

# SHETLAND ISLANDS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

2022-2027



## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to the Shetland Islands Local Housing Strategy</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1	Local Housing Strategy Purpose.....	3
1.2	Local Housing Strategy Vision and Priorities .....	4
1.3	Local Housing Strategy Consultation and Engagement.....	5
<b>2</b>	<b>Local Housing Strategy Context</b> .....	<b>8</b>
2.1	Strategic Context for Housing in Scotland.....	8
2.2	Strategic Context for Housing in Shetland .....	10
<b>3</b>	<b>Shetland Islands Profile</b> .....	<b>13</b>
3.1	Population and Households.....	13
3.2	Shetland’s Ageing Population.....	14
3.3	Shetland’s Economy .....	15
3.4	Shetland’s Housing Market.....	16
3.5	Shetland’s Housing Stock.....	17
<b>4</b>	<b>LHS Priority 1: Increasing Housing Supply &amp; Promoting Place making</b> .....	<b>18</b>
4.1	LHS Priority 1: What’s our Starting Point? .....	18
4.2	What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think? .....	20
4.3	LHS Priority 1: Our Actions.....	20
<b>5</b>	<b>LHS Priority 2: Improving House Condition, Energy Efficiency &amp; Tackling Poverty</b> .....	<b>22</b>
5.1	LHS Priority 2: What’s our Starting Point? .....	22
5.2	What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think? .....	24
5.3	LHS Priority 2: Our Actions.....	24
<b>6</b>	<b>LHS Priority 3: Improving Access to Specialist Housing Provision &amp; Enabling Independent Living</b> .....	<b>26</b>
6.1	LHS Priority 3: What’s our Starting Point? .....	26
6.2	What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think? .....	28
6.3	LHS Priority 3: Our Actions.....	28
<b>7</b>	<b>LHS Priority 4: Preventing &amp; Alleviating Homelessness through Housing Options, Information &amp; Support</b> .....	<b>30</b>
7.1	LHS Priority 4: What’s our Starting Point? .....	30
7.2	What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think? .....	32
7.3	LHS Priority 4: Our Actions.....	32
<b>8</b>	<b>Delivering Local Housing Strategy Outcomes</b> .....	<b>34</b>
8.1	Our Implementation Plan.....	34
8.2	Monitoring and Evaluation .....	34

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## 1 Introduction to the Shetland Islands Local Housing Strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) supported by an assessment of housing need, demand and housing provision. Scottish Government Guidance was published in 2019 to assist local authorities with the preparation of Local Housing Strategies.

The Local Housing Strategy sets out the strategic direction, policies and plans that will enable Shetland Islands Council and partners to deliver high quality housing and housing services to meet the needs of local people in all housing tenures. The LHS also sets out the important contribution that housing makes to improving health and wellbeing, creating connected and sustainable places, tackling climate change, supporting economic growth and reducing poverty across Shetland.

This LHS builds on the progress of the 2016 LHS and sits at the heart of all housing planning arrangements and partnership activities in Shetland. It is an ambitious strategy, setting out what homes and communities should look and feel like in Shetland over the next five years and beyond. This vision includes improving access to suitable, affordable and energy efficient housing for all Shetlanders, in homes that meet the individual needs of each household, and which are well connected to local services, jobs and communities.

The LHS has been developed with the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and also the UK exit from the European Union, both of which have had significant impacts on Shetland's economy and communities. The Local Housing Strategy therefore comes at a crucial


time and by aiming to support inclusive growth and tackle inequalities, will be instrumental in improving outcomes for everyone in Shetland.

### 1.1 Local Housing Strategy Purpose

The LHS sets out the vision of Shetland Islands Council and local partners for the future of housing across all tenures and types of housing provision. The strategy aligns to national housing priorities by maximising investment opportunities for Shetland, taking into account Shetland's unique geographic and housing system context. The main purpose of the strategy is to:

- set out a shared understanding of need and demand for all types of housing, and for housing services now and in future
- provide clear strategic direction for housing investment including the development of new homes as well as investment in existing housing
- set out actions and targets to improve the quality, condition and energy efficiency of homes in Shetland
- provide a strong contribution to the integration of housing, health and social care services to enable independent living and improved wellbeing outcomes
- set the framework to prevent homelessness wherever possible and to resolve homelessness quickly and effectively when it does occur
- focus on the priorities and outcomes required to achieve the LHS vision.

In meeting the requirements of the LHS Guidance, the strategy must be:



- Evidence based & informed by the latest housing system insight
- Developed in collaboration with partners, stakeholders & residents
- Forward looking and delivery focused
- Based on public service reform principles: prevention, collaboration, people development & innovation
- Informed by extensive and inclusive consultation
- Clear, concise & easy to read
- Clear on the links to previous LHS priorities

## 1.2 Local Housing Strategy Vision and Priorities


The vision for housing in Scotland places housing firmly at the center of other national objectives including tackling poverty and inequality, creating and supporting jobs, meeting energy efficiency and fuel poverty targets, tackling the climate emergency and creating connected, successful communities.

The LHS vision also places housing at the centre of major ambitions for Shetland including:

- improving housing access and reducing inequality
- providing homes in sustainable places where connectivity to jobs and local services is easy
- ensuring everyone finds it easy and affordable to heat their home
- supporting people to live independently and well at home.

<sup>1</sup> Shetland will attract people of all ages to live, work, study and invest, Shetland Partnership Plan 2018-28

Coproduced with LHS delivery partners, stakeholders and local residents, the Local Housing Strategy vision for Shetland is that:



**"Everyone in Shetland has access to a home which is connected, energy efficient and meets individual needs"**

To achieve this vision and realise the wider ambitions set out in the Place Principle of the Shetland Partnership Plan<sup>1</sup>, the following four LHS priorities have been defined:

<p><b>LHS Priority 1:</b> Increasing housing supply &amp; promoting place making</p>	<p><b>LHS Priority 2:</b> Improving house condition, energy efficiency &amp; tackling poverty</p>	<p><b>LHS Priority 3:</b> Improving access to specialist housing provision &amp; enabling independent living</p>	<p><b>LHS Priority 4:</b> Preventing &amp; alleviating homelessness through housing options, information &amp; support</p>
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The evidence, key issues and actions for each LHS priority are set out in Sections 4 to 7 of this LHS Framework document.

Guiding the delivery of the LHS are the principles set out by the Christie Commission on the Delivery of Public Services in Scotland. These include commitments to collaboration, efficiency and innovation, prevention, and tackling inequality.

The LHS Steering Group will build on the strong partnerships already in place, recognising that achieving LHS priorities will require a

collective effort from delivery partners, stakeholders, communities, and the people of Shetland.

### 1.3 Local Housing Strategy Consultation and Engagement

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires that local authorities consult on their LHS, and the statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires the involvement, consultation and engagement of a wide a range of local residents, tenants and communities of interest as possible.

A range of consultation opportunities have been provided throughout the course of developing this LHS, with opportunities for early engagement to help ensure local people, communities and wider stakeholders share views on the most pressing housing challenges facing Shetland, as well as generating ideas for change and improvement. As housing system research and analysis emerging during LHS production, the views of partners and stakeholders were sought on the emerging key housing issues that should be prioritised for action.

**A diverse range of partners, stakeholders and subject matter experts participated in developing the Shetland Island LHS 2022-27. An extensive consultation and engagement programme has been undertaken to collect a range of views and enable this feedback to systematically inform the development of the LHS. These include:**

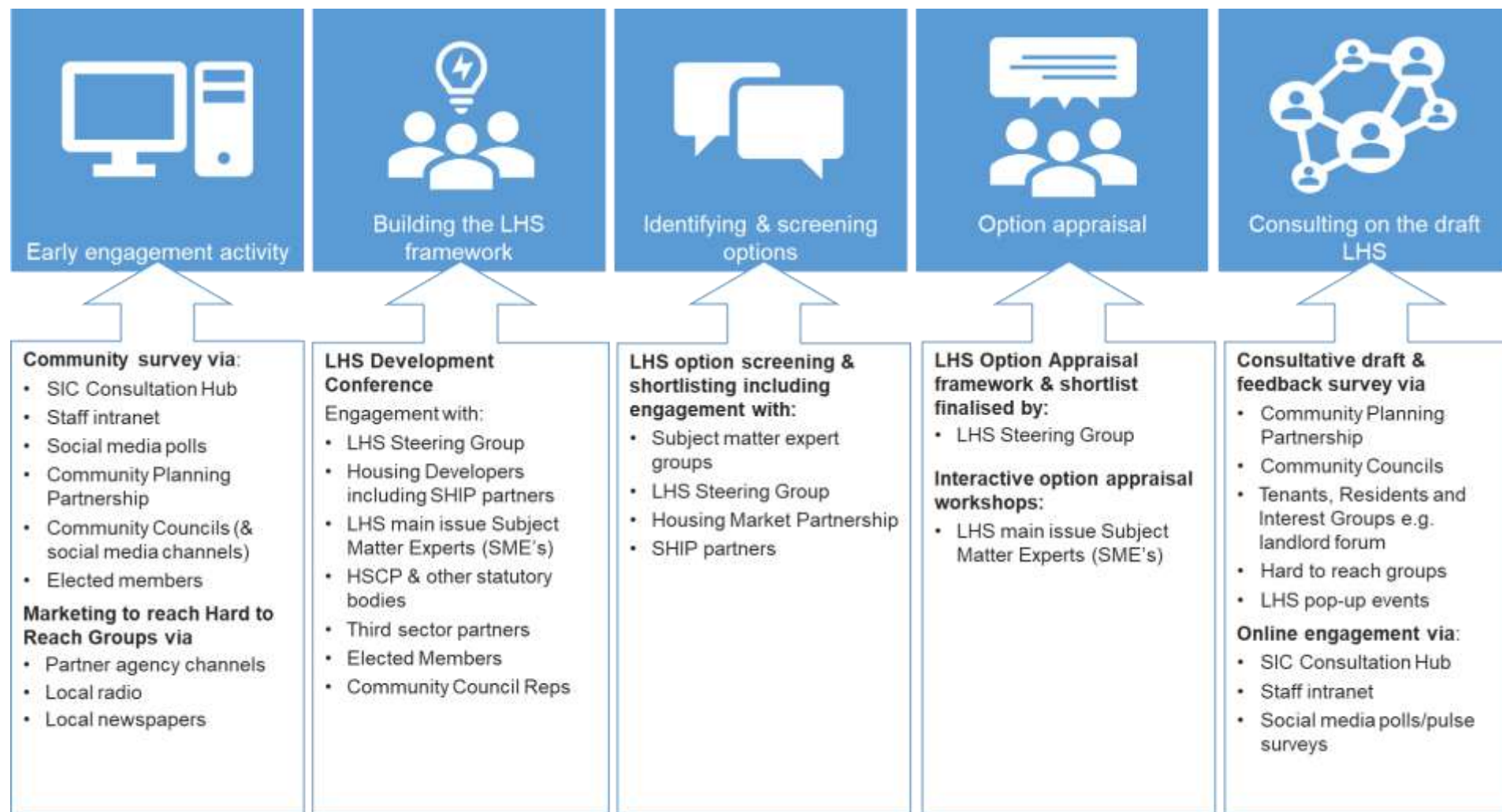
- **LHS early engagement survey:** A survey to inform the new Local Housing Strategy was made available to communities and residents across Shetland, enabling them to express their views on which local housing issues 'matter most'. The survey was open for a 6-week period from 22/09/21 – 28/10/21. The early engagement survey was heavily promoted on social media, via the

