



Midlothian Local Housing Strategy 2013 - 2017

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Foreword

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 required all local authorities in Scotland to submit a Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The purpose of the LHS is to:

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

This document details all of the outcomes proposed by the Council, and its partners over the period to ensure that targets are set to address housing issues and problems are resolved. In the previous Local Housing Strategy, developed in 2004, one of the main successes was to achieve a new programme of council house building, with Midlothian Council becoming the first Scottish Council to build substantial numbers of new homes for a generation. Since then, other Scottish Councils have followed suit, with funding from the Scottish Government becoming available to help boost the number of homes Councils can build. With the support of the local community, this Local Housing Strategy will bring about further significant achievements to benefit households in Midlothian.

We hope you find this document useful and informative and we are interested in hearing your views on our housing strategy. In doing so you can then help us to deliver the best outcomes for the issues that matter to you.

Councillor Owen Thompson
Deputy Leader, Midlothian Council

1. Introduction

This Local Housing Strategy 2013 – 2017 sets out the key housing issues to be addressed across all tenures in Midlothian, and also sets the strategy for addressing homelessness, housing support, fuel poverty and energy efficiency/climate change.

The Local Housing Strategy's strategic vision for housing in Midlothian is that:

“All households in Midlothian will be able to access housing that is affordable and of good quality in sustainable communities.”

In order that this vision is realised, the Local Housing Strategy must ensure that the following outcomes are realised within the five year period of the Strategy. These outcomes are:

- Households have improved housing options across all tenures.
- Homeless households and those threatened with homelessness are able to access support and advice services and all unintentionally homeless households will be able to access settled accommodation.
- The condition of housing across all tenures is improved.
- The needs of households with particular needs will be addressed and all households will have equal access to housing and housing services.
- Housing in all tenures will be more energy efficient and fewer households will live in, or be at risk of, fuel poverty.

These outcomes will be enabled through the following activities that the Local Housing Strategy will monitor through the period 2013 – 2017:

- **Partnership working** with local and national organisations to ensure ownership of the local housing strategy and an ability to work together to find solutions, jointly fund initiatives and ensure the broadest reach of strategic influence.
- **Effective communication** to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the progress towards meeting outcomes and new developments that arise.

- **Using resources most effectively** to ensure that funds are prioritised to the most important strategic objectives.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation and Annual Updates** of the Strategy to address changes, such as new legislation, and to monitor performance against targets.

2. Links to National and Local Policies and Strategies

National Housing Policy

At the start of individual chapters throughout this document, relevant housing policy and strategies are noted. However, key legislative and housing policies which are very influential in shaping all aspects of the Local Housing Strategy are detailed here.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001

The Housing (Scotland) 2001 Act made it a statutory requirement for all Scottish local authorities to prepare and submit a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) to Scottish Ministers. The LHS should assess the nature and condition of the housing stock, the needs of persons in the area for housing, the demand for, and availability of housing and the needs of persons in the area with particular needs. The Scottish Government has since set out detailed guidance of the requirements that local authorities need to take account of in the development of a Local Housing Strategy.¹

Homes fit for the 21st Century

This document, published in 2011, sets out the Scottish Government's housing vision and Strategy until 2020. It notes that there are four principal housing targets set out by the Scottish Parliament required during the period 2012 - 2020:

- By December 2012, all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation.
- By April 2015 all social rented housing must meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- By November 2016, so far as is reasonably practicable, nobody will be living in fuel poverty in Scotland.
- By December 2020, improved design and greater energy efficiency in housing will have made a contribution to Scotland's commitments to reduce our energy consumption by 12% and our greenhouse gas emissions by 42%.

¹Local Housing Strategy Guidance, 2008, www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25093503/0

However, it also outlines future national housing policy objectives of the Scottish Government which informs the development of Midlothian's LHS. Such objectives include:

- Continuing investment in social housing, and prioritising affordability
- Publishing a Strategy for Sustainable Housing in Scotland
- Consultation on ways to remove excessive discounts on the preserved Right to Buy
- Identifying new forms of mortgage products which can provide funds for first time buyers
- Ensuring that property owners are aware of their responsibility over the quality of their property, and that they receive appropriate support for fulfilling their responsibility.
- Consulting with Registered Social Landlords on minimising the legislative constraints of allocations policies, enabling them to have a greater role in determining housing need in their area, and widening tenancies available for an intermediate rent.

Welfare Reform

On 16 February 2011 the UK Government introduced the Welfare Reform Bill. The bill introduced a wide range of reforms to the benefits and tax credits system, with the intention of:

- creating the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays
- protecting the most vulnerable in our society
- delivering fairness to those claiming benefit and to the tax payer.

However, it has been recognised that the changes to the benefits system will also cause problems for households reliant on housing benefit. In Midlothian, 48% of Council tenants and a similar proportion of housing association tenants are reliant on housing benefit payment in order to afford their housing. Table 2.1, below summarises some of the changes being introduced. The effects of these reforms will impact on the housing sector in a variety of ways, such as:

- Increased debt problems for tenants.

- Increased arrears for social rented landlords as tenants cannot afford to pay their rent.
- Housing Allocations policies amended to avoid tenants living in underoccupied housing.
- Increased requirement for 1 bed housing across all tenures.
- Young people reliant on housing benefit being unable to access private rented sector housing.
- Increased number of social rented tenants wishing to downsize their property to ensure that they can afford their rent.

The LHS needs to consider how best to meet these challenges in order to ensure that households in housing need, private sector landlords and Registered Social Landlords are not adversely affected by these changes. More information on the effects of welfare reform are detailed in Section 3, 4 and 7 of the Strategy. Updated information is also available on Midlothian Councils website: www.midlothian.gov.uk

Table 2.1: Summary of Welfare Reforms

Benefit changes	Date of Implementation
Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is capped based on property size, with a maximum of £400 per week for a 4 bedroom property. The £15 LHS excess is removed.	April 2011
LHA rates will be set at the 30th percentile of local rents instead of the 50th percentile	October 2011
Extend the Single Room Rate for LHA from age 25 to age 35	January 2012
Caps on Housing Benefit based on property size for underoccupying tenants living in social rented housing	April 2013
All working-age benefits will be replaced with a Universal Credit with a benefit cap of £350 a week for single people and £500 per week for couples, further sanctions will also apply.	2013 - 2017
Replacing Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payment with the aim of reducing the amount payable to working age claimants by around 20%	2013 -2017
The localisation of the Social Fund and Council Tax 2013-2017	2013 - 2017

Local Policy and Strategic Links

There are various strategies and partners who help to shape the development of the Local Housing Strategy and ensures that it not only recognises national housing policy and legislation, but also takes account of the local priorities for Midlothian.

Midlothian Community Plan

The Community Plan sets out objectives for Midlothian that have been agreed by partner agencies and local communities. This plan provides a framework for delivering our long-term vision for the area and focuses on achieving measurable improvements to the quality of life for all in Midlothian. Over time the Community Plan and the related Neighbourhood Plans will set the context for continued joint working between the Council and its partner agencies.

Figure 2.1, below shows the Community Planning Structure in Midlothian. The development, implementation, and monitoring of the Local Housing Strategy is overseen via the Adult Health and Social Care Working Group, which meets on a quarterly basis and Reports on progress to the Community Planning Steering Committee. Being a part of the Community Planning Structure is important in order that the LHS is linked to community planning partner organisations which enables improved joint working. For example, the Getting It Right For Every Midlothian Child Partnership provides strategic leadership and directions for services that support children, young people and their families in Midlothian. Many of the outcomes of this group will rely on Local Housing Strategy activity, particularly in relation to homelessness and housing support, such as:

- Children, young people and families receive appropriate support from services at the right time.
- Fewer children and young people are affected by drug and alcohol misuse.
- Fewer children and young people are affected by violence against women.

The Community Planning Partnership may also an effective conduit for coproduction activity. Coproduction is a method of involving potential service users more directly in shaping the provision of a service or project. The outcome should be an effective collaboration which meets the needs of the service user whilst potentially reducing

costs if a community is involved in decision making on services provided in that community.

Midlothian Single Outcome Agreement

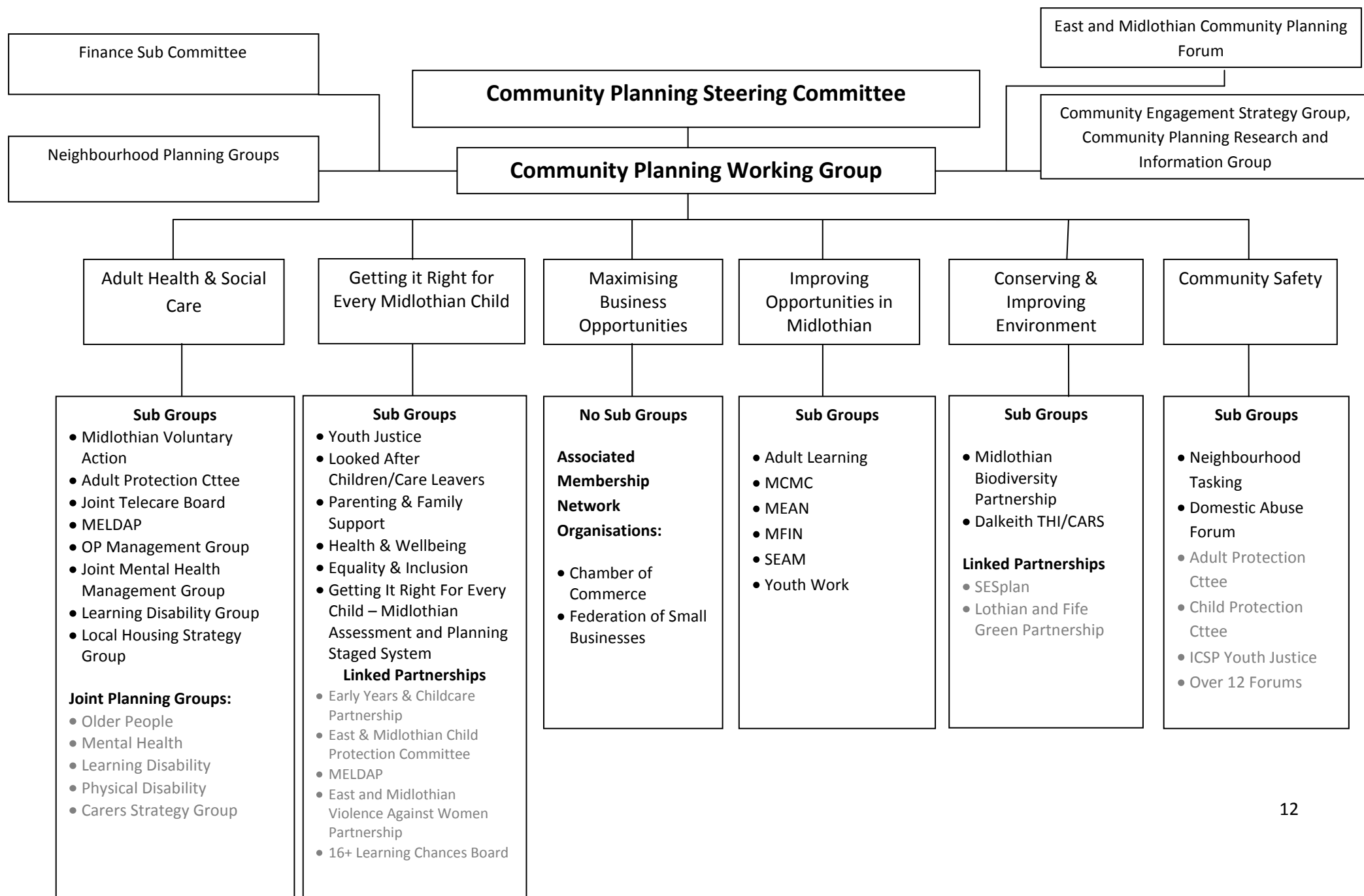
All local authorities in Scotland are required to develop a Single Outcome Agreement which sets out the strategic direction for each Council and their key stakeholders to address local needs and priorities. This Single Outcome Agreement is set out to reflect National Outcomes which have been agreed between Midlothian partners and the Scottish Government in order that there is a joined up approach to improving local outcomes, and to enable progress to be monitored and reported.

