertainty: public sector budgets have been cut and more economies are inevitable over the next few years. At the same time as investment in social housing is under pressure, people who wish to buy a home to meet their housing needs have found it increasingly difficult to do so because the banks have restricted access to mortgages. This has had a direct impact on the rate of new house building by developers and the building industry itself has experienced difficulty in accessing the finance needed to pump-prime new schemes. It is therefore more important than ever that best use is made of whatever funding is available. In this context, partnership working is vital.

Strategic Partnership Framework

1.53 To achieve the necessary co-operation to deliver the LHS outcomes over the coming five years it is proposed to:

- Set up a LHS Implementation Group with representation similar to the HNDSEG to oversee and drive multi-agency working on housing matters,
- Develop Partnership Agreements between the Council and RSL partners.

1.54 The primary aim of this approach will be to maximise the resources available to improve housing conditions in the Council area so that everyone can live in a home that meets their needs.

2. HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND ASSESSMENT

This Section will:

- Outline the key findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and issues arising from it,
- Define the Local Housing Market Area (LHMA) and describe its key features
- Explore the likely nature of the future local housing market, taking account of population and household projections and the nature of the economy
- Outline the requirement for specialist housing and support services for people with particular housing needs
- Set housing supply targets for the period 2011-16

Summary of Key Findings

- The Falkirk Council area forms a self-contained Local Housing Market Area (LHMA),
- The local population grew by 5.5% between 1999 and 2009 and is projected to increase further,
- The number of households increased by 10.9% in the period 1999-2009 - almost twice as much as the population change,
- There are now more single person households and smaller families and this is projected to continue,
- House-building rates have slowed since the economic downturn with only 400 - 500 houses per year built in the 3 years to 2009-10 compared with over 900 per year in the period 2001-05
- Levels of income and savings in the Falkirk Council area are lower than in Scotland as a whole,
- Access to mortgage finance has become more difficult since the economic downturn – typically, purchasers currently require a 23% deposit,
- Tenure patterns are now almost the reverse of what they were in 1981 when the Right to Buy was introduced. This means there are many fewer properties available for social renting although ex-Right to Buy properties offer low-cost home-ownership opportunities for some people,
- There is a shortfall of affordable housing of around 230 units per year over the period 2010-20. This shortfall could increase or decrease depending on the prevailing economic situation,
- Some housing need could be addressed through better use of the existing housing stock. This could involve people moving to alternative housing that better meets their requirements as well as carrying out adaptations/alterations to the stock to address specific issues,
- There are particular pressures in respect of larger houses in the social rented sector.
- The population is ageing: there is projected to be a 25% increase in the population aged over 65 by 2018 and a 75% increase by 2033,
- Older people's housing aspirations have changed and there is now relatively low demand for the current model of Housing with Care in the Council area,
- Given the strong correlation between old age and disability, there is high demand for property adaptations and support services to assist older people to stay at home ,
- There are estimated to be around 100 households whose current accommodation does not meet their needs due to physical disability; 50% of these need an affordable housing option. It is estimated that need will increase by 5-10 households per year,
- Demand for adaptations is high whilst resources, especially for adaptations in privately owned properties, are low,
- There is a low level of awareness about the housing advice and information services available to assist people with disabilities, especially for home owners who wish to access funding to adapt or extend their homes,

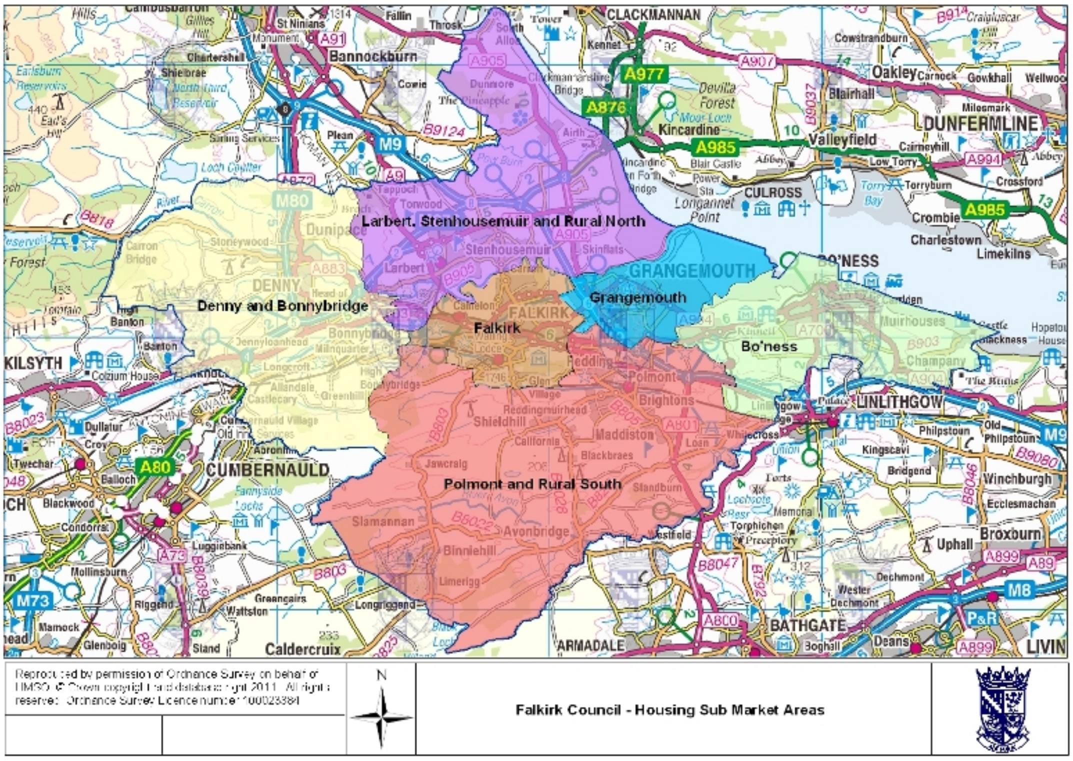
- Around 50% of people with learning disabilities live in mainstream housing whilst the remainder live in supported housing,
- Potentially there will be a requirement for more support services for people with learning disabilities in the future as elderly carers become unable to continue to provide such care and as people with learning disabilities themselves live longer as a result of advances in medicine,
- Most people with mental ill health live in mainstream housing. Some receive support services to help them to live independently; there is no indication that any further specialist provision for this group requires to be made at this time,
- People who are dependent on drugs or alcohol are more likely to become homeless,
- Some people with drug/alcohol dependency problems have complex needs that require a multi-agency response,
- The housing aspirations of people from the minority ethnic communities are very similar to those of the wider population; the HNDA does not identify any requirement for specific housing for people from the minority ethnic communities,
- It is difficult to quantify any need for more site provision for travelling people in the Council area – this will require liaison with neighbouring local authorities,
- There may be a need for more supported accommodation options for young people, particularly those with complex needs
- Homelessness in Falkirk is reducing but remains at a high level,
- Relationship breakdown is the most significant reason for homelessness,
- Young people and single people form a disproportionately high percentage of homeless applicants,
- There appears to be some correlation between homelessness and access to affordable housing options; homeless people are more likely to be unemployed or in low-paid jobs than the rest of the population,
- Young homeless people have fewer housing options than older homeless people because of the welfare benefits regulations,
- More needs to be done to prevent people from becoming homeless and encourage them to explore a range of housing options.
- There are more women than men in housing need but men are more likely to sleep rough than women,
- Homeless men are likely to be single whereas homeless women tend to have dependent children,
- More women than men flee domestic abuse,
- Housing support is vital to assisting many people to live independently in the community,
- Support needs require to be assessed on an individual basis and be designed to meet specific individual requirements.

The Housing Market Area

2.1 The HNDA identifies Falkirk Council area as a self-contained housing market area whose strongest links are to West Lothian and Edinburgh followed by North Lanarkshire and Stirling. This was established using origin-based self-containment analysis which indicated that 69% of purchasers in Falkirk Council area over the period 2006 to 2009 were resident there. These findings confirmed earlier analysis by Newhaven Research[3] in 2006. The Newhaven Research and updated analysis indicated the following sub areas:

[3] Newhaven Research (2006)

- Bo’ness Local Plan area
- Denny/ Bonnybridge Local Plan areas
- Wider Falkirk (Stenhousemuir/Larbert/Rural North Local Plan areas and Falkirk Local Plan area)
- Grangemouth Local Plan area
- Polmont/ Rural South Local Plan areas



2.2 Interestingly, the HNDA indicates that self-containment levels are higher amongst applicants on the Council’s housing register with 91% being local residents. It is evident that people who can afford to buy their home exercise more choice about where they want to live than those who rely on the social rented sector to meet their housing needs.

The Current Housing Market

Demographic context

2.3 The current population of the Falkirk Council area (2009) was 152,480. This represents an increase of 7,910 from 1999 (5.5%) and compares with growth in Scotland as a whole of 2.4%.

2.4 The following table shows how the population of the Falkirk Council area has grown over the last ten years. The fastest growth was between 2003 and 2005 when the population rose by over 3,000. Much of the growth over the decade has been driven by an increase in net in-migration. Another feature of the recent increase in the population has been the increase in the number of births in the area so that in the most recent years the number of births has increased considerably and consistently exceeded the number of deaths. The pattern in Falkirk very much reflects national trends.

Table 2: Population of Falkirk Council area 1999-2009

Year	Population	Change No	%
1999	144,570		
2000	144,650	+ 80	+ 0.1%
2001	145,270	+ 620	+ 0.4%
2002	145,560	+ 290	+ 0.2%
2003	145,920	+ 360	+ 0.2%
2004	147,460	+ 1,540	+ 1.1%
2005	149,150	+ 1,690	+ 1.1%
2006	149,680	+ 530	+ 0.4%
2007	150,720	+ 1,040	+ 0.7%
2008	151,570	+ 850	+ 0.6%
2009	152,480	+ 910	+ 0.6%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland: mid year estimates of population[4] note as of 1/4/11 GRO became the National Records of Scotland (NRS)

2.5 Table 3 indicates how the age structure of the population has changed over the last 10 years. While the population as a whole has increased by almost 8,000 (5.5%), there has been a wide variation in the change in individual age groups. There has been a reduction in the number of people aged 25-39 whereas the population over the age of 40 has seen an increase. There has been a consistent large percentage increase in the population aged 80+, reflecting greater life expectancy.

Table 3: Population change 1999-2009

Age group	1999		2009		Change	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
0-4	8,547	5.90%	9,185	6.00%	638	7.50%
5-9	9,391	6.50%	8,289	5.40%	-1,102	-11.70%
10-14	8,916	6.20%	8,883	5.80%	-33	-0.40%
15-19	8,745	6.00%	9,817	6.40%	1,072	12.30%
20-24	8,107	5.60%	8,983	5.90%	876	10.80%
25-29	9,955	6.90%	8,928	5.90%	-1,027	-10.30%
30-34	11,723	8.10%	9,224	6.00%	-2,499	-21.30%
35-39	11,498	8.00%	11,086	7.30%	-412	-3.60%
40-44	10,156	7.00%	12,477	8.20%	2,321	22.90%
45-49	9,668	6.70%	11,803	7.70%	2,135	22.10%
50-54	9,901	6.80%	10,169	6.70%	268	2.70%
55-59	8,207	5.70%	9,550	6.30%	1,343	16.40%
60-64	7,820	5.40%	9,442	6.20%	1,622	20.70%
65-69	6,754	4.70%	7,405	4.90%	651	9.60%
70-74	5,703	3.90%	6,456	4.20%	753	13.20%
75-79	4,778	3.30%	4,832	3.20%	54	1.10%
80-84	2,508	1.70%	3,252	2.10%	744	29.70%
85-89	1,574	1.10%	1,949	1.30%	375	23.80%
90+	619	0.40%	750	0.50%	131	21.20%
Total	144,570	100%	152,480	100%	7,910	5.50%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland: mid year estimates of population[5] now National Records of Scotland

[4] http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html
[5] http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/population/estimates/mid-year/index.html

Population by sub area

2.6 Table 4 indicates that the largest sub area is Falkirk and the smallest is Bo'ness. Denny/Bonnybridge, Stenhousemuir/ Larbert/ Rural North and Polmont/Rural South are all similar in size. One quarter of the population of the Council area currently lives in the Falkirk sub area, compared to just over 10% in each of the Bo'ness and Grangemouth sub areas.

2.7 Between 2001 and 2008 the Council area as a whole grew by almost 6,400 people. Denny/Bonnybridge had the fastest growing population - 2,300 people (a 9.6% increase), whereas the population of Grangemouth fell by over 1,000 or 6%. Generally, the rate of population change can be related to the amount of new house building in each area.

Table 4: Population change sub areas 2001-2008

Sub area	2001	2008	Change 2001-2008	
			No	**%**
Bo'ness	14,805	15,297	+ 492	+ 3.3%
Denny/Bonnybridge	24,092	26,394	+ 2,302	+ 9.6%
Falkirk	35,969	37,872	+ 1,905	+ 5.3%
Grangemouth	17,906	16,827	- 1,079	- 6.0%
Stenhousemuir/Larbert/Rural North	24,891	26,230	+ 1,339	+ 5.4%
Polmont/Rural South	27,529	28,954	+ 1,425	+ 5.2%
Falkirk Council total	**145,191**	**151,570**	**+ 6,379**	**+ 4.4%**

Source: GROS datazone data and 2001 Census (Crown Copyright) and Falkirk Council R&I Unit

Household Estimates

2.8 The number of households in the Council area has increased steadily over the last ten years and at a faster rate than the increase in the population. The following table indicates that the number of households has increased by almost 6,700 in the last ten years to over 68,000, an increase of 10.9% compared to an increase in the population of half that amount – 5.5%. The pattern across Scotland is very similar where the number of households increased by 7.2% compared to a population increase of 2.4%.

Table 5: No of households in Falkirk area 1999-2009

Year	Households	Change 1999-2009		% change in population
		No	**%**	
1999	61,531			
2000	61,974	+ 443	+ 0.7%	+ 0.1%
2001	62,689	+ 715	+ 1.2%	+ 0.4%
2002	63,534	+ 845	+ 1.3%	+ 0.2%
2003	64,394	+ 860	+ 1.4%	+ 0.2%
2004	65,391	+ 997	+ 1.5%	+ 1.1%
2005	65,879	+ 488	+ 0.7%	+ 1.1%
2006	66,651	+ 772	+ 1.2%	+ 0.4%
2007	67,379	+ 728	+ 1.1%	+ 0.7%
2008	67,808	+ 429	+ 0.6%	+ 0.6%
2009	68,223	+ 415	+ 0.6%	+ 0.6%

Source: General Register Office for Scotland: household estimates[6] now National Records of Scotland

2.9 The greater increase in the number of households compared to the population is due to falling average household size. This, in turn, is caused by an increase in single person households and

[6] http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/stats/household-estimates/he-09/household-est-2009-table1.xls

smaller family sizes. The effects of these changes can be seen in the changes in household types between the 2001 Census and the current household type estimates. Table 6 highlights these changes.

Table 6: Household type 2001 and 2008

	2001		2008		Change	
Household type	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
1 pensioner adult	9,175	14.7%	9,920	14.6%	+745	+8.1%
1 non-pensioner adult	10,466	16.7%	13,480	19.9%	+3,014	+28.8%
Single parent	3,684	5.9%	4,990	7.4%	+1,306	+35.5%
2+ adults no children	25,967	41.5%	25,680	37.9%	-287	-1.1%
2+ adults and children	13,308	21.3%	13,740	20.3%	+432	+3.2%
Total	**62,600**	**100%**	**67,810**	**100%**	**+5,210**	**+8.3%**

Source: General Register Office for Scotland, 2001 Census (Crown Copyright) now National Records of Scotland

2.10 While the total number of households grew by 8.3% between 2001 and 2008, the number of single parent households increased by over one third and there was an increase of nearly 30% in the number of single non-pensioner adult households. On the other hand there was only a small increase in the number of two or more adult households with children while the number of households of two or more adults with no children fell slightly.

Economic context

2.11 As noted in the Introduction, this Local Housing Strategy has been prepared against a background of the most significant recession in a generation. The impact of the economic downturn seems likely to continue for some time and will inevitably impact on housing provision during the LHS period.

2.12 The residential construction industry has been hit badly by the economic situation with the result that over the 3 years to 2010/11 house completions have been around 400 to 500 per year which compares to rates which reached 900 per year in 2001-05. This means there are fewer new homes available for occupation in the area and this is also relevant in relation to those employed in the construction industry which is over-represented locally with almost 8.9% employed in that sector in 2008 as compared to 5.9% in Scotland as a whole.

2.13 The main industries in the Falkirk Council area are related to the refinery and petro-chemical complex at Grangemouth, together with vehicle manufacture, and timber processing with a smaller proportion of the population employed in high-end managerial and professional occupations which have higher earnings.

2.14 Incomes and access to savings in Falkirk Council area are lower than national levels. It is indicated in the HNDA that the annual income level for full time employees was lower in the Falkirk Council area than the national figure over the period 2006-09[7]. According to the Scottish Household Survey, only 46% of Falkirk households have savings compared to over half of all Scottish households[8].

[7] Falkirk Council (2010) The current housing market – stage 3 market activity
[8] Falkirk Council (2010) The Economic Context page 34

2.15 There are considerable differences in household income by sub area: for example, in Grangemouth in 2009 the average income was around £10,000 lower than in Larbert/ Stenhousemuir/Rural North[9].

2.16 The economic recession has impacted on unemployment levels with the unemployed claimant count showing that 4,751 people (4.8% of Falkirk's working-age population) were unemployed in January 2011, which is its highest point since summer 2008[10].

2.17 Inflation is at its highest level for several years, particularly the Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation, which includes mortgage interest payments – this was 5.5%, in February 2011, the highest rate for 20 years.

2.18 The economic recession has made it more difficult to access finance including mortgage finance. Indeed, as will be discussed later, first time buyers are required to have a deposit of around 23% before they can access a mortgage.

The Housing Stock

2.19 In 2009 there were 70,134 properties in the Council area, with the highest number being in the Falkirk sub area. The tenure is predominantly owner occupation (68%) however there are some variations by sub area which are indicated below:

- The sub areas with most social rented properties and lowest percentage of their stock being owner-occupied are Falkirk and Grangemouth,
- The highest levels of owner-occupation are in Larbert/Stenhousemuir/Rural North and Polmont/Rural South whereas the levels of social rented housing is lowest in these areas,
- Most private rented stock is in Falkirk.

Table 7: Tenure by sub area 2009

	Falkirk Council		RSL		Social rented	Owner occupied		Private rented		Total	
	No	% area	No	% area	% area	No	% area	No	% area	No	% total
Bo'ness	1276	18%	472	7%	24%	4985	69%	451	6%	7184	10%
Denny Bonnybridge	2995	26%	291	3%	29%	7849	69%	273	2%	11408	16%
Falkirk	5015	26%	1117	6%	32%	11342	60%	1570	8%	19044	27%
Grangemouth	2333	26%	759	9%	35%	5436	62%	288	3%	8816	13%
Polmont Rural South	2574	21%	133	1%	22%	9354	75%	352	3%	12413	18%
Stenhousemuir Larbert Rural North	1983	18%	228	2%	20%	8567	76%	491	4%	11269	16%
Total	16176	23%	3000	4%	27%	47533	68%	3425	5%	70134	100%

Source: Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009. Note numbers are subject to rounding

[9] Falkirk Council (2011) Housing Need and Demand Assessment p
[10] Falkirk Council (2011) Insight Unemployment for January 2011

2.20 Table 8 indicates that the percentage of owner-occupied and social rented stock in 2009 is almost the reverse of what it was in 1981. This is one consequence of the Right to Buy in the Tenants Rights etc (Scotland) Act 1980.

Table 8: Change in House Tenure 1981 – 2009

	1981		1991		2001		2003		2009	
Tenure	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Falkirk Council	37,237	69%	25,906	44%	20,981	33%	19,323	29%	16,176	23%
RSL	747	1%	3,520	6%	3,129	5%	3,182	5%	3,000	4%
Owner occupied	14,126	26%	27,897	48%	38,162	59%	41,624	63%	47,533	68%
Private rented and other	1,617	3%	1,230	2%	2,152	3%	2,152	3%	3,425	5%
Total	53,727	100%	58,553	100%	64,424	100%	66,281	100%	70,134	100%

Source: 1981- 2003 - LHS 2004-9 Appendix A (1) Housing Market Analysis, Note that Scottish Homes (Communities Scotland) housing was included with RSL in 1991 and 2001 but with Falkirk Council for 1981 pg 11 2009 - Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009

2.21 Over the last 30 years the Right to Buy has clearly had a profound impact on the balance of tenure in the area however sales of public sector housing stock have reduced substantially in the past few years from 796 a year in 2002 to 131 a year in 2010-11. The Right to Buy has had ongoing implications for this LHS, not least in respect of housing conditions as explored further in Section 5 below but also in relation to the supply of affordable housing. The new pressured area guidance issued by the Scottish Government in June 2011 will be explored with RSL partners and stakeholders during 2012 to see if there is scope to designate particular local areas as pressured areas.

Age of Stock

2.22 The Local House Condition Survey (LHCS) indicates that around 30% of the stock was built prior to 1945. Of the remaining 70% of dwellings, over a third of these were built after 1982. Rates of pre-1919 housing are significantly lower than the Scottish average whilst the proportion of modern housing (post 1982), estimated at around 25% of the stock, is higher than the Scottish average of 20%.

House Conditions

2.23 House conditions are discussed in more detail in Section 4 however conditions in the Falkirk Council area are generally better than the Scottish average but vary across the area both geographically and by tenure, type and age.

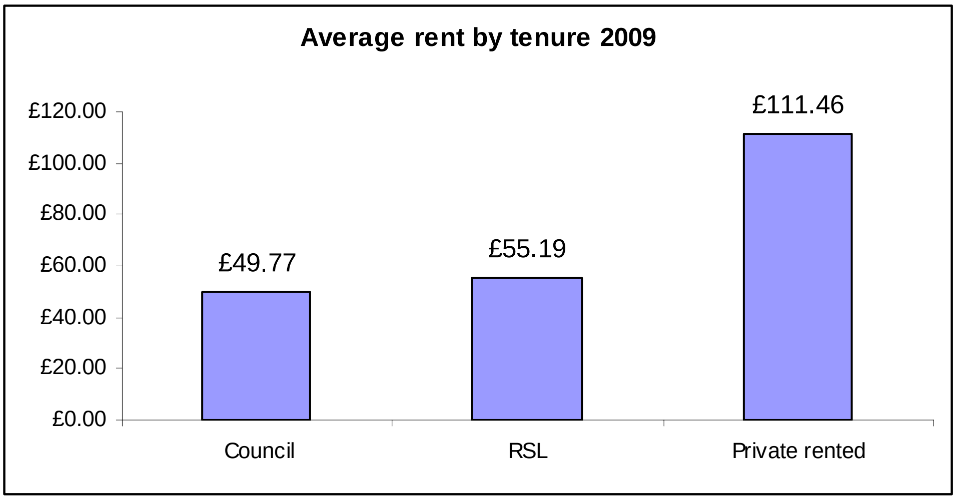
Market Activity

2.24 The economic recession has impacted significantly on the local housing market with a significant decline in properties sold, which is reflected in a 49% fall over the period 2006 to 2009 in new build sales and a 66% fall in second hand sales.

2.25 Resale house prices in 2009 in general were slightly above 2006 figures with the mean resale price being £115,193, however there are differences by sub area: Grangemouth continues to be the most affordable area and Larbert/ Stenhousemuir/Rural North the least. New build prices in 2009 were below 2006 levels with the mean price being £168,833.

2.26 In relation to rented housing, Council housing is cheapest whereas private rented properties are the most expensive as indicated in figure 6.

Figure 6



Source: Falkirk Council finance services, Housing regulator and private rented sector database.

Under-Occupation and Overcrowding

2.27 The degree of overcrowding in the area provides an insight into a key indicator of housing need and will be explored in greater detail in Section 4. Information from the LHCS indicates that 3,150 properties are overcrowded which is around 4% of the total stock, the greatest percentage of which are owner-occupied or Council-owned properties.

2.28 Under-occupation, although not in itself an indicator of housing need, is a useful measure of how well the stock is being used. The LHCS estimated there were 46,550 households which had bedrooms surplus to household requirements. The majority of these properties (75%) are owner-occupied with Council tenancies making up 19% of under-occupied properties. Again, this issue will be further explored in Section 4.

The Future Housing Market

Population Change

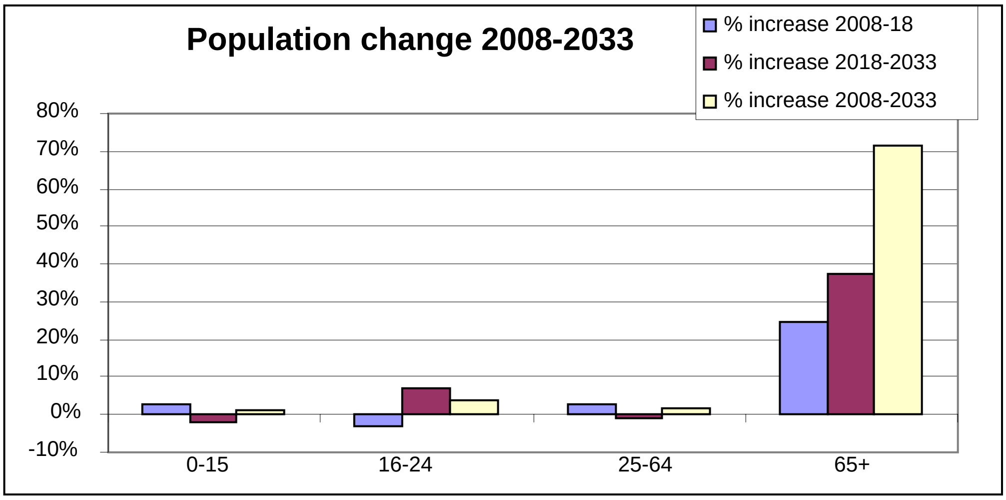
2.29 The population of Falkirk Council area is projected to increase by 6% over the period 2008-18 or a 13% increase in the period 2008-33 which is set out in Figure 7.

