

# ABERDEENSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2023

## ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report summarises the engagement carried out during the development of Aberdeenshire's Local Housing Strategy for 2018-2023.

### 2 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT, FEEDBACK AND CONSULTATION RESULTS

### 3 WIDER POPULATION

- 3.1 The Citizens' Panel comprises 1,250 residents across Aberdeenshire who are chosen to be demographically representative and to be a statistically significant sample of the wider population. Response rates are typically around 70-75%.
- 3.2 Results from the [47<sup>th</sup> survey](#) on future housing priorities were used to inform the development of the Local Housing Strategy. These asked the panel to review and rank the potential different priorities for the next strategy.
- 3.3 In addition, the [50<sup>th</sup> survey](#) on Council priorities and social isolation and the [38<sup>th</sup> survey](#) on Gypsy/Traveller accommodation helped to inform the development of the strategy.
- 3.4 At the same time as the Local Housing Strategy was developed, public engagement took place on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. These involved holding sessions at all 73 community councils to undertake the Place Standard tool. There was a unanimous response coming back from community councils identifying the lack of affordable housing as an issue which affects their community.
- 3.5 Aberdeenshire Council carried widescale [public consultation](#) to inform its Council Plan for 2017-2022. Approximately 1,500 people took part to identify the priorities for the Council. Enabling the provision of appropriate housing was seen as a high level priority by residents. Community groups felt that there needs to be a focus on older people including access to appropriate housing and health services. There was a strong focus on the economy and connected communities. There was support for enabling communities to participate in local decision-making processes and the importance of 'real' partnership working to deliver outcomes. Community groups were more likely to rate "promoting sustainable development within planning policy" highly. This was

due to a belief that the planning process was perceived to be difficult. These themes guided the development of the strategy.

- 3.6 The draft strategy was available online for public consultation in late 2017 although few comments were made on the document.

#### **4 GYPSY/TRAVELLERS**

- 4.1 Between 1 June and 31 July 2015, 24 Gypsy/ Travellers in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, from 12 different groups of Gypsy/ Travellers took part in a consultation exercise to assess the accommodation needs of the Travelling community. Results showed that 100% of all participants thought there should be an increase in site provision in both Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. There was no clear preference on whether they should be developed and managed privately or by the local authorities.

- 4.2 A further survey has been carried out with Gypsy/ Travellers during summer 2017. [further survey](#) has been carried out with Gypsy/ Travellers during summer 2017. This found that as a whole the most desirable type of site for participants was a local authority provided permanent site, but when taken alongside data on the number of encampments over recent years, and feedback to the 2015 consultation, there is a demand for a range of provision. Given the number and size of encampments at present, it seems likely that there will continue to be a shortfall of provision.

- 4.3 This further survey assessed wider needs for Gypsy/Travellers in North East Scotland. This included access to services to identify areas where there are shortfalls. Actions from this research report have been included in the action plan for the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee and the Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group. These will take forward the Gypsy/Traveller actions in the Minority Ethnic Communities priority in the Local Housing Strategy.

- 4.4 Aberdeenshire's [Citizens' Panel's 38<sup>th</sup> edition of 'Viewpoint'](#) included a section on Gypsy/ Traveller site provision. The questions posed sought the opinion of residents in Aberdeenshire on current provision provided to Gypsy/ Travellers along with feedback on future provision. Results showed that residents of Aberdeenshire believe that there should be more Gypsy/ Traveller site provision in Aberdeenshire.

#### **5 COUNCIL TENANTS**

- 5.1 Aberdeenshire Council's [Tenant Satisfaction Survey of 2015](#) showed how tenants viewed the service they receive. This information was compared with other landlords to benchmark Aberdeenshire Council's position and to identify

areas for improvement. This information was fed into the development of the Local Housing Strategy.

- 5.2 The Planning for the Future tenant group reviews future strategies, policies and plans for Aberdeenshire Council's housing service. It reviewed the findings of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017 and the emerging priorities and outcomes for the Local Housing Strategy. Feedback from the group helped to shape the final document.

## **6 SYRIAN NEW SCOTS**

- 6.1 A workshop was held to help develop the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in September 2017. This involved 122 attendees including 30 Syrian New Scots who identified ESOL, employability and family reunification as priority issues. This information has helped to guide the Minority Ethnic Communities priority in the Local Housing Strategy and the action plans that sit beneath this priority.

## **7 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR LANDLORDS**

- 7.1 Landlord information and engagement sessions are held on a regular basis in Aberdeenshire. These have been well attended and have been useful in gaining feedback from the sector. They have been particularly informative in preparing for the new private rented sector legislation and the forthcoming energy efficiency requirements that will impact on the sector. Feedback here has helped to shape the actions sitting underneath the private sector priority focusing where support should be provided.

## **8 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

- 8.1 In developing the Housing Need and Demand Assessment, a number of engagement sessions were held with housebuilders, agents, mortgage and lending companies as well as affordable housing providers. As well as projecting future scenarios for the area, these reviewed strategies to meeting future needs, economic and housing market challenges.

## **9 STRATEGY GROUPS**

- 9.1 There is a number of strategy groups sitting underneath the existing Local Housing Strategy. These assessed the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2017 and the engagement evidence detailed above. They developed and drafted the new strategy, by agreeing outcomes, actions and supporting narrative together. The groups were:

- Affordable Housing Forum (Scottish Government, Kincardine Estates, Grampian Housing Association, Barrat Homes, Sanctuary Scotland, Hillcrest Housing Association, Osprey Housing, Castlehill Housing

Association, Langstane Housing Association, Abbeyfield, Homes for Scotland, Stewart Milne, Scottish Land and Estates, Aberdeenshire Council; Housing Options, Planning Delivery Team, Estates, Legal, Developer Obligations)

- Fuel Poverty Group (SCARF, Osprey Housing Association, Langstane Housing Association, Grampian Housing Association, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council; Asset Management, Finance, Economic Development., Financial inclusion, Housing Strategy (Particular Needs), Housing Benefit)
- Gypsy/Traveller Officer Group (Police Scotland, Health and Social Care Partnership, Representatives from the Gypsy/Traveller community, Aberdeenshire Council; Education, CLD, Legal, Environmental Health, Corporate Communications)
- Homelessness Strategic Outcome Group (Representatives from Housing Options and Homelessness, Homelessness 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, Register Social Landlord, Third Sector Supported Accommodation, Social Work Through Care and After Care, Social Work Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Health and Social Care Partnership, Aberdeenshire Drugs and Alcohol Partnership, Mental Health Voluntary Sector)
- Particular Needs Strategic Outcome Group (Houseability, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, Health and Social Care Partnership, Grampian Housing Association, Castlehill Housing Association, Inspire, Aberdeenshire Council; Private Sector Housing, Finance, Sheltered Housing Manager, Housing Options, Social Work, Occupational Therapy)

## **10 ELECTED MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**

- 10.1 All 68 elected members in Aberdeenshire were asked to take part in an online survey to identify priorities for the Local Housing Strategy. This was used to inform the prioritisation process for the strategy.
- 10.2 A workshop was held with all elected members invited. This reviewed the findings from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment as well as feedback from engagement activity. Together members identified priorities and considered potential actions for the new strategy. Following the workshop, officers fleshed out the recommendations from members.
- 10.3 A draft strategy was taken around all six area committees in Aberdeenshire for consultation. Comments were collated from members to create a final version of the strategy that was agreed by the Communities Committee which has responsibility for approving housing strategy and policy.