Key outcomes that are relevant to LHS outcomes include:

Local Outcome 1
Reduce Relative Poverty Levels in Midlothian
Local Outcome 6
All children and vulnerable adults have safe lives
Local Outcome 16
We will provide access to quality, affordable housing by delivering affordable homes for rent and sale
Local Outcome 17
Promote Independence for People with Disabilities
Local Outcome 25
We Will Work With Communities to Reduce Antisocial Behaviour and Promote Positive Social Development

Progress in meeting outcomes related to the Local Housing Strategy will be highlighted through annual reporting of the Single Outcome Agreement.

Figure 2.1: Community Planning Structure in Midlothian



MFIN – Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network

MFIN is a network of Midlothian partners that seek to address financial exclusion and poverty by a variety of actions. MFIN's objective is "To relieve poverty and to advance public education in all matters relating to the management of personal finances." Many of the outcomes in the Local Housing Strategy relate to tackling issues of financial exclusion, such as fuel poverty and homelessness. These issues are dealt with regularly by a range of MFIN partners, including:

- Midlothian Council's Welfare Rights Team
- Midlothian Council's Regeneration Team
- The Bridges Project
- Melville Housing Association
- Midlothian Advice and Resource Centre
- Changeworks
- Midlothian Voluntary Action
- Dalkeith Citizens Advice Bureaux
- Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureaux

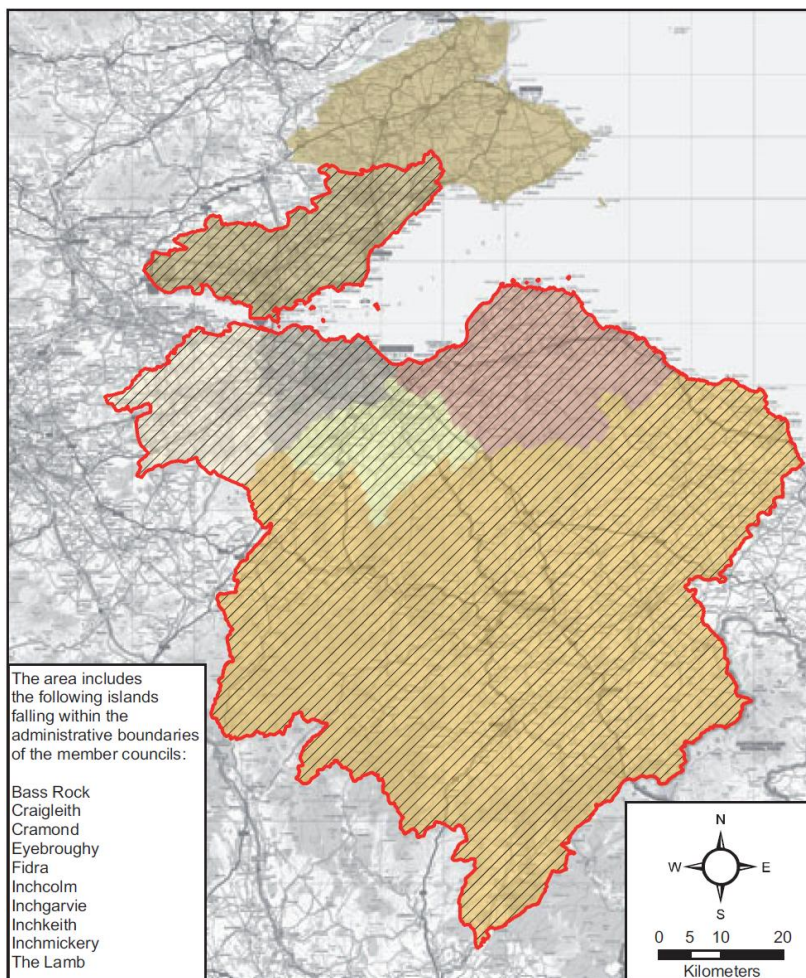
Midlothian Council has worked with MFIN in the past to help address poverty issues in relation to housing, by, for example, jointly hosting a Housing Need, Homelessness and Financial Inclusion Event with Shelter and Women's Aid in October 2010 and December 2011, to raise awareness and identify solutions. The involvement of MFIN partners in the LHS can help to strengthen the approach to financial inclusion and reducing poverty. It will also be a useful Network for undertaking co-ordinated activity to help households at risk from changes to the welfare benefits system.

South East of Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment²

SESplan

The framework for strategic planning has been recently revised in Scotland. One of the changes is a requirement to produce strategic development plans in the four city regions. These will set out a clear vision and spatial strategy for each Council area; focusing on the key land use and development matters that cross local planning authority boundaries. The South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SESplan) area covers the administrative area of 5 local authorities and part of one more: Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian, Scottish Borders and south and mid-Fife.

Figure 2.2: Map showing Edinburgh and South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan Area



Source: www.sesplan.gov.uk

² The SESplan and South East of Scotland Housing Need and Demand Assessment are available to view online at: www.sesplan.gov.uk

In accordance with Scottish Government guidance, prior to the development of the Local Housing Strategy, a Housing Need and Demand Assessment was undertaken for the South East of Scotland Housing Market Area. This was done in order to project the level of need and demand for housing over the next ten years. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment for the SESplan area was assessed by the Scottish Government as being a robust and credible evidence base for the development of Local Housing Strategies and the SESplan Main Issues Report in May 2010. Key points from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment include:

- The Study noted that the private sector housing market had been very unsettled in recent years, with a large increase in house prices since the mid 1990s fuelled by rising demand, rising incomes and increasing household numbers, followed by a significant slowdown and following the tightening of the global financial markets and the reduced availability of credit. However, the longer term expectation is optimistic for the South East of Scotland given the projected population increase in the region.
- The SESplan Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) identified that to provide for predicted levels of growth over the period 2009 - 2032, land for a total of 155,545³ new homes will be required across the SESplan area.
- Calculating current housing need is based on estimating the number of households that currently have unmet housing needs based on the circumstances such as the number of homeless households, those in temporary accommodation and in overcrowded conditions. The SESplan Housing Need and Demand identified that 46,357 (8%) households out of the 546,119 households in the SESPlan area were in housing need.⁴
- In terms of housing demand for market housing in Midlothian (as opposed to affordable housing), it was calculated that a total of 1,318 houses were required during the period 2009 – 2032.⁵ Across the SESPlan area 115,518 new homes would be required to meet demand in the area during the period 2009 – 2032 – accommodating this number of new homes within the South East of Scotland will be a challenge. The Report noted that local authority demand requirements constitute the demand generated within the area. However, as local authority areas are not

³ Table 5.1.2, page 29 of SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment

⁴ Table 2.1, page 10 of SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment

⁵ Table

self contained housing market areas, it is likely that a significantly larger number of new market homes will be required in Midlothian to partially accommodate this demand.

- The study also calculated annual future arising need, which estimated the number of newly emerging households that are unable to afford suitable market housing, homeless households, and existing households that develop housing needs. New households were determined from using projections based on household estimates from the General Register of Scotland (2006 based estimates). As a result, the Report expected that an additional 1.6% of the 546,119 households in the SESplan area would require new housing.
- As it would be impossible to address the requirement for current and housing need in one year, Table 2.2, below shows the calculation for addressing housing need in Midlothian and the SESplan area over a 10 year period. It shows that the total number of new affordable homes required across the SESplan area would be 2,817 homes per annum. In Midlothian, this figure would be 121 homes per annum. However, this figure has not been adopted for use as a housing supply target for affordable housing, this will be outlined in Chapter 3.

Table 2.2: Annual Housing Need Average over a 10 Year Period in Midlothian and in the SESplan Area, 2008 - 2018

Category	Midlothian	SESplan
Housing Need		
Current Need	142	1,908
Future Need	158	6,116
Total Housing Need	300	8,025
Housing Supply		
Supply of Turnover	179	5,265
Supply from New Build	166	947
Total Housing Supply	345	6,212
Housing Need - Net of Turnover	121	2,807

Source: SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment (Table A1.4 Total Households Need, Page 52)

3. Meeting Housing Need and Demand in Midlothian

Key Policy and Legislation in Relation to Housing Need and Demand

Housing Need and Demand Assessment

Housing need and demand assessments are a crucial aspect of the evidence base in terms of preparing local housing strategies and development plans. Housing need refers to households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is inadequate or unsuitable, who are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance. It is also important to understand that the Housing Need and Demand Assessment uses robust and credible data to make estimates and projections. However, the reality of what may happen in the housing market may be quite different over time from the conclusions of the Study, and it is a modelling exercise to help Councils set out future development plans and the Local Housing Strategy. Other factors will also need to be considered and the data needs to be updated to ensure it is relevant. Two Studies have been undertaken to assess Housing Need and Demand, the Lothian Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2011), and the SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment, as noted above.

Affordable Housing Investment Programme

The Scottish Government provides funding to affordable housing providers to subsidise the cost of housing development. Prior to 2011, typically the amount of Housing Association Grant provided to a housing association to provide affordable rented housing would be £60,000 per home. In 2011, the Scottish Government set a benchmark of £40,000 per home. This is problematic for the delivery of social rented housing as lenders are less willing to provide finance to housing associations since the impact of the credit crunch on the banking sector. In addition, the Scottish Government also support the development of new council house building, with all local authorities having to bid for this funding by demonstrating that the new council housing will meet housing need in the area.

Midlothian Local Plan

The Local Plan was adopted in 2008 and set out the Council's approach to land use, and ensuring the sustainable development of the area. Key areas of the Local Plan that impact on the Local Housing Strategy include:

- Setting out an Affordable Housing Policy that requires all residential sites with 15 or more homes to provide a percentage of the total site capacity as affordable housing.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance for affordable housing provision which sets out the potential delivery mechanisms for affordable housing development.
- Identifying specific sites for future housing development.

Midlothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan

Every year, Midlothian Council, in conjunction with its partners, develops a Strategic Housing Investment Plan which provides direction to the LHS objectives relating to affordable housing development, and:

- Sets out key investment priorities for affordable housing over a five year period and how these will be delivered.
- Identifies the resources to deliver project priorities
- Involves key partners in the delivery of new affordable housing

Housing Supply Targets

The Local Housing Strategy is required to set out a target for future housing development across all tenures which is informed by the SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment, and, through the planning system, assures that there is sufficient provision for the number of houses required.

Midlothian Housing Market Area, Population and Households

Midlothian is a small local authority area adjoining Edinburgh's southern boundary and framed by the Pentlands Hills in the west and the Moorfoot Hills of the Scottish Borders in the south. Most of Midlothian's population, of 82,000, resides in or around the main towns of Penicuik, Bonnyrigg, Loanhead, Dalkeith, Newtongrange and Gorebridge (shown in Figure 3.1, below). The southern half of the authority is predominantly rural, with a small population spread between a number of villages and farm settlements.