local press and radio and channeled locally through community councils. The survey was made available in a range of formats including online, via telephone and freepost options.

- **Stakeholder conference:** To encourage and enable widespread participation, the full day conference was held digitally via Microsoft Teams. A total of 58 partners and stakeholders attended the event, including representatives from public, private, third and community sectors. The purpose of the conference was to co-produce an LHS vision, agree the main housing issues that form the basis of LHS priorities and generate ideas and innovation as a basis for LHS actions.
- **Options identification workshops:** Four half-day workshop sessions were held, to inform the definition of key LHS priorities together with a range of viable options for addressing them. Workshop participants were specialist stakeholders and subject matter experts from across the Council and partner organisations.
- **Option appraisal workshops:** Four half-day workshop sessions were held to systematically appraise LHS options. The outputs from these sessions from the basis of the LHS Action Plan and Outcome Framework.
- **Strategic engagement:** Mechanisms were put in place, as part of the LHS consultation plan to ensure the LHS is fully aligned with local strategies, policies and plans. These include partnership working around the Housing Contribution Statement, the Local Development Plan and the Shetland Net Zero Route Map.
- **Strategic governance:** The LHS development process has been commissioned by the LHS Steering Group which provides a multi-agency governance framework for the development and implementation of the LHS. Representatives includes partners from Housing Services, Planning, SIC's Development Directorate,

Community Planning & Development, Education, Transport Planning, Economic Development, Hjaltland Housing Association and NHS Shetland.

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the development and delivery of the LHS Consultation Plan. A creative approach was deployed to ensure that a range of alternative engagement and consultation opportunities were available in the absence of face-to-face opportunities. The advancement of virtual consultation methods has been effective in providing new ways to engage with people not able to attend in-person events, and to expand the digital audience of the LHS. The extent and nature of the LHS Consultation Plan can be summarised as follows:



## 2 Local Housing Strategy Context

It is important that the LHS supports and helps deliver national housing outcomes and targets, whilst also reflecting the needs and priorities of local people through the Shetland Partnership Plan.

The LHS is therefore set within the wider Community Planning framework for the Council and its partners. On this basis, the LHS defines the housing contribution to local strategic priorities and provides a framework for meeting the targets set out in Scotland's first national Housing Strategy: 'Housing to 2040'. The national and local strategic framework that will support and enable LHS delivery is set out in more detail below.

### 2.1 Strategic Context for Housing in Scotland

#### Housing to 2040

Housing to 2040 is Scotland's first ever long-term national housing strategy providing a vision for what housing should look like and how it will be provided to the people of Scotland, no matter where they live and what point in their life they are in. The strategy is developed around four key themes:

- 1 More homes at the heart of great places
- 2 Affordability and choice
- 3 Affordable warmth and zero emissions
- 4 Improving the quality of all homes

Housing to 2040 makes a commitment to increasing housing supply by setting an ambition to deliver 100,000 affordable homes over the next ten years up to 2031/32, with at least 70% of these homes for social rent. The strategy also sets out a specific vision for rural and island communities to guide policy and investment:



*I live in a remote area and it is great to know there are good housing options for everyone here, from farmers and crofters to young people and those seeking to move to the area to set up home and bring employment and new opportunities to the area.*

*Housing supports much needed skilled workers living and staying in my community; and local people and businesses are building the new homes*

The vision for rural and island communities set out in housing to 2040 is underpinned by a range of strategic commitments aligning economic and population strategy ambitions to housing ambitions:

#### What will the 2040 vision for rural and island settings deliver?



The Government **actively shapes the market to make sure that there is a sufficient number of high-quality homes** in urban and rural areas so that everyone has a reasonable choice of where they live and the type of accommodation they live in.



Policy is tailored to the different needs of urban, rural and island communities. **Housing availability in rural areas is attracting inward investment** and creating employment opportunities which, in turn, is attracting people to rural communities.



**Rules around, and investment in, housing takes account of the differing costs of delivery** between rural and urban Scotland and also accounts for people with different needs.



There is a more organic approach to new housing, with the right number and type of homes placed in a way to strengthen the existing community, and benefits incomers. **The right housing supports rural and island economies to thrive.**

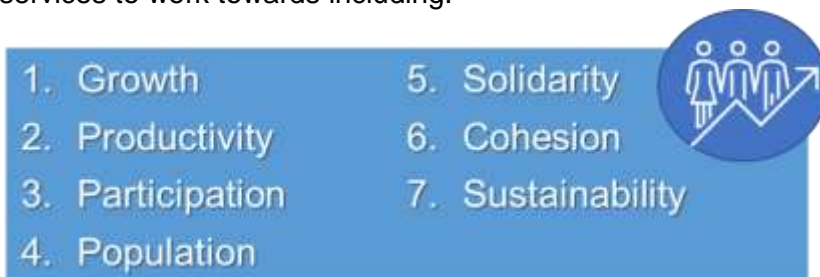


Local communities should be empowered to respond to housing need in their area, as **part of a coherent regional economic approach** (creating and maintaining jobs) and supported by provision of the **right infrastructure.**



### National Performance Framework

The Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework provides a vision for ‘A Scotland that is *wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger and greener*’. It provides a framework which includes seven high level targets for public services to work towards including:



LHS outcomes in Shetland align well to the National performance Framework Vision and make strong contributions to the targets set under the growth, participation, population, cohesion and sustainability elements of the framework.

### Fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4)

The Scottish Government are currently preparing a new spatial plan for Scotland that will look ahead to 2050. The fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) will set out a vision for what Scotland, as a place, could and should look like in 2050. This will include national planning policies and provide a plan for future development in Scotland. Driven by the overarching goal of addressing climate change, this long-term strategy is expected to focus on achieving four key outcomes:

1. Net zero emissions
2. A wellbeing economy
3. Resilient Communities

### 4. Better, Greener Places

The LHS has been informed by the concepts and aims set out in NPF4. Concepts such as the 20 minute neighbourhood, use of the Place Principle, prioritising brownfield development and a fabric first approach to decarbonising homes and communities; all feature within the action plans to deliver Shetland LHS priorities.

Furthermore, informed by the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) produced in 2021, Shetland Islands Council set a ‘minimum all tenure housing land requirement’ (MATHLR) following Scottish Government consultation with local authorities on the spatial strategy for NPF4. The MATHLR took into consideration:

- Housing Need & Demand Assessment evidence including cross tenure housing estimates
- housing delivery targets arising from the Rural and Islands Growth Deal and Strategic Housing Investment Plan
- local strategic drivers for housing delivery, as well as historic evidence of the rate of housing completions in Shetland.

MATLHR targets set a minimum threshold for housing land allocations within the Local Development Plan.

**The proposed Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement set for Shetland for the next 10 years is 850 units.**

Setting the MATLHR does not impact on the requirement for setting Housing Supply Targets within the Local Housing Strategy, based on the housing estimates produced within the HNDA. In preparing this Local Housing Strategy there has been close partnership working between housing and planning colleagues to ensure that

housing delivery and land use planning principles are informed and well aligned.

## 2.2 Strategic Context for Housing in Shetland

It is important that the LHS should be closely aligned with the Shetland Partnership Plan (2018-28), as well as supporting a range of other local plans and strategies which set out ambitions for the people of Shetland.

### Shetland Partnership Plan (2018-28)

Shetland’s Partnership Plan is a plan for all partners and communities in Shetland. It identifies a shared vision and priorities for all to work towards, both individually and collectively, to improve the lives of everyone in Shetland.

