

# **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY GUIDANCE**

**The Scottish Government and the Convention of  
Scottish Local Authorities**

**25 June 2008**



## **INTRODUCTION**

1. 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 local housing strategy provides the strategic direction to tackle housing need and demand and to inform the future investment in housing and related services across the local authority area.
2. The first round of local housing strategies was produced in 2004. Most covered a five year period. This guidance, which has been agreed between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and issued jointly, sets out key changes to the format and detail of local housing strategies in accordance with the new relationship between central and local government established through the Concordat and in line with proposed changes in national policy direction. It has been produced to provide general advice and principles for local authorities in preparing their new-style local housing strategies.

### **New relationship between the Scottish Government and local government**

3. The Concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA has established a new relationship between central and local government. This relationship is based on trust, mutual respect and full partnership working on the development of strategic approaches and the achievement of shared outcomes. The Scottish Government is enabling local authorities to have greater flexibility and responsibility for their actions and is stepping back from micro managing local authorities.

4. The new working arrangements are set within the context of a new performance framework, which takes an outcomes-focused approach. The transition to an outcomes-based approach with delivery partners, including local government, will leave the detailed management of services to those who can best understand and tailor their resources and activities in line with local priorities. The Scottish Government will concentrate on providing leadership and direction, and focus on strategic priorities.
5. The Concordat underpins the funding to be provided to local government for the period 2008/09 to 2010/11. In return for local government's commitment to delivering a number of national outcomes there has been a reduction in the level of ring fencing within the overall budget settlement and local authorities have greater autonomy to allocate their resources according to local priorities.

### **Single Outcome Agreements**

6. Central to the new relationship set out in the Concordat is the creation of a Single Outcome Agreement between each local authority and the Scottish Government<sup>1</sup>. Local authorities will have considered in their Single Outcome Agreements how they will contribute to the Scottish Government's fifteen national outcomes and set out specific local priorities and local outcomes. Local outcomes will follow from and focus local authority and partnership strategic planning.
7. The Scottish Government has developed a set of forty-five national indicators to track progress towards outcomes and has developed a menu of locally relevant indicators<sup>2</sup>.
8. The Concordat and the associated development of Single Outcome Agreements will have an impact on how local authorities and their partners prepare the next round of local housing strategies. Particularly by:

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance on preparing Single Outcome Agreements is available at:  
<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/index.asp?leftId=10001CB3D-11001461&rightId=10001CB3D-11001015>

<sup>2</sup> See pages 22 to 33 of the above guidance.

- Reducing the level of detail required and including a much greater emphasis on outcomes and
- Integrating a number of related strategies and plans into the local housing strategy.

### **New emphasis on outcomes**

9. We envisage the new-style local housing strategy having a clearer focus on strategic outcomes for housing and related support needs. It is expected that the local housing strategy will feed into and support the local authority's Single Outcome Agreement.

10. As part of the new working arrangement with local government, local housing strategies will no longer need to describe all the processes and activities involved in preparing the strategy. For example, they don't need to include a detailed description of an option appraisal process or a detailed action plan. Local authorities are encouraged to follow good practice in developing and implementing their local housing strategy.

### **Integrating plans and strategies into the local housing strategy**

11. The local housing strategy will now be the sole strategic document on housing, homelessness and support issues.

12. In line with the Scottish Government's commitment to reduce the reporting requirements of local government, housing and related strategies have been rationalised. The production of separate strategies for homelessness, housing support<sup>3</sup> and fuel poverty will no longer need to be submitted to Scottish Ministers, although there remains a statutory duty on local authorities under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act to address these areas. The scope of the local housing strategy will be broadened and the strategy will now address the

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<sup>3</sup> The term housing support has replaced 'supporting people'.

prevention and alleviation of homelessness, meeting housing support needs and fuel poverty issues. This will help facilitate the effective integration of strategic planning on these closely-related issues.

13. The Scottish Government plans to consult on options for reform of reporting requirements under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA), which in due course may be included within the local housing strategy. Regardless of the outcome of the consultation on HECA, local housing strategies are expected to cover improvements in household energy efficiency, and the links with related areas such as fuel poverty and climate change.