Figure 3.1: Map of Midlothian

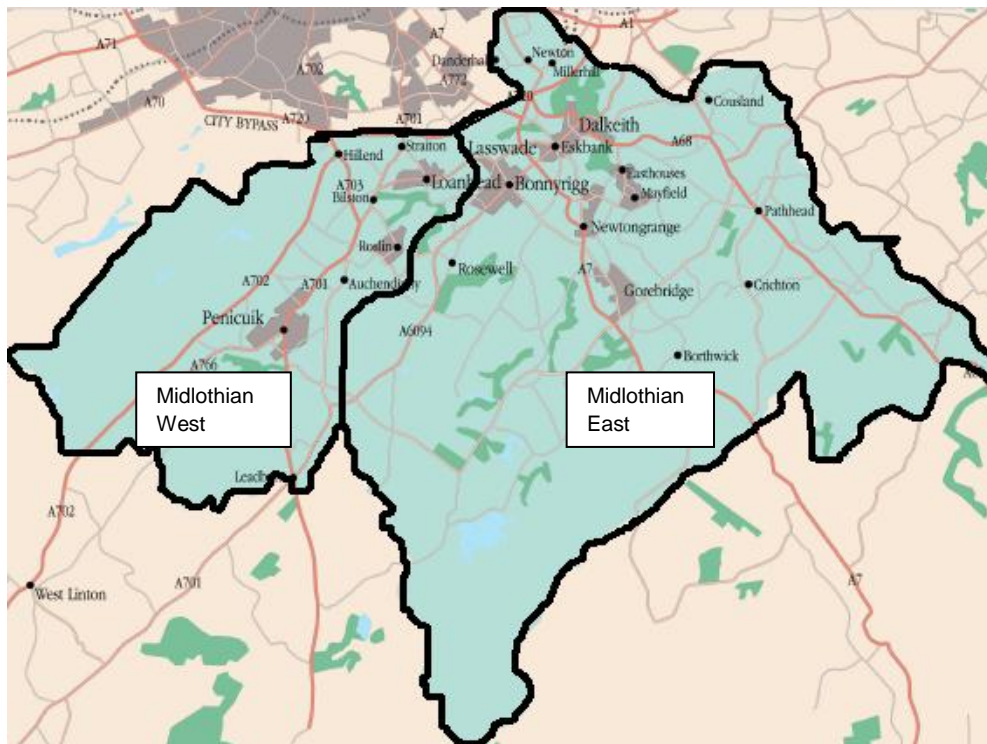


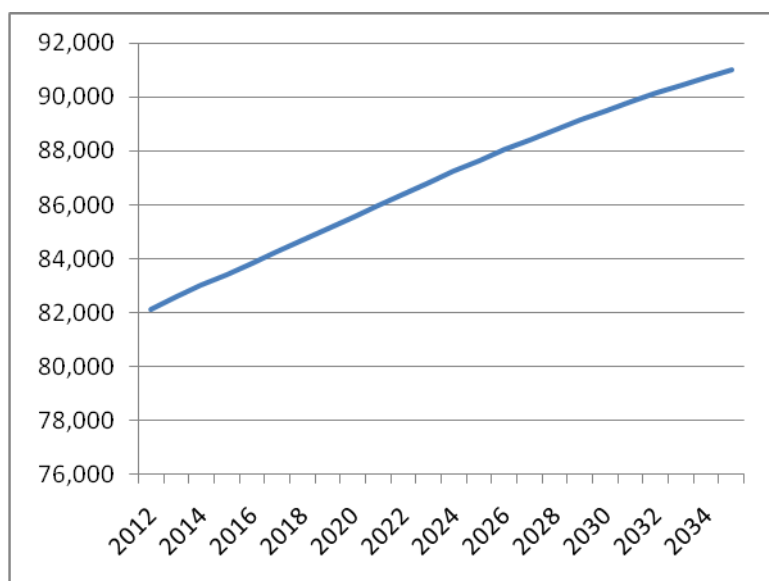
Figure 3.1 also shows that the housing market in Midlothian is divided into two areas: Midlothian West and Midlothian East. These are based on the Midlothian core development areas based predominantly on the provisions of the Edinburgh and the Lothian's Structure Plan 2015, A701 Corridor and A7/A68 corridors. Table 3.1, below, shows the main settlements in each housing sub market area.

Table 3.1: Settlements in Housing Sub Market Areas

Midlothian West	Penicuik, Loanhead, Bilston, Roslin, Straiton, Auchedinn
Midlothian East	Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg, Gorebridge, Rosewell, Mayfield, Easthouses, Pathhead, Newtongrange

Figure 3.2, below, shows that it is projected that the population of Midlothian will increase from 82,211 in 2012 to 91,017 in 2035 – an increase of 11%. The population growth is also projected to increase significantly in the short term (by 3% between 2012 and 2018). In addition, Table 3.2, below shows that there will be a faster rate of household growth, from 34,210 in 2008 to 39,560 in 2033 – a 16% increase in the number of households in Midlothian.

Figure 3.2: Projected Population in Midlothian, 2012 - 2033



Source: www.gro-scotland.gov.uk

Table 3.2: Projected Household Population in Midlothian

Measure	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	% Change between 2008 - 2018	% Change between 2008 - 2033
Midlothian 2008 Based Household Projection	34,210	35,940	37,100	38,130	38,910	39,560	8%	16%

The reason for the disparity between population and household growth is due to the decline in household sizes. It is projected that there will be an increased number of smaller households. Table 3.3, below, shows that average household sizes in Midlothian and Scotland are projected to reduce. In Midlothian, the average household size was 2.32 in 2008, and is projected to reduce to 2.06 by 2033. Table 3.4 also shows that the number of single person households will increase by over 5,000, a 51% increase over the same period, whilst the number of households with two adults and children is expected to decline. Table 3.5 also shows that migration appears to be a factor in population increases in Midlothian, with a net increase of 376 people moving into the area between 2008 and 2010.

Table 3.3: Projected Average Household Size in Midlothian and Scotland, 2008- 2033

Area	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033
Midlothian	2.32	2.26	2.20	2.15	2.11	2.06
Scotland	2.18	2.12	2.06	2.02	1.97	1.93

Table 3.4: Projected Change in 1 person Households, 2008 - 2033

Household type	Base-year	Projected number of households					% change in Midlothian 2008-2033	% change in Scotland 2008-2033
	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033		
1 adult	9,980	11,260	12,370	13,420	14,250	15,060	51%	49%
1 adult with 1 or more children	2,570	2,910	3,190	3,550	3,950	4,260	66%	46%
2 or more adults	14,330	14,980	15,420	15,480	15,220	14,860	4%	12%
2 or more adults with 1 or more children	7,330	6,790	6,120	5,670	5,490	5,380	-27%	-27%
Total households - Midlothian	34,210	35,940	37,100	38,130	38,910	39,560	16%	
Total households - Scotland	2,331,250	2,440,440	2,549,930	2,645,300	2,731,760	2,812,520		21%

Table 3.5: Net Migration in Migration 2008 - 2010

Age	In	Out	Net
0-15	570	449	121
16-29	872	855	17
30-44	822	633	189
45-64	410	382	28
65+	156	135	21
All ages	2,830	2,454	376

In terms of the type of tenures households live in, Table 3.6 below shows this and estimates the change in tenure patterns prior to more comprehensive information being made available from the 2011 Census. Table 3.6 shows that the level of owner occupation sharply increased between 1991 and 2010, with 52% of households being owner occupiers whilst in 2010 this had increased to an estimated 67% of households living in a home that they own, according to a recent Report for the Scottish House Condition Survey.

The proportion of households in council housing reduced from 31% in 1991 to 18% in the 2008 – 2010 SHCS Survey, whilst the proportion of housing association households

increased slightly. There has been little change in the private rented sector in Midlothian during this time.

Reasons for changes in tenure patterns during this period:

- Growth of owner occupation fuelled by new house building for sale.
- Reduction in council housing due to Right to Buy Sales, of which there were 2,777 since 1996 and which also contributed to the growth in owner occupation.
- Reduction in the housing association sector due to house sales followed by growth due to increased development by local housing associations in recent years.

Table 3.6: Housing Tenure in Midlothian 1991 - 2010

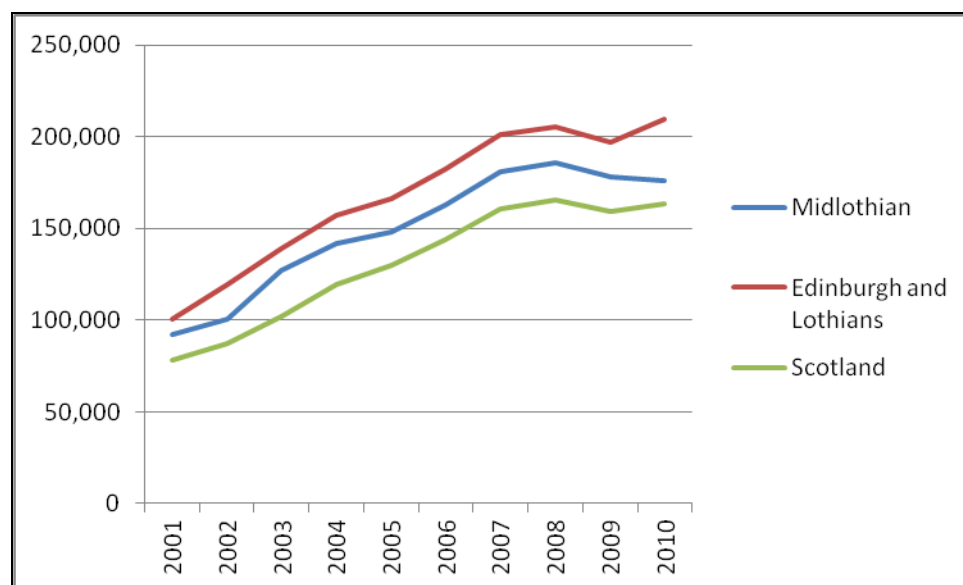
Tenure	1991 Census	2001 Census	2003 - 2006 SHCS	2008 - 2010 SHCS
Owner Occupied	52%	64%	65%	67%
Council Housing	31%	23%	23%	18%
Housing Association	11%	7%	8%	9%
Private Rented	5%	6%	5%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Private Sector Housing

As noted above, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of owner occupied households in Midlothian. At the same time, there has been significant fluctuation in the private sector housing market during this time. Figure 3.3 showed that the period from 2001 to 2007 marked a period of booming growth in house prices, and Table 3.7 showed a significant number of sales in 2006 and 2007. However, the impact of the credit crunch in 2007 has led to the house prices reducing slightly, with little likelihood of significant growth in prices over the short term. The number of sales has also sharply declined, between 2007 and 2010 the number of house sales in Midlothian reduced by 60%.

Despite the reduction in house price growth, Midlothian still has a higher average house price than for Scotland as a whole, with the mean price in 2010 being £175,836, compared to £163,429 for Scotland as a whole.

Figure 3.3: Mean House Prices in Midlothian, the Lothian's, and Scotland 2001 - 2010



Many low income households will look to buy a house in the lower quartile of the housing market (the average cost of a house in the bottom 25% of the market). Table 3.8 shows the lower quartile prices in recent years, it shows that the lower quartile house price in Midlothian was £118,112 in Midlothian, compared to £90,000 for Scotland. However, households in Midlothian earn less than the Scottish average, as shown in Table 3.9. This causes a problem for many local households who cannot afford to purchase a property in their own community.

Table 3.7: Number of House Sales in Midlothian and Scotland 2006 - 2010

Area	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Midlothian	1,467	1,650	1,199	672	668
Scotland	126,763	129,836	83,518	53,630	58,642

Table 3.8: Lower Quartile House Prices in Midlothian 2006 - 2010

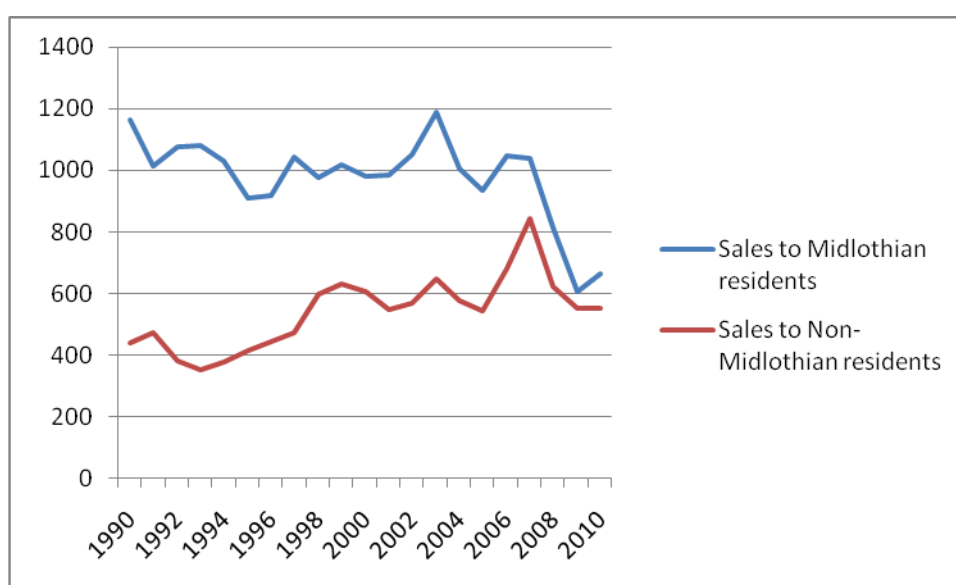
Area	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Midlothian	£106,000	£120,000	125,000	118,000	118,112
Scotland	83,500	95,000	96,500	91,575	90,000

Table 3.9: Average Gross Weekly Pay in Midlothian and Scotland 2011

Gross Weekly Pay	Midlothian	Scotland
Full Time Workers	£452	£491
Male Full Time Workers	£482	£520
Female Full Time Workers	£399	£441

A significant factor in the increasing cost of private housing in Midlothian has been the influence of households moving into the area to purchase their home. Whilst this is beneficial in terms of increasing the population of the county and contributing to the local economy, it also means that some local residents may not be able to compete with wealthier householders moving to the area. Figure 3.4, below, shows that in 1990, the majority of sales (1,162 out of 1,604) were from households already resident within Midlothian. By 2010, 664 out of 1,216 buyers originated from Midlothian. Consequently, barely over half the numbers of households buying a home in Midlothian already lived in the County.