The key focus of the Plan is to reduce inequality of outcome in Shetland, setting out a range of priorities and outcomes which tackle the issues that mean some people and groups have a poorer quality of life than others. Tackling housing inequality through the Local Housing Strategy is therefore central to the delivery of the Shetland Partnership Plan by ensuring homes:

- are well connected to local jobs and services through placemaking
- reduce housing induced poverty through improving affordability and tackling fuel poverty
- offer the amenity and support needed to help households with health, disability or support needs to live independently and well in their community

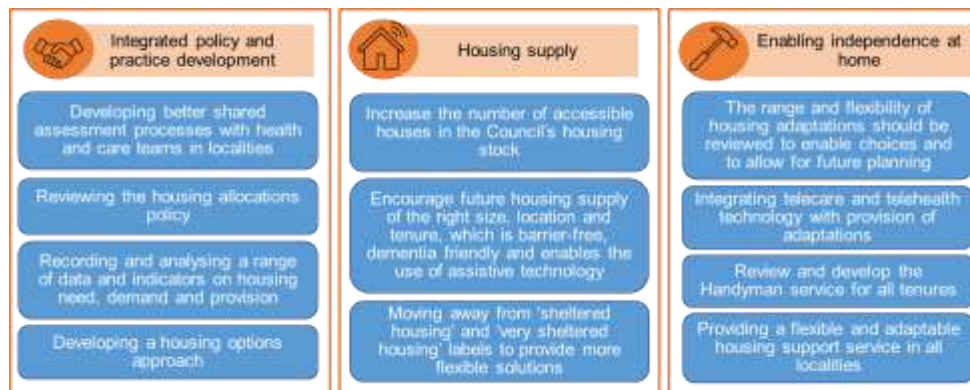
- support people facing housing crisis to keep their home or find suitable alternative housing without the need to become homeless.

The LHS vision has been aligned to the shared vision in the Partnership Plan: *“Shetland is a place where everyone is able to thrive; living well in strong, resilient communities; and where people and communities are able to help plan and deliver solutions to future challenges”*; and to the shared ‘Place’ principle:

*“Shetland is an attractive place to live, work, study and invest”.*

### Joint Commissioning Plan

The Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) sets out the role of housing services in meeting health and social care outcomes and is a key element of the Joint Commissioning Plan in Shetland. It serves the key link between the Joint Commissioning Plan and the Local Housing Strategy. The current Shetland Island’s HSCP Joint Commissioning Plan spans 2019-2022 and sets out a number of actions and priorities which support the better integration of housing, health and care services, including:



### Shetland Net Zero Route Map

Shetland Islands Council are currently working on the development of a Shetland Islands Council Net Zero Route Map and a Shetland Net Zero Route Map. The development of the route maps will form a framework and a plan for how the Council and Shetland will reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

There are 6 sectors within the emerging net zero route maps, one of which is public and residential buildings. The LHS will form a significant part of the public and residential buildings sector, setting out housing's contribution to reducing CO2 emissions and decarbonising domestic fuel. It is intended that the development of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, which sets out the measures home owners and landlords will take to improving the energy performance of Shetland's homes, will form a major component of this work.

### Shetland Local Development Plan

The Council adopted the Shetland Local Development Plan (LDP) in September 2014 and work is now well underway to develop a new LDP by December 2022. As well as monitoring the impact of the 2014 Plan, the Council has also conducted a call for sites – the process through which developers and landowners submit potential future development sites for consideration. The Council has also carried out extensive consultation and engagement on a Main Issues Report which outlines the main land use planning issues arising in Shetland now and in the future.

In preparation for the Local Housing Strategy, a Housing Need & Demand Assessment was carried out, providing analysis of how the housing system in Shetland is operating, plus a range of housing estimates which set out need and demand for housing in Shetland

over the next 10-20 years. The Local Housing Strategy will utilise these estimates to set Housing Supply Targets as the basis for allocating land for housing within the new Local Development Plan.

The LHS is also instrumental in delivering a number of key LDP priorities aligned to the new National Planning Framework, including tackling climate change, promoting placemaking and supporting the delivery of a wellbeing economy.

### Rural & Islands Growth Deal

Research into the economic impact of Brexit on local authorities defines Shetland as the second most vulnerable Council area in Scotland. To mitigate the economic challenges faced by Shetland, a £335M Island Growth Deal was announced by the UK and Scottish Governments in March 2021.

The Deal, founded on £100M of public investment, will drive a 10 year economic development programme for Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides with a focus on the transition to net zero and supporting the creation of sustainable, thriving communities. Key investment priorities include net zero carbon energy and infrastructure, innovation, tourism, skills, creative industries, food and drink, aquaculture and housing.



**The Knab Redevelopment project places housing and place at the heart of Shetland's economic strategy.**

The Shetland Knab Redevelopment project aims to go beyond creating a simple housing regeneration project by delivering a mixed-use site that embeds living and ageing well, wellbeing and a dynamic use of public space. The masterplan vision for the site is to develop a new, future looking community which links well with Lerwick town centre and delivers community facilities as well as up to 140 modern homes. The site offers an opportunity to diversify tenure options to meet different housing needs, including mid-market rents, first time buyer options, downsizing options and technology based assisted living. The vision also aims for the delivery of energy efficient, net zero, affordable housing that meets and ideally surpasses building standards.

The Knab development will enhance the range of housing options in Lerwick and will provide local infrastructure that supports Shetland's ambitions on place. It will set an ambitious standard for how Shetland and its communities will develop over the coming decades; ensuring 'People' and 'Place' are at the forefront of all that Shetland builds for its future. The Knab Redevelopment project will be supported with investment of up to £9.1M from the Scottish Government.

### 3 Shetland Islands Profile

A complex mix of factors and issues influence the operation of the housing system in the Shetland. Informed by analysis of the local housing system, the LHS develops a framework for improving housing outcomes for everyone in Shetland by tackling housing system imbalances. Key housing system drivers such as population, household and the structure of Shetland’s economy are set out below.

#### 3.1 Population and Households

Despite sustained growth between 2000 and 2010, population numbers in Shetland have plateaued and in recent years have shown marginal decline. This trend is set to continue over the next 10 years with a 1% decline by 2028.

Despite static population numbers in Shetland, the number of households living in the area has increased by 14% since 2001 (the same rate of household growth as is Scotland). In 2018, there were an estimated 10,384 households living in Shetland.

Recent household projections produced by the National Records of Scotland estimate

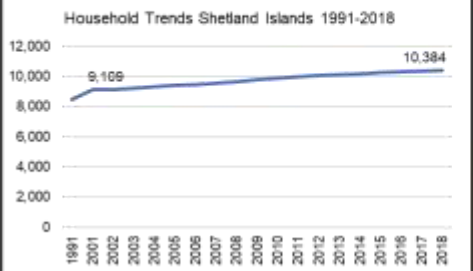
that the number of households living in Shetland will continue to grow over the next decade. Over the next 10 years, household numbers will increase by 3% ensuring a relatively stable household base without migration into Shetland. The high migration scenario increases this growth to 3.4%. This increase will drive a future need for new homes across Shetland, accelerated by a growth in smaller households.

LHS Main Issue 1: Supply & Placemaking

## Demographic Profile: Household change

**In 2018, there were an estimated 10,384 households living in Shetland, an increase of 14% since 2001.** This growth follows the national pattern with households in Scotland increased by almost 13% over the same period.

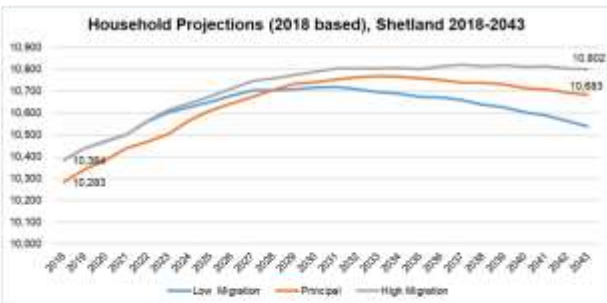
The average household size in Shetland has decreased by 5.1% from 2.38 in 2001 to 2.2 in 2018. This decline in household size is notably higher than the Scottish average which saw a 1.4% decline over the same period.



Household Trends Shetland Islands 1991-2018

In September 2020, the NRS published household projections for every local authority in Scotland, based on the 2018 population estimates. The projections include a principal scenario and variants based on alternative assumptions about migration trends (high and low).

**Both the principal and high migration projections show an increase in population between 2018 and 2043, with projections stabilising thereafter**



Household Projections (2018 based), Shetland 2018-2043

Over the life of the next LHS, 2022-2027, the number of households in Shetland is projected to increase by over 2.5% from 10,439 to 10,644. Over the decade (2021-2031) the figure will increase by over 3% to 10,753 under the principal scenario.

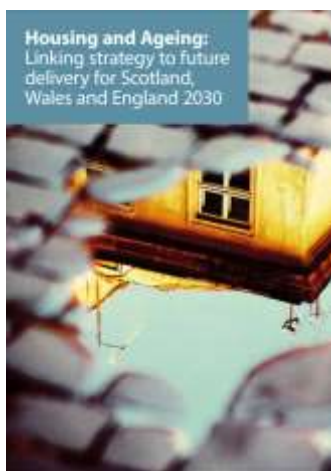
### 3.2 Shetland’s Ageing Population

The average age of the population of Shetland is projected to increase significantly as people live longer.

The working age population is projected to decrease by almost 6% in the next 10 years whilst the 65+ age cohort will increase by almost 22%. More specifically, there is a projected increase of the 66-84 population of 25% and growth of 115% in the 85+ age group. This will inevitably lead to an increasing demand for housing or housing support for older people in Shetland in the next 10-20 years.

These projections will have a major impact on the sustainability of the local economy and will necessitate housing, health and care interventions that enable the growing population of older people to live independently and well.

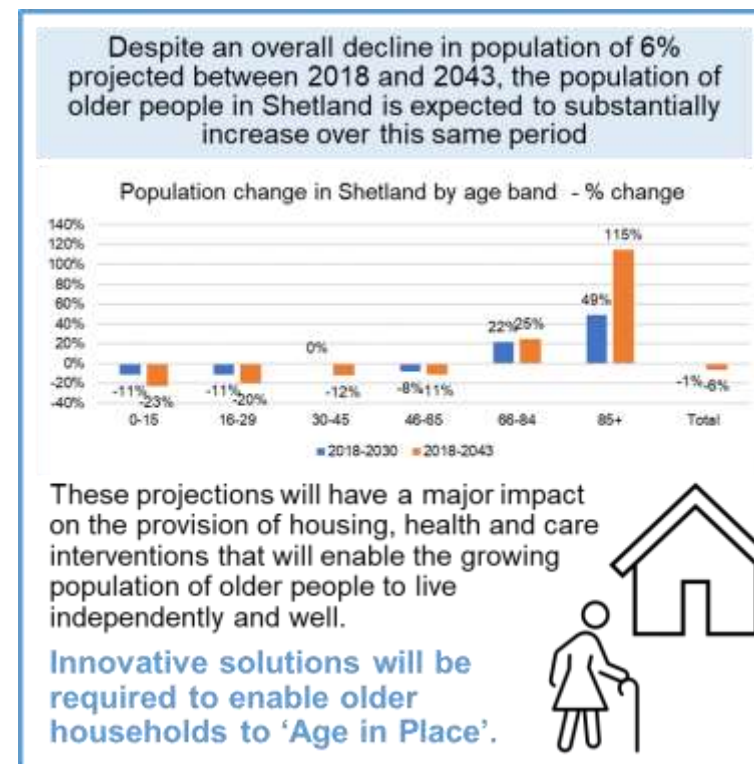
#### Innovative solutions will be required to enable older households to ‘Age in Place’.