## NEW NATIONAL POLICY DIRECTION AND PRIORITIES

14. New-style local housing strategies are part of a broader package of policy changes included within *Firm Foundations* and the consultative draft Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Housing (SPP3)<sup>4</sup>, which aim to support achievement of an increase in housing supply across all tenures. As a result local housing strategies are to assume a stronger strategic role than is the case at present and will be central to local authorities' corporate planning activities.
15. The Scottish Government undertook a major consultation on the future of housing in Scotland through the discussion document *Firm Foundations*. This introduced a new emphasis on increasing housing supply across all tenures, and recognises the importance of higher environmental and design standards, affordability for those on low incomes, the creation of sustainable mixed communities and value for public expenditure. It is the Scottish Government's and COSLA's joint priority to increase housing supply across all tenures.
16. Other key policy areas which will impact on a local housing strategy are the new statutory requirements set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 on private sector house conditions, a stronger focus on the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need and demand, a commitment to achieving sustainable mixed communities and the challenge of climate change.

### ***Firm Foundations***

17. *Firm Foundations* set out a clear expectation that local authorities should play a greater strategic role in shaping the housing systems in their areas through their local housing strategies. Central and local government have agreed that local housing strategies are at the heart of the new arrangements, both

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<sup>4</sup> SPP3: Planning for Housing, Consultative Draft, the Scottish Government 2008  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2008/01/07141036/0>

through their links to development plans, as set out in the consultative draft of SPP3 published in January 2008 and in terms of their influence on the direction of local housing investment.

18. An important part of the approach to increasing housing supply to at least 35,000 per year by the middle of the next decade will be co-operation between local authorities at a regional level to set realistic housing supply targets in their local housing strategies and then - through the planning system - allocating sufficient available land to deliver the required number of houses. The public sector as a whole will play an important part in bringing land forward for development.
19. As a key part of a reformed delivery framework for a step change in housing supply, local housing strategies are expected to view the housing system as a whole and deal with the requirements for housing across all tenures. This requires a broader and more strategic housing role, integrated with modernised development planning that can only be achieved in many parts of the country through collaboration across local authority boundaries.
20. While joint approaches in some parts of the country are well developed, greater co-operation on housing provision will be important to achieving the delivery of the housing supply increase which is needed. Local authorities are encouraged to explore new and enhanced ways of joint working within wider housing market areas.

### **Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Housing, Consultative Draft**

21. The revised SPP3 will strengthen the link between assessed housing need and demand, local housing strategies and development planning. Housing need and demand assessments provide a key part of the evidence base upon which housing supply targets are defined in the local housing strategy and land release decisions are made within the development plan process. This will ensure the integration of local housing strategies and development plans and will depend upon close working between local authority housing and planning teams.

## **Housing need and demand assessments**

22. Housing need and demand assessments will form a critical part of the evidence base for the local housing strategy and development plan framework. In line with the Government's new guidance<sup>5</sup> these assessments are to be undertaken at functional housing market level<sup>6</sup> and will provide a much clearer understanding of the operation of the housing system as a whole. It is for local authorities to define the boundaries of housing market areas, following one of the range of approaches referenced in the housing need and demand assessment guidance. On the basis of identified housing market areas constituent local authorities will be encouraged to set up housing market partnerships. These partnerships will play an important role in bringing together local authorities across housing market areas to undertake housing need and demand assessments and to agree housing supply targets for inclusion in local housing strategies.

23. While it is recognised that housing market areas are not evident across all of Scotland, particularly in some rural areas, guidance on housing need and demand assessment is still relevant and will help partnerships take a strategic view of housing requirements and inform housing land allocations in development plans.

## **Private sector housing**

24. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 has two main aims: to improve the condition of privately owned homes and to raise standards in the private rented sector through, for example, the Repairing Standard and new provisions for the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

25. The policy vision of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 is that:

- There will be a cultural change in attitudes to housing quality in the

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<sup>5</sup> Housing Need and Demand Assessment Guidance, the Scottish Government 2008.  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/guidance/guidance-info>

<sup>6</sup> Functional housing market areas are defined in SPP3 as 'a geographical area which is relatively self-contained in terms of housing demand i.e. a large percentage of people moving house or settling in the area will have sought a dwelling only in that area.'

private housing sector;

- Local authorities will lead a marked improvement in the quality of private housing in their areas, benefiting owners and the communities they live in;
- The Scottish Government will support and facilitate their work;
- Private owners will become more aware of repair and maintenance responsibilities and more proactive in carrying them out;
- Private owners will invest more to ensure their homes have a sustainable future; and
- Public money will support owners' repairs and maintenance only where this is strictly necessary.

