

Appendix 5

Falkirk Local Housing Strategy

Consultation

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Falkirk Local Housing Strategy

Consultation Report

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1. Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to consult on their proposed local housing strategy (LHS). In addition, the statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires the involvement, consultation and engagement with as wide a range of local residents as possible.

Scottish Government Guidance 2014 highlighted that early engagement with key partners and stakeholders is key to identifying priorities and agreeing, through a range of options, how to deal with the priorities identified¹.

In regards to consultation methods the Guidance makes clear a wide range of media should be considered to ensure engagement with as many local communities, interest groups and individuals as possible.

The idea of Co-production is strongly advocated by the Scottish Government to promote a more pro-active and inclusive approach at the earlier stages in the development of the strategy, allowing the LHS to be developed ‘with’ and ‘by’ the people instead than ‘for’ them².

A further part of consultation is to demonstrate how consultation has influenced and shaped the design and development of the outcomes and actions of the LHS. It is hoped this appendix to the LHS will explain our various attempts to reach out to all communities and encourage everyone to participate in the consultation at a level they feel comfortable by using a wide range of media formats.

Strategic Housing Group (SHG).

The Strategic Housing Group (SHG) was primarily created to focus on the development and implementation of the HNDA and LHS but it also covers a wide range of topics which directly or indirectly affect housing. The SHG involves a wide range of participants including RSLs, Scottish Government, and other private, public and voluntary sector representatives and organisations. The LHS, HNDA and the consultation plan were all discussed and approved, allowing the group a route to directly influence the development of the HNDA and the LHS.

Information, publicity and links to the surveys were distributed out to all partner agencies who attend the SHG informing them of the consultation process and how to participate if they resided in the Falkirk area.

The focus of consultation was:

‘to create a Local Housing Strategy the community can be proud off.’

It is also important to note here that consultation provides qualitative analysis on the key issues identified in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

¹ Scottish Government Guidance: 2014, p6

² Scottish Government Guidance: 2014, p 7

2. Consultation Planning.

A review of LHS2 consultation enabled us to determine what were the most successful forms of consultation to progress for LHS3 and the least effective. It was clear that previous LHS consultation was area based involving information boards and members of staff sitting in town halls, community centres, schools and libraries across the area which did not generate much interest. This was the case when organised at night. Online surveys, focus groups and stakeholder events were particularly successful and adopted into the LHS3 consultation plan.

From our analysis of LHS2 consultation we concluded that much of the consultation was reliant on people within the community approaching us. For LHS3 consultation, we have adopted a more pro-active approach whereby the Strategy & Development Team would go out into the communities and interact with residents instead of waiting for people to come to us. We would take the consultation out into the local communities. This involved attending local festivals, community family fun days, local community groups and contacting local businesses.

This pro-active approach was designed to access as wide a range of people as possible by going to the places where people are. The approach was intended to be a more informal with a relaxed approach to consultation.

The consultation programme ran from early March 2016 right throughout the summer until the 30th September 2016 ensuring a wide variety of methods used. We adopted a number of the more traditional methods of consultation such as focus groups, online surveys, presentations and stakeholder events while committing to co-production by piloting a Falkirk Council and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Co-production Focus Group. This was primarily based around the thoughts of tenants on their local communities and how to improve them.

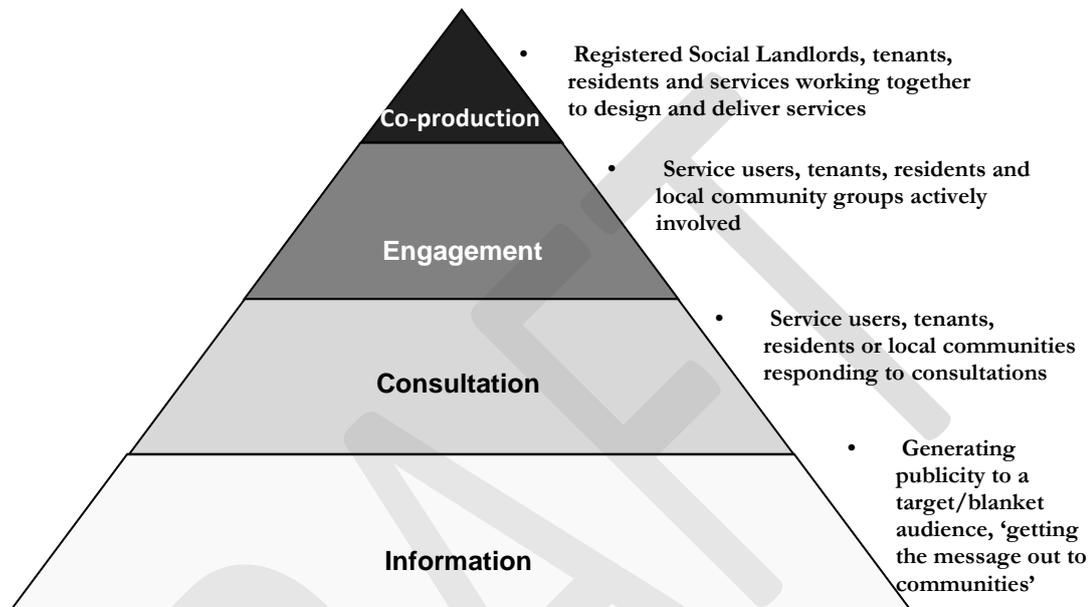
A Sustainability Event held at Falkirk College was attended by the Strategy & Development Team. This was an opportunity to engage primarily with under 35 year olds on their housing aspirations and realistic housing choices. We used tablets to carry out face to face surveys with students. The use of tablets allowed for a more informal approach and a more easy way of completing surveys. It proved a fast, efficient and effective way to collect completed surveys.

Another new approach was to attend local community events or festivals. We attended a festival called 'Eid in the Park' at Callander Park, organised by The Falkirk Muslim Forum in partnership with Falkirk Council Community Learning & Development and Community Volunteer Service (CVS) Falkirk. This was a fun day for all communities to come together and share the celebration marking the Muslim festival Eid ul Fitr. At the event we used tablets to carry out face to face survey completions including paper copies available at the Housing Services stall. Also available were paper copies of the surveys translated into Urdu. This provided a particularly successful opportunity to engage with people in a less informal setting.

The Strategy and Development Team has identified certain groups to consult with further as they has been identified in the HNDA as groups that required further consultation in particular their view relating their housing aspirations and choices.

Further detail and analysis of the various methods used for LHS3 consultation will be provided throughout this appendix.

3. LHS3 Consultation Plan.



Source: Falkirk Health and Social Care Integration Partnership Participation and Engagement Strategy, p4

From the diagram above it is clear that the bottom tier in the diagram relates to informing the residents of Falkirk Council about the consultation taking place and how the various ways to participate. The 2nd tier is associated with engaging with large number of people at public events or family fun days. As you travel further up the triangle the 3rd tier is beginning to get noticeably smaller with engagement carried out with specific groups using focus groups where there has been a gap identified from the HNDA. Finally at the top of the triangle there is co-production. It takes longer to co-produce rather to inform as this is more specific. The FC/RSL Tenant Co-production pilot is an example of this.

For ease we have split our consultation to fit these 4 categories. Each heading will discuss the consultation methods used and the level of participation.

4. Inform.

The emphasis was on getting the message 'Have your say on the Local Housing Strategy' out via as many different outlets as possible using a variety of different media methods. The following methods were used to publicise the consultation:

90 posters were distributed out to the 5 Neighbourhood Officers, all Libraries, GP surgeries, Social Work Offices, Community Centres, Sport Centres and various Council Buildings across the Council including the Support Accommodation

Front page of the Falkirk Council Website publicised the Consultation with a link to the

Consultation page explaining the consultation and how to participate in the surveys.

Publicised the Consultation in the Economic Development E-zine which is sent to over 3500 businesses in the local area. This included an overview of the LHS along with the links to access the consultation page and surveys online. This link was also uploaded onto the Economic Development Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn page.

Falkirk College was asked to forward on information and links to the consultation webpage to all students and employees highlighting the consultation and the surveys to complete if resident in the Council area.

A short article was placed in the Disability Newsletter publicising the consultation and inviting people to participate via the LHS consultation link or contact the Team direct.

Consultation details were also sent out to people who follow the Council on Twitter.

An email was sent out to the largest employers in the area including Caledonian Foods, Bo'ness, ASDA (including distribution depot), Alexander Dennis, Ineos, Child Support Agency, Webhelp TSC at Larbert, Scottish Prison Service and Tesco providing an overview of the consultation. This was followed up by a further email detailing how to participate and a request to forward on to staff asking if they could complete.