The report “Housing and Ageing: Linking Strategy to future delivery for Scotland, Wales and England 2030”, recommends that housing should play a central role in the provision of services for older people.

It also calls for new adaptable and affordable housing to be built; investment in early intervention; and meaningful consultation with older people. It makes the point that by 2030 there will be over 600,000 people aged 75 or over in Scotland. As a result, we will need to ensure there is suitable housing and services for individuals to continue living independently at home, maintaining their connections with people and place.

There is increasing recognition that planning for housing in later life is about **ageing in place** and staying in the home of your choice for as long as possible. Increasing the supply of accessible housing is a fundamental part of promoting independence, flexibility and social inclusion. This can only be achieved by building accessible dwellings or by adapting the existing housing stock to meet the needs of Shetland’s older people as they age.



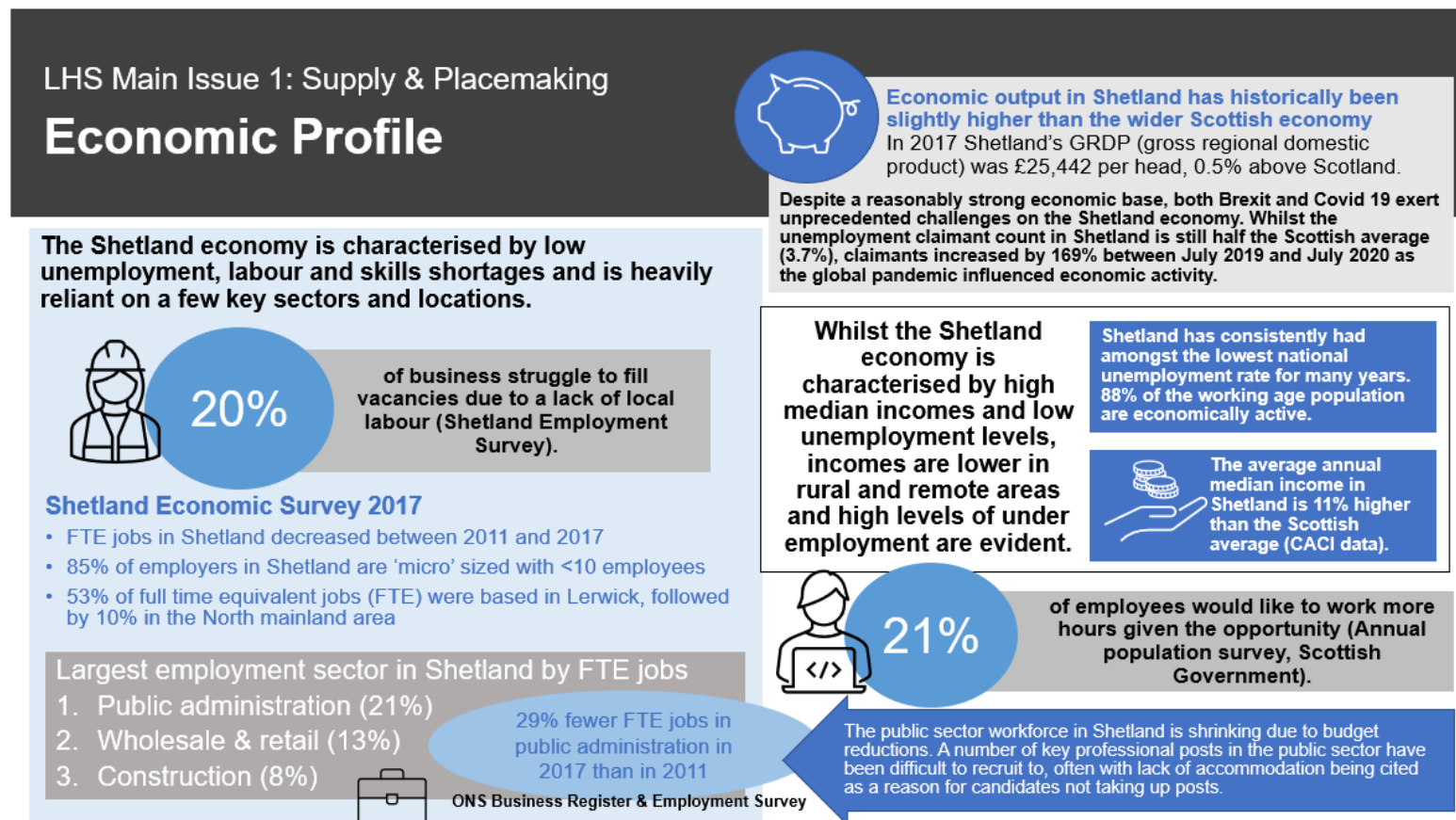
### 3.3 Shetland's Economy

The Shetland economy is characterised by low unemployment, labour and skills shortages, and is heavily reliant on a few key sectors and locations. Despite low unemployment rates, full time jobs in Shetland have been declining for a number of years and there is evidence of under employment - 21% of employees would like to work more hours given the opportunity.

Whilst the average annual median income in Shetland is 11% higher than the Scottish average, incomes are lower in rural and remote areas.

Despite a relatively strong economic base, both Brexit and Covid-19 are exerting unprecedented challenges on the Shetland economy. It is important that housing investment is maximised as part of Shetland's economic strategy. Housing and economic growth are fundamentally linked, and a lack of suitable housing can be a barrier to key sectors of the economy being able to recruit and retain staff to grow their businesses and in turn grow the local economy.

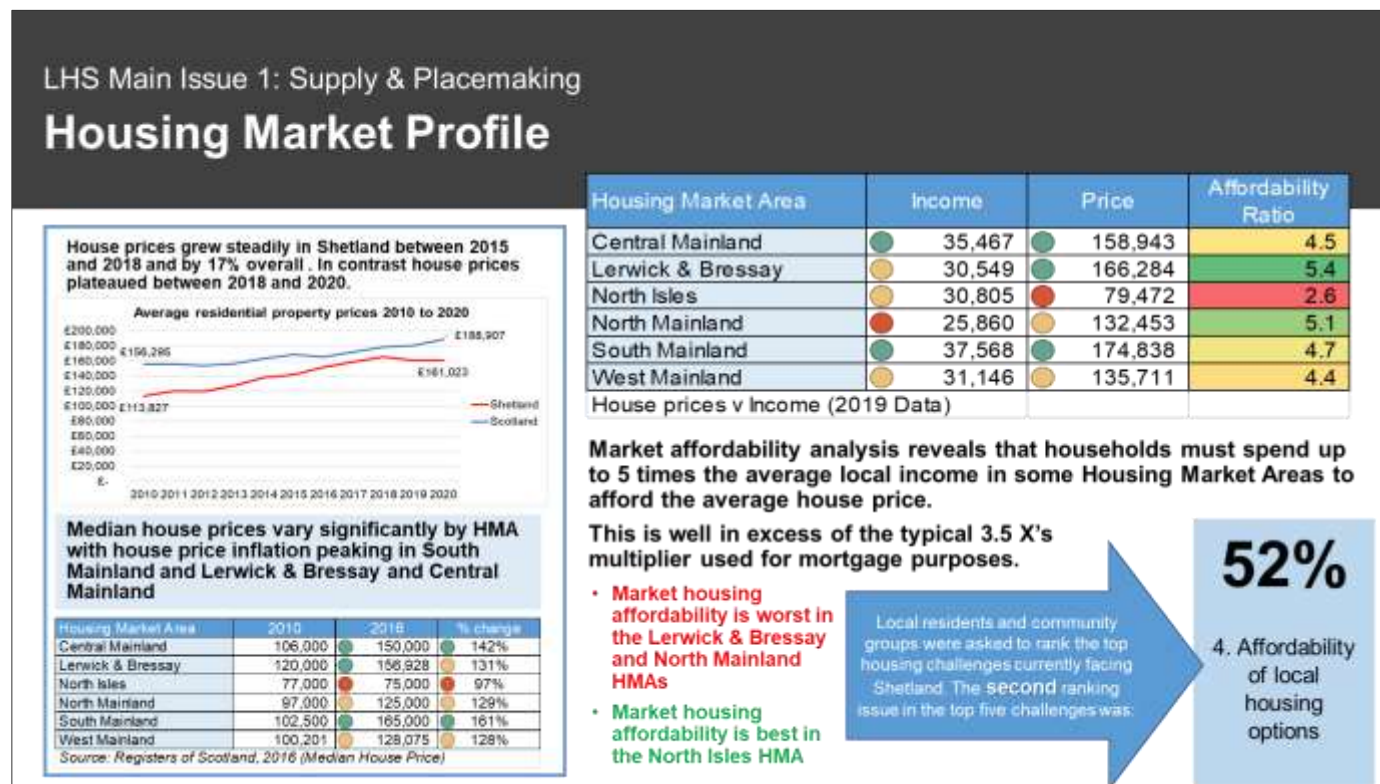
The capacity of the housing construction sector will also have a major impact on the ability to achieve Shetland's economic ambitions and to deliver the scale of housing output required to meet housing need and demand.