2.30 During this time there are expected to be significant changes by age group:

- The number of children aged 0-15 is projected to increase by 3% in the period 2008-2018 then decrease by 2% during 2018-2033. This results in a projected 1% increase for the period 2008-2033,
- The number of 16-24 year olds is projected to decrease by 3% in the period 2008-2018 then to increase by 7% in the period 2018-2033. This equates to a projected 4% increase in the combined period 2008-2033,

- the most significant change relates to the older population: during the period 2008-18 the population aged over 65 is expected to increase by 25% whilst during the period 2008-33 a 71% increase is anticipated.

Figure 7

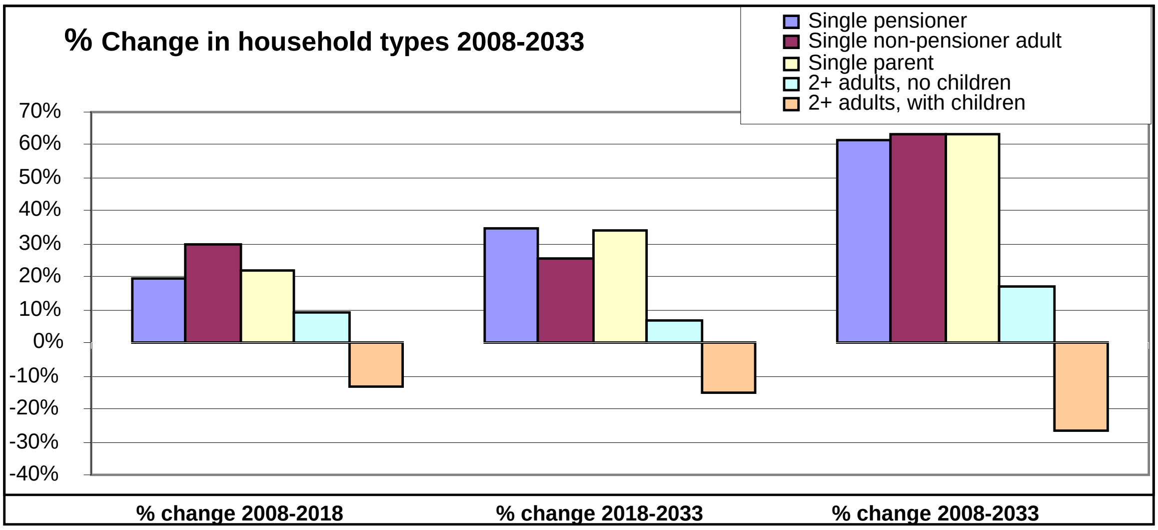


Source: National Records of Scotland

Increases in Households

2.31 Over the period 2008-33 the number of households is expected to increase from 67,810 to 86,410 as set out in figure 8.

Figure 8



Source: National Records of Scotland

2.32 The changes in the proportions of the household types are also significant:

- there is projected to be a steady increase in smaller, single-person households – 63% increase in single people and 62% increase in single pensioner households during the period 2008-33,

- there is also projected to be an increase in single parents (64% over the period 2008-2033)
- The percentage of two-parent families with children is expected to reduce steadily over the period 2008-33.

What Population and Household Growth means for Housing Provision

2.33 The projected growth in both population and households gives rise to a number of issues, not least of which is the requirement for more houses. However, another significant issue is household income and the amount of money people have available to pay their housing costs. The groups noted above are more likely to have lower incomes and are therefore less likely to have access to savings. In essence, this means that these groups are more likely to have to need affordable housing in its various forms. This is evidenced in the Scottish Household Survey 2009:

- Over 77% of single adults and 91% of single pensioners have an income of less than £20, 000
- 74% of single parents have an income of less than £20,000 which compares to between 19-20% of small or large families. In relation to savings, 35% of single parent families have access to savings which is over 20% lower than every other household group.

2.34 In addition, the correlation between old age and disability means more properties will need to be suitable for people with disabilities. In the longer term, there is also likely to be an increasing need for the provision of support services that enable people to live independently for as long as possible.

Housing Requirements of Particular Household Groups[11]

2.35 The housing needs assessment (see Appendix 1) and the Community Care Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 4) set out housing and support issues in relation to the following client groups which may have particular needs:

- Older People
- People with physical disabilities
- People with learning disabilities (including autistic spectrum disorders)
- People with mental ill health
- People who misuse drugs and alcohol (including people with Alcohol Related Brain Disorders)
- Minority ethnic groups
- Gypsies/Travellers
- Young People

2.36 The HNDA also considered the equality strands of religion, sexual orientation and gender but there was no available information of a requirement for specific house types. The needs of older women are considered in relation to older people.

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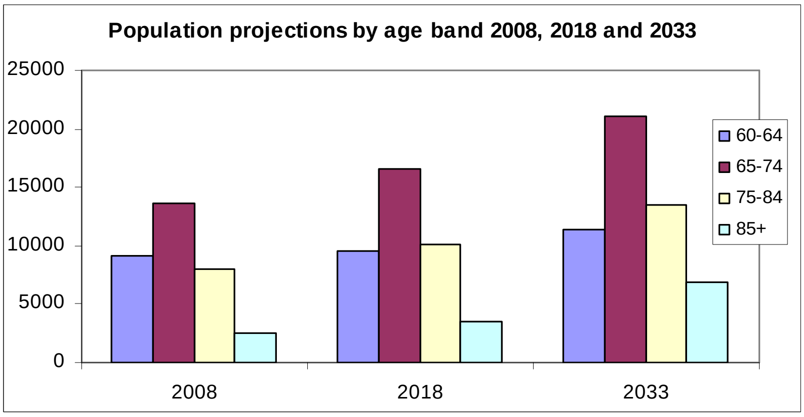
[11] The equalities groups covered in the HNDA were set at a workshop with Social Work colleagues in 4/6/2009 and discussed in detail in the Community Care Housing Needs Assessment appendix 4. The Equalities Impact Assessment for the LHS covers the nine stands and is available at appendix 6.

Housing for Older People

2.37 Paragraph 2.30 showed that the population of older people in the local community is projected to rise significantly over the coming 20 or so years. The 2008 based population projections indicate that whilst the overall population in 2033 will have risen by 13%, the age group over 75 years will have increased by 93%. These figures have significant implications in respect of the provision of both suitable properties and housing support services in the future and these issues are explored in figure 9 in more detail.

Figure 9: Population projections by age band 2008, 2018 and 2033



Source: National Records of Scotland

2.38 Health and Wellbeing profiles indicate that life expectancy for women in the Falkirk Council area is 78.8 years and 74 years for men. This is slightly lower than the Scottish average. Women are also likely to live longer in good health (69.5 years) than men (66.4 years). The Health and Well-Being Profiles also indicate that there is a link between deprivation and ill health/life expectancy and they highlight the importance of support options to enable people to stay in their own homes for longer.

2.39 Consultation within the Falkirk Council area undertaken for this LHS supports national research[12]. The LHS survey included questions which asked people what they would wish if they were older or disabled: 66% said they would like to live in their own home with adaptations as compared 29% who said they would like to live in specialist housing. The survey was based on a response rate of 1,082 therefore provides a comprehensive picture. The findings of the survey are also supported by the two focus groups with older and disabled people, where a preference was also expressed by those attending of wanting to remain in their own home with adaptations and support being provided if necessary rather than specialist housing. This gives rise to a number of issues concerning the provision of specialist housing models for older people which are explored below.

2.40 Research undertaken as part of the HNDA indicates that there is currently very low demand for the current model of supported housing for older people in the Council area. Waiting lists indicate only between 197-214 people looking for Housing with Care and some RSLs are having to reduce their age criteria for this type of housing in order to fill vacancies. Limited information from the housing register appears to indicate that older people would prefer to have two bedroom properties rather than move to Housing with Care which is either a bedsit or has

[12] National Research as quoted in Appendix 1, Housing Need and Demand Assessment

only one bedroom. Conversely, there is high demand for property adaptations with 3,693 people indicating they require adaptations to their home, of which 67% are elderly.

2.41 Ongoing liaison with RSLs indicates that some of them are reconsidering their provision of Housing with Care at some of their developments and dialogue has begun with one particular RSL about the client groups accommodated at two of their developments – there may be scope to meet the housing needs of other groups that need housing support in the absence of older people expressing an interest in this type of property. Any change of client group will require careful planning and implementation.

2.42 There is a strong correlation between old age and physical disability as highlighted in relation to adaptation requests. The projected population increase in older people, and issues highlighted in relation to the existing housing stock for this age group, together with the national agenda in relation to *Reshaping Care for Older People* means that reconsidering current housing for older people and the provision of adaptations and support services need to be a key priority in this LHS.

2.43 There is also a correlation between old age and the incidence of dementia. It is currently estimated that there are around 1,920 people with dementia in the Falkirk Council area but there is very little information available about their accommodation and support needs. This may be largely an issue of recording with other more acute factors also affecting a person's health and wellbeing accorded greater priority in case files. This is an issue that requires to be addressed in the course of this LHS with Social Work and Health.

Where do Older People Live?

2.44 Table 9 considers tenure breakdown by the age of the head of household and indicates that the tenure of people over 60 is very similar to the population as a whole, however there are some exceptions:

- Council – a higher percentage of over 60s are Council tenants
- Privately rented – a lower percentage over 60s are private rented sector tenants
- All private – the percentage of over 60s in privately owned properties is very similar to the wider population
- Ex-Right to Buy – the percentage of over 60s in ex Right to Buy properties is higher than in the population as a whole
- Privately owned – the percentage of over 60s in privately owned properties (resale or new build) is very slightly lower than in the wider population

Table 9: Tenure breakdown by age head of household 2009

	ALL HOUSEHOLDS		HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD 60+	
	No	% of total	No	% of total
Falkirk Council	16,173	23%	6,949	28%
Housing Association	3,002	4%	922	4%
Privately Owned (Resale/ new build)	31,715	45%	10,539	42%
Ex Right to Buy	15,818	23%	6,193	25%
All private	47,533	68%	16,732	67%
Privately Rented	3,426	5%	196	1%
Total	70,134	100%	24,799	100%

Source: LHCS

2.45 It is possible that older people in ex-Right to Buy properties who previously did not have to worry about maintaining and improving their homes will be more likely to have difficulties organising and funding the maintenance of their properties and will require assistance to do so.

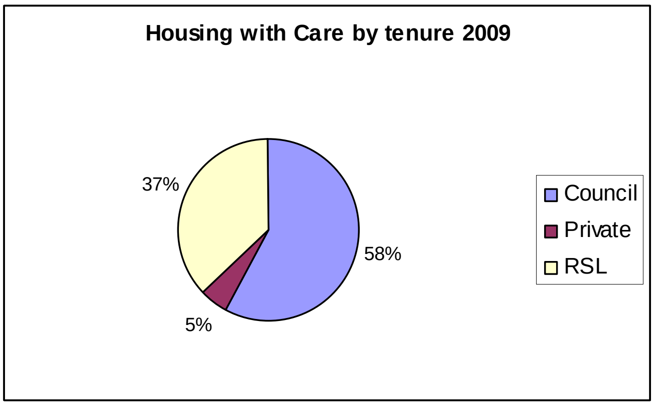
2.46 In terms of care home provision for older people, this is currently being reviewed as part of the Reshaping Care for Older People workstream. Care home provision is closely related to the availability of continuing care beds within the NHS. With pressure on NHS beds, there is a desire to provide more accommodation that helps people, even those with complex needs such as dementia, to live in their own homes rather than in an institutional environment. It seems likely that, in the coming years, given this policy position and the rising number of older people in the community, there will be an increasing need for what is now called Extra Care Housing which offers a higher level of support and care than can be provided in mainstream housing or the existing model of "Housing with Care".

2.47 In the Falkirk Council area Housing with Care falls into three categories with Level 3 being the least specialised or supported:

- Level 3 – sometimes called Amenity Housing.
- Level 2 – sometimes called Sheltered Housing.
- Level 1 – sometimes called Very Sheltered Housing or Extra Care Housing. This is similar to Level 2 Housing with Care but also provides meals which are prepared on site and served in a dining room.

2.48 In terms of Housing with Care, the tenure split is as follows:

Figure 10



Source: HNDA

2.49 An audit of all Housing with Care Levels 1 and 2 carried out for this LHS shows that there are a number of issues which impact upon the popularity of this type of housing amongst older people:

- Some are flatted properties which were built some time ago and do not have a lift to the upper floors,
- Some developments include bedsit or studio flats which are now less popular with housing applicants, particularly older women,

- Housing with Care in the Council's High Rise Flats is unsuitable for anyone who requires to use a wheelchair within their home.

2.50 In addition to Housing with Care, Levels 1-3 owned by both the Council and RSLs, the Council owns 69 properties which are let under a special lettings initiative for older people and 13 blocks of High Rise Flats which are used to accommodate older people. Two of these blocks, Glenbrae and Glenfuir Courts, are designated as Housing with Care Level 2 but the remainder are routinely let to people over the age of 60 and are a very popular housing option amongst older people who wish to downsize from family accommodation in both the private sector and the social rented sector.

2.51 There is very limited private Housing with Care in the Council area – only 105 owner-occupied units and 28 units which are let and managed by a private company. Notwithstanding the above, the majority of older people live in mainstream housing with greater or lesser levels of adaptation and support provision.

<u>Housing for Older People – The Future</u>

2.52 As noted above, there is an increasing body of evidence to suggest that many of today's older people prefer to stay in their current home, having adaptations carried out to it to assist them to cope with disabilities and to have support services brought to them if they require them. This presents a number of challenges including:

- The future use of the existing stock of housing for older people,
- The increased pressure that there is now on family-sized housing which is being under-occupied by older people,
- The cost of adapting more properties – in both the private and social sectors - to meet the needs of an increasing number of older people who have disabilities,

2.53 It is clear that older people are not a homogenous group and that they do not all want the same kind of housing. Most of the Housing with Care in the Council area was built in the 1970s and 80s when housing standards and the aspirations of older people were lower. Thirty years on the percentage of older people in the population has grown considerably as a result of developments in medicine; many more older people now own their homes as a result of the Right to Buy legislation and, generally, people's housing expectations and aspirations have increased. Increasingly, there is difficulty in letting the older models of Housing with Care to older people – locally, some RSL providers have reduced the age of eligibility to 50 (at a time when many people are now expected to work well beyond that age).

2.54 Given all the above, it is clear that at both the national and local level there is a need to formulate new strategies for accommodating an increasing number of older people in the community and the forthcoming publication of a national strategy for housing for older people in December 2011 is warmly welcomed. It is proposed that a priority action during the period of this LHS should be the development of a local strategy for older people's housing which will take account of the Scottish Government's national research *Wider Planning for an Ageing Population* and address the issues highlighted in Reshaping Care for Older People.

2.55 The demographic projections over the coming ten to twenty years, the impact they will have on society as a whole and changing public expectations mean that this work is vital and will require close co-operation between Housing, Social Work, Health and the voluntary sector.

There is a clear role for the Strategic Community Planning Partnership in driving forward the necessary changes in an integrated way that seeks to deliver the best overall outcomes for individuals and the best return for the significant sums of public money that will require to be spent on an ageing population.

The Housing Needs of People with Physical Disabilities

2.56 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment looked at a wide range of sources of information on levels of disability in order to develop a picture of the extent of disability in the Council area and how this impacts on the need for specialist forms of housing during the life of this LHS. The data sources considered were health and well-being profiles, the Census, benefits take-up, social work caseloads, the all-tenure Local House Condition Survey and the Council's housing waiting list.

2.57 These various data sources provide a range of differing figures because they analyse a range of different issues, however, it has been possible to gain a clear overall picture that will assist in determining policy priorities for the coming years:

- Around 20% of the local population have a limiting long term illness,
- 10% of the local population are not in good health,
- Older people, especially those aged 85+ are in poorer health than younger people,
- Over 10,000 people in the Council area claim Disability Living Allowance,
- 7,400 people claim Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance,
- 4,350 people claim Attendance Allowance,
- Over 700 people on the Social Work case load had physical disabilities,
- Around 100 people with significant disabilities who are on the Social Work case load have accommodation that does not meet their needs,
- Around 1,100 people on the Council's housing register said they had a mobility or physical disability issue.

2.58 The correlation between old age and disability has been widely recognised and will have an increasing impact during the lifetime of this LHS and beyond. In very general terms, it is expected that a significant proportion of older people will need some adaptations to assist them to live independently as they age or become more frail.

The Physical Suitability of Dwellings

2.59 In terms of the physical suitability of dwellings to meet the needs of people with disabilities, there are two key issues which need to be considered:

- Can a person's current home be adapted to meet their needs or will they have to move, either to a purpose-built property or to another house that can be more easily adapted?
- Can a person resolve his housing need by himself e.g. by buying a more suitable home, or will he require help to resolve that need?

2.60 In terms of *in situ* solutions to housing need, people with physical disabilities in both private and social sector housing may be able to obtain help to make their home more suitable. In respect of home owners or people living in the private rented sector, the Council's Scheme of Assistance, a requirement in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, puts in place a system of grants to enable property adaptations to be carried out. However, key factors influencing whether adaptations can be carried out include the nature of the property itself and the financial resources available to fund adaptations.

2.61 However, regardless of tenure, in some instances property adaptations provide only a partial or short term solution and in these cases it may be more appropriate for the individuals/families concerned to move to other more suitable housing. The main issue in this regard is the supply of housing suitable for people with greater levels of disability.

2.62 Local authorities and other social sector landlords have been criticised for removing adaptations when tenants move out of a property and arguments have been made that such properties should be made available to other people who need these adaptations. However, there is a real difficulty in matching up those in housing need with the available adapted properties – the properties may not be in an area in which current disabled applicants wish to live or they may not meet the specific needs of individuals – physical disability encompasses a wide range of impairments and what suits one person may be entirely unsuitable for another.

2.63 However, since the introduction of the Council's choice-based lettings scheme, empty adapted properties are now advertised for letting and applicants can bid to be considered for them, with priority being given to those whose functional assessment best meets the features of the adapted property. In the year April 2010-March 2011, 165 adapted Council properties have become available for letting. Subject to the agreement of partner RSLs, it is intended to extend this arrangement over the wider social rented sector stock in the area so that best use is made of all adapted housing in the social rented sector.

Demand and Supply of Adapted Housing

2.64 Consultation carried out in 2009 on the Scheme of Assistance and, more recently as part of the LHS consultation process, indicates that a key issue to be addressed during the period of this LHS is the provision of better information and advice about housing options for people with physical disabilities to enable people to make better choices at an appropriate stage in their life – if people can be encouraged to think ahead, the need for emergency solutions at times of crisis can be reduced.

2.65 Based on an analysis of the number of applicants on Council and RSLs housing waiting lists whose needs assessments indicate that their housing need cannot be met through adaptations to their current home, the HNDA estimates that about 100 households have a physical disability which means that their current home does not meet their needs. Around half of these households need an affordable housing option, i.e. they cannot afford to resolve their housing need themselves.

2.66 In the social rented sector, purpose-built properties suitable for wheelchair users can be identified from the Council's and RSL's records and the allocations policies of the agencies concerned ensure that the properties are allocated to people who need the special facilities available in these dwellings. However, information on mainstream properties which have been adapted is not easily accessible across the social rented sector and this requires to be addressed. In relation to housing in the private sector (both owner-occupied properties and those available for private rent) information on purpose-built housing for those with disabilities is not easily available. It should also be noted that there is currently no single, comprehensive all-tenure database on disabled adaptations currently in place.

2.67 This factor limits what can be done to assist people with disabilities to find appropriate accommodation to meet their needs in the tenure of their choice and this is an issue which will require to be tackled during the life of this LHS. The work that is currently being done by the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL) to develop an accessible housing register and which is to be rolled out nationally over the next few years will allow both individuals and landlords (social and private) to register properties and they adaptations they contain. The Council welcomes this lead and will engage with local RSL partners about the potential that participation in this initiative could bring in the coming years.

2.68 There are a number of ways in which better use could be made of the existing housing stock which would help reduce the need for new build housing for people with physical disabilities. These include the following:

- Integrating improved information from the Council's 100% stock condition survey (carried out in 2010) particularly in relation to adaptations, with the new housing allocations policy and the Choice-Based Letting scheme to ensure that adapted properties are offered to those with the greatest needs,
- Reaching agreement with RSLs around formalising procedures on letting adapted properties to ensure that priority is given to people requiring such adaptations,
- Improving information on an all-tenure basis about adaptations to properties and how to access such accommodation. This needs to include information for owners on how they can fund adaptations to their homes without recourse to the very limited public monies available under the Scheme of Assistance.

Learning Disability (including Autistic Spectrum Disorders)

2.69 The Community Care Housing Needs Assessment (Appendix 4) used information from the Scottish Consortium for Learning Difficulties (SCLD) and the Council's Social Work Information System (SWIS) to quantify the extent of learning disability in the Falkirk Council area. The SCLD data suggests that there are around 750 adults with learning disabilities in the area and just under half (46%) of them live in mainstream accommodation, with or without support (which may be provided, at least in part, by family members). The remainder (54%) live in specialist accommodation including registered care homes and supported accommodation projects which were developed as part of the reprovisioning of the Royal Scottish National Hospital (RSNH).

2.70 For those who live with a family carer, there are potentially issues to be considered in the future for both carers and the people being cared for, e.g. as they get older.

2.71 The Supporting People budget for people with learning disabilities was £3,859,304 in 2010-11; this accounts for 40% of the total Supporting People budget.

2.72 Work is currently ongoing in Social Work Services to review the range of supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities in the Council area and consideration is being given to using some of the Housing with Care for which there is currently low demand for this group.

2.73 In terms of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), records indicate that there are around 85 people with an ASD diagnosis in the Council area but there is a lack of information about the accommodation and support needs for this group. This issue needs to be explored in the life of this LHS.

Mental Ill Health

2.74 Appendix 4 provides detailed information in relation to the extent of mental ill health in the Council area based largely on Health and Wellbeing Profiles prepared by NHS Forth Valley but also using statistics from SWIS and the Homelessness System.

2.75 In summary, the vast majority of people in the area who suffer from some form of mental ill health live independently in the community receiving some level of support from the NHS and the voluntary sector. A very small number of people have more complex mental health problems which require them to live in a supported environment. In 2009 there were 23 shared or communal living establishments in the Council area accommodating a total of 34 people. Information from SWIS indicates that a better housing solution needs to be found for around eight people.

2.76 Information from the Supporting People budget indicates that in the current year there is a budget of £642,996 to provide housing support for people with mental ill health and there is no indication that additional or different accommodation requires to be provided for this group.

Alcohol/Drug Misuse

2.77 Appendix 4 provides information about the number of people with alcohol or drug problems in the Council area, largely based on Health and Wellbeing Profiles for the area. The vast majority of people with such problems live in mainstream accommodation without specialist housing support services. However, there is increasing evidence, both from analysis of the reasons why people become homeless and from the support needs assessment carried out for each homeless person, that people who have alcohol or drug dependency problems are at greater risk of becoming homeless. Some of this group present with a range of complex issues which can be challenging for housing support providers to manage.

2.78 It is clear that more joint work needs to be done with Health, Social Work, the Criminal Justice Authority and the voluntary sector to identify whether there is a need for specialist supported accommodation for people with drug/alcohol dependency and how such support could be funded. This will be pursued during the course of this LHS.

Minority Ethnic Groups

2.79 The minority ethnic population[13] is small in the Falkirk area (1%) but it has a youthful age profile with 82% of the minority ethnic population in the 0-44 age group compared to 59% of the white population.

2.80 The percentage of applicants[14] from a minority ethnic group on the Council's waiting list is the same as for the population as a whole, at just over 1.1 %[15].

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[13] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs Assessment p100-101
[14] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs Assessment p101

2.81 Research was carried out in 2006 by the research company ODS on behalf of Communities Scotland and the three Forth Valley local authorities. This made a number of recommendations which have been incorporated into ongoing LHS work, including, for example, local housing needs assessments to inform RSL new build programmes; improved data collection from RSLs;[16] work with private landlords and the development of equalities impact assessments to inform service delivery objectives.

2.82 As part of the HNDA consultation process a focus group[17] was carried out with people from minority ethnic groups which indicated that:

- People want to live in a "good area" with good schools etc. There is no indication that people from minority ethnic groups want to be housed close to specialist shops or places of worship, or near to other people from the same ethnic groups or religion – the reputation of the area is more important to them,
- People in the minority ethnic communities have concerns about harassment – they do not feel they can let their children play in their front garden or in play parks because of fear of physical or verbal abuse,
- There is some concern about communication problems and staff awareness of issues that people from the minority ethnic communities might face. There is a need to improve awareness of the housing advice and information available in the Council area, particularly in relation to the specific needs of minority ethnic groups.

Gypsies/Travellers

2.83 There is one purpose-built site for gypsies/travellers in the Council area. The Falkirk Council site for gypsies/travellers has fifteen pitches and is in Redding within the Polmont/Rural South sub area.[18] Each pitch has its own amenity block offering shower/toilet and clothes-washing facilities.

2.84 The Scottish Government requires that twice yearly counts of gypsies/travellers be carried out in all local authority areas. Locally, the counts tend to record greater numbers of gypsies/travellers in the summer than in the winter: for example, in summer 2008 there were 44 travelling households, whereas in winter 2009 there were 29 such households.

2.85 As at October 2010 there were two households waiting for a pitch at Redding. Both were residing outwith Falkirk Council area at that time. [19]

2.86 There were five households recorded in private sites until summer 2008; thereafter the number increased to sixteen households in the 2009 winter count.

2.87 During the period 2006-2009 there were no unauthorised encampments recorded in any winter counts however, they were recorded in summer counts increasing from eight in 2006 to nineteen in 2008.

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[15] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs Assessment p103
[16] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs Assessment p107
[17] Falkirk Council (2011) LHS Consultation Phase 1 p4
[18] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs p110
[19] Falkirk Council (2011) Community Care Housing Needs p110

2.88 A new policy was incorporated into the Local Plan approved by Council in June 2010. It relates to small privately owned gypsy/travellers' sites and the necessity of providing guidance for assessing proposals for such sites.