All Registered Social Landlords were contacted via email with the request of forwarding the consultation email and survey links to appropriate staff and tenants. As this LHS is devised around partnership working it was crucial for RSLs to be involved in the advertising of the consultation to their staff and tenants. Three RSLs confirmed the email was sent to the appropriate staff. Link Housing Association also placed the consultation links in their tenant newsletter, on their website and Facebook and Twitter page.

Publicity for the consultation and the links to surveys were included in the CVS Falkirk monthly newsletter which accesses over 1000 voluntary and support groups in the local area. CVS Falkirk is an organisation which ensures the continuation and development of a vibrant third sector including charities, social enterprises, community and voluntary groups.

A presentation to the Council's Resident and Tenants Forum was carried out on 18th May 2016 which provided an overview of LHS3 consultation and how to get involved. The presentation was well received and the consultation plan approved by the Forum. A further presentation was given on the 24th August 2016 providing an overview of the consultation completed to date. The RTO supported the various avenues of engagement carried out throughout the area to engage people in the development of the next LHS.

The Strategy & Development Team publicised the event to Elected Members with a presentation and overview of the consultation planned with two dates scheduled. The first was held on 18th May 2016 at the start of summer recess with the second arranged at the start of the next session on 24th August 2016. Again this was well received by Members who supported our new approach of going out and speaking to a wide range of residents and community groups across the area.

Plasma screens in the Neighbourhood Offices also displayed publicity for the consultation and how to participate.

A letter on the consultation and how to participate was sent out to all members on the Consultation Register, Resident and Tenants Organisations, members of the Scrutiny Panel and Community Councils.

Information was distributed via email to all Private Sector Landlords registered in the area providing them with information on the LHS consultation and asking if they could complete the relevant survey.

The Strategy & Development Team included links to the surveys as part of our email signature as part of our daily work in order to spread the word of the LHS Consultation.

4.2 Emphasis was to initially get the message out that we were developing the next LHS and looking for people to 'Have their Say'. We attempted to reach a wide an audience as possible by using various publications from Council services and working with external partners to assist getting the message out across the Council area.

4.3 It is also important to note that surveys were accessible via online however all publications and information provided included details to contact the Strategy & Development Team by either phone, post or email if they require paper copies of the survey or copies in a different format or language.

5. Consult.

5.1 Consulting with the community took on various forms. Below details the variety of different media formats used:

In order to identify housing issues within the area we initially devised a short survey where residents were given a list of 5 statements under the following headings: Neighbourhoods; Homelessness; Health and Wellbeing; House Condition and Energy Costs and climate Change. Out of a total of 20 statements, respondents were asked to pick the 5 most important statements to them and the area they resided in. A total of 55 were completed via a number of events and groups including the Moving Assistance event in Camelon held in May 2015 and a number of local groups including the Over 55 group in Bonnybridge. This enabled us to identify the top statements and explore these further in the surveys and the focus groups detailed below.

Two surveys were designed to identify the main housing issues people felt where most important to housing in their area. The surveys where split into two age groups with one specifically designed for people aged 35 and over with the second survey focusing on the housing aspirations and realistic housing options for people under the age of 35.

These age groups were picked for three reasons, firstly under 35s have been a group that had previously been difficult to engage with, secondly the under 35 age group is likely to be affected by austerity measures, the financial crisis, Housing Benefit changes as a result of Welfare Reform and difficulty in raising a large deposit for purchasing. Thirdly, national research suggested that this age group are more likely to experience difficulty in accessing the various housing options³. We wanted to analyse just how different peoples (frustrated) aspirations were compared to the more realistic options for housing for people in this age group.

³ Understanding the Housing Aspirations of People in Scotland; 2015, p5.

The surveys were accessible online and available in paper copy in a variety of different languages and formats. As already mentioned in the 'Inform' section the surveys were distributed to a wide number of Council services, third sector services, RSLs and businesses via email publicising the consultation with links to the surveys.

We made a pro-active attempt to get out into the community and engage with people by attending Community events over the summer across the Council area including Family Fun Day's and Festivals. A number of Family Fun Days were attended by the Strategy & Development Team who had the opportunity to mingle around the event with tablets inviting people to complete surveys online. The idea behind the use of tablets enabled a more informal professional approach in a more relaxed environment and to involve people who might not necessarily have engaged in the Consultation process. It also benefitted the Council in providing a more positive role of the Council by demonstrating engagement at the heart of communities. A list of the Family Fun Days attended by the Strategy & Development Team can be found in page 29 of this Appendix.

Another new approach was to attend a local community festival. We attended a festival called 'Eid in the Park' at Callander Park, organised by The Falkirk Muslim Forum in partnership with Falkirk Council Community Learning & Development and CVS Falkirk. This was a fun day for all communities to come together and share the celebration marking the Muslim festival Eid ul Fitr. The festival consisted of five activity zones including a food & refreshment zone, market zone, entertainment zone, exhibition zone and play zone. Again this allowed us the opportunity to engage with a cross section of the local community in particular minority groups. For the event a member of staff mingled with festival goers asking if they would like to complete the survey on line via the tablet. Paper copies were also available at the Housing Services stall along with paper copies of the surveys translated into Urdu.

Three 'Pop Up' events were organised at Local Offices across the area in particular Callander Square the largest and busiest local office, Denny and Bo'ness. A member of the Strategy & Development Team used a tablet to ask customers if they could complete a survey online or via a paper copy. The use of the tablet allowed for a greater face to face and assistance during completion.

A survey was designed and published by the Citizen Panel. The Citizens Panel is designed to listen and respond to peoples on various themes relating to services across the Council. The Panel is made up of more than 1000 local people who have volunteered to respond to three or four surveys each year. The survey covered sections such as Housing for Special Needs, Housing Regeneration, Affordable Housing and the Housing Market and were used to develop LHS3. This initial survey assisted to identify the main issues in the area and use these results to develop more detailed surveys to investigate more in-depth the key issues. The number of completed returns from the panel was 493 with 174 postal returns and 319 completed online. Analysis of these results can be found on page 26 in this Appendix.

A Sustainability Event was held at Falkirk College on Tuesday 16th May 2016 focusing on how to live in an environmentally friendly way with events held across the campuses. The Strategy & Development Team had the opportunity to collect views from mainly under 35s attending the college. The use of the tablet provided the opportunity to move around the college inviting people to complete the online survey via the use of tablets. This proved very popular in collecting completed surveys from the under 35 age group. It proved such

a successful way to gather information on the under 35 age group that we arranged to go back for the Open Day on Tuesday 20th September 2016.

The 'Under 35' survey was also placed on the Young Scot website in an attempt to reach younger people. As an incentive to encourage Young Scot card holders to complete the survey award points were given which can be built up and in return swapped for rewards.

A Young Mum's Group in Grangemouth has just been established and members were asked if they could complete paper copies of the online surveys. The age range of the group is between 20 and 30 years old was a beneficial way of engaging with young families. Neighbourhood Officers were involved in the consultation by completing surveys with clients while out on their patch. Some Officers were involved in a mobile technology pilot and they used their tablets/laptops to input surveys live. This proved to be a smoother more informal efficient process. Neighbourhood Officers from each Local Office were involved by asking people to complete a survey while they were out on their patch dealing with enquiries.

Surveys were delivered to the Salvation Army Soup kitchen in Falkirk and the support workers assisted in completing the surveys with people accessing the service. The Salvation Army can feed and assist up to 45 people a day. This included many people with addictions, mental health, homelessness, disability as well as people residing in supported accommodation and temporary accommodation. This was an opportunity to connect with the most difficult to reach groups in the Falkirk area and enabled them to 'have their say' on housing issues important to them in an informal environment.

A member of staff attended the Bo'ness Networking Group to highlight the consultation process and also used the opportunity to connect with other local groups within the Bo'ness area. Surveys were distributed out to the members in attendance and arrangements were made to attend a few local groups.

The Afternoon Club is a lunch club for people who are retired and is attended by up to 35 people on a fortnightly basis. This allowed the opportunity to provide an overview of the LHS consultation which generated a discussion around the themes in the questionnaires while completing the surveys.

FunB4U Club is a kids club where parents/guardians bring their children for various activities afterschool. This was an opportunity to speak with parents/guardians while the children played, talking to them about the consultation, the LHS and assisting them in completing the surveys.

Over the course of the consultation period we worked closely with the ME Community Development Worker who put us in touch with various groups in the area, in particular two literacy groups and a group called Al-Masaar which supports vulnerable ethnic families, promote healthy living and integration. The team attended both literacy groups, gave an overview of the LHS and the consultation and had a short discussion on housing in the area and assisted members to complete the appropriate survey. The consultation links were also distributed to other local groups including the Rainbow Group, placed on the Al-Masaar Facebook page and other relevant websites.

