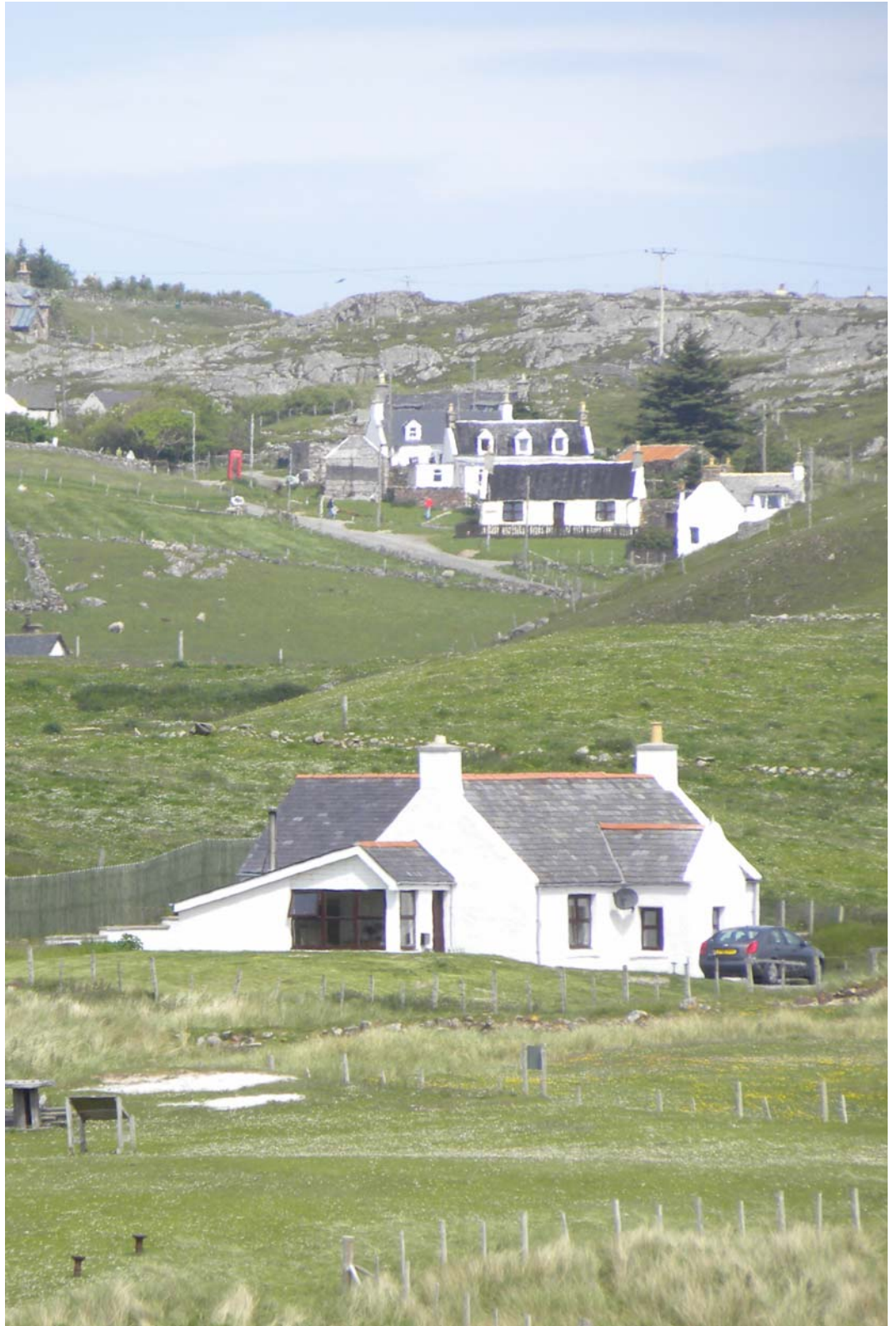


# HIGHLAND'S HOUSING STRATEGY

## RO-INNLEACHD TAIGHEADAIS NA Gàidhealtachd

### 2010 - 2015



**A SUMMARY**  
**GEÀRR-CHUNNTAS**



# HIGHLAND'S HOUSING STRATEGY

## RO-INNLEACHD TAIGHEADAIS NA Gàidhealtachd

### WHAT IS IT?

#### DÈ A TH' ANN?

Highland's Housing Strategy shows how the Highland Council and its partners will tackle housing issues over the next five years. It sets out:

- ▶ The main housing issues in Highland and highlights our key challenge - a shortage of housing that people can afford to buy or rent.
- ▶ The positive changes we want to see for people whether they own their home; rent from the Council or a housing association; rent privately or don't have a home of their own.
- ▶ What we will do to help make these changes happen.
- ▶ Our priorities and how we will use our resources.



### WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

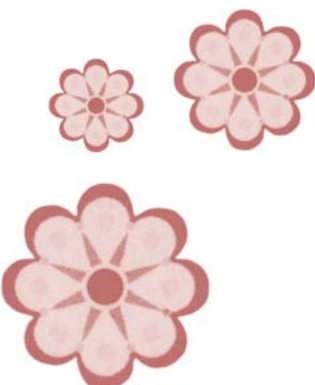
#### NA THA SINN A' FEUCHAINN RI CHOILEANADH

#### OUR STRATEGIC VISION IS THAT:

Everyone in Highland has a warm, affordable, secure home in good condition which meets their needs in a pleasant and thriving community. Housing helps communities across Highland to have sustainable economic growth.

We have set 6 outcomes. We want to see these achieved so that this vision becomes real. We think these are the most important housing priorities for Highland. The actions in our Strategy are to achieve these outcomes.

1. People are able to live in suitable, and affordable, housing through increased supply in the best places and improved access routes to a wide range of housing choices.
2. Owners and renters are able to live in suitable, energy-efficient houses which are in good condition and, for renters, are well managed.
3. Fewer households living in fuel poverty.





4. More people with community care needs successfully living at home independently.
5. Fewer households experience homelessness through increased prevention and the delivery of responsive, effective services which bring about better outcomes.
6. We have strong and supportive communities which have a long term future; where people feel safe and are able to play a greater role in shaping their future; where the impact of disadvantage is reduced and where public services are delivered well and provide value for money.

## INVOLVING OTHERS

### A' COM-PÀIRTEACHADH CHÀICH

We worked with and listened to people, communities and organisations who told us what their priorities were. This helped us to decide what action to take. Working with others will be an important part of delivering our Housing Strategy. Our key partners include: housing associations; the Scottish Government, NHS Highland; voluntary organisations and Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE).

## WIDER INFLUENCES

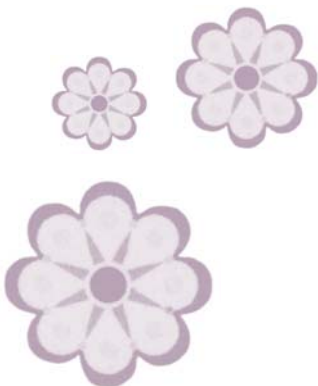
### BUAIDHEAN NAS FHARSAINGE

Highland's Housing Strategy will help to deliver, and influences, other major plans such as The Highland Single Outcome Agreement; The Highland-wide Development Plan, Local Plans and The Highland Joint Community Care Plan. It will also assist the Scottish Government to deliver its priorities.

## HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

### DÈ CHO MATH 'S A THA SINN A' DÈANAMH?

Each year we will review the progress made with delivering our Strategy. This will tell us where our approaches are successful and where changes are needed. We will then update our Strategy. You can help by giving us your views.





## WHAT ARE THE MAIN HOUSING ISSUES? DÈ NA PRÌOMH CHEISTEAN A TH' ANN A THAOBH TAIGHEADAS?

### A growing population and increasing households

#### Sluagh a' fàs agus barrachd thaigheadasan ann

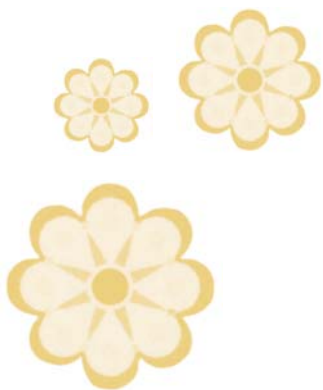
The population is growing in many areas - this is good for Highland's economy but brings challenges. Household numbers are also increasing because people are living longer and more people are living alone. There is a need for more houses in most of Highland's communities. The chronic and persistent lack of affordable housing is one of Highland's biggest challenges.