26. As has been stated previously, the local housing strategy covers all sectors, but the requirements in section 10 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 reinforce its application to the private sector<sup>7</sup>. It is now a statutory requirement for the local housing strategy to show how the local authority's policies on enforcement and assistance will improve private housing conditions. This needs to be built around a clear understanding of the scale and nature of local housing quality problems.

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<sup>7</sup> The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 introduced new statutory requirements in relation to the local housing strategy. These are set out in Section 10 and include a requirement that the local housing strategy must set out:

(a) a strategy for ensuring compliance with section 85(1) (duty to close, demolish or improve houses which do not meet the tolerable standard) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (c. 26);

(b) the authority's policy for identifying parts of its area for designation under section 1 (housing renewal areas) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (asp 1); and

(c) a strategy for improving the condition of houses by providing or arranging for the provision of assistance under Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (asp 1).

Further detailed guidance on undertaking each of these is currently being consulted on.  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/04/07144231/0>

Final guidance is expected to be published in Autumn 2008.

### **Private Rented Sector**

27. Where appropriate a local authority may decide to plan how best to meet the increasing demand for private rented accommodation from a wide range of tenants with different needs (e.g. those on low incomes, students, migrant workers, young professionals, families, etc.) and to provide advice and support to these tenants where it is needed. *Firm Foundations* proposed that local authorities continue to work in partnership with private landlords and letting agents to help meet housing need and to improve standards in the sector.

28. The Government is currently taking forward a review of the private rented sector to examine ways in which it can contribute more fully to meeting housing need. Further details on this work, such as supply options to help meet housing need and information on best practice in engaging with the sector, will be provided as the review progresses. Outputs from the review are expected later in 2008.

29. The local housing strategy should consider addressing increasing demand for private rented sector accommodation from a wide range of tenants, and in particular consider the role of HMOs.

### **Sustainable mixed communities**

30. Local authorities may decide in planning to meet housing need to take account of the principles of creating mixed communities as a means of guarding the sustainability of their stock and preventing concentrations of deprivation. This could include for example seeking to diversify tenures and stock type to encourage the delivery of social rented, affordable and private housing within the same development, as well as housing that will appeal to a mixture of families, first time buyers, and the senior community.

### **The challenge of climate change**

31. A significant proportion of all carbon emissions in Scotland derives from houses, therefore measures to improve domestic energy efficiency in both new and existing stock will be crucial to meeting climate change objectives, as

well as making houses more comfortable, cheaper to heat and helping to tackle fuel poverty. In order to respond to these challenges, local housing strategies may want to consider the issue of climate change and examine the links with related policies, such as planning, improving household energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty.

## THE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

32. As COSLA and the Scottish Government has agreed that local housing strategies are at the heart of the new housing planning framework local authorities will continue to prepare local housing strategies and submit these to Scottish Ministers. In line with development plans it is recommended that a local housing strategy should cover a five year period. It should set out how local authorities with their partners intend to jointly and strategically meet housing need and demand across all tenures in their communities.

33. In order to facilitate integration of local housing strategies and development plans, submission of local housing strategies will now be linked to the submission dates of Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs). It will be important for the local housing strategy and Main Issues Reports of SDPs and LDPs (outwith Strategic Development Plan areas) to be prepared in tandem, with both informed by the outcomes of the housing need and demand assessment. The local authority can chose to submit their Local Housing Strategy at any point between the conclusion of consultation on the Main Issues Report and submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers. We expect submission of local housing strategies to be staggered between the end of 2009 and the end of 2011, depending on the local authority's timescale for consultation on the Main Issues Report and submission of the Proposed Plan. Local authorities may want to review their existing local housing strategies and associated strategies and roll these forward on an annual basis, where they expect to submit towards the end of this period.

34. Areas that a local housing strategy should cover:

- Describes the extent and type of housing need and demand;
- Sets out the local authority's strategic vision for the future of housing across all tenures, taking account of national priorities;
- Sets out how the standard of housing will be improved;
- Provides clear strategic direction for housing investment;

- Focuses on the outcomes required to achieve this vision; and
- Identifies specific commitments made by the local authority and key partners to enable the delivery of outcomes as shared priorities.

35. Local housing strategies are expected to ensure that any distinctive issues associated with addressing the above within a rural context are taken fully into account.