2.89 A focus group was held with gypsies/travellers on the Council's travelling people's site in May 2011 which raised a number of issues which will be explored during 2012. The issues were:

- A wish for more direct consultation involving gypsies/travellers rather than with groups which claim to represent their interests,
- A wish for more amenities on the site,
- Concern about the cost of renting a pitch on the site,
- A wish for more flexibility regarding the use of the community space on the site,
- A wish for more information about mainstream housing.

2.90 There is no evidence to suggest that travelling show people are looking for sites in the Falkirk Council area.

Young people

2.91 As at December 2009 there were 2,305 young people under the age of 25 on the Council waiting list, accounting for 20% of the total housing list at that time. This compares with 44,627 young people under age 25 in the local population, or 29% the total population. Younger people make up a lower percentage of the total Falkirk Council population waiting list than they do the total Falkirk Council population. This suggests that most young people do not approach the Council for accommodation but there is a considerable body of evidence to indicate that those who do are more likely to have housing support needs.

2.92 Analysis of homelessness data for the HNDA indicated that the number of homeless applicants increased significantly over the period 2006/2007-2008/2009 and that this increase was disproportionately higher amongst young people under 25.

2.93 Current housing benefit legislation precludes young people under the age of 25 (unless they have responsibility for dependents) from obtaining Local Housing Allowance in respect of individual, self-contained accommodation in the private rented sector. Instead, the "single room rent" applies and they are only awarded housing benefit on the basis of renting a room in shared accommodation. This is a significant issue for those young people who are looking for housing who cannot afford owner-occupation and do not wish to share accommodation in the private rented sector: their only real housing option is accommodation in the social rented sector.

2.94 The pressure on social rented sector accommodation is likely to increase when the "single room rent" rules are extended to single people up to the age of 35 as part of the current Westminster government's welfare reforms in April 2012.

2.95 As part of recent LHS consultation two focus groups were held with young people leaving care and young people in supported accommodation which indicated the following issues:

- For 16-18 year olds the only social rented housing option offered to them is supported accommodation in one of the local projects,

- This group of young people have low housing aspirations in that they do not aspire to owner-occupation. However, they wish accommodation with two bedrooms and are less interested in bedsit or one bedroom accommodation,
- Awareness of the private rented sector and how to access it is low,
- Overall, these young people have a poor knowledge of the need to budget their income and very little awareness of rent responsibilities: they expect that their rent will be paid through housing benefit; this gives rise to the "benefits trap" if they gain employment,
- Like other groups, young people want to live an area where they can feel safe and which had good transport links to the facilities that they use,
- Surprisingly, this group have poor skills in relation to the use of the internet and how it can assist them.

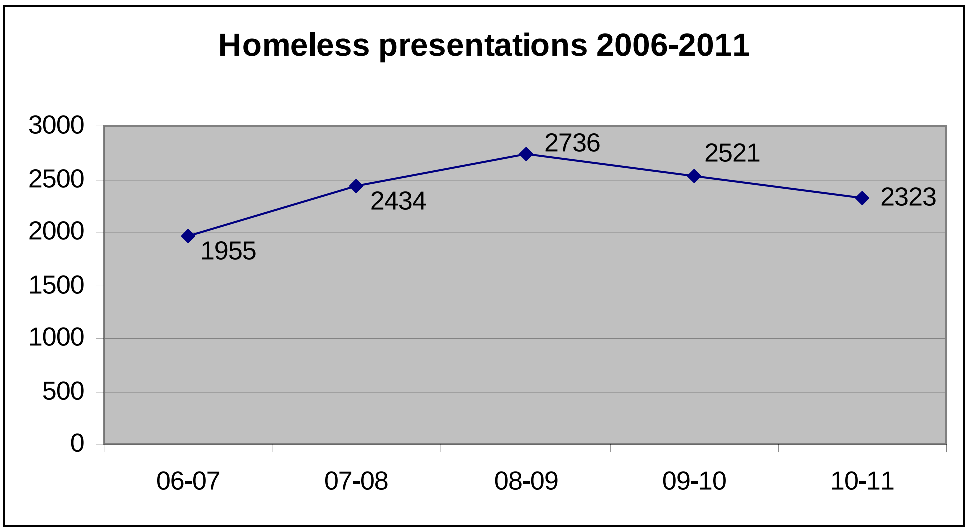
2.96 These focus groups indicated a number of issues which require to be taken forward in the LHS. However, there are also issues which require the attention of the wider Strategic Community Planning Partnership and these will be addressed in the coming years.

Homelessness

Scale and Nature of Homelessness in Falkirk

2.97 After rising steadily for many years, homelessness in the Falkirk area appears to have stabilised and is now reducing as indicated in the following graph.

Figure 11



Source: Falkirk Council Homelessness System

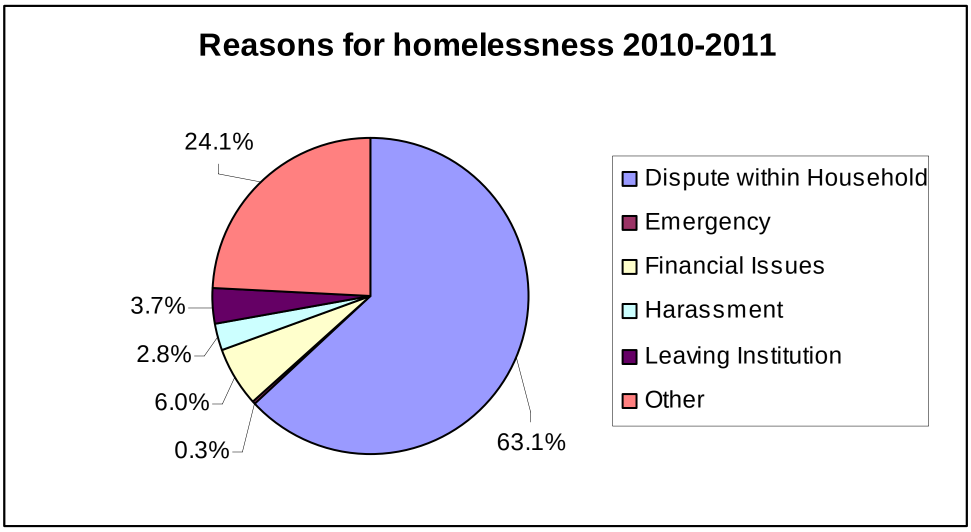
2.98 The reduction in homeless presentations since 2008-09 is a result of proactive homelessness prevention measures such as:

- Developing joint working arrangements between Housing and Revenues staff to ensure that Council tenants falling into rent arrears are identified at the earliest opportunity,
- Developing an Advice and Information Strategy to assist in the prevention of homelessness,

- Implementing Housing Option interviews for all homeless applicants,
- Reviewing processes for Debt and Welfare Benefits Advice,
- Undertaking regular focus groups with service users to gather feedback on awareness of homelessness, access to services to prevent homelessness and the provision of accommodation and support,
- Reviewing the service-user feedback questionnaire and undertaking an annual evaluation of the results,
- Analysing complaints to identify the need for service improvement,
- Delivering a housing education programme about leaving home and homelessness, including the use of peer educators,
- Developing a family mediation service to prevent current and future homelessness.

2.99 Whilst the numbers presenting as homeless have reduced over the last two financial years, the main cause of homelessness remains relationship breakdown as shown in Figure 12 below:[20]

Figure 12

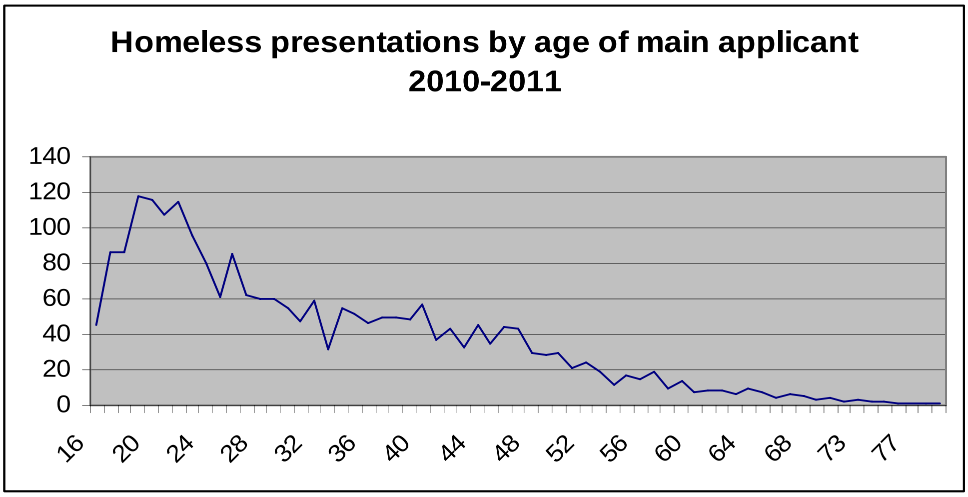


Source: Falkirk Council Homelessness System

2.100 In terms of age, homelessness in Falkirk (as in Scotland as a whole) affects young people more than older people as shown below:

[20] The "Other" category in Figure 9 includes applicants presenting because the applicant terminated secure accommodation (68), Other action by the landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy (158), Other reason for leaving accommodation / household (297), Other reason for loss of accommodation (28) and Overcrowding (9).

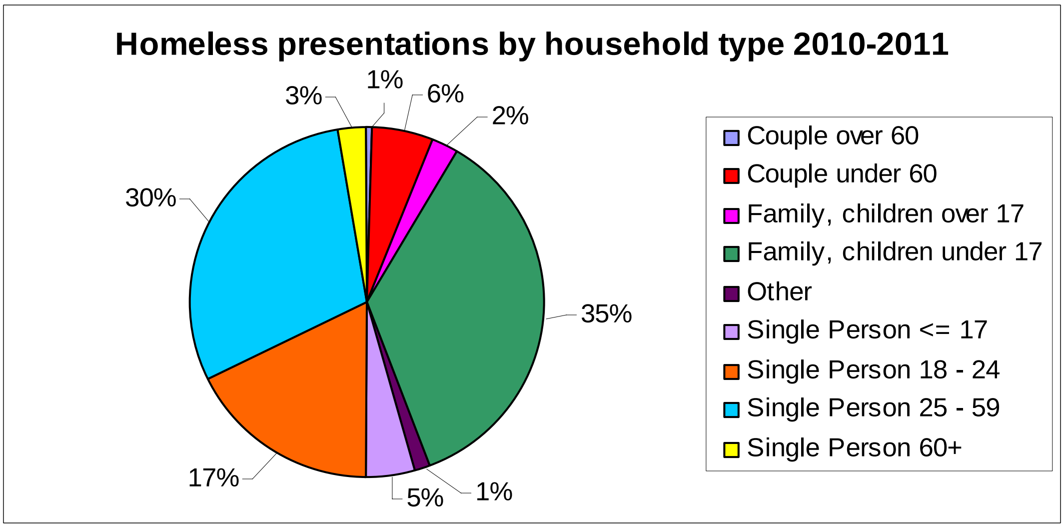
Figure 13



Source: Falkirk Council Homelessness System

2.101 In terms of household type, it is clear that single people are over-represented (52% of all cases) as are families with children under the age of 17 (35% of cases):

Figure 14



Source: Falkirk Council Homelessness System

2.102 It is interesting to note that income data for homeless people shows that over 60% have an annual income of less than £10,000 with a further 20% having an income between £10,000 and £15,000. It is therefore self-evident that the majority of homeless people have to rely on the rented sectors to meet their housing needs.

Homelessness Strategy

2.103 The Council's Homelessness Strategy was approved in December 2008 (see Appendix 15). It seeks to address the national target that by 2012 everyone who is not intentionally homeless will have a right to settled accommodation.

2.104 The Strategy is founded on three key principles: Prevention, Accommodation and Support. A fundamental element of the approach taken to the prevention of homelessness is the implementation of the "housing options approach" as advocated by the Scottish Government. This seeks to help everyone who is looking for affordable housing to explore the various housing options that may be available to them, including accommodation in the private rented sector.

2.105 The housing options approach recognises that many people are unaware of the different forms of tenure that might suit their circumstances and that some people have unrealistically high expectations of what is available in the social rented sector - the impact of the Right to Buy as set out in Section 4, now restricts the amount of social rented housing available for let but resales of properties bought through the Right to Buy now offer those on low to moderate incomes the opportunity for low cost home ownership.

Providing Housing Support to Meet a Range of Needs

2.106 As noted at the start of this Strategy, everyone needs a home and meeting the physical need for every household to have good quality accommodation is a key focus of this LHS for the coming five year period. However, homes are not just about bricks and mortar – they are also a place where a person can feel safe and an integral part of their community.

2.107 The LHS guidance indicates that housing support services (in the main previously funded through Supporting People) have a vital role in making sure people can live independently. From April 2008 the ring-fence was removed from Supporting People funding which was absorbed into the main local government settlement. The Scottish Government indicated that they removed the ring-fence around the Supporting People budget in order to remove the distinction that had previously been made between care and support and to ensure a focus on best meeting service-users' needs. This was to ensure local authorities considered the role housing support (along with aids and adaptations, care and repair and other housing services) could make to "shifting the balance of care" between the NHS and community based support.

2.108 As previously indicated, there are two main issues affecting the housing needs of people with disabilities. The first was the extent of physical disability in the community and the supply of suitable housing, either purpose-built or adapted, and this has been explored above. The second is the need for housing support services. This section of the LHS will address this issue both for people with disabilities and for other groups of people who have been identified as vulnerable in some way.

What is Housing Support?

2.109 Housing support services help people to live as independently as possible in the community. Such services can be provided in an individual's own home or in temporary accommodation such as hostels for homeless people

2.110 Housing support services help people manage their home in different ways. These include assistance to claim welfare benefits, complete forms, manage a household budget, keep safe and secure, get help from other specialist services, obtain furniture and furnishings and help with shopping and housework. They also include community alarm services in sheltered housing. The type of support provided aims to meet the specific needs of the individual, based on an assessment of his/her needs.

Who Receives Housing Support?

2.111 Most of those who receive housing support services require only a few hours support each week to enable them to cope with independent living. However, a small number of people need very intensive housing support packages to sustain them in community placements. The most expensive placements tend to be for people who have complex needs that require 24 hour support that may include an element of social work or health care.

2.112 The provision of housing support services is often the result of a Single Shared Assessment in respect of the traditional "community care groups". However, in addition, Falkirk Council carries out a Support Needs Assessment alongside all homelessness assessments. This helps to identify people who need assistance to sustain their accommodation and seeks to prevent them from becoming homeless again in the future. Reviews of both floating support for homeless people and supported accommodation projects for the same group are currently being undertaken.

Floating Support

2.113 The review of floating support has involved the establishment of a Public Social Partnership with the two main providers of such services, LinkLiving and Loretto Care. It is anticipated that a contract for floating support services will be tendered early in 2012.

2.114 At any point in time the number of homeless or potentially homeless people receiving floating housing support is as set out in Table 10 below:

Table 10: Support Packages as at 30 June 2011

Total Support Packages as at 30 June 2011	**Total**	**%**
Gaining a Home	17	7%
Maintaining & Moving on from Temp Acc	10	4%
Moving on from Supported Accommodation	21	8%
Setting up Home	79	31%
Social Development	27	11%
Tenancy Sustainment	103	40%
Total	**257**	**100%**

Source: Falkirk Council

Supported Accommodation

2.115 Supported accommodation is provided for people with more complex needs who are not ready to move on to living in an independent tenancy with, or without floating support. There are four supported accommodation projects in the Council area providing a home for 64 homeless people as follows:

Table 11: Supported Accommodation

Project	Client Group	Owner/Management Agent	No. of places
Castings	Single men	Falkirk Council	21
Garry Place	Young people	Falkirk Council/Loretto Care	14
Inchyra Place	Complex needs	Loretto Care	14
Seaforth House	Young people	Falkirk Council/Y People	15

Source: Falkirk Council

2.116 These projects are currently being reviewed to ensure that they offer the services required to meet the outcomes that need to be achieved for the individuals accommodated there, some of whom have complex needs. All of the projects have been in place for some time and it is now considered necessary to review them in the light of experience and information about best practice elsewhere. A particular area of focus for the review will be whether there is a need for a specific project for single women with complex needs.

People with Complex Support Needs - Partnership Working

2.117 It is clear that housing support services alone may not be sufficient to sustain accommodation for a person with complex needs. It is therefore vital that other agencies continue to play their role in providing specialist services to individuals or families where this is necessary.

2.118 The Strategic Community Planning Partnership has an important leadership role to play in providing the framework for inter-agency co-operation to ensure that as many people as possible can live successfully in their local communities. The role of Social Work Services, the NHS, substance abuse projects, the Criminal Justice Service and a range of third sector agencies that support people with particular needs cannot be understated.

2.119 A range of mechanisms is already in place to facilitate cross-service and inter-agency working such as hospital and prison discharge protocols and formal referral arrangements between particular agencies and it is likely that more of these will be developed during the five year period of this LHS as professional staff and volunteers become ever more aware of the over-lapping, complex issues faced by a small number of highly vulnerable people.

Funding Housing Support Services

2.120 Appendix 16 considers the budget for housing support and the number of clients by client group. The housing support budget for Falkirk Council area in 2010-11 was £9.6 million - 3% more than it was in 2007-08, the year when the ring-fencing was removed. For the most part, this increase has been a reflection of the significantly increasing demands of providing care and support at home for older people. The greatest number of clients receiving housing support is older people who make up 90% of all clients

2.121 The highest percentage of the housing support budget continues to be people with learning disabilities (40%) who make up 2% of the clients receiving housing support. This is due to the high support packages relating to former residents of RSNH who now live in the community – many of these people require 24 hour support packages.

2.122 The figures in Appendix 16 relating to the number of clients receiving housing support services are from 2007-08 as the Supporting People returns for which this information was recorded are no longer required and are therefore no longer available.

2.123 It is clear that ongoing review of all housing support services will be required throughout the life of this LHS in order to ensure that they meet the needs of the individuals receiving support and provide good value for money. Needs change over time and in an environment of financial constraint it will be increasingly important to ensure that the available funds are targeted on those who need them most. Clear assessment, review and exit criteria will be vital to ensuring the best outcomes both for the individuals who require support and for the wider community which funds it.

2.124 Taking account of the analysis summarised in this Section it is now necessary to consider the net annual estimate of housing need for general needs housing.

Net Annual Estimate of Housing Need

2.125 Housing need is estimated by adding current housing need at the point of the HNDA assessment to future housing need over a ten year period[21], then subtracting affordable housing supply over the same period. This calculation then shows either a shortfall or surplus of affordable housing.

2.126 The HNDA guidance indicates households are in housing need if they fall into one of the following categories:

- Homeless,
- Concealed households,
- Overcrowding,
- Have support needs,
- Live in housing in poor condition,
- Subject to harassment.

2.127 It is clearly set out in the guidance that there should be no double-counting so the same households cannot be counted under more than one category of need, even if they demonstrate more than one needs factor. Given the very small numbers involved, those subjected to harassment have been counted under the homeless category.

2.128 The calculation of net housing need underpins the rest of this Local Housing Strategy and directs the actions that need to be taken both in terms of the requirement for new housing supply and for making the best use of the existing housing stock. The means of calculating net housing need is set out below but takes account of the following:

- Gross housing need
- In situ solutions
- Affordability
- Current housing need
- Newly arising need

[21] The HNDA covers a 10 year period 2010-2020. The starting point or base year is 2010 or as close to then that data was available.

- Current housing supply
- Future housing supply

Gross Housing Need

2.129 The HNDA established a gross housing need of 8,500 dwellings over the ten year period 2010-2020.

In Situ Solutions

2.130 Once gross housing need is established it is necessary to exclude those who can resolve their needs *in situ* and those who can afford to resolve their housing need without assistance. Of the 8,500 people in gross housing need, it was estimated that 2,124 could meet their needs in situ.

Affordability

2.131 After identifying gross housing need and households who could meet their need through in situ solutions, it is necessary to estimate how many households can afford to resolve their need in the market without assistance. A number of scenarios were identified to estimate this and are set out in Table 12.

Table 12: Affordability estimates

Source Methodologies	**Estimated Percentage**
a) National research carried out by Prof G Bramley in 2005	55.1% of households could afford to resolve their housing need in the market
b) Waiting list	14.6% of households could afford to resolve their need in the market
c) Local House Condition Survey and savings	49% could afford to resolve their need in the market
d) Revised Bramley wealth adjustment figure updated 2009	52% could afford to resolve their need in the market

2.132 After reviewing the various methodologies outlined above, the Housing Need and Demand Assessment Executive Group agreed that the most appropriate scenario for the purposes of the Falkirk LHS was scenario (c) for the following reasons:

- It is based on local information (LHCS) with a sample size of over 1,000,
- The LHCS was carried out by an independent party (Adamson’s),
- It was carried out recently in 2009 and across all tenures,
- It included questions on income and wealth,
- The CHMA have expressed concerns that the waiting list estimate was low and would include a disproportionate number of households on low or very low incomes (e-mail correspondence 10/11/10),
- It is consistent with the national research carried out by Professor G Bramley, firstly in 2005, pre-credit crunch, which estimated that 55.1% of households could afford to resolve their housing need in the market and, secondly, the unpublished research from 2009 (52% could afford to resolve their housing need as quoted in mail from the CHMA in 10/11/10),

- It has been decided not to use the revised Bramley research as it has not been published.

2.133 The preferred scenario – (c) - is estimated in the following way.

- The lowest quartile resale price in 2009 was £75,000 and the mortgage multiplier at that time was 2.87 x income. According to the Council for Mortgage Lenders (CML), a deposit of 23% is required to access a mortgage. In this case the mortgage required would be £57,750. An income of £20,122 is required for lending at this level,
- According to the LHCS (Table 37), 46% of households had an income of £20,000 or more in 2009,
- The local wealth adjustment figure is taken as being 2.6%. This is estimated by making reference to the social survey from the Local Housing Condition Survey[22] which asked if households had interest from savings and investments. The figure of 2.6% is viewed as comparable to Bramley's revised wealth adjustment figure of 2.8%,
- Using the wealth adjustment figure of 2.6% from the LHCS and the percentage who have an income of £20,000 or more (46%) it is estimated that 49% (48.6%) of households could afford to resolve their housing need in the market,
- It is therefore estimated that 49% of households in the Falkirk Council area could afford to resolve their own housing need.

2.134 However, it is important to reiterate that this calculation does not include homeless households. It is estimated that 1% of homeless households are able to resolve their housing need in the private sector. Therefore scenario (c) was applied to concealed households, those who are overcrowded, have support issues, live in poor quality accommodation or are facing harassment.

Current Housing Need

2.135 Once these figures are brought together they equate to 3,786 households currently in housing need of which 28% were homeless and 43% overcrowded. The sub areas with greatest levels of current housing need were Falkirk and Stenhousemuir/Larbert/ Rural North.

Newly Arising Need

2.136 Newly arising need consists of:

- Newly forming households in housing need who cannot afford to resolve their housing need,
- Existing households who fall into need and cannot afford to resolve their housing need.

These figures are brought together to indicate 976 households in newly arising need.

Current Housing Supply

2.137 This stage considers the total affordable housing stock available to meet housing need at the point of assessment by looking at:

[22] Adamson D &Partners Ltd (2009) All Tenure House Condition Survey appendix C question 13d

- households in housing need who live in the social rented sector and whose need could be resolved by moving,
- new affordable supply at the point of the HNDA,
- units to be taken out of management (demolitions).

This results in a figure of 502 households.

Future Supply to Meet Housing Need

2.138 Future supply to meet need comes from looking at the trends for Council and RSL relets and forecasting how many new lets are likely to come on stream. This has been estimated at 1,070 a year over a 10 year period.

Estimate of Net Annual Housing Need

2.139 The above information is brought together to indicate a shortfall of affordable housing which ranges between 158 and 643 units a year over a ten year period. The preferred scenario for planning purposes is an annual shortfall of 233 affordable properties.

2.140 The HNDA looked at the shortfall across the various sub areas identified in the analysis of the housing market and shows that the areas with the greatest shortfalls are Stenhousemuir/Larbert/Rural North, Polmont/Rural South and Denny/Bonnybridge

Table 13: Shortfall/Surplus by Sub Area[23]

Shortfall/surplus	
Bo'ness	2
Denny/Bonnybridge	58
Falkirk	23
Grangemouth	-65
Stenhousemuir/ Larbert/Rural North	123
Polmont/Rural South	92
Total	233

Source: HNDA

2.141 Table 14 below sets out the steps that were followed using the HNDA guidance to estimate the preferred scenario re net annual housing need.

[23] A negative figure equals a surplus as supply greater than need

Table 14: Net Annual Housing Need

Stage 1 Total current housing need	**Steps**	**Number**	**Calculation**
Households in need	Steps 1.1-1.6	8500	X
Number resolved in the market		2590	Y if affordability for backlog is 48.8%
Number resolved in situ		2124	Z
Current housing need	Step 1.7	3786	X-(Y+Z)
Stage 2 Total newly arising housing need			
New household formation	Step 2.1	763	A (over 10 years)
Proportion unable to buy or rent in the market	Step 2.2	51.2%	B
Existing households falling into need	Step 2.3	585	C
Total newly arising housing need (NAN)	Step 2.4	976	NAN=(AxB)+C
Stage 3 (3.1-3.5) Affordable housing supply			
Affordable dwellings occupied by households in need	Step 3.1	479	
Additional supply associated with reducing void levels	Step 3.2	0	
Planned supply of new affordable housing	Step 3.3	145	
Units to be taken out of management	Step 3.4	122	
Total affordable housing stock available to meet housing need	Step 3.5	502	3.1+3.2+3.3-3.4
Stage 3 (3.6-3.9) Future annual supply of affordable housing			
Annual supply of relets (including annual supply of relets associated with steps 3.1 and 3.2)	Step 3.6	1071	
Annual supply of intermediate affordable housing available for re-let	Step 3.7		
Annual number of units to be taken out of management	Step 3.8	0	
Annual future supply of affordable housing	Step 3.9	1071	3.6+3.7-3.8
Stage 4 Bringing the evidence to together (4.1) current housing need			
Current housing need (CN)	Step 1.7	3786	CN
Total affordable housing stock available to meet housing need in the 12 month period around when the assessment is produced	Step 3.5	502	
Net current housing need in the 12 month period around when the assessment is produced (NCN)		3285	NCN=CN-(step 3.5)
Step 4.2 Estimate of net annual current need			
Net figure derived should be converted into an annual flow using assumptions about the number of years that will be taken to meet this need. Quota should be based upon meeting over a period of 10 years.		328	10 years
Stage 4.3 Estimate of net annual housing need (adding current and future need and subtracting annual supply)			
Net current need	4.1	3285	Total current need-total current availability
Annual current need	4.2	328	Net current need / by no of years over which backlog will be dealt with
Annual newly arising need	Step 2.4	976	nan in table 6.6
Total annual need	Step 4.2 +step 2.4	1304	annual current need + annual future need
Total annual supply	Step 3.9	1071	
Net annual housing need		**233**	**Total annual need - total annual supply**

Source: HNDA

2.142 The highest percentage of households in current housing need are overcrowded. This is explored further below.

Increasing the Number of Larger Homes/Overcrowding

2.143 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment highlighted that there is a particular issue with the supply of larger affordable homes.

