

East Lothian

**Local Housing
Strategy**

2012 –2017

Executive Summary

This East Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) outlines the nature of the housing system in East Lothian, including key trends, local pressures and challenges. It sets out a proposed vision for housing in East Lothian across all tenures with a range of outcomes and corresponding actions which enable the Council and partners to meet the vision over the period 2012-17. The five outcomes cover the core priorities of increasing housing supply; improving the condition and energy efficiency of housing; reducing and preventing homelessness; addressing the housing and support needs of particular needs groups; and reducing fuel poverty.

Developing the Local Housing Strategy

The LHS has been developed by East Lothian Council with extensive partnership working, consultation and engagement with stakeholders and local communities. This has informed the identification of issues and challenges affecting East Lothian and set key priorities for the LHS to address.

During the public consultation period the consultation focused on whether there was agreement about what the priorities should be, if there are other issues that should have been considered, and how the Council should provide the housing and related services that residents want. Local communities and stakeholders were encouraged to participate in the consultation exercise using a variety of methods including public consultation events, presentations to community groups and stakeholders and dissemination of information through local networks.

Responses to the consultation evidenced that communities and stakeholders were broadly supportive of the priorities identified in the LHS and the proposed actions to tackle the issues. Some respondents asked for specific issues to be highlighted and where possible this has been done.

Development of the LHS has been underpinned by three key principles of consultation and engagement, equalities and sustainability. A range of supporting documents provide more detailed information on how these principles have informed development of the LHS, as well as other key evidence. These documents include:

- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Partnership Working, Consultation and Engagement Report;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Equalities Report;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Sustainability Assessment;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Risk Assessment;
- SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment; and
- Lothian Housing Need and Demand Assessment

Strategic Vision and Outcomes

Taking account of the key housing issues identified in East Lothian and reflecting the aspirations of key stakeholders, the strategic vision for housing is that by 2017:

‘Everyone in East Lothian has access to quality sustainable housing, which meets the changing and diverse needs of households, within safe, inclusive and vibrant communities.’

The strategic vision will be met by meeting a set of outcomes. Outcomes are the positive housing related improvements we are seeking to achieve. They reflect local priorities and national policy objectives and provide clear strategic direction for the LHS 2012-17.

The five outcomes are:

1. Increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing;
2. Improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock;
3. Fewer people become homeless;
4. People with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate; and
5. Fewer people live in fuel poverty.

National and Local Strategic Policy Context

The LHS is informed by a national legislative and strategic policy context which provides direction for local strategic policy across a range of issues.

The LHS also plays a critical role in delivering the corporate priorities for housing in East Lothian and links to a range of strategies and plans which have informed development of the LHS.

Understanding East Lothian – the population, social, housing and economic profile

East Lothian has one of the fastest growing populations in Scotland. The population of older people is also set to grow at a faster rate than the national average. This means East Lothian will require more housing in the future and the housing must meet the changing needs of the population.

East Lothian’s housing stock is predominately private, with a substantial owner occupied sector in particular. There are also a low proportion of flatted dwellings compared to the national average.

It is estimated that 232 households per annum will require affordable housing over the next ten years in East Lothian. This is net of existing stock turnover.

Housing Supply, Access and Affordability

There is increasing pressure on the housing market in East Lothian and increasing the supply of affordable housing is a corporate priority for the Council. House prices are among the most expensive in Scotland and there is significant demand for social rented housing. The level of homelessness applications has stabilised in recent years but remains high. The economic climate continues to impact on the ability of households to meet their housing needs.

Through the LHS the Council and partners will increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing.

Ensuring Good Quality and Energy Efficient Homes

The condition and energy efficiency of housing has a significant impact on communities. The Council and RSL's are making good progress towards meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. Additional new energy efficiency standards for social housing are expected to assist the sector to meet challenging targets to reduce carbon emissions from our homes.

Disrepair and poor energy efficiency are more common in the private sector and are particularly prevalent in rural areas, in some town centres and in the private rented sector. Younger and older households as well as households with a low income are more likely to be affected by disrepair and poor energy efficiency.

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets standards and outcomes that social landlords should be achieving for tenants and other customers through their housing activities.

Through the LHS the Council and partners will improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock.

Reducing and Preventing Homelessness

Tackling homelessness is a priority in East Lothian. Homelessness strategies were published in 2003 and 2009, aiming to prevent and alleviate homelessness across the county. Preventing homelessness is also a key theme of the East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement 2011.

Despite the emphasis placed on tackling homelessness, meeting the 2012 legislative duty and corresponding accommodation requirements poses a significant challenge. It is also anticipated that the number of people the Council will have a duty to permanently re-house will increase over the lifetime of the strategy.

The Council and partners will work together to ensure fewer people become homeless and to increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing.

Particular Needs and Housing Support

Addressing the housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups is a priority in East Lothian. With an ageing population there is an increasing demand for housing and housing support services. Additionally, more complex levels of need can be found in our communities across all client groups.

There are a range of groups who have particular needs in relation to housing and related services. A need to improve knowledge and understanding of housing and housing support needs was identified through the development of the LHS.

The Council and partners will ensure that people with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate.

Reducing Fuel Poverty

The Scottish Government places significant importance on eradicating fuel poverty and aims to ensure that by November 2016, as far as reasonably practical, no one in Scotland is living in fuel poverty. Meeting this target is a challenge.

Addressing fuel poverty is a key priority for East Lothian Council and the East Lothian Fuel Poverty Strategy (2008) provides a framework for tackling fuel poverty.

The Council and partners will work together to ensure that fewer people live in fuel poverty.

Foreword

Welcome to the East Lothian Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2012-17, which sets out the strategic direction for housing of all types. The LHS is the key document addressing housing, homelessness, housing support and fuel poverty and is central to our planning activities. It sets out a five-year vision for housing and housing-related services and corresponding outcomes and actions to bring about that vision.

This strategy is being developed in a challenging and fast-changing environment. Since coming to power in 2007 the Scottish Government have introduced major changes to housing policy and published an ambitious ten-year strategy for housing in 2011 that sets out a commitment to a number of housing related targets. The financial crisis of 2008 has had, and continues to have, a major economic and social impact.

Housing is a basic requirement for all, at the heart of our everyday lives, and housing issues are complex. The development of a housing strategy cannot be limited to accommodation alone in such challenging times, with radically new and innovative approaches to housing necessary, while ensuring efficient and effective practices.

We look forward to working with our key partners to improve housing for all across East Lothian, delivering better housing outcomes to meet the needs of the local community and for future generations.

Councillor Stuart Currie
Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety
March 2012

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1. Developing the Local Housing Strategy

1.1. Purpose of the Local Housing Strategy

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for their area. The purpose of the LHS is to provide strategic direction to tackle housing need and demand and inform future investment in housing.

The East Lothian LHS 2012-17 aims to address the following:

- Describe the extent and type of housing need and demand;
- Set out the local authority's strategic vision for the future of housing across all tenures, taking into account national priorities;
- Set out how the standard of housing will be improved ;
- Provide clear strategic direction for housing investment;
- Focus on the outcomes required to achieve this vision; and
- Enable the delivery of outcomes as shared priorities

The Scottish Government issued LHS Guidance in 2008. The scope of the LHS is broadened and it is the sole strategic document for housing, dealing with requirements for housing across all tenures. The LHS must encompass separate housing related strategies previously produced, such as those addressing homelessness, housing support and fuel poverty and address private sector house conditions and climate change. The LHS should be outcomes focused and link to the modernised development planning process.

1.2. How was the East Lothian LHS Developed?

The development of the East Lothian LHS 2012-17 has been co-ordinated by an East Lothian Council LHS Project Team, overseen by a wider East Lothian Housing Partnership comprising a range of stakeholders.

Between April 2009 and August 2011 consultation was undertaken with stakeholders to inform development of the LHS. A draft LHS was published for public consultation on 1 September, with a three-month consultation period running until 30 November 2011.

A key stage of developing the LHS was the production of the South East Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment. This was produced jointly with neighbouring authorities and provides information on the current need and likely future demand for housing both across South East Scotland and in East Lothian.

1.2.1. Key Principles

Three key principles have underpinned the development of the LHS and will underpin its delivery.

Consultation and Engagement

It is recognised that a successful LHS, which meets local needs and aspirations, can only be developed through meaningful consultation and engagement with stakeholders and local communities. The approach taken is outlined in the East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Partnership Working, Consultation and Engagement Report.

Equalities

The **UK Equality Act 2010** sets out a new single equality duty covering race; sex; disability; sexual orientation; religion and belief; age; gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity. Most of the provisions of the Act came into force in October 2010, with local authorities subject to the Equality Duty from April 2011.

Local authorities must ensure that equality issues are embedded throughout LHS's, with equalities mainstreamed in all aspects of planning for housing. Mainstreaming equalities is about systematically considering equality and diversity at all stages / in all areas of activity. It is about building in equalities from the start. The approach taken to equalities is set out in the East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Equalities Report.

Sustainability

The **Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005** requires local authorities to carry out a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for certain strategies and plans. This enables consideration of potential impacts upon the environment, promoting sustainable development.

While it was formally determined that a full SEA was not required for the LHS following a screening exercise in 2009, the **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** requires public bodies to work towards incorporating the principles of sustainability into their decisions and actions. East Lothian Council recognises the importance of adhering to the principles of sustainability and considered the potential environmental impacts of the LHS upon the wider community in the East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Sustainability Assessment. This seeks to ensure that the principle of sustainability underpins all aspects of the LHS.

1.2.2. LHS Supporting Documents

The East Lothian LHS 2012-17 should be read in conjunction with the East Lothian Local Housing Systems Analysis Report (2012) which provides more detailed analysis of the evidence base for the LHS.

The following documents outline how the key principles of consultation and engagement, equalities and sustainability have informed development of the LHS and provide other key evidence:

- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Partnership Working, Consultation and Engagement Report;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Equalities Report;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Sustainability Assessment;
- East Lothian LHS 2012-17 Risk Assessment;

- SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment; and
- Lothian Housing Need and Demand Assessment

All supporting documents are available at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lhs or on request.

1.3. How Consultation Shaped the LHS

During the initial development of the LHS a range of consultation methods were used to encourage stakeholders to input into establishing the LHS evidence base, identifying the issues and challenges to be addressed, assessing the impact on equality groups and agreeing the LHS outcomes and actions. This consultation provided the information needed to shape the LHS priorities and enabled agreement to be reached on how to tackle the issues.

During the public consultation period the consultation focused on whether there was agreement about what the priorities should be, if there are other issues that should have been considered, and how the Council should provide the housing and related services that residents want. Local communities and stakeholders were encouraged to participate in the consultation exercise using a variety of methods including public consultation events, presentations to community groups and stakeholders and dissemination of information through local networks.

Responses to the consultation evidenced that communities and stakeholders were broadly supportive of the priorities identified in the LHS and the proposed actions to tackle the issues. Some respondents asked for specific issues to be highlighted and where possible this has been done.

Full details of the consultation and engagement activity and how it influenced the LHS 2012-17, can be found in the East Lothian LHS 2012 -17 Partnership Working, Consultation and Engagement Report.

1.4. The Strategic Vision for Housing

Taking account of the key housing issues identified in the East Lothian Local Housing Systems Analysis Report (2012) and reflecting the aspirations of key stakeholders, the strategic vision for housing is that by 2017:

‘Everyone in East Lothian has access to quality sustainable housing which meets the changing and diverse needs of households, within safe, inclusive and vibrant communities.’

1.4.1. Outcomes

Outcomes are the positive housing related improvements we are seeking to achieve, which reflect local priorities and national policy objectives and provide clear strategic direction for the LHS over a five-year period.

To achieve the strategic vision for housing, five outcomes have been identified as follows:

1. Increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing;
2. Improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock;
3. Fewer people become homeless;
4. People with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate; and
5. Fewer people live in fuel poverty.

1.4.2. Actions

Each outcome is supported by a range of actions. These actions enable the changes which lead to the improvements we are seeking to achieve. The actions which will be undertaken are outlined at the end of chapters four to eight.

2. National and Local Strategic and Policy Context

2.1. Changing National Direction and Priorities

In May 2010, the Scottish Government published a discussion document **Fresh Thinking, New Ideas** that marked the beginning of a national discussion on housing policy. Following on from this, the Scottish Government published **Homes Fit for the 21st Century (2011)** which set out a vision for ‘...a housing system which delivers an affordable home for all’ by 2020.

Homes Fit for the 21st Century sets out the Scottish Government’s policy vision and agenda for housing for the decade. Four housing related targets are outlined:

- By December 2012, all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation;
- By April 2015, all social landlords must ensure that their dwellings pass all elements of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS);
- By November 2016, so far as is reasonably practicable, nobody will be living in fuel poverty in Scotland; and
- By December 2020, improved design and energy efficiency in housing will have made a contribution to Scotland’s commitment to reduce energy consumption by 12% and greenhouse gas emissions by 42%.

The paper sets out actions to increase the supply of housing across all tenures, promote choice and flexibility and implement measures to improve houses and neighbourhoods to make them more sustainable.

2.2. Welfare Reform

In the emergency budget of June 2010 the UK Government announced welfare reform savings of £11 billion. The October 2010 spending review identified further savings of £7 billion. These savings are to be made through significant changes to Housing Benefit and far reaching welfare benefit reform.

On 16 February 2011, the **Welfare Reform Bill** was introduced to the Westminster Parliament. The Bill legislates for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years introducing a wide range of reforms that will deliver the commitment made in the Coalition Agreement to make the benefit and tax credit systems fairer and simpler. Some of the key proposals contained in the Bill are:

- A single universal credit to come into force in 2013;
- Tax changes to enable people to keep more income;
- Changes to disability living allowance;
- More details of the back-to-work programme;
- Those refusing to work face a maximum three-year loss of benefits;
- Annual benefit cap of about £26,000 per family; and

- Review of sickness absence levels.

Many of the changes to Housing Benefit come through the introduction of secondary legislation and a number of these amendments came into force from 1 April 2011, with others timetabled over the next two years. Changes will affect both social and private tenants. Some of the major changes to Housing Benefit are:

- Capping the maximum Local Housing Allowance (LHA) payable in the private rented sector for each property size and applying a four-bed limit;
- Calculating LHA rates using the 30th percentile of market rents rather than the 50th percentile;
- Linking LHA increases to the consumer price index (CPI) which does not include housing costs, rather than the higher retail price index (RPI);
- Increasing the rate of non-dependant deductions;
- A cap on Housing Benefit for social tenants of working age based on under-occupancy; and
- Extending direct payments to social rented tenants.

In July 2011 the UK Government announced a further consultation on proposals to change the way Housing Benefit is paid to people living in supported accommodation.

The impact of the wide ranging reforms will be significant for tenants, local authorities, the Scottish Government, social and private landlords. Although work is ongoing to understand the impact of the reforms the implications are not wholly quantifiable at this time.

2.3. The Strategic Planning Framework

A broad package of policy changes in strategic planning for housing were set out in **Firm Foundations (2007)** and **Scottish Planning Policy 3: Planning for Housing (SPP3) (2008)**, superseded by **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (2010)**.

The discussion document **Firm Foundations** provided clear direction for local authorities to have a central role in shaping housing systems through their LHS. It viewed the co-operation of local authorities at a regional level as critical to increasing housing supply, setting a housing supply target and allocating sufficient land through the planning system to deliver housing.

SPP3 aimed to strengthen links between housing need and demand assessments, the LHS and strategic development plans. Housing need and demand assessments provide a fundamental part of the evidence base to set housing supply targets and inform land allocation decisions being made within the development planning process. Local authorities should support joint assessments at a housing market area level, with Housing Market Partnerships established for this purpose.

Scottish Ministers designated the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Authority (SESplan) in 2008, to deliver strategic planning reform.

It includes the administrative areas of Edinburgh, East Lothian, parts of Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian. A SESplan Housing Market Partnership was established through which joint work on housing need and demand assessments has been undertaken.

2.4. Housing Supply and Access

The Housing Supply Task Force was established in 2007 to identify and tackle impediments to increasing the supply of housing across all tenures so that people across Scotland can access suitable housing that meets their needs and demands.

The Task Force published a report, **Housing Supply in Scotland**, in February 2009. The report set out a number of recommendations in four priority areas to support the delivery of new housing and remove key blockages to increasing supply. The priority areas were:

- Advance funding of infrastructure;
- Implementing the reformed planning system;
- Capacity in the housing building sector; and
- Public sector land.

Following publication of this report, the Task Force reconvened in March 2009 with an expanded membership and a new remit which included addressing the implications of the economic downturn on the housing market and championing new ideas and innovative solutions to help house building recover once market conditions improve.

The final report of the Housing Supply Task Force, published in May 2010, outlined the progress made on the recommendations set out in the four priority areas and made additional recommendations in relation to the use of compulsory purchase orders and support for rural housing enablers. The report found that while significant progress had been made, particularly in relation to the implementation of the new housing and planning delivery framework, there was still much to be done, recognising the need for radical measures to increase supply and meet the range of other pressing housing challenges over the medium to long term.

Homes Fit for the 21st Century set out a requirement to increase supply right across the housing system. As well as a requirement for more homes in the established tenures (owner occupied housing, private rent and social rent) it recognised that for growing numbers of people their needs are not met by these tenures. The action plan aims to provide new options for this group, requiring a substantial expansion of mid-range housing products. It aims to continue to support shared equity and in particular to expand provision of homes for intermediate rent¹. The intention is to

¹Intermediate (mid market) renting is a form of affordable housing. It allows tenants to pay rent levels below the normal market rent level in the area; although rents are higher than that a tenant would normally expect to pay in social housing.

implement a radically different and innovative approach to increasing the supply of affordable and intermediate rent housing with key actions including:

- Encouraging multi-tenure housing developments with developments for private sale or rent, cross subsidising the social rented sector;
- Exploring the potential for shared funding of developments;
- Widening the sources of funding for investment in affordable housing;
- Expanding and developing the National Housing Trust model to deliver a major increase in the number of homes for intermediate rent;
- Continuing to invest in shared equity schemes, especially the New Supply Shared Equity Scheme with private sector developers;
- Supporting development through an innovation and investment fund;
- Consulting on legislation to allow councils to levy additional Council Tax from long term empty homes with the additional income to be earmarked for investment in affordable housing (with proposals published for consultation in November 2011); and
- Establishing an Infrastructure Investment Loan Fund and a National Housing Investment bank to mobilise all possible sources of funding for housing investment.

Homes Fit for the 21st Century also recognised that in addition to boosting supply, there is much more that can be done to enhance choice and quality within the housing system. In order to maximise sustainable housing options across all tenures the action plan includes initiatives aimed at improving access to the owner occupied sector, strengthening the private rented sector and giving social landlords greater flexibility in allocations.

A 2008 Scottish Government consultation on Affordable Housing Investment Reform outlined plans for the introduction of Lead Developers and a more regionally orientated strategic sector to work more closely with local authorities. It aimed to introduce large scale competition for funding and ensure maximum value is obtained from public expenditure available for affordable housing. Proposals for investment reform recognise the role of local government in housing investment and attempt to strengthen the agreed strategic role of local authorities within the reformed housing and planning delivery framework.

The Scottish Government set out its views on responses to the consultation in a statement **Investment in Affordable Housing – the Way Forward (2009)**. This outlines key areas for strengthening investment in the social housing sector and consideration of alternative sources of private finance and approaches to funding affordable housing. Following the publication of this document, the Scottish Government established three housing investment working groups to:

- Look at issues of collaboration, consortia and procurement;
- Advise on standards for development and establish a framework for assessing organisations who wish to receive a subsidy to build new affordable homes; and
- Consider the future funding of affordable housing.