### 3.4 Shetland's Housing Market

Whilst the Shetland housing market has shown positive growth over the last 5 years, housing market performance is patchy at a sub-market area level.

House prices have grown steadily in Shetland by 17% over the last 10 years. Median house prices vary significantly by Housing Market Area with house price inflation peaking in South Mainland, Lerwick & Bressay and Central Mainland at over £150,000 per property. Market affordability analysis reveals that households in Shetland must spend up to 5 times the average local income to afford the average house price, well in excess of the typical 3.5 times income multiplier required to secure mortgage lending.



Analysis of housing affordability in Shetland reveals there are clear affordability pressures locally, particularly for those on low household incomes. A significant proportion of households in Shetland (38%) earn less than <£25,000 per annum despite a lower quartile income which is above the Scottish national average.

Incomes are lower in rural and remote areas and high levels of under employment are evident. This will drive housing affordability pressures.

Whilst Council rents are affordable for 4/5 households in Shetland, market rents are only affordable to 3/5 households. Market rents are out of reach for those households on lower incomes including those earning minimum or living wage levels. More than 40% of households in Shetland cannot afford to access the housing market, even at market entry level.



### 3.5 Shetland's Housing Stock

There are over 11,000 dwellings in Shetland to meet the needs of the local population. 73% homes in Shetland are located in the owner-occupied sector, which is significantly higher than in Scotland (62%). The social housing sector accommodates just under 1 in 4 households living in Shetland.

Shetland has fewer smaller homes than is the case in Scotland. A third of homes in Shetland have 2 bedrooms or less compared to 50% in Scotland. The projected growth in smaller households in Shetland creates an increasing mismatch between households and homes, fuelling a need to develop smaller properties in well-connected places and sustainable communities.

LHS Main Issue 1: Supply & Placemaking

## Housing Stock Profile

**There are approximately 11,400 residential homes across Shetland**

Most homes in Shetland are located in the owner occupied sector (73%) which is significantly higher than in Scotland (62%). The social housing sector accommodates just under 1 in 4 households living in Shetland.

	Shetland	Scotland
Owner-occupied	73%	62%
Social Housing	23%	26%
Private Rented	4%	13%

*Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-2019 LA Tables*

Shetland's private rented sector accounts for only 4% of the stock whereas the Scottish average is 13%. The PRS is an important transitional housing tenure which offers flexible housing options to those in need. Tenure diversification and PRS growth in main housing centres could be an important consideration in the new LHS.

**NRS statistics (2020) reveal that 9% of dwellings in Shetland can be classified as ineffective housing stock i.e. not available to meet the needs of the resident population. This is significantly higher than is the case in Scotland (4%).**

**The scale of ineffective housing stock has a significant impact on the ability of local households to meet housing need.**

	Shetland		Scotland	
Total Dwellings	11,374	100%	2,663,726	100%
Occupied dwellings	10,401	91%	2,538,756	98%
Vacant dwellings	800	7%	90,499	3%
Second Homes	173	2%	24,471	1%
<b>Total Ineffective stock</b>	<b>973</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>114,970</b>	<b>4%</b>

	Shetland		Scotland	
Vacant dwellings	800	7%	90,499	3%
With unoccupied exemptions	208	2%	43,166	2%
Long term vacant	592	5%	47,333	2%


NRS: Dwellings by occupancy in each council area, September 2020

**The number of empty homes (7%) and long term empty homes (5%) in Shetland is more than double the Scottish pattern.**

31%

Increase in long term empty homes in Shetland between 2008-2018

**9% of dwellings in the North Isles are empty homes**



**Pause & reflect: The impact of ineffective stock in meeting housing need**

Bringing empty homes back into use could be a key consideration with the new LHS. This approach could provide opportunities to enhance housing options in the private rented sector. Investing in long term empty properties not only increases the supply of local housing but improves condition of housing stock and helps to regenerate communities.

There are also substantial cost and environmental benefits to utilising existing stock. For every £1 spent renovating an empty home, it is estimated that £1.60 can be generated within the local economy. Whilst the average cost of a new build home on Shetland is up to £200k, the average costs of bringing empty homes back into use can be as low as £40-50k depending on the scale of work required. There are also significant reductions in the carbon footprint of renovation.

Shetland's private rented sector accounts for only 4% of the stock, much lower than the Scottish average at 13%. The PRS is an important transitional housing tenure which offers flexible housing options to those in need. Growing the private rented sector and offer a wider range of tenure options in main housing centres is an important consideration for the local housing strategy. New housing tenures could include low-cost home ownership, shared equity, shared ownership and mid-market rent options. Creating a more accessible and flexible range of housing options could also be instrumental in attracting and retaining essential workers supporting the delivery of Shetland's economic ambitions via the Islands Growth Deal.

#### 4 LHS Priority 1: Increasing Housing Supply & Promoting Place making

The LHS is an all-tenure strategy which considers current and future housing need, setting a strategic vision for housing across both public and private sectors. Providing the right size, type and tenure of housing, in sustainable, well-connected places is a fundamental aspect of Local Housing Strategy delivery and crucial to the delivery of the Shetland Partnership Plan and Islands Growth Deal.

Aligned to increasing housing supply and placemaking, the LHS is required to provide evidence and policy direction in relation to:

- the extent and nature of housing need and demand across Shetland
- delivering a generous supply of housing land aligned to the Local Development Plan and Housing Supply Targets
- the strategic direction for housing investment in Shetland, including the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (for affordable housing) and the delivery of intermediate housing through the Island Growth Deal
- powers and mechanisms to help households and landlords make best use of existing homes
- efficient and innovative ways of building and financing the development of new homes.



Informed by analysis of the main issues and housing system drivers, LHS Priority 1 focuses on ***‘Increasing housing supply and promoting placemaking’*** in Shetland by:





Chapter 4 sets out the evidence base and outlines what Shetland Island Council and partners doing to address the main challenges to increasing supply and promoting placemaking. It concludes with LHS priority actions for partnership, investment and delivery activity.

#### 4.1 LHS Priority 1: What’s our Starting Point?

LHS analysis suggests that the key issues which drive the need for action, investment and partnership to increase housing supply and promote placemaking in Shetland are as follows:

<p><b>Affordable housing pressure</b></p> 	<p>There are 2,551 units of affordable housing across Shetland, with around 8% becoming available for letting each year. Demand for affordable housing in Shetland clearly outstrips supply with roughly 4 applicants for every social tenancy that becomes available. The number of waiting list applicants to available homes shows major pressures for 1-bedroom homes across Shetland.</p>
<p><b>Housing need</b></p> 	<p>If we assume that local housing requirements will be based on a growing population scenario, Shetland will require additional housing in the region of 929 units over the next 10 years. Almost 43% of this additional housing requirement is for affordable housing.</p>

<p><b>New supply</b></p> 	<p>Over the last 5 years (from 2015-2019), the total number of housing completions across Shetland totalled 390 comprising of 261 market completions and 129 affordable homes. The Housing Supply Target for the past 5 years was 710. There is a significant shortfall in private and affordable housing completions against housing supply targets.</p>
<p><b>Placemaking</b></p> 	<p>The delivery of the Housing &amp; Community Place standard is a key priority for Shetlanders. Shetland Islands Council is currently working with the Scottish Futures Trust and Hub North Scotland to develop a place-based model which joins up the planning and delivery of economic and social infrastructure investment including housing, planning, net zero, transport and Covid recovery.</p>

A key challenge in increasing housing supply in Shetland is the cost of building new homes.


### Development Costs in Shetland

**The cost of building in Shetland is recognised to be significantly higher than the Scottish average**

The Scottish Government's analysis of new build development costs in Scotland, sets a regional location factor to adjust affordable housing grant rates. These factors range from 0.84 in Midlothian to 1.34 in Shetland – the highest in Scotland.

According to Scottish Government analysis:

**The cost of affordable housing development is 34% higher in Shetland than elsewhere in Scotland**



£215k\*

In fact, recent tender returns for Hjaltrand HA suggest that current development costs are **up to 45% higher** than benchmarks for the Scottish mainland at £215,000 per unit (including works, land and professional fees)

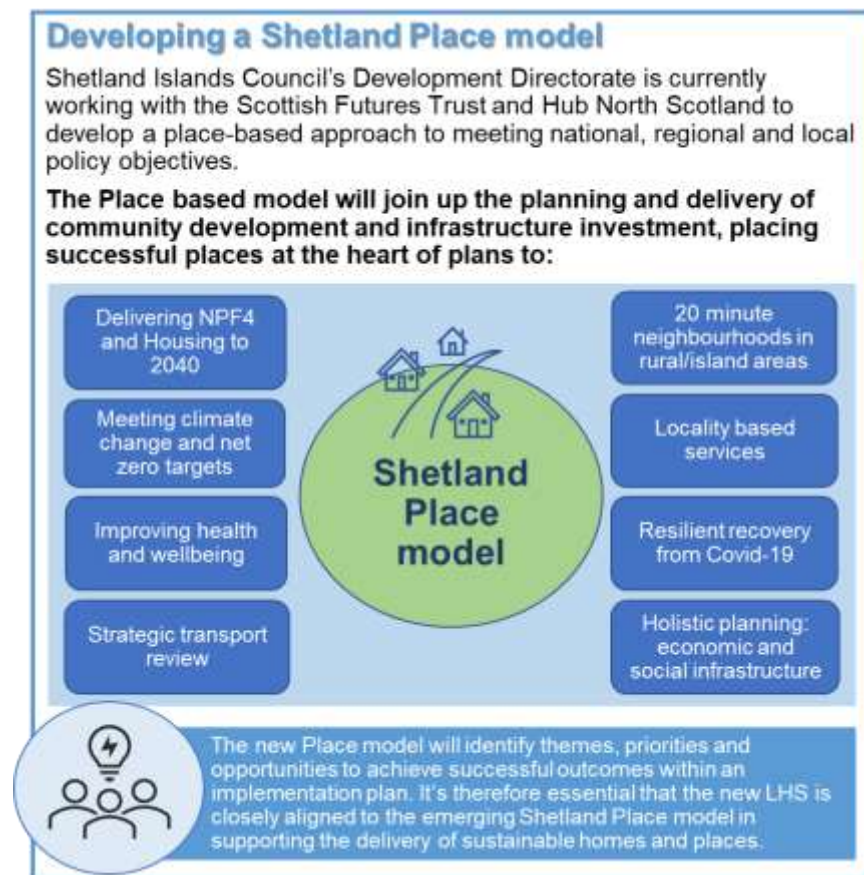
\* Taken from latest 2 projects to attain Scottish Government approval

Despite new subsidy rates for affordable housing, the cost of development in Shetland will continue to be extremely challenging without making the case for further subsidy. This could be essential in meeting supply targets.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan is the delivery plan for meeting affordable housing supply targets across Shetland. Over the next 5 years, the Strategic Housing Investment Programme in Shetland will deliver 316 affordable homes supported by over £19M of funding from the Scottish Government. Opportunities to maximise other funding streams will also be pursued including the Rural & Islands Fund, the Infrastructure Fund, the Island Deal and 2nd Homes CT Fund.