Figure 3.4: Origins of Home Buyers Purchasing in Midlothian 1990-2010



Private Rented Housing

Table 3.10, below, shows that while the private rented sector in Midlothian is quite small, a significant supply of lets are available every year. In 2011, there were 425 lets advertised, the majority of which were 2 and 3 bed properties. 1 and 2 bedroom properties were relatively affordable, with an average of £513 and £588 respectively. There were few very large properties available, such as 5 bed homes, and these were generally very expensive properties to rent.

Table 3.10: Private Rented Sector Costs and Number of Lets⁶

Size	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5+ Bed
Average	£513	£588	£717	£1,028	£1,668
No. of Lets	51	173	112	61	28

In order to meet with legal requirements, all landlords must be registered with the Council, to ensure that they are a ‘fit and proper’ person to be a landlord – this is in order to protect the tenant from unscrupulous or illegal practices. Currently, there are 2,406 rented properties and 2,301 landlords registered with the Council.

Landlords in Midlothian are also encouraged to become an accredited landlord through Landlord Accreditation Scotland in order that landlords can demonstrate that they adhere to good practice guidance in the management and letting of private rented property.

Due to the reduction in housing subsidy from the Scottish Government, it is likely that an increased proportion of affordable housing will be “intermediate” or “mid market” rented housing that is built by RSLs or private sector developers and let at a level below the Local Housing Allowance and therefore more affordable for than many other properties available on the private rented market.

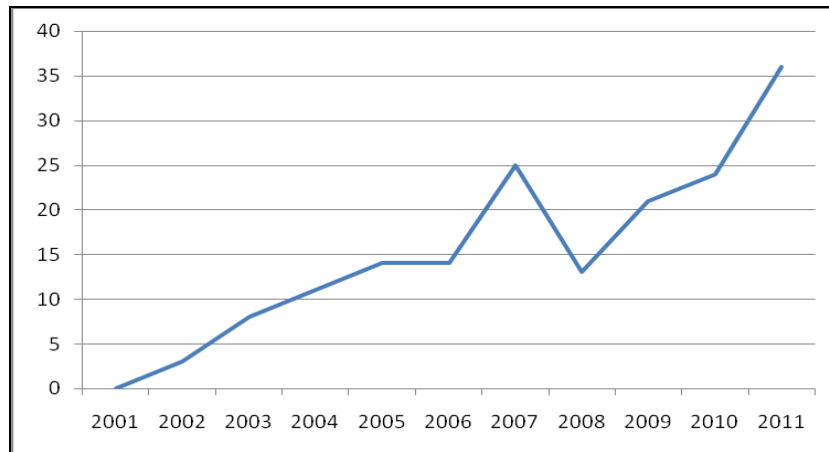
Houses in Multiple Occupation

In addition, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) can play an important role within the Private Rented Sector. A property is an HMO if it is let as a main or only home to at least three tenants, who form more than one household and who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet. To ensure that shared properties are safely managed HMO landlords must have a licence from the council. This ensures that the property is managed properly and meets certain safety standards. The licence will be valid for up to three years, and will then have to be renewed. This type of accommodation is often used by those on low incomes such as students and other young people as it costs less money to share a property.

⁶ This data has been gathered through analysis of the adverts for lets posted on websites during 2011. It is likely that a higher number of private lets were available but advertised through other means or informally.

Figure 3.5, below, shows that the number of licences in force has increased in Midlothian to 36. This is comparable to the neighbouring Lothian local authorities, whereas Edinburgh had 5,417 licences – which reflects the demand for this type of accommodation from the large number of students and other young people living in the city.

Figure 3.5: HMO Licences in Force in Midlothian as at 31 March of each year



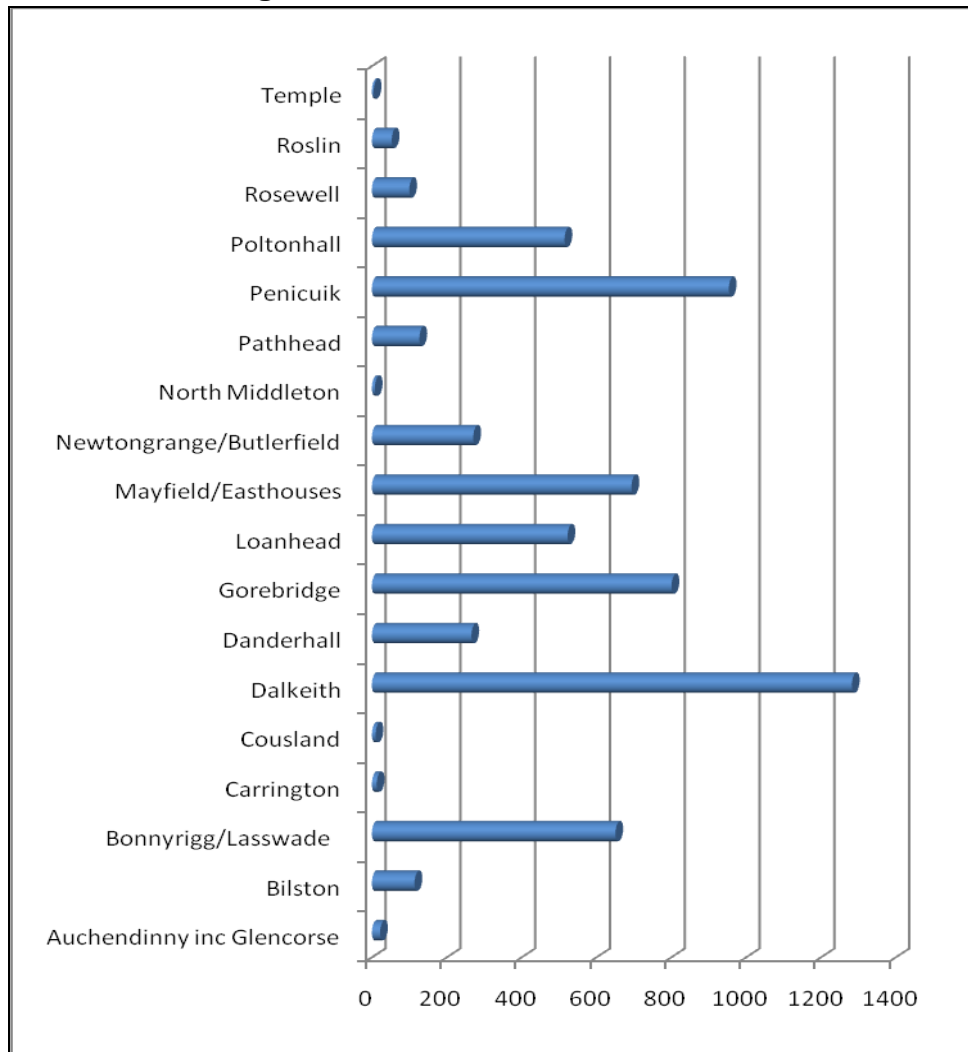
Social Rented Sector

Council Housing Stock in Midlothian

There are a total of 6,410 council homes in Midlothian. Figure 3.6, below, shows that Dalkeith is the settlement with the largest number of council homes: 1,283 units accounting for 20% of all stock. This is unsurprising, given that Dalkeith is the largest settlement in Midlothian. Penicuik has the second largest number of houses, with 954 units (15% of all council housing). The other areas with a significant proportion of council housing include: Gorebridge with 801 units (12%), Mayfield/Easthouses with 694 units (11%), Bonnyrigg/Lasswade with 651 units (10%), Loanhead with 523 units (8%) and Poltonhall with 515 units (8%).

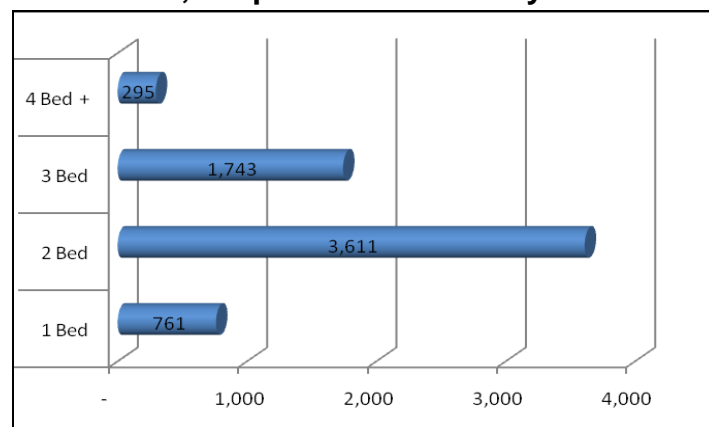
There are also many small settlements with only a handful of council homes, including Temple (5 units), North Middleton (8), Cousland (10) and Carrington (13).

Figure 3.6: Council Housing Stock in Midlothian in 2012



In terms of house sizes, the majority of stock is 2 bedroom (3,611 units), followed by 3 bed (1,743 units). There is a small number of 1 bed housing (761 units) and 4 bed and larger (295 units).

Figure 3.7: Midlothian Council, Proportion of Stock by House Size



In terms of other social rented housing in Midlothian, there are 10 other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the region, with a total of 2,961 social rented properties. Figure 3.8 shows the number of units for each landlord at present.⁷ It shows that the two landlords with the most properties are Melville Housing Association, with 1,732 units followed by Castle Rock Edinvar, with 942 units. Other social landlords have very few properties.

Figure 3.8: Number of RSL Units, by Landlord, in Midlothian, 2011

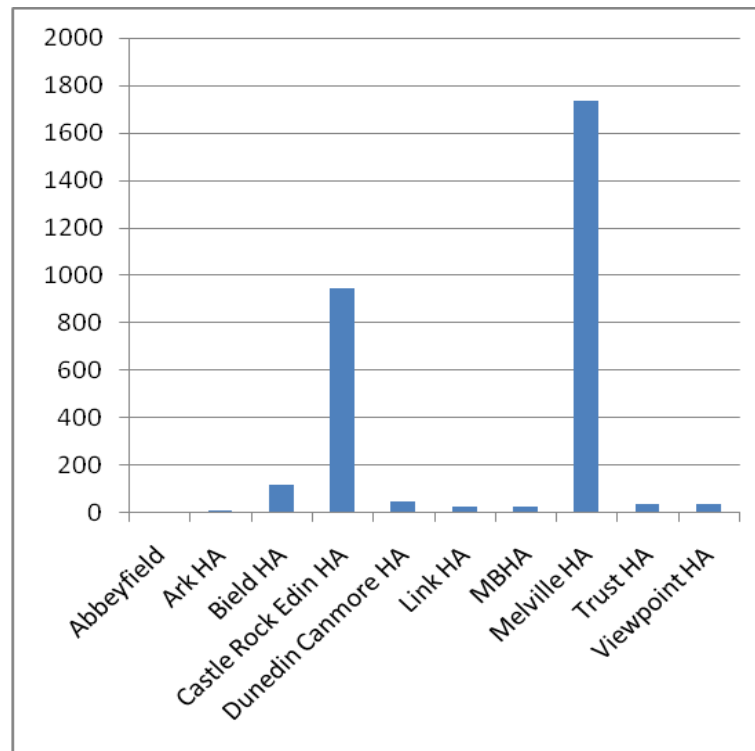


Figure 3.9 below, shows the number of new council lets in recent years. Prior to Midlothian Council undertaking new building, the number of new lets each year was very low, due to low turnover levels for council housing. From 2008/09 onwards, the effect of new lets (and the Councils Transfer Led Allocations Policy) can be seen, with a dramatic increase in the supply of council homes during this period. For example, between 2006/07 and 2008/09 there was a 180% increase in the number of new council lets.

Figure 3.10 shows the number of lets by RSLs in Midlothian. Whilst in recent years there have been significantly lower numbers of lets by RSLs compared to the Council, there has been growing numbers in years, including a high of 308 lets in 2009/10. This has been largely driven by new RSL housing development, as it is apparent that new building

⁷ Information from the RSL Register, www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

accounts for a high proportion of the supply of lets in the RSL sector also. For example, in 2010/11, 30% of lets made by RSLs were new homes being let for the first time.