The three working groups published final reports between September and October 2010.

In November 2010 in response to the UK Budget, the Scottish Government confirmed that from 2011/12, access to and the amount of subsidy it would provide for new affordable housing projects would change significantly. In 2011/12 the Innovation and Investment Fund provided £50m for local authority and RSL development, allocated on a competitive funding basis. While it is anticipated that 2012/13 to 2014/15 will see a three budget for affordable housing allocated for locally led programmes no announcement has been made to date.

2.5. Private Sector

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 aims to improve the condition of private housing, providing local authorities with tools to help, and where necessary compel, private owners to take action. Local authorities must seek to encourage a change in the attitudes of private owners and landlords towards more responsible ownership.

A Scheme of Assistance must be in place in each local authority area, setting out arrangements for the provision of information, advice and practical and financial assistance to owners and landlords to improve private housing conditions. Promoting responsible home ownership, raising awareness of maintenance responsibilities and assisting owners to be proactive with repairs are critical. Local authorities must demonstrate how policies on assistance and enforcement will improve conditions, based upon an understanding of the scale and nature of private sector stock and house condition issues.

Local authorities must have a strategy in place to deal with below tolerable standard (BTS) dwellings and a policy to designate Housing Renewal Areas where a number of houses are substandard, or where housing adversely affects the amenity of an area.

The 2006 Act also established a Repairing Standard for private rented accommodation and introduced the Right to Adapt, giving private tenants the right to request that an adaptation be installed in their home.

The **Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004** introduced a national Landlord Registration scheme to help local authorities monitor private landlords and ensure that they are fit and proper to let residential dwellings. The system aims to remove disreputable landlords from the market and protect tenants.

The Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 aims to support responsible landlords and address problems caused by landlords acting unlawfully by strengthening regulation of the private rented sector. It includes changes to the registration of private landlords and licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) and incorporates provisions to deal with overcrowding.

2.6. Social Housing

The **Housing (Scotland) Act 2010** aims to safeguard social housing for the future by reforming the Right to Buy, modernising regulation of social housing and by creating an independent Scottish Housing Regulator, which will safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, homeless people and other service users. It requires a Social Housing Charter to be developed, setting out outcomes that social landlords should be expected to achieve. It is anticipated that the Charter will be in place by April 2012. During the latter part of 2011 consultation on the standards to be included in the Charter was undertaken by the Scottish Government and consultation on the new regulatory approach undertaken by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)** was introduced in 2004 and is the Scottish Government's principal measure of housing quality in the social rented sector in Scotland. All social housing landlords are required to bring their stock up to every element of the standard (where applicable) by April 2015.

In 2010, the Scottish Government published **Social Housing Allocations: A Practice Guide**. The Guide describes the legal, regulatory and equalities framework surrounding social housing allocations and outlines how these are put into practice and the flexibilities that exist. The Guide is intended to assist housing officers making day to day allocation decisions but also to inform development of allocation policies, processes and procedures.

2.7. Homelessness

The **Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003** introduced a series of radical changes to homelessness legislation in Scotland including:

- a duty to provide temporary accommodation to all homeless households;
- Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to comply with requests from local authorities to provide accommodation;
- abolition of the 'priority need' test element of homelessness assessments by 2012;
- the 'local connection' test may be modified or suspended;
- the duty to investigate 'intentionality' will be replaced by a power; and
- a duty on landlords and creditors to notify local authorities of eviction action, alerting to households at risk of homelessness.

The **Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004** specifies minimum temporary accommodation standards for homeless families, aiming to put an end to children living in unsuitable accommodation.

Prevention of Homelessness Guidance (2009) sets out actions to prevent homelessness and **Guidance on Meeting the Best Interests of Children Facing Homelessness (2010)** seeks to reduce the impact of homelessness on children.

Regulation 32 A of the **Homeless Persons (Provision of Non-Permanent Accommodation) (Scotland) Regulations 2010** enables local authorities to discharge

their duties to homeless households via a Short Assured Tenancy in the private rented sector.

2.8. Particular Needs and Housing Support

Homes Fit for the 21st Century (2011) outlines commitments to publish a national strategy on housing for older people; develop a national register of accessible housing for disabled people; simplify arrangements to access the funding for adaptations and ensure needs of older and disabled people are better reflected in national and local planning / housing investment processes.

It sets out a requirement for every older and disabled person to have the opportunity of a housing health check at key stages of life, provision of advice on housing options and opportunities available and practical help with securing appropriate services or moving to more appropriate accommodation. The paper also acknowledges that targets for a percentage of new build homes to be wheelchair accessible may be helpful to ensure that sufficient fully accessible properties are built to enable disabled people to have more choice about where they want to live.

The Reshaping Care for Older People programme was set up to consider how services can help older people to maintain their independence. The 'Wider Planning for an Ageing Population' workstream focused on housing and a working group was tasked to draft proposals to inform future strategy for older people's housing. **Wider Planning for an Ageing Population: Housing and Communities – Analysis of Consultation Responses (2010)** sets out views on outcomes and actions produced by the working group. A number of these outcomes are taken forward in **Homes Fit for the 21st Century** including the development of a national strategy for housing for older people. The **Draft National Strategy for Housing for Older People** was published for in December 2011.

The Same As You? A Review of Services for People with Learning Disabilities (2000) states that people with learning disabilities want to and can live in mainstream housing. It recommended people with learning disabilities have ordinary homes which are private, comfortable and safe.

2.9. Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

The **Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** aims to reduce carbon emissions, with reduction targets of 42% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. It sets out public sector duties in relation to the delivery of targets and necessitates further regulations which will require private owners and landlords to make energy efficiency improvements and reduce emissions.

The **Fuel Poverty Statement 2010** sets out measures being taken nationally and locally to ensure that where practical, fuel poverty is eradicated by 2016.

The **Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Scotland 2010** sets out priority areas for action including behaviour change, private housing and improving standards in social housing.

2.10. The Local Strategic and Policy Context

The LHS plays a critical role in delivering the corporate priorities for housing and links to a range of local strategies and plans.

2.10.1. Local Strategies and Plans

Strategy / Plan	Purpose	Relationship to LHS
East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2011	Overarching plan for the future of East Lothian / sets out how East Lothian Community Planning Partners will contribute to the 15 national outcomes, local needs and priorities	Provides strategic direction for LHS and in turn, LHS is a key driver in delivering the SOA and national outcomes
East Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2008-12	Supports SOA priorities / sets out how East Lothian Council will deliver local priorities	Provides strategic direction for LHS
Draft East Lothian Council Council Plan 2012-17	Supports SOA priorities / sets out how East Lothian Council will deliver local priorities	Provides strategic direction for LHS
East Lothian Council Single Equalities Scheme 2010-12	Sets out how East Lothian Council will ensure that people are not discriminated against	Informs the LHS
Proposed South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan 2012-2032 (draft)	Facilitates and provides the steer for the future development and growth of the designated SESplan area	Provides strategic direction for the LHS
Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010 (2011/12 – 2015/16)	Informs the LHS in relation to future investment in housing	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Council Affordable Housing Policy 2006	To help provide a range and choice of housing in East Lothian that meets the identified housing needs of the whole community	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Homelessness Strategy 2009-14	Provides a framework to prevent, tackle and alleviate homelessness	Key elements to be incorporated into the LHS

East Lothian Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2010-16	Identifies temporary accommodation requirements, aiming to increase supply	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Fuel Poverty Strategy 2008	Provides a framework to prevent and tackle fuel poverty	Key elements to be incorporated into the LHS and existing Strategy replaced by LHS
East Lothian Council Scheme of Assistance 2010-12	Sets out arrangements for provision of advice, practical and financial assistance to improve private house conditions	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Older People's Strategy 2011-20	Sets out a long term vision to improve health and wellbeing of older people	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Environment Strategy 2010-15	Seeks to influence environmental decision making	Informs and guides LHS
East Lothian Anti-social Behaviour Strategy 2009	Seeks to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour	Informs the LHS
Children's Service Plan 2008-11	Seeks to ensure that all children and young people are integrated into the community	Informs the LHS
Draft East Lothian Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Strategy 2012-20	Sets out a framework for the future development of services for people affected by physical disability and / or sensory impairment	Informs the LHS
A Sense of Belonging: Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-16	Sets out a vision to improve mental health across Lothian	Informs the LHS
East Lothian Learning Disability Strategy 2007-10	Sets out a plan for people with learning disabilities	Informs the LHS
Lothian Learning Disability Strategy 2010-13	Sets out a plan for people with learning disabilities	Informs the LHS
Mid and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2010-13	Sets out an approach to respond to the challenges posed by drug and alcohol misuse	Informs the LHS
East and Midlothian Violence Against Women Strategic Aims	Outlines the 'dedicated response' to violence against women in East and Midlothian.	Informs the LHS

2.10.2. Single Outcome Agreement

The Concordat agreed between the Scottish Government and COSLA in November 2007 set out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government. A central element of the Concordat is the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA), a means by which Community Planning Partnerships agree their strategic priorities for an area. The SOA is based on 15 National Outcomes and shows how local partners will contribute to meeting these outcomes.

Our Plan for the Future of East Lothian: SOA 2011 is the overarching plan for the East Lothian Community Planning Partnership. The LHS 2012-17 has been developed to complement and support the SOA. In particular, the LHS is linked to local outcomes 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10.

Single Outcome Agreement	National Outcomes	Linkages with LHS
Local outcome 3: East Lothian's children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	5	Housing supply access and affordability Homelessness Particular needs and housing support
Local outcome 4: The life chances for children, young people and families at risk or with disability in East Lothian are improved	8	Particular needs and housing support
Local outcome 5: In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives	6 & 7	Particular needs and housing support
Local outcome 6: Fewer people experience poverty in East Lothian	7	Housing supply access and affordability Housing quality and management Fuel poverty
Local outcome 10: In East Lothian people in housing need have access to an appropriate type, tenure and standard of housing and are prevented from becoming homeless	7, 10 & 11	Housing supply access and affordability Housing quality and management Homelessness Particular needs and housing support Fuel poverty
Local outcome 11: East Lothian has high quality natural and built	10	Housing supply access and affordability Housing quality and management

environments that enhance the wellbeing of the local community		
Local outcome 12: East Lothian is less dependent on finite resources by moving to a more localised, low carbon economy and reducing its ecological and carbon footprints by 80% by 2050	14	Housing supply access and affordability Housing quality and management Fuel poverty

2.10.3. Single Outcome Agreement – Short Term Outcomes

The strategic vision for the LHS and five outcomes will be translated into local outcome 10 and the short term outcomes for housing in the SOA, currently ‘In East Lothian people in housing need have access to an appropriate type, tenure and standard of housing and are prevented from becoming homeless’.

Performance against these short term outcomes will be reported to the East Lothian Community Planning Board on an annual basis.

3. Understanding East Lothian – the population, social, housing and economic profile

East Lothian offers an appealing quality of life, with residents enjoying relatively low crime levels, better health and higher levels of educational attainment than the national average. Good transport links provide residents with easy access to employment and amenities in Edinburgh. However, the desirability of East Lothian as a place to live brings with it a rapidly growing population and corresponding increased demands on infrastructure, housing and housing related services.

This chapter summarises key trends, issues and challenges in relation to the demographic, economic and social context and includes a profile of housing.

Summary of Key Issues for LHS 2012-17:

- East Lothian's housing market and economic profile is closely linked to Edinburgh and the rest of South East Scotland
- East Lothian is an attractive and desirable place to live. There is a projected increase in population growth, most notably in East Lothian East
- A significant shift is forecast in population age structure, with an increasing ageing population
- The household growth rate is expected to outstrip the population growth rate, resulting in a reduction in the average household size
- Unemployment in East Lothian has risen in recent years although it remains lower than the Scottish average
- Housing stock is predominately in private ownership with a substantial owner occupied sector

3.1. Structure and Geography

Situated in East Central Scotland, East Lothian lies adjacent to Edinburgh. It is bordered by three local authorities; City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and Scottish Borders. Together these authorities form part of the wider Edinburgh and South East Scotland Housing Market Partnership which also includes West Lothian and the southern half of Fife. The Housing Market Partnership demonstrates the close connections between these neighbouring administrative areas particularly in relation to housing and employment.

East Lothian is an attractive and desirable place to live. East Lothian is a small but diverse authority with a mix of urban and rural settlements. Overall 27.6% of East Lothian is classified as accessible or remote rural², higher than the national average

² Rural is defined as settlements with a population of less than 3,000. Accessible rural: those with a less than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more; Remote rural: those with a greater than 30 minute drive time to the nearest settlement with a population of 10,000 or more.

of 18.1%. The close proximity to Edinburgh makes it a popular choice for high income commuters and there is a well established local agriculture economic base. Although generally considered an affluent county there are also areas of East Lothian with issues such as low incomes, high unemployment, poor health outcomes and low educational attainment. Small pockets of East Lothian are within the bottom 15% in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

For housing strategy purposes East Lothian is considered to contain three sub-areas each of which have some distinct characteristics. The sub-areas are based on historic secondary school catchment areas and comprise:

- East Lothian East – including Haddington (the administrative centre), North Berwick and Dunbar. The largest sub-area in terms of population and geography. The most rural sub-area.
- East Lothian West – including Musselburgh. The smallest sub-area in terms of population and geography. Highly urban and bordering Edinburgh
- East Lothian Central – including Tranent and Prestonpans. A mix of urban and rural areas. Contains the most deprived areas of East Lothian.

A map detailing the sub-areas can be found in Appendix 2: East Lothian Sub Areas.

3.2. Population and Household Profile

3.2.1. Population Profile

In 2010, East Lothian had an estimated population of 97,500. The county experienced a significant growth in population from 2000 to 2010 at 8.4% compared with a 3.1% increase nationally. In comparison with other local authorities across Scotland, East Lothian experienced the third fastest growth in population during this period.

The number of new births was similar to the number of deaths, with population growth attributable to high levels of net in-migration to East Lothian, in line with national trends.

3.2.2. Household Profile

East Lothian saw the greatest increase in the percentage of households nationally at 7.7% from 2005 to 2010, compared to a national average of 3.8%. However, the rate of increase in the number of households has slowed down in recent years, with a 1% increase between 2009 and 2010 compared to 0.5% nationally.

3.2.3. Projected Population and Household Change

The population is projected to continue to grow over the period to 2033 at a national level, with East Lothian anticipated to be the fastest growing local authority area in

Scotland during this period. The annual rate of change from 2008 to 2033 is anticipated to be 1.3% in East Lothian compared to 0.3% nationally. This represents an increase of 33.5% by 2033, compared to just 7.3% in Scotland as a whole.

Across Scotland, the second largest projected increase in household numbers between 2008 and 2033 is in East Lothian. The total increase in households across East Lothian is projected to be 39.6% compared with 20.6% nationally for this period.

Population is also expected to grow at different rates in different areas of the county. It is projected that East Lothian East will grow most significantly while East Lothian West will show a slight contraction overall in the period 2006 to 2031³.

High population growth is likely to place additional demands on existing housing stock, new build housing and infrastructure, with a shortage of affordable housing posing a particular challenge. Increases in homelessness are also likely given structural pressures on the housing system.

3.2.4. Household Type and Size

In 2008, 32% of the adult population lived alone in East Lothian and this is projected to rise to 40% by 2033. Single parent households are also anticipated to increase from 6% in 2008 to 10% in 2033. This is likely to result in increasing demand for smaller house types.

Population projections by age indicate that the population profile is likely to change over the period 2008-33, with a significant ageing population. The population of 16-64 year olds is projected to decrease from 62.9% of the population in 2008 to 56.2% in 2033 while the population of over 65 year olds is projected to increase from 17.6% of the population in 2008 to 23.6% in 2033. This represents a 65.2% increase in the 65-74 population and 94.9% increase in the 75+ population by 2033. An ageing population is likely to have a significant impact on the type of housing and housing related services required to meet demand.

3.3. Economic Profile

3.3.1. Economic Activity

The rate of economic activity outlines the proportion of the working age population either working or seeking work. In the year from April 2010 to March 2011, 78.1% of the working population in East Lothian was economically active, slightly higher than that of Scotland overall at 77.1%. The rate of economic activity in East Lothian has shown an overall decline in recent years however remains greater than national averages.

³ Population growth estimates at sub area level are only available for the period 2006-2031, estimates at local authority level are available for the period 2008 to 2033.

The proportion of East Lothian residents in employment has shown contraction over recent years from a high of 77.0% between July 2007 and June 2008 to 72.1% for the period April 2010 and March 2011. Past trends have shown greater levels of employment in East Lothian as compared to the national average however the rate of decline in East Lothian has outstripped national figures resulting in a convergence between employment rates.

Unsurprisingly, as employment rates have fallen unemployment has risen. For the period April 2010 to March 2011, there were 3,400 people unemployed, representing 7.1% of the economically active population. This is an increase of almost 50% since 2004 when there were 1,800 people unemployed or 4.1% of the economically active population. The rate of unemployment in East Lothian has also seen a convergence with a typically higher Scottish average with a difference of just +0.6% during January and December 2010 compared to +1.7% during October 2008 to September 2009.

The East Lothian economy is influenced by its close geographic proximity to Edinburgh. Estimates show that up to half of East Lothian residents out commute from the county for employment, many to take up higher paid jobs in Edinburgh.

3.3.2. Benefit Uptake

In May 2011, 13.8% of the working age population was in receipt of benefits, lower than the Scottish average of 16.5%. This includes 11.4% of the working age population claiming out of work benefits⁴ in East Lothian compared to 13.9% nationally. The proportion of the working age population claiming out of work benefits has risen steadily since 2007 and while rates have followed a similar trend to the national average, the gap between the two has narrowed.

An analysis of benefit claims by type indicates that the increase in claim rates is directly attributable to an increase in Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) claims. The proportion of the working age population claiming JSA at May 2011 was 3.2% compared to 4% nationally.

3.3.3. Income

In 2010 the median income in East Lothian was £27,820 compared to £26,323 nationally (CHMA, 2010). Overall, household income by band in East Lothian shows a similar profile to the national breakdown however there is some variation by sub-area. In East Lothian East 29% of households have an income of £40-100k in comparison to 26% of households in East Lothian West and 24% of households in East Lothian Central. A slightly higher proportion of households in East Lothian Central and West are on lower incomes of £5-25k.

⁴ The key out of work benefit groups are Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit and other income related benefits.

3.4. Housing Profile

There are an estimated 41,000 dwellings in East Lothian. East Lothian saw a significant increase in the number of dwellings⁵ during 2005-10 up 3,103 or 7.5% compared to a 3.8% increase nationally.

East Lothian's housing stock ownership is predominantly private, with a substantial owner occupied sector in particular. Table 3.1 sets out the number of dwellings by tenure.

Table 3.1: Dwellings by Tenure in East Lothian

Owner-occupier		Local authority / other public		Housing Association / co-op		Private-rented	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
27,000	64	8,000	20	2,000	6	4,000	10

Source: Scottish Government SHCS, 2011

There are a low proportion of flatted dwellings in East Lothian (28%) compared to Scotland (38%) with a higher proportion of terraced and semi detached dwellings. East Lothian also has a high proportion of dwellings in the higher value Council Tax bands (F-H) at 19% compared with 12% nationally.

East Lothian has a relatively low proportion of vacant dwellings (2.1%) and second homes (1.1%) compared to the national averages of 2.8% and 1.4% respectively. There are however around 1,000 – 1,500 properties not being occupied as a main or principal home.