The 5-year Housing Supply Target set in the 2014 Local Development Plan for Shetland was 710 homes. Analysis of total housing completions in Shetland over the past 5 years shows a significant shortfall in meeting Housing Supply Targets in both private and affordable housing delivery. A key consideration in setting Housing Supply Targets within the new LHS will therefore focus on removing constraints and building capacity to increase the delivery of housing supply across all tenures in Shetland.

Shetland Islands Council's Development Directorate is currently working with the Scottish Futures Trust and Hub North Scotland to develop a place-based model which joins up the planning and delivery of economic and social infrastructure investment including housing, planning, net zero, transport and Covid recovery. It is essential that the new LHS is closely aligned to the emerging Shetland Place model, supporting the delivery of sustainable homes and places.



## 4.2 LHS Priority 1: What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think?

Informed by resident feedback and housing system analysis, partners and stakeholders came together to define the major

barriers that need to be overcome in the Shetland LHS to increase housing supply and promote placemaking. Key local challenges which drive the need for future partnership, investment and delivery activity include:



## 4.3 LHS Priority 1: Our Actions

Partners and stakeholders co-produced a range of options and ideas to proactively address the challenges associated with increasing housing supply and promoting placemaking in Shetland. The following priority actions have been identified to enable the Council and partners to deliver LHS Priority 1 Outcomes over the next 5 years:



Deliver the Strategic Housing Investment Plan in partnership between SIC, HHA, Scottish Government, Developers and landowners



Develop a coherent, multi-agency workforce strategy for the construction sector in Shetland ensuring that skills development supports capacity for investment in new and existing homes



Use master planning sites (Knab/Staneyhill) to understand the optimum development mix to increase tenure options using learning outcomes to improve development planning across Shetland



Maximise investment via the SHIP and other sources (e.g. Rural & Islands Housing Fund; Housing Infrastructure Fund) to deliver Housing Supply Targets



Encourage and support the delivery of place principles in the design and development of new build housing and existing stock, and where required, align housing with economic development proposals



Work with partners to identify procurement and partnership mechanisms which enhance access to development finance and explore housing construction innovation



Enable the delivery of affordable/mixed tenure housing development including mid-market, shared equity, serviced plots, self-build and options for intergenerational housing projects



Ensure the housing component of the Island Growth Deal delivers positive outcomes for economically active households and supports local businesses to attract and retain staff

## 5 LHS Priority 2: Improving House Condition, Energy Efficiency & Tackling Poverty

The LHS provides the strategic framework for improving the quality and energy efficiency of homes across Scotland, driving improvement in housing induced poverty and proactively tackling fuel poverty.

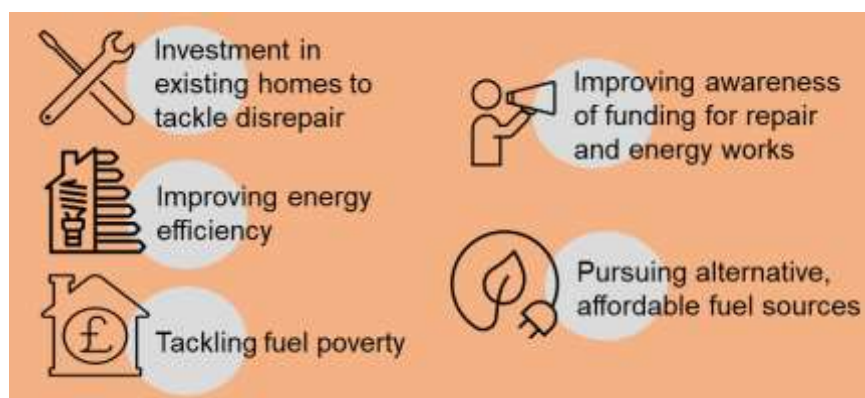
The LHS has a significant role to play in enabling Shetland to meet the ambitious energy efficiency and climate change targets set by the Scottish Government. It sets out how affordable warmth can be achieved through investment in housing condition and energy improvements; sets a road map for reducing domestic carbon emissions. LHS also sets a framework for improving the condition and quality of housing across all tenures, setting out the mechanisms and support to enable landlords and owners across Shetland to invest in repair and maintenance.

Aligned to improving house condition, energy efficiency and tackling poverty, the LHS is required to provide evidence and policy direction in relation to:

- the strategy for delivering energy efficiency standards including the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2) and targets for private sector homes in the Heat and Buildings Strategy
- tackling fuel poverty
- driving housing's contribution to climate change
- improving the condition of all homes by meeting housing quality and repairing standards

- supporting private owners and landlords to invest in housing repair and maintenance through the Scheme of Assistance.





Informed by analysis of the main issues and housing system drivers, LHS Priority 2 focuses on '**Improving house condition, energy efficiency and tackling poverty**' in Shetland by:




Chapter 5 sets out the evidence base and outlines what Shetland Island Council and partners doing to address the main challenges to improving housing condition, energy efficiency and fuel poverty. It concludes with LHS priority actions for partnership, investment and delivery activity.

### 5.1 LHS Priority 2: What's our Starting Point?

LHS analysis suggests that the key issues which drive the need for action, investment and partnership to improve housing condition, energy efficiency and fuel poverty levels in Shetland are as follows:

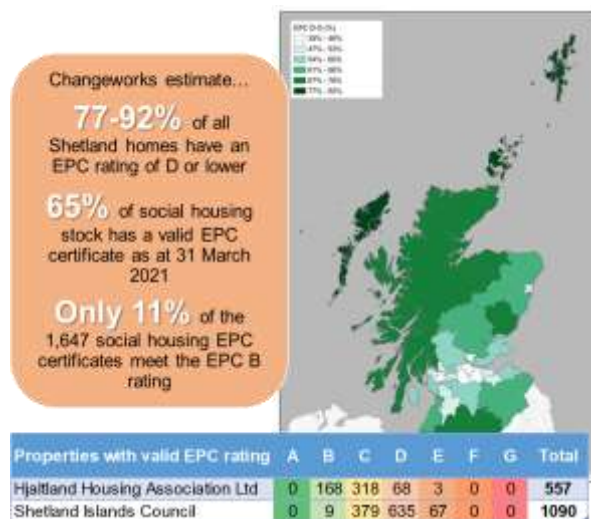
<p>House condition</p> 	<p>The Scottish House Condition Survey suggest that 59% homes in Shetland have some element of disrepair. This is 12% lower than the Scottish average.</p> <p>However, 30% of Shetland's homes are in urgent disrepair, which is higher than the national average.</p> <p>100% of HHA stock and 76% of SIC stock met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard with Council stock significantly below the national average for the sector (91%).</p>
<p>Support for private sector owners and landlords</p> 	<p>Most Shetland households (73%) live in private sector housing. SIC's Scheme of Assistance offers advice and support for private sector owners and landlords. There are two key elements to the Scheme: (i) advice and information; and (ii) financial assistance.</p> <p>For the six years to 2018/19 £5.3M of SG grant has been made available to Shetland to fund energy efficiency programmes. In 2019/20 110 EE installations were completed.</p>
<p>Fuel poverty</p> 	<p>31% of households in Shetland are estimated to be fuel poor compared to 24% in Scotland. Furthermore, 22% of households are estimated to be in extreme fuel poverty compared to 12% nationally.</p> <p>There is a higher prevalence of fuel poverty in the social housing sector with 53% fuel poor. Older people and family households experience greater fuel poverty than other household types. North Isles has the highest incidence of fuel poverty over the six localities.</p>
<p>Energy efficiency</p> 	<p>The Scottish Government's Heat in Building Strategy set targets are that all homes should have an EPC rating of band C by 2033. It is estimated that 77-92% of all Shetland homes currently have an EPC rating of D or lower.</p> <p>Targets for the social housing sector are more stringent with all homes required to meet an EPC B by 2032. Currently just 11% of homes in the sector meet Band B.</p> <p>Furthermore, all homes that use high emission oil, LPG and solid fuels in Shetland have to convert to zero emissions heating by 2030.</p>

<p>Climate change</p> 	<p>8% of Shetland's CO2 emissions are estimated to come from the domestic sector.</p> <p>There has been a 65% reduction in the emissions from domestic electricity since 2005, with emissions from other domestic fuels remaining fairly static over the same period.</p> <p>Renewable electricity installation has been a contributing factor on lowering CO2 emissions. Shetland's renewal electricity installations mostly come from onshore wind and Shetland has the second highest rate of installations per household in Scotland.</p>
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The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy, published on 7 October 2021, outlines a pathway to net-zero emission homes and buildings in Scotland by 2045. The Strategy includes an overarching ambition for all homes to achieve at least EPC Band C by 2033 where feasible and cost effective.