## **EQUALITY ISSUES**

36. In accordance with the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act the local housing strategy must explain how equality issues have been considered and how their statutory public sector equality duties have been met<sup>8</sup>. Data and evidence about the needs of different communities and household groups will have been collected as part of the local authority's housing need and demand assessment and will inform the preparation of the local housing strategy. Equalities issues should be embedded throughout the local housing strategy. This should be informed by an Equality Impact Assessment, which the public sector equality duties require public bodies to undertake, as part of the development of new policies and functions. To help with this, further guidance on mainstreaming equalities can be found on the Scottish Government website<sup>9</sup>. The Scottish Government has produced an Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit, which local authorities may find useful<sup>10</sup>.

## **CONSULTATION**

37. Under the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act local authorities are required to consult on their proposed local housing strategy. Local authorities should also be aware of the statutory public sector equality duties on disability, gender and race. These require public authorities to involve, consult and engage with communities as widely as possible. Central and local government have made an explicit

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<sup>8</sup> Public sector duties were introduced by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and Equality Act 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Link to Mainstreaming Equalities guidance (previously included as an annex in the guidance)

<sup>10</sup> Further details on the Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18507/EQIA2>

commitment to support and develop community empowerment. This work is ongoing and is expected to help support local people's involvement in the preparation of the local housing strategy.

38. It is likely that a range of consultation methods will need to be adopted to ensure that people and communities have equality of opportunity for being involved in the process. In line with best practice, it is expected that the local housing strategy should contain information on stakeholders' specific involvement in the consultation process.

## **HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND**

### **Understanding the housing system as a whole**

39. The local housing strategy is a key element of the reformed policy framework for housing and planning and should view the housing system<sup>11</sup> as a whole.

### **Housing need and demand assessments**

40. A housing need and demand assessment is part of the evidence that will underpin the local housing strategy. Separate guidance has recently been published by the Scottish Government<sup>12</sup> on undertaking housing need and demand assessments. A pragmatic approach should be taken where local authorities have commenced or recently completed housing need and demand assessments. In such cases local authorities should use the best existing evidence to inform their local housing strategies and put plans in place to update their assessments in line with the new guidance.

41. SPP3 describes a process whereby the preparation of housing need and demand assessments, local housing strategies and development plans are complementary work streams which should be aligned to achieve more effectively the aim of delivering new homes in the right places. Taking account of the scale and nature of the identified housing requirements and opportunities to create sustainable mixed communities, planning authorities should allocate a generous supply of land<sup>13</sup> for housing on a range of sites within each housing market area.

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<sup>11</sup> “A housing system consists of all the elements which determine the supply of, demand for and need for housing in an area. These elements include all the providers, public, voluntary and private sector, of housing, the individual households which require housing and the economic and social factors which influence the availability of and requirement for housing.” Add reference.

<sup>12</sup> Housing Need and Demand Assessment Guidance, the Scottish Government 2008  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/guidance/guidance-info>

<sup>13</sup> Further details will be included on this in the revised SPP3 which will be published by the Scottish Government shortly

42. Reflecting the planning modernisation agenda, the housing need and demand guidance encourages local authorities to co-operate regionally and set up housing market partnerships where housing market areas cross local authority boundaries.

### **Setting housing supply targets**

43. The housing need and demand assessment will provide an important part of the evidence base upon which housing supply targets covering **all** tenures are defined in local housing strategies, and sufficient available land is allocated through development plans to meet these targets. Housing supply targets are to include new housing supply, replacement housing, empty properties to be brought back into use and conversions.

44. One of the key questions for partnerships to consider - where an assessment of housing need and demand has been undertaken at housing market area level - is how this translates into housing supply targets at a local authority level, for inclusion in the local housing strategy. This will depend to a large extent on the pattern of need and demand across the housing market area, homelessness pressures and agreement between local authorities within the partnership on how best to meet this need and demand.

45. Those local authorities covering large geographic areas may find it helpful to set housing supply targets at sub-local authority level.

46. Whilst the local housing strategy will cover a five year period, in order to link with the development plan process it is recommended it considers a fifteen year housing supply target.

47. As part of the new national housing planning framework it is expected that the housing need and demand assessment, local housing strategy and development plan will be reviewed in conjunction, every five years.

## **Joint housing strategies**

48. Local authorities are encouraged to undertake housing need and demand assessments at functional housing market level. Some authorities may wish to consider preparing a joint local housing strategy. Section 89(9) of the Housing (Scotland Act) 2001 enables this, though a joint strategy must cover whole local authority areas. If any local authorities are thinking about producing a joint local housing strategy, the Scottish Government would be happy to support them achieve this.