⁵ A dwelling refers to the accommodation such as a house or flat.

4. Housing Supply, Access and Affordability

The Scottish Government's vision for housing in 2020 is '...a housing system which delivers an affordable home for all'. Homes Fit for the 21st Century sets out a requirement to increase supply right across the housing system. As well as a requirement for more homes in the established tenures (owner occupied housing, private rent and social rent) it recognises that for growing numbers of people their needs are not met by these tenures. The intention is to implement innovative approaches to increasing the supply of affordable housing.

Increasing the supply of affordable housing is a key priority in East Lothian and is highlighted in the East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement 2011.

Summary of the Key Issues for LHS 2012-17

- There is a high demand for housing of all tenures in East Lothian
- Estimates show that East Lothian will generate a demand for 7,950 houses between 2009 and 2024. This includes 2,860 affordable units and 5,090 market units
- The SESplan⁶ housing land requirement will require that land is made available for 6,835 dwellings in East Lothian between 2009 and 2024
- A lack of availability of land to deliver affordable housing in East Lothian poses significant constraints
- Projected increases in population and reductions in household size are likely to result in increased requirements for smaller houses and more affordable housing
- An ageing population poses a challenge in relation to increasing affordable housing for older and disabled people
- Legislative change in relation to homelessness is likely to result in increased pressure on affordable housing and requirements for new build affordable housing
- High house prices and limitations on borrowing resulting from the 'credit crunch' make accessing owner occupation difficult for some, particularly first time buyers
- Knowledge and understanding of the requirements for different forms of affordable housing is limited
- The economic climate is having a negative impact on the house building industry. In the short term this has provided opportunities for affordable housing provision but in the long term affects the volume of affordable housing delivery possible
- Levels of Scottish Government investment and subsidy for new affordable housing have been reduced for the RSL sector and funding for future projects remains uncertain
- The private rented sector poses issues of accessibility and affordability

⁶ SESplan is the Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland
<http://www.sesplan.gov.uk/>

- Existing housing stock is highly pressured and should be used effectively
- Welfare Reform is likely to impact on the ability of households to meet their housing costs in the future and could have knock on implications for landlords being able to invest in new housing

4.1. East Lothian Housing System

A housing system is made up of different components which interact and influence each other over time, it is important that a housing system is viewed as a whole in order to fully understand how well it is responding to housing need and demand. An example of the interaction between components could include high house prices increasing demand for social rented housing. For a housing system to be operating effectively the availability, cost, location and characteristics of the housing stock needs to be broadly in line with the requirements of those looking to access it.

The following section outlines the main components of the East Lothian housing system.

4.1.1. Property Sales

The UK and Scottish economies entered recession in early 2009. Following a period of sustained growth in house prices, this has had a significant impact upon the housing market. Partly as a result of a significant reduction in the availability of mortgage lending, house prices in Scotland dropped sharply between 2008 and early 2009. Levels of market activity were also affected with the number of monthly house sale transactions in Scotland falling to just 3,600 in February 2009, a quarter of the October 2007 level.

The Lothian housing market has been at the forefront of housing market activity in Scotland over recent years. Between 2004 and 2007, East Lothian experienced a growth in sales of 54% compared to 32% across the Lothian area. Recent house sales data indicates declining levels of housing market activity across the Lothian area in line with the national picture. ESPC⁷ data shows that in 2010 there was 710 second hand property sales in East Lothian compared to 1,752 in 2006.

⁷ Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre (ESPC) data only includes sales recorded by ESPC solicitors (estimated to be 9 out of 10 solicitors in East Central Scotland). It does not include new build sales.

4.1.2. House Prices

Nationally the housing market has been in overall decline since the peak of 2007, however the market in East Lothian would appear to have shown greater recovery. ESPC data shows that in 2010 the average house price of £212,658 in East Lothian was greater than in 2007 despite almost half the number of sales. The Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA)⁸ collects information on house prices for second hand and new build sales from across Scotland, this data indicates that house prices in East Lothian were the fourth most expensive in Scotland in 2010.

The median shows the middle value in a range and provides a better indication of house prices than the average because the average can be distorted by a few very high or very low sales. The median house price in 2010 was £170,000, this means that 50% of properties sold for £170,000 or less and 50% sold for £170,000 or more. It is also possible to calculate house prices at the lower end of the market, such as those more likely to be accessible to first time buyers. In 2010 25% of houses sold for £125,000 or less across East Lothian.

As would be expected there are significant variations in house prices across East Lothian. In 2010, median house prices in East Lothian East (which includes Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar) were at least 20% higher than East Lothian Central (which includes Tranent and Prestonpans) and East Lothian West (Musselburgh).

4.1.3. Affordability

The current economic climate continues to cause difficulties in relation to the accessibility and availability of mortgage finance, particularly for first time buyers. There has been a sharp decline in the availability of mortgages with high loan to values (LTV)⁹, and those seeking competitive mortgages now typically need a 10-15% deposit, or upwards of 20-25% for first time buyers. As a result, the age of first time buyers unable to purchase without parental support has risen substantially.

One method of calculating how affordable the owner occupied sector is for residents is to measure house prices against income levels to calculate the level of mortgage required to buy a house. Typical income multiples available in the current economic climate are 3 times a single income and 2.5 times a joint income. In 2010, the median household income in East Lothian was £27,820. A household with a median income would be required to borrow 4.9 times their salary in order to buy house at £170,000, assuming they had a deposit of 20% or £34,000. To buy a property at the lower end of the market (£125,000) a household would be required to borrow 3.6 times their income, again assuming a 20% or £25,000 deposit was available.

⁸ The CHMA is part of the Scottish Government's Communities Analytical Services Division and provides support to local authorities, and others, to aid the strategic planning of housing in Scotland.

⁹ The LTV ratio is the amount of mortgage as a percentage of the total value of the property. The LTV is one of the key risk factors used by lenders in assessing mortgage lending decisions.

Given the variation in house prices, affordability issues are also more pronounced in some areas compared to others. There is significant pressure in East Lothian East where a household looking to purchase in the Haddington and Dunbar areas would require a mortgage of around 6 times their salary for a mid price property, even with a deposit of 20%. In the North Berwick area income multiples are more than 8 times. At the lower end of the market issues of affordability are acute across the county but are again more pronounced in East Lothian East.

4.1.4. Size of Sector

The number of social rented properties in East Lothian has fallen substantially as a result of right to buy¹⁰. The Council's housing stock has declined from a base of 16,000 in the early 1980's to 8,223 in 2011. With right to buy sales slowing and supply increasing through new builds and acquisitions the stock has stabilised in recent years. There are also around 2,000 housing association properties. Social rented housing accounts for around 26% of all stock in East Lothian.

4.1.5. Demand and Allocations

As at 1st April 2011, 4,403 households were on the Council's housing list. Until recently, the Council's turnover has remained at around 5% per annum with RSL's in East Lothian turning over around 4% of their stock. This represents an average of 610 social lets per annum and shows significantly lower turnover rates than the national average. However, as a result of an increase in supply and transfer activity the Council let a total 627 properties in 2010/11, a turnover rate of 7.5% and this trend is set to continue in 2012/13.

Comparing the number of Council housing applicants currently looking for housing in a particular area, with the number of properties typically becoming available for rent each year (based on the last 3 years) provides an indication of how many housing list applicants might be competing for each property becoming available. This is known as 'waiting list pressure' and indicates to what extent there is a shortage of social housing. Across East Lothian waiting list pressure is 8.1, well above the national average of 6.1. Pressure is particularly evident in Haddington villages (36.4 applicants for every property), North Berwick (10.6) and Dunbar (9.8).

¹⁰ Introduced in the 1980's, right to buy gave council tenants the right to buy their home at a discounted rate.

4.2. Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector traditionally plays a greater role in providing housing for those that cannot or do not want to buy their own home and are unable to access the social rented sector and for newly established households. As at July 2011, there were 3,915 registered¹¹ private rented properties which represents around 9% of all dwellings in East Lothian. The 2001 Census estimated the private rented sector to represent only 7% of dwellings in East Lothian, around 3,000 properties, indicating that the private rented sector is increasing in size and proportion of overall housing stock. It is recognised that increases in the private rented sector may be reflective of other issues in the market such as difficulties in accessing mortgage finance, shortages in affordable housing and homeowners being unable to sell their property.

The majority of registered dwellings (47.6%) are in East Lothian East. However it is estimated that around 11% of the population live in the private rented sector in both East Lothian East and East Lothian West compared to just 6% in East Lothian Central.

4.2.1. Affordability

It is difficult to estimate how 'affordable' the private rented sector is, however there are some figures which provide an indication. The March 2011 Local Housing Allowance (LHA)¹² rates show that the mid rent for a 1 bed private rented property was £499.98 per month at the time of calculation. Using an assumption that paying more than 25% of household income on housing costs does not represent 'affordable' housing¹³, a household would require an income of £24,000 per annum to afford a mid rent one bed property. Using the same calculation, a household would require an income of £31,200 per annum to be able to afford a mid rent two bed property with a rent of £650 per month.

Another indication of how affordable the private rented sector is is the proportion of tenants that rely on assistance to help meet their rent obligations. As at January 2012 there were 1304 private sector households receiving assistance with their rent. This represents approximately a third of all private rented properties.

4.2.2. Housing Benefit Reform

In April 2011 changes were made to the way LHA rates are calculated. The changes mean an immediate reduction in the maximum rent claimants are eligible to receive and rates will increase at a slower rate in the future. There is also a significant

¹¹ Since April 2006 private landlords have been legally required to register with the relevant local authority before letting or seeking to let a property.

¹² LHA is the benefit available for tenants on a low income renting from a private landlord. Rates are calculated on market rents across a Broad Market Rental Area (BMRA), the Lothian BMRA includes Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian.

¹³ There is no standard definition of affordable housing however it is generally accepted that it is not affordable for a household to spend more than 25% of their income on housing costs.

change for single people aged 25 to 35 who will now only be eligible for the Shared Room Rate¹⁴.

Although the changes to LHA were introduced in April 2011 existing claimants are not affected until the anniversary of their claim, this means that it is not yet known how landlords and tenants will react to the changes. The Council consider that the following issues may result as a direct impact of the changes:

- Households struggling to access the private rented sector;
- Landlords less willing to take tenants in receipt of LHA;
- A concentration of LHA claimants in cheaper, poorer quality housing;
- Greater levels of overcrowding; and
- Increased demand for housing and debt related services, including homelessness services.

4.3. Housing Supply Target

Scottish Government Guidance recommends that local authorities set a 15-year housing supply target in their LHS which should be closely linked to the housing land requirement included in the Strategic Development Plan (SDP). For SESplan this 15-year period covers 2009 to 2024 with both demand and housing land requirements estimated up to 2032.

The housing need and demand assessment provides 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.

4.3.1. Housing Need and Demand Assessment

East Lothian is part of the South East Scotland (SESplan) housing market area. A SESplan housing need and demand assessment (HoNDA) has been undertaken and was assessed as 'robust and credible' by the CHMA in 2011. The following tables set out key findings from the SESplan HoNDA¹⁵.

The SESplan HoNDA provides an estimate of total housing need by calculating current housing need and future housing need. The estimated supply from existing stock turnover is then deducted to provide the net housing need. Table 4.1 shows that an estimated 232 households are projected to require affordable housing per annum, over the next ten years in East Lothian, net of existing stock turnover.

¹⁴ The Shared Room Rate is the cost of renting a single room in a shared house, rather than a self-contained one bedroom property.

¹⁵ A Lothian HoNDA was also carried out in 2008 which provides information at an East Lothian sub area level. The SESplan and Lothian Housing Need and Demand Assessments were carried out using different methodologies and therefore the findings are not directly comparable.

Table 4.1: East Lothian Total Household Need (Net of Turnover) – Average Applying Over Next 10 Years

	East Lothian	Lothian	SESplan
Housing Need			
Current Need	138	1,306	1,908
Future Need	408	4,074	6,116
Total Housing Need	547	5,380	8,025
Housing Supply			
Supply from Turnover	314	3,009	5,265
Net Housing Need			
Housing Need – Net of Turnover	232	2,383	2,807

Source: SESplan HoNDA: Final Report, 2011

The SESplan HoNDA also includes an assessment of demand for housing at a local authority level, this provides an estimate of demand for market housing. The SESplan HoNDA estimates that demand for new houses net of turnover from East Lothian is 11,770 from 2009 to 2032. A breakdown of demand is provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demand for New Houses Net of Turnover

	Years 1 – 5 (2009 - 2014)	Years 6 -10 (2015 - 2019)	Years 11 - 15 (2020 - 2024)	Total Housing Demand 2009 – 2024	Years 16 - 20 (2025 - 2029)	Total Housing Demand 2009 to 2032
Affordable	197	232	143	2,860	122	3,844
Market	282	331	405	5,090	360	7,926
TOTAL	479	563	548	7,950	482	11,770

Source: SESplan Housing Technical Note, 2011

4.3.2. Housing Land Supply and Housing Land Requirement

As the housing market area is taken to be the SESplan area, for strategic planning purposes the SESplan partner authorities have used the findings of the HoNDA to agree how to best meet housing need and demand across the entire SESplan area; for the avoidance of doubt, this means that the demand for new housing need not necessarily be met within the local authority area where it is perceived to have originated.

Table 4.3 indicates that there is a requirement for 6,835 units in East Lothian between 2009 and 2024, this includes 6,085 which will be delivered through existing land supply and windfall development.

Table 4.3: Summary of Existing Land Supply and Land Requirement

	2009 - 2019	2020 - 2024	2009 - 2024	2024 - 2032	2009 - 2032
Effective Housing Land Supply	5,064	498	5,562	792	6,354
Constrained Land Supply	0	0	0	0	0
Windfall Development	220	110	330	110	440
Completions	193	0	193	0	193
Demolitions	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5,477	608	6,085	902	6,987
Housing Land Requirement	0	750	750	23,950 ¹⁶ (across SDP)	750 (+share of SDP allocation)
Total	5,477	1,358	6,835	902 (+share of SDP allocation)	7,737 (+share of SDP allocation)

Source: Adapted from SESplan Housing Technical Note, 2011

4.3.3. Setting a Housing Supply Target

Based on past trends the SESplan HoNDA estimates that demand for an additional 11,770 new homes will arise in East Lothian between 2009 and 2032. Using the 2010 Land Audit, SESplan have estimated how much of that demand can be met using existing land allocations and how much additional land will be required. These estimates show that 6,085 new houses can be developed in East Lothian between 2009 and 2024 and that additional land for 750 houses should be allocated, giving a total of 6,835.

As the SESplan area is the housing market area, the strategic planning process does not require that all the demand that is perceived to arise in each local authority area be met within the respective local authority's area. The SDP and its housing land requirement are to be reviewed at least every five years. Currently, the strategic planning process signposts a potential demand for a further 23,950 homes in the period 2024 – 2032 across the entire SESplan area. However, as this figure, as well as the locations within which it may be delivered, will be subject to on-going review it cannot be taken into account in calculating the current housing supply target for the LHS. For the purposes of setting a housing supply target therefore, it is considered that the period up to 2024 is the most appropriate timescale as this is the one for which the SDP must confirm the scale and broad locations for its housing land allocations.

¹⁶ The identified housing land requirement from 2024-2032 is 23,950 across the SESplan area. This has not been broken down to a local authority area level.

The East Lothian housing supply target has been calculated using the SESplan housing land requirement for 2009 to 2024. This translates to a housing supply target of 6,835 for the period 2009 to 2024. It should be noted that a total of 674 completions were achieved in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

It is acknowledged that this housing supply target has been calculated using the best information available at the time. While the LHS covers a 5-year period it does not exist in a vacuum and it is realistic to assume that elements of the projections may change over time. In order for the LHS housing supply target to remain connected with the development planning process it will be reviewed on a regular basis.

4.3.4. Affordable and Market Housing

The SESplan HoNDA provides an indication of the demand for affordable and market housing over the period 2009 to 2024. This information has been used to calculate the total requirement for affordable and market housing based on the proposed housing supply target for 2011 to 2024. This has been broken down to provide an average requirement per annum over the period, this is not intended as an annual target but gives an indication of the delivery which could be expected and provides a benchmark for monitoring performance against the target.

Table 4.4: East Lothian Housing Supply Target

	Total requirement 2009 to 2024	Requirement per Annum
Affordable	2,461	164
Market	4,374	291
Total	6,835	456

Source: East Lothian Council 2011

The primary requirement in relation to affordable housing is for social rented housing. However, to reflect identified needs and meet the aim of increasing supply across all tenures, the split of social rented housing and alternative affordable housing tenures should be approximately 80:20. It is anticipated that the majority of alternative forms of tenure will come forward as mid market rent or low cost home ownership.

4.4. Increasing Supply of Affordable Housing

With high demand for housing across all tenures, increasing the supply of affordable housing is a key priority for the Council and partners.

4.4.1. New Build Housing

Rates of new build development have seen significant contraction as a result of the economic climate. In 2009, the level of private sector completions in Scotland almost halved from the 2007 level to around 11,300. This means in 2009 the number of new build completions in Scotland were at their lowest level since 1982, at just under 17,600¹⁷.

In East Lothian, annual completion rates increased significantly up to 2006/07 peaking at 872. However, the completion rates have fallen and the number of units completed in 2009/10 was particularly low. Completions saw an upturn in 2010/11, particularly attributed to a record number of affordable housing completions, which represented more than 50% of the 481 completions in this period.

In total there have been 825 affordable housing completions in East Lothian since 2003. Recent delivery of affordable housing reached a peak in 2010/11 as a result of significant investment in the Council's own new build programme combined with record levels of Scottish Government investment for RSL house building. High levels of Scottish Government funding were achieved through a combination of factors including the Council's policy to maximise this funding pot for the county. Funding for Council house building remains stable supported by the Scottish Government Innovation and Investment Fund in 2011/12 and will result in a high number of affordable housing completions for the coming years. The impact of investment reform has seen RSL completions severely restricted and future outputs from the sector remain uncertain.

The economic climate is projected to continue to affect house building for a further five years and levels of borrowing and investment seen prior to 2008 are unlikely to return in the foreseeable future. The 2010 Housing Land Audit¹⁸ projects that developers will bring forward land to build 5,064 new homes in East Lothian between 2010 and 2019, with a further 608 to be completed between 2019 and 2024. These figures include market and affordable housing.

4.4.2. Strategic Housing Investment Plan

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2012/13 – 2014/15 sets out how investment in affordable housing will be directed with the involvement of key partners. It refers to affordable housing supply through new provision, replacement, remodelling, rehabilitation and housing provided or assisted by other Scottish Government initiatives and provided by local authorities.

¹⁷ It should be noted that the Scottish Government accelerated funds for the Affordable Housing Investment Programme from 2010/11 into 2008/09 and 2009/10 to help finance increased house building by local authorities and housing associations as part of an overall Economic Recovery Plan. This resulted in 6,300 social sector completions during 2009, the highest level since 1981.

¹⁸ The Council carry out an annual Housing Land Audit which provides a description of all current housing sites and projected timetable for development. It is agreed in consultation with partners including the Scottish Government and Homes for Scotland.

The SHIP 2011/12 – 2014/15 identifies tender approvals for approximately 780 units could be achieved over the period. This is based on a tenure mix of housing association rent, intermediate tenures such as low cost home ownership and Local Authority Rent. Funding in the region of £70m from the Council's new build programme would be required to deliver the number of Local Authority rented units alongside further funding (yet to be quantified) from the Scottish Government's Investment Programme (AHIP) and private finance raised by RSL partners.