A member of The Muslim Forum also distributed surveys to two Mosques in the area and assisted people to complete surveys with the parents of the children attending the Al-Masaar football training on a Saturday.

6. Engage.

6.1 The HNDA identified gaps where further consultation was required in particular under 35s, equality groups and disability groups. The following focus groups were arranged:

7. Focus Groups.

7.1 Inchyra Focus Group.

A focus group was arranged with the residents at Inchyra, a supported accommodation block in Grangemouth. This supported accommodation provides housing with support and care at home services with each resident residing in their own flat. This involved residents who had resided at the accommodation from between 4 to 11 months. Topics discussed included support, housing options, accommodation, wider community and future accommodation.

Accommodation

All service users felt their accommodation was excellent in comparison to their situation before Inchyra advising it was a positive experience and “first class”. All were glad to be at a place where they had control of their own front door and they all felt safe and secure. Length of stay was dependant on the progress of each resident with no minimum or maximum stay. All residents felt there was a need for this type of accommodation in other areas of Falkirk.

Support

Support available was described as ‘absolutely brilliant, staff great, polite and respectful’. All felt the support received was assisting them towards independent living although one resident did feel that they weren’t sure what type of support they required.

One criticism was that all were concerned about the level of support staff turnover with one person noting that agency staff can appear at the door and they don’t know who they were. They felt the agency staff should be introduced before arriving at someone’s door. They also felt they had to keep repeating their situation a number of times which felt inappropriate.

Residents did advise they had reservations on moving into their own accommodation.

Wider community

The accommodation was described as within 10 minute walk from bus stops and shops and in a quiet area. 3 residents felt part of the local community as they felt close to neighbours and felt they could help each other, however one said although they were aware of the local services available such as the sport centre, they did not use these services. It was personal choice to be involved in the community or not.

Housing Options

The group were unsure about the housing options available to them although knew they had a housing review from the Councils homeless staff on a 6 – 8 weekly basis. All were worried about the prospect of moving on and worried about bidding online or the length of time to be allocated as they knew there was a shortage of low level properties and wet

floor showers.

Future accommodation

Two of the group wanted to become a Council tenant with 1 person being specific about which area in Falkirk they wanted to reside in. There was also acknowledgement from two residents with mobility issues that there would be a long wait as there was high demand for suitable property types (wet floor/level access shower) and some areas. Transport links were also considered when deciding on areas.

From discussion the following priority, outcomes and action were included in the LHS.

Priority 3 – Access to Housing.

Outcomes:

- **people can access temporary accommodation and supported accommodation as required**
- **tenancy improvement is improved**

Actions:

- **we will ensure temporary accommodation provides best value fitting the current profile of homeless households**
- **we will ensure supported accommodation and support services meet the needs of service users and provide best value.**
- **we will use a range of methods to improve tenancy sustainment**
- **we will provide a tenancy support service with an external provider**

7.2 Travelling Person Site Focus Group

A focus group with residents at the Travelling Person Site was organised and 6 female residents attended. The focus group was advertised with a poster placed in the Travelling Site Office and Community Room. The acting Site Officer visited each pitch to invite residents to participate. The aim of the focus group was to determine what residents thought on the following; obtaining housing advice and identifying issues they felt required to be addressed.

Overall the residents were generally happy with the site but felt that the chalets could be upgraded or reconfigured to provide a separate bathroom and kitchen. Larger room sizes in order to increase storage space would be beneficial. Suggestions were also made to change the storage hut into a bathroom to free up space.

The residents suggested the communal room based at the site office could be used to encourage better integration between families on site and provide monthly courses, for example on cooking, health, IT and literacy.

Resident were keen for regular consultation in order to air views on any issues on the site or to discuss the progress of future site work or changes to the site. Residents also suggested a letting standard similar to mainstream lettings and tenant packs for new residents.

Following the focus group a new Travelling Site Officer was appointed on a permanent basis on the site. Since the introduction of the post a number of key findings identified in the focus group have been implemented including an informal tenant consultation group for site residents to attend, various groups and service have been invited up to the site to make use of the communal room at the residents request and upgrades to chalets are being carried out prior to moving in a new resident. Further information can be obtained in Priority 4 of the LHS.

Some of the issues/themes identified in the focus group where implemented in the following priority, outcomes and actions.

Priority 4 – Housing and Support for Vulnerable Groups.

Outcomes:

- **further analysis on the housing needs of vulnerable group is carried out**

Actions:

- **review service delivery at the Council’s travelling person site**

7.3 Under 35 Focus Group

The purpose of this group was to further discuss the realistic and aspirational housing options available for this age group. Following the analysis of the Under 35 survey we wanted to further explore what people within this age group and who reside in the area feel about housing and what sort of housing people under 35 can realistically afford. Furthermore we wanted to explore how under 35’s access their housing options information.

We advertised for volunteers across the Council asking employees within this age group if they would like to participate in a focus group. A total of 14 people responded and a total of 5 people attend (3 females and 2 males). The idea was to have a relaxed, informal, and frank discussion on housing options available in the Falkirk Council area for under 35’s over lunch.

Three of the group still resided at home with their parents or with other family and saving money to put towards a deposit to purchase. They viewed private renting as a “waste of money”. One member had experience of residing in private rented accommodation and was currently an owner occupier. One member said they were actively looking and considered all housing options available but due to being single felt they would struggle to rent and pay own bills and therefore not sure what their best option would be.

The group first discussed what they liked and didn’t like about the area they lived in; their short and long term housing preferences and tenure preference. Overall the group liked residing close to amenities and close to the major transport links, work and shops. Staying near family and friends was important and living in ‘nice owner occupier areas’ and housing quality, (“good ex local authority well built”) was considered important. Some areas were not popular with the group.

One member said that they didn't like their area "especially as the areas around where I live are dodgy". There are some nice areas but there seems to be more bad areas'. Two members stated there was a lot of flats as most of the houses have been bought. Once member said that you can easily compare good and bad areas.

All felt certain that homeownership was the housing option of choice although one member did say they would consider private renting initially before move up to owner occupation. All wanted a house with a front, back door and garden. An overall consensus from the group was that people on lower salaries would find it really difficult to afford a mortgage or rent especially if single.

Secondly, we discussed housing options currently available and the barriers, if any, that prevented people from accessing housing. The majority of the group work in housing and advised they are only aware of housing options because of their job but not aware of where to go to access information on the various different options. One group member who does not work in housing said "I am clueless about the different housing options". Finance was identified as the main barrier even in social housing. The general consensus was that social rent is affordable if working but if single then it's not. The same with private rented sector, it can be unaffordable if you live on your own and likely to only be able to afford a 'dodgy' area.

In addition, the group felt that young people should be taught about budgeting at school to give them the skills to save for deposits for properties as they get older.

The all agreed that there is a lot of new build developments around the Council area but not the right ones for young people. Lots of larger properties which cost around £400k. Who can afford them? Not many two bedroom houses.

Finally we asked how we could make housing options more accessible and if more housing should be build. There was strong agreement that there was a need to make more people aware of their housing options in schools and colleges with the use of social media to publicise. None of the group was aware there was a housing options page on the Council website but all said the Council website wouldn't necessarily be the first place they would look for information. Citizen Advice and the Scottish Government were considered the more appropriate websites for information.

The group felt there should be more housing where they lived and very clear on what types. There was a perception that there are too many flats particularly larger flats. All felt the housing situation is the hardest it has ever been as prices are still very high and they will only increase.

What can be ascertained from the focus group is that a full range of housing options should be developed and made available and publicised across the area in particular online. The feedback from the focus groups fed into the following priority, outcomes and actions of the LHS.

Priority 1 – Increase Housing Supply

Priority 3 – Improving Access to Housing

Outcomes:

- the supply of housing is increased
- housing advice is provided to those at risk of homelessness

Actions:

- ensure housing land supply is available to build 2456 properties by 2021
- provide new affordable housing
- make best use of existing stock to provide additional housing
- work in partnership to deliver housing through the Affordable Housing Policy
- explore a range of models to increase affordable housing models used locally
- improve access to the private rented sector to aid wider housing options
- we will develop a Younger People’s Housing Plan
- we will explore the potential for providing a Common Register with social landlords
- we will ensure information on housing options is accessible and informative
- we will improve customer satisfaction and service delivery with homelessness services

7.4 Disability Working Group Focus Group

A focus group was carried out with the Disability Working Group whose main aim is to make Falkirk Council area a friendlier place for disabled people. They push to resolve issues around accessible public toilets, dropping kerbs, taxis for disability users and parking spaces. Four members of the group were present.

The conversation started with a brief discussion about what they liked and disliked about their home before leading onto discussions on housing options advice, moving to more suitable accommodation and the importance of an area.