In the social housing sector, the EESSH2 milestone (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing) is that all homes in the sector will meet EPC B or be as energy efficient as practically possible by 2032. The Scottish Government is delivering a Social Housing Net Zero fund that will assist social landlords meet some of the costs associated with this target. In addition to these energy targets, by 2030, the vast majority of homes that use high emission oil, LPG or solid fuels will have to convert to zero emission heating.

The following map, produced by Changeworks, shows the extent and distribution of cold homes across Scotland, with Shetland showing the highest proportion of homes with an EPC rating of D or lower. Furthermore, statistics from the latest Annual Return on the Charter from the Scottish Housing Regulator show that around 2/3rds of homes in the social housing sector have a valid EPC rating, with just 11% meeting the EPC rating of B.



Housing investment and improvement programmes will require to be carefully reviewed to incorporate the costs arising from Heat in Buildings and ESSH2 targets.

Both homeowners and landlords are encouraged to pursue a 'fabric first' approach to housing maintenance that maximises the performance of the components/materials that make up the building fabric before consideration of relying on energy saving products or renewable technologies to meet energy standards. This approach could be instrumental in making progress in improving the energy efficiency and condition of homes across Shetland.

## 5.2 LHS Priority 2: What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think?

Informed by resident feedback and housing system analysis, partners and stakeholders came together to define the major barriers that need to be overcome in the Shetland LHS to improve housing condition, energy efficiency and fuel poverty. Key local challenges which drive the need for future partnership, investment and delivery activity include:

<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Funding is essential to meet energy standards in the private housing sector (the predominant tenure in Shetland) to ensure costs do not exacerbate existing housing affordability pressures</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Households in private sector housing need clear information, advice and assistance to access grant funding opportunities as well as support to source reliable contractors</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>There is limited capacity in the local construction sector to deliver energy improvement works due to competing construction pressures and a limited number of skilled contractors in this field</p>
<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Shetland's starting point for meeting energy and climate change targets is extremely challenging given the scale of owner occupation, higher than average disrepair and number of homes with EPC band D or lower ratings</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>The incidence of fuel poverty in Shetland is higher than Scotland and the removal of LPG and oil source heating, while positive for climate change, could have a worsening impact on already high fuel poverty levels</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>There is limited understanding of the impact of alternative low carbon fuel sources and heating technologies on household cost and energy performance</p>

## 5.3 LHS Priority 2: Our Actions

Partners and stakeholders co-produced a range of options and ideas to proactively address the challenges associated with improving housing condition and energy efficiency. The following priority actions have been identified to enable the Council and partners to deliver LHS Priority 2 Outcomes over the next 5 years:





Develop and deliver a fuel poverty strategy to reduce the incidence of fuel poverty across Shetland



Overhaul the capital investment programme for Shetland Islands Council stock to adopt a Fabric First approach



Continue to help improve the energy efficiency, condition and accessibility of homes in Shetland by improving public awareness of all forms of advice, support and grant funding



Develop and deliver an EESSH2 strategy to progress compliance with statutory requirements and targets



Develop and deliver a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) for Shetland to improve energy efficiency across the domestic sector



Increase capacity and improve skills in the Shetland construction sector to develop workforce capability to achieve energy improvement targets



Target support under the Scheme of Assistance to owners of Below Tolerable Standard stock or those who cannot afford the cost of essential repairs



Prepare and implement a housing net zero plan, aligned to the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Shetland Net Zero Route Map

## 6 LHS Priority 3: Improving Access to Specialist Housing Provision & Enabling Independent Living

The LHS has a key role to play in meeting national health and wellbeing targets in Shetland through the delivery of the Housing Contribution Statement (HCS). The HCS sets out housing contribution to achieving the integration of health and social care services and aligns directly to the Strategic Commissioning Plan of the Health and Social Care Partnership in Scotland.

The LHS plays a significant role in improving public health in Shetland by setting the framework for delivering accessible homes, wheelchair homes and specialist forms of provision such as supported accommodation for key client groups. The LHS also sets the framework for enabling people to live independently and well for as long as possible through investment in property adaptations, technology, care and support services.

Aligned to improving access to specialist housing and enabling independent living, the LHS is required to provide evidence and policy direction in relation to:

- targets for delivering more wheelchair, accessible and specifically designed homes
- mechanisms to enable existing homes to be adapted to meet the changing needs of households via the Scheme of Assistance and investment programme of social landlords
- need for specialist housing provision across a range of key client groups
- the delivery of preventative housing support services to promote independent living

- maximising the use of technology enabled care in homes across Shetland.






Informed by analysis of the main issues and housing system drivers, LHS Priority 3 focuses on ***‘Improving access to specialist housing and enabling independent living’*** in Shetland by:



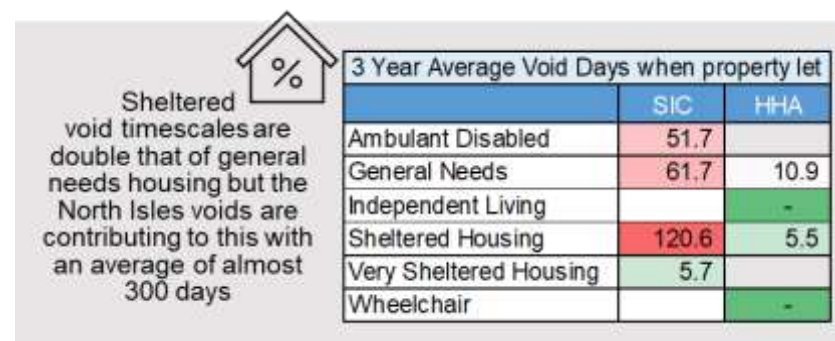
Chapter 6 sets out the evidence base and outlines what Shetland Island Council and partners are doing to address the main challenges to increasing specialist housing and promoting independent living. It concludes with LHS priority actions for partnership, investment and delivery activity.

### 6.1 LHS Priority 3: What's our Starting Point?


LHS analysis suggests that the key issues which drive the need for action, investment and partnership to improve access to specialist housing and promote independent living in Shetland are as follows:

<p>Specialist housing profile</p> 	<p>There are 546 units of specialist housing stock held by the Council and Hjaltland HA across Shetland, representing 21.4% of all homes in the social housing sector.</p> <p>53% of specialist stock is 1 bedroom. 56% of specialist housing provision is sheltered/ very sheltered.</p> <p>SIC sheltered housing stock has an average void rate double that of the average for general needs lets.</p>
<p>Specialist housing requirements</p> 	<p>Based on evidence from the Common Housing register, it is estimated that approximately 150 households may require specialist forms of housing across Shetland.</p> <p>Based on evidence from the CHR at March 2021, 11 applicants require wheelchair accommodation. The average wait on the CHR for wheelchair housing applicants was 1.3 years.</p> <p>Applying a 3.5% target to the 316 SHIP target for 2021-2026 would deliver 11 wheelchair accessible homes.</p>
<p>Aids &amp; adaptations</p> 	<p>Hjaltland HA operates a One Stop Shop that provides services to private sector homeowners to receive assistance with disabled adaptations as well as repairs and maintenance to their properties. Since 2017, £723,000 of funding has enabled 106 Private households to carry out adaptations across Shetland.</p> <p>Both SIC's and HHA's average time to complete adaptations (14 days in 2019/15 days in 2020) is significantly below the Scottish average for 2019/20 (41 days) and 2020/21 (58 days).</p>
<p>Housing for older people</p> 	<p>With a population change of over 25% for the 65+ age group to 2030 and 35% to 2043 there will be an increasing demand for housing or housing support for older people in the next 10-20 years.</p>
<p>Homecare and Telecare</p> 	<p>There is a growing population of households receiving care and support services to enable them to remain at home. Over the last three years, the number of households receiving care at home has increased in every category including Homecare (353), Telecare(756) and Personal Care (300).</p> <p>The role of technology enabled care in meeting the needs of the growing population of older people in Shetland is a key question for the LHS.</p>

There are 546 units of specialist housing stock held by the Council and Hjaltland HA across Shetland representing just over 21% of the total social housing sector stock. Much of this stock is sheltered housing, followed by ambulant disabled properties. Despite the growing population of older people in Shetland, there are questions over the current model of sheltered housing provision and its effectiveness.



The King Harald Street development is a first step in testing the concept of a 'Homes for Life' housing option in Shetland. This will also inform and influence future provision of innovative, flexible supported accommodation, moving away from traditional generic 'labels' on types of accommodation to modern, accessible accommodation benefiting from latest technology and innovation to allow tenants to maintain their independence.



Investment in aids and adaptations makes a significant contribution to ensuring that households with health conditions and disabilities can live independently and well in their own homes for as long as possible.

Both Shetland Islands Council and Hjaltland HA provide property aids and adaptations to improve the accessibility and suitability of tenants' homes.

Over the last 2 years, £369,000 has been invested in property adaptations by Shetland Islands Council (£304,337) and Hjaltsland HA (£64,954). SIC meets the full cost from the Housing Revenue Account and HHA receives Scottish Government Stage 3 grant funding, supplementing this with their own budgetary contribution.