The SHIP 2012/13 – 2014/15 is currently in development, therefore the figures presented above are only an estimate and will be subject to change before its publication in spring 2012.

4.4.3. Affordable Housing Planning Policy

The Council's current Affordable Housing Policy has been in place since 2003 and makes a key contribution to the supply of affordable housing. The policy requires that residential developments of five or more units must make provision for land for affordable housing; generally 25% of new housing should be affordable.

The impact of the current economic climate on the housing market and private house building activity has also impacted on the delivery of affordable housing. The immediate impact on the affordable housing sector has been positive as both the Council and RSL partners have secured opportunities to work with private developers to provide affordable housing on sites previously identified for market sale. However, the slowdown in the number of market units will restrict the delivery of affordable housing in the future as the contribution of units through the Affordable Housing Policy cannot happen without sites for market sale being delivered.

4.4.4. Addressing Barriers to Increasing Supply

East Lothian Council has been proactive in identifying key barriers to housing development and considering how to remove some of these barriers. A range of innovative solutions are being actively taken forward with key partners to increase the supply of new homes. Initiatives include:

- Provision of a £25m loan facility to East Lothian Housing Association (ELHA), to enable continued development of affordable housing;
- Assisting RSL's to fund Section 75¹⁹ contributions;
- Addressing the significant issue of land availability by establishing an internal working group to assess land in the Council's ownership and its potential for affordable housing development and engaging with NHS Lothian regarding the feasibility of releasing land held in East Lothian for affordable housing;

¹⁹ A Section 75 agreement is a legally binding agreement between a land owner and the Planning Authority made under Section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. It is used for financial and other contributions, such as affordable housing provision.

- Working with developers to identify opportunities for the Council or RSL's to purchase new suitable sized properties direct or purchase land for the new build programme; and
- Positive engagement with private housing developers, including highlighting opportunities to build houses for East Lothian Council and a willingness to consider innovative ways to address infrastructure funding challenges on larger sites.

4.4.5. Other Affordable Housing Tenures

The Council's priority is to deliver new social rented housing however it is recognised that other affordable housing models may meet need and demand. The Council participated in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Scottish Futures Trust National Housing Trust Initiative (NHT)²⁰ that aims to deliver intermediate rented housing and kick start house construction. Unfortunately, no tenders were received at the 'Invitation to Tender' stage for Phase 1 or Phase 2.

The Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Scheme (OMSE) budget for South East Scotland was increased in September 2011. In 2011/12 East Lothian has seen the greatest number of sales across the six local authority areas to date, a total of 15 sales between April 2011 and February 2012 representing 40% of sales across Edinburgh, Lothians, Borders and Fife.

There is currently limited information available on the potential demand for alternative affordable housing tenures in East Lothian such as midmarket rent, rent to buy schemes, shared equity and other low cost homeownership models.

4.5. Housing Information and Advice

The provision of good quality housing information and advice ensures that people make the best housing choices and are able to access housing which is affordable and appropriate to their needs. The Council recognises that the provision of housing information and advice plays an important role in enabling service users to make the best housing decisions for their circumstances, as well as improving their financial, welfare and other social issues. A Housing Information and Advice Strategy is currently under development which aims to ensure a planned, joined-up approach to good quality, continuously improving, consistent housing information and advice.

4.6. Making Best Use of Housing Stock

The functioning of the housing system depends not just on the supply of housing to meet need and demand but also by utilising the existing stock to its full potential.

²⁰ http://www.scottishfuturestrust.org.uk/national_housing_trust

4.6.1. Private Sector Empty Homes

Homes lying empty represent a wasted resource and can have a negative impact on the surrounding community. East Lothian has a relatively low proportion of empty and vacant homes compared to national averages however data from Council Tax records indicates that as at March 2011 there were over 300 properties which had been empty for six months or more (known as long-term empty) and over 500 second homes.

The Council has taken steps to improve knowledge and understanding of empty homes in the county. Analysis of available data indicates that almost half of long-term empty homes are located in the North Berwick (25%) and Musselburgh (23%) areas. 65% of second homes are located in the North Berwick area.

The Council currently offer grant assistance to owners of empty homes which fall below the tolerable standard²¹ to encourage them to be brought back into private rented sector use. Owners must commit to renting the property for a minimum of five years at below market rent. In 2010/11 four dwellings were brought back into use as a result of this grant.

East Lothian Council is also participating in a pilot scheme which will see two Regional Empty Homes Officers working across West and East Lothian, Scottish Borders, Fife and Dumfries and Galloway to bring empty homes back into use. The pilot will initially run for one year and is part funded by the Scottish Government and delivered in partnership with Shelter Scotland.

4.6.2. Social Housing Stock

Issues of empty homes relate to the private sector, however the social sector sees issues relating to the under occupation of housing. With a growing population of older people under occupation of family housing contributes to an overall shortage of affordable housing.

The Council currently offers an incentive scheme for Council tenants who are downsizing to a smaller Council or RSL property either through a mutual exchange or transfer. Between April 2009 and March 11 232 tenants received a downsizing incentive. The Council also operates a mutual exchange register which helps tenants to identify potential exchanges.

4.7. What the LHS 2012-17 will Achieve

The Council and partners will increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing.

²¹ The Tolerable Standard is the minimum standard a house must meet to be considered habitable.

Delivery of Affordable Housing

The Council will undertake a detailed assessment of the need and demand for different affordable housing tenures. This will supplement the evidence already available through the SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment to provide more detailed information on social rent, intermediate or midmarket rent, rent to buy, shared equity and other low cost homeownership models.

It is intended that East Lothian Council's Planning Department will review the Affordable Housing Policy in line with development of the Local Development Plan to be published in 2014. The review will look at the current thresholds and policy decisions around rural steading conversions. The Council's Housing Strategy & Development unit also intend on developing and implementing a policy guidance note for developers to provide more information about the delivery mechanisms for affordable housing in line with its planning policy.

The Council and partners will explore new ways of facilitating the funding of affordable housing. The Council and partners will also work together to maximise efficiencies and increase delivery of affordable housing. This could include joint procurement to reduce development constraints or construction costs or further lending to RSL partners to enable development activity.

The Council will continue to facilitate the Scottish Government's Housing Investment Programme. The Council will work jointly with the Scottish Government to select a preferred partner or partners beyond the current agreement with the East Lothian Strategic Alliance in March 2014.

The Council's new build housing investment programme continues to be one of the Council's core priorities and the Council continues to have a clear long-term strategy in place to increase the delivery of affordable housing in the county. Much of this delivery will come through the Council's own new build investment programme along with the Council's affordable housing planning policy which specifies that 25% of new housing should be affordable.

East Lothian Community Planning Partners will work together to establish an asset disposal framework. This will enable partners to improve the release of land for affordable housing.

The Wider Housing Market

The Council will seek to improve knowledge and understanding of the private housing market, which includes the private rented sector. While the Council has a good understanding of the barriers to increasing supply of new build private housing, research into the market as a whole will provide evidence relating to issues of accessibility and affordability of market housing to inform future strategic planning. This will include exploring opportunities to improve access to the private rented sector where appropriate.

The Council will continue to explore opportunities to work with partners to overcome barriers to delivering new build housing. Where possible and appropriate the Council will support partners to overcome funding and infrastructure constraints which impede developments. Solutions will vary depending on individual circumstances but could include front funding infrastructure costs or innovative funding solutions such as the loan facility made available to East Lothian Housing Association.

Housing Information and Advice

The East Lothian Housing Information and Advice Strategy 2012-17 is currently under development. The Strategy is being developed in consultation with key stakeholders. The Strategy will achieve the following outcomes:

1. Ensure that accurate, up to date, comprehensive and good quality housing information and advice is tailored to meet the needs and preferences of all service users;
2. Promote public awareness of housing information and advice services;
3. Maximise choice by providing advice on housing options;
4. Achieve agreed quality standards for providing housing information and advice that comply with the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers;
5. Improve joint working arrangements between information and advice providers in East Lothian.

The Council and partners will work together to fully implement the Housing Information and Advice Strategy.

Making Best Use of Existing Stock

The Council and partners will make best use of existing housing stock by developing initiatives to reduce private sector empty homes and under occupation in social rented sector. Existing initiatives will also continue to be promoted to encourage uptake.

Outcome 1: Increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing

- Action 1.1:** Provide a detailed assessment of the need and demand for different affordable housing tenures
- Action 1.2:** Improve knowledge and understanding of the private housing market
- Action 1.3:** Review the Council's planning policy for Affordable Housing and its associated guidance note
- Action 1.4:** Explore new ways of facilitating the funding of affordable housing
- Action 1.5:** Engage in partnership working to maximise efficiencies and increase delivery of affordable housing

- Action 1.6:** Facilitate delivery of the Scottish Government Housing Investment Programme
- Action 1.7:** Deliver the Council's new build housing investment programme
- Action 1.8:** Examine opportunities to work with partners to overcome funding and infrastructure constraints
- Action 1.9:** Set up an asset disposal framework with Community Planning partners to improve release of land for affordable housing where appropriate
- Action 1.10:** Make best use of existing housing stock by developing initiatives to reduce private sector empty homes and under occupation in social rented sector
- Action 1.11:** Explore opportunities for improving access to the private rented sector where appropriate
- Action 1.12:** Fully implement the Housing Information and Advice Strategy

5. Ensuring Good Quality and Energy Efficient Homes

Improving the quality and management of existing housing stock, both public and private, is a local and national priority. The Scottish Government has introduced a range of legislation aimed at improving the condition and energy efficiency of Scotland's housing since 2004. Legislation has also been introduced which aims to improve the management of social and private rented housing.

With a chronic shortage of affordable housing, increasing the supply of housing is a key priority for East Lothian Council. However, the vast majority of homes have already been built and improving the condition, energy efficiency and where appropriate the management of the stock will protect these homes for the future and ensure residents have access to good quality, energy efficient housing.

Key Issues for LHS 2012-17

- Meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 is a priority for all social landlords in East Lothian
- Property condition and energy efficiency are particular issues in the private rented sector and for owner occupiers living in rural areas and in some town centres
- A private household that has a low income or is headed by someone aged over 65 is more likely to live in a property which is below tolerable standard (BTS)²² in need of extensive repair or has low energy efficiency. These households are least likely to be able to afford to repair or improve their property
- It is difficult to proactively identify properties in disrepair in the private sector including BTS dwellings
- Homeowners and private landlords do not always recognise the need to improve property conditions and energy efficiency. Encouraging owners to recognise this is particularly challenging
- Meeting current and future carbon reduction targets is a priority across all tenures
- Further investment is required to improve energy efficiency in existing stock and new homes
- Development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the Scottish Social Housing Charter is likely to have resource implications
- A sharp increase in rent arrears in the social sector may be indicative of the current economic climate and requires careful monitoring. Welfare Reform may further impact on rent arrears levels
- There is a need to improve communication with tenants, applicants and local communities regarding policies, rights and responsibilities and key priorities
- There is no evidence to demonstrate how satisfied private tenants are with landlord services and only partial evidence of social tenant satisfaction

²² The tolerable standard is the minimum standard for housing to be considered habitable.

5.1. Property Condition in the Social Housing Sector

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)²³ was introduced in 2004 as the Scottish Government's principal standard of housing quality and all social landlords are required to meet the SHQS as a minimum standard by April 2015. Achieving this Standard is a key driver of investment in existing housing stock for all social landlords.

Social housing stock in East Lothian is generally considered to be of good quality, evidenced by the proportion of stock already meeting the SHQS. By 31 March 2011 55% of Council stock met the SHQS (RSL figures for this period are not available). It is projected that by 2015 100% of local authority stock and 97.8% of RSL stock will meet the standard.

It is estimated that £6m per annum is required between 2011/12 to 2013/14 and £2.4m in 2014/15 for the Council to meet the SHQS and this is reflected in the Housing Capital Investment Plan.

5.2. Property Condition in the Private Sector

Legislation has fundamentally changed the way in which quality and management issues in the private sector are to be perceived and addressed, with an emphasis on the responsibility of owners to maintain their properties at the heart of this. Local authorities must demonstrate how policies on assistance and enforcement will improve conditions, based upon an understanding of the scale and nature of private housing and house conditions.

5.2.1. Private Sector Stock Condition Survey

In 2010 East Lothian Council commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey with the final results published in January 2012²⁴. The purpose of the survey was to provide a better understanding of the scale and nature of private sector stock condition issues. The survey was designed to provide information on a geographic, tenure and socio-economic basis. The findings provide a comprehensive picture of disrepair, energy efficiency and fuel poverty across East Lothian, as well as information on the attitudes of owners towards repairs and maintenance.

Some of the key findings from the survey are:

- 54.7% of private sector housing fails the SHQS and 9.3% of dwellings require extensive repairs;
- 2.1% of dwellings fall below the tolerable standard (BTS). 39.7% of all households living in BTS housing have a low income;

²³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/16342/shqs>

²⁴ <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lhs>

- Disrepair and poor energy efficiency are most prevalent in the private rented sector and 17.4% of private rented properties fail the Repairing Standard²⁵;
- Geographically, disrepair is most prevalent in rural areas and in some town centres
- Low income households and households headed by someone aged over 65 are most likely to live in a property which is in need of extensive repair or has low energy efficiency;
- Only 22% of households perceive there is a requirement to repair their property and only 1.6% consider there to be major repairs required.

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey represents the most comprehensive assessment of private house conditions carried out in East Lothian for 20 years. The condition and energy efficiency of housing is generally better than the Scottish average however the survey highlights a number of areas where poor conditions are a cause for concern.

5.2.2. Below Tolerable Standard Housing

Local authorities have a duty to secure that all housing which does not meet the tolerable standard is closed, demolished or brought up to standard within a reasonable time period. The results of the stock condition survey indicate that 2.1% of private sector stock in East Lothian is BTS; this represents 701 dwellings. Geographically the highest rates of BTS housing are recorded in the rural east and within Haddington and North Berwick town centres. BTS failure rates are also higher in the private rented sector, for pre-1919 housing and for detached properties. There are also linkages between household circumstances and the prevalence of BTS housing with 39.7% of households living in a BTS dwelling being low income and a bias towards older households.

While a broad range of defects are apparent in BTS dwellings, the most common reason for failure relates to a lack of appropriate thermal insulation. The cost of improving BTS housing is estimated at £1.892M which equates to an average of £2,698 per dwelling. The costs per dwelling range from under £1,000 to over £12,000.

5.2.3. Helping Homeowners and Private Landlords to Repair, Maintain and Improve

The Scheme of Assistance²⁶ aims to improve the condition of private sector housing through the promotion of responsible home ownership and the provision of assistance. Through the Scheme of Assistance, the Private Sector Housing Team delivers a range of information, advice and in some cases practical or financial assistance.

²⁵ The Repairing Standard sets out the minimum standard that private rented housing must meet. Private landlords have a statutory obligation to ensure that their properties meet the standard.

²⁶ www.eastlothian.gov.uk/privatehousing

Owners, landlords or tenants of properties which are BTS or in serious disrepair are considered a priority group for assistance through the Scheme of Assistance. Other priority groups are owners, landlords or tenants that are older and disabled or live in a property with common repair responsibilities. These priority groups are provided access to practical assistance including identifying repairs and maintenance, obtaining quotes and organising common repairs.

It is recognised that the Scheme of Assistance is currently delivered on a reactionary basis, rather than proactively as advocated by the Scottish Government. This is primarily as a result of limited resources available to deliver the Scheme of Assistance. The need to deliver a more proactive service is highlighted by the results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey which indicates that awareness of repair and maintenance issues among owners is severely limited. The results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey will enable the Council to target those most likely to be living in properties that are in disrepair or have poor energy efficiency. However the need for owners to take greater responsibility for the condition of their homes requires a culture change the Council alone cannot achieve.

In addition to the Scheme of Assistance, East Lothian Council may use enforcement powers to compel owners to carry out work to improve the condition of their properties. Enforcement action will only be used as a last resort where owners will not engage with the Council or other owners.

It must also be recognised that legislation introduced with the aim of improving the condition of private sector housing was designed at a time when property prices were rising and many people had easy access to credit. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 also indicated that a National Lending Unit (NLU) would be established by the Scottish Government to assist owners to access borrowing. The current financial climate has had a significant impact on household incomes and the availability of credit and the absence of the NLU is seen as a critical gap in the ability of local authorities to assist owners to improve the condition of housing.

5.3. Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

The Scottish Government has set challenging climate change objectives; the targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009²⁷ require a 42% reduction in Scotland's carbon emissions by 2020 and an 80% reduction by 2050. In addition, energy efficiency targets require a 12% reduction in our total energy consumption by 2020. The East Lothian Environment Strategy²⁸ aims to reduce East Lothian's carbon footprint by 80% by 2050. Climate change is also a key focus of the East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement 2011.

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<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlandsaction/climatechangeact>

²⁸ http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/1116/environmental_health-pollution/764/sustainable_development_and_climate_change/2

Around a quarter of all energy consumed in Scotland is used in our homes, making energy efficiency in the domestic sector a key contributor in the drive to reduce green house gas emissions, as well as helping to reduce household fuel bills and fuel poverty. Specific carbon targets for the housing sector have not been set to date although the Scottish Government outlined the contribution housing will make to the climate change agenda through Homes Fit for the 21st Century²⁹. Improvements to existing stock will play a vital role in housing's contribution to the overall target, as will increased energy efficiency of new build housing.

5.3.1. Energy Efficiency Levels

The National Home Energy Rating Scheme (NHER) rates dwellings on a scale of 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent) based on the total energy costs per square metre of floor area. A rating of 6 or above is considered good. Results from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey estimate the average rating for private sector housing in East Lothian to be 7.0 compared to a Scottish average of 6.7. As with BTS housing, below average energy efficiency ratings are associated with the private rented sector, pre-1919 housing and detached dwellings. Geographically the lowest average NHER ratings are found in the east with the three eastern town centres of Haddington, North Berwick and Dunbar particularly affected together with Tranent town centre in central East Lothian.

Across the private and social sector there is evidence to suggest that energy efficiency levels are improving. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS)³⁰ shows a year on year increase in the proportion of properties in East Lothian in the NHER 7–10 band.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) give information on how to make a property more energy efficient and reduce carbon dioxide emissions³¹. EPCs carry ratings that compare the current energy efficiency and carbon dioxide emissions with potential figures the house could achieve. The EPC register contains details of all registered EPCs across the country and 18.2% of housing stock in East Lothian had been surveyed as of February 2011. The average rdSAP³² rating in East Lothian is 64

²⁹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/03132933/0>

³⁰ The SHCS is a national survey which looks at the physical condition of Scotland's homes as well as the experiences of householders. It should be noted that the sample of properties surveyed in East Lothian is very low which reduces the reliability of the results. The survey does however provide a useful indicator of trends over time.

³¹ There is a requirement to provide an EPC to any prospective buyer or tenant of a property when it is either sold or rented.

³² RDSAP is another method of measuring how energy efficient a property is. It is the Government-approved standardised system for undertaking an energy survey on an existing dwelling. A full SAP (standard assessment procedure) requires many data items that cannot be seen in a survey (or take too long to collect).

compared to 62.5 nationally. A higher rating relates to better energy efficiency therefore these results indicate properties in East Lothian have above average energy efficiency.