There was general consensus that people would rather adapt their home than move because ‘it’s your home and you know the neighbours and the area well’. One member spoke of how new building regulation meant that all new builds have ramp access up to at least one main door and because of this they are able to visit neighbours without having to arrange assistance which had increased their socialisation with neighbours.

10.2 All recognised that with older stock it was often unable to be adapted and this was problematic if life circumstances change. One member resided in a new build which has been specifically adapted for their needs and included a bath lift and wider doorways for wheelchairs.

Others had experience of using Care and Repair to adapt their homes with a large ramp and door entry system installed in one property. Overall all members had adaptations installed in their properties which enabled them to remain at home and live independently. All praised the assistance and the benefits of the adaptations. There was an acceptance that at some point they might have to move if their property could no longer be adapted or they required a low level property such as a bungalow.

All were unaware of where to go for advice and assistance on housing options on adaptations.

Everyone knew about adaptations from involvement with social work or by word of mouth. Having a central point on housing advice was well received by the group.

One member felt that more was need to make adaptations more aesthetically pleasing. “Why do they have to be cumbersome?” “If better designed then they are more likely to be kept rather than being ripped out”. The example provided was metal ramps which are seen as better rather than concrete ramps.

The group felt that what was overall lacking in their current home was not having enough storage space for equipment. Larger rooms to be able to manoeuvre a wheelchair easier. All felt that in the design of new builds, involvement from wheelchairs users, and people with hearing and sight impairments should be involved at design stage as they are in the best position to advise what should be required.

All members wanted to remain in the same area, independent and with the assistance of adaptations with local amenities such as post office, shops, cash machine, doctor surgery and good transport links are vital in maintaining independence.

It was clear from the discussions that maintaining independence is important and people want to remain in their homes, in the areas they know with the assistance of adaptations for as long as possible. When the time comes when they are no longer able to remain at home then a move to a suitably adapted property within the same area would be preferred.

Out of this focus group the following priority, outcomes and actions were identified

Priority 4 – Housing and support for vulnerable groups.

Outcomes:

- the supply of accessible housing is increased
- specialist housing advice is provided in partnership
- older peoples' housing advice is reviewed with the HCSG
- further analysis on the housing needs of vulnerable groups is carried out

Actions:

- we will work in partnership to agree standard specifications for specialist housing built through the SHIP
- we will increase the supply of specialist properties funded through the SHIP
- we will work in partnership to implement the findings of the Disabled Adaptations Adapting for Change (AfC) pilot
- we will carry out awareness raising training for staff including mental health and dementia training
- we will work with the Housing Contribution Statement Group (HCSG) to providing advice to people with specialist needs
- we will agree and implement protocols for young people leaving care
- we will make best use of the current housing stock to reduce delayed discharge
- carry out research to identify which housing needs present greatest challenge to accommodate
- we will review older peoples' housing
- we will carry out further needs analysis for specialist groups
- we will explore through the HCS how housing issues could lead to delayed discharge

8. Stakeholder Events:

8.1 Access to Housing Stakeholder Event.

This was held on 18th August 2016 with 34 attendees from various stakeholder including Falkirk Council Housing, Social Work, NHS Forth Valley, Salvation Army, RSLs and Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA). There were three workshops: housing options; temporary accommodation/supported accommodation, support needs; health and well-being. Following the stakeholder event the following themes were considered:

- Ensure housing options information is available on alternative housing options and accommodation types available from all related housing and support agencies.
- Ensure we are able to support those struggling to sustain tenancies.

- Temporary accommodation meets the support needs of all and is holistic.
- Ensure people are aware of new systems i.e. Homespot and Housing option online tools.

Following the stakeholder event the following priority, outcomes and actions were developed:

Priority 3 – Improving Access to Housing

Outcomes:

- housing advice is provided to those at risk of homelessness
- people can access temporary and supported accommodation as required
- tenancy sustainment is improved

Actions:

- we will develop a Younger Peoples' Housing Plan
- we will explore the potential for providing a Common Housing Register with social landlords
- we will ensure information on housing options is accessible and informative
- we will improve customer satisfaction and service delivery with homelessness services
- we will ensure temporary accommodation provides best value fitting the currently profile of homeless households
- we will ensure supported accommodation and support services need the needs of services users and provides best value
- we will use a range of methods to improve tenancy sustainment

8.2 Fuel Poverty and Climate Change Stakeholder Event

This event was held on 23 August 2016 with 33 attendees from various stakeholders including various Falkirk Council services, NHS, Home Energy Scotland, Energy Saving Trust and energy providers. There were three workshops that considered the following:

- Set out the goals, objectives and plans tackling fuel poverty and climate change over the next 5 years
- Incorporate view of those who have an interest in fuel poverty, climate change and stock condition
- Maximise our knowledge and understanding of these subjects to ensure our plans have a positive impact.

The keys themes identified were as follows:

- Fuel Poverty impacts on Health
- Partnership working at a local level is key
- The words “Fuel Poverty” are prohibitive in identifying those at risk
- The effects of Climate Change need to be addressed.
- More inclusion for householders whose first language is not English
- Including all tenures in energy efficiency schemes
- Learning from others to tackle abeyances.

Following the stakeholder event the following priority, outcomes and actions were developed:

Priority 5 – Sustainable Housing: Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Outcomes:

- **Fuel poverty is tackled, climate change improved and progress is made to meeting national climate change targets**

Actions:

- **ensure compliance with the EESH by 2020**
- **develop with RSL partners a HEEPs: ABS (4) programme to improve the energy efficiency of private sector homes in mixed tenure estates**
- **develop a Communication Strategy to promote new initiatives, energy advice and funding information to all residents**
- **develop a District Heating Strategy**
- **utilise the Scotland Heat Map to identify potential energy sources**
- **mitigate the impacts of climate change in relation to housing by improving the energy efficiency of the stock and consider risk such as flooding**
- **reduce the numbers experiencing fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty as far as reasonably possible**

8.3 Private Sector Landlord Forum Stakeholder Event.

This was held on the 19th May 2016 and 21 landlords and landlord agents attended. Two forums are held each year and we used one of the forums to organise a stakeholder event whereby landlords/letting agents were split into groups and the following questions were discussed through facilitated workshop discussion:

- What can Falkirk Council, Landlords, Letting Agents and others do to support the sector and ensure there is enough good quality private lets in Falkirk?
- What factors impact on high demand? What factors impact on low demand?
- Properties built for the Private Rented Sector are increasingly new build flats. What are your thoughts?
- How do you predict your portfolio will change over the next five years?
- Should anything be added to the draft action plan? What is your highest and lowest priority?

The key findings from landlords were:

- Improve Communication
- Enforcing unregistered and rogue landlords
- Increased landlord training/ feedback from forums
- Removing problem tenants
- Proactive inspections

From the stakeholder event the following were adopted into a priority, outcomes and actions for the LHS.

Priority 2 – Creating sustainable communities

Priority 6 – To Improve House Conditions

Outcomes:

- **make best use of existing stock across tenure**
- **best use is made of community resources to create sustainable communities**
- **social rented housing conditions are improved**
- **private sector housing conditions are improved**

Actions:

- **develop area based regeneration strategies in partnership with RSLs and the local community**
- **explore the potential to use the Rural Housing fund to develop new affordable housing, refurbish empty homes and contribute to feasibility studies**

- establish the potential for joint working on estate management and employability initiatives between Council/RSLs
- increase the number of empty homes brought back into use
- ensure actions from the Empty Homes Plan are implemented
- explore town centre sites to provide affordable housing
- increase satisfaction levels for people within local communities
- improve condition of social rented homes by targeting investment through capital programmes
- ensure continues compliance with SHQS, meeting EESSH and reduce SHQS
- review Scheme of Assistance (SOA)
- explore and review the possibility of extending factoring

9. Co-production.

Following the Scottish Government Guidance the following approaches were devised as a means to promote co-production:

9.1 RSL and Falkirk Council Tenant Co-production Focus Group.

This approach involved the establishment of a focus group bringing together Falkirk Council tenants with tenants from the three largest Registered Social Landlords in the area, Weslo, Paragon and Link. Discussions concentrated around the topic of communities and what could be done to improve them. Two tenants from each landlord were asked to attend two workshops. Two sessions were planned with Session 1 relating to what the group liked and disliked about their home and communities. This was attended by two Falkirk Council tenants and one RSL tenant. A further two RSL tenants and a further Council tenant were unable to attend on the day. The session was led by the Stakeholder Engagement Officer who is trained in co-production.

Session 2 was organised to discuss the key themes identified in Session 1 seeking solutions to improve their home and communities. A solution circle technique was used whereby the key issues identified in Session 1 were discussed to find possible solutions. These solutions could be something that is relatively easy to fix or something that could be incorporated into the next LHS as an outcome or action.