## 6.2 LHS Priority 3: What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think?

Informed by resident feedback and housing system analysis, partners and stakeholders came together to define the major barriers that need to be overcome in the Shetland LHS to improve access to specialist housing and promote independent living. Key local challenges which drive the need for future partnership, investment and delivery activity include:

<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>There is a limited supply of specialist housing in Shetland and is this a barrier to enabling households with health and disability needs to live independently and well.</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>There is a lack of incentives and options to enable downsizing with under occupation often leading to property disrepair.</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>Shetland's ageing housing stock makes normal adaptations and accessibility measures challenging.</p>
<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>Shetland's geography presents challenges in providing support in more rural/island areas. This is exacerbated by skills shortage in the social care/health sector. A lack of homes key workers exacerbates this.</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>There is increasing demand for supported housing options from: older people; young people with complex needs; ageing carers; and substance users with advancing needs.</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b> </p> <p>A lack of very specialist housing provision, coupled with and leads to out of area placements for client groups with complex needs.</p>

## 6.3 LHS Priority 3: Our Actions

Partners and stakeholders co-produced a range options and ideas to proactively address the challenges associated with improving access to specialist housing and promoting independent living in Shetland. The following priority actions have been identified to enable the Council and partners to deliver LHS Priority 3 Outcomes over the next 5 years:



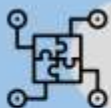
Set targets to increase the supply of wheelchair and accessible homes aligned to robust evidence of unmet housing need



Increase the supply of homes that are available to accommodate key workers in the health and care sectors



Consider core and cluster provision through new build or repurposing existing buildings, to provide effective and efficient supported housing for all key client groups



Assemble and share current and trend information/analysis on unmet needs for specialist housing to improve multi-agency planning and future projections



Develop a strategy that supports vulnerable young people to prepare for independent living and sustain tenancies in areas they want to live



Develop a more flexible range of housing options for key client groups aligned to a review of the sheltered housing model, which enable independent living



Promote and encourage delivery of inter-generational housing and flexible care models for mixed use client groups through the SHIP and masterplan sites at Staneyhill and Knab



Enhance partnership working, intelligence sharing and pooling of resources to provide strategic solutions to develop specialist housing models and improved housing outcomes

## 7 LHS Priority 4: Preventing & Alleviating Homelessness through Housing Options, Information & Support

The LHS provides the overarching framework to realise Shetland’s ambition for Rapid Rehousing, by ensuring those who experience homelessness access sustainable and settled housing as quickly as possible.

Tackling homelessness and preventing housing crisis is a key housing priority both nationally and in Shetland. Ensuring that households in Shetland have good awareness of local housing options and are empowered to find the right home to meet their needs, is at the centre of a proactive and preventative model of housing information, advice and assistance. Equally, enabling households to sustain their current home through the provision of person-centred housing support services is at the heart of preventing homelessness.

Aligned to preventing and alleviating homelessness, the LHS is required to provide evidence and policy direction in relation to:

- delivering housing information, advice and assistance within a housing options model of homelessness prevention
- reducing reliance on temporary accommodation by improving access to settled housing via the Rapid Rehousing model
- providing support services, which meet the housing and underlying needs to enable housing sustainment
- innovative ways of extending the range of housing options available to households who may be facing housing crisis.





Informed by analysis of the main issues and housing system drivers, LHS Priority 4 focuses on **‘Preventing and alleviating homelessness in Shetland through housing options, information and support’** by:



Chapter 7 sets out the evidence base and outlines what Shetland Island Council and partners doing to address the main challenges in preventing and alleviating homelessness. It concludes with 2022-27 LHS priority actions for partnership, investment and delivery activity.

### 7.1 LHS Priority 4: What’s our Starting Point?

LHS analysis suggests that the key issues which drive the need for action, investment and partnership to improve the approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness in Shetland are as follows:

<p><b>Homelessness profile</b></p> 	<p>In 2020/21, 85 households made a homeless application in Shetland, down 17% on the previous year. The average time to discharge the homeless duty from application to final outcome in 2020/21 was 67 weeks, which is almost twice the Scottish average.</p> <p>Most homeless applicants are single males, fuelling demand for smaller properties in Lerwick.</p>
<p><b>Homelessness prevention</b></p> 	<p>In 2019/20, 153 households approached the SIC Housing Service to discuss homelessness or potential homelessness with the majority of this group already experiencing housing crisis (68%).</p> <p>Just 10% approach the service for assistance about a future housing problem, much lower than the proportion in Scotland at 38%. This indicates a need to encourage engagement at an earlier stage to enable prevention interventions to be more successful.</p>
<p><b>Temporary accommodation</b></p> 	<p>In 2020/21, there were 80 placements in temporary accommodation at a cost to Shetland Islands Council of £429,000.</p> <p>The average length of stay in temporary accommodation was 379 days, which is almost double the length of stay in Scotland (at 199 days). Shetland has the 3rd longest length of stay of all Scottish local authorities.</p>
<p><b>Housing support profile</b></p> 	<p>About 60% of homeless applicants in Shetland have no identified support needs, which means that the majority of homeless households in Shetland simply need access to settled housing to resolve their homelessness.</p> <p>Over the last 5 years, approximately 15% of homeless households have presented with moderate to high support needs and have required housing support to ensure that a lasting, sustainable outcome is achieved in settled housing. Over the same period, each year between 20-30% of homeless applicants have been provided with housing support under the Council's statutory support duty.</p>

As part of the national 'Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan' (2018), all local authorities in Scotland were required to submit a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to Scottish Ministers by 31st

December 2018. The vision behind Rapid Rehousing is to empower local authorities to pursue transformational change to eradicating homelessness across Scotland through a 'housing first and housing fast' approach. In Shetland, the principles of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (July 2021) reflect the updated recommendations of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) namely:

- a person-centred approach
- prevention of homelessness
- prioritising settled accommodation for all
- responding quickly and effectively when homelessness happens
- joining up planning and resources to tackle homelessness.

Actions within Shetland's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan include:



A key aspect of tackling homelessness in Shetland will focus on utilising the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to prioritise addressing the imbalances in demand and supply which prolongs homelessness for households in temporary accommodation. Actions such as focusing on the delivery of smaller housing units will ensure the right size of homes in the right places and speed up access to settled housing.

### 7.2 LHS Priority 4: What do Residents, Partners and Stakeholders Think?

Informed by resident feedback and housing system analysis, partners and stakeholders came together to define the major barriers that need to be overcome in the Shetland LHS to improve the approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness. Key local challenges which drive the need for future partnership, investment and delivery activity include:

<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Prevention challenges around funding and multi-agency working lead to delays in accessing support services to enable housing sustainment</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Better multi-agency working, and decision making is crucial so that risks to housing sustainment are identified and mitigated early</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>There is a need to raise public awareness of prevention services and to promote housing information and advice in Shetland encouraging early action to avoid crisis</p>
<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>A major priority is to reduce the use and length of stay in temporary accommodation in Shetland by creating more settled housing options for single people</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>It is important that temporary and settled tenancies enable access to social networks and local support services to encourage and enable housing sustainment</p>	<p><b>Key issue:</b></p> <p>Working within the legislation, we need to find creative and person-centered ways to manage allocation and homelessness duties to enable rapid rehousing principles</p>

### 7.3 LHS Priority 4: Our Actions

Partners and stakeholders co-produced a range of options and ideas to proactively address the challenges associated with preventing and alleviating homelessness in Shetland. The following priority actions have been identified to enable the Council and partners to deliver LHS Priority 4 Outcomes over the next 5 years:





Review local domestic abuse procedures to ensure compliance with the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 and deliver a training plan for all frontline housing staff and partners



Ensure that the RRTP vision is aligned to the SHIP, the housing allocations policy and all other Corporate and partner strategies to speed up access to sustainable settled housing options



Improve awareness of and access to financial inclusion and debt advice services, enabling early action for those at risk of or experiencing housing crisis



Increase understanding and meet the housing needs of people who use drugs and alcohol by improving partnership working between the Recovery Hub, housing support services and other partners



Develop a communication plan and social media strategy to raise public awareness of housing options advice and homeless prevention services, building on the housing options education programme in schools



Review, update and promote access to housing options information and advice, embedding person centred, trauma informed approaches in prevention activity, including a multi-agency roll out of the housing options training toolkit



Improve multi-agency working to identify households at risk and proactively prevent homelessness by coordinating case management processes and improving communication/referral pathways



Enable the development of community led support services/social networks for those at risk of homelessness in all areas of Shetland including remote and rural areas

## 8 Delivering Local Housing Strategy Outcomes

### 8.1 LHS Implementation Framework

The actions set under each LHS Priority, will be developed into a series of detailed action plans which set specific, timescales, resources and partner responsibilities to guide implementation and delivery and to provide a strong basis for monitoring LHS progress.

Aligned to each LHS Priority Action plan, a range of LHS Outcome measures will be developed to track change over time including baseline indicators and delivery targets. The LHS Outcome framework will provide a strong basis for evaluating LHS impact across Shetland.

LHS Outcomes will be best delivered through a strong partnership network. The LHS Implementation Group is a new mechanism to stimulate and co-ordinate this partnership activity based on the LHS Steering Group assembled to coordinate LHS Development. The LHS Implementation Group includes partners from Housing Services, Planning, SIC's Development Directorate, Community Planning & Development, Education, Transport Planning, Economic Development, Hjaltland Housing Association, NHS Shetland plus key third sector and community partners.

The objectives of the Group are as follows:

- to track progress and measure impact via the LHS Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- to ensure that LHS outcomes are linked effectively into other strategic plans across the Shetland Partnership Planning framework
- to consider investment priorities and maximise shared resources

- to exchange information and planning data
- to review outputs from housing related research and insight, making recommendations to inform LHS implementation.

The LHS Implementation Group will link into a number of existing partnership forums which plan, implement and deliver housing related investment and activity. The activity across this network will be coordinated by the LHS Implementation Group to ensure partnership, investment and collaboration maximise opportunities to deliver LHS outcomes.

### 8.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The LHS evaluation framework will clearly set outcome targets for each LHS priority, together with the high level inputs, indicators and timescales that will underpin successful delivery. Following the launch of the LHS, a set of Action Plans will be developed. The Action Plans will set out in detail the delivery programme required to achieve each of the outcomes in the LHS; to drive implementation and facilitate monitoring and review against milestones.

The LHS will be monitored annually against each Action Plan, to track progress and to enable remedial actions to be pursued to ensure the milestones set out are achieved, and to seek assurance that services/partners are on track to deliver specific LHS workstreams.

The LHS Action Plans will be reviewed annually by the LHS Implementation Group. In addition to strategic monitoring, partners will be responsible for monitoring the progress of related housing plans including the SHIP, the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, the Housing Contribution Statement and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.