Figure 3.9: Number of Council Lets 2007 - 2011

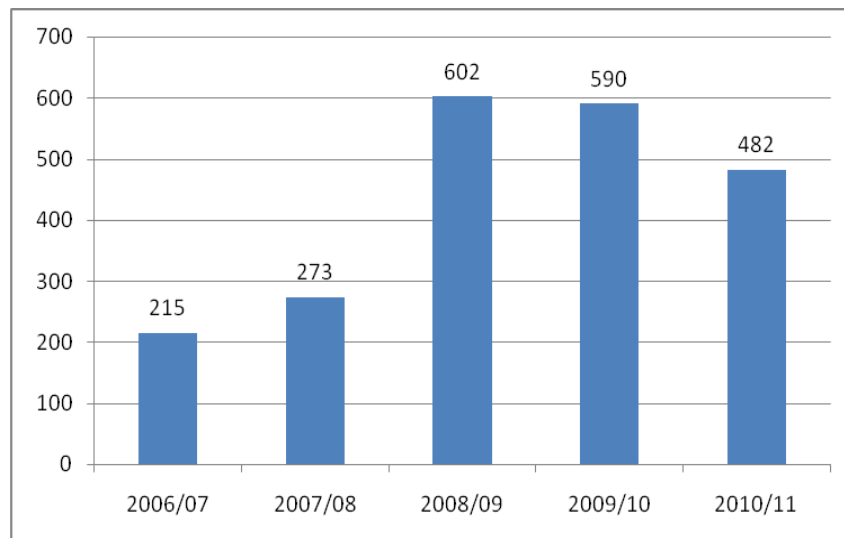
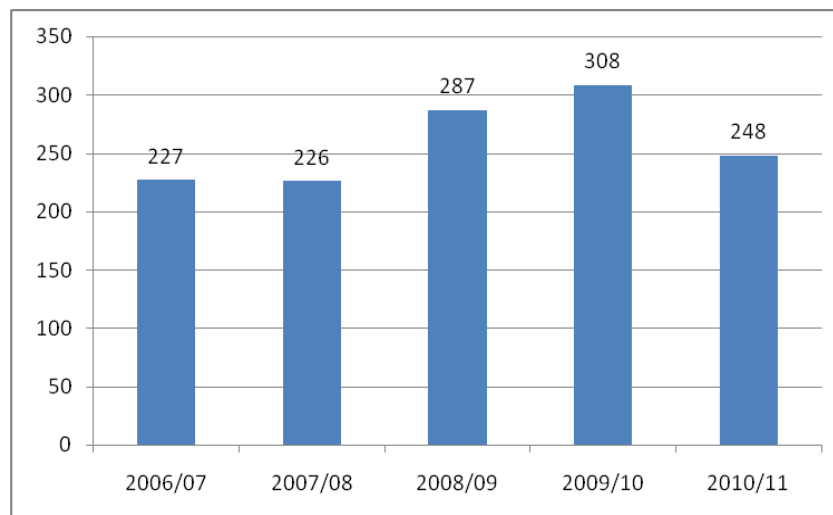


Figure 3.10: Number of RSL Lets



Source: www.scoreonline.org

Demand

Table 3.8 below, shows that despite significant investment in new council housing in the previous 5 years, the number of households on the waiting list and transfer list has risen from 2,465 to 4,588 – an increase of 86%, which is in excess of 2,000 additional households. The following table shows the breakdown into household sizes. It shows that 46% of applications are from single people, suggesting a need for smaller housing to meet the demand from these households. In addition, a total of 73% of households are 1 or 2 person households, many of these households will also only require 1 bed housing – a

house type of which there are very few in Midlothian, as noted above. However, there is still a requirement for larger housing, with 13% of households comprising 4 or more people.

Table 3.8: Number of Households on Midlothian Council's Housing List

Year	Number of Households
2006	2,465
2012	4,588

Table 3.9: Proportion of Household Size of Waiting List and Transfer List

No. of People in Household	% of All Applications
1	46%
2	27%
3	15%
4	8%
5	3%
6+	2%

Table 3.10, below shows the variation in age groups (of the main applicant on the housing list). It shows that the majority of applications come from younger households, with those aged 16 – 25 accounting for 34% of applications, whilst those aged 26 – 39 accounted for 31% of applications. This is to be expected due to new households forming when young people leave home and from families requiring affordable housing to accommodate their growing family.

Table 3.10: Proportion of Age Groups on the Housing Waiting List

Age Category	16-25	26-39	40-59	60+
%	34%	31%	25%	10%

Midlothian has a high level of demand for housing across the local authority area. Whilst the waiting lists are longest in the largest towns of Dalkeith, Penicuik and Bonnyrigg/Lasswade, there is a larger supply of relets in these areas in comparison with other smaller areas such as Newtongrange and Danderhall which have lower levels of relets. One way of determining the level of demand in an area is to use a pressure ratio. For example, 100 waiting list applicants in an area with 10 lets made in a year would give you a ratio of 10:1, in other words there are 10 applicants for every let that becomes

available. Areas with a ratio of less than 2:1 indicate low levels of demand for an area, whereas a pressure ratio higher than the national average of 4:1 would suggest that the area or house size has a high level of demand. For Midlothian overall in 2011, there was a total pressure ratio of 9:1, indicating a higher level of demand. In some smaller rural areas, levels of pressure are much higher than this, reflecting the low level of council housing in some areas.

New Supply

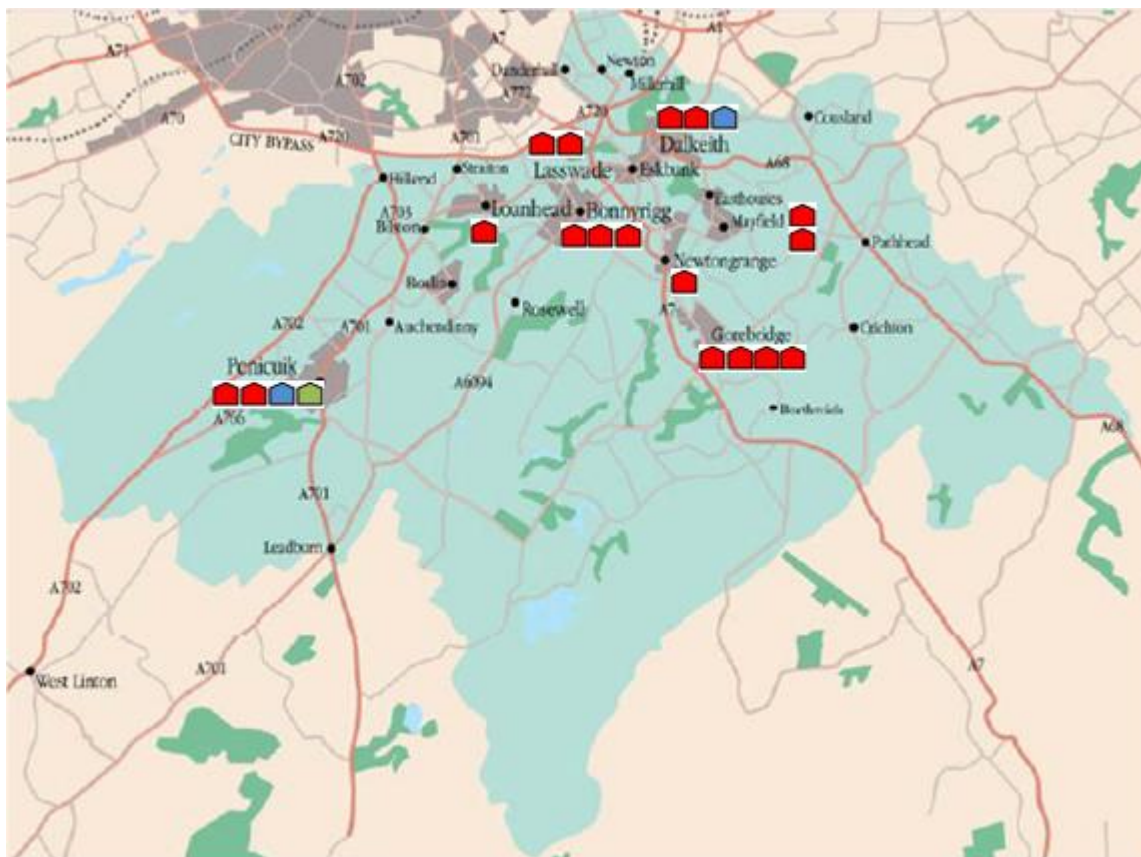
Investment in new social rented housing remains a priority for Midlothian Council, and its preferred development partners, the consortium of Melville Housing Association, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and Margaret Blackwood Housing Association. Midlothian Council has invested £108.4 Million in the development of 864 new houses across Midlothian since 2006. In January 2011, a further £56 Million was agreed for a second phase of new council housing to address the increasing demand for affordable housing in Midlothian. In addition, the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme will invest £7.7 Million into affordable housing projects, including council and housing developed by the consortium of Melville Housing Association, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and Margaret Blackwood Housing Association.

Figure 3.11, below, shows the location of all new build sites⁸ being developed by Midlothian Council, most of which are completed, and also the first sites agreed for development in the second phase, including an extra care housing development. It is evident that most new building has taken place in the larger settlements in Midlothian, where the demand for new housing is the highest. Therefore, it is likely that most of the new homes in the second phase will be in the larger towns, however, where possible some development will take place in smaller settlements within Midlothian.

Future sites for the development of affordable housing will be set out in the Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, which is updated on an annual basis and provides details of the priorities for investment for both the Council and other developing housing associations in Midlothian.

⁸ These icons note the approximate settlement area, not exact location within each settlement.

Figure 3.11: New Council Housing Sites in Midlothian



Key: New Build Phase 1 Site (Red house icon)
 New Build Phase 2 Site (Blue house icon)
 Extra Care Housing (Green house icon)

Other types of Affordable Housing

It is intended that the majority of new affordable housing in Midlothian will be social rented housing. However, there are additional types of affordable housing which will assist in meeting the need for affordable housing in Midlothian during the Strategy's lifetime. Such types are likely to include:

Mid Market Rented Housing

Mid Market Rent (MMR) is a form of housing aimed at enabling people on low and modest incomes to access affordable accommodation with affordable rent. Also known as intermediate housing, rents are set at a level below the private market rent but above social housing rent.

National Housing Trust

This is a Scottish Government initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing. It aims at delivering houses suitable for mid market (intermediate) rent, through an innovative high value-for money solution, in areas where there is a high demand for affordable housing.

Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT) - Shared Equity schemes

The purpose of the LIFT shared equity schemes (the New Supply Shared Equity Scheme and the Open Market Shared Equity Pilot) is to help first time buyers on low to moderate incomes who could not otherwise afford to buy to achieve their home ownership aspirations, where ownership sustainable for them over the long term.

Mortgage to Rent (MTR) Scheme

The MTR scheme is a Scottish Government scheme that helps home owners who are in danger of having their homes repossessed as a result of financial difficulties. Under the Mortgage to Rent scheme, the Government makes provision for a social landlord such as a housing association or local authority to buy homes and for home owners to continue to live there as a tenant.

Mortgage to Shared Equity Scheme

The Scottish Government taking a financial stake in homes where the home owner is experiencing difficulty in paying mortgage on the property. Unlike the Mortgage to rent scheme, home owners will still own their homes and continue to have responsibility for maintaining and insuring it, but will be able to reduce the amount they have to pay to lenders every month.

Mortgage Indemnity New Home Scheme

MI New Home is a scheme to allow creditworthy borrowers to access 90 to 95 per cent loan to value mortgages from participating lenders to buy new build homes in Scotland, with a maximum sales price of £250,000.

Self-build

There is the potential for low income households to build their own homes. Self-build is particularly important to give people the opportunity to own a home and remain in their communities in rural areas, and it also provides opportunities for households in other areas to choose the type of home they want and make sure it meets their needs.

Determining a Housing Supply Target for Midlothian

As presented earlier in this Strategy, the SESplan Report estimated that 121 new affordable homes per annum for 10 years was required to adequately meet housing need in Midlothian. However, Midlothian Council and its Local Housing Strategy partners believe that the level of net housing need in Midlothian needs to be considered alongside several other key factors.