This was essentially a pilot that if deemed successful and beneficial would start a new type of partnership working between the RSLs and the Council. The idea was to establish a fresh approach towards partnership working with other social providers by consulting tenants. The same tenants who attended Session 1 also attended Session 2.

Session 1.

The group was in agreement that their community and home were considered very important in particular how community 'brings people together', along with having good neighbours, family and friends close by and residing in a nice quiet area. 'Community is an extension of home and I am able to put a stamp on my own home'.

There was a general consensus that ‘people make the community’ – I have great neighbours therefore people and the environment make a community’.

Some in the group felt there were barriers between owner occupiers and tenants; however one member disagreed and advised that there was a mix of tenures where they lived and there were no issues. Others topic discussed included repairs, parking, the role of the housing officer.

However the two prominent issues were communication across services/lack of involvement and forgotten areas. These issues having the most likely impact on community. Communication across Council services and between tenant, resident and the Council all relate to community involvement. Residents only tended to get involved if they had an issue and wanted it addressed. Greater communication is required to enable people to find out what’s going on in their communities. The group felt that engagement was a two way process as customers need to feedback in order for the Council to improve service but also the Council needs to feedback on improvements. Input from tenants is needed.

Session 2.

A number of solutions were raised at Session 2 to help overcome the problems outlined from Session 1. This included being able to contact the Council to determine ownership of land and in particular low demand areas or areas with flats/tenement that look run down and no one wants to live in them. The design of a block of flats can lead to other issues such as bin sheds and access via paths. There was discussion around outdated designs in particular flats. Maintaining the areas surrounding estates would make the environment more appealing. Emphasis was made on the idea that it is not solely about a path, place or house, ‘it’s about the whole area – regeneration with various services involved’.

It was important to highlight that the phrase ‘forgotten areas’ can have a different meaning to different people, for example the group referred to a neighbourhood or area with housing that is no longer fit for purpose but also about people no longer wanting to reside in a particular area due to its reputation. This was discussed in the group and concluded that different areas are associated with different meanings of the phrase ‘forgotten areas’.

Other solutions included better promotion of ‘walkabouts’ around estates and involving more services including Roads or Development Services. Therefore it is a more cross Council approach to improving estates and includes tenant and landlord responsibilities in tenant packs.

The following were included as outcome/actions in the LHS.

Priority 2 – Creating Sustainable Communities.

Outcomes:

- best use is made of stock across tenure
- best use is made of community resources to create sustainable communities

Actions:

- develop area based regeneration strategies in partnership with RSLs and the local community
- explore the potential to use the Rural Housing fund to develop new affordable housing, refurbish empty homes and contribute to feasibility studies
- increase the number of empty homes brought back into use
- ensure actions from the Empty Homes Plan are implemented
- explore town centre sites to provide affordable housing
- increase satisfaction levels for people within local communities
- establish the potential for joint working on estate management and employability initiatives between Council/RSLs

10. **Survey Analysis**

Under 35 survey

A total of 402 surveys were completed online or in paper form. The survey contained questions relating to where people currently live, where they wanted to be living in 5 years and the housing options they considered aspirational and more realistic.

The split was 29% male and 71% female. Around a third of respondents were aged (34%) 29-34 years old, followed by (20%) 18-21 years old, (18%) 25-28, (14%) 22-24, (9%) 16-17 and (1%) 12-15 year olds. 96% cited no disability, with 4% identifying themselves with a disability.

Just under half of respondents' (49%) were employed, 18% in further education, 10% raising a family, 5% at school, 0.7% in training. 7% cited 'other' which included apprentice, disabled and self employed.

92% of respondents specified their ethnic group as White Scottish followed by Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (4%), followed by mixed or multiple ethnic group, African and other ethnic group all with 1%. Caribbean or Black 0.6%.

We asked... a number of questions about housing in the Falkirk Council area in particular where people lived, what type of accommodation residents want to live in now, in the future and how information on housing options is accessed.

We asked... about respondents' current situation in the survey. 34% resided in the family home, 26% in Council accommodation, 19% owned their house outright or had a mortgage, and 11% resided in private rented accommodation with 6% residing in accommodation provided by an RSL. 4% of respondents selected 'other' with the majority citing they were currently residing in homeless temporary or hostel accommodation.

You said... Most respondents, 62% felt their housing situation was unlikely to change in the next 12 months with 20% citing it would change. 18% responded 'don't know'. 23% wanted to continue to live in their accommodation in 5 years time with 63% looking to change their accommodation.

For those who cited 'no change to accommodation' in the next 12 months, 75 respondents provided comments such as 'stay right next to family', 'I have my mother's support', 'nice area, good schools, close to work', 'no urgent need to move' and 'continue to save money until I can afford my own place'.

42% who wanted to change accommodation felt their likeliest option was to own outright or with a mortgage followed by renting from the Council (35%). Private renting (10%), RSLs, 3%, shared equity (4%) with 'other' at 6% including 'student accommodation', 'unsure of what is available' and 'limited information on how to buy'.

Those that 'didn't know' commented that at present 'they didn't need to pay anything', 'nice area', 'awesome community, safe and secure' and 'affordability' were reasons why they were remaining in current accommodation for now.

We asked... A series of questions about barriers to housing and respondents' ideal and likely housing options.

You said... 59% of those remaining in their current accommodation felt there was no barrier that would have put them off moving with 29% citing not enough money. Appropriate housing not available/in limited supply was 11% with long waiting lists for Council and RSL properties at 7%.

42% of those who wanted to move within 5 years felt their likeliest option was to own outright or with a mortgage followed by renting from the Council (35%) with RSLs (3%), shared equity (4%) and 'other' (4%) which included student accommodation and renting for religious reasons listed.

For those who 'didn't know' their likeliest option was to own a property outright or with a mortgage (61%), followed by renting from the Council (17%), rent privately (10%), further education and accommodation provided by employer/armed forces (5%) and in accommodation provided by RSLs (2%).

The most popular accommodation for 'likeliest option' and 'most like to live in' is to own a property outright or with a mortgage confirming that homeownership is still aspirational and for many considered achievable for those under 35 years old. Many felt there was no barrier in achieving this housing choice. The second most popular choice was renting from the Council. However, in addition there is acknowledgement that there is not enough affordable housing in the Falkirk Council area in terms of both social housing and home ownership. There was a strong emphasis on 'nice' areas. Out of the 85 respondents who answered the question on what area they wanted to live in, 40% wanted to move out

with Falkirk, 19% wanted to stay with in the Falkirk area with 11% in the Larbert/Stenhousemuir area. 8% wanted to move abroad.

Interestingly those who continue to remain in the same accommodation, 56% felt not having enough money was a barrier that put them off moving while for those who wanted to move within 5 years, there was 'no barrier' in achieving their desired housing option of homeownership.

We asked... where you would go for information on housing.

You said... The majority of respondents would do a web search for information (63%), followed by visiting the Falkirk Council website (39%). Visiting a Council office (33%) and contacting a property agent (24%), Citizen Advice (7%), Citizen Advice website (6%) with 'other' (5%) including speak to family support worker or estate agent.

We did (include outcome and actions in LHS3...

- Increase housing land supply by ensuring land is available to build 2456 properties by 2021.
- Increase the supply of affordable housing by providing new affordable housing including social rent, mid-market rent and low cost ownership
- Make best use of existing stock to provide additional affordable housing
- Improve access to the Private Rented Sector to aid wider housing opportunities
- Develop a Young Persons Housing Plan
- Ensure people are aware of all housing options available to them by ensuring information on housing options is accessible and informative.

35 and over survey

A total of 629 surveys were completed online or in paper form. The survey was split into 5 sections including Improving Neighbourhoods; Tackling Homelessness; Providing Housing and Support to Vulnerable People; Improving Housing Conditions and Reducing Energy Costs and Climate Change. Each section had 4 statements and respondents' were asked if they considered each statement to be 'very important', 'important', 'moderately important', 'off little importance' and 'unimportant'.

70% respondents were female with 30% males. Just over half of respondents were aged 45-64 (53%) followed by 35 – 44 (35%), 65+ (16%), 25-34 (1%). 84% cited no disability with 16% citing a disability.

Over half of respondents were owner occupier (55%) followed by Council tenant (26%), RSL tenant (7%), private tenant (7%) and 'other' (4%) including staying with family/friends, homeless temporary accommodation and house sharing.

94% of respondents were White Scottish followed by Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (3%), prefer not to say (1%), other ethnic group (1%), mixed or multiple ethnic group (1%), African (0.5%) and 0% Caribbean or Black.

We Asked...about Improving Neighbourhoods.