5.3.2. Scottish Housing Quality Standard

The SHQS includes a minimum energy efficiency level and the Council and RSL partners are making good progress towards meeting the SHQS by 2015. However, the Scottish Government has acknowledged that the SHQS level will not be sufficient to meet the 2020 and 2050 targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The Scottish Government has therefore proposed to introduce a Climate Change Standard for Social Housing to significantly reduce carbon emissions from the social housing sector. It will go beyond the requirements of the current SHQS and will be accompanied by a reporting and monitoring mechanism to ensure emissions levels from existing social housing are reduced.

5.3.3. Fuel Poverty, Climate Change and Energy Efficiency

Overall energy consumption must be reduced, and householders need to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and to save energy. However, it is recognised that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for fuel poor households to take advantage of some of the energy efficiency savings to heat their homes a little more, or to use additional fuel for home cooking, where this has been avoided for reasons of cost. This means that although improving energy efficiency can impact on reducing fuel poverty the knock on effect may actually be an increase in carbon emissions. Fuel poverty is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

5.3.4. Current Programmes to Improve Energy Efficiency

There are a wide range of initiatives in place that aim to improve the energy efficiency of housing and reduce carbon emissions. Programmes are funded from a range of sources and are led by the Council and other partners. Many of these initiatives have a dual goal of reducing fuel poverty. An outline of current programmes can be found in Table 5.1. Details of initiatives which particularly contribute to reducing carbon emissions in East Lothian are also discussed in more detail below.

Table 5.1: Existing Programmes

Programme	Goals	Funder	Main Partners (Other than Funder)	Notes
Energy Assistance Package	Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency	Scottish Government		Range of measures aimed at maximising incomes, reducing fuel bills and improving the energy efficiency of homes.
Energy Saving Scotland advice centre	Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty	Scottish Government	Changeworks	Range of sustainable energy and fuel poverty advice
Fuel Poverty Advice Services	Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency	East Lothian Council	Changeworks / CAB / Sustaining Dunbar	Range of Fuel Poverty and Energy Advice services
Home Insulation Scheme	Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty	Scottish Government	East Lothian Council / Changeworks	Free insulation measures
CERT	Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty	UK Government - Energy Supplier	UK Government / Energy Supplier - Receivers of Funds	Funding from energy bills for energy efficiency improvements, distributed via energy suppliers
Feed in Tariff	Energy Efficiency	UK Government - Energy Supplier		Funding from energy bills for renewable technology installation distributed via energy suppliers
Renewable Heat Incentive	Energy Efficiency	UK Government - Energy Supplier		Funding from energy bills for renewable technology installation distributed via energy suppliers
Council Tax Discount Scheme	Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty	East Lothian Council	Energy Saving Scotland advice centre / Contractor	Discount on Council Tax for insulation measures
PV Hot Spots Campaign	Energy Efficiency	Discounted offer 'best price'	ELC / ESSAC / Private Sector partner	Tendered best price offer of Solar PV system marketed at private households
Gas Extension Projects	Energy Efficiency / Fuel Poverty	East Lothian Council / CERT	Fuel Supplier / Gas Transporter	Mains gas extension programme
Fuel Switching	Fuel Poverty / Energy Efficiency	East Lothian Council / CERT		Council properties only encourage tenants to switch to gas from more carbon intensive energy source

The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT)

The Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) requires domestic energy suppliers to make savings in the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from households. Electricity and gas suppliers are be obliged to promote things that:

- Improve energy efficiency, for example, loft and wall insulation
- Increase the amount of energy generated from renewable technologies such as wind turbines, solar panels and ground source heat pumps

Suppliers are also required to provide grants and offers to help households to fund energy efficiency measures and renewable technologies.

CERT constitutes a considerable proportion of activity to improve the energy efficiency of homes in East Lothian, both directly through the suppliers and by forming an integral part of East Lothian Council and the Scottish Government's main programmes to address fuel poverty.

CERT will be replaced by Energy Company Obligation (ECO) in 2012.

Universal Home Insulation Scheme

In recent years the Council and the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre have worked together on projects to help householders reduce carbon emissions from their properties. The project is funded by the Scottish Government through the Universal Home Insulation Scheme and provides free insulation for private households. This has resulted in 400 homes in Musselburgh and 100 homes in Haddington receiving cavity wall insulation and 500 homes in Musselburgh and 400 in Haddington receiving loft insulation. In addition around 4,500 households in Musselburgh, and 3,400 households in Haddington received information and advice about improving energy efficiency. A similar scheme is being operated in Prestonpans and Tranent during 2011/12.

The Boiler Scrappage Scheme

In May 2010 the Scottish Government announced a boiler scrappage scheme, offering a £400 voucher to households for the replacement of the least energy efficient boilers with an Energy Saving Trust recommended boiler. The scheme has proven to be successful and has been allocated additional funding in subsequent years.

Gas Extension Projects

In partnership with fuel supply organisations and local communities the Council has facilitated the extension of mains gas supplies to around 2,000 households. Around 160 properties will be connected to the gas network in Dunbar in 2011. These projects, combined with fuel switching have made the most significant reductions in carbon emissions in the Council's own housing stock and because of this receive significant CERT contributions. As part of these projects, private households are assisted to connect to the extended mains gas supply.

There are concerns about the stability of gas supply and increased prices as the UK moves towards greater reliance on imported gas. While it is recognised gas by itself

is not the answer to meeting carbon targets, and that the decarbonisation³³ of the grid remains a priority, gas presents a short to medium term answer to reducing carbon emissions and this approach will be closely monitored.

5.3.5. Renewable and Low Carbon Technology

A substantial decarbonisation of electricity supply is essential by 2050 if Scotland is to achieve the target of 80% reduction in carbon emission and links to the Scottish Government's targets for increasing the proportion of Scotland's electricity generated from renewable sources.

In conjunction with the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre, the Council have undertaken a renewable hotspot campaign, designed to make it easy for private households to install solar panels by promoting a pre-selected contractor and price. Sustaining Dunbar delivered a similar campaign and together these projects have resulted in over 40 solar panel installations.

In the existing Council housing stock the Council has begun to introduce air source heat pumps heating systems, which can reduce carbon emissions and running costs. These are being piloted in areas not connected to the gas network. Advice and assistance is provided to tenants using these heating systems to ensure they are able to get the most benefit from them.

Work on the Council's existing housing stock and facilitation and promotion of renewable technologies for private sector households will continue to be undertaken by the Council and delivery partners.

5.3.6. Energy Efficiency in New Build Housing

The drive towards low-carbon standards in new housing is regulated by planning and building standards which have made improvements in energy standards for new housing over many years. The standards introduced in the 2010 Building regulations are intended to reduce emissions by approximately 30% compared to 2007 standards, and a further 30% reduction will be required by 2013, leading to zero carbon developments by 2016.

In order to meet building regulations a number of new build Council houses have been equipped with renewable technologies. The approach to date has been to increase the insulation standards in properties and to provide solar thermal hot water. As building standards increase other alternatives are being explored by increasing the insulation even further and by introducing alternative site specific renewable, low carbon and ventilation solutions. Other house builders operating in the county are formulating similar responses to meet the building regulations and

³³ Electricity generation accounts for around one third of all carbon emissions in the UK and production is dominated by coal generation. Decarbonisation refers to moving to low carbon generation such as wind, photovoltaics (solar), hydro, biomass, wave/tidal and nuclear.

this is resulting in an increase in renewable technologies being introduced into the new build sector.

In terms of meeting carbon targets the proportion of the total stock made up by new-build is relatively small, this is certainly the case for East Lothian where, over the past few years, less than 1% of the total housing stock has been provided as new build. As a housing developer (the largest housing developer in East Lothian in 2011) East Lothian Council will continue to revise its strategy in response to the appropriate planning legislation, guidance and policy and to Building Standards.

5.3.7. Future Policy

As a result of the current economic climate Council budgets and those of other funding agencies are under pressure, making reducing carbon emissions and reducing fuel poverty two amongst many competing priorities. The rate of installation, uptake of key energy efficiency measures, and services for fuel poor households may suffer as a result. Given the uncertainty around future economic conditions, meeting the stringent targets set out in the Climate Change Act (2009) will be challenging. In this context, delivery partners will need to consider their priorities for investment in capital projects to support emissions reductions.

Many of the current programmes focus on standard insulation measures such as cavity and loft measures and a high percentage of properties have been tackled in this way. The Green Deal is due to commence in October 2012 and is the Westminster Government's flagship policy for improving the energy efficiency of homes and other buildings. The Green Deal is a revolutionary programme to bring buildings up to standard which will enable bill payers to get energy efficiency improvements without having to pay upfront costs. Instead, businesses will provide the capital, getting their money back via the energy bill. The Green Deal combined with the replacement of CERT with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will fundamentally change the way many of the existing programmes are funded.

East Lothian Council is currently exploring ways of providing an offer similar to the UK Government's Green Deal but deviates in some respects to offer more flexible funding for householders. The central idea is that owners will invest their money in energy efficiency improvements in their own property if key barriers to installation were removed. Development of the East Lothian Green Deal is ongoing.

5.4. Tenancy Management, Performance and Communication

In both the social and private rented sector, tenancy management and landlord performance are key to ensuring tenants receive quality services.

5.4.1. Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter was introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 which requires Scottish Ministers to set standards and outcomes that social landlords should be achieving for tenants and other customers through their housing

activities. The Scottish Social Housing Charter aims to improve the quality of services that social landlords provide. The purpose of the Charter is to give tenants, homeless people and other customers a clear understanding of what they should expect from a social landlord. It also represents a significant shift in the way social landlords demonstrate performance, focusing on the outcomes and satisfaction of tenants and others.

The current draft Charter contains 16 outcomes and standards which social landlords should aim to achieve through their housing activities. These relate to the following seven areas; equalities, the customer/landlord relationship, housing quality and maintenance, neighbourhood and community, access to housing and support, getting good value from rents and service charges, and other customers. The final Charter is due to be published in April 2012.

The development, implementation and ongoing monitoring of the Charter is likely to have significant implications for the Council and RSL's. A working group has been established with representatives from the Council and RSL's to take forward joint development of the Charter as far as possible. Further development work will be undertaken by landlords during 2012/13 with the Charter due to be fully implemented by April 2013.

5.4.2. Welfare Reform

The full impact of Welfare Reform is not yet known however social landlords are preparing for a range of potential scenarios including:

- An increased demand for housing;
- An increased risk and incidence of rent arrears;
- An increased requirement to resource arrears collection;
- A requirement from Housing Benefit colleagues to monitor household composition.
- Increased demand for housing and debt related services, including homelessness services.

The potential increase in rent arrears is a particular concern in relation to the management of social housing. In recent years the level of rent arrears has increased for both the Council and RSL's, possibly as a result of the difficult economic climate. Further increases in rent arrears could have significant implications for landlords, impacting on their ability to deliver services and invest in new housing.

5.4.3. Satisfaction and Communication

The Council measure tenant satisfaction in relation to repairs and planned maintenance. New tenants are also asked to complete a survey which covers property standard and experience of the allocation process. Approaches to measuring tenant satisfaction will be further developed in response to the Social Housing Charter.

The Council also undertake consultation with tenants in relation to the introduction and review of policies, rent consultation and more recently is involving tenants in self-evaluation.

A theme which emerged through consultation on the draft LHS was dissatisfaction - primarily among non-Council tenants - with the way the Council operates policies relating to tenancy management, allocations and anti-social behaviour. A number of the views expressed made reference to specific areas in which the Council could improve services or performance however an analysis of the range of comments indicates that a lack of awareness and general misconceptions are a major contributing factor to some of the dissatisfaction raised. In some cases this can contribute to friction among communities and compound prejudice and mistrust.

As a landlord the Council must have good communication structures in place to ensure tenants and others are kept up to date with issues that may affect them. Promoting a better understanding about the way in which the Council manages its housing stock and the positive actions that take place may enable the Council to better demonstrate its commitment to sustainable mixed communities.

5.4.4. Estate Management

The Council has an existing Estate Inspection Policy and a range of procedures to assist with the management of antisocial behaviour and tenancy breaches. During consultation on the draft LHS it was suggested that the frequency of estate inspections should be at least annual and follow up work to address any issues raised should be integral to the success of the Policy.

5.4.5. Private Rented Sector

The registration of private landlords³⁴ in East Lothian is operating well. The majority of landlords own just one property, suggesting that property rental may be prompted by the potential for capital growth or an inability to sell the property rather than a desire to become a private landlord. While there is no suggestion that small scale landlords provide a poorer quality of service, it is likely that these landlords will find it more difficult to keep up with changes in legislation and may be less able to invest in the condition and energy efficiency of their properties.

The Council holds a regular Landlord Forum which aims to keep private landlords up to date with legislation and good practice. The number of landlords attending the Forum tends to fluctuate depending on the topics. In 2011 the Council also launched a Private Landlord Newsletter and a separate Private Tenant Newsletter. The newsletters are sent to all registered landlords and all registered properties and provide information on key issues for landlords and tenants.

³⁴ Since April 2006 private landlords have been legally required to register with the relevant local authority before letting or seeking to let a property.

Evidence relating to the operation of the private rented sector, for example demand, re-let times and rent levels, is very limited.

5.5. What the LHS 2012-17 Will Achieve

The Council and partners will improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock.

Social Housing – Property Condition and Energy Efficiency

Delivering the SHQS by 2015 is a key priority for the Council and RSL's. It is anticipated that the Scottish Government will publish details of an enhanced energy efficiency standard for social housing during 2012 and the Council will put in place measures to deliver the new standard.

The Council will continue to install carbon reduction measures in its own stock and where possible will work with other partners to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. Where the Council is involved in installing energy efficiency measures and/or renewable technologies in its own stock, consideration will be given to how any bulk purchase discounts could also be passed on to private owners.

Private Housing – Property Condition and Energy Efficiency

The results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey indicate a number of areas where action is required to improve the condition and energy efficiency of private housing. Due to the interrelated nature of the stock condition issues it is not considered appropriate to tackle any element of disrepair or energy efficiency in isolation. To do so would be an inefficient use of limited resources. Therefore the results of the stock condition survey will be used to inform a strategic response to addressing all disrepair and energy efficiency through an Improvement Plan. This will include assessing the potential role for Housing Renewal Areas (HRAs) as a tool to improving property condition on a geographic basis and may include initiatives which could assist owners to carry out regular maintenance such as a maintenance scheme for gutter cleaning and remedial roof repairs. Priority will be given to identifying and targeting BTS dwellings.

In the short term the Council will ensure that all dwellings receiving practical assistance through the Scheme of Assistance are assessed against the tolerable standard criteria, including the thermal insulation standard. As the majority of practical assistance cases are located in areas with high instances of BTS dwellings this will be a first step towards proactively identifying BTS housing and ensuring the duty to close, demolish or bring up to standard within a reasonable time period is complied with.

Reducing the number of BTS dwellings will contribute to improving the energy performance of private sector housing with almost 70% of BTS dwellings found to have a lack of thermal insulation. The Council will also seek new ways to encourage private owners to further improve the energy efficiency of their properties including

using new technologies and exploring the impact of behaviour change. Should enforcement powers become available in the future the Council will consider how these can be used as a package of measures to encourage private owners to improve the energy efficiency of their properties, particularly in the private rented sector.

The Council will investigate the feasibility of facilitating access to an accessible lending product to help homeowners raise money for essential repairs and maintenance as well as energy efficiency measures.

Social Housing – Tenancy Management, Performance and Communication

The Council and RSL partners will implement the Scottish Social Housing Charter. This will involve putting in place measures to assess performance and customer satisfaction with social housing and related services.

The Council will review the implementation of the Estate Inspection Policy and consider setting a minimum frequency for estate management inspections.

The Council will monitor the impact of Welfare Reform in a number of areas, including in relation to the delivery of housing related services.

The Council will develop and implement a Communication Strategy which will seek to improve communication with tenants, applicants and local communities. As a result of the Strategy the Council will be better able to promote its achievements and ensure a better understanding of housing policy, services and initiatives.

Private Rented Sector – Tenancy Management, Performance and Communication

The Council has limited information on the operation of the private rented sector. Outcome one relates to access to appropriate and affordable housing and improving understanding of the private rented sector is one of the actions which will assist in achieving this outcome. This knowledge and understanding requires to be improved before specific issues relating to tenancy management, performance and communication can be explored.

Outcome 2: Improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock.

- Action 2.1:** Deliver the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015 and ensure continued investment in the future
- Action 2.2:** Develop and implement a Private Sector House Condition Improvement Plan using the findings from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010/11
- Action 2.3:** Investigate the feasibility of extending the Scheme of Assistance to include initiatives which encourage regular maintenance of private sector housing
- Action 2.4:** Investigate the feasibility of the Council facilitating access to an accessible lending product for households carrying out repairs, maintenance or

adaptations

- Action 2.5:** Respond to carbon reduction requirements/targets in relation to the housing stock
- Action 2.6:** Maximise use of resources to increase the installation of carbon reduction measures across all tenures including energy efficiency and renewable technologies
- Action 2.7:** Put in place mechanisms to assess performance and customer satisfaction with social housing and related services in accordance with the Social Housing Charter
- Action 2.8:** Ensure good quality social housing estates by ensuring a regular programme of estate inspections and taking action where necessary and appropriate
- Action 2.9:** Monitor the impact of Welfare Reform while ensuring that rent arrears are effectively recovered and levels of arrears reduced
- Action 2.10:** Develop a Communication Strategy to ensure better understanding of housing policy, services and initiatives

6. Reducing and Preventing Homelessness

Over the last decade, the Scottish Government has introduced legislation, which has radically altered the duties local authorities have in relation to homeless households. The changes include transforming the way homelessness is assessed and a requirement to provide temporary and permanent accommodation for additional groups.

Tackling homelessness is a priority in East Lothian. Homelessness strategies published in 2003 and 2009, aim to prevent and alleviate homelessness across the county. Preventing homelessness is also a key theme of the East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement 2011.

Key Issues for LHS 2012-17

- The volume of homelessness applications has stabilised at a fairly high level in recent years at just below 1,200
- The supply of affordable housing is insufficient to generate vacancies to meet the needs of homeless households both currently and beyond 2012
- Increasing the supply and range of affordable housing is critical
- Heavy reliance remains upon B&B accommodation due to a lack of alternative accommodation
- The main reason for homelessness is consistently 'asked to leave (by parent / other relatives or friends).
- Key areas of significant pressure are Tranent, Prestonpans and Musselburgh
- The impact of Housing Benefit (HB) changes may result in more HB claimants presenting as homeless
- Meeting the 2012 legislative duty and corresponding accommodation requirements poses a significant challenge
- The number of people the Council will have a duty to permanently re-house will increase over the lifetime of the Strategy.

6.1. The Scale and Nature of Homelessness in East Lothian

The scale of homelessness in East Lothian is a significant concern. Homelessness primarily relates to a lack of housing rather than issues of poor rates of tenancy sustainment or unmet housing support needs.

6.1.1. Homelessness Applications

Following a sustained period of increase, homelessness applications made to East Lothian Council have stabilised in recent years. 1,196 applications were recorded during 2009/10 representing the most applications ever dealt with by East Lothian Council. A total of 1,193 applications were recorded in 2010/11. The level of homelessness applications as a proportion of households is consistently higher than the Scottish average. In terms of households found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness, East Lothian has seen a rise of 69.6 % in the period 2003/04 to

2010/11 as opposed to a national reduction of 2.4% during the same period. In 2010/11, 935 households were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Reasons for homelessness have remained consistent in recent years with 'being asked to leave by parents, other relatives and friends' the largest single and accounts for a greater proportion of applications than the national average. The majority of this group are young single people asked to leave the parental home. 'Non-violent dispute in household/relationship breakdown', 'other action taken by landlord resulting in the termination of tenancy' also account for a high percentage of applications and more than the national average. The fourth largest reason for homelessness is 'dispute in the household: violent or abusive'.