2.144 The LHCS survey indicates that there are high levels of under-occupation in private sector housing which reflects the choices that people on higher incomes can afford to make. However, the situation is markedly different for people who cannot afford to buy a property large enough to suit their needs.

2.145 Analysis of housing affordability undertaken as part of the HNDA clearly shows, as would be expected, that larger properties are more expensive to buy and therefore that larger families will have to incur higher costs if they want to meet their housing need in the private housing market. In 2007 the average price of a 5 apartment house was 42% more expensive than the average price for all properties.

2.146 In addition, there is less likelihood of larger families being able to meet their needs in the private rented sector for two reasons: firstly, the supply of larger properties for private rent is very small – less than 1% of private lets available in 2010 were 5 apartment properties and, secondly, the average rent for such properties was 111% higher than the price of an average private let. Clearly, families that need larger properties are more likely than most households to have to rely on the social rented sector to meet their housing needs.

2.147 In the social rented sector, the Council's stock of houses has decreased by 46% since the introduction of the Right to Buy (the earliest year for which detailed Council stock size figures are available is 1984; accurate 1984 house size information is not available for the RSL stock in the area).

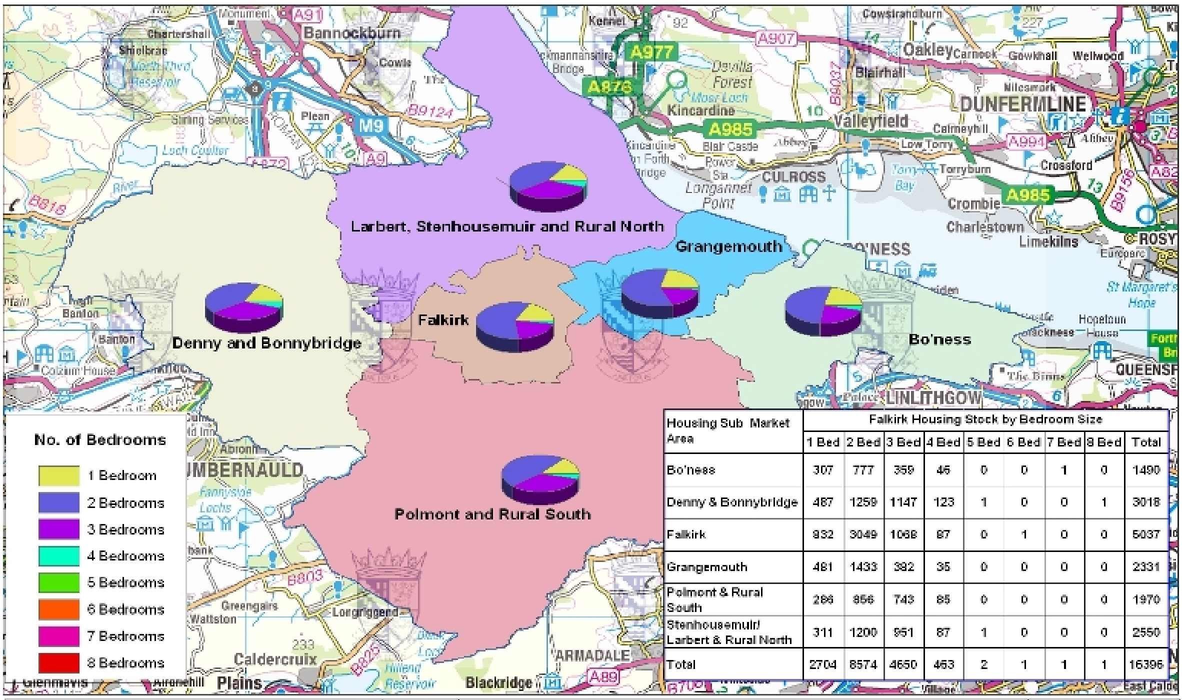
2.148 Table 15 below shows the breakdown of the Council's stock by size in 1984 and as at 31 March 2011:

Table 15: Council Stock by House Size, 1984-2011

House Size	1984	2011	Percentage decrease
1 bedroom	2,969	2691	9%
2 bedroom	15,327	8505	45%
3 bedroom	11,500	4622	60%
4 bedroom	2,079	460	78%
5+ bedroom	55	5	91%
Total	**31,930**	**16, 283**	

Source: Falkirk Council housing management system

2.149 It is clear from the above that the effect of the Right to Buy has been far greater in respect of larger properties than small units. In this context it is likely that people who are overcrowded and who cannot afford to buy a home will have to wait considerable periods of time for accommodation to become available in the social rented sector.



Housing Sub Market Area	Falkirk Housing Stock by Bedroom Size								
	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	6 Bed	7 Bed	8 Bed	Total
Bo'ness	307	777	359	46	0	0	1	0	1490
Denny & Bonnybridge	487	1259	1147	123	1	0	0	1	3018
Falkirk	832	3049	1068	87	0	1	0	0	5037
Grangemouth	481	1433	382	35	0	0	0	0	2331
Polmont & Rural South	286	856	743	85	0	0	0	0	1970
Stenhousemuir/ Larbert & Rural North	311	1200	951	87	1	0	0	0	2550
Total	2704	8574	4650	463	2	1	1	1	16396

Falkirk Council Stock by Bedroom Size
by Housing Sub Market Area 2009

2.150 At present, around 1,773 households on the Council's housing register are looking for larger properties as follows:

Table 16: Demand for Larger Properties as at March 2011

Property Size	Demand
4 apt (3 bedrooms)	1,257
5 apt (4 bedrooms)	396
6+ apt (at least 5 bedrooms	120
Total	**1,773**

Source: Council Housing Register

2.151 This must be compared with stock turnover rates to give some indication of how long applicants with larger families might have to wait to meet their housing need. In 2010, the number of larger properties in the Council's stock that became available for let was as follows:

Table 17: Larger Properties Let During 2010

Property Size	Number Let
4 apt	254
5 apt	18
6+ apt	0
Total	**272**

Source: Council Housing Management System

2.152 It is evident that if turnover rates remain at roughly the same level as in 2010 – and there is no reason to suppose that they will change significantly in future years – families who need 5 apt or larger accommodation may have to wait many years to have their housing needs met. Very crudely, based on recent turnover rates, applicants seeking 5 apartment (or larger) houses might have to wait over 20 years for a property that addresses their overcrowding. Clearly, this position is unacceptable and unsustainable.

2.153 The following Table indicates how HNDA outputs have influenced the development of the LHS Outcomes. The latter are set out in more detail in Appendix 2.

Table 19: How HNDA outputs link to LHS outcomes

HNDA core output	HNDA core outputs findings	Key LHS outcomes
1. Estimates of current dwellings in terms of size, type, condition tenure, occupancy and location	• 70, 131 dwellings – vacancy rate 2.6% • Tenure – Owner occupied 69%, Council 23%, Private Rent 5%, RSL 4%. • Type – 70% houses • Size - majority 4 or 5 rooms • Condition all tenure - 61% fail SHQS, 4% BTS, 13% extensive disrepair • Energy efficiency – 45% fail energy efficiency requirements SHQS	1. Best use is made of existing and new housing (including empty homes and new affordable housing) to address local needs 5. The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty
2. Analysis of past and current housing market trends, including balance between supply and demand in different housing sectors and price/affordability. Description of key drivers underpinning the housing market	• Number house sales fallen 49% (new build), 66% (resale), average prices 2006 levels • Affordability issues house price to income ratios still above 2.9 and 3.5 • Council house rents cheapest option • On average 23% deposit first time buyers • Grangemouth most affordable, Larbert Stenhousemuir Rural North least affordable • Turnover – tenure highest private rented sector, type highest flats, size larger properties lowest turnover	1. as above 2. Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options to assist access to housing and prevent homelessness
3. Estimate of total future numbers of households	• 75, 441 households in 2018, 86, 411 in 2033.	1 as above
4. Estimate of future household groups who have a specific housing requirement e.g. families, older people, minority ethnic groups, disabled people, young people etc	• Families –need for larger accommodation • Older people –needs relate to housing/ support issues to be taken forward in Older Persons' Housing Plan following consideration of the National Accommodation Strategy • Minority ethnic groups – no information require specific housing provision • Disabled people –need for 100 properties (50% affordable) re mobility needs • Disabled people –anecdotal evidence need accommodation people with learning disabilities • Young people –no evidence need specific house types some evidence relatively high support needs.	1 as above 3. Older people and those with disabilities are able to make informed housing choices including making required adaptations to their home 4. Housing support and other services are provided to help people live independently
5. Estimate of current number of households in housing need 6. Estimate of future households requiring market housing	• Currently 3285 households in housing need • 391 future households requiring affordable housing • When supply taken account of shortfall affordable housing 233 annually	1 as above 2 as above 5 as above 6. All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently
7. Estimate of future households requiring market housing	• 530 households annually.	1 as above
8. Estimate of future households requiring affordable or market housing	• 763 households annually	1 as above

3. MEETING HOUSING NEEDS 2011-16

This Section will:

- Set out housing supply targets for the period covered by this LHS
- Identify the key factors that will influence how the supply targets are met
- Determine the actions required to increase the supply of affordable housing through a combination of new build and making better use of the existing stock
- Determine the actions required to increase the supply of housing suitable for people with particular needs
- Outline the measures required to ensure that housing support services help vulnerable people to live well in their homes

Key Issues

- For more new private sector homes to be built there needs to be:
    - an adequate supply of land for private housing,
    - access to mortgage finance for prospective buyers,
    - funding for infrastructure works,
- The Affordable Housing Policy needs to be rigorously implemented in order to secure sufficient land for affordable housing development. However, the AHP can only be effective when there is a buoyant private house-building market,
- A range of affordable housing options in the area is essential if housing aspirations as well as needs are to be addressed,
- More people would be able to meet their housing needs/aspirations in the private housing markets if the banks eased their lending criteria,
- Council housing is cheaper than other types of housing for rent; this fuels demand for Council housing relative to other rented housing options,
- Even with a substantial new build programme, the Council will not be able to meet the housing needs of all its applicants and will need to encourage people to consider other housing options,
- Housing Benefit can help with housing costs for all types of rented accommodation; however, younger single people face more restrictions on the type of property they can rent and this increases pressure on the social rented stock,
- People who do not qualify for Housing Benefit/Local Housing Allowance are more likely to want Council housing than any other type of rented accommodation,
- The introduction of mid market rents to the area offers an additional housing option that may be of interest to some local people,
- There is scope for the private rented sector to play a bigger role in meeting the need for affordable housing in the area, particularly for people in receipt of Local Housing Allowance,
- The turnover of the few larger properties in the social rented sector is very low: over-crowded families could wait a long time for suitable accommodation,
- There is a strong correlation between age, physical disability, sensory impairment and dementia so issues related to these are likely to increase as a result of more people living longer,
- There is pressure on NHS and social care services to free-up hospital beds and allow older people to live longer in the community,
- There is now a high level of home ownership amongst older people: there is therefore a need for a range of housing options in all tenures to meet current needs and aspirations,
- There is a lack of demand for the current model of Housing with Care,
- Funding for adaptations in the private sector is low – currently £500,000 a year and may be insufficient to meet demand over the longer term.

Housing Supply Targets

3.1 Taking account of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment summarised in Section 2, it is now necessary to set housing supply targets for the LHS period.

3.2 The HNDA for the Falkirk Council area was confirmed by the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) as robust and credible on 6th September 2011. The supply targets set in the LHS are informed by the HNDA and have been agreed corporately by the Council's Housing and Social Care Committee on 8th November 2011. These targets contribute to the Scottish Government's goal of increasing housing supply.

3.3 The LHS supply targets for the Falkirk Council area are set out below.

Table 18: Annual Falkirk Council Area Supply Targets

All tenure supply target	725
New build affordable housing	233
• New build affordable	100
• Making best use of existing stock	133

3.4 The LHS covers a five year period however the LHS guidance recommends setting a fifteen year housing supply target that links in with the Local Development Plan timescales. The annual supply targets therefore cover fifteen years but will be reviewed after five years when the next LHS is due to be prepared.

3.5 The housing supply targets were set following consideration of the HNDA and draft LHS at 5 two stakeholder events[24] [25]. These events were held to widen out discussion beyond the Housing Market Partnership which is known locally as the Housing Need, Demand and Supply Group (HNDSEG).

All Tenure Supply Target

3.6 The HNDA indicated that over the period 2008-2033 there will be an additional 763 households per annum and a corresponding requirement for an additional 763 properties each year.

3.7 However, the present economic downturn and the resulting funding constraints mean it is important to weigh new build aspiration with deliverability in the LHS therefore the *new* housing all tenure supply target is 725 as set out in the Local Development Plan Main Issues Report[26] (MIR) which was agreed by Economic Strategy and Development Committee on 20th September 2011[27] and by Council on 5th October 2011.

Housing Market Area and Tenures

3.8 As noted earlier and in the HNDA, the Falkirk Council area is a self-contained housing market therefore the supply targets are set at Falkirk Council area level. Whilst the analysis in the HNDA is broken down by housing sub market areas to inform the Affordable Housing Policy

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[24] LHS stakeholder consultation 28th April 2011
[25] LHS stakeholder consultation 25th September 2011
[26] Falkirk Council (2011) Local Development Plan Main Issues report
[27] Falkirk Council (2011) Local Development Plan – Main Issues Report to Economic Strategy and Development Committee 20th September 2011

and to prioritise resource allocations for new affordable housing provided by the Council and RSLs, it is not considered appropriate to set sub market supply targets – such targets could be overly restrictive in the current climate.

Affordable Housing Supply Target

3.9 In terms of affordable housing, the HNDA indicates a figure of 233 for estimated net annual housing need over 10 years. The following table takes this figure of estimated net annual housing need and uses this to set affordable housing supply targets. In line with LHS guidance, this covers new housing supply, replacement housing, empty homes to be brought back into use, and conversions and it includes housing in all tenures, not just the social rented sector. It is considered that the shortfall figure of 233 affordable homes per year can be met by building 100 new affordable homes and that a further 133 affordable homes can be provided by making better use of the existing housing stock.

3.10 The following table sets out the supply targets to meet the shortfall of 233 affordable homes a year, 100 from new build affordable housing and 133 from making better use of existing supply.

New build affordable	100
• Council/ RSL social rent, RSL Mid Market Rent (MMR[28]) and RSL low cost initiatives funded by Scottish Government such as Low Cost Initiative for First Time buyers (LIFT)[29], New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) • Affordable Housing Policy (developers' schemes at, or below, Scottish Government local price ceiling thresholds as set for developers' shared equity, developers' MMR) • National Housing Trust (NHT) – developer- led through Scottish Futures Trust • New policy initiatives	
Making best use of existing stock	133
• Open market resales • Bringing empty homes back into use • Private sector leasing • Mortgage to Rent (Council/RSL) • Policy initiative social rented stock e.g. Tenants' Incentive Scheme • Other policy initiatives (conversions, acquisition of former Right to Buy stock • Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE)	
Total	233

Appendix 3 sets out the rationale behind these supply targets.

New Affordable Housing Supply Target

3.11 The new affordable housing target is 100 annually and relates to the following;

- Council and RSL social rented accommodation,
- RSL mid market and low cost initiatives,
- Developer- led mid market renting such as the National Housing Trust initiative,
- Affordable Housing Policy (developers' low cost home ownership or mid market rented initiatives at or below Scottish Government local price ceilings).

[28] MMR – 85% or lower than Local Housing Allowance
[29] LIFT – Scottish Government funded low cost home ownership option

3.12 The new build affordable supply target has been set after giving consideration to previous years annual Scottish Government funded target completions and targets as set out in Appendix 3.

Existing Affordable Housing Supply Target

3.13 The target for making best use of the existing housing stock is 133 a year. This includes the following initiatives:

- Bringing empty homes back into use,
- Open market resales not exceeding Scottish Government price ceilings for subsidised housing in the Falkirk Council area,
- Mortgage to Rent,
- Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE),
- Exploring Pressured Area status,
- Housing management initiatives to increase the supply of larger homes within the existing stock.

Affordable Housing - House Size

3.14 The HNDA indicated that the highest percentage of households (43%) who are currently in housing need are overcrowded. This is linked in part to a reduction of 63% in Council properties of 3 bedrooms and above through the Right to Buy.

3.15 However, it was also indicated in the HNDA that there has been, and will continue to be, an increase in smaller households; for example between 2001 and 2008, the number of single-parent households increased by over one third and there was a nearly 30% increase in the number of single non-pensioner adult households.

3.16 The pressure is therefore on larger affordable properties although most households require smaller properties. Taking account of the findings of the HNDA, it is proposed that the following house size mix should be applied to the Council and RSL new build programme:

- 2 bedrooms – 58%
- 3 bedrooms – 28%
- 4 bedrooms – 13%
- 5+ bedrooms – 1%

3.17 It is proposed that this size mix be applied across the annual programme as a whole rather than on a site by site basis – some sites will not lend themselves to particular types or sizes of properties and it is useful to have some flexibility to deal with such issues.

Housing Supply Targets for People with Physical Disabilities – All Tenure

3.18 The HNDA indicated that there is a current need for 111 properties for those with physical disabilities of which 57 should be affordable. In future, it is estimated that there will be a need for around 10 additional properties each year, again around half of which should be affordable. Given current market conditions, it is more difficult to set targets to increase the supply of purpose-built housing in the private sector - the Affordable Housing Policy may or may not deliver on this objective. In this context, it is proposed that the supply target for housing for people with disabilities is a year on year increase through both Council/RSL new build and disabled adaptations.

Housing Supply Targets for Housing for Older People – All Tenure

3.19 It is noted throughout this LHS that the changing demographic profile of the area together with an apparent lack of popularity for the existing model of Housing with Care means that a priority for action during the lifespan of this LHS is the development of a strategy for housing older people. This will take account of the National Strategy for Housing for Older People that is due to be published in December 2011. It is therefore considered to be the wrong time to develop supply targets for housing for older people but this will be addressed as part of the proposed strategy and reported in Annual LHS Updates in due course.

Housing Supply Targets for Housing for People with Learning Disabilities – All Tenure

3.20 It is also noted in this LHS that there are proposals to review the provision of housing for people with learning disabilities. For this reason it is again considered to be the wrong time to set housing supply targets for this group. A similar approach is proposed to that outlined above for older people – a key part of the review will be the development of housing supply targets once the review has been completed.

Meeting the Housing Supply Targets

3.21 Taking account of the housing supply targets set out above, this Section now explores the following range of ways in which it is proposed to meet the key areas of housing need identified in the HNDA and through consultation during the lifetime of this LHS:

- Building new homes,
- Exploring how best to use existing stock,
- Extending housing options and improving housing advice and information.

Building New Affordable Homes for Sale and for Rent

3.22 As noted above, the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) indicates that, based on current population and household projections there will be 763 additional households requiring housing over the 2008-2018 ten year period. Taking account of household projections, backlog housing need, existing households falling into need, newly arising need and affordable housing supply the HNDA identified an *affordable* housing shortfall of 233 units per year over a ten year period.

<u>What does “Affordable Housing” Mean?</u>

3.23 The Scottish Government defines affordable housing in the HNDA guidance as:

...housing made available at a cost below full market value, to meet an identified need. It includes social rented housing, subsidised low cost housing for sale (discounted, shared ownership or shared equity) and low cost housing without subsidy (entry level housing for sale). Private rented accommodation available at lower cost than market rents, (mid-market rent), should also be considered within the affordable housing category. The term intermediate housing product has been used in this guidance to cover all types of affordable housing which are not social rented.

This is similar to the definition in Scottish Planning Policy however the latter makes reference to income:

Affordable housing: *Housing made available at a cost below full market value, to meet an identified need. It includes social rented accommodation, some private sector rented accommodation, and publicly subsidised housing for sale. It may also include unsubsidised entry-level housing for sale where it can be demonstrated clearly that the homes are affordable to low-income groups of households. Scottish Planning Policy (2008 revised)*

3.24 The key issues that will determine whether or not a house is affordable are:

- household income,
- household savings,
- the cost of a home (either mortgage or rent payments),
- the availability of mortgage finance for those who wish to buy a home.

3.25 Information about income, savings and the cost of buying a home in Falkirk formed part of the calculation of net housing need set out in paragraph 2.141 above. At the present time house prices in the local market are lower than they have previously been – this would suggest that the properties would therefore be more affordable. However, perhaps the key issue that determines the housing options available to local people is the availability of mortgage finance to support home ownership.

<u>The Availability of Mortgage Finance to Buy a Home</u>

3.26 As noted in paragraph 2.133 above, at the current time, anyone buying a home is likely to be required to pay a deposit of around 23% of the total price. Assuming a household is able to put down this deposit, the amount available as a mortgage is likely to be 2.87 x household income.

3.27 Clearly, if the banks' lending criteria were to be relaxed so that lower deposits were required to access mortgage finance, more people would be able to meet their own housing needs by buying a home. A relaxation in lending criteria would also have the effect of stimulating the house-building industry and more new homes would be built to meet the latent demand. If more people were able to afford to buy in the market, the overall shortfall of affordable housing in the Council area could reduce from the figure of 233 units per year which is being used for planning purposes in this LHS.

3.28 However, in the absence of readily available mortgage finance, the only real option available for people in housing need, particularly younger people who are just beginning to establish independent living arrangements, is to rent accommodation. In terms of rented accommodation there are essentially two options: private renting and social renting and these are explored further below. Nevertheless it is important that consideration is given to how new affordable homes can be built.

<u>The LHS and the Local Development Plan</u>

3.29 Taken together, the LHS and the Local Development Plan (LDP) aim to produce a sufficient supply of affordable housing to meet needs over the longer term. As noted earlier, the HNDA provides the evidence base for the housing supply targets set in the LHS and for the land allocations in the LDP.

3.30 The LDP will take into account anticipated completions from existing housing sites contained within the Housing Land Audit (HLA) to estimate the shortfall in each period. This gives an indication of the likely level of additional housing sites required to meet the projected household growth in the area. The information below indicates projected capacity from existing sites zoned for housing and the consequent shortfall over the period 2014-2034:

Table 20: Projected capacity from existing sites zoned for housing

	2014-2024	2024-2034	Total 2014-2034
Output from existing sites	7,322	1,906	9,228
Potential shortfall	2,028	6,717	8,746

3.31 The above information shows that whilst most of the requirement for land is covered by existing sites in the 2014-2024 period, very substantial amounts of additional housing land may be required in the period beyond 2024. This issue is explored in detail in the Main Issues Report for the LDP which was considered by the Council on 5th October 2011.

3.32 The existing housing sites carried forward in the HLA are in the order of 9,200 units between 2014 and 2034 and there is likely to be a need to identify additional land to meet the shortfall anticipated from the household projections. The Main Issues Report (MIR) stage of the LDP process took these figures and considered a number of scenarios through which need can be addressed. Ultimately, a medium growth scenario has been selected as the appropriate way forward. However, the slowdown in yearly build rates for new housing may impact on the achievability of any scenario. The Council is, however, instructed through Scottish Planning Policy to ensure a generous land supply at the same time as ensuring site effectiveness.

3.33 The current Local Plan and the new Local Development Plan will provide a Council-wide housing land requirement. Each settlement in the Council area will be able to absorb additional growth at different levels depending on a number of factors such as education and transport capacity, flood risk and other environmental constraints. This will also impact on each area's ability to contribute to the affordable housing shortfall. While HNDA figures for each sub housing market area will be used in support of the policy to provide affordable housing, it should be noted that these do not relate exactly to the settlement areas in the Falkirk Council Local Plan and LDP. From a Council-wide perspective it may be possible to meet housing market sub area requirements in another sub area and a degree of flexibility is considered to be beneficial.

3.34 The affordable housing requirement is part of the overall household growth projections for the Council area and the LDP, in seeking to meet the housing land requirement for the household projection figures, will also seek to ensure there is enough land for affordable housing.

Delivering Affordable Housing

3.35 Given recent private sector house-building rates and the current level of public funding available for social rented housing provision, it is difficult to see a rate of 233 units per year of affordable housing being delivered in the LHS period. However, as noted above, the identified shortfall could be met in other ways apart from new house building.

3.36 Affordable housing can be delivered in a number of ways:

- New build – Developer-led (e.g. shared equity schemes or the provision of serviced land at affordable housing land value),
- New build - Council and RSL development programmes such as New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE), National Housing Trust (NHT),
- Re-use of existing stock – Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE), conversions/extensions/property mergers to alter house type and/or size,
- Housing management initiatives to make best use of existing stock, e.g. tenants incentives schemes and lettings initiatives.

Private Developers and the Affordable Housing Policy

3.37 In terms of private sector affordable housing supply there are three key issues which impact on its delivery:

- the rate of new house building,
- the Council's Affordable Housing Policy (AHP),
- the funding available to build affordable housing.