## **OUTCOMES AND COMMITMENTS**

49. At the core of the new-style local housing strategy will be a set of outcomes which will set a clear strategic direction for the local authority and its partners in addressing housing and related support needs for the following five year period. These will form a clear statement of what the local housing strategy is trying to achieve.

### **Alignment between the Single Outcome Agreement and local housing strategy outcomes**

50. The first round of Single Outcome Agreements will be finalised by June 2008. The local housing strategy is expected to play an important part in delivering the government's primary purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth, as well as contributing significantly to a number of the fifteen national outcomes. For example, National Outcome 10, 'We live in well designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need', and National Outcome 7, 'We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society'. It is also likely to contribute towards the achievement of locally defined outcomes.

51. The Single Outcome Agreement will drive the local housing strategy. The outcomes and indicators identified in the Single Outcome Agreement relating to housing and support issues will effectively form a core set of outcomes and indicators within the local housing strategy. Local authorities may wish to also include additional outcomes and indicators within their local housing strategy to reflect more detailed policy objectives.

52. In deciding on indicators - for any outcomes not already included in the Single Outcome Agreement - local authorities are encouraged to use the menu of locally relevant indicators, though of course are free to develop their own indicators.

53. A template is included in Annex A for recording outcomes included in the local housing strategy. Some worked examples are included on the website.

54. Local authorities may find guidance on Single Outcome Agreements helpful in defining outcomes<sup>14</sup>.

### **Commitments to delivery of outcomes**

55. Investment in affordable housing will be set out in the local authority's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, which forms an annex to the local housing strategy.

56. In line with the Single Outcome Agreement process, the local housing strategy should identify specific commitments made by the Council, Community Planning Partners and other key partners to enable delivery of the outcomes as shared priorities. Details on this can be recorded in the template in Annex A.

57. Alongside their Single Outcome Agreements, local authorities have a statutory duty to set out in the local housing strategy a strategy for using the powers in Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 to improve the condition of houses. Part of that strategy will be expressed in the authority's statement under section 72 of that Act, which should form an annex to the local housing strategy.

### **Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs)**

58. SHIPs were prepared by local authorities for the first time in 2007. The core purpose of the SHIP is to set out how investment in affordable housing<sup>15</sup> will be

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<sup>14</sup> Single Outcome Agreements – guidance, format and indicators for Scottish Local Government, February 2008  
<http://www.cosla.gov.uk/index.asp?leftId=10001CB3D-11001461&rightId=10001CB3D-11001015>

<sup>15</sup> Affordable housing is 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 and mid-market rent, should also be considered within the affordable housing category (ref: Housing Needs and Demand Assessment Guidance, 2008). The term intermediate affordable housing is used to cover all types of affordable housing which are not social rented.

directed over a five year period to achieve the outcomes relating to affordable housing in the local housing strategy. It reinforces the local authority as the strategic housing body and the importance of the outcomes and targets set out in the local housing strategy.

59. Separate guidance for the preparation of SHIPs<sup>16</sup> has been prepared. There will be no need to include any material on delivery and resources relating to affordable housing provision within the main body of the local housing strategy.

### **Section 72 statement**

60. Section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 requires a local authority to prepare and make available to the public a statement of the criteria it will use for deciding when to provide assistance with works by owners to their houses and what form that assistance should take. Statutory guidance on the statement is currently under construction.

### **Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan**

61. Standard Delivery Plans were submitted by local authorities in 2005. They describe how local authorities will meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard in their own housing stock by 2015. Separate advice on information required to demonstrate the ability to meet the Standard will be provided in due course. This will be a separate exercise to the local housing strategy.

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<sup>16</sup> Guidance on preparing Strategic Housing Investment Plans, the Scottish Government, May 2008  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/investment/guidancenotes>

## **INTEGRATING OTHER STRATEGIES**

62. Homelessness, housing support and fuel poverty are now to be addressed within the local housing strategy.

### **Homelessness**

63. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on each local authority to carry out an assessment of homelessness in its area and to prepare and submit a strategy for preventing and alleviating homelessness in its area. This strategy should now be fully integrated into the local housing strategy and should be underpinned by accurate and comprehensive information on the extent and nature of homelessness within the local area.

64. Preventing and tackling homelessness is a key part of fighting poverty and inequality in Scotland. The Government is implementing policies and legislation to prevent and alleviate homelessness and to ensure that every homeless household gets help according to their needs.