1. Increasing Household Projections

The SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment was undertaken using earlier data (2006 based) on household projections supplied by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS). More recent projections have been made available since the Study was completed. These show a significant increase in the projected household growth in Midlothian. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment used the projection that there would be household growth of 4% between 2008 and 2018, and of 6% between 2008 and 2033. More recent projections suggest an increase of 6% between 2008 – 2018 and 16% between 2008 – 2033.

Consequently, if we consider the more recent projections to be more accurate it is projected that 2,890 households will form in Midlothian. This will clearly impact upon the need for housing, including affordable housing, with a greater requirement for housing in Midlothian than the earlier projections indicated.

In addition to this, the projections are purely trend based and do not reflect local and national changes in the economy nor strategic and local planning policy. As part of the Lothian Housing Need and Demand Assessment, a Scenario was developed which adjusted the projection to account for policy interventions outlined in the Edinburgh and Lothian Structure Plan 2015. These interventions allow for significant programmes of new

build in Midlothian in order to contribute the wider regional housing requirement. This implied a household growth rate of 1.7% in Midlothian from 2008 – 2028, much higher than GROS projections.

Table 3.11: Household Projections for Midlothian, 2006 based and 2008 based

Measure	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	% Change between 2008 - 2018	% Change between 2008 - 2033
Midlothian 2006 Based Household Projection	33,700	34,360	34,980	35,510	35,890	35,810	4%	6%
Midlothian 2008 Based Household Projection	34,210	35,940	37,100	38,130	38,910	39,560	8%	16%
Difference between 2006 and 2008 Projections	+510	+1,580	+2,120	+2,620	+3,020	+3,750		

Source: General Register Office for Scotland

2. Housing Waiting List and Homelessness Figures

As noted earlier, the housing waiting list in Midlothian has increased by more than 2,000 households. This has occurred during a period of record investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian, where it may have been expected that there would be a reduction in households on the waiting for suitable housing. In addition, the number of households living in temporary accommodation has increased significantly in recent years.

3. Reduced Levels of New Social Rented Housing

It is evident that the previous five years has seen a dramatic increase in the development of affordable housing in Midlothian. This is due the fact that Midlothian Council has undertaken an ambitious new build council housing programme and local housing associations have been able to secure funding for developments in recent years. Midlothian Council is funding up to 1,500 new council houses with the majority of new council housing completed by 2016. However, this programme may not continue beyond this date, and does not make up for the losses in affordable housing that occurred due to the Right to Buy sales. In addition, as noted earlier, the level of investment in new housing from the Scottish Government will also sharply decline due to the housing budget being reduced. The SESplan Housing Need and Demand Assessment made assumptions of the supply of new affordable housing at a time when the new supply was at its peak and therefore this should not be considered as a normal level of new supply, when in fact it was at its highest level for many years.

4. Meeting Housing Need across the SESplan Area

As noted earlier in this chapter, it is evident that there is a high level of housing need across the SESplan area, the 2,807 units of housing required per annum is not currently being met. Table 3.12 shows the annual total of affordable house completions and shows that in 2010, the year with the highest number of completions, a total of 1,511 affordable homes were completed across the SESplan area, which was still 1,296 units short of meeting the annual requirement. It is also likely that the housing need in other areas with higher need figures, such as Edinburgh, will cause households to move to outside into other local authority areas. The effect of this is to reduce the housing supply for the local community in Midlothian so, as a consequence, other areas of the SESplan may have to accommodate some of the 'overspill' of housing need from other areas, otherwise housing need across the SESplan area will not be met.

Table 3.13 below, shows the number of overall house completions in the SESplan area. It shows that, in contrast to affordable housing development, overall house completions have reduced in the SESplan⁹ area. Between 2004 – 2006, approximately 6,500 completions took place annually, in 2009 and 2010, this dropped to around 4,000 completions – a reduction of around 38% from earlier years.

Table 3.12: House Completions by Local Authorities and Housing Associations, SESplan Area 2004 - 2010

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
East Lothian	16	145	86	55	47	145	239
Edinburgh, City of	171	480	463	485	405	437	491
Fife	124	177	258	303	348	213	213
Midlothian	14	6	19	40	214	247	108
Scottish Borders, The	74	55	46	69	24	79	116
West Lothian	75	105	44	49	153	188	344
SESplan	474	968	916	1,001	1,191	1,309	1,511
Scotland	3,097	4,649	3,947	4,062	4,304	6,261	5,674

⁹ It should be noted that the East Fife area which is not part of the SESplan has been included, so numbers are an overestimate for the SESplan area.

Table 3.13: All House Completions, SESplan Area 2004 - 2010

Area	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
East Lothian	304	707	948	467	362	362	452
Edinburgh, City of	2,668	2,447	2,005	1,911	1,864	918	1,222
Fife	1,711	1,860	1,519	1,406	1,428	1,087	1,117
Midlothian	96	121	188	304	414	651	374
Scottish Borders, The	546	559	664	740	494	517	542
West Lothian	1,091	892	997	1,062	604	443	557
SESplan	6,416	6,586	6,321	5,890	5,166	3,978	4,264
Scotland	24,973	25,288	25,271	25,736	22,016	17,847	16,893

Table 3.14, shows the housing land allocation for Midlothian and the SESPlan area, this shows that there is currently capacity for 11,800 units on existing sites, and additional land for a further 700 units between 2009 and 2019 and 1,750 units between 2019 and 2024. This provides an ample supply for housing development across all tenures. Table 3.15, shows the suggested housing supply target for Midlothian between 2013 and 2017. It shows that 565 new build homes per annum is the annual target, of which there is a target of 165 of the new homes to be affordable. The number of affordable houses exceeds the SESPlan Housing Need and Demand Assessment calculation, due to above considerations. In terms of affordable housing, there will be a significant level of new council housing development during this period which will contribute to this target. However, reduced subsidy from the Scottish Government to support other Registered Social Landlords will mean that this will be a challenging target.

The target of private sector house completions is higher, at 400. Both targets are ambitious given the current economic climate, although it is recognised that a higher target in Midlothian would be required to adequately address the level of need and demand for housing in Midlothian.

However, ongoing discussion between the Council and housing developers suggest that in the coming years there will be a significantly increased number of new private homes developed which is beneficial not only to meeting the level of demand, but it also contributes to local economic growth. The target for both market and affordable housing will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains a realistic target. It is also recognised that bringing existing empty properties back into use is beneficial to increase the supply of housing in Midlothian.

Table 3.14: Housing Land Allocations in Midlothian and the SESPlan Area

Area	Committed Development	2009 - 2019	2019 - 2024
Midlothian	11,800	700	1,750
SESPlan	125,100	3,300	6,850

Table 3.15: Annual Midlothian Housing Supply Target 2013 - 2017

Sector	Annual Target
Affordable	165
Market	400
Total	565

Welfare Reform and Improving Housing Options

Housing Need in Social Rented Housing

From April 2013, many tenants who currently underoccupy their own home and who receive Housing Benefit to help pay their rent will see a 14% reduction in their housing benefit if they under occupy by 1 bedroom and 25% if they under occupy by 2 bedrooms, this will mean some tenants would have a shortfall in their rent payments.¹⁰

Many social rented tenants currently live in properties which are larger than their household might require. This could be for a variety of reasons, including landlords having flexible policies on qualifying room sizes and tenants circumstances changing, such as children leaving home. Demographic change also means a growing number of single person households are emerging. This is evidenced by both the general population projections and social housing waiting lists. For instance, 47% of households on Midlothian Council's Waiting List are single people – whilst only 11% of council housing is this size. In addition, few social landlords have built significant numbers of 1 bedroom property, and many of those units were designated for particular needs such as amenity housing for the elderly. Consequently, there is a mismatch between the need for smaller homes and the supply of homes of this size. Consequently, social landlords in Midlothian need to focus future development activity on providing smaller homes for rent – however, this will not address the need. In addition, some larger house sizes may have a reduced level of demand due to there being a reduced number of households who can access

¹⁰ This only applies to working age tenants and not pensioner age households.

larger homes. Some landlords may wish to consider converting larger homes if this is realistic.

However, it is evident that fewer tenants in Midlothian will be adversely affected by welfare reform changes compared to other areas in Scotland. In 2011/12, 46% of Midlothian Council tenants received Housing Benefit to pay for part or all of their rental costs, the Scottish average for council tenants is 62% - suggesting a higher proportion of tenants in other areas will be affected than in Midlothian. In addition, many of those households will not be of working age and therefore will not be affected.

Housing Need in Private Rented Sector Housing

The Local Housing Allowance caps may restrict the number of homes that can be accessed by households who require Housing Benefit to live in private rented accommodation. This is because private landlords may be unwilling to reduce their rent as a result of the caps and decide that they can access suitable tenants who are not reliant on Housing Benefit. Private Landlords may also have concerns about increased arrears as a result of the housing element of universal credit being paid directly.

Access for a single household will also become more restricted due to households under the age of 35 being able to access benefit payments which would entitle them to shared accommodation (this was previously for those aged under 25). There is currently a lack of smaller sized accommodation available in the sector, as shown earlier, most properties are 2 and 3 bedroom in size. To respond to welfare reform, an increased proportion of shared accommodation needs to be made available in this sector, and this should result in an increase in HMO accommodation.

Specific actions at the end of this section have been developed which are intended to mitigate the effects of welfare reform.

Key Challenges

- Many low income households require affordable housing due to the high average cost of private sector housing.
- Providing affordable housing will be more difficult given the reduced level of government subsidy available.
- The population is projected to increase significantly, and there will be a larger number of new small households (including rising numbers of single person households) requiring housing across all tenures.
- Delivering on the housing supply targets will be challenging during a downturn in the housing market.
- High numbers of households are unable to access owner occupied housing due to the lack of mortgage availability and the requirement for larger deposits than previously required.
- Implications of welfare reform will have an impact on housing need and demand in Midlothian.

Key Actions:

1. Development of a second phase of Midlothian Council's affordable housing programme to build up to 1,300 new council homes by 2017.
2. Develop affordable housing using innovative models for securing more affordable homes which requires less subsidy, such as Mid Market Rented Housing.
3. Increase the use of the private rented sector in meeting housing need, including through the use of HMOs.
4. Build smaller housing to address the growing number of single person households and to avoid households under-occupying larger homes in the social rented sector.
5. Work with partners in the public and private sector to meet the housing supply target of 565 new homes per annum.
6. Improve social housing choice and access through social housing allocation policies.
7. Improve mobility in the social rented housing through use of mutual exchanges and readily available lets.
8. Ensure households at risk of welfare reform are informed of changes that will affect them and offer solutions, such as use of incentive to move and downsizing schemes.

9. Secure homes and resources for affordable housing through Midlothian Council's Affordable Housing Policy.
10. Work with partners to provide options for home ownership for low income residents of Midlothian.
11. Contribute to wider strategic planning for housing in the South East of Scotland Development Plan area.
12. Develop an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan to set out the areas and Sites for priorities for investment.
13. Support the local economy by promoting opportunities for training and employment schemes through housing construction programmes.
14. Support the involvement of tenants and residents in housing services in Midlothian.
15. Investigate options for developing a Common Housing Register by 2013.
16. Support initiatives that assist first time buyers to purchase a property.

Outcome: Households have improved housing options across all tenures

4. Addressing Homelessness in Midlothian

Key Policy and Legislation in Relation to Homelessness

Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003

This Act required Scottish local authorities to abolish the distinction between homeless households who were considered to be in priority need and those not considered to be in priority need (which deemed certain households as requiring assistance in accessing accommodation, such as someone who is pregnant or vulnerable, such as the very young or the elderly. Prior to this law coming into force in 2012, local authorities were only required to assist a homeless household in priority need to access settled accommodation. By 2012, all homeless households will become entitled to accommodation rather than just those who are in priority need.

The Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act also set out to end further tests conducted by local authorities to establish if a homeless household has a local connection with the area and whether or not the household is intentionally homeless.

Homelessness Code of Practice Guidance

This Code of Practice provides advice for how local authorities can best address homelessness in their area and points to good practice in areas such as prevention of homelessness, provision of accommodation and assessment decisions. Consequently it is important that the guidance set out in the Code of Practice is considered when developing a Local Housing Strategy for Midlothian.

Midlothian Council Allocation Policy 2013

Midlothian Council recently revised its current allocation policy to reflect the requirement to provide settled accommodation to an increased proportion of homeless households. Amendments include moving to a “group and points” method of allocation to ensure 45% of housing allocations are to homeless households.