3.38 It is clear that, although the Council can take measures to facilitate new house-building through, for example, its Economic Action Plan, it has no control over the wider economy which determines how much people can afford to spend on housing and therefore on the overall rate of new house building. Nevertheless, when new private sector housing developments do proceed, the AHP can be used to facilitate the development of new affordable homes. The Council recently agreed a revision to the new Affordable Housing Policy as set out below:

Table 21: Affordable Housing Policy

Settlement Area	**Bo'ness, Falkirk, Grangemouth, Denny, Bonnybridge/Banknock**	**Larbert/Stenhousemuir Polmont & District Rural North; Rural South**
Threshold above which affordable housing is required	20 units	20 units
Percentage of total site output required to be affordable	15%	25%

3.39 Acceptable approaches to delivering affordable housing through the AHP could include:

(1) Provision of general needs social rented houses;
(2) Provision of social housing with care, for people with particular needs
(3) Provision of shared equity or shared ownership housing;
(4) Provision of low cost homes for sale; or
(5) Provision of homes for mid-market or intermediate rent

The Council will apply a sequential approach to the delivery of affordable housing

- *On site provision*
- *Off site provision*
- *Commuted sum payment*

3.40 The acceptable approaches to providing affordable housing in the policy reflect the more comprehensive range of possible options in Planning Advice Note 2/2010. This not only complies with government policy but also ensures a more realistic position for the Council in view of the drop in the availability of public subsidy for affordable housing in the next few years

3.41 Developers will be expected to work in partnership with the Council, National Housing Trust and/or Registered Social Landlords in the delivery of this policy. Further guidance is provided in the SPG Affordable Housing. In applying the policy to secure affordable housing to development applications, consideration of the overall viability of the development will be taken into account.

3.42 It is important to note that, although the policy applies to sites being developed by private sector house builders, it has been extremely rare anywhere in the country for the affordable units, particularly for social housing, to be built by the developer. This is because of the low value attached to such units. In practice, the developer provides an RSL partner with sufficient serviced land, at a reduced market value as determined by the District Valuer, to allow the RSL to deliver the required number of affordable units. The difference between the full market value and the affordable land value forms the developer's affordable housing contribution. The ability of RSLs to deliver the required units tends to be subject to the availability of grant funding from the Scottish Government.

3.43 In the current economic climate, it is unlikely that the revised policy will deliver housing on a scale that would meet the requirements set out in the HNDA and it should be noted that certain large-scale housing commitments were granted planning permission prior to the introduction of the AHP and so will not yield an affordable element, unless voluntarily. Nevertheless, in the longer term, as the private sector housing market improves and sites which do not have current planning permissions are brought forward, the potential for a substantial contribution of new affordable housing may be realised.

Council/RSL New Build

3.44 In September 2008 the Council approved a "twin-track" approach to the development of affordable housing whereby, taking account of constraints on land supply and funding availability, every effort would be made to facilitate new affordable housing provision by both the Council and RSL partners. The key issues determining the rate of Council/RSL building are land supply and funding availability.

3.45 During the years in which it was not economically viable for the Council to build new homes itself, it sold surplus housing land to RSLs for new housing development. This meant that when new Council building became a possibility once more, the supply of land available for this purpose had been significantly depleted.

3.46 To address this issue, a desk-top exercise was undertaken to identify Council owned sites, including some used as public open space, that might have the potential for new Council housing. Of approximately 200 sites that were initially identified, it was agreed that 77 sites should be subject to further investigation.

3.47 The results of the investigations carried out are set out below:

Table 22: Land Account sites

Total Number of sites (All Land Accounts)	**77**
Number of sites already part of Council new build programme	**5** (Carron Road, Bainsford; Chisholm Place Grangemouth; Shiel Gardens, Langlees; Islands Crescent, Hallglen; Cadzow Avenue, Bo'ness)
Number assessed as developable	**21** *(15 sites classified as open space and 6 former school sites)*
Number assessed as undevelopable	**26**
Number which require further investigations	**25** *(Significant constraints that require further investigations – 18 of the 25 are currently classified as open space)*

Source: Strategy and Development Team

3.48 Site capacity and scheme deliverability were key elements of the options appraisal process. Consideration was also given to whether or not the land was held on the Council's Housing Revenue Account – where it is held on other accounts the HRA must acquire the land in order to meet best value requirements.

3.49 Considering the above factors, eight sites were recommended to be progressed to a detailed design and development appraisal and four sites were selected to form the basis of the Council's 2011 funding bid for the Innovation and Investment Fund:

- Maddiston Primary School site - 42 units
- St Mungo's High School site - 64 units
- Grangemouth High School site - 56 units
- Summerford, Falkirk - 24 units

3.50 The outcome of the Innovation and Investment Funding bids was announced by the Scottish Government in September 2011 and the Council was awarded funding for 102 units supported by £3.06m of funding. The successful bids included:

- Maddiston Primary School site - 42 units supported by £1.23m of funding
- St Mungo's High School site - 36 units supported by £1.08m of funding
- Summerford, Falkirk - 24 units supported by £0.72m of funding

3.51 Design appraisal work on the remaining deliverable sites will continue and will form the basis of potential future Council new build projects or partnership work with RSLs.

3.52 Given the limited HRA land available, consideration requires to be given to other options to facilitate the supply of new council housing in the longer term. These options, consistent with the Scottish Government's policy paper "Homes Fit for the 21st Century", include:

- Transferring non-HRA land assets to the HRA,

- Reclassifying some open space land (both HRA and non-HRA) to developable land,
- Acquiring surplus land owned by other public bodies or private land owners,
- Securing land through the Affordable Housing Policy using Section 75 Agreements,

3.53 Projects contained within the 2011- 2016 Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) on council owned land comprise:

Projects completed in 2011-12

- Shiel Gardens, Langlees – 20 units (Council).
- Carron Road/Haugh St, Falkirk – 36 units (Council),
- Chequers, Hallglen – 18 units (Council),
- Chisholm Place, Grangemouth - 12 units (Council),

Projects under Construction

- Carron Road/Haugh St, Falkirk – 36 units (Council),
- Cadzow Avenue, Bo'ness – 24 units (Council),

Planned Projects

- Maddiston Primary School site – 42 units (Council)
- St Mungo's High School site – 64 units (Council)
- Grangemouth High School site – 56 units (Council)
- Summerford, Falkirk – 24 units (Council)
- Auchincloch Drive, Banknock – 30 units (RSL).

3.54 Beyond 2014, it is anticipated that other sites in the Council's ownership have the potential to yield up to 146 units, however this is dependent on ongoing detailed site assessments and funding availability. Consideration is currently being given to the need for a land acquisition strategy to facilitate further Council new build in the years to come.

3.55 One potential source of new land for Council (or RSL) house building, and funding to acquire such land, is through the application of the Affordable Housing Policy: on large sites, developers may wish to satisfy their affordable housing contribution by selling serviced land to the Council at *Affordable Land Use Value* as determined by the District Valuer at the point of sale. This would allow the Council to acquire land for its housing programme at a discounted value which would likely be below current market value.

3.56 On smaller sites which would not support the development of new Council housing, a developer could meet the requirements of the AHP by paying the Council a commuted sum which could be held in reserve to acquire suitable land for Council new build at a future date. It is proposed that these benefits of the AHP be used, as appropriate, in the coming LHS period to facilitate the continuation of the Council's new build programme.

3.57 In terms of funding for new Council/RSL building, subsidy is provided by the Scottish Government's Innovation and Investment Fund although the bulk of the funding comes from local authorities and RSLs themselves. Subsidy for new Council house building was introduced in 2009. (Appendix 17)

3.58 In the current year, a bidding process has been introduced for the money available from a new *Innovation and Investment Fund*. Table 23 outlines the funding bids for RSL new build housing in the Falkirk Council area – the bids that were successful have been shaded.

Table 23: RSL funding bids for Innovation and Investment Fund

Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	Development Project	Unit Nos.	Size/ Type	Grant Funding
Link Group	Bellsdyke, Larbert - phase 2	21	2 x 4apt/ 5 person (MMR) 4 x 3apt/ 4 person (MMR) 9 x 4apt/ 5 person (Social Rent) 4 x 3apt/ 4 person (Social Rent)	£863,310
Link Group	Park Terrace, Brightons	16	16 x 3apt/ 4 person (Social Rent)	£630,020
Link Group	Main Street, Airth	12	3 x 4apt/ 5 person (MMR) 9 x 4apt/ 5 person (Social Rent)	£509,355
Link Group	Blytheswood, Quarrolhall Crescent, Carronshore	13	13 x 3apt/ 4 person (Social Rent)	£538,460
Kingdom Housing Association	Overton, Redding - Phase 2	23	2 x 4apt/ 5 person (MMR) 8 x 3apt/ 4 person (MMR) 13 x 3apt/ 4 person (Social Rent)	£968,000
Key Housing Association	Burnside Terrace, Camelon	4	2 x 3apt/ 4 person (Social Rent) 1 x 4apt/ 5 person (Social Rent 1 x 2apt/ 2 person (Social Rent)	£169,120
Total		89		£3,678,265

3.59 However, as well as a requirement to build new homes to meet the identified housing need, the HNDA highlighted a variety of other ways in which housing need could be met. The most significant of these issues are now explored below.

Making Better Use of the Existing Stock

3.60 As previously noted the housing target for making best use of existing stock is 133. This includes the following initiatives across all tenures:

- Bringing empty homes back into use (although the number of empty homes in the Council area is relatively low),
- Open market resales which do not exceed Scottish Government price ceilings for subsidised housing in the Falkirk Council area,
- Mortgage to Rent acquisitions that prevent homelessness,
- Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE),
- Exploring the possibility of designating certain areas as pressured areas which rescinds the Right to Buy in certain circumstances.

3.61 In addition, in relation to the Council's own stock Housing and Social Services Committee recently agreed to:

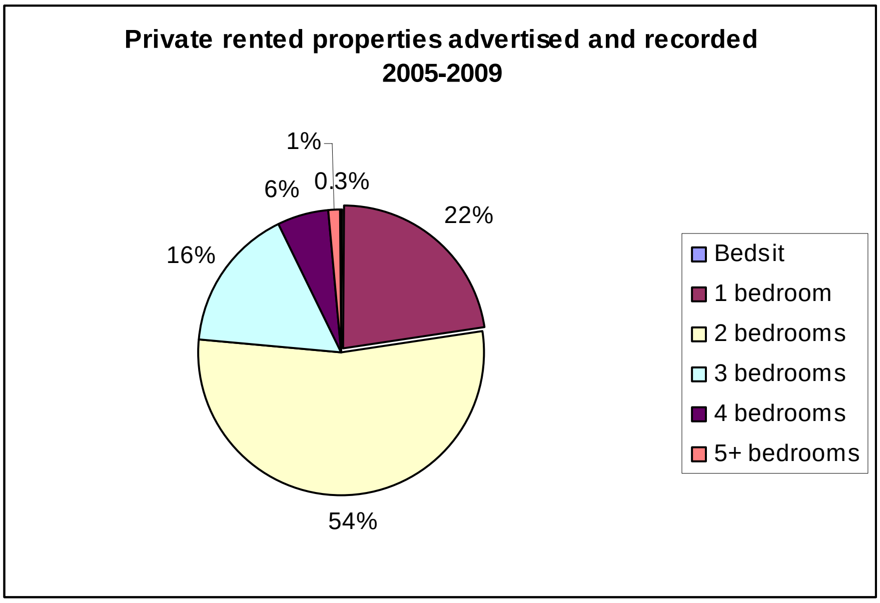
- Consider providing incentives to encourage the 2,700 tenants who are currently under-occupying their homes to move to smaller accommodation (at present, only 10% of them are actively looking for alternative housing but more may do so if incentives were on offer),
- Continue the pilot programme of extending existing properties and converting two or more smaller properties into one larger unit where it is technically feasible and cost-effective to do so, for a further year,
- Consider buying back former Council houses which have four or more bedrooms when these properties become available for sale on the open market. This makes financial sense as larger properties are more expensive to build and ex-Right to Buy properties are currently selling for less than the new build price,
- Consider rationalising the stock of flatted properties in multi-tenure situations,
- Build new larger properties as part of the Council's new build programme.

Appendix 3 provides further detail on these options.

Private Renting

3.62 Potentially, another way of meeting housing need is to make better use of the private rented sector. Table 7 shows that only 5% of the housing stock in the Falkirk Council area is in the private rented sector. The majority of properties advertised for private let in the area between 2005 and 2009 were 2apt as shown in Figure 15 below:

Figure 15



Source: Falkirk Council Strategy and development team private rented sector database

Rent Levels

3.63 The most expensive rent levels in Falkirk Council area are in the private sector as indicated in the table below. However, although they are most expensive, the private sector rents are generally below the Local Housing Allowance (LHA rates) set for Forth Valley (Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire Council area) by the Scottish Government. LHA is a form of Housing Benefit and is available to people who are on limited incomes.

3.64 It was highlighted in the HNDA that housing costs are more expensive in Stirling Council area and it is likely that this is a significant factor on LHA rates set for Forth Valley.

3.65 Table 24 below shows that Council rents are the least expensive in the area, followed by RSL rent, mid market rents and, finally, private rents.

Table 24: Rent levels by type

House size	Council Rents (2011-2012)	RSL Rents (2009-10) *2010-11 Fig available from Oct 2011*	RSL - Mid Market Rent (85% LHA) 30 Years	NHT - Mid Market Rents (84% LHA) 5-10 Years	Private Sector Rents August 2011	LHA (weekly) Aug 2011
1 bedroom (2p)	£44.34	£50.87	£71.60	£70.75	£80.82	£84.23
2 bedroom (4p)	£52.34	£56.83	£88.27	£87.23	£105.68	£103.85
3 bedroom (6p)	£59.34	£61.53	£107.88	£106.61	£129.46	£126.92
4 bedroom (7p)	£65.51	£76.79	£147.12	£145.39	£166.62	£173.08

Source: Scottish Government IIF guidance, Falkirk Council re Council rents, RSL rents from Housing Regulator, Private sector rents –private sector database, Scottish Government set LHA rates for Forth Valley area

Perceptions of the private rented sector

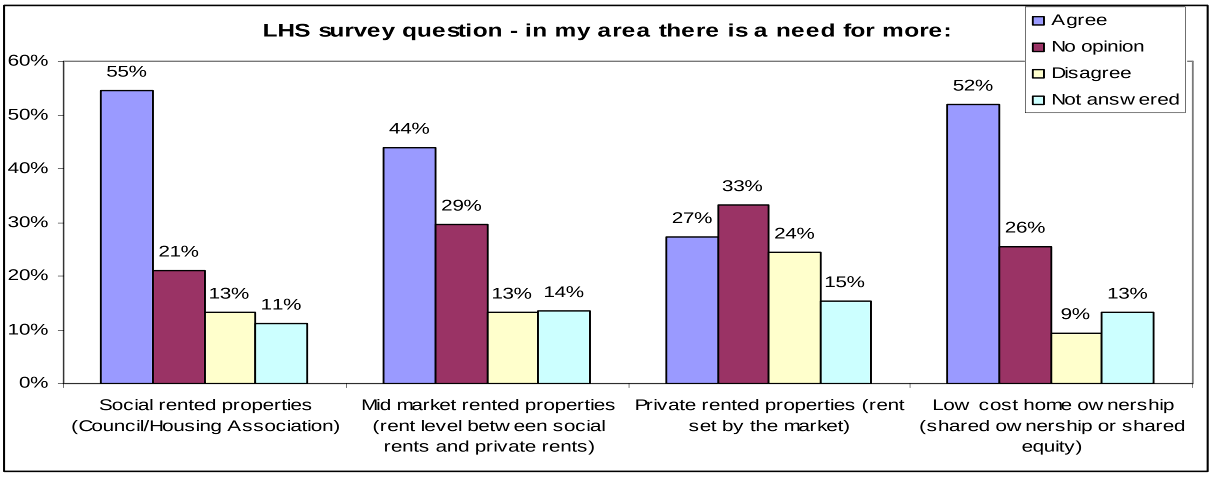
3.66 In order to consider perceptions about housing tenure in the local area, the LHS survey was considered. The survey was carried out in early 2011 as discussed in more detail in Section 1. The response rate to the survey was 1,098 and it is considered that a sample of this size provides robust evidence on which to plan future actions

3.67 The LHS survey asked the following question: “In my area there is a need for more:

- Social rented properties (Council/ RSL)
- Mid market rented properties
- Private rented properties
- Low cost home ownership options”

3.68 The following graph shows that the highest percentage of households agree their area needs more social rented, mid market rented and low cost home ownership properties. However, a different view was held in respect of the private rented sector. When asked about this the highest percentage said they had no opinion and only 27% agreed there was a need for more private rented properties.

Figure 16



Source: LHS Survey

3.69 Another survey question asked respondents if they would choose to rent from a private landlord rather than the council or a housing association if it meant quicker access to housing. The following table indicates that the majority of respondents (54%) would be prepared to rent from the private rented sector to gain quicker access to housing.

Table 25: Survey question – People would choose to rent from a private landlord rather than the council or a housing association if it meant quicker access to housing?

	Number	%
Agree	587	54%
No opinion	186	17%
Disagree	198	18%
Not answered	111	10%
Total	1082	100%

Source: LHS survey 2011

Encouraging High Standards

3.70 Since it was established, the Landlord Registration Team within the Council has concentrated on working with landlords to address any issues of concern and to implement suitable alternative arrangements. However, survey work has been commissioned to quantify the presence/scale of poor standards in areas where there has been a concentration of complaints. Where appropriate, the Landlord Registration Team involves other appropriate Council services which have responsibilities in respect of housing conditions and it provides landlords with information and advice to help them take the measures required to improve the situation. To date, no enforcement action has been required to bring about positive changes.

Future role of the Private Rented Sector

3.71 The LHS survey, rent levels and the HNDA provide information on the possible future role of the private rented sector and have helped inform proposals to extend the use of this sector during the coming five years. Clearly, however, a main driver for improving housing in the private rented sector will be the Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 which will be implemented over the coming eighteen months and any future legislation that may be developed.

3.72 Over the LHS time period the Council proposes to work with the private rented sector in the following ways:

- Developing new private rented sector initiatives such as mid market rents under the National Housing Trust initiative and RSL schemes,
- Assisting people to access the private rented sector through a rent deposit scheme, or similar, depending on market conditions,
- Pursuing private sector leasing to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households,

- Continuing to manage the landlord registration process and providing guidance and assistance to private landlords (4,208 registered landlords; 4,890 properties as at November 2011),
- Promoting the Landlord Accreditation scheme to private landlords,
- Investigating complaints about the sector involving liaison with Environmental Health Officers and signposting tenants, landlords and neighbouring residents to appropriate services,
- Offering advice and information on housing options in the private rented sector,
- Supporting the Private Rented Sector Forum to encourage joint working and good practice between the Council and private landlords.

3.73 It is important to highlight that for a number of households the private rented sector is the tenure of choice for meeting their housing needs and/or aspirations for a number of reasons such as:

- It provides the right property in the right area at the right time,
- It is the most flexible option for those who move into the area temporarily,
- It is the most quickly accessible option for a number of people,
- In the current economic climate a large deposit is required to access a mortgage to buy and private renting may be the preferable option for people who do not have priority for social rented housing or who do not want Council/RSL housing.

3.74 In the current housing market some householders want to sell their property but find it difficult to sell at the price they want and so are willing to let out their property on a short-term basis. This has increased the number of private lets in the area in recent years. If the economic situation continues, it seems likely that some owners who cannot sell will continue to let out their properties. However, the Welfare Reform agenda could have an impact on their ability to do so.

Welfare Reform

3.75 Whilst the Scottish Government is promoting private sector tenancies as one element of meeting the 2012 homelessness target, the Westminster Government is pursuing radical reform of the welfare benefits system. To date, changes to Local Housing Allowance rates and non-dependant deductions have been implemented but perhaps a more significant change will be the extension in January 2012 of the single room rate to single applicants under the age of 35 from the current position of applying only to those under 25. This will make it much harder for more single people to obtain accommodation in the private rented sector, unless they are prepared to share with others in multi-occupancy arrangements. Locally it is estimated that around 110 people will be affected by these changes.

3.76 The most likely impact of this change will be increasing demand on the social rented housing stock from single people aged under 35: the private rented sector is likely only to be attractive to younger single people if they have sufficient income to pay the rent without requiring housing benefit.

3.77 At present there are only 41 properties in the Council area licensed as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). This accommodation currently provides temporary accommodation and supported accommodation for homeless people and young people with support needs. There is no real tradition of young people in the Falkirk Council area living in shared flats with their peers – unlike the situation in the cities where there are large student populations and many young professionals who wish to be relatively mobile to take up new job opportunities.

3.78 At this time, it is difficult to predict how the local private rented sector will respond to the changes but this will be explored with landlords at the Private Landlords forum. However, one specific initiative currently being explored is the potential for a "flatmates" scheme in partnership with other agencies including some in the Third Sector.

Mid-Market Rented Accommodation

3.79 A new concept – Mid-Market Rents (MMR) - has recently been developed as a response to the need for more affordable housing. Mid-market rents are defined as being rents which are pitched between social rents and markets rents. For the purposes of the Scottish Government's National Housing Trust initiative, mid markets rents have been assumed to be 84% of local market rents.

3.80 Local Housing Allowance is payable for MMR to people who qualify for it but for those who do not, MMR is a slightly more affordable housing option than property let at market rents.

3.81 Falkirk Council has participated in Phase 1 of the National Housing Trust (NHT) initiative. Two bids were received as a result of the open procurement exercise but one developer has subsequently withdrawn their interest. A development of 27 new homes by Mactaggart and Mickel will now proceed in the Denny area. The properties will be let on mid market rents for the duration of the scheme which will be between five and ten years.

3.82 The Council is currently involved in the procurement process for Phase 2 of the NHT. In addition, two RSLs have included 22 mid market rent properties in their successful Investment and Innovation Fund bids in 2011. All of the MMR schemes outlined above will be closely monitored to assess the impact they have on the overall demand for affordable housing in the Council area over the LHS timeframe.

Social Rented Housing

3.83 The social rented sector comprises housing owned by the Council and by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Table 26 below shows that Falkirk Council owns 84% of the social rented stock in the Council area:

Table 26: Social Rented Housing Stock in Falkirk Council Area, 2009, by Landlord

	Council		RSL		Social rented	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Bo'ness	1276	73%	472	27%	1748	9%
Denny & Bonnybridge	2995	91%	291	9%	3286	17%
Falkirk	5015	82%	1117	18%	6132	32%
Grangemouth	2333	75%	759	25%	3092	16%
Polmont Rural South	2574	95%	133	5%	2707	14%
Larbert Stenhousemuir Rural North	1983	90%	228	10%	2211	12%
Total	16176	84%	3000	16%	19176	100%

Source: LHCS

3.84 As previously indicated, Council rents are cheaper than RSL rents which, in turn, are cheaper than private rents in the area. This fuels demand for Council housing relative to other forms of rented accommodation. However, the supply of Council housing is such that some people in housing need will have to consider other housing options if they want to meet their needs in a reasonable timescale.

Making Housing Choices - Housing Information and Advice Strategy

3.85 Demand for housing is not determined solely in terms of affordability - other factors such proximity to schools, work, shops, medical facilities and so on, also have an influence on the housing choices that people make. Nevertheless, it is clear that housing affordability is a key element determining the kind of housing that people want to live in.

3.86 All of the above highlights the need for information and advice services on the full range of housing options (all tenures) and welfare benefits. As noted earlier in relation to homelessness, the provision of high quality housing information and advice is a vital way of helping people to make informed housing choices.

3.87 Whilst accommodation in the private rented sector may seem to be unaffordable to many housing applicants, in fact, some of them will be eligible for welfare benefits that make this a more suitable option than waiting for a Council house, particularly if they have specific requirements in terms of the area and type of house they wish to live in. Developing and rolling out the housing options approach to addressing housing need is a priority during the time span of the LHS.

3.88 A key part of this approach will be to achieve accreditation under the National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Provision. All of this work will contribute to an overall review of advice services in the Council area which will commence in early 2012.

Meeting the Housing Needs of People with Particular Requirements

People with Physical Disabilities

3.89 As noted in Section 2, it is estimated that there is currently a shortfall of around 100 purpose-built or specially adapted homes suitable for the needs of people with significant levels of disability. It is further estimated that around 10 new households per year will require purpose-built or specially adapted housing. In this context it is clear that (a) Council and RSL new build programmes should provide a proportion of such accommodation, subject to the topography and location of each site and (b) disabled people who wish to own their own home should be put in touch with Ownership Options who can assist them to resolve their housing need in the private housing markets.

3.90 It is evident that there will be a continuing need for properties to be adapted, particularly in the light of the ageing population. It is also evident that some adaptations will be removed from homes when they are no longer required by those living there, although there is scope to improve awareness of adapted housing when it becomes available and for all adapted housing in the social rented sector to be advertised with preference given to those people who need the adaptations provided.

3.91 A key issue is to raise awareness of alternative housing options so that people with disabilities can make more informed housing choices at the right time in their lives so that crises can be prevented.

3.92 There is a clear need to improve awareness of the range of ways in which people with physical disabilities can meet their housing needs in all sectors, with much more information being provided on the funding that may be available to assist with this. This issue will be pursued over the period of this LHS as part of the Council's wider aim of improving information and advice on housing options.

Older People

3.93 There is clearly some overlap between the supply of suitable accommodation to meet certain housing needs and with the provision of support services for the same groups. This is particularly true in relation to older people who make up not only the bulk of people with physical disabilities but also the biggest number of housing support recipients.

4. HOUSING CONDITIONS

This Section will:

- provide an all-tenure overview of stock conditions in the area,
- look at housing conditions in privately owned housing (both owner occupied and privately rented),
- consider the condition of housing in the social rented sector.

Key Issues

- The Local House Condition Survey carried out in 2009 provides a robust evidence base for the preparation of a Scheme of Assistance, Below Tolerable Standard Strategy and Housing Renewal Area Policy in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006,
- Around 2,123 properties in the private sector are considered to be BTS, this being 4.3% of the owner occupied stock and 1.6% of privately rented stock,
- A database of BTS properties should be established,
- The level of assistance that the Council can provide will largely be driven by the availability of resources,
- Owners’ awareness of their repair and maintenance responsibilities needs to be raised,
- Information about improving private sector housing needs to be easily accessible,
- The social rented housing stock in the Council area is in good condition overall and will largely comply with the SHQS by 2015,
- It will be necessary to ensure that the available resources are targeted on priority works such as the external “weather envelope” of properties; heating and insulation; rewiring; kitchen and bathroom replacement and security systems to ensure that the SHQS can be maintained beyond 2015,
- There will be some difficulty in meeting SHQS energy efficiency targets in respect of some non-traditional dwellings and there may be a need to seek exemptions in respect of these,
- Options for alternative heating in areas which do not have a gas supply need to be pursued,
- The scope for using excess heat generated from a biomass plant in Grangemouth should be explored.

