



Housing Scotland: Planning for a better future



The challenges that face Scotland are numerous. However, a good home is the foundation for the well-being of Scotland's people. We have to deliver enough homes to house the people of Scotland; we have to ensure that the type and quality of these homes are appropriate; we have to make sure that people who need support are enabled to live in their local community in comfort.

The Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland (CIH), the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) and Shelter Scotland have been working together to set out what we need to do to help Government meet the housing challenges of today and tomorrow. This document 'Housing Scotland - Planning for a better future' is the housing sector's view on what needs done.

The Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland is the professional body for people who work in housing. With more than 2,000 members in Scotland, its purpose is to maximise the contribution that housing professionals make to the wellbeing of communities.

www.cihscotland.org

The Scottish Council for Single Homeless is Scotland's national membership body for organisations and individuals tackling homelessness.

www.scs.org.uk
www.leavinghome.info

COSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, is the representative voice of Scottish local government and also acts as the employers' association on behalf of all Scottish councils.

www.cosla.gov.uk

The Scottish Federation of Housing Associations is the representative body for the Housing Association sector in Scotland. We represent 230 members, who between them house 40% of the social rented sector in Scotland, and over 10% of the Scottish population as a whole."

www.sfha.co.uk

Shelter believes everyone should have a home. We help people find and keep a home. We campaign for decent housing for all.

www.shelter.org.uk

The Scottish Parliament has shown it takes housing seriously, especially through renewed debate on housing issues and much-needed housing legislation that it has passed. There have also been important initiatives to tackle real housing issues:

- The 2012 homelessness target represents the most ambitious and forward-looking legislation in Europe.
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard means that social landlords will have to ensure that their homes meet specific quality targets by 2015.
- The Scottish Executive's central heating programme will ensure that all pensioners have warmer homes.
- Increased investment has been made in housing through the prudential borrowing framework, development funding, the Housing Estate Regeneration Fund and the Community Ownership Fund.

However, the task is far from over – more needs to be done.



More Homes Better Homes Thriving Neighbourhoods Sustainable Living



Housing is central to society. A dynamic Scotland where households can prosper needs accessible, affordable and sustainable housing. A good home is the foundation for the well-being of Scotland's people – health, education, a sustainable environment, community cohesion and a thriving economy.

- People living in good housing enjoy better health, but 360,000 homes still suffer from dampness and condensation. 1 in 6 families with children face the problem of living in damp homes.
- Good housing greatly increases the chances of a successful education, but overcrowding or time spent in temporary accommodation will reduce educational chances for many children.
- Good housing benefits the environment. Energy-efficient homes will cut fuel poverty, help meet carbon emission targets and help build a sustainable Scotland. But 88% of existing homes in Scotland do not meet current building regulation standards for energy efficiency. With an average 78% increase in gas prices over the last three years, Scotland's people must have energy-efficient homes.
- If we are really concerned about supporting Scotland's continued economic prosperity, Scotland's skilled workforce and Fresh Talent need access to affordable housing. An economically mobile workforce means we must have the right houses in the right areas.

Much has been done but we still have a way to go. Scotland's housing organisations are agreed on practical steps that need to be taken to make Scotland's housing fit for purpose. We call for a debate about the future of the social rented sector, including its funding, to ensure that existing legislative and policy commitments are met and we can meet the housing aspirations of Scotland's people.

What We Need - More Homes

- There is a demand for more homes for rent in Scotland. We need a commitment to fund at least 10,000 homes for rent in Scotland per year. Investment plans should be based on robust local housing strategies. In all developments there should be an assumption of mixed tenure, and funding mechanisms should be adapted to encourage mixed developments.
- There is also a demand for more homes for affordable ownership in Scotland. We need a commitment to long-term funding of (presently short-term funded) schemes such as Homestake. Other models of full and part ownership which meet aspirations should be encouraged and funded.
- The Right to Buy needs to be reformed to allow local decision-making about local needs and how to meet them, including suspending the Right to Buy or varying the level of discounts.
- Key to the development of new homes for rent and ownership is land. Local authorities must be enabled to purchase appropriate land for housing.
- We need a commitment from the Scottish Executive to enable public authorities to dispose of surplus land in a way that secures maximum public benefit, not just highest price.



What We Need - Better Homes

- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard has to be delivered by 2015. We need housing which is more energy-efficient, for both health and environmental reasons. The Standard should be reviewed in relation to its energy efficiency requirements.
- We need housing that is accessible for people as their needs change throughout their lifetime: that means investing to save by building houses which can cope with all the things that life throws our way.
- Owner occupiers and private landlords need to be made aware of the requirements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard so that they can assess the degree to which their properties measure up against that standard.
- In areas of mixed tenure, we need a strong relationship between landlords and owners to ensure that planned improvements and repairs programmes can be carried out effectively. Factoring arrangements could help here.



What We Need - Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Housing is more than bricks and mortar, and the quality of the neighbourhood should be a key factor in funding decisions. Raising neighbourhood standards should become a recognised priority within all housing investment decisions and within the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Local communities should be involved in the development and ongoing assessment of the neighbourhood as part of the community planning process.
- Neighbourhoods work best when all service providers – with local people – work together, for instance through community planning partnerships.
- Housing providers are well placed to be agents of change in local neighbourhoods. We believe that providers should be encouraged to develop and grow a social enterprise side to their work, for example in the field of local apprenticeships or health initiatives.
- Successful national schemes such as neighbourhood wardens initiatives should be encouraged and placed on a long-term financial footing.
- Anti-social behaviour is a blight on too many of our communities. Providers need to share both thinking and resources to the development of broad based actions to deal with local problems.
- Providers should be enabled as part of any Development Submission to achieve added value through creative approaches to tenure mix.



What We Need - Sustainable Living

- Practical steps need to be taken to achieve the aim of enabling people to stay in their own home as long as they can and want. There are three key areas we believe can help with this:
 - New homes built to easily adaptable standards
 - Additional financial assistance through grants and loans for adaptations
 - Use of shared equity schemes to enable homeowners to move to more suitable housing
- The Supporting People programme plays a crucial role in helping providers to supply a range of support packages. Supporting People funding must be needs-based and must be subject to evaluation of the quality of provision. Scottish Executive needs to ensure that Supporting People funding is secured for the long term.
- The Executive's commendable emphasis on tackling homelessness means that the right support, as well as good housing, must be available to people who might otherwise lose or abandon their tenancy. Prevention will have an important role in meeting the 2012 homelessness target.



We believe that the benefits of good housing should have a high profile in national policy priorities. A comprehensive review is required so that national spending priorities can be determined on the basis of spend-to-save, bringing about benefits for the economy, Scotland's health and education through effective investment in good housing.

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