65. Local authorities are working to prevent homelessness and to ensure that a higher proportion of homeless households than ever before have the right to settled accommodation. The legislative target is that by 2012 every unintentionally homeless household will be entitled to settled accommodation. Local authorities should consider within the local housing strategy how they will continue to work towards the 2012 target and beyond. Coverage of homelessness within the new-style local housing strategy, should build upon the existing homelessness strategy in place in the local authority.

66. The integration of homelessness within the local housing strategy will enable appropriate housing solutions to be developed where housing factors have been identified as a driver for homelessness. Housing supply responses to address the projected requirements in relation to the 2012 Homelessness target will have been taken into account in setting the overall housing supply target included in

the local housing strategy, and the associated investment should be identified in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

67. In developing the local housing strategy, local authorities should work closely with registered social landlords and private sector landlords in their area in order to ensure that the contribution made by these sectors towards meeting the 2012 target is at the optimal level. This could include reviewing any existing protocols with registered social landlords, examining options for partnership working with private landlords and continuing to develop rent deposit schemes. The Scottish Government has recently launched a consultation<sup>17</sup> on amending the Homelessness Person Interim Accommodation (Scotland Regulations) 2002 to allow local authorities more flexibility in discharging their homelessness duties, with a view to enabling wider use of the private rented sector where this will meet the needs of homeless households. Outputs from the Scottish Government's review of the private rented sector should further assist local authorities in this regard.

68. An integrated local housing strategy should also identify and make provision for appropriate support as well as considering the physical housing aspects.

69. The Scottish Government will produce specific guidance on preventing homelessness which will supplement the current coverage in Chapter 2 of the Code of Guidance on Homelessness and follows on from research on this issue published last year. This will be helpful to local authorities in preparing their local housing strategy and is likely to be available by the end of March 2009. Short notes on prevention of homelessness, planning accommodation and support services in relation to rough sleepers and repeat homelessness, along with links to additional information and useful contacts can be accessed on the Scottish Government website<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Include reference to consultation document

<sup>18</sup> Include web link here.

## **Housing Support Services**

70. Housing support services (previously known as Supporting People services) play a crucial role in ensuring that that people can live independently in all types of accommodation and tenure.
71. From April 2008 Supporting People is no longer a separate funding stream but has been absorbed into the main local government settlement as part of the Concordat. While the ring-fencing has been removed around the funding the Scottish Government remains committed to the importance of housing support in enabling people to live fulfilling independent lives. Under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 local authorities have a duty to promote social welfare by making available advice, guidance and assistance on a scale appropriate for their area and the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act reinforces the requirement to assess provision of housing and related services in their area. The integration of housing support into the local housing strategy reflects the importance of ensuring that physical housing development and planning is not seen in isolation from the support and services that are required to enable individuals to maintain their housing.
72. The local housing strategy should identify how housing support needs will be addressed.
73. It will be important for outcomes and actions in the local housing strategy to be consistent with other relevant outcomes, strategies and action plans, for example in relation to support for older people or people with physical and learning disabilities, victims of domestic violence, young people leaving care, substance addictions, reducing re-offending and supporting families at risk. The relationship between housing support and social care is particularly important. Part of the rationale behind the removal of ring fencing around the Supporting People budget was to remove the often arbitrary distinction that had to be made between care and support and to ensure a focus on best meeting service user needs. Local authorities should consider the role that

housing support (along with aids and adaptations, care and repair and other housing services) can make to “shifting the balance of care” between NHS and community based support and in supporting *The Same as You* agenda<sup>19</sup>.

### **Eradicating fuel poverty**

74. The eradication of fuel poverty is a priority within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Scottish Government is committed to ending fuel poverty in Scotland as far as is reasonably practicable by 2016. Local authorities have a key role to play in achieving this goal, and many have already taken significant steps towards it.

75. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 specifically states that, in relation to local housing strategies, such strategies should be accomplished in a manner that ensures, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons do not live in fuel poverty.

76. It is expected that agreed outcomes and any targets set as regards the alleviation of fuel poverty should feature in the local housing strategy and reference be made there to the key approaches and to significant projects that will be undertaken to meet these. While there is now no requirement for local authorities to develop specific stand alone fuel poverty strategies it is anticipated that local authorities will still find it helpful to develop action plans to facilitate taking forward work on addressing their fuel poverty outcomes. Equalities issues which are expected to be embedded throughout the local housing strategy need specific attention in developing and delivering fuel poverty outcomes.