The characteristics of homeless families have remained fairly consistent in recent years with a high proportion of single person households compared to families. There are a higher proportion of single person households than the Scottish average and this is significant in relation to demand for temporary and permanent accommodation. The proportion of single parents is also high although this is reducing year on year. The age range of applicants has also remained consistent with around one third aged 18-25 and over a half aged 26-59.

6.1.2. Priority Need

The 2012 homelessness target, introduced through the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003, gives all unintentionally homeless households the right to settled accommodation by December 2012. This new legislative requirement has the effect of ending the 'priority need' test by local authorities. In 2010/11 the Council found 63% of households assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness to be in 'priority need'. This figure is considerably lower than the national average of 88% for the same period and demonstrates the significant difficulty East Lothian Council faces in meeting the 2012 homelessness target.

6.1.3. Future Demand

There is no evidence that demand from homeless households is likely to reduce in the immediate future. At best the Council projects a stabilisation of demand at current levels however issues such as changes to homelessness legislation, welfare reform and the current economic climate and likely increase in unemployment and mortgage / tenancy arrears could result in an increase in applications. Related to this is a significant level of housing need generally with over 4,000 households on the Council's housing register and similarly high numbers on housing association housing lists.

6.2. Meeting Homelessness Need

As outlined in Chapter 5 East Lothian faces a chronic shortage of affordable housing and this directly impacts on the Council's ability to meet the needs of homeless

households. High house prices, a relatively small private rented sector and traditionally low turnover of social rented housing all contribute to the issue.

The average length of time that households are homeless and without permanent accommodation has increased significantly from 210 days in 2006/07 to 261 days in 2010/11, 2009/10 saw a high of 274 days. This is despite high levels of allocations to homeless households and increased temporary and permanent stock. It is anticipated that the number of days between homeless presentation and re-housing may increase further in future years given the issues outlined above.

6.2.1. Housing Supply and Allocations

Until recently, the Council's turnover has remained at around 5% per annum with RSL's in East Lothian turning over around 4% of their stock. These are significantly lower turnover rates than the national average and of benchmarking authorities. However, in 2010/11 turnover was at 7.5% and this is set to continue for 2011/12 as a result of more new supply properties coming forward and increased transfer activity.

For a number of years the Council has consistently been one of the top performing councils in terms of the percentage of allocations made to homeless households in 'priority need'. For example, in 2010/11 68% of new lets were allocated to homeless households, well in excess of the Scottish average of 55%. In addition 50% of general needs housing association lets are made to homeless families, one of the highest homeless nomination/section 5 levels in Scotland.

In 2008 the Council commissioned an independent Homelessness Needs Assessment to inform development of the Homelessness Strategy 2009–14. The main conclusion was that 'causes of homelessness in East Lothian are predominantly structural with the main problem being the shortage of affordable rented homes. As a direct result, the Council is facing increasing difficulties in meeting its duties to homeless applicants' (July 2008). The Council shares this view and does not consider that there is sufficient affordable housing stock available to meet the housing needs of all homeless people.

Work carried out by the Scottish Government in 2009 to help councils assess their ability to meet new legislative duties from December 2012, identified East Lothian Council as one of a small number of councils evidencing lack of capacity to meet the requirements of 2012. It is estimated that between 2011/12 and 2016/17 there will be an annual shortfall of 90 to 253 lets.

The Council has taken a number of steps to increase the supply of affordable housing, these are outlined in more detail in Chapter 4 but include:

- Delivering the Council's new build development programme and working with housing associations and private house developers to promote and support the development of new affordable housing

- Assisting households to access a range of low cost home ownership options through LIFT, open market and shared equity schemes.
- Protecting the existing stock by successfully applying for certain areas of East Lothian to be designated 'Pressured Areas', suspending the modernised right to buy for existing tenants for 5 years from 21 March 2011 to 20 March 2016.
- Approving an Open Market Acquisition Initiative to increase the number of Council properties by purchasing houses for sale on the open market. To date this has resulted in an additional 55 properties that will be used to address a range of housing demands, including additional homeless temporary accommodation.
- During 2012, the Council will work in partnership with Orchard & Shipman to set-up and deliver an initiative that will source and market private rented lets to homeless service users through the Council's local housing office network.

6.2.2. Temporary Accommodation and Bed and Breakfast

The increasing number of homeless applications has a clear impact on the demand for temporary accommodation however there has also been an increasing trend in the percentage of applicants provided temporary accommodation. In 2010/11, 29% of applicants were provided with temporary accommodation compared to 17% in 2006/07. The average stay in temporary accommodation has also increased from 155 days in 2007/08 to 199 in 2010/11.

In June 2010 the Council approved the Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2010-16 which sets out how the Council aims to address the temporary accommodation needs of homeless households. As a result of the Strategy work is ongoing to increase the availability of temporary accommodation, particularly for single households. This has involved reconfiguring the use of Council stock for temporary accommodation to best meet geographic and household characteristics, increasing the number of Private Sector Leasing properties and investigating the feasibility of leasing additional RSL properties.

Despite increasing temporary stock, bed and breakfast accommodation continues to be used and while standards meet relevant legislation, this is not wholly appropriate. The number of households provided with B&B accommodation has seen an increase in recent years at 451 in 2010/11 compared to 402 in 2007/08. B&B accommodation is costly, although spend continued to reduce in 2010/11 from the previous year at just over £600,000.

6.2.3. Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector in East Lothian has an important but limited role to play in meeting housing need due its relatively small size, affordability is also a significant issue for many households. Furthermore, the structure of the sector is such that the stock is generally family sized housing, whilst the unmet demand from homeless households relates mostly to single people.

The Council operate a Rent Deposit Scheme which enables homeless or potentially homeless households to access the private rented sector. During 2010/11, uptake of the Scheme increased by 46% and this continues to be an effective tool in preventing homelessness, providing 89 households access to private rented housing. During early 2012, the Council will work in partnership with Orchard & Shipman to set-up and deliver an initiative that will source and market private rented lets to homeless service users through the Council's local housing office network.

HB reforms are likely to impact on the role the private rented sector can play in meeting the housing need of low income households causing an increase in presentations and reducing future take-up of the Rent Deposit Scheme. The change to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)³⁵ in relation to 25 to 35 year olds is a particular concern. The impact of this change in East Lothian is that 80 people who presently receive LHA will only receive the Shared Room Rate³⁶ allowance from the next anniversary of their application, sometime during 2012. The Council's Homelessness Prevention Team is already dealing with those who will be affected first and will deal with all of these clients during next year. In addition, it is estimated that this change will affect around 100 'new' applicants per year who will no longer be able to access individual private sector tenancies as a means of addressing their homelessness, further increasing the demands placed on the Council's limited housing supply.

6.3. Reducing and Preventing Homelessness

Reducing and preventing homelessness is a key priority for East Lothian Council. Preventing homelessness is a key theme of the East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement 2011.

6.3.1. Housing Options

In April 2011, the Council's Homelessness Service introduced a housing options approach to complement the prevention approach delivered since 2006. The objectives of the initiative are to:

1. Address the housing circumstances of applicants and identify solutions to any difficulties where possible without employing the traditional homelessness route;
2. Address the perceived culture that homelessness is a re-housing route rather than a reaction to a client circumstances; and
3. Ensure that the services being offered are genuine housing options and not a means of reducing demand on the homelessness service.

³⁵ LHA is the benefit available for tenants on a low income renting from a private landlord. Rates are calculated based on market rents across a Broad Market Rental Area (BMRA), the Lothian BMRA includes Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian.

³⁶ The Shared Room Rate is the cost of renting a single room in a shared house, rather than a self-contained one bedroom property.

The initial impact of the approach has been a 38% reduction in homeless assessment activity compared to the same 6 month period in 2010. Overall activity within the Homelessness Unit (options, prevention and assessments) has remained constant. In terms of outcomes for those assisted via the housing options approach some of the key outcomes are as follows:

- Homelessness was unavoidable in around 25% of cases and the clients were then dealt with using the 'traditional' homeless assessment approach;
- In 18% of cases the Homeless Unit was able to assist the clients to secure accommodation without the need for a homeless assessment;
- In 22% of cases the Homeless Unit was able to assist the clients to avoid homelessness.

The evidence indicates that the housing options approach is having a positive impact in reducing homelessness and the initiative is meeting its objectives. However, while this is encouraging it is still too early to draw conclusions about the full impact of the approach.

6.3.2. Tenancy Sustainment

Limited information on tenancy sustainment is available however figures on tenancy termination suggest that 7.1% of all Council tenancies are terminated within 12 months. Around 47% of these tenancies relate to applicants housed from the housing register and 53% relate to homeless applicants. The Council measure performance by benchmarking against other local authorities of a similar size and nature. Among the local authorities the Council benchmark against 10.6% of tenancies are terminated within the first year.

The Council's Homelessness Manager carried out research in 2006 and 2009 to establish a base line of tenancy sustainment for Council properties. The key findings for both periods is that tenancy sustainment is high at around 90% and where a tenancy was ended within a 6 month to 1 year period it was more likely to be concentrated in family sized accommodation as opposed to single person accommodation.

The Council established a Tenancy Support Service which now provides four officers working across the county to promote tenancy sustainment by providing support with rent arrears, managing household budgets and seeking funding for furniture and decoration. It is too early to draw any conclusions about the success of the Tenancy Support Service. East Lothian Housing Association also operate a Tenancy Sustainment Policy.

6.3.3. Housing Information and Advice

The Council is currently consulting on the draft Housing Information and Advice Strategy 2012-17 which will ensure a planned, joined-up approach to good quality, consistent housing information and advice. The Strategy seeks to improve the

provision of information and advice across all tenures and will complement the housing options approach. The draft Strategy has five strategic outcomes:

1. Ensure that accurate, up to date, comprehensive and good quality housing advice and information is tailored to meet the needs and preferences of all service users;
2. Promote public awareness of housing advice and information services;
3. Maximise choice by providing advice on housing options;
4. Achieve agreed quality standards for providing housing information and advice that comply with the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers; and
5. Improve joint working arrangements between information and advice providers in East Lothian.

It is anticipated that the final Strategy will be published in spring 2012.

6.3.4. Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Housing Option Hub

The Scottish Government Housing Options Hubs were established to promote a housing options approach to preventing homelessness and provide a forum for disseminating and developing good practice examples. East Lothian Council are active partners in the Edinburgh, Lothians & Borders Housing Option Hub. A homelessness prevention promotional campaign was launched in June 2011 utilising Hub funding.

6.3.5. Other Services

Mediation

Mediation can assist parties to communicate more effectively and resolve differences that could lead to homelessness. As 'being asked to leave by parents, other relatives and friends' remains the single largest reason for homelessness in East Lothian Mediation has a role to play in preventing homelessness, sometimes enabling a planned move to take place.

In addition to the existing homelessness mediation services available, the Council is also funding a Mediation Service targeted at 16-20 year olds who have been asked to leave their current accommodation and are threatened with homelessness. This service commenced in October 2011 and provides increased opportunities to divert homeless applications from this key group.

Access to goods and furnishings

Furnishing and decorating a new property can be difficult for homeless households, particularly as they are likely to have a low or fixed income. The provision of goods and furnishings can reduce the likelihood of repeat homelessness by enabling households to make their new property a 'home'.

East Lothian Voluntary Organisations Network (ELVON) Recycling Project aims to assist families throughout East Lothian who are in receipt of benefits and have a need for furniture and to collect good quality second hand furniture for distribution

to families in need. Referrals for the project come from a variety of agencies including East Lothian Council Homeless Team, Health Visitors, Social Workers, Citizens Advice Bureaux, hospitals and Women's Aid. The service is part funded by the Council.

Education, employment and training

Homeless households are likely to experience other forms of social exclusion. Worklessness can be a key factor in causing people to become homeless. Employment opportunities, where available, are likely to be low skilled and poorly paid. The provision of services which promote access to education, employment and training can prevent homelessness, including repeat homelessness.

The Bridges Project, Personal Development Service (Employability) provides services to young people to increase their employability skills and is funded by the Council. The service is designed to prevent and reduce homelessness and focuses on assisting young people to develop the core skills that bring them closer to the local labour market and as a consequence, enable them to better manage their accommodation. The development of employability skills is closely related to the development of the life and independent living skills required to manage a tenancy or shared living in the family or extended family home.

6.4. 2012 Working Group

A Working Group comprising the Council's 2012 Working Group and Scottish Government officials was formed at the behest of the Housing and Communities Minister in September 2010 to discuss policies and initiatives that could assist the Council achieve the 2012 target. The Working Group reported its findings to the Housing and Communities Minister and East Lothian Council's Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety in December 2010.

The Report recognises that the Council faces a significant challenge in meeting the 2012 target and that a lack of affordable housing supply alongside anticipated increasing levels of homeless presentations remain key concerns. The Report emphasises that effective prevention activity and continued new social supply will both be necessary to ensure the Council has the capacity to achieve 2012.

Notwithstanding the initiatives in place and the positive actions being developed, and despite the best efforts of the Council to date, it remains highly unlikely that the Council will be in a position to meet the legislative requirements of 2012 and beyond.

6.5. What the LHS 2012-17 will Achieve

The Council and partners will work to increase the supply of housing and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing.

The Council and partners will work together to ensure that fewer people become homeless.

Meeting Homelessness Need

It is clear that the limited supply of affordable housing in East Lothian is a key contributing factor to the high levels of homelessness and the difficulties faced by the Council in meeting the 2012 target. Increasing the supply of housing and improving access to appropriate housing, including affordable housing, is a key priority for the LHS 2012-17. This will ensure that the housing system is better able to meet the needs of all households, reducing the requirement for crisis response particularly among young single adults. The actions relating to the supply of housing are outlined in Chapter 4.

During consultation on the draft LHS the levels of homelessness among single adults was raised as a concern. In previous years the proportion of single adult households presenting as homeless has been higher in East Lothian than the national average. In 2010/11 the proportion was broadly in line with the national average however single adults continue to represent the largest group of homeless applicants. Further research will be carried out to improve knowledge and understanding of homelessness among this group.

The Council and partners provide a range of accommodation options for homeless households. In order to ensure that the support needs of homeless households are being met, an assessment of the need for specialist supported accommodation will be carried out. During consultation on the draft LHS a number of respondents suggested non-accommodation based support services which could assist homeless households. The need for non-accommodation based support will therefore also be assessed.

The Council and its partners will continue to develop services and initiatives which tackle the social exclusion, isolation and health needs of vulnerable homeless people. These services will help to improve the life chances of vulnerable homeless people and help to prevent repeat homelessness. This will include services for specific groups such as households experiencing domestic abuse.

The Council currently operate a Private Sector Leasing Scheme and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. These schemes will be reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the needs of households and provide value for money.

Reducing and Preventing Homelessness

The Council and partners will continue to develop measures which aim to prevent homelessness. Measures will include the provision of tenancy support as well as education and training to a range of agencies to enable effective identification of homelessness 'triggers' or 'risks'.

Other Services

The Council and partners will continue to deliver a range of services which aim to prevent and reduce homelessness including services which provide access to goods and furnishings and promote access into education, training and employment.

Outcome 3: Fewer people become homeless

- Action 3.1:** Improve knowledge and understanding of homelessness among single adults
- Action 3.2:** Assess the need for specialist supported accommodation and non-accommodation based support services
- Action 3.3:** Develop services and initiatives which tackle the social exclusion, isolation and health needs of vulnerable homeless people
- Action 3.4:** Develop a range of measures to prevent homelessness including provision of tenancy support to help sustain tenancies
- Action 3.5:** Review existing Private Sector Leasing Scheme and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Action 3.6:** Improve access to household goods and furnishings to households in need
- Action 3.7:** Promote access into employment and training for homeless households

7. Particular Needs and Housing Support

The Scottish Government has set out a firm commitment to ‘shifting the balance of care’ and ensuring that people with particular needs can live independently and safely in their own homes where they wish to do so. However, it is widely acknowledged that access to housing can often pose a barrier to enabling people to living full independent lives in their community.

Addressing the housing needs of particular needs groups is a priority in East Lothian. With an ageing population there is an increasing demand for housing and housing support services as well as more complex levels of need.

The SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment considered the needs of all equality groups and highlighted those with particular needs in relation to housing and housing support. This has informed the development of the LHS 2012-17.

Key Issues for LHS 2012-17

- Knowledge of the housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups requires to be improved, including demand for intermediate housing
- An ageing population is likely to result in increased demand for housing and housing related services necessitating an efficient and effective redesign of existing services
- More accessible homes are required across all tenures
- More complex levels of need are likely to be met in the community
- Service improvements require to be based on better outcomes for particular needs groups
- Improved support services, including housing support, are required to enable people to stay in mainstream housing for as long as possible
- Joint working is required to improve strategic planning for particular needs groups
- Equality monitoring information systems need to be improved, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities

7.1. Strategic Planning for Particular Needs Groups

The planning of health and community care services in East Lothian is delivered by a range of Joint Planning Groups (JPGs) which include representatives from East Lothian Council, East Lothian Community Health Partnership, the voluntary sector, service users and carers. There are currently five JPGs which include the Older People’s JPG, the Physical Disability JPG, the Learning Disability JPG, the Mental Health JPG and the Carers JPG. In addition the Mid and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP) is a multi-agency partnership working together to lead and co-ordinate the prevention and reduction of problems associated with drugs and alcohol.

It is recognised that not all groups that may have particular needs in relation to housing and housing support services are represented within the existing JPG structure.

7.2. Older People

The population of older people³⁷ in Scotland is increasing and to cope with the increased demand on services there needs to be a change to the way care is planned and delivered. The Scottish Government's Reshaping Care programme provides a long term and strategic approach to delivering that change.

In recent years there has been significant growth in the number of older people in East Lothian and this is set to continue. East Lothian has one of the biggest projected increases in the over 65 population in Scotland. Between 2010 and 2020 the number of older people living in the county is projected to increase by 24% (from 17,594 to 21,830). There will be a particularly large rise in the number of older people aged 85 and over, an increase of 41% from 2,190 to 3,077. These increases are likely to have significant implications for housing. It is also acknowledged that generally, public expectations of services are rising.

7.2.1. East Lothian Older People's Strategy

The East Lothian Older People's Strategy 2011-20³⁸ sets out a long term vision to improve the health and well being of older people. It supports the policy agenda of shifting the balance of care and aims to ensure that older people will be able to access information and support to enable them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and to live active and enjoyable lives. Resources will be focused on the people with the highest levels of need and a range of practical support and preventative community services will be developed to assist older people who have less complex needs. The Strategy is based upon the assumption that funding opportunities will be limited and cost releases must be achieved by reshaping existing services efficiently and effectively.

Housing and housing support services are key components of shifting the balance of care for older people from hospital-based care to preventative, anticipatory care being provided in the wider community setting. The Older People's Strategy contains a number of actions which aim to deliver services which will enable older people to live independently, with support whenever necessary. A number of these actions are taken forward in the LHS 2012-17 and related activities, including;

- Increasing the availability of affordable housing including housing for varying needs across East Lothian, including wheelchair standard housing in each new Council development;
- Producing and implementing a new Housing Adaptations Policy³⁹; and

³⁷ Defined as 65 and over

³⁸ <http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/opstrategy>

³⁹ See Equipment and Adaptations Partnership Agreement 7.3.3

- Further development of housing information and advice via the Housing Information and Advice Strategy.