The chart below shows that the number of households presenting themselves as homeless in Midlothian increased significantly between 2006 and 2008, since then the number of presentations has fallen, apart from in 2011. Between 2008 and 2012, presentations in Midlothian decreased by 15%. Across Scotland there has also been a declining trend in homeless presentations, as shown in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.1: Homelessness Presentations in Midlothian 2004 - 2012¹¹

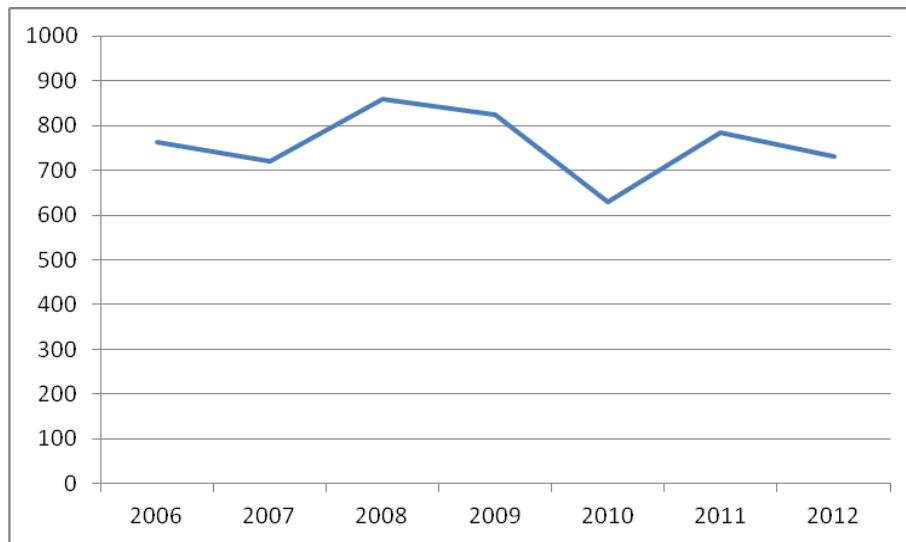
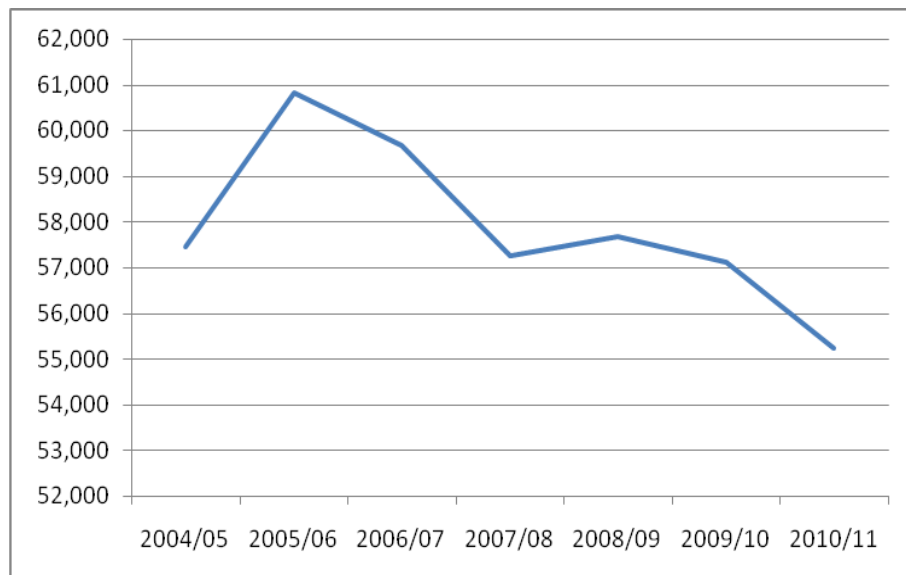


Figure 4.2: Homelessness Presentations in Scotland 2004 - 2012



¹¹ 2011/12 data is incomplete, and covers all applications until 15th February 2012 – an estimate has been made for further presentations until 31st March using the average number of presentations for the period November – January as a guide.

Meeting the Priority Need Target

The chart below shows the progress made in Scotland and Midlothian towards the requirement of providing settled accommodation to all households who are assessed as homeless. As this chart covers shorter time periods there is some fluctuation in percentages in Midlothian, but it is evident that Midlothian Councils percentage of cases meeting the priority need target was similar to the Scottish average until June 2012, where the Council agreed to abolish priority need – and therefore complied with the Scottish Government's December 2012 deadline. The Scottish average for the third quarter of 2012 was 93%.

Figure 4.2: Percentage of Households Assessed as Homeless and in Priority Need in Midlothian and Scotland 2002 - 2011



In Midlothian, steps towards meeting the target was undertaken through increasing the age categories considered to be more vulnerable – this focused on younger and older people.

However, some local authorities had not met the 2012 target. Several local authorities in the SESPlan region had not met the target. This is primarily due to there being a very high level of housing need in this region, with demand for affordable housing exceeding supply. Table 4.1 below shows the performance of other local authorities in South East of Scotland area meeting the target.

Table 4.1: Other South East Scotland local authorities % of homeless applicants being assessed as Priority Need July – September 2012

Area	%
East Lothian	76%
Edinburgh	80%
Fife	92%
Scottish Borders	100%
West Lothian	100%
Scotland	93%

Reasons for Homelessness

Table 4.2: Reasons for Homelessness, 2008/09 – 2010/11

Reason	Number of Households	% of Households
Parents no longer willing/able to accommodate	667	29.5%
Domestic Violence	399	17.6%
Other relatives/friends no longer willing/able to accommodate	333	14.7%
Partner Dispute	203	9.0%
Lost Private/Tied Tenancy	130	5.7%
Lost Council/Social Landlord Tenancy	49	2.2%
Harassment	41	1.8%
Mortgage Default	34	1.5%
Fleeing Non Domestic Violence	23	1.0%
Forced division or sale of property	29	1.3%
Prison Discharge	23	1.0%
Overcrowding	22	1.0%
Closing/Demolition Order	7	0.3%
Hospital Discharge	5	0.2%
Other	297	13.1%
Total	2262	100.0%

Table 4.2 provides an insight into why people become homeless in Midlothian. A significant proportion is due to parents, friends, or families being unable to accommodate the household any longer, accounting for 44% of all homeless households. However, there are many other reasons why a household should become homeless, including a householder losing their current home in all tenures. This could be due to repossession, eviction, a private landlord giving a tenant notice to quit, and poor property conditions. Relationship breakdown was also a cause, through domestic violence (18%) or a non violent dispute between a couple. In order for the Council to reduce the number people becoming homeless it will therefore need to address the diverse causes of homelessness

in Midlothian. For example, some of those who experience homelessness or are threatened with homelessness may have mental health issues or substance misuse problems that have contributed to a chaotic lifestyle.

Household Types affected by Homelessness

The chart below shows the age of the household presenting as homeless. It shows that while the majority of presentations have been from young people aged 16 to 24 (38% of households), the number of presentations was also high among those aged between 25 and 39 (36% of presentations). There was also a significant number of applicants aged 40 to 59 (24%) while there were only small numbers of those aged 60 and over.

Figure 4.3: Number of Homeless Presentations, by Age Group 2008 - 2011

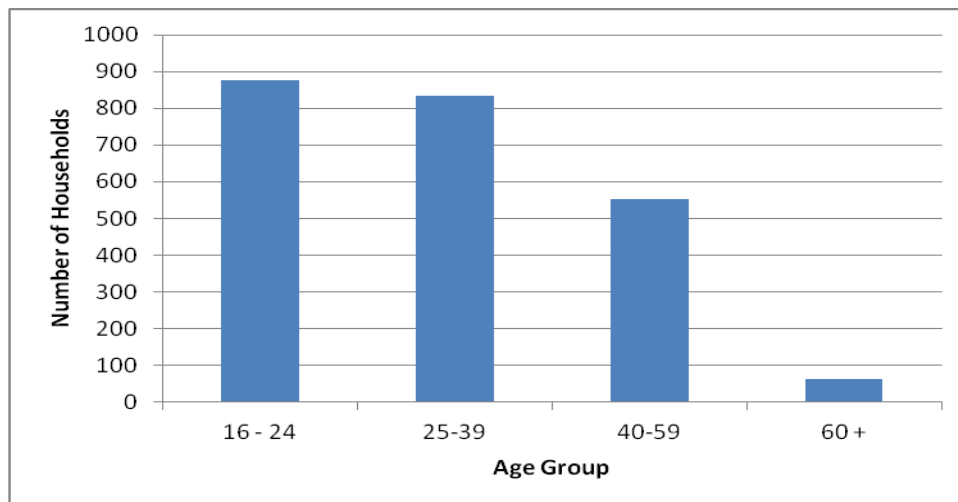
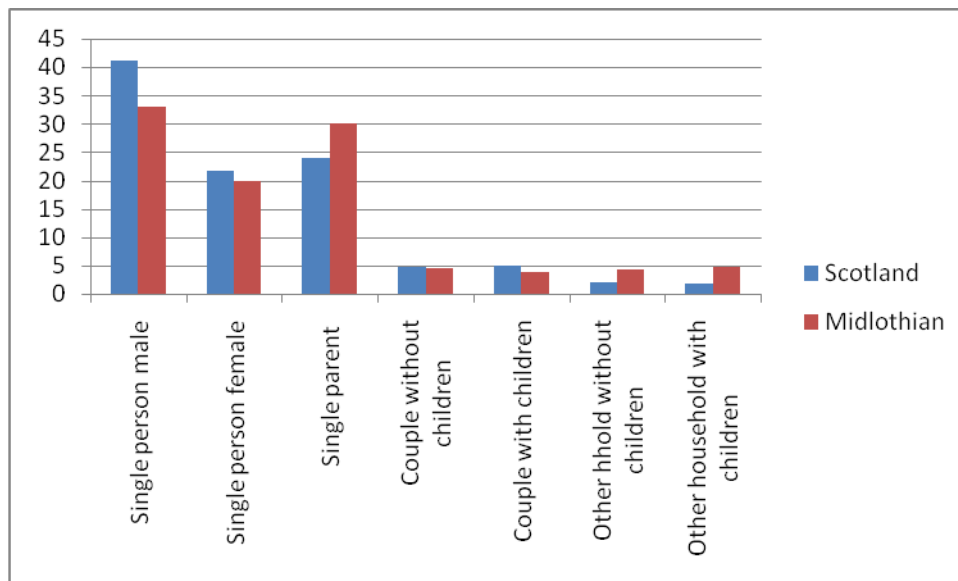


Figure 4.4 shows the different household types who presented in Midlothian and Scotland during 2010/11. It showed that in Midlothian 53% of homeless households were single people, with 33% being male and 20% being female. This is quite different to the Scottish average of 63% of applicants being single people, with 41% being males. In addition, 30% of households were single parent families, which was higher than the Scottish average of 24%. It is therefore evident that single adult households (whether they are single people or single parents) are far more likely to become homeless than other household types, which were a small proportion of homeless applicants in Midlothian and Scotland.

Figure 4.4: Homelessness, by Household Type, in Midlothian and Scotland, 2011



Source: Scottish Government Statistics 2011

Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households

Midlothian Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation to a significant number of homeless households. The number of households living in temporary accommodation in Midlothian has been rising in recent years. This is due to a number of factors:

- Midlothian Council has been increasing the number of groups considered to have a homeless priority need in order to meet the 2012 homeless target.
- There is a shortage of available accommodation for homeless households therefore settled accommodation is in high demand.
- Homeless households are spending longer waiting for settled accommodation, with the average homeless household living in temporary accommodation for more than a year before being able to access settled accommodation.