	Important	Moderately Important	Unimportant	Total
Build more affordable housing	91%	6%	3%	100%
Return empty homes back into use	95%	3%	2%	100%
Improve the appearance of local area	92%	6%	2%	100%
Regenerate less popular area	87%	10%	3%	100%

Each statement was considered of particular significance for respondents' with 'returning empty homes back into use' with the highest response rate (95%).

You Said...

'Returning empty homes benefits council by paying extra council tax and help reduce waiting lists. More affordable housing to decrease waiting and housing lists. Help young generation with no savings and no capital'

'Need more affordable housing, make better use of existing stock'

'Not everyone wants to buy. Encourage pride in homes, and surrounding areas'

'Not enough homes for people who need them'

'Too many massive new builds, not enough being done in helping the younger generation and lower income families'

'More affordable housing is needed. Returning empty homes back into use is common sense really as people will use them. If the appearance of the local area is improved then more people will take where they live more positively and take some pride in it. Less popular areas should be regenerated in to something else that the community needs'

'More affordable housing needed particularly one bed and housing for disabled'

'All issues are important as there is a shortage of housing available for those who cannot afford to spend £150k upwards on a house'

'Overcrowding is an issue for families'

'Affordable housing is critical to community prosperity and individual wellbeing'

'Young people cannot afford to buy their own properties. More affordable properties or rentals would be beneficial to them'

'People are struggling to get mortgages. Need more Council housing'

'We have a shortage of affordable houses for rent'

'The area needs more affordable housing. There is also a need to maintain existing areas as there are becoming run-down'

'There is currently a shortage of affordable housing. If the appearance of an area is improved people would be more willing to live in it'

'Good affordable and well maintained housing helps sustain an area'

'Need a mix of owner occupied and affordable rented housing for young people and those saving for deposit'

We Did... (include outcomes and actions in LHS3)...

Outcomes:

- The supply of housing is increased
- Best use is made of stock across tenure

- **Actions:**
- Ensure housing land supply is available to build 2956 properties by 2021
- Provide new build affordable housing
- Made better use of existing stock to provide additional affordable housing
- Work in partnership to deliver housing through the Affordable Housing Policy
- Explore a range of models to increase affordable housing models used locally
- Develop area based regeneration strategies in partnership with RSLs and the local community
- Explore the potential to use the Rural Housing fund to develop new affordable housing, refurbish empty homes and contribute to feasibility studies
- Increase the number of empty home brought back into use
- Ensure actions from the Empty Homes Plan are implemented
- Explore town centre sites to provide affordable housing
- Increase satisfaction levels for people within local communities
- Establish the potential for joint working on estate management and employability initiatives between Council/RSLs

We Asked...Tackling Homelessness

	Important	Moderately Important	Unimportant	Total
Prevent people from becoming homeless	92%	7%	1%	100%
Provide housing advice for people	95%	4%	1%	100%
Provide supported accommodation/hostel accommodation	88%	11%	1%	100%
Signpost clients to services to maximise income and benefits	88%	8%	4%	100%

All statements were considered important by respondents' however 'providing housing advice for people' was the statement that polled the highest with 95%.

You Said...

- 'In this day and age there shouldn't be any poverty and this has to be addressed'
- 'A lot of people don't know where to go to get help and advice a lot of people need support'
- 'Very important says it all'
- 'So people know that the support is there for all issues'
- 'People who have hit 'hard times' need guidance and encouragement, prevention of homelessness initially important'
- 'People should have the opportunity to be informed and supported'
- 'No one should be homeless in 2016'
- 'All the above will help people sustain tenancies'
- 'Housing support should be available to all and information regarding assistance should be readily available'
- 'Not everyone knows what they are entitled to'

'Need to improve supported accommodation and temporary accommodation conditions'

'Prevention is better than cure'

'All the above is important, good signposting and providing advice, with follow up, will enable people to remain in their homes'

'Access to advice and support can help people maintain their tenancies and avoid homelessness'

'A lot of people don't know how to go about getting all potential benefits or if they are even entitled to'

'Lots of benefits people have a right to but don't know how to claim. Millions left unclaimed because people don't know how to claim'

'Assist those in need'

'It is important to provide options to stop individuals becoming homeless'

'If you signpost and give advice correctly, then people have the opportunity to consider their options'

We Did (include outcomes and actions) in LHS3...

Outcomes:

- The supply of housing is increased
- Housing advice is provided to those at risk of homelessness
- People can access temporary and supported accommodation as required
- Tenancy sustainment is improved
- Specialist housing advice is provided in partnership

Actions:

- Ensure housing land supply is available to build 2456 properties by 2021
- Provide new build affordable housing
- Made better use of existing stock to provide additional affordable housing
- Work in partnership to deliver housing through the Affordable Housing Policy
- Explore a range of models to increase affordable housing models used locally
- Improve private rented housing options
- We will develop a Younger Peoples' Housing Plan
- We will explore the potential for providing a Common Housing Register with social landlords
- We will ensure information on housing options is accessible and informative
- We will improve customer satisfaction and service delivery with homelessness services
- We will agree and implement protocols for young people leaving care
- We will ensure temporary accommodation provides the best value fitting the current profile of homeless households
- We will ensure supported accommodation and support services meet the needs of services users and provides best value
- We will use a range of methods to improve tenancy sustainment
- We will carry out awareness training for housing staff
- We will work with the HCSG to provide housing advice to people with specialist needs

We Asked...Providing Housing and Support for Vulnerable People

	Important	Moderately Important	Unimportant	Total
Build more homes which meet people's changing needs	92%	7%	1%	100%
Provide specialist advice for older people and those with disabilities	96%	3%	1%	100%
Provide advice on housing adaptations	92%	7%	1%	100%
Promote technology to help people stay at home for longer	87%	10%	3%	100%

Each statement was considered important as each polled high percentages, however 'providing specialist advice for older people and those with disabilities' was considered the most important with 96%.

You Said...

- 'Build more housing to meet people's changing need'
- 'Assist people to remain independent and stay in their own home'
- 'Our population is getting older, clients who have/may have disabilities – houses should be built where property could be easily adapted'
- 'As we live longer, adaptations to our homes are more likely'
- 'Independence for as long as possible for the elderly'
- 'Population is getting older. Therefore first-hand information is very important'
- 'Building specialised homes for elderly frees up housing for larger families and saves cost of care home and reduces bed blocking in the HNS'
- 'Some people don't know what help is available, i.e. stair lifts, walk in showers etc.'
- 'Advice and technology is very important to allow tenant to adapt and use facilities available to them'
- 'Where possible people should be supported to remain independent'
- 'Technology should be embraced as it would help people stay at home longer'
- 'People need adapted housing and advice as the get older'
- 'We need to prepare for an aging population'
- 'The problem is that the service and support on offer at the moment are not very widely advertised so people don't know where to turn'
- 'Houses should be built especially for the elderly and people with disabilities. They should be built fit for purpose of housing people with special needs'
- 'More adapted houses for disabled should be made available'
- 'Older people need dedicated advisers based locally to help them move to a more suitable home. Technology could save a lot of resources'
- 'With an aging population, strategic planning is essential to meet current and future housing needs'
- 'With the right support vulnerable people can live a full life and be fully connected to the community'

We Did (include outcomes and actions in LHS3)...

Outcomes:

- The supply of accessible housing is increased
- Specialist housing advice is provided in partnership
- Older peoples’ housing is reviewed with the HCSG
- Further analysis on housing needs of vulnerable groups is carried out

Actions:

- We will work in partnership to agreed standard specification for specialist housing built through the SHIP
- We will work in partnership to implement the findings of the Adapting for Change (AfC) pilot
- We will carry out awareness raising training for housing staff
- We will work with the HCSG to provide housing advice to peoples with specialist needs
- We will review older peoples’ housing
- We will carry out further needs analysis from specialist groups
- We will explore through the HCS the need for extra care housing
- We will explore through the Lochview Working Group the accommodation needs of people currently living there
- We will explore through the HCS the recommendation needs of people with health and social care needs living out with the area
- We will carry out a design feasibility study on current HwC developments to assess their potential to meet the needs of a range of older and disabled people.
- Develop standard specifications for assessable and wheelchair housing
- Carry out research to identify which housing needs present greatest challenges to accommodate
- Review the service delivery at the Council’s Travelling Person Site.

We Asked...Improving Housing Conditions

	Important	Moderately Important	Unimportant	Total
Improve housing condition	94%	5%	1%	100%
Provide information on tenants' rights	88%	11%	1%	100%
Provide information on landlord/owners responsibilities	92%	7%	1%	100%
Take action against private landlords who do not maintain their properties	96%	3%	1%	100%

For this section all statements were considered important with ‘action being taken against private landlords who do not maintain their properties’ with the highest percentage (96%).