Housing Conditions – General

4.1 Maintaining and improving the condition of the existing housing stock in the Council area – regardless of tenure - is fundamental to addressing the housing needs set out in earlier Sections of this Strategy.

4.2 In all instances the benchmark against which property conditions have been assessed is the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS). The SHQS is an all-tenure standard which is mandatory in the social housing sector and discretionary in the private sector.

All-Tenure Survey

4.3 An all-tenure Local House Condition Survey (LHCS) was undertaken in 2009 on the basis of a 3% random stratified sample - 2,100 of the 70,134 dwellings in the Council area. The sample involved all tenure sectors and all six local housing market areas as identified in Section 3. This sample size is considered to be sufficiently robust for housing planning purposes and is within the upper confidence interval of the Scottish House Condition Survey.

4.4 Dwelling performance against the SHQS gives a broad indication of what action is required to bring all the housing stock up to the SHQS over a period of time. In terms of the social rented housing stock the target timescale for meeting the SHQS is 2015. The SHQS defines property conditions in accordance with the following high level criteria:

- **Tolerable Standard** - all properties must be wind and watertight plus have bathroom and kitchen facilities,
- **Serious Disrepair** - all primary (wall, floor and roof structures) and secondary (roof coverings, rainwater goods) elements must be free from serious disrepair,
- **Energy Efficiency** - all properties need to be well insulated and have energy efficient heating systems,
- **Modern Facilities** - all properties must have modern kitchen and bathroom facilities,
- **Healthy, Safe and Secure** - all properties must have compliant electrical, gas and smoke detector systems in place.

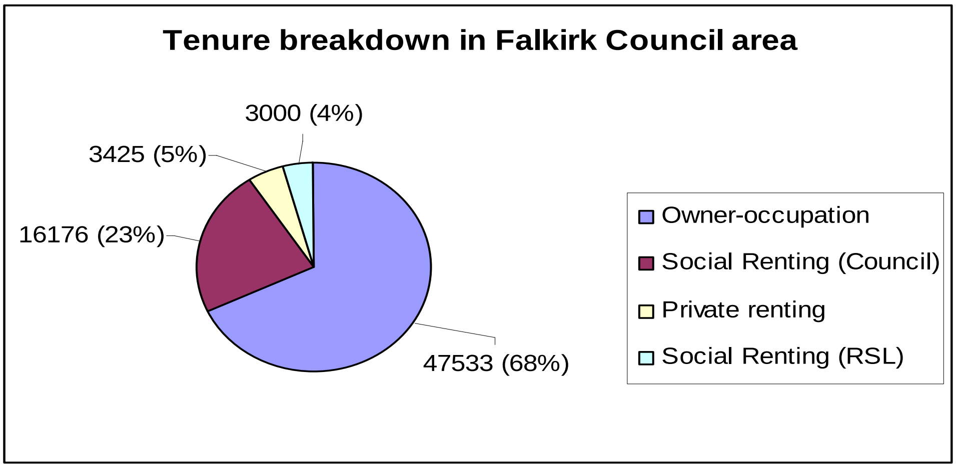
4.5 A more detailed breakdown of the items included in each of the above categories is provided in Appendix 18.

4.6 The all-tenure survey considered not only physical housing conditions but also involved a socio-economic/attitudinal interview with occupying households. This has provided useful information in terms of local attitudes to housing and community issues.

Stock by Tenure

4.7 Stock ownership at the time of the survey is illustrated in Figure 17 below:

<u>Figure 17</u>



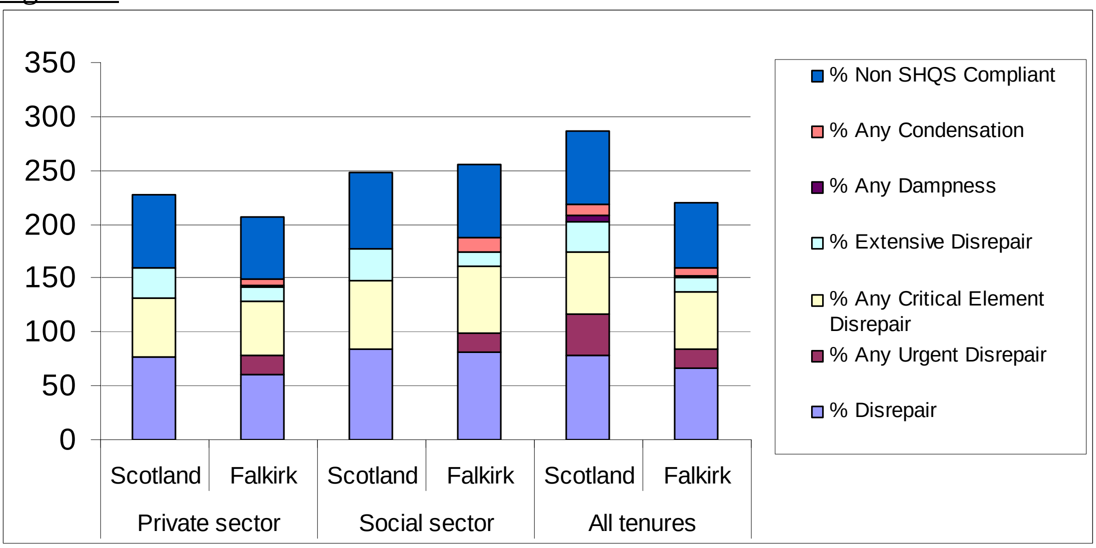
Source: Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009

Broad Survey Results

4.8 The all-tenure survey indicates that housing conditions in Falkirk are better than the Scottish average but vary across the Council area both geographically and by tenure, house type and age. The LHCS indicated that 27, 439 dwellings (39.1%) were compliant with the requirements of the SHQS, which means the remaining 42, 692 dwellings (60.9%) were non-compliant.

4.9 The LHCS used information from the Continuous Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) 2007 to place local housing conditions in Falkirk in a national context (Figure 18). It is relevant to note that the two data sources reflect different timeframes. The data suggests that housing conditions in Falkirk are better than the national average across all key indicators. This situation applies to both the private and social housing sectors.

<u>Figure 18</u>



Source: Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009. Note numbers are subject to rounding

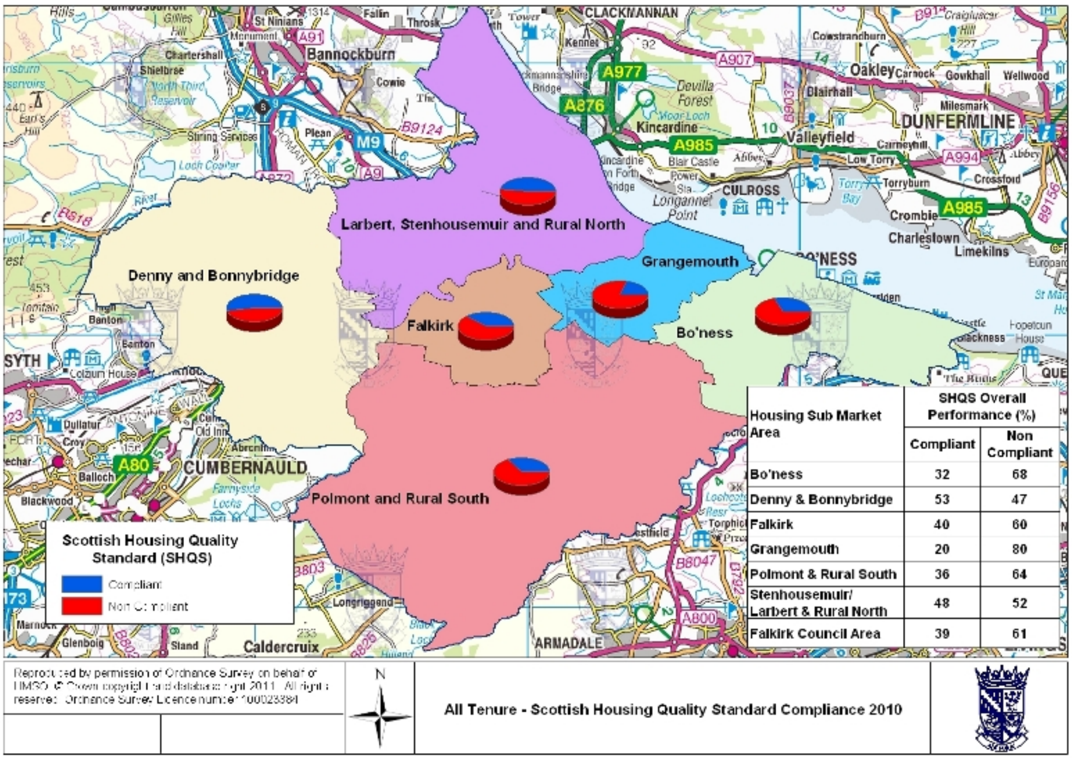
4.10 Although the survey indicated that the stock is in a generally good condition, around 61% of the dwellings in the area did not meet the SHQS at the time the survey was undertaken, albeit some of the failures related to issues which are easily resolved. The following key issues were identified:

- Around 2,600 dwellings (3.7%) failed to meet the Tolerable Standard as defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006,
- Around 9,007 (12.8%) dwellings required extensive repairs,
- Around 13,882 (19.8%) dwellings required urgent repairs
- Over half of the total stock (37,724 dwellings - 53.8%) required repairs to critical building elements,
- Less than 1% of dwellings (679) exhibited any form of dampness,
- Around 5,231 dwellings (7.4%) exhibited condensation.
- Average National Home Energy Rating (NHER) rating of 6.7 with an equivalent SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating of 64.

4.11 Within the main tenure groups housing conditions are best in the owner occupied and RSL owned stock and worst in the ex-Right to Buy and private rented sector. In terms of age, as would be expected, the worst stock was built in the pre 1919 and inter-war periods.

A Tenure Based Response

4.12 The means by which repairs and improvements can be carried out varies across the different housing sectors. In terms of private housing, the carrying out of repairs and improvements is largely dependent on the willingness of owners to do/pay for the work to be done. In the social rented sector, the Scottish Government has set a national target that the stock in this sector will meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015. These issues have a significant impact on how housing conditions will improve in the Falkirk Council area during the period of this LHS.



Housing Sub Market Area	SHQS Overall Performance (%)	
	Compliant	Non Compliant
Bo'ness	32	68
Denny & Bonnybridge	53	47
Falkirk	40	60
Grangemouth	20	80
Polmont & Rural South	36	64
Stenhousemuir/ Larbert & Rural North	48	52
Falkirk Council Area	39	61

4.13 Paragraphs 4.14 – 4.47 below set out the Council's arrangements for improving private sector housing in the area whilst paragraphs 4.148 – 4.65 set out plans in relation to the social rented housing stock.

Private Sector Housing

4.14 In respect of private sector stock, the findings of the Local House Condition Survey underpin how the Council seeks to improve private sector housing during the life of this LHS. However, since the last LHS was prepared the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 has changed the way in which a local authority can respond to instances of poor repair and it is also a key driver in determining a strategy to improve the condition of private sector housing.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

4.15 An important aim of the Act has been to modernise the powers available to local authorities for dealing with sub-standard private sector housing conditions. The Act requires that a more strategic approach be taken by local authorities to tackling poor housing conditions through a combination of the following:

- A ***Scheme of Assistance*** to tackle disrepair due to poor property maintenance and to help more people with disabilities to live independently by adapting their homes to meet their needs,
- A ***Below Tolerable Standard Strategy*** to tackle the worst housing conditions in the owner-occupied and private rented sectors,
- A ***Housing Renewal Area Policy*** to assist in tackling areas of sub-standard housing and individual houses that seriously affect the wider amenity of the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

4.16 Falkirk Council has developed all of the above which have been approved for implementation on an interim basis pending the publication of this Local Housing Strategy. The documents are now provided as Appendices 9 - 11 to this LHS.

Scheme of Assistance

4.17 The Scheme of Assistance (Appendix 10) sets the Vision that owner occupied and privately rented housing conditions are constantly improving, widely accessible, energy efficient and safe. The evidence from the Local House Condition Survey highlights the need to focus on two key aims:

- Enabling more disabled people to live in a home that is suited to their needs,
- Improving the overall condition of private housing, including its energy efficiency.

4.18 The objectives underpinning the Scheme of Assistance are to:

- Provide grants and other assistance to help older and disabled people access well maintained, barrier-free housing,
- Increase awareness about owners' repair and maintenance responsibilities,
- Facilitate higher quality, more sustainable housing through advice and information for all who need it,

- Prevent serious disrepair and unsafe conditions arising, through proactive assistance and enforcement where necessary,
- Reduce Below Tolerable Standard housing by providing grants in priority cases that cannot be privately financed
- Assist owners to prevent homes becoming empty long term, and work with the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to being more empty homes back into use.

4.19 The Scheme of Assistance has been developed in a context where the resources available for making the area's private housing fit for the future are limited. For this reason, the Scheme of Assistance seeks to generate a culture change whereby owners see the benefit of investing in the condition of their homes; where more owners can access assistance to do so; and where more disabled people have better choices to meet their needs.

Repairs, Maintenance and Energy Efficiency

4.20 The Scheme of Assistance is founded on the principle that homes need to be properly maintained to prevent serious problems that can be more difficult and expensive to repair in the long run. Properties left to fall into a poor condition can not only affect the wellbeing of the residents but also the rest of the neighbourhood.

4.21 The Scheme recognises that most home owners and private landlords can, and do, meet their obligations to maintain their properties but, in some cases, might face difficulty in doing so. The Scheme therefore seeks to assist people to meet their obligations, to deal with minor works if they are older or disabled and to improve energy efficiency.

4.22 Following consultation, priorities for assistance have been agreed as:

- Work to meet the Tolerable Standard,
- Work required by a statutory notice served by the Council,
- Lead pipe replacement,
- Communal repairs in blocks of flats,
- Any other work.

4.23 Given the limited financial resources available, Discretionary grant applications will only be accepted in relation to the priority works where private finance is not available to the applicant. Resources will be prioritised according to in the order listed above. Owners in the Council's high rise flats are also eligible for roofing grants under previously agreed criteria as part of a rolling programme of major repairs agreed in 200X.

4.24 The Scheme of Assistance also makes specific provision for assisting older and disabled people to maintain their homes and it is anticipated that demand for this type of assistance will continue to rise as the population ages. This situation is likely to result in significant resource pressures in the time span of this LHS. Assistance for older and disable people is provided through the following:

- **Care and Repair Service**
- **Small Repairs Service**
- **Handyperson Service**
- **Garden Aid Service**

4.25 The Scheme of Assistance sets out other forms of assistance which may be available to home owners or private landlords in relation to improving the energy efficiency of properties and the provision of central heating in certain circumstances. The current eligibility criteria are set out in Appendix 10. Consultation feedback indicates that there is a need for specific expert advice for people with disabilities on how to meet their needs and it is proposed that this issue will be taken forward through current work to improve housing advice and information.

Adaptations to meet the needs of a disabled person

4.26 The Scheme of Assistance sets out how the Council may be able to assist private householders who are experiencing difficulty with everyday tasks in their home because of a disability or health issue. In essence, assistance will only be provided where a needs assessment by an Occupational Therapist determines that adaptations are necessary.

4.27 The assessment takes account of works required to

- prevent immediate, high risk or physical harm or accidents,
- prevent hospital admission or facilitate hospital discharge,
- overcome significant everyday barriers to bathing/showering, using toilet facilities or accessing the home in essential ways,
- prevent alternative care arrangements having to be put in place.

4.28 The Scheme defines the type of work that might be eligible for grant and notes other types of assistance that might be offered in particular circumstances.

4.29 Under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, there are two types of major adaptations which may be eligible for grant funding:

- **Mandatory**: where structural work or permanent changes are essential to meeting assessed needs. These works are eligible for a Mandatory Grant,
- **Discretionary**: where structural work or permanent changes are essential to meeting assessed needs but involve extending the structure or converting outhouses or garages to add living space. In these circumstances Discretionary Adaptation Grants may be provided where resources permit and all other options for meeting a person's needs have been explored and ruled out.

4.30 The LHCS social survey asked households if they had an illness and or disability and believed they required adaptations. This was based on households self assessing their situation and requirement for adaptations, on this basis it was estimated that 3,693 households believed they needed adaptations (5.6% of total households)[30].

Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) Strategy

4.31 The Council has a continuing duty under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 to ensure that housing which does not meet the tolerable standard is brought up to standard or closed or demolished within a reasonable period of time. The 2006 Act extended the definition of the Standard to include loft insulation and electrical safety.

[30] Adamson D et al (2009) Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009 p96

4.32 Results of the 2009 all tenure Local House Condition Survey underpin the BTS Strategy and inform how resources will be targeted to have the greatest impact. Key findings of the LHCS in relation to BTS housing are as follows:

- The LHCS identified 2,610 dwellings which were Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS),
- The following table indicates the tenure with the highest percentage of its stock BTS stock is privately owned ex Right to Buy (6.3%) followed by privately owned (3.4%)
- BTS housing is more prevalent in older properties built before 1944. Across all properties, a lack of adequate/safe electrics which comply with modern requirements is the most common reason for a property failing the standard.
- There is a correlation between BTS housing and poorer quality neighbourhood environments. This suggests that the two issues could be mutually reinforcing and may therefore be tackled most successfully in tandem.
- Younger, older and economically disadvantaged households are disproportionately affected by BTS housing.
- There are low levels of awareness about disrepair among owners of BTS housing. There is a particular issue with owners of properties purchased through the Right to Buy legislation.

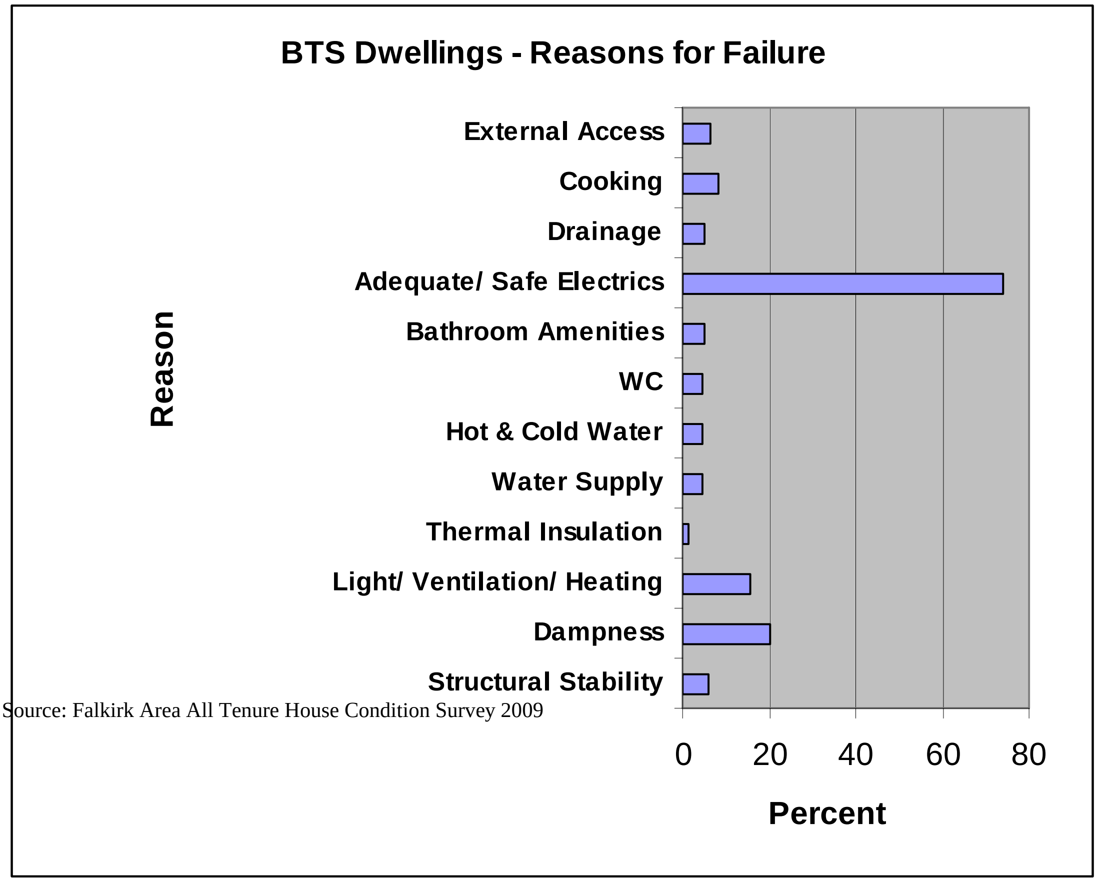
Table 27: Tolerable Standard (post 2006 Housing Act) by tenure 2009

	Above tolerable standard	Below tolerable standard
Private owner occupied	97%	3.4%
Private owner occupied (ex RTB)	94%	6.3%
Private rented	98%	1.7%
RSL	100%	0%
Falkirk Council	97%	3%
Total	96%	3.7%

Source: Falkirk Council LHCS (2009)

4.33 The primary reason for failure concerns electrical installations with dampness/ventilation, heating and lighting being the next most significant reason.

Figure 19



Source: Falkirk Council LHCS, 2009

4.34 It is estimated that the total cost of improving BTS housing in the Council area is around £5.630m at an average cost of £2,148 per defective dwelling. Costs range from under £1,000 to over £12,000 although the dominance of electrical failures influences the average improvement cost.

4.35 The BTS Strategy set out in Appendix 9 aims to eradicate BTS housing, ensuring that in the longer term all housing in the Falkirk Council area meets or exceeds the Tolerable Standard. In the short term the Strategy aims to reduce the failure rate and to show evidence of progress within the next Scottish House Condition Survey Report.

4.36 The principles which underpin the Strategy are set out below. Key actions which underpin these principles are set out in the BTS Strategy (Appendix 9).

- **Prevent** housing from becoming BTS by supporting more owners to meet their maintenance and repair obligations,

- **Assist** more home owners to improve BTS housing through the Scheme of Assistance and by making it easier for the public to report problems of derelict or poor quality housing,

- **Use enforcement action as a last resort**, where assistance fails to resolve problems and the property is already BTS or at risk of becoming BTS due to neglected maintenance or repairs.

Low awareness of disrepair

4.37 The LHCS social survey asked owners of their perceptions of repairs to their property; this indicated that 9.1% of all owner occupiers (or 4,128 households) stated that repairs were necessary. Households living in poor conditions had the greatest perception of repair needs although the majority of households living in poor conditions still perceived no repair needs.

4.38 Perception of repair needs were higher for households with a head of household aged 45-64 years old and for single parent families, those living in semi-detached housing and in dwellings constructed between 1919-64. The lowest perception of repair needs was associated with both younger and older households.

Attitudes to information, support and advice

4.39 Owner occupied households were questioned in the LHCS on preferred measures of support and advice from the Council for home improvement. A high proportion of owner –occupiers were uncommitted on the types of information and advice which might assist them in carrying out repairs and improvements. Where views were held the factors receiving the highest level of agreement were:

- Guide to costs involved
- Guide to finance sources
- Guide to Contractors

Equity release

4.40 The LHCS did not ask owner –occupied households directly about their willingness to release equity but they were asked if they would remortgage or otherwise use the value of their home to carry out necessary repairs or improvements. Only 1,468 owner occupied households said they would do this. Interest in re-mortgage is significantly higher among younger households.

Housing Renewal Area Policy

4.41 In tandem with the Scheme of Assistance and Below Tolerable Standard Strategy the Council has also developed a Housing Renewal Area Policy in recognition of its duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. The power to designate an area as a Housing Renewal Area is a new power which supersedes previous arrangements in terms of Housing Action Areas.

4.42 The Housing Renewal Policy outlines the approach which Falkirk Council will take in considering whether to designate any locality within the Falkirk Council area as a Housing Renewal Area (HRA) as defined in the legislation.

4.43 An HRA can be designated where a local authority considers that

- A significant number of houses in the locality are sub standard
  or
- The appearance or state of repair of any houses in the locality is adversely affecting the amenity of the area.

4.44 Falkirk Council's Housing Renewal Area Policy is set out as Appendix 11 to this Local Housing Strategy.

4.45 At the present time, it is not considered that there are any sufficient concentrations of BTS properties in the Council area to warrant the designation of any Housing Renewal Areas. However, over the coming five years of this LHS it is proposed that a comprehensive list of all BTS properties should be established and this will assist in identifying areas that would benefit from focussed intervention on an area basis.

4.46 Variations in SHQS performance exist across Falkirk both by area and by housing sector. Within the housing stock the highest rates of non-compliance are associated with the private-rented sector, with inter-war housing and with tenemental flats. Geographically, highest rates of non-compliance are found in the Grangemouth, Bo'ness and Polmont/Rural South housing market areas.

4.47 The following table outlines in detail compliance with the SHQS by tenure indicating that the highest rates of compliance with the SHQS are in owner occupied stock (52%) and the lowest in private rented (24%), ex right to buy (27%).