7.2.2. Change Fund

The costs associated with a shift from one type of service to another are challenging. In recognition of this the Scottish Government established a Change Fund to support the costs of running existing services whilst introducing new types of care.

In East Lothian a Change Plan has been developed that will enable investment of an additional £1.25M in 2011/12 to support the shift in the balance of care. Housing and assistive technologies were highlighted as priority areas for the 2011/12 Fund, in particular aids and adaptations, housing information and advice and investment in Telecare/Telehealthcare⁴⁰. Funding of £1.435M is anticipated to be made available in 2012/13 and 2013/14 and £1.25M in 2014/15. The 2012/13 Change Plan is currently under development.

7.3. Physical Disability

Estimates of the number of people in Scotland that have a physical disability or sensory impairment vary. The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS)⁴¹ 2008-10 estimates that 35% of households in Scotland and 30% in East Lothian contain at least one member with a long-term illness or disability. This figure includes all types of physical or mental illness or disability.

There is limited information on the number of adults with a physical disability or sensory impairment in East Lothian. In August 2010 1,955 adults with physical disability/sensory impairment were receiving services from East Lothian Council Adult Social Care, having been assessed as having critical or substantial levels of need. This represents around 2% of the population. It is anticipated that the majority of adults with a physical disability or sensory impairment will not be known to Adult Social Care.

7.3.1. Draft East Lothian Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Joint Strategy 2012-20

The draft East Lothian Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Joint Strategy 2012-20 provides a framework for the future development of services for people with a physical disability and / or sensory impairment and their carers. It develops the recommendations set out in the 'Lothian Joint Strategy for Physical and Complex Disability – Our Lives Our Way' and makes them relevant to the needs of the people

⁴⁰ Telecare and telehealthcare services use technology to help people live more independently at home. They include personal alarms and health-monitoring devices.

⁴¹ The SHCS is the largest single housing research project in Scotland, and the only national survey to look at the physical condition of Scotland's homes as well as the experiences of householders.

affected by disability and their carers in East Lothian. The draft Strategy sets out a requirement for affordable, good quality housing which is accessible inside and out and offers choice. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be completed in 2012.

7.3.2. Major Adaptations

East Lothian Council is committed to the Scottish Government aims to help residents who are older and residents with a disability to live safely, independently and comfortably in their own homes. It is also recognised that, in some cases, these residents require a higher degree of assistance to deal with routine maintenance and repairs both inside and outside the home.

East Lothian Council's Private Sector Housing Team co-ordinate private sector major adaptations in accordance with the East Lothian Scheme of Assistance 2010-12, dedicated support is also provided by East Lothian Care & Repair. Typically around 40-50 adaptations to private sector stock are carried out each year, depending on assessed need although it is anticipated that more than 80 adaptations will be approved in 2011/12. Adaptations are funded through the provision of grant assistance.

East Lothian Council have a dedicated team who co-ordinate adaptations in Council properties. Around 90 adaptations are carried out in Council stock each year depending on assessed needs. Adaptations to Council stock are funded through the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

Figures are not available on the number or cost of major adaptations carried out to RSL stock. RSLs currently receive a grant from the Scottish Government towards the cost of adaptations. The Scottish Government recently consulted on changes to the funding regime for RSL adaptations which may result in a reduction in the overall funding available. This may have an impact on the ability of RSLs to carry out adaptations in the future.

7.3.3. Equipment and Adaptations Partnership Agreement

The Council is currently developing an Equipment and Adaptations Partnership Agreement which aims to improve joint working in relation to the provision of equipment and adaptations and to streamline the process for service users.

Consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders to inform development of the Equipment and Adaptations Partnership Agreement and proposed approval process. During the LHS consultation a number of comments were received from service users regarding the provision of equipment and adaptations. These comments have also informed development. It is anticipated the Partnership Agreement and revised approval process will be implemented in spring 2012.

7.3.4. New Build Housing

The LHS 2003-2013 set a target that 10% of all new build affordable housing should meet the needs of particular needs groups. To date approximately 9.1% of all new build affordable housing completions have been particular needs properties, primarily wheelchair accommodation. All social housing is built to the Housing for Varying Needs standard⁴².

Housing Occupational Therapists' currently input into the design of new build Council stock for particular needs. The Council will shortly begin work with partners including the East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel, the Community Care Forum and the East Lothian Access Panel to develop a New Build Standard Design Guide which will set out key design principles for new build Council housing, ensuring the needs of particular needs groups are fully considered.

During the LHS consultation a number of comments were raised about the availability of housing for particular needs groups as well as the importance of property type and location. The Council will review the provision of affordable housing for particular needs groups and set a supply target for the provision of future stock.

7.4. Learning Disability

Information about the number of adults with a learning disability in East Lothian is limited. A better understanding of the housing needs of people with learning disabilities is required in order to improve housing for people with learning disabilities.

It is estimated that 7.7 adults per 1,000 population in East Lothian have a learning disability, which is higher than the national figure of 6.5. Of those adults with a learning disability that are known to the local authority, the majority are living in mainstream accommodation.

7.4.1. East Lothian Learning Disability Strategy 2007-10

The East Lothian Learning Disability Strategy Partnership in Practice recognises the importance of people with learning disabilities having access to a range of housing options.

The Strategy outlines a need to further explore the specific housing needs of people with a learning disability and projected need based on complexity of disability.

⁴² Guidance on Housing for Varying Needs covers the design of housing and associated facilities to suit the full range of people's housing needs.

7.4.2. Lothian Learning Disability Strategy 2010-13

The Lothian Learning Disability Strategy 2010-13 is a plan which sets out what will happen across Lothian for people with learning disabilities by 2013 to ensure people can obtain support, including housing support. The Strategy outlines the difficulties that can be faced by people with a learning disability who find themselves homeless and makes recommendations in relation to the provision of appropriate accommodation, early involvement with people who are homeless from housing/housing support services supported by learning disability services and a need for joint working and training across staff groups.

7.5. Mental Health

People living with mental health problems present an increasing challenge, with depression and other affective disorders being the fifth most common group of conditions reported in GP consultations in 2009/10. Estimates from the Scottish Government suggest that at any one time, one in six people experience mental health problems, whilst one in 200 have a psychotic illness and one in 25 has a personality disorder.

Figures for the number of people in East Lothian who suffer, or have suffered from a mental health disorder are not available. However, in November 2010 there were 1,400 adults in East Lothian receiving Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance due to a mental health condition, which represents 43% of all claimants. The number of claimants in this category has reduced significantly since November 2007 when 1,850 adults were in receipt of benefit due to a mental health condition, however this accounted for only 41% of all claimants at that time.

7.5.1. Joint Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2011-16

A Sense of Belonging is a joint strategy for improving the mental health and wellbeing of Lothian's population. The Strategy sets out 19 aspirations, including 'we should maximize opportunities for social housing for people with mental health problems; and explore opportunities for shared ownership through government or housing associations'.

The Strategy recognises that having a safe secure home is fundamental to mental health and wellbeing. Homelessness is highlighted as a specific risk factor for mental health and vice versa and it is noted that rent arrears can be a significant issue among tenants with mental health problems.

The Strategy includes two priority actions in relation to housing:

- To strengthen partnership working with the local authority LHSs' through existing joint planning mechanisms to ensure that housing and mental health and wellbeing issues are prioritised and fully addressed;
- Seek to address the impact of community or neighbourhood based discrimination, abuse and hate crime that has a lasting and detrimental

impact on vulnerable individuals' mental health, and on the wellbeing of the community.

7.6. Housing and Housing Support

The majority of people with particular needs live in mainstream accommodation. In some cases additional support may be provided to enable independent living or the property may have been adapted.

Housing support describes the help given to assist a person to live independently. Housing support can assist with a range of day to day activities.

7.6.1. Service provision

There are currently 13 identified providers delivering housing support packages to 675 service users in East Lothian. The highest number of packages are delivered to the older people client group with a significant number also provided to adults with learning disabilities. A breakdown of the particular needs groups provided with housing support services is detailed in Table 7.1. The Council is the largest provider of housing support services in East Lothian providing 44% of all support packages.

Table 7.1: Housing Support Provision 2011

	Learning Disabilities	Mental Health	Older People	Physical Disabilities	Varied	Totals
Total	181	63	246	57	128	675

Source: East Lothian Council, 2011

Housing support is also provided to older people in specialist housing, mainly in the form of very sheltered and sheltered housing. This type of housing is provided by a range of social landlords and private companies and is available in both the social rented and owner occupied tenures.

The Council and partners also provide a range of supported accommodation and housing support services for young people, people who have experienced homelessness and women fleeing domestic violence.

7.6.2. Current and Future Needs

In 2011 the Council commissioned Craigforth Research to carry out a Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment to provide a better understanding of the current and future housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups. The assessment will provide evidence of the housing and housing support needs of the following groups:

- Older people;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People with mental health problems;
- People with learning disabilities;

- People with drug and alcohol problems;
- Homeless households with support needs including young people with chaotic lifestyles and young single parents; and
- Women and men at risk of domestic violence.

Following completion of the study the Council and partners will develop initiatives to address the findings.

7.7. Drug and Alcohol

It is estimated that there were 895 problematic drug users in East Lothian in 2006, equal to 1.51% of the population aged between 15 and 54. East Lothian faces a considerable challenge in respect of drug use among young people of both genders with a higher proportion in this group compared to the Scottish average. Conversely, rates of treatment for people over the age of 35 are lower than in Scotland overall⁴³. In 2009, there were 21 drug related deaths in East Lothian with many of these as a result of poly-drug use including alcohol.

MELDAP Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2010-13 Strategy

The MELDAP Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2010-13 Strategy describes what MELDAP (Mid and East Lothian Drugs and Alcohol Partnership) intends to do over the three year period and how it will respond to the challenges posed by the misuse of drugs and alcohol.

Priority 2 'We will enable people with substance problems to recover from them and live healthy crime free lives' includes a specific outcome 'higher proportion of service users living in safe, settled and appropriate accommodation'. The corresponding action seeks to work with housing agencies to develop and enhance services for vulnerable groups including homeless people.

7.8. Domestic Violence

The East and Midlothian Violence Against Women Partnership has produced a set of strategic aims which outline the 'dedicated response' to violence against women in East and Midlothian. The strategy has four key objectives, which are prevention, protection, provision and participation.

East Lothian Council provide funding for dedicated housing and housing support services for women fleeing domestic violence.

7.9. Gypsy Travellers

East Lothian Council manage a Gypsy Traveller site on behalf of East and Midlothian Councils. It has a total of 20 pitches and is open all year round. Occupancy rates at the site have remained fairly consistent since 2001, with a reduction in occupancy

⁴³ Source: Mid and East Lothian Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2009

rates during 2010. The average occupancy rate for the period was 66%. There is currently no demand on the site register/waiting list. Typically, there is an average of 47 people living on site at any one time.

There was a marked increase in the number of roadside or unauthorised encampments in 2010 from previous years. The reasons for this are unknown. However, given that occupancy levels on the authorised site have declined slightly, this could be attributable to Gypsy Travellers preferring to camp elsewhere combined with the closure in recent years of other Gypsy Traveller sites in Scotland including West Lothian, which is in close geographical proximity to East and Midlothian.

Addressing the accommodation issues of Gypsy Travellers is also a key focus of East Lothian Council. A cross local authority accommodation needs assessment of Gypsy Travellers carried out in 2008 made a number of recommendations in relation to the management of the Gypsy Travellers site including the development of secure tenancy agreements and implementation of management policies. The recommendations have been progressed through a working group made up from a range partners and in consultation with site users.

7.10. Travelling Show People

Travelling Showpeople are defined by their occupation of providing fairground rides, amusements and fairs in various locations throughout the summer months and then to a permanent residential base in the winter months. Travelling Showpeople are self employed business people who have lived this lifestyle for many generations. Travelling Showpeople have very different characteristics from the Gypsy/Traveller community. They are defined as a separate group with different cultural needs, lifestyle and accommodation requirements.

In East Lothian there is no permanent Travelling Showpeople site and it is difficult to assess housing need for this group. Travelling Showpeople do pass through East Lothian providing fairs, predominantly in the summer months. Applications for site accommodation and fair provision are dealt with on an individual basis. It is recognised that the number of potential sites available has reduced as a result of land being allocated for other purposes and in some locations the available sites are disconnected from the local population making them less suitable.

7.11. Minority Ethnic Communities

In October 2007, ODS Consulting was commissioned by Communities Scotland working with East Lothian, City of Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Councils to undertake a study to assess the housing needs of minority ethnic communities in the six local authority areas. The research aimed to explore the housing circumstances, needs and preferences of minority ethnic communities, to inform future strategic planning and service provision.

The study identified a number of key issues and common themes, set out as follows:

- There was evidence of limited awareness of some Council services among ethnic minority communities, for example confusion in relation to allocations procedures, low levels of awareness of private sector housing and care and repair grants and a lack of understanding with regard to reporting anti-social behaviour. Despite the availability of interpretation and translation services in each local authority, there were also low levels of awareness of these services among people from minority ethnic communities.
- There was generally a need for improvement in both local authority and RSL monitoring systems and the use of ethnic monitoring information. Ethnic monitoring data was collected regularly in relation to housing allocations and applications, however ethnic monitoring in relation to existing tenants, private sector improvement and Care and Repair grants was particularly poor in some areas. And while Equality Impact Assessments were being carried out, in the majority of cases these were rapid equality impact assessments rather than full Equality Impact Assessments.
- Growing pressure on housing from migrant workers from Eastern Europe was identified, with 19,020 migrant workers from the A8 countries registered for work in Edinburgh, the Lothians and the Scottish Borders during 2002-2007. The majority of registrations (12,380) were in Edinburgh. Migrant workers tended to live in private rented accommodation due to the high cost of buying a house and the long waiting times associated with accessing accommodation from a social landlord. There was anecdotal evidence from migrant workers of overcrowding and over pricing in parts of the private rented sector, which is the most accessible housing tenure for Eastern European migrant workers and some evidence of limited understanding of tenants' rights among Eastern Europeans that are renting privately.

7.12. Other Groups

It is recognised that there are a range of other groups with particular needs in relation to housing and housing support, these include:

- Prison leavers;
- Ex-Service personnel
- Young people; and
- Looked after young people.

The Homelessness Team currently works with a range of partners to address the housing needs of people from these groups as required. This includes early intervention to prevent homelessness occurring. However, it is recognised that joint working between housing and other services could be strengthened.

7.13. What the LHS 2012-17 Will Achieve

The Council and partners will ensure that people with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate.

Housing and Housing Support Services

Many of the strategic issues relating to the delivery of housing and housing support services are common across the particular needs groups.

Across all particular needs groups there is a requirement to improve the collection and analysis of data. This will provide an ongoing evidence base which will improve the planning and delivery of housing and housing support related services. The Council will seek to establish systems to enable ongoing analysis of data and undertake annual analysis. One of the objectives of the Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment 2011/12 is to make recommendations for the Council to improve data collection and collation.

The Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment 2011/12 will provide a comprehensive assessment of the current and future housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups. The results are not available to inform the LHS however an early action for the Strategy will be to develop initiatives to address the findings.

The LHS 2003-2013 set a target that 10% of all new build affordable housing should meet the needs of particular needs groups. To date approximately 9.1% of all new build affordable housing completions have been particular needs properties, primarily wheelchair accommodation. During the LHS consultation a number of comments were raised about the availability of housing for particular needs groups as well as the importance of property type and location. The Council will review the provision of affordable housing for particular needs groups and set a supply target for the provision of future stock.

A need for a more coordinated approach to the strategic planning of housing and housing support services has been highlighted as an early finding of the Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment 2011/12. The Council and partners will seek to improve joint working to ensure Housing is better integrated into the strategic planning for particular needs groups.

Older People

Housing support services play a key role in 'shifting the balance of care', enabling people to stay at home safely and avoid unplanned hospital admissions where possible. The Council and partners will continue to develop and improve housing support services including those which focus on preventative support such as home safety services, falls prevention, Telecare and Telehealthcare.

The Council and partners will explore the feasibility of developing social enterprise initiatives to provide assistance with tasks such as moving home, clearing lofts for

insulation and decorating. These services will support a range of other priorities such as encouraging people to downsize from family sized properties where appropriate and improving the energy efficiency of the housing stock.

Outcome 4: People with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate

1. Establish systems to enable ongoing analysis of data in relation to particular needs groups and undertake annual analysis
2. Develop initiatives to address the current and future housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups using the findings from the Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment 2010/11
3. Review the provision of new build affordable housing for particular needs groups and set a supply target for the provision of future stock
4. Improve joint working to ensure housing is integrated into the strategic planning for particular needs groups
5. Work in partnership with ELC Adult Social Care and others to develop housing support services with a focus on preventative support
6. Explore and develop social enterprise initiatives to provide assistance with moving home, decorating etc

8. Reducing Fuel Poverty

The Scottish Government places significant importance on eradicating fuel poverty and aims to ensure that by November 2016, as far as reasonably practical, no one in Scotland is living in fuel poverty.

Addressing fuel poverty is a key priority for East Lothian Council and the East Lothian Fuel Poverty Strategy (2008) provides a framework for tackling fuel poverty.

Key Issues for LHS 2012-17

- Meeting the Scottish Government target to eradicate fuel poverty by 2016 is a significant challenge
- Household income and fuel costs are key factors which contribute to levels of fuel poverty
- The energy efficiency of housing also plays a role in fuel poverty and a higher incidence of fuel poverty exists in rural areas and in older properties
- Certain groups are more vulnerable to fuel poverty including older people
- Improved knowledge of levels, extent and nature of fuel poverty will enable investment to be targeted more effectively
- Targeting energy advice and promoting and encouraging behaviour change are vital to reduce energy consumption / fuel bills
- Reductions in benefits and tax credits as a result of Welfare Reform may further compound fuel poverty for some already on the lowest incomes

8.1. The Scale and Nature of Fuel Poverty in East Lothian

A household is defined as living in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, they would be required to spend more than 10% of the household income⁴⁴ on fuel costs. If more than 20% of the household income would be required, the household is considered to be in extreme fuel poverty.

8.1.1. Causes of Fuel Poverty

There are three factors which influence whether a household is in fuel poverty.

1. **Low household income.** The costs of heating a property form a greater proportion of total income for those on low incomes.
2. **Fuel costs.** Higher prices reduce the affordability of fuel. Prices of different types of fuels can vary considerably, as can the availability of different fuels in different areas, and of different types of heating systems. This affects the ability of consumers to exercise choice.
3. **Energy efficiency.** The thermal quality of the building and the efficiency of the heating source determine the amount of energy that must be purchased

⁴⁴ Including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest

to heat the home adequately. Energy efficiency is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

8.1.2. General Trends in Fuel Poverty

There are two main sources of evidence on levels of fuel poverty in East Lothian. The most comprehensive source is the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010/11⁴⁵, commissioned by East Lothian Council to provide a better understanding of the scale and nature of private sector stock condition issues. Using the definition of fuel poverty as outlined in the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement 2002⁴⁶ 3,870 households in East Lothian were found to be in fuel poverty, representing 11.9% of all private households; 577 households, or 1.8% were found to be in extreme fuel poverty. These figures indicate that levels of fuel poverty are below the national average. Although the survey provides the most comprehensive evidence base for fuel poverty in the county it relates only to private sector housing which accounts for about two thirds of all housing.