You Said...

'Should be more information to tenants on their rights and yes more done to landlords who don't abide by there rules'

'People should know their rights'

'People need to know their rights and legalities'

'Provide information on landlords, owners responsibilities'

'Everyone is entitles to well maintained property'

'All properties should be of an acceptable standard'

'All tenants should have a property that is fit for purpose and bad landlords should face prosecution'

'The legal obligations of tenants and landlords should be easily understandable for everyone and landlords who do not maintain their properties drag an are down so should be pursued'

'Conditions are important'

'It is the duty of local authorities to ensure its citizens are aware of their rights. It is also LA's duty to make landlord accountable for lack of care'

'From my own experience the more information the better'

'It's important to always provide information to the general public on any new developments/procedures. Private landlords should be accountable for their properties if in a poor state or repair'

'Still a lot of landlords not registered and tenants need to know what their responsibility'

'Improving housing conditions is a must'

'Everyone is entitled to good quality housing meeting SHQS and it is up to housing providers & regulators to ensure these standards are met'

We Did (include, outcomes and actions in LHS3)...

Outcomes:

- Social rented housing conditions are improved
- Private sector housing conditions are improved
- The supply of housing is increased

Actions:

- Improve the condition of social rented homes by targeting investment through capital programmes
- Ensure continued compliance with SHQS, meeting EESH and reduce SHQS
- Review Scheme of Assistance (SoA)
- Explore proposals for Council to lead on a property management service (factoring)
- Improve private rented sector housing options
- Take action against private landlords who fail to comply with their responsibilities

We Asked...Reducing Energy Costs and Climate Change

	Important	Moderately Important	Unimportant	Total
Provide advice on how to save energy in the home	86%	12%	2%	100%
Provide information to help people get grants and loans to improve energy efficiency	83%	14%	3%	100%
Train staff to identify people struggling to meet energy costs and reduce bills	86%	11%	3%	100%
Find way to reduce carbon emissions	76%	19%	5%	100%

The outcomes from this section showed that respondents' felt that all statements were significant with 'provide advice on how to save energy in the home' and 'train staff to identify people struggling to meet energy costs and reduce bills' highlighted as particular important with 86% for both.

You Said...

'People should not have to choose between heat and food'

'Makes the world cleaner, helps people with bills'

'People do not know what is out there, that they can claim or get grants its time people knew'

'Reduce fuel poverty'

'It is difficult to manage high energy costs – beneficial to get advice'

'Provide information to help people get grants and loans to improve energy efficiency'

'Share knowledge and understanding to benefit everyone and help make informed decisions'

'I had a neighbour who was afraid to put her heating on in winter because of the high cost – this should not be happening'

'We need to help the environment and help older people who struggle with their energy bills'

Less money spent on bill can mean a world of difference to a low income household.

Often card meters are put in which cost more to run'

'All home should be built with renewable in mind, and where possible the council should promote to existing tenants and locals'

'All energy is expensive'

'Fuel poverty is a major problem if you can keep property warm at a reasonable cost it promotes sustainability'

'Any cost saving measures are good when everyone is struggling'

'Think it is important that staff recognise people struggling and being able to afford to eat or heat'

'The changes welfare benefits reform has a huge impact on the lower paid members of society which makes it difficult to heat their homes'

'Trained staff has to be the most important concern here, as without trained and knowledgeable staff – the remaining issues wont reach the public'

As energy costs are causing a lot of people considerable hardship, it is vital that energy

reducing options and investment are prioritised'

'Again, keeping the general public informed and having competent staff to assist with any changes'

'People don't know how easy it is to swap supplier and warm home discount. Smart meters installed so help people to budget'

'Some older residents are finding it difficult to pay heating bills'

'Fuel poverty in the 21st century Scotland is totally unacceptable and by improving the efficiency of homes and educating households, could reduce fuel poverty and lessen the effect of climate change'

'To assist people who may be in fuel poverty'

We Did (outcomes and actions in LHS3)...

Outcomes:

- Fuel poverty is tackled, climate change improved and progress is made to meeting national climate change targets

Actions:

- Ensure compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020
- Develop with RSL partners a HEEPS: ASB (4) programme to improve the energy efficiency of private sector home in mixed tenure estates
- Develop Communication Strategy to promote new initiatives, energy advice and funding information to all residents
- Develop a District Heating Strategy
- Utilise the Scotland Heat Map to identify potential energy sources
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change in relation to housing by improving the energy efficiency of the stock and consider risks such as flooding
- Reduce the number of experience fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty as far as reasonably practicable
- Mitigate the impact of climate change in relation to housing by improving the energy efficiency of the stock and consider risks such as flooding

We Asked...What the most pressing housing issue in the Falkirk Council area.

You Said...Out of the 360 respondents' who responded, 73% said lack of affordable housing followed by tackling homelessness and property condition both with 6%. The need for larger properties to tackle overcrowding/over occupying had 3% of comments while specialist housing (older/disabled), anti-social behaviour, empty homes and affordable rent all had 2% of comments.

We did (outcomes and actions in LHS3)...

These issues have all been identified via consultation and identified as outcomes and actions in the Local Housing Strategy. The actions within each outcome have recognised the concerns of the residents, to better plan resources and to make the Local Housing Strategy a document the Community can be proud off and fulfil the changing needs of the area.

11. Citizen Panel Analysis.

Citizen Panel 15 contained questions on the Local Development Plan, the Local Housing Strategy, and Health and Social Care Integration. There were 493 responses to the survey, with 174 postal returns and 319 online completions. 39% of respondents were male, 42%

were female and 19% did not specify their gender.

Over a third of respondents (38%) were aged 65 years or over and nearly three-quarters (72%) were aged 45 years or older. 12% were aged 25 to 44 years old and 15% did not specify their age. 15% of respondents identified themselves as disabled, with 69% stating they were not disabled. 16% did not answer the question.

We also asked about respondents' houses in this survey. Most respondents (81%) either owned their house outright or had a mortgage. 18% lived in rented accommodation, while 1% lived rent-free.

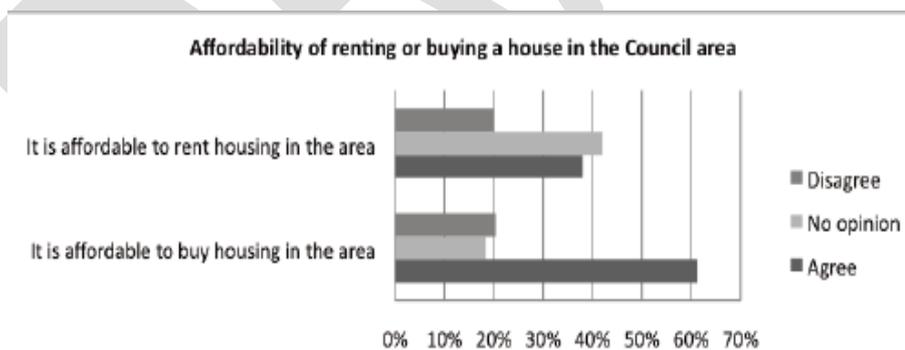
We Asked... a number of questions about the housing market in the Falkirk Council area.

You Said... Most (72%) agreed that for economic and social reasons the population of the Falkirk Council area should continue to grow. 15% of you disagreed with this. Two thirds (66%) agreed that people are willing to move to new areas to get the type of housing wanting. 13% of you disagreed with this statement.

Just over half respondents' felt that more housing is needed in their area. Nearly a third (29%) disagreed with this. Nearly two thirds of you (62%) agreed there should be more social housing in their area. 13% disagreed with this. 80% agreed there should be specialist housing for older people in their area. Only 4% disagreed with this. Nearly three quarters (73%) agreed there should be more specialist properties for people with disabilities in their area. 5% disagreed with this.

We Asked...a number of questions about affordable housing in the Falkirk Council area.

You Said...Nearly two thirds of you (61%) agreed that it is affordable to buy housing in the area (and 20% disagreed). In contrast, 38% agreed that renting is affordable in the area. 20% disagreed that rents are affordable.

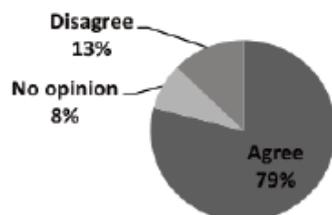


We Asked...some questions about housing regeneration, including whether or not we should prioritise resources in disadvantaged areas and where residents would rather live when they are older or if you became disabled.

You Said...Over two-thirds (79%) agree that the Council should prioritise resources in deprived areas. Only 13% of you disagreed with this and 8% had no opinion.