77. Separate more detailed guidance designed to assist local authorities meet their fuel poverty obligations is being prepared and will be available shortly and will be helpful in preparing the local housing strategy.

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<sup>19</sup> Same as You is a 10 year strategy, originally published in 2000, for improving services for people with learning disabilities.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/care/VAUnit/Sameasyou>  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/ldsr/docs/tsay-00.asp>

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

78. There will be no need for local authorities to produce a separate monitoring and evaluation framework for their local housing strategy. Instead a local authority may measure their progress against the outcome templates.

## REVIEW OF LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGIES

79. Each local housing strategy will be reviewed by a process to be agreed by the Scottish Government and COSLA and further advice will follow on this. We would envisage a greatly simplified process which might cover the following key areas:

	Possible Review Criteria
1	The extent to which the key findings from a housing need and demand assessment have been addressed within the local housing strategy
2	Evidence that housing supply targets have been informed by a robust and credible housing need and demand assessment; have been agreed corporately and contribute appropriately to the government's goal of increasing housing supply.
3	Evidence that in setting housing supply targets the local authority, through the housing market partnership, has fully considered how housing need and demand can best be met over the whole market area and across all tenures.
4	The extent to which outcomes are consistent with national housing objectives and meet statutory targets (for example 2012 target for homelessness and 2015 target for fuel poverty)

5	The extent to which outcomes are aligned to the local authority's Single Outcome Agreement and Development Plan, as well as other key strategic documents, for example, Regeneration Plans, Community Care Plan and the Health Improvement Plan
6	The extent to which requirements of the 2006 Housing (Scotland) Act have been addressed
7	The extent to which preventing and alleviating homelessness, meeting housing support needs and fuel poverty, energy efficiency and climate change issues have been addressed within the local housing strategy
8	Evidence that equalities issues been addressed through the local housing strategy
9	Evidence that the local authority has consulted widely on its proposed strategy
10	Evidence that commitments have been made by the Council, Community Planning Partners and other key partners to enable delivery of the outcomes as shared priorities.

80. The local housing strategy will be considered robust and credible where all ten areas have been satisfactorily covered.

## **SUPPORT AND SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS**

81. The Scottish Government is available to provide advice, support and guidance to local authorities and partners involved in the development of the local housing strategy. Contact details are as follows:

**Lothian, Borders and Fife (0131 313 3700)**

Donald Bain

**South West (01698 420 042)**

Pauline Gilroy

**Glasgow (0141 226 4611)**

Lisa Bullen

**Grampian (01244 332978)**

Elaine Crawford

**Highlands and Islands (01463 711272)**

Ralph Throp

**Tayside & Forth Valley (01382 427500)**

Gordon Paterson

**Argyll and Clyde (0141 889 8896)**

Stephen Youd

82. Three paper copies of the local housing strategy and a copy in electronic format should be sent to the contact above.

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

83. In Scotland the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 extended the statutory obligations of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)<sup>20</sup> to all public plans, programmes and strategies.

84. SEA is a key component of sustainable development, establishing important methods for protecting the environment and extending opportunities for participation in public policy decision-making.

85. It is for the each individual 'responsible authority' to make a judgement on whether their qualifying plan, programme or strategy is likely to have any significant environmental effects. However, this judgement can be complex and is not always straightforward due to a number of either direct or indirect factors, such as timing. It is therefore recommended that local authorities seek independent legal advice where in doubt, or at least initially discuss the matter with the SEA Gateway before undertaking any pre-screening, screening or SEA.

86. The SEA Gateway can be contacted via e-mail at

[SEA.Gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SEA.Gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Further guidance**

87. Further guidance will be issued on a number of areas, which will help local authorities prepare their Local Housing Strategies. This includes the publication of more detailed guidance on fuel poverty obligations in Summer 2008; on meeting the requirements of the 2006 Act in Autumn 2008 and on preventing homelessness by Spring 2009.

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp\\_20050015\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050015_en_1)

88. We will be working through the approach to provision of any interim statements on meeting fuel poverty targets and 2012 homelessness targets with COSLA and further advice will follow.

**ANNEX A**

**Template for recording outcomes in the local housing strategy**

Local Housing Strategy Outcome	Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (date)	Targets	Timescale
Key actions and commitment by local Partners for this outcome					