An assessment of Highland's future housing demand told us that between 6,000 - 9,000 new houses need to be built over the next 5 years to house all those who want to make a new home for themselves. If these houses aren't built then this could lead to problems such as: increased housing costs; people being unable to live in the area (which will weaken our economy and jeopardise jobs) and more pressure on rented housing. Because of changing demographics, there is a need for more housing to be built which is suited to single people or couples - rather than families.

Many people have difficulty paying for housing. Incomes in the Highlands tend to be lower than elsewhere in Scotland. Many people cannot get a mortgage. House prices have been rising. Because of the lack of housing choices and high house prices, many people cannot find housing that they can afford.

Our assessment found that around 4,500 more 'affordable' homes are needed over the next five years to help people on low / modest incomes who can't find housing they can afford to rent or buy. The vast majority of the need is for social rented housing (i.e. from housing associations or the Council). The need for new affordable housing varies greatly across the different areas of Highland. It is most acute in the west of Highland, in the Inner Moray Firth and in the Cairngorm National Park area. Caithness has adequate numbers of affordable housing.

Although there are around 19,500 social rented houses across Highland, only a small number (around 7%) are available to rent each year. These houses are allocated to people who are in the most housing need. There are over 10,000 households on Highland's Housing Register. Because many people want social rented housing, there is very great pressure on the housing that does become available - in some communities it is immense. This means that people experiencing housing need often have to wait a long time for a suitable house.





If someone is homeless they have an acute need for housing. Many more of Highland's households are becoming homeless, mostly because of our housing shortages. Last year over 2,300 households applied as homeless. The vast majority were households already living in Highland. Many had children.

**Although many new affordable houses have been built, new development is expected to slow down.**

**Ged a chaidh tòrr thaighean ùra a thogail aig prìs ruigsinneach, thathar an dùil gum bi leasachadh ùr a' fàs nas slaodaiche.**

The housing associations, the Highland Council and developers have been very successful at providing new affordable housing. Over the last 6 years 2,000 new affordable homes (1,368 for rent and 682 for low cost home-ownership) have been built across Highland's communities.



However there will be much less money from the Government to build affordable housing over the next few years. There are also many other challenges. The infrastructure to support the building of new homes is often poor with little money to remedy the problems. It can be very difficult to get land to build on. People often object to new housing being built in their communities.

**Community care services are facing increasing demands and great challenges.**

**Tha barrachd iarrtais agus dùbhlain mhòra mu choinneamh seirbheisean cùram coimhearsnachd.**

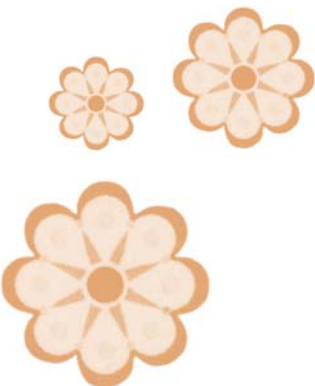
Older people will make up a much larger part of Highland's population over the next few years. An ageing population presents particular housing challenges. This will increase the demand for suitable housing and services to help them live independently in a home of their own. Increasing numbers of people also need help from community care services because of a learning disability, mental health problem or other problems. However there will be less public sector funding to pay for these services.



**The quality and condition of some housing is also a concern.**

**Tha càileachd is cor cuid den taigheadas na adhbhar dragh cuideachd.**

Because some privately owned houses are old or because they haven't been maintained, many need repair work carried out on them. Many houses have poor energy-efficiency. Many people can't afford to heat their homes. People living in private rented housing are particularly affected.





## WHAT WE WILL DO NA NÌ SINN

Here are some of the actions we, and our partners, will take:

### To tackle housing need and demand issues, we will:

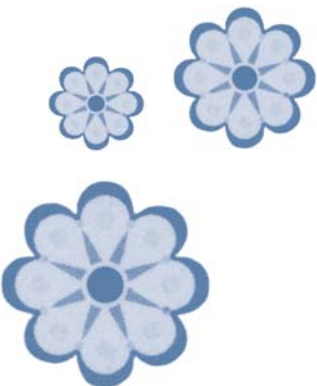
**Gus aghaidh a chur ri ceistean feum is iarrtais a thaobh taigheadas, nì sinn na leanas:**