Table 28: SHQS Overall Performance

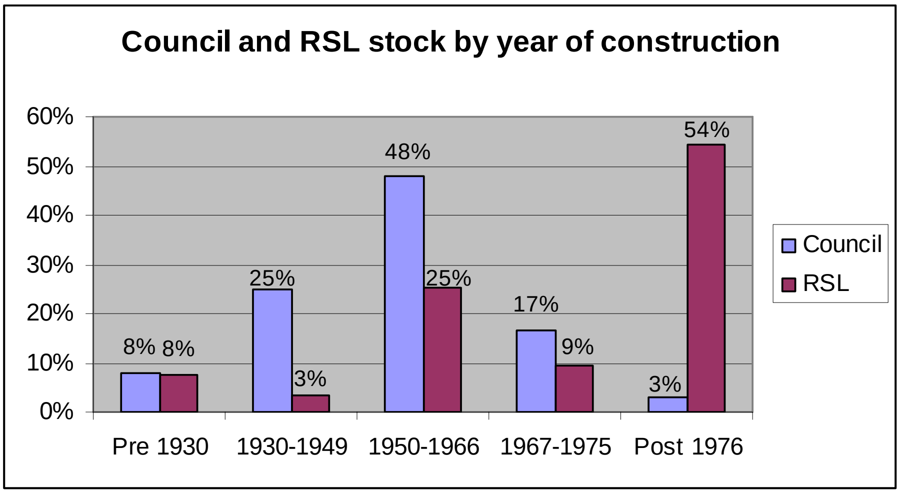
Main Tenure Group - SHQS Overall Performance			
	SHQS OVERALL PERFORMANCE		Total
	compliant	non compliant	
Falkirk Council – no.	4615	11561	16176
%	29%	71%	100%
RSL – no.	1296	1703	2999
%	43%	57%	100%
Privately Owned – no.	16454	15260	31714
%	52%	48%	100%
Right to Buy – no.	4258	11560	15818
%	27%	73%	100%
Privately Rented – no.	816	2607	3423
%	24%	76%	100%
Private – no. (privately owned, right to buy, private rented)	21528	29427	50955
%	42%	58%	100%
Social Rented – no.	5911	13264	19175
%	31%	69%	100%
Overall	**27439**	**42691**	**70130**
%	**39%**	**61%**	**100%**

Source: Falkirk Council All Tenure House Condition Survey 2009. Note numbers are subject to rounding.

Social Rented Housing and the SHQS

4.48 The social rented housing stock is split between the Council and RSLs as shown in Figure 20 below:

Figure 20



Source: Local House Condition All Tenure Database

4.49 There is a notable difference in the age profile of the Council's housing stock compared to the stock owned by RSLs with the RSL stock being predominantly younger.

4.50 However, age is not the only significant factor in assessing whether the Council's stock will meet the SHQS by 2015 and other key issues need to be considered:

- The proportion of properties of non-traditional construction which may present challenges, particularly in terms of energy efficiency,
- Previous investment in the stock,
- Ongoing maintenance programmes.

4.51 A summary of the position relative to the SHQS in respect of both RSL and Council housing stock is detailed below.

RSL Stock

4.52 In relation to the RSL stock in the area, the all tenure Local House Condition Survey indicated that dwellings owned by RSLs are generally in good condition – this is likely to be a result of the average age of RSL-owned properties: 54% has been built since1975.

4.53 Recent discussions with RSLs who have stock in this area and information below from the Scottish Housing Regulator indicate that there should be few difficulties in achieving the SHQS by 2015.

Table 29: RSL stock in Falkirk Council area in relation to meeting the SHQS 2009/10

RSL Name	Total stock	Stock meeting SHQS	% of stock meeting SHQS
Abbeyfield Scotland Ltd [1]	1	0	0%
Ark Housing Association Ltd	1	1	100%
Barony Housing Association Ltd	4	0	0%
Bield Housing Association Ltd	155	155	100%
Cairn Housing Association Ltd	55	1	2%
Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd	8	8	100%
Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd	176	43	24%
Horizon Housing Association Ltd	87	87	100%
Key Housing Association Ltd	68	68	100%
Kingdom Housing Association Ltd	8	8	100%
Link Group Ltd	1,232	1,232	100%
Loretto Housing Association Ltd	102	102	100%
Margaret Blackwood Housing Association Ltd	41	30	73%
Paragon Housing Association Ltd	831	570	69%
Weslo Housing Management	405	270	67%
Total	**3,174**	**2,575**	**81%**

The Scottish Housing Regulator - Scottish Registered Social Landlord Statistics 2009-10. Table A9b Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by Council area
Note 1 Figures submitted by the RSL refer only to self contained stock, non self contained stock has not been included.
http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/stellent/groups/public/documents/webpages/shr_2009-10tablea9bscottishhou.xls accessed 5/8/11

Council Housing Stock

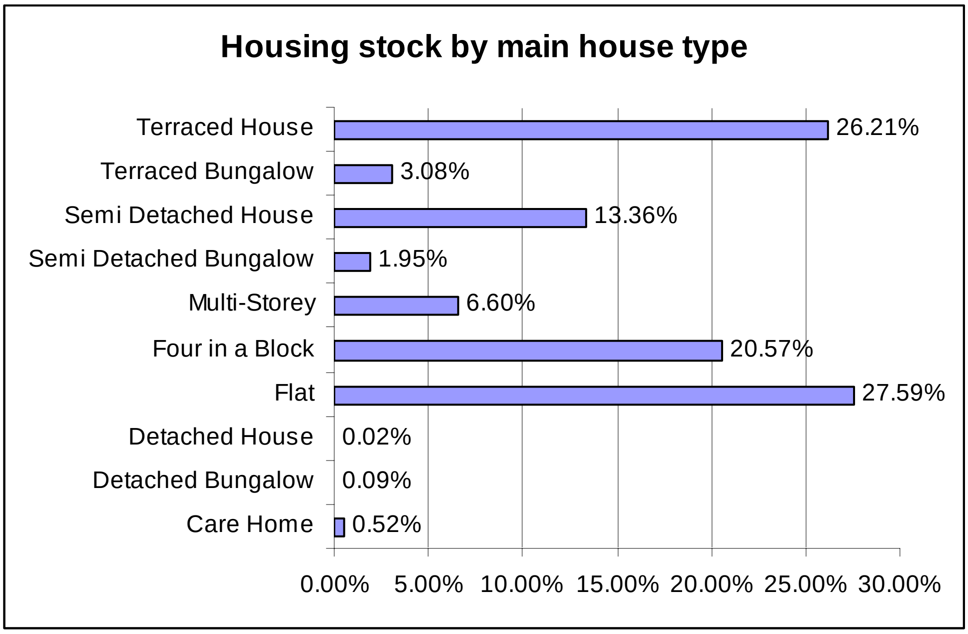
4.54 The Council is the largest single owner of social rented housing in the area and can clearly make a considerable contribution to the overall condition of the housing stock in the area.

4.55 In order to have a much fuller picture of the condition of the Council's own housing stock a 100% survey was carried out by Savills Commercial Limited in 2010. In short, the survey indicates that, with appropriate investment over the next 3-4 years, the Council should be able to afford to achieve the SHQS for the bulk of its stock.

4.56 The key points from the survey are:

- 44% of the total stock met the SHQS in 2010. This is a better position than suggested by the all-tenure Local House Condition Survey carried out in 2009 which indicated that only 33% of the Council's stock met the SHQS at that time,
- Of the remaining 56% of dwellings, some require only minor alterations to bring them up to the Standard,
- No Council properties fail the Tolerable Standard or the Serious Disrepair (Primary) elements criteria,
- Around 40% of the failures relate to one single element of the SHQS; these failures are primarily within the Energy Efficiency and Healthy, Safe and Secure categories and can be rectified relatively easily.

Figure 21



Source: LHCS

4.57 The significant points to note from this information are that flats comprise nearly 55% of the total stock. This potentially gives rise to issues in relation to common repairs, particularly in mixed-tenure blocks where properties have been sold under the Right to Buy.

4.58 In terms of those properties currently assessed as not meeting the SHQS (c.9,000 properties, 56% of the stock), the main areas requiring improvement are:

- **Serious Disrepair**– improvement to **secondary** elements including roof coverings, chimney stacks and rainwater goods (5% of stock non-compliant),

- **Modern Facilities** - upgrading of kitchen and bathroom facilities (11% of stock non-compliant),

- **Healthy, Safe and Secure** - upgrading and installation of new electrical, gas and smoke detector systems (9% stock non-compliant),

- **Energy Efficiency** – installation of insulation and efficient central heating systems (46% stock non-compliant).

Exemptions and Abeyances

4.59 There are some properties where the Council will have some difficulty in meeting all the SHQS criteria, with the non-traditional housing stock presenting particular challenges. However, recent guidance from the Scottish Government recognises that there are certain situations where it is not simply a case of a property passing or failing the SHQS and particular elements can be categorised as follows:

- **Not applicable –** this applies where a certain element is not present in a particular property,
- **Exempt –** this applies to situations where a property is capable of meeting the SHQS but the landlord considers it is not possible to do so for technical, disproportionate cost or legal reasons
- **In abeyance –** this applies where the work cannot be done for "social" reasons such as neighbouring owners being unwilling to pay their share of common repairs despite the efforts made by the Council which must continue to try to engage with owners to achieve stock improvements.

4.60 The two most common reasons for difficulty in bringing a property up to the SHQS are:

- Properties are of a non-traditional construction type,
- Reluctance from neighbouring owners to participate in common repairs schemes.

4.61 To address this issue a detailed schedule of properties is being prepared in 2011-2012 to identify situations where it may be necessary to seek an exemption or an abeyance from the SHQS based on factors such as construction type, the cost-effectiveness of improvement works or the unwillingness of neighbouring owners to co-operate with common repairs.

SHQS Budgets

4.62 The stock condition report estimates that c.£50-£60 million will need to be spent over the period 2010-2014 to ensure that, where reasonably practicable, the majority of properties can be brought up to the standard by 2015. To enable the Council to meet the SHQS for most of its stock by 2015, it currently spends approximately £34m per year (£19m revenue and £15m capital) maintaining and improving its properties.

4.63 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme is a rolling three year investment programme which allows the Council to target capital expenditure on improvement works and high cost repairs. The 2011-2014 Capital Programme involves a programme of the following works:

- Roof/ roof tile replacement
- Chimney replacement
- External weather envelope
- Kitchen replacement
- Rewiring/wiring upgrading/periodic testing
- Replacement heating
- Insulation works
- Communal door security systems
- Asbestos water mains renewal

4.64 Within the revenue budget, £2.6m is set aside for a rolling programme of cyclical maintenance activities which includes a programme of external painting and joinery repairs as well as roofing and gutter repairs. A further £19.2m is spent on reactive repairs.

4.65 The 2011-2014 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme is provided as Appendix 12 to this LHS.

30 Year Life-Cycle Costing Plan

4.66 The Council is currently working on the development of a 30-year life cycle costing plan to inform future expenditure requirements.

SHQS and Climate Change

4.67 It is now recognised that around 25% of green house gas emissions emanate from household energy consumption and that measures to improve domestic energy efficiency are crucial to meeting climate change objectives. In 2011 the Scottish Government published new guidance on addressing climate change in Local Housing Strategies as part of their duties under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Act sets two key targets:

- by 2020 there should be a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions,
- by 2050 there should be an 80% reduction in such emissions.

4.68 A key message from the Guidance is that the LHS has an important role to play in linking action on climate change with mainstream housing and fuel poverty policies. In terms of the social rented housing stock, both Council and RSL-owned, it is recognised that the SHQS requirements in respect of heating and insulation can play an important role in the local response to tackling climate change. Beyond 2015 the Scottish Government has undertaken to work with stakeholders to develop a new regulated standard to achieve further carbon emission targets to help meet the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and this will influence action in the next LHS.

4.69 Section 5 of this LHS considers climate change issues in more detail and sets out Falkirk Council's response to the challenging targets faced.

5. HOUSING AND SUSTAINABILITY

This Section will:

- Outline the strategic planning framework within which housing sustainability will be improved,
- Describe the legislation pertaining to climate change in relation to housing,
- Describe how Falkirk Council and its partners will work to achieve sustainable development in housing provision.

Key Issues

- Housing sustainability must be closely linked into the development planning process,
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment underpins the Council's approach to achieving housing sustainability,
- The Climate Change (Scotland) Act requires that Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions be reduced by 42% by 2020 and by 80% by 2050,
- The Act requires key actions be taken in relation to Adaptation, Mitigation and Sustainability to ensure that there is the maximum impact and climate change is mainstreamed,
- Partnership working is vital to maximising the resources that are available to improve household energy efficiency, reduce poverty and respond fully to the climate change agenda,
- Whilst this LHS can help to maximise the resources available and help people to maximise their income to pay for fuel costs, it can have no influence on global fuel prices,
- Any action taken in respect of housing provision has long term implications which need to be considered at the outset is sustainability is to be achieved,

5. HOUSING AND SUSTAINABILITY

5.1 This section of the LHS considers issues housing and the wider environment. The actions proposed aim to minimise negative impacts by taking mitigating actions to improve sustainability and seek to make a net positive impact wherever possible. In terms of the overall sustainability agenda, the Local Plan (in future the Local Development Plan) sets the over-arching context in which this LHS has been prepared. The current Local Plan, adopted in December 2010, considers environmental quality under a range of inter-related themes:

- Improving Design Quality and Standards,
- Enhancing the Environment and Image of the Area,
- Protecting and Enhancing the Built Heritage,
- Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Heritage,
- Ensuring Environmentally Sensitive Mineral Extraction.

5.2 In terms of the new Local Development Plan, a consultative draft of the Main Issues Report (MIR) was approved by the Council on 5th October 2011 and the formal consultation process has now commenced. The MIR identifies four Main Issues which are directly related to housing and sustainability:

- **Housing Growth –** a medium growth scenario is proposed,
- **Sustainable Housing Locations** - existing commitments and regeneration initiatives are re-affirmed along with modest settlement growth in all areas except Grangemouth where opportunities are scarce and constraints are significant and Larbert/Stenhousemuir where school capacity constraints are acute. Proposed provision will ensure that a "generous" supply of housing is possible,
- **Housing Need –** the revised Affordable Housing Policy which was approved in August 2011 is proposed; this will extend affordable housing requirements on private housing sites,
- **Infrastructure for Growth –** it is anticipated that the modest settlement expansion proposed will be able to use existing infrastructure capacity, although pressure on schools provision may require mitigation measures.

Building Standards

5.3 In addition to the measures which can be taken through the planning system, there is the requirement to satisfy National Building Standards in terms of the Building (Scotland) Act 2003. Building Standards are supported by Technical Handbooks which provide guidance on achieving the standards set in the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and Building (Scotland) Amendment Regulation 2010. The Technical Handbooks are available in two volumes, which are in relation to Domestic and Non-Domestic buildings.

5.4 Against this wider policy background, this LHS does not reiterate issues which are detailed in the Local Plan or the MIR for the new Local Development Plan, rather it concentrates on two particular issues:

- the need to meet carbon reduction targets and
- the scope to enhance the sustainability of local areas through well-designed new housing and improvements to existing housing.

5.5 A comprehensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been undertaken in respect of this LHS and is provided at Appendix 7. The SEA considers the environmental impact of the LHS outcomes in relation to:

- Biodiversity,
- Population and Human Health,
- Air and Climactic Factors,
- Landscape,
- Material Assets,
- Cumulative Effects.

Carbon Reduction Targets

5.6 It was noted in paragraph 4.67 above that household energy consumption accounts for around 25% of greenhouse gas emissions. In response to international commitments to the reduction of greenhouse gases, the Scottish Government passed the Climate Change (Scotland) Act in 2009. As noted earlier, the Act sets two key targets:

- by 2020 there should be a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions,
- by 2050 there should be a 80% reduction in such emissions.

5.7 The target set by Scottish Ministers for overall energy efficiency - a 12% reduction in energy consumption by 2020 - was set out in the Energy Efficiency Action Plan published in 2010. Requirements in respect of domestic energy consumption only are incorporated in the Council’s Home Energy Policy, 2011-16 as set out in Appendix 13. This Policy explores the links between energy efficiency and fuel poverty and puts in place a range of mechanisms to improve the former and by doing so reduce the latter.

5.8 Alongside initiatives to improve household energy efficiency and achieve reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, tackling fuel poverty remains a key concern for both the Scottish Government and Falkirk Council. This LHS proposes the continuation of a comprehensive approach to these issues which includes:

- physical improvements to the housing stock,
- raising awareness about the efficient use of heating systems,
- raising awareness of the financial assistance available for capital improvements to domestic properties
- maximising household income through increased awareness of welfare benefits so that fewer people live in poverty, including fuel poverty,
- working in partnership with the range of agencies that can contribute resources or knowledge to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

5.9 This approach is consistent with work undertaken under the previous Local Housing Strategy (2004-2009) and forms a firm foundation for continued improvements in the future. It should be noted that tackling fuel poverty is an integral part of the Council’s recently published Poverty Strategy.

Fuel Poverty

5.10 The eradication of fuel poverty by 2016 was a Scottish Executive target introduced as part of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The definition of fuel poverty used by the Scottish Government is as follows:

> *A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its (net) income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use.*

5.11 It is recognised that three issues contribute to fuel poverty: household income, fuel costs and energy efficiency. The price of fuel over the last few years has steadily risen which has caused an increase in the number of households in fuel poverty. A recent report by the Scottish Government suggested that for every 5% rise in fuel prices an extra 46,000 households will fall into fuel poverty ('Progress Report on the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement' November 2010).

5.12 This is clearly seen in the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) results from 1996 - 2002 when it was estimated that the number of households in fuel poverty fell from 36% to 13%. However the latest SHCS report shows that in 2009, 33% of Scottish Households (770,000 homes) are fuel poor.

5.13 This means that it will continue to be vital for all the key players in this agenda to work in partnership. It is only through co-operation between these parties that the climate change targets will be met, the housing stock will be more energy efficient and more people will be able to afford to heat their home with the benefits that this has for general health and well-being.

Progress to Date - Home Energy Strategy 2008-11

5.14 The Council's first Home Energy Strategy was successful in achieving significant improvements to household energy efficiency. In respect of the Council's own housing stock, the 2010 Stock Condition Survey confirmed that the percentage of properties meeting the energy efficiency criteria of the SHQS had improved from 33% in 2005, when a Standard Delivery Plan was first submitted to the Scottish Government, to 54% in 2010 when the 100% Council house stock survey was completed.

5.15 This was achieved partly through the completion of the Council's double glazing programme and the continuation of a rolling programme of central heating installation/replacement together with improvements to insulation levels. However, the following initiatives marked a step-change in tackling home energy efficiency and fuel poverty within the Council's own housing stock:

- the installation of a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system to 330 high rise flats in six tower blocks in Callendar Estate which has assisted in reducing occupants' household energy bills. Combined with the continuing upgrading programme to the external fabric of the high rise flats, the CHP continues to help reduce fuel poverty amongst tenants who are predominantly older people,

- the extension of the gas network where it was economically feasible to do so. £376,000 of energy company grant facilitated the installation of modern, efficient gas heating systems, in over 560 properties, particularly in areas with high levels of fuel poverty. Areas to benefit included Hallglen, Camelon, Dawson, Denny and Grangemouth,

- the installation of improved insulation using £1.4m of Scottish Government grants and £578,000 of funding from the energy companies. In addition, Scottish Power funded the full costs of installing cavity wall insulation in over 2,500 properties during this period.

5.16 Until 2010 the majority of local energy efficiency projects focussed on the Council's own stock. However, in 2010 the Council was successful in obtaining funding to run a Home Insulation Scheme (HIS) for owner-occupiers in conjunction with the Scottish Government and managed by the Energy Savings Trust. This project targeted 15,000 houses in the Bo'ness, Polmont and Rural South part of the area which were identified on the basis that they demonstrated high CO2 emissions in the all-tenure survey. Nearly 200 homes benefited from cavity wall insulation, 54 had full loft insulation installed and a further 500 homes had loft insulation top-ups.

5.17 In addition to physical measures to improve energy efficiency, applicants benefited from free energy advice and could be referred to the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package for a benefits health check and free central heating where certain conditions and criteria were met.

5.18 In September 2010 the Council was successful with an application for funding of £370,000 from the Scottish Government which enabled around 6,000 owners in the Stenhousemuir, Larbert and Rural North areas to benefit from free insulation through the Universal Home Insulation Scheme (UHIS). Again, the funding was made available to tackle areas with particularly high carbon emissions. This scheme resulted in the installation of cavity wall insulation in 672 properties, full loft insulation in 500 properties and top-up loft insulation in 1,200 properties.

Energy Advice and Information

5.19 The provision of energy advice is an important element of ensuring that consumers are resilient to fuel poverty and the following initiatives were implemented as part of the 2008-2011 Home Energy Strategy:

- The production and distribution of a household energy advice booklet for front line staff,
- The preparation of *Winter Warmth* packs for elderly and other vulnerable households in conjunction with Social Work Services,
- Inclusion of household energy advice pages on the Council's website,
- A letter drop to all householders, in partnership with Energy Saving Scotland advice centre.

Partnership

5.20 Partnership working has been fundamental to the implementation of the Home Energy Strategy 2008-2011 priorities with successful joint working arrangements being forged with stakeholders such as Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre (ESSac), Energy Savings Trust, Energy Action Scotland, NHS Forth Valley and a range of fuel supply companies. This work has established a strong foundation upon which the 2011-16 Home Energy Policy has been built.

The Future - Home Energy Policy 2011-16

Legislative and Policy Framework

5.21 Since the preparation of the first Home Energy Strategy, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 has replaced the Home Energy Conservation Act 1996 as the main driver of change in respect of greenhouse gas emissions. Whereas the 1996 Act aimed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30% across all housing tenures over a 10-15 year period, the 2009 Act has set an interim target of a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 and a target of an 80% reduction by 2050.

5.22 Part 4 of the 2009 Act refers to the duties of public bodies which came into force on 1 January 2011 and further guidance has now been issued. The Act requires public bodies to take action in three specific ways as follows:

- **Adaptation –** adjusting behaviour to limit harm, or exploit opportunities, arising from climate change,
- **Mitigation –** reducing harmful emissions,
- **Sustainability –** ensuring that social, economic and environment aspects are considered alongside the impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

5.23 The new legislation has implications for the Council, especially in relation to the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable heat. The Renewable Heat Incentive was launched by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in Spring 2011, however details in respect of energy efficiency were issued in October 2010 as part of the Scottish Government's publication, *Conserve and Save: The Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland*.

5.24 The duties set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the aims identified in *Conserve and Save* have been incorporated into the Council's new Home Energy Policy which covers the period 2011-2016. This updated Policy has been developed as an integral part of the 2011-2016 Local Housing Strategy but can also be considered on a standalone basis.

5.25 The Home Energy Policy aims to:

- Respond to the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 by assisting in the delivery of Government targets for greenhouse gas emissions,
- Ensure the Council's own housing stock meets the energy efficiency criteria set down in the SHQS by 2015 as far as is technically feasible and economically sensible,
- Raise awareness of energy efficiency and fuel poverty issues and encourage take-up of energy efficiency improvements by home owners and private landlords,
- Minimise fuel poverty through the installation of energy efficiency measures and income maximisation measures across all tenures,
- Maximise the availability of external funding from the main energy suppliers and other sources,
- Act as a basis for researching innovative technical solutions to improve home energy efficiency.

Resources

5.26 The new Home Energy Strategy identifies a range of funding streams that are available to support new initiatives to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. Currently, the following potential sources of funding are being pursued:

Carbon Emission Reduction Target Funding (CERT)

5.27 The aim of CERT is to help fund energy saving measures to reduce carbon emissions. This funding stream has been extended to December 2012 and from then on will be replaced by the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO). The Falkirk Council area is ranked 5th highest of Scottish local authorities in terms of the number of homes (all tenures) to benefit from improved insulation during the CERT programme.

5.28 In addition to energy efficiency measures, CERT requires energy suppliers to explore new and innovative technologies such as wind turbines, solar panels and ground source heat pumps as well as encouraging greater energy saving by consumers. Locally, CERT has been used to fund a range of projects, including insulation, new gas heating and external cladding.

Green Deal

5.29 The Energy Bill 2011 was published in December 2010. The Bill includes provision for a new "Green Deal" which will follow on from the current CERT obligations. The Green Deal is currently being developed by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and is only in the early stages of design. The likelihood is that the Green Deal will allow private companies to offer "able to pay" consumers energy efficiency improvements to their properties, community spaces or business accommodation at no upfront cost. The private company will then recoup the cost through a charge in instalments on the consumer's energy bill.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

5.30 This will replace *CERT* and will be offered by the utility companies at the start of 2013. The *ECO* is being developed in recognition of the fact that vulnerable or low income households may already ration the amount of energy they use and therefore may not be able to benefit from *Green Deal*.

A Cross-Tenure Response

5.31 Climate change requirements and fuel poverty issues affect all tenures but the responses to these issues are determined, to some extent, by tenure. Although the Scottish Housing Quality Standard sets the benchmark for house condition in all tenures, social rented sector landlords need to take steps so that, as far reasonably practicable, their housing stock meets the SHQS by December 2015. As at December 2011, no timescales have been set for private sector housing to meet the SHQS.

5.32 Measures to eradicate fuel poverty through the provision of high quality advice and information on energy efficiency matters together with income maximisation projects are, however, relevant across tenures and this is reflected in the way that the Council and other agencies work in partnership to address these issues. The Council has an in-house Community

Advice Service which, amongst other things, seeks to maximise household income and the Older People's Advice Project run by Link Housing Association has had significant success in increasing the income of older households and thereby improving general quality of life. In addition, an annual Energy Efficiency Week is organised by the Council in partnership with Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre (ESSac) to provide advice and information to households about how best to improve the warmth of their homes. These initiatives go some way towards reducing the incidence of fuel poverty in the area.

Existing Council Housing

5.33 In terms of the Council's housing stock, investment will continue to focus on installing and improving full-house central heating systems, double glazing and insulation. This strategy has been effective thus far with the percentage of properties now meeting the SHQS energy efficiency criteria having increased from 33% in 2005 to 54% in 2010.

5.34 Specific attention will, however, require to be given to particular non-traditional houses which have exhibited poor energy efficiency making them hard to heat. Where appropriate, initiatives such as insulated over-cladding will be pursued for these properties alongside the other measures outlined above in respect of the traditional housing stock.

New Council Houses

5.35 The Council has embarked on a programme of building new Council houses. To date nearly 80 new homes have been completed and around 60 are currently being developed. As a result of a successful bid for funding from the 2011 Investment and Innovation Fund resources are available to build a further 102 new Council houses and plans are being developed for around 50 more properties subject to funding availability.

5.36 The new properties will be built to current Scottish Building Regulations which seek to achieve a National Home Energy Rating (NHER) value of 5. In some instances ground source heat pumps are being installed in the new properties. Where appropriate, consideration is being given to the use of other renewable technologies such as solar power for water heating and the use of biomass as a fuel source in CHP schemes in order to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

RSL Housing

5.37 The RSL housing stock in the Council area is, on average, significantly newer than the Council's housing stock (see Page 90, Figure 20). The 16 RSLS operating in the Council area have confirmed that they should achieve the SHQS for their existing stock by 2015 and, like the Council, are required to achieve current building regulations in respect of their new stock. Closer joint working between the Council and RSLs will be explored during the period of the Home Energy Strategy to ensure that the maximum benefits can be obtained for all RSL tenants.