Most respondents' (84%) want to stay in their own home when they are older or if they became disabled. 15% showed a preference for moving into specialist housing under the same circumstances. Just under 1% of respondents already live in specialist housing.

The Council should prioritise resources to tackle neighbourhood problems in disadvantaged areas



We Asked... what people think are the most pressing housing issue in the Falkirk Council area.

You Said... There were 353 responses to this question. The most popular suggestion was that more social housing is required in the Council area. 28% of respondents suggested this. Respondents also said there is a need to build affordable housing in the Council area, particularly properties for young people, either singles or couples. 22% of respondents mentioned this. 16% stated that there is a need for the Council to repair existing social housing stock or improve infrastructure before new housing developments are built. Antisocial behaviour and specialist housing for elderly and disabled people were also mentioned by a smaller number of people, 8% and 7% of respondents respectively.

What You Said

‘Not enough social rented housing, the government and councils need to build more housing and properly laid out with a mix of private houses and local amenities to encourage good coherent communities.’ ‘I worry that people on limited incomes are forced into private rented sector and this then restricts their access to a council house. I am in favour of a vibrant social rented sector.’ ‘Not enough houses for the rise in population, Falkirk is a very good area for shopping and leisure and more affordable houses would be good for the town’

We Did... The Citizens Panel is a key part of our consultation for the Local Housing Strategy. The response from this survey has also indicated to us that we need to engage further with young people in particular. Some of the issues raised had been raised in previous consultations and addressed accordingly. For example, the consultation completed for the previous Local Housing Strategy also highlighted that respondents’ felt there was not enough affordable housing. To address this, since 2010 an additional 644 new build affordable properties have been built. 388 of these have been built by Falkirk Council and 306 have been built by Registered Social Landlords.

Source: <http://www.falkirk.gov.uk/services/council-democracy/consultations-surveys/docs/feedback/Citizens%20Panel%20Feedback%202015.pdf?v=201604121508>, accessed 08/08/16

12. Other Consultation

We also utilised other consultation that has been carried out by other services which we felt was beneficial to the development of LHS3. We felt there was no need to replicate work that had already been completed. The following is a list of some of the consultation we considered:

12.1 Older People Consultation.

Extensive consultation was carried out for the development of the Older People's Plan which was initially identified as a priority via the consultation carried out for LHS2 and included in Outcome 3 of LHS3 and action 3.7:

'develop a Housing Plan for Older People with Social Work and Health that takes account of people living longer and housing expectations and aspirations in the 21st Century'.

The Consultation involved a wide range of consultation methods including survey, questionnaire, presentations, Citizen Panel and focus groups to ensure views were reflective of the wider community. The aim of the consultation was to seek views on the awareness of existing services and to shape future services. The Plan and the consultation was considered for LHS3 and contributed towards the development of Priority 4 – Housing and support for vulnerable groups, 4 outcomes and 13 actions within the LHS3.

12.2 Scottish Gypsy/Travelling Movement: Community Views Survey Summary of Finding 2016.

Consultation of the Gypsy/Traveller community living in social housing, known private sites and the Council run site in Redding. This work was carried out by Building Bridges with the support of Community Learning & Development and was carried out between December 2015 and January 2016. Out of 36 individuals contacted, 16 agreed to participate in the survey and also provided information on their health needs including other family members. Responses from those residing in private sites included “no official people bother us”, felt “more free to live our ways”, “happy owing my own plot” while social housing residents felt “near to school”, kids mix with country people kids” and “don't get involved in other travellers problems”. Priorities for action identified from residents on the Council run site included “more things for children to do”; “Wi-Fi on site” and “better amenities”, “more private sites” was a response from private site residents. The Council already has a process in place for applying for private sites which is working well.

12.3 Housing Management Review.

Two consultation workshops were arranged in February 2016. The first attended by staff from various levels and from a variety of team across Housing Services, the second attended by tenants and other customers.

The main theme to come from the workshops and highlighted by both tenants and staff on the current role of the Neighbourhood Officer was the diversity of the job, the back office administration (enquiries) and size of patches across the areas.

In terms of the role of the Neighbourhood officer going forward both workshops emphasized the need for higher visibility, better communication and a more pro-active approach. Support and accessibility to services to help tenants sustain their tenancy resonated throughout both workshops. These workshops assisted in devising the survey.

A total of 1423 (9%) of tenants responded to the survey and consisted of the following themes:

- named neighbourhood officer
- local housing services
- home appointments
- advise and support
- help to access support services
- annual visits

Analysis of the review will be used to plan future service delivery of our housing management.

12.3 Draft LHS Consultation.

Consultation for the draft LHS was carried out for 8 weeks between 17th March 2017 and 12th May 2017. Links to the draft and the feedback links were emailed to all stakeholders and members who participated in the focus group as well as local community groups involved. Other members of the public were invited to feedback via the Falkirk Council website in particular the consultation pages. All feedback was considered and changes made to the LHS if appropriate.

13. Feeding back to residents on the LHS Consultation

The Council is aware of the obligation to feedback to its residents the outcome of any consultation and the LHS is no exception. The Strategy & Development Team is committed to ensuring this report is sent out to all participants from the focus groups and community groups that took part, is accessible to everyone on line, results included in the specialist publications used to advertise the consultation and in the quarterly Tenant Talk magazine. The Tenant Talk magazine is the preferred method (77%) of residents to be kept informed about general issues such as services, decision or events in the Falkirk Council area⁴. An article will be included in the Summer edition of Tenant Talk once the LHS approved at Executive.

We endeavour to continue to build on this new found relationship with residents and show the Council values consultation in shaping, developing and influencing the strategic direction of its services.

14. Celebrating Success 2016.

Celebrating Success is an annual event held to recognise the excellent work carried out by staff working across the diverse and wide ranging services the Council provides. Nominations are invited to be submitted under the following categories:

- Service Improvement of the Year
- Health Initiative of the Year
- Community Involvement of the Year
- Environmental Initiative of the Year
- Provost's Award
- Economy & Employment Initiative of the Year

⁴ Falkirk Councils, Tenant & Customer Participation Strategy 2016 – 19, p 7.

- Service Accessibility Initiative of the Year
- Individual Achiever of the Year
- Team of the Year

A panel of judges considered all entries and a short list was devised for each category with the shortlisted nominees invited to attend an event where the winners are announced. The LHS Consultation was submitted under the Community Involvement of the Year category. There were a total of 11 nominations in the category and the LHS Consultation was announced as the winner at the award ceremony held on Tuesday 15th November 2016.

15. List of Family Fun Day Events and Festivals attended by the Strategy & Development Team:

Dates	Day	What	Where	Time
09/07/2016	Saturday	Eid in the Park Festival	Callander Park	13.00 - 16.00
17/07/2016	Saturday	Fun Day	Dawson	13.00- 16.00
28/07/2016	Thursday	RSL	Paragon	11.00-14.00
03/08/2016	Wednesday	CLD Family Fun Day, Denny	Community Flat	13.00-15.00
04/08/2016	Thursday	Family Fun Day	Airth Community Centre	13.00-15.00
08/08/2016	Monday	WASP/CLD Family Fun Day Denny	WASP	1300-15.00
10/08/2016	Wednesday	Family Fun Day	Bonnybridge	13.00-15.00
11/08/2016	Thursday	Family Fun Day	Camelon Community Centre	10.00-14.00
15/08/2016	Monday	Family Fun Day	Bankier	13.00-15.00
23/08/2016	Tuesday	Family Fun Day	Denny Centre – School	13.00-15.00

16. Falkirk Council Local Office Pop Up Events.

Location	Date
Denny Local Office	17th August 2016
Falkirk Local Office	24th August 2016
Bo'ness Local Office	31st August 2016

17. Registered Social Landlord Pop Up Event.

Location	Date
Paragon Office, Grangemouth	28th July 2016

18. **Residents and Tenants Forums attended.**

Location	Date
Committee Rooms, Municipal Buildings	Wednesday 18th May 2016
Committee Rooms, Municipal Buildings	Wednesday 24th August 2016

19. **Councillor Presentations.**

Location	Date
Committee Rooms, Municipal Buildings	Thursday 7 th July 2016
Committee Rooms, Municipal Buildings	Monday 15 th August 2016

20. **Focus Groups.**

Location	Date
Disability Working Group, Sensory Centre, Camelon	Friday 20 th May 2016
Inchyra Focus Group, Inchyra Supported Accommodation, Grangemouth	Thursday 8 th September 2016
Under 35 Focus Group, Camelon Education Centre	Thursday 22 nd September 2016

21. **Stakeholder Events.**

Location	Date
Fuel Poverty & Climate Change Event	Tuesday 23 rd August 2016
Access to Housing Event	Thursday 18 th August 2016
Private Sector	Thursday