- ▶ Make it possible for over 9,000 new houses to be built across Highland to meet the needs of a growing population and the demand from increasing household numbers. We will do this through the supply of development land and other planning activities.
- ▶ Work with partners to provide more affordable houses in the communities where they are most needed. Based on the amount of Government funding we hope to get, our target is to start building at least 350 new affordable homes each year. For every 10 affordable houses built, our target is to provide 8 for rent from the Council or housing associations and 2 for low cost ownership or mid-market rent. We will continue to seek more funding, so that we can build more.
- ▶ Work with private developers so that they also help to provide more affordable housing. They can do this by providing at least 25% of the houses they are building as housing which is affordable.
- ▶ Make sure there continues to be social rented housing available to rent in the communities where it is most needed by continuing to suspend Right to Buy sales.
- ▶ Introducing a 'housing options approach' to providing advice so that we can better help people to access alternative housing such as private renting.
- ▶ When newly built social rented houses in small rural pressured communities are being allocated, giving households with a specific evidenced need to live there, a greater preference – through 'enhanced local connection' points.

### To make sure that housing is suitable, of good quality and warm, we will:

**Gus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil taigheadas freagarrach, no math agus blàth, nì sinn na leanas:**

- ▶ Provide 80-100% grants to people living in privately owned and privately rented housing to fit the adaptations they need.
- ▶ Encourage owners to take more responsibility for repairing and maintaining their housing. We will help them to do so through advice and assistance. For those in financial hardship we will provide support through grants or loans.





- ▶ Invest the money we get from our tenants' rents to improve their housing so that it meets good energy efficiency and quality standards.
- ▶ Work with private landlords / estate owners to make sure that their private rented housing is of good quality and well managed. We will help to make sure that private renting tenants know their rights and responsibilities.
- ▶ Make sure that households can afford to heat their homes – through energy efficiency improvement works, providing advice (on energy efficiency grants for example) and by making sure that they get the benefits that they are entitled to.

**To enable more people to live independently in a home of their own successfully we will:**

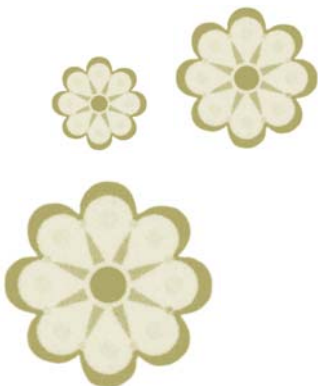
**Gus cothrom a thoirt do bharrachd dhaoine fuireach gu neo-eisimeileach ann an dachaigh dhaibh fhèin, nì sinn na leanas:**

- ▶ Meet people's community care needs through providing well-designed and adapted mainstream housing in places where services can be delivered.
- ▶ Work with Social Work and NHS Highland to make sure the right level of help is on hand for people who need it. This includes investing in services which help people to remain at home including adaptations; tele-care; Care & Repair and Handyperson services.
- ▶ Review the use of sheltered housing so that it meets the needs of more vulnerable people.
- ▶ Do more to prevent people becoming homeless including by making sure they get good quality advice and support and, if necessary, are helped to access the community care services they need.
- ▶ Provide more and better temporary housing for people who are homeless.
- ▶ Increasingly use private rented housing as a solution for housing people who are homeless or unlikely to access social rented housing.

**To help support strong sustainable communities we will:**

**Airson cuideachadh gus taic a thoirt do choimhearsnachdan làidir seasmhach, nì sinn na leanas:**

- ▶ Help to regenerate communities that are struggling.
- ▶ Continue to review our performance in delivering housing services and, if necessary, make improvements.
- ▶ Continue to listen and work with communities e.g. through tenant participation.
- ▶ Work with our partners to prevent and jointly respond to anti-social behaviour quickly and effectively.
- ▶ Try to improve the quality of life of those who often experience more disadvantages.



# HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

## MAR A GHEIBHEAR TUILLEADH FIOSRACHAIDH



This is a summary of the Strategy, the full Strategy explains Highland's housing issues and challenges in more detail. It also explains the actions we will take to address these issues. It is available from The Highland Council's website - [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) - from local libraries and Council Housing & Property offices.

**If you want more information or want to make comments on our Strategy, please contact:**

Housing Strategy Officer  
Housing & Property Services  
The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
INVERNESS IV3 5NX

Telephone: 01349 886606

Please contact us to ask for this information in an alternative format e.g. **large print**, Braille, computer disc, audio tape, or suitable language.