Private Sector Housing

5.38 To date, it has proved easier to achieve positive change in relation to the social rented housing stock than in the private sector stock. Historically, home owners and private landlords have been a more difficult group to reach and the take-up of the advice services available has been low in the private sector. The all-tenure Local House Condition Survey carried out in 2009 found that within the housing stock the private rented sector had some of the highest rates of non-compliance for the energy efficiency criteria of the SHQS.

5.39 However, one recent means of addressing this issue has been to work in partnership with Energy Savings Scotland advice centre (ESSac) to carry out a number of mail drops to residents in the Council area asking them to complete a “DIY” Home Energy Check. The data collected has been used by ESSac to provide home owners with information about subsidised cavity wall and loft insulation offers along with providing recommendations for improving energy efficiency in order to reduce fuel bills.

5.40 It is intended that this valuable partnership work will continue throughout the period of the Home Energy Policy in order to ensure that owner-occupiers and private sector tenants do not miss out on the assistance currently available and to drive continuous reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and prevent fuel poverty in private sector housing.

Sustainable Housing; Sustainable Communities

5.41 The issues pertaining to climate change outlined above go a significant way towards improving the sustainability of both the local housing stock and the wider environment in the longer term. However, it is important that requirements in relation to energy efficiency and fuel poverty do not detract from other measures to improve the sustainability of existing housing or new housing in the area.

5.42 As noted in paragraph 5.4 above, a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out in relation to this LHS and formal written consultation has taken place with the:

- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA),
- Scottish Natural Heritage,
- Historic Scotland ,

5.43 In addition, focus groups were held to obtain the views of local people and groups with a particular interest in environmental matters. The feedback received was incorporated into the final Strategic Environmental Assessment and influenced the actions in this LHS.

5.44 A commonly used definition of sustainable development is:

> *“…development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”* (Report of the Bruntland Commission, Our Common Future, Oxford University Press, 1987).

5.45 This definition is consistent with the Scottish Government’s vision as outlined in Homes Fit for the 21st Century and underpins the Vision for the Falkirk LHS 2011-16: Homes for Now; Homes for the Future; it is implicit in the outcomes that support this Vision. These outcomes seek to drive actions that will lead to the creation of attractive places where people want to live, both now and in the years to come, consistent with the Local Plan (in future the Local Development Plan).

5.46 The Scottish Building Standards also have a role in driving sustainability in the design of new properties in terms of both ensuring high standards of energy efficiency and safeguarding the landscape setting by ensuring high quality design which aims at the outset to accentuate local landscape character.

5.47 The first Falkirk LHS covering the period 2004-2009 had a major focus on the regeneration of specific "priority areas" and sought to deal with the legacy of poor housing design from previous times together with the economic and social exclusion that often go hand in hand with such housing. The impact of that Strategy can been seen across the Council area where a partnership approach to demolition and new build, combined with social and economic inclusion measures, has resulted in the demolition of poor quality, low demand housing and its replacement with new properties which demonstrate higher environmental standards and are more suited to the aspirations of the area's residents in the 21st Century.

5.48 In addition, a number of areas of Council housing stock have benefited from comprehensive internal refurbishment combined with external environmental improvements with the aim of improving the longer term sustainability of the properties, the appearance of the area and the quality of life of those who live there.

5.49 This second Falkirk LHS covering the period 2011-16 takes a broader approach which seeks to ensure the sustainability of all housing in the area: new homes require to meet higher environmental standards than ever before; the social rented housing stock needs to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015; a Scheme of Assistance, Below Tolerable Standard Strategy and Housing Area Renewal Policy have been developed to drive up standards in private sector housing and the 2016 fuel poverty target is fundamental to the approach taken in terms of energy efficiency improvements, albeit the Council and its partners can have little influence on fuel prices.

5.51 By taking this broader approach, the aim is to deliver good quality housing for everyone in the Council area both today and in the foreseeable future, in a way that is sustainable in the longer term. The Vision for this LHS – Homes for Now; Homes for the Future – will influence and underpin all housing activity in the area for many years to come.

SECTION 6 CONCLUSIONS: BALANCING RISKS AND RESOURCES

An Uncertain Future

6.1 It is clear that this LHS has been developed against a background of both increasing demand and extreme resource constraint. The population is growing, people are living longer and there are more households than ever before. At the same time Scotland is affected by the fallout from a global recession; public subsidy for housing in 2011-2012 has reduced by 19% from 2010-2011 and every pound must be spent as effectively and efficiently as possible. A sustainable LHS is not only one which does not impose a heavy environmental burden on future generations, it must also not impose an unsustainable economic burden.

6.2 The wider macro-economic environment continues to be uncertain and it is difficult for even the most informed commentators to predict where the Scottish economy will be by the end of this LHS period. There is a real and significant risk that subsidy for new affordable housing will be reduced if the Scottish (and British) economies continue to be affected by the global recession. At the current time it is possible only to take a relatively short term view of the financial resources likely to be available to deliver the outcomes set out in this Local Housing Strategy.

6.3 In terms of the Council's resources, Table 30 summarises revenue funding in the current three year budget for the Housing Revenue Account as approved by the Council on 9 February 2011:

Table 30: Housing Revenue Account (HRA), 2011/12-2013/14 – Revenue Expenditure

2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**Total**
51.439m	53.328m	55.861m	**160.628m**

6.4 In terms of HRA capital funding, the three year approved budget programme is set out in Table 31 below:

Table 31: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2011/12-2013/14 – Capital Expenditure

2011/12	**2012/13**	**2013/14**	**Total**
25.200m	30.950m	24.950m	**81.100m**

6.7 In respect of capital funding for new RSL provision, Table 24 on page 72 sets out the currently committed grant funding for the new build projects in the current programme (£3.678m). This is augmented by approximately £4.5m which the RSLs contribute themselves.

6.8 The Council and its RSL partners aim to allocate sufficient resources to meet the costs of bringing their existing housing up to the SHQS by 2015 but their ability to build new homes to meet the needs set out in this LHS is largely contingent on the capital resources that are available to them. Scottish Government subsidy is vital if major capital expenditure is to be affordable and whilst both the Council and RSLs can raise capital finance from borrowing for new build or major improvements, the costs of borrowing have ultimately to be passed on to their tenants. A balance has to be struck between what is needed and what tenants can afford to pay for their housing costs – not all are eligible for housing benefit and the welfare reform agenda means that the overall funding available for housing benefit will be reducing in the lifespan of this LHS.

6.9 As far as resources for private sector housing is concerned the figures are much more modest. In the current year only £500,000 is available for private sector grants in the Falkirk Council area.

6.10 The bulk of this funding goes to provide mandatory grants for disabled adaptations in the private sector with the result that there is little available to provide discretionary grants for disabled adaptations or for repairs and improvements to the private sector housing stock. The Council's Scheme of Assistance therefore puts considerable emphasis on advising home owners about other ways of raising the finance to bring their properties up to standard.

6.11 Clearly, the public funding available for housing improvement and new build is a risk to the achievement of the Vision and Outcomes set in this LHS but a further risk is the amount of funding available in the private mortgage market. An easing of the strict lending criteria currently being applied by the banks and building societies would go some way to kick-starting the private house building market and release some of the pressure on the public purse.

6.12 It is also clear that there are social factors – for example, the rate of household formation or the nature of those households - that this LHS cannot influence and which therefore must be recognised as risks to the achievement of long term goals. Nevertheless, the LHS can put in place a framework that ensures that all of these issues are taken into account when strategic housing decisions are being made.

Aspirations vs. Realism

6.13 In the context outlined above, this LHS seeks to be both aspirational and realistic. It is vital that the Council and its strategic housing partners continue to work together to (a) secure the widest range of funding available for new housing (b) consider new models of provision such as the National Housing Trust initiative and (c) explore opportunities to improve value for money through co-operative approaches to such issues as procurement and employment/training initiatives. The range of issues identified in this LHS is such that only positive partnership working will be able to deliver the identified outcomes.

6.14 The development of this LHS has involved significant stakeholder consultation and the agreed outcomes have evolved to represent a consensus view. However, the co-production route to the development of future strategies and policies is currently receiving attention and it may be that this is way of involving key stakeholders is an option that will need to be explored locally during the lifespan of this LHS.

6.15 This LHS has been developed with the Strategic Housing Market Partnership and partnership working is integral to its implementation. Current arrangements for co-ordinated joint working will be reviewed in the coming months as the implementation phase of the LHS begins and it is anticipated that new Strategic Housing Partnership Agreements can be put in place with key stakeholders by early 2012. In moving forward, a shared Vision for housing in the Falkirk Council area is vital and that Vision is clear: Homes for Now; Homes for the Future.

Welfare Reform

6.16 Notwithstanding the clarity of vision and the commitment of the Strategic Housing Market Partnership, some issues cannot be controlled and therefore present a risk to the delivery of the LHS. One such risk is the impact of the Westminster Government's *Welfare Reform* agenda. Debate is still ongoing in relation to certain elements of the proposed changes to the welfare system but the effects of the early changes are already impacting on the operation of the local housing market as noted earlier.

6.17 It is intended to explore the Welfare Reform agenda at the next meeting of the local Private Landlords' Forum . Given the implications of the changes to the single room rate rules, it may be that some landlords will wish to consider venturing into the HMO market rather than letting properties to individuals and families. Consideration is currently being given to developing a "flatmates" scheme which would match-up potential tenants in multi-occupancy properties. However, the proposed changes and the private sector response could pose a risk to the achievement of the outcomes set out in this LHS and result in even more demands being placed on an already pressured social rented housing sector.

Mitigating Actions

6.18 In the light of the uncertain future and taking an approach which is both aspirational and realistic, this LHS seeks to mitigate the risks outlined above. Mitigation measures include, for example, the prevention of homelessness by improving tenancy sustainability, encouraging people to explore a range of housing options in all tenures, making better use of the existing housing stock and providing adaptations and support for those who need them to enable them to live independently. It is hoped that through these measures the impact of any significant reduction in resources for new housing provision can be minimised.

Homes for Now; Homes for the Future – Monitoring and Evaluation

6.19 The Action Plans that form the remainder of this section will drive the implementation of the Strategy's six core outcomes but, as recognised above, some actions may require to change as a result of funding constraints or other factors outwith the control of the key stakeholders.

6.20 It is proposed to monitor and review the implementation of the Action Plan on an annual basis. A Local Housing Strategy Update will be provided to the Council's Housing and Social Care Committee, with referrals if necessary to the Policy and Resources Committee, and to the Strategic Housing Partnership and any sub groups which may be established under it. The LHS Update will be published on the Council's website and thus be open to public scrutiny; key stakeholders will be advised of the publication date and provided with a link to the document. Where requested, the LHS Update will be translated or prepared in a format that maximises the opportunity for all members of the community to be informed and participate in the Strategy.

6.21 In moving to the implementation phase of this LHS it is recognised that issues change over time but it is considered that the annual monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements outlined above are flexible enough to respond to change. Whilst individual actions may need to be amended, the Vision remains: H**omes for Now; Homes for the Future.** The Action Plan which follows shows how this Vision will be achieved.

Figure 22: LHS outcomes and actions

LHS Outcome 1 - Best use is made of the existing and new affordable housing stock to address local needs
1.1/a Provide new affordable housing including social rented, low cost home ownership, mid market rented, properties for people with disabilities
1.2/a Continue to participate in new initiatives (such as the National Housing Trust) to increase affordable housing supply
1.3/a Consider purchasing former Council or RSL properties when they become available for sale (larger properties - if cost effective) and rationalising flatted accommodation (blocks where Council majority/ minority landlord - if cost effective)
1.4/a Explore the potential of a pressured area status bid in 2012 (Falkirk Council Corporate and Neighbourhood Services (FC C&N) and RSL partners)
1.5/a Develop and then review on an annual basis partnership agreements with RSLS to monitor working relationships which inform the annual LHS update and the SHIP
1.6/a Increase the supply of larger homes in the social rented sector by offering incentives to people under-occupying larger properties to downsize, add extensions to existing properties, convert properties and build a proportion of larger houses in Council and RSL development programmes
1.7/a Provide housing advice and information in a range of formats and from a range of providers to ensure it is compliant with the relevant National Standards and is available to all groups including minority ethnic groups, young people and those with disabilities
1.8/a Develop a database to record developers' new build affordable housing models in the context of the Affordable Housing Policy
1.9/a Participate in the Scottish Government/ Shelter initiative on empty homes
1.10/a Develop an Empty Homes Plan
LHS Outcome 2 - Advice and information is provided on a range of affordable housing options in order to prevent homelessness
2.1/a Social rented landlords work together to prevent homelessness wherever possible through a range of positive interventions such as maximising income, assisting people to deal with debts and providing family mediation services
2.2/a Social rented landlords work together to increase awareness of the range of local affordable housing options available by rolling out the housing options approach
2.3/a RSL partners supply the necessary information and data requested by Falkirk Council to meet the Council's strategic responsibilities set out by the Scottish Government. This relates to RSL proformas which collect information and data for the Single Outcome Agreement, Equalities Impact Assessments for the SHIP, monitoring data for the HNDA and LHS and rolling out the housing options approach.
2.4/a Falkirk Council C&N Services collate all information and data supplied by RSLs including comparison Council data to feed it back annually to RSLs to assist them provide housing advice and information to local people.
2.5/a Falkirk Council C&N Services work in partnership with Social Work and Health to develop a range of housing support options for homeless people with complex needs.
2.6/a RSLs comply with Section 14(5A) (Notice to Local Authority of Proceedings for Possession of a House Let on a Scottish Secure Tenancy) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (asp 10) and inform the Council of steps taken to prevent their tenants from becoming homeless
2.7/a Falkirk Council and relevant RSLs agree Section 5 agreements
2.8/a Falkirk Council and RSLs agree nominations agreements where appropriate
2.9/a Social rented landlords ensure 50% of their mainstream lets are to statutory homeless applicants (who have a right to permanent accommodation) by December 2012 in line with the Scottish Government requirements
LHS Outcome 3 - People with disabilities are able to adapt their homes or have the information they need to make appropriate housing choices
3.1/a Participate in the accessible housing register being developed by Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living (GCIL).
3.2/a Social rented landlords try to ensure properties with disabled adaptations are allocated to those who need them
3.3/a Explore the potential to redesign properties in the social rented sector to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities
3.4/a Develop specific housing advice and information for older people and those with physical disabilities so that they are better informed about their housing options
3.5/a Develop a strategy for housing older people with Social Work and Health that takes account of people living longer and housing expectations and aspirations in the 21st Century

3.6/a Review with Social Work Services current provision of specialist accommodation for people with learning disabilities and develop appropriate models for future provision
3.7/a Explore equity release schemes with the voluntary sector
3.8/a Assist home owners and tenants in the private rented sector who have disabilities to adapt their homes to meet their needs
LHS Outcome 4 - Housing support are provided to help people live independently
4.1/a Falkirk Council carries out a programme of regular reviews of housing support services to ensure that they continue to meet changing needs and offer best value for money
4.2/a Falkirk Council along with RSL and voluntary sector partners ensure that services are integrated as well as possible and people with complex needs receive joined up services
4.3/a Falkirk Council considers the viability of breaking down the age band of those 65+ receiving housing support (65-75, 75+) in order to take account of national reporting shifts due to a correlation between old age and disability.
4.4/a Review the provision of specialist supported accommodation for young people people with learning disabilities
4.5/a Review the provision of refuge accommodation for women and children to ensure provision meets current needs and expectations
4.6/a Carry out research into the extent of male domestic abuse in the Council area and investigate appropriate responses
LHS Outcome 5 - The condition and sustainability of housing is improved and measures put in place to address fuel poverty
5.1/a Social rented landlords meet the SHQS by 2015
5.2/a Social rented landlords continue to invest in repair and improvement programmes in respect of the external “weather envelope” of properties (roofs/walls) to ensure that they are wind and watertight
5.3/a Social rented landlords continue to invest in the installation of central heating, double glazing and insulation measures in Council properties to improve the energy efficiency of the stock and reduce fuel poverty
5.4/a Social rented landlords continue to invest in rewiring and kitchen/bathroom replacement to make homes more comfortable and suitable for 21st Century living.
5.5/a Social rented landlords continue to invest in controlled door entry systems in tenement properties to improve security
5.6/a Social rented landlords provide advice and information in a range of formats to groups most likely to be a risk from fuel poverty
5.7/a Develop a comprehensive database of private sector BTS housing by 2015
5.8/a Raise awareness of owners of the need to maintain private sector housing on a continuous basis
5.9/a Implement a programme of continuous surveys to ensure stock condition information is up to date
5.10/a Explore other heating options in areas that do not currently have a gas supply in order to meet the SHQS and reduce fuel poverty
5.11/a Investigate the feasibility of achieving economies in fuel costs in grouped accommodation such as housing with care schemes
5.12/a Explore the feasibility of using excess heat generated from a biomass plant in Grangemouth as a by-product of a scheme being investigated by Forth Ports and Scottish and Southern Energy
5.13/a Corporate and Neighbourhood Services and Development Services will work together , with the Scottish Government and other partners to deliver the Scheme of Assistance; to enforce standards and to comply with duties in respect of BTS housing
5.14/a Work with local landlords, tenants, home owners, contractors and advice agencies to raise awareness about housing conditions and the Scheme of Assistance
LHS Outcome 6 - All rented housing is managed effectively and efficiently
6.1/a All social rented landlords increase awareness amongst with those looking for social rented housing of provision from all social rented landlords with stock in the Falkirk Council area
6.2/a All social rented landlords encourage applicants to register on the list for more than one provider
6.3/a Falkirk Council annually pull together a total list of all Council and RSL applicants for social rented housing taking account of duplication between providers
6.4/a Social rented landlords explore the development of a Common Housing Register (CHR)
6.5/a The project group explores the software for a CHR based on the annual list of all applicants for social rented housing
6.6/a The project group works to increase the number of partners on the CHR
6.7/a Falkirk Council and RSLs develop a protocol on data sharing and the provision of housing advice and information

6.8/a Falkirk Council and RSLs work to implement partnership agreements between Falkirk Council and all RSLs with stock in Falkirk Council area to ensure an integrated approach to funding bids and the provision of new housing
6.9/a All social rented landlords work together to identify applicants at risk of losing their home through anti-social behaviour or rent arrears and offer support
6.10/a Work with the Private Landlords' Forum to collect information on property sizes and prices in the private rented sector in order to inform housing advice and information materials
6.11/a Work with the Private Landlords' Forum to consider how public awareness of the private rented sector as a valid housing option can be increased
6.12/a Continue to develop the Private Landlords' Forum to help drive up management standards in the private rented sector

Glossary

Affordable Housing Policy (AHP)	*The provision of low cost social rented and affordable private housing which provides access to those who would otherwise be unable to afford it.*
Below Tolerable Standard Strategy (BTS)	*A document published under Section 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, the aims of which are to meet or exceed the Tolerable Standard.*
Carbon Emission Reduction Target Funding (CERT)	*Funding to help energy suppliers, through promoting the uptake of low carbon energy solutions to household energy consumers, meet their legal target of cutting greenhouses gas emissions by 2012.*
Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA)	*A division of the Scottish Government, providing central support to local authorities, and others, to aid the strategic planning of housing in Scotland.*
Community Care Housing Needs Assessment (CCHNA)	*Identifies housing requirements of specific household groups to inform the HNDA and the LHS Equalities Impact Assessment.* *The CCHNA also identifies housing support needs and other relevant issues to be taken forward in the LHS.*
Energy Savings Trust	*An impartial organisation helping people save energy and reduce carbon emissions, through providing energy saving advice.*
Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA)	*An Equalities Impact Assessment is a process of analysing a proposed or existing policy or strategy to identify what effect, or likely effect, will follow from its implementation for different equality groups within the community. The primary objective is to ensure that as far as possible any negative impacts for particular groups are eliminated or minimised by other measures.*
Green Deal – Department of Energy and Climate Change	*A Government initiative to support the implementation of energy efficiency measures to homes and businesses.*
Home Energy Strategy	*This document sets out the Council's commitment to improve the energy efficiency of its housing stock and addresses issues of Fuel Poverty affecting vulnerable households.*
Home Insulation Scheme	*A scheme designed to improve the energy efficiency of homes by promoting energy saving measures such as installing free or discounted loft and cavity wall insulation.*
Housing Land Audit (HLA)	*This document sets out the housing land supply in the Falkirk Council area at June 2010.*
Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA)	*An assessment of future housing need and demand over the next 10 years. This document provides evidence for the Council and partners to inform policy decision to be taken forward in the Falkirk Council Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016 in relation to market and affordable housing.*
Housing Renewal Area Policy	*A document published under Section 1 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 which outlines how Falkirk Council will identify parts of its housing renewal areas.*
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme	*A rolling three year investment programme which allows the local authority to target capital expenditure on improvement works and high cost repairs.*
Innovation and Investment Fund (IIF)	*A Scottish Government competitive funding arrangement which allows all housing suppliers, through a bidding process, funds to build new affordable homes.*
Interim Statement	*This document was prepared and produced to act as a bridge between the first Falkirk LHS, covering 2004-2009, and the publication of the next LHS 2011-2016.*
Joint Health Improvement Plan	*This document sets out a programme of work to build the foundation for future joint health improvement activities.*
Local Development Plan (LDP)	*This document guides the use and development of land within the Falkirk Council area.*
Local House Condition Survey (LHCS)	*An inclusive house condition survey programme carried out across all housing tenures in the Falkirk Council area.*
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	*A new measure introduced from April 2008 to help people receiving Housing Benefit or low income to live in private sector accommodation they can afford.*
Mains Issue Report (MIR)	*This report is the first stage in the Local Development Plan process and identifies the main planning issues facing the area, the Council's preferred approach to these issues and its preferred sites for development.*
National Home Energy Rating (NHER)	*A scoring device which provides a concise measurement of the overall energy efficiency of a dwelling.*
National Housing Trust Initiative (NHT)	*A new affordable housing initiative, led by the Scottish Futures Trust, to help provide housing for rent at mid-market levels.*
National Outcomes	*15 national outcomes describing what The Scottish Government want to achieve over the next 10 years.*

National Performance Framework	*The Scottish Government's purpose as set out through 15 National Outcomes and 45 National Indicators.*
New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE)	*A low cost home ownership scheme where Scottish Government gives grants to Registered Social Landlords to help them build or buy new homes for sale.*
Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE)	*A low cost home ownership scheme which allows people on low to moderate incomes to purchase homes for sale on the open market where it is affordable for them to do so.*
Ownership Options	*A Scottish charity providing advice and support to all disabled people throughout Scotland, ensuring they have access to suitable housing in the tenure of their choice.*
Poverty Impact Assessment	*Poverty Impact Assessment is the process by which central and local government assess working practices, programmes, policies and resource allocation in relation to the likely impact they will have or have had on poverty with a view to poverty reduction.*
Scottish Futures Trust (SFT)	*A Scottish Government initiative responsible for delivering value for money across all public infrastructure investment.*
Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)	*An index of small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland*
Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)	*The independent regulator of Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords.*
Scheme of Assistance	*A document published under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 which describes how Falkirk Council will assist with adaptations and repairs or improvements to private housing.*
Single Outcome Agreement (SOA)	*An agreement between Falkirk Council and The Scottish Government developed from the national outcomes and, under a common framework, local outcomes in terms of local priorities.*
Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP)	*An energy assessment rating procedure carried out in new build properties.*
Strategic Community Plan (SCP)	*A partnership document with the full co-operation of key stakeholders which focuses on high priority issues which both reflect local needs and future challenges.*
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	*This assessment highlights likely effects of plans and programmes on the environment.*
Strategic Housing Partnership Agreements	*An agreement between Falkirk Council and key stakeholders to ensure maximum co-operation in the implementation of the LHS – by early 2012.*
Supporting People budget	*A housing related support budget to help vulnerable people to live independently in the community.*

Acronyms:

AHP	*Affordable Housing Policy*
ASD	*Autistic Spectrum Disorder*
BTS	*Below Tolerable Standard*
CCHNA	*Community Care Housing Need Assessment*
CERT	*Carbon Emission Reduction Target*
CHMA	*Centre for Housing Market Analysis*
CHP	*Combined Heat and Power*
CML	*Council for Mortgage Lenders*
CN	*Current need*
COSLA	*Convention of Scottish Local Authorities*
CP	*Community Plan*
CVS	*Council for Voluntary Service*
ECO	*Energy Company Obligation*
EQIA	*Equalities Impact Assessment*
ESSac	*Energy Savings Scotland advice centre*
FCCP	*Falkirk Council Coporate Plan*
FFF	*Fairer Falkirk Fund*
FSF	*Fairer Scotland Fund*
GCIL	*Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living*
HIP	*Health Improvement Plan*
HLA	*Housing Land Audit*
HNDA	*Housing Need, Demand Assessment*

HNDSEG	*Housing Need, Demand Supply Executive Group*
HRA	*Housing Revenue Account*
HRAP	*Housing Renewal Area Policy*
LDP	*Local Development Plan*
LHA	*Local Housing Allowance*
LHCS	*Local House Condition Survey*
LHMA	*Local Housing Market Area*
LHS	*Local Housing Strategy*
LIFT	*Low Cost Initiative for First Time buyers*
MIR	*Main Issues Report*
MMR	*Mid Market Rent*
NAN	*Newly arising need*
NCN	*Net current need*
NHER	*National Home Energy Rating*
NHS	*National Health Service*
NHT	*National Housing Trust*
NPF	*National Performance Framework*
NSSE	*National Supply Shared Equity*
OMSE	*Open Market Shared Equity*
PIA	*Poverty Impact Assessment*
RSL	*Registered Social Landlord*
SCLD	*Scottish Consortium for Learning Difficulties*
SCP	*Strategic Community Plan 201-15*
SEA	*Strategic Environmental Assessment*
SHCS	*Scottish House Condition Survey*
SHIP	*Strategic Housing Investment Plan*
SHQS	*Scottish Housing Quality Standard*
SIMD	*Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation*
SOA	*Single Outcome Agreement*
SPG	*Supplementary Planning Guidance*
SWIS	*Social Work Information System*
UHIS	*Universal Home Insulation Scheme*

English

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Urdu

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