Figure 4.5: Number of Households in Homeless Accommodation, April 2009 – December 2012

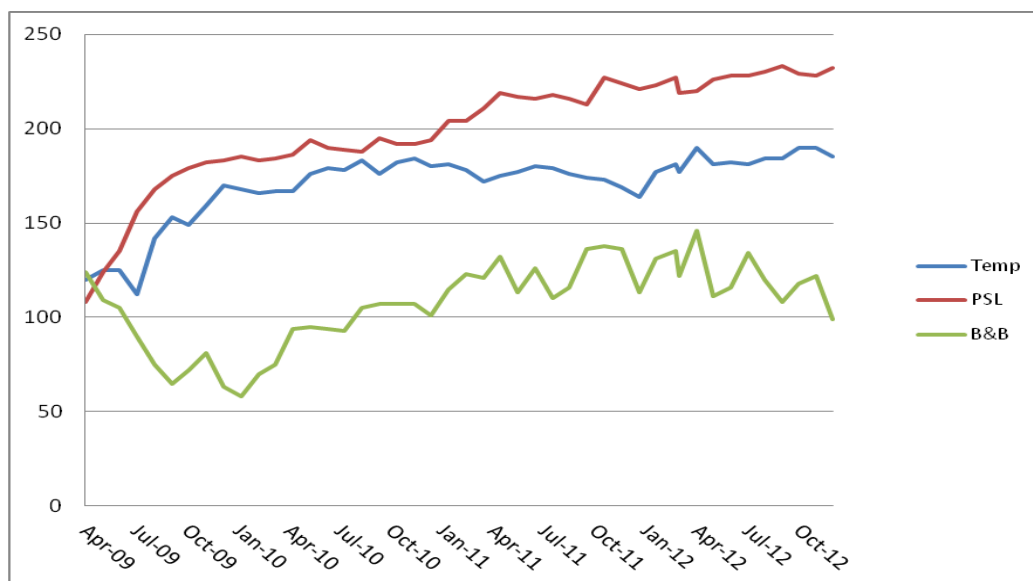


Figure 4.5, above, shows the impact on temporary accommodation requirements. In recent years the number of households living in temporary accommodation has increased from 352 to 556 between April 2009 and April 2012. This is an increase of 58%. As a result of the increased provision of properties through the private rented sector and through additional council owned property brought back into use through the spend to save scheme, the number of households being accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation reduced for a period, before rising to a similar level as at 2009.

Housing Support in Midlothian

Housing support is help that is provided to enable someone to manage on a day to day basis whilst they are living in their own home. It can include things like help with budgeting and paying bills, planning meals and shopping or emotional support. Support is usually provided by a support worker, or a team of support workers. Support could be provided to someone in different circumstances, for example, in their own tenancy, or in a hostel environment. Supported housing and related support services provide a significant contribution to the wider agenda of inclusive and sustainable communities, including supporting people into training, education and employment. Some households, such as vulnerable homeless households may struggle to maintain their tenancy, however, Midlothian Council has a very high success rate of tenancy sustainment – in 2011/12 94% of previously homeless households sustained their permanent tenancy for at least 12

months. Midlothian Council provides a housing support service via an external provider who also provide manage the supported hostels for homeless households. The locally based RSLs also provide tenancy support services, in the case of Melville Housing Association; they received funding through the Big Lottery Fund to support all new tenants to ensure tenancies had an excellent chance of sustainment.

What is Homeless Prevention?

Activities and intervention which can be described as homelessness prevention are aimed at helping households who may be threatened with homelessness or feel that presenting themselves as homeless to the local authority is the only option open to them. However, many of the causes of homelessness are preventable.

Why is Homeless Prevention Important?

- The costs of homelessness are high for both central and local government in terms of the costs of providing and paying for accommodation for households who are homeless.
- In Midlothian, a household who becomes homeless is likely to be dependent on housing benefit to pay for temporary accommodation which may not be suitable for their needs and is likely to require some time in bed and breakfast or hostel accommodation.
- They are also likely to have to wait a long time for suitable accommodation in an area of their choice which meets their needs.

The above factors can have a detrimental effect on a household's social network, on their prospects for entering into employment and training opportunities, and on their health and wellbeing. Therefore, becoming homeless should be the very last resort for most households in Midlothian.

What Activities can help Prevent Homelessness?

1. Providing Housing Options

Providing housing options can benefit a wide section of the community, not just the people at risk of homelessness, although it is important that there are housing options which assist those at risk of homelessness. The types of services include:

- Providing information and advice so that people can find out more about the housing options in Midlothian, including council housing, housing associations, private renting, options for lodging and flatsharing, and remaining in current accommodation if suitable and safe.
- Facilitating mechanisms for providing housing, such as encouraging the use of private rented housing.
- Ensuring that housing staff, and a wide range of organisations are able to provide guidance to households in relation to their housing needs. This can be done in many ways, for example, having a housing options interview to discuss worries, the likely waiting times for specific areas for social rented housing and seeking advice on debt problems.
- Many households who are homeless may find access to suitable accommodation which is not owned by the Council or local housing association, and it is important that the private rented sector is recognised as a suitable tenure for providing settled accommodation to homeless households.

One example of providing a housing option is by providing 'Letfirst'. A significant number of homeless or potentially homeless households could be accommodated in the private sector through initiatives aimed at making better use of the private rented sector. The lack of a tenancy deposit, reference or being on DWP benefits restricts access to many people who would otherwise be able to sustain a private tenancy. Letfirst works by helping to increase accessibility in the private rented sector, by offering private landlords a guaranteed rent backed up by a tenancy and property management service. For the tenant they are able to choose a private rented let without requiring a deposit and ensure they receive a good housing service from an accredited letting agency.

2. Ensuring that people can sustain their Current Accommodation

Tenancy sustainment is an important way of ensuring that people can avoid homelessness. Levels of tenancy sustainment are very high in Midlothian (96% of homeless applicants after receiving permanent accommodation remained a Council tenant after 12 months – higher than is the case nationally). Many households will require access to housing support services to ensure that they have the necessary living skills to manage their tenancy effectively. Many owner occupiers are vulnerable to homelessness if they

are under threat of repossession but there are also opportunities to prevent this situation from happening, such as the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent Scheme.

3. Targeting Specific Groups who are Vulnerable to Homelessness

Young people are at particular risk of homelessness, therefore it is important to educate young people about homelessness and explain their housing options to them. Midlothian Council currently delivers education in schools, but it also needs to work more effectively to reduce the level of presentations from young people by other methods of support. One way it is doing this is by providing a youth intervention service for young people aged between 16 and 25. This service carries out a range of activities, including visiting the young person's parents to talk to them about their homeless application and helping them to investigate housing options while remaining in the home to avoid homelessness. There are other groups that have a higher risk of homelessness, including people leaving care and veterans of the armed forces and in many cases, early intervention would be help to avoid the threat of homelessness.

What are Housing Options Hubs?

Five regional Hubs have been established across Scotland to promote a housing options approach to homelessness prevention. Midlothian is a member of the Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders Hub, which contains six local authority areas, who experience similar challenging in providing settled accommodation and housing support for households who present themselves as homeless to the local authority. Housing Options Hubs, funded by the Scottish Government, enable partnership working on projects which benefit all local authority areas in terms of providing greater housing options to homeless households.

Since the Hub was established in 2010 a range of activities have been undertaken, including providing mediation training for staff, and a housing options advertising campaign across the region. An Action Plan for the Hub has been developed, with actions including:

- Development of an interactive web based housing options tool.
- Exploring flatsharing models in the private rented sector.

Progress on meeting the Hub Actions is important in order that Midlothian's outcome in relation to Homelessness can be realised. Progress will be reported in the annual Local Housing Strategy update.

Homelessness and Welfare Reform

Changes to the welfare benefits system will impact upon how the Local Housing Strategy Outcome in relation to homelessness.

Access to social rented housing

As noted earlier in this section, around half of all homeless applicants are single people. Conversely, only a small proportion of social rented housing is 1 bedroom. In the past, Midlothian Council and other RSL partners would allocate 1 or 2 bed social rented housing to single persons. However, this will change as those who underoccupy a house receive a reduced benefit entitlement.

Access to private rented housing

The majority of homes in the private rented sector is also larger than 1 bedroom sized which means that single homeless households will be unlikely to be able to access this tenure. All those aged under 35 will only be able to access a shared room in a private rented home. The effect of this is to limit the housing options of homeless households who receive housing benefit.

Temporary Accommodation

Due to homeless households being restricted in their housing options, it is likely that there will be a continued requirement for temporary accommodation, and single households may face significant waiting times for settled accommodation. An increased supply of suitable housing including Council and RSL owned temporary accommodation and emergency accommodation, such as the provision of shared accommodation including HMOs will be necessary to avoid an increase in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

Specific actions at this end of this section have been developed which are intended to mitigate the effects of welfare reform.

Key Issues in relation to Addressing Homelessness in Midlothian

- Midlothian Council has met the Homeless 2012 target, which means the Council needs to provide settled accommodation to all households assessed as unintentionally homeless. However, there is not enough affordable housing to accommodate the number of homeless households in Midlothian.

- There are too many homeless households living in bed and breakfast accommodation, costing the Council a significant amount of money.
- There are not enough housing options available to those at risk of homelessness.
- A significant proportion of young people are presenting as homeless who have previously lived with their parents.
- Some households require support to sustain their tenancy and to assist them with life skills and independent living.
- Welfare Reform changes mean that single people aged under 35s reliant on housing benefit will no longer be able to be housed in their own private tenancy.

Key Actions:

1. Ensure that all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation.
2. Reduce the average number of homeless households living in bed and breakfast accommodation by 50% by 2017.
3. Increase the number and proportion of housing allocations to homeless households by social landlords, including a target of 45% of all council house allocations per annum.
4. Reduce the amount of time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation.
5. Reduce the number of breaches of unsuitable temporary accommodation to zero.
6. Provide up to 40 additional temporary accommodation units for homeless households in Midlothian by 2014.
7. Provide a good quality housing information and advice in a variety of formats, including through face to face contact, over the telephone, on the web, and through printed materials which are widely distributed.
8. Work with accredited private landlords to increase the use of private rented housing used to accommodate homeless households, and those at risk of becoming homeless.
9. Reduce the number of homeless presentations by 20% through early intervention, homeless prevention activity (including skills development) and by providing housing options.
10. Ensure all households who require housing support are able to access appropriate services promptly.
11. Provide housing options support and skills development to young people leaving care in order that they can avoid homelessness.

12. Work with MFIN partners to increase financial inclusion among all those at risk of homelessness through income maximisation service.
13. Ensure those at risk of domestic abuse are provided with appropriate support.
14. Work with the South East Scotland Housing Options Hub to increase the availability of housing options in Midlothian.
15. Maintain a high level of tenancy sustainment in all tenancies through providing a range of support services.
16. Continue to provide up to 250 properties as temporary accommodation in the private sector.
17. Ensure the quality and standard of temporary accommodation is monitored through periodic inspection and customer surveys.
18. Retender hostel staffing and tenancy support services used by Midlothian Council tenants and service users by 2013.
19. Provide private rented sector lets through the Letfirst Scheme.
20. Provide a youth homelessness prevention service to reduce the number of homeless presentations from those aged 16 – 25.

Outcome:

Homeless households and those threatened with homelessness are able to access support and advice services and all unintentionally homeless households will be able to access settled accommodation

5. Improving housing quality

Key Legislation and Policy in relation to Housing Quality

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) was introduced in 2004 by the Scottish Government as is the principal measure of housing quality in Scotland. To meet the SHQS, a property must meet specific standards in five areas:

- Must be free from Serious Disrepair
- Must be compliant with the Tolerable Standard
- Must be Energy Efficient
- Must have Modern Facilities and Services
- Must be Healthy, Safe and Secure

The Scottish Government has set a target for all social rented property to meet the SHQS by 2015. In addition, the Scottish Housing Quality Standard will be revised in 2012, which will require higher standards for all social rented sector housing.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

This Act was intended to make owners more aware of their repair and maintenance responsibilities and be more proactive in carrying them out. Consequently, the use of grants from local authorities would be used only when strictly necessary. The Act was also introduced to help improve standards in the private rented sector. Legislative requirements included:

- Giving Councils the powers to declare a Housing Renewal Area for an area where housing is in poor condition, and develop an Action Plan for improvement.
- Requiring all private householders to produce a home report prior to selling their property.
- Requiring all local authorities to develop a Scheme of Assistance for private householders to support householders to adequately maintain their property. This is in order that householders can be provided with assistance despite grant assistance being made available.

- Improved rights for private tenants to ensure their landlords carry out repairs or make adaptations for a disabled tenant.

Private Rented Housing

In addition there has been several areas of increased regulation in relation to the Private Rented Sector in recent years. The Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 now requires all private landlords to register with the Council to ensure that they are reputable and to protect tenants in the private rented sector. The Private Rented Housing (Scotland) Act 2011 has increased the regulatory requirements for landlord registration, Houses in Multiple Occupation and overcrowding with increased penalties for landlords who conduct unlawful practices.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

One of the main provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 is to ensure the quality of service being provided by social landlords in Scotland