The second main source of evidence for fuel poverty is the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS)⁴⁷ which covers all housing tenures. The SHCS results are based on a very small sample which reduces the reliability of the results however it provides a useful indicator of trends over time. The 2008-2010 SHCS found 25% of households in East Lothian to be in fuel poverty, compared with 28% nationally. The 2003-2006 SHCS found 17% of households locally and 18% nationally to be in fuel poverty which indicates that the proportion of households in fuel poverty in East Lothian is increasing in line with national trends. The SHCS survey also indicates that 7% of households in East Lothian were in extreme fuel poverty, slightly lower than the national average of 8%. Fuel poverty levels were found to be the same in the social sector compared to the private sector.

8.1.3. Nature of Fuel Poverty

In 2006 Changeworks undertook a mapping exercise which showed that rural areas have particularly high levels of fuel poverty in East Lothian. This is primarily due to reduced access to the gas network, lower incomes and harder to treat properties. Areas with high levels of private rented housing, such as in the east of the county, were also found to have higher levels of fuel poverty. Although the data is based upon 2001 Census information, the information provided on the distribution of fuel poverty remains broadly accurate.

⁴⁵ www.eastlothian.gov.uk/lhs

⁴⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2002/08/15258/9951>

⁴⁷ The SHCS is a national survey which looks at the physical condition of Scotland's homes as well as the experiences of householders. The Council consider its own survey to provide a more accurate reflection of overall rates of fuel poverty although the SHCS provides a useful indicator of trends over time.

The results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010/11 support the patterns of fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty evidenced in the earlier mapping exercise. The survey indicates significantly higher rates of fuel poverty in the private-rented sector, in pre-1919 housing and in the rural east. Households living in Haddington, Prestonpans, Dunbar and Tranent town centres are also significantly more likely to be in fuel poverty than households outside these town centres.

There is a some concern that the policy shift brought in by Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations (ECOs)⁴⁸ will result in some of those in fuel poverty paying more for their fuel and that less funding will be directed towards those vulnerable to fuel poverty. It is essential that in order to continue to deliver programmes which help to reduce fuel poverty that the relevant funding sources are maximised.

8.1.4. Groups Vulnerable to Fuel Poverty

Certain groups are particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty and are likely to require more targeted support. These groups include households that are more likely to be at home for longer periods of time, live in energy inefficient homes or are on a low/fixed income. Groups particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty are:

- Older people
- Permanently sick or disabled people
- Families with young children
- People living on a low or fixed income, or unemployed
- People living in overcrowded conditions
- People living in energy inefficient homes or homes in disrepair.

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010/11 provides information on the socio-economic circumstances of households living in fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty. The results indicate that fuel poverty impacts to a greater extent on households where the head of household is either under 25 years old or over 64 years. Older person single households account for 1,903 or 49.2% of all households in fuel poverty. The prevalence of fuel poverty is also higher in households where the head of household is not in full-time employment or the household contains an individual with an illness/disability. Low income households account for the vast majority of households in fuel poverty, 87.6%.

While there are no figures available for fuel poverty in temporary accommodation, East Lothian staff consider it is likely that homeless families living in temporary units face higher levels of fuel poverty, which is primarily as a result of low incomes and using power-card meters as documented in the East Lothian Fuel Poverty Strategy 2008. Fuel poverty is also likely to pose an issue for Gypsy Travellers on low incomes, although again there is no statistical evidence available to support the views of East Lothian Council staff.

⁴⁸ See Future Policy surrounding energy efficiency at 5.3.7

8.2. Reducing Fuel Poverty

East Lothian Council works with partners to reduce fuel poverty among households and a number of projects and initiatives are in place to provide support and assistance. As the energy efficiency of a property is a key contributing factor to the incidence of fuel poverty, the majority of the initiatives in place have a dual role to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

8.2.1. Energy Assistance Package

The Energy Assistance Package delivers a range of measures aimed at maximising incomes, reducing fuel bills and improving the energy efficiency of homes. The Energy Saving Trust manages the package on behalf of the Scottish Government. The aim of the package is to address fuel poverty and the model was designed to prioritise assistance to those on the lowest incomes and in the least energy efficient homes.

The primary route to accessing the package is via the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre who can offer households a range of services as well as make referrals to partner organisations. In 2010/11 2,212 households in East Lothian were referred through the Energy Assistance Package.

8.2.2. East Lothian Advice Services

The Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre offers a range of sustainable energy advice to households over the telephone and signposts householders to a range of programmes and delivery partners. There are also a range of fuel poverty and energy advice services which can provide more in-depth support to households in East Lothian.

The Council funds Changeworks to provide the East Lothian Energy Advice Centre (ELEAC), Warm and Well (a project focusing on people whose housing may be affecting their health) and the Fuel Poverty Prevention Project, delivered in collaboration with the Haddington Citizens Advice Bureau. Changeworks also brings in funding from a range of sources to deliver cross local authority fuel poverty advice services, such as Cozy Kids and Switched On. The community group Sustaining Dunbar have received funding to deliver energy and fuel poverty advice through the Be Green Dunbar Energy Advice Shop and have also been undertaking home energy audits to a number of households in Dunbar. In 2010/11 these services have supported almost 500 households in East Lothian.

The fuel poverty advice services take approximately 60% of their clients from the social housing sector. This could be due to people in social housing being more connected to and more willing to accept support through various referral networks.

8.2.3. Income Maximisation and Household Debt

Household income is one of the key contributing factors of fuel poverty with low and fixed income households more likely to be living in fuel poverty. Energy price increases also disproportionately impact on low income households. The results of the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey indicate that 87.9% of households in fuel poverty in East Lothian are low income households.

Maximising household income by, for example, encouraging benefit uptake can significantly impact on the ability to meet fuel costs. Reducing household debt is another way to help households struggling to meet their fuel costs. For example, negotiating with an energy supplier to reduce repayments to a debt can ensure the household can repay the debt and heat their home at the same time.

8.2.4. Fuel Switching

One way to reduce fuel poverty is to reduce the cost of fuel for the household. As part of fuel poverty assistance advice, households are encouraged to reduce the cost of heating their home by moving to cheaper energy providers. In addition, as gas is currently a cheaper fuel source than electricity, Council tenants are offered the opportunity to switch their fuel supply from solid fuel or electricity to a less carbon intensive, and cheaper to run gas system where this is possible. The Council also undertakes projects to extend the gas network and private sector households are offered discounts to connect to the supply.

8.3. What the LHS 2012-17 will Achieve

The Council and partners will work together to ensure that fewer people live in fuel poverty.

Nature of Fuel Poverty

The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey provides a comprehensive assessment of private house condition issues, including levels of fuel poverty. In addition to the survey results a range of other data sources provide information on the energy efficiency of housing stock, and likely incidence of fuel poverty. In conjunction with partners the Council will use this information to complement the results of the stock condition survey to build a robust body of evidence. This evidence will be used to develop targeted approaches to tackling fuel poverty which will ensure that investment is directed effectively.

Income Maximisation and Household Debt

The Council and partners will continue to deliver services which are aimed at maximising household income and reducing household debt. As low income households are most at risk of living in fuel poverty, these services can have a significant impact on customer ability to manage fuel costs and resilience to future price increases.

Reducing the Cost of Fuel

It is recognised that the Council can have limited impact on the cost of fuel from suppliers however there are opportunities for the Council to facilitate opportunities for households and communities to establish initiatives such as community energy production, biomass, combined heat and power and wind / solar generation schemes.

The Council will also work with partners to support households to change behaviour to reduce energy consumption where possible and therefore fuel costs.

Outcome 5: Fewer people live in fuel poverty

1. Improve knowledge of the levels, extent and nature of fuel poverty
2. Continue to facilitate services to maximise household income and reduce household debt
3. Target Energy efficiency advice at households most at risk of fuel poverty
4. Reduce the cost of fuel to households and communities where practical via a range of mechanisms

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

9.1. Approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

Scottish Government Guidance on the LHS includes a template for monitoring outcomes. This template has been used to develop a local LHS Monitoring Framework which outlines the key indicators and targets for the LHS 2012-17. This will enable an annual review of progress in relation to implementing the LHS and enable the impact of the LHS actions to be measured against key indicators. The LHS Monitoring Framework can be found in Appendix 3: LHS Monitoring Framework.

It is anticipated that the LHS itself will be a flexible and dynamic document, which can easily respond to change, particularly given the current context of economic uncertainty and it is recognised that the document may be required to change during the period 2012 to 2017.

9.2. Process for Monitoring the LHS

The East Lothian Council LHS Project Team will monitor the East Lothian LHS 2012-17 on an ongoing basis and report on progress annually to the East Lothian Housing Partnership, with updates provided through the supporting East Lothian Housing Group Structure, comprising of the following groups:

- Private Sector Stock Management and Standards Group
- Affordable Housing Group
- Homelessness Strategy Group
- Housing Support Strategy Group (to be reconvened)
- Fuel Poverty Strategy Steering Group

An annual report will be published and made available to key stakeholders and the local community, setting out progress in relation to the LHS 2012-17. Wider reporting will also be undertaken through existing networks including the LHS Bulletin and the East Lothian Housing Forum.

Progress will also be reported to East Lothian Council's Cabinet.

9.2.1. Single Outcome Agreement

The strategic vision for the LHS and five outcomes will be translated into local outcome 10 and the short term outcomes for housing in the SOA, currently 'In East Lothian people in housing need have access to an appropriate type, tenure and standard of housing and are prevented from becoming homeless'.

Performance against these short term outcomes will be reported to the East Lothian Community Planning Board through the Community Planning structure on an annual basis.

9.2.2. Further Monitoring and Evaluation

The LHS Monitoring Framework measures the key indicators for achieving the LHS outcomes. These are high level indicators which reflect the core priorities of the LHS. This Framework is underpinned by a more detailed set of monitoring and evaluation reports for each strategic area which will include more detailed statistical evidence and will outline achievement against milestones for each action. This information will be collated by the Council and partners through the East Lothian Housing Group Structure and is subject to ongoing review with each strategy group responsible for agreeing indicators.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Affordable Housing: Housing of a reasonable quality that is affordable to people on modest incomes

AHIP: Affordable Housing Investment Programme

BTS: Below Tolerable Standard

Care and Repair: A service to help older or disabled people with repairs and adaptations to their home

CERT: Carbon Emissions Reduction Target

Commissioning: Deciding what services are needed, procuring these services and then getting someone to provide them by entering into a contract

Complex needs: The additional requirements of an individual

ESPC: Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre

ECO: Energy Company Obligation (to replace CERT)

Extreme fuel poverty: A household is considered to be in extreme fuel poverty if it spends at least 20% of their income on fuel to maintain the specified heating regime

Fuel poverty: A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if it spends more than 10% of income on household fuel costs

Green Deal: A national and local project which facilitates energy efficiency works and micro-generation schemes

GRO grant for owner occupation: Funding provided to private developers, housing trusts or non-registered housing associations to provide low cost owner occupied housing

HoNDA: Housing Need and Demand Assessment

Housing demand: Quantity and type/quality of housing which households wish to buy or rent and are able to afford

Housing market areas: Geographical areas which are 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.

Housing market partnership (HMP): A group of local authorities and relevant organisations working jointly to plan for housing within a housing market area

Housing need: Households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance

Housing register: A list of those who require social rented housing

Housing Renewal Area: An area defined as such by the local authority due to a significant number of below standard dwellings or the state of repair of dwellings having a negative impact upon the area

Indicator: A measure that should evidence whether an outcome is being achieved

Intermediate housing products: Housing options available at a cost below full market value to meet an identified need, including subsidised low cost housing for sale (discounted, shared ownership or shared equity); low cost housing without subsidy (entry-level housing for sale); and mid market renting (at rent levels between social rent and private rent)

LDP: Local Development Plan

Learning disability: A lifelong condition which involves reduced ability to understand new or difficult information or to learn new skills and reduced ability to cope independently

LHS: Local Housing Strategy

Low Cost Initiatives for First Time Buyers (LIFT): A scheme which assists people on low to moderate incomes to buy a home

National Home Energy Rating (NHER): A useful indicator of energy efficiency, based on the total energy costs per square metre of floor area required to achieve a satisfactory heating regime. The NHER of a property is assessed on a scale of 0-10 with ranges of: poor 0-2; moderate 3-7 and good 8-10

New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE): Enables RSL's and private developers to build or buy new homes for sale on a shared equity basis, with purchasers buying a majority stake of the equity depending on income

Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE): Operates on similar principles to NSSE, enabling eligible purchasers to acquire a property in the second hand market

Outcomes: Positive improvements sought or a result required to happen

Particular needs housing: A general term covering accommodation built with a specific group in mind which usually involves either specially built or adapted housing

Right to Buy (RTB): Legislation which enables people to purchase a house in which they reside and have a tenancy, from the Council or an RSL

Registered Social Landlord (RSL): A not-for-profit housing association or housing cooperative that is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator and provides affordable housing

SHCS: Scottish House Condition Survey

Scheme of Assistance: A system of information, advice, practical and financial help, for private owners, landlords and tenants introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 to improve the maintenance and repair of private housing

Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS): A Scottish Government standard which relates to the quality and condition of housing

Scottish Housing Quality Standard Delivery Plan: A document to show how a social landlord will meet its targets of achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015

Scottish Planning Policy: The statement of the Scottish Government's approach to land use planning matters

SDP: Strategic Development Plan

Sensory impairment: A loss of sight or hearing or both

Shared equity: A scheme which enables households to purchase a majority stake in the equity of a property

Shared ownership: A scheme which enables households to acquire a share – see NSSE and OMSE in a property paying mortgage costs on that share and a reduced rental charge to an RSL for the remaining portion

Single Outcome Agreement (SOA): An overarching community plan for the future of a local authority area



Source: Tribal, 2005

Appendix 2: East Lothian Sub Areas

Appendix 3: LHS Monitoring Framework

LHS Outcome	Indicator	Baseline data	Target	Performance	Comments
Increase housing supply and improve access to appropriate housing including affordable housing	Number of new build homes completed	193 (2009/10 Housing Land Audit) 481 (2010/11 Housing Land Audit)	6,835 by 2024		
	Number of new build affordable homes completed	144 (2009/10 LHS Monitoring) 256 (2010/11 LHS Monitoring)	2,4618 by 2024		
	New Affordable Housing Policy approved	-	April 2014		
	Housing Information and Advice Strategy implemented	-	Completion of milestones as per Strategy action plan		
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Provide a detailed assessment of the need and demand for different affordable housing tenures</p> <p>Improve knowledge and understanding of the private housing market</p> <p>Review the Council’s planning policy for Affordable Housing and its associated guidance note</p> <p>Explore new ways of facilitating the funding of affordable housing</p> <p>Engage in partnership working to maximise efficiencies and increase delivery of affordable housing</p> <p>Facilitate delivery of the Scottish Governments’ Housing Investment Programme</p> <p>Deliver the Councils’ new build housing investment programme</p> <p>Examine opportunities to work with partners to overcome funding and infrastructure constraints</p> <p>Set up an asset disposal framework with Community Planning partners to improve release of land for affordable housing where appropriate</p>				

	<p>Make best use of existing housing stock by developing initiatives to reduce private sector empty homes and under occupation in social rented sector</p> <p>Explore opportunities for improving access to the private rented sector where appropriate</p> <p>Fully implement the Housing Information and Advice Strategy</p>				
LHS Outcome	Indicator	Baseline data	Target	Performance	Comments
<p>Improve the condition and energy efficiency, and where appropriate the management, of existing housing stock.</p>	Social stock meeting SHQS	55% Council (2010/11 Audit Scotland return) 91.9% RSL (2009/10 APSR)	Year on year improvement		
	BTS dwellings closed, demolished or brought up to standard	701 BTS dwellings (2010/11 Private Sector Stock Condition Survey)	Long term decrease		
	Carbon savings achieved across all housing stock	-	Year on year improvement		
	Average SAP ratings across all tenures	64 (Feb 2012 ESPC data base)	Year on year improvement		
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Deliver the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015 and ensure continued investment in the future</p> <p>Develop and implement a Private Sector House Condition Improvement Plan using the findings from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2010/11</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of extending the Scheme of Assistance to include services such as a maintenance scheme</p> <p>Investigate the feasibility of the Council facilitating access to an accessible lending product for households carrying out repairs, maintenance or adaptations</p> <p>Respond to carbon reduction requirements/targets in relation to the housing stock</p> <p>Maximise use of resources to increase the installation of carbon reduction measures across all tenures including energy efficiency and renewable technologies</p>				

	<p>Put in place mechanisms to assess performance and customer satisfaction with social housing and related services in accordance with the Social Housing Charter</p> <p>Ensure good quality social housing estates by implementing a programme of estate inspections and take action where necessary and appropriate</p> <p>Monitor the impact of Welfare Reform while ensuring that rent arrears are effectively recovered and levels of arrears reduced</p> <p>Develop a Communication Strategy to ensure better understanding of housing policy, services and initiatives</p>				
LHS Outcome	Indicator	Baseline data	Target	Performance	Comments
Fewer people become homeless	Number homeless presentations	1,196 (2010/11 homelessness monitoring)	Year on year decrease		
	% of unintentionally homeless households entitled to settled accommodation	63% (2010/11 homelessness monitoring)	100%		
	Average number of days to rehousing	261 (2010/11 homelessness monitoring)	Year on year decrease		
	Number of homeless applicants terminating within first 12 months	7.1% of tenancies terminated within first 12mths – 53% homeless applicants	Year on year decrease		
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Improve knowledge and understanding of homelessness among single adults</p> <p>Assess the need for specialist supported accommodation and non-accommodation based support services</p> <p>Develop services and initiatives which tackle the social exclusion, isolation and health needs of vulnerable homeless people</p> <p>Develop a range of measures to prevent homelessness including provision of Tenancy Support to help sustain tenancies</p> <p>Improve access to household goods and furnishings to households in need</p> <p>Promote access into employment and training for homeless households</p>				

Review existing Private Sector Leasing Scheme and Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme					
LHS Outcome	Indicator	Baseline data	Target	Performance	Comments
People with particular needs are able to access and sustain their choice of housing including independent living, where appropriate	Number of new build affordable homes suitable for particular needs groups completed	12 (2010/11 LHS monitoring)	Long term increase		
	Implementation of recommendations from Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment		To be agreed – high priority		
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Establish systems to enable ongoing analysis of data in relation to particular needs groups and undertake annual analysis</p> <p>Develop initiatives to address the current and future housing and housing support needs of particular needs groups using the findings from the Housing and Housing Support Needs Assessment 2010/11</p> <p>Review the provision of new build affordable housing for particular needs groups and set a supply target for the provision of future stock</p> <p>Improve joint working to ensure housing is integrated into the strategic planning for particular needs groups</p> <p>Work in partnership with ELC Adult Social Care and others to develop housing support services with a focus on preventative support</p> <p>Explore and develop social enterprise initiatives to provide assistance with moving home, decorating etc</p>				
LHS Outcome	Indicator	Baseline data	Target	Performance	Comments
Fewer people live in fuel poverty	Number of households provided fuel poverty/energy efficiency advice	x (2010/11 monitoring data)	Year on year increase		
	Number of households in fuel poverty/extreme fuel poverty		Year on year decrease		

**Key actions and
commitment by
local partners for
this outcome**

- Improve knowledge of the levels, extent and nature of fuel poverty
- Continue to facilitate services to maximise household income and reduce household debt
- Target Energy efficiency advice at households most at risk of fuel poverty
- Reduce the cost of fuel to households and communities where practical via a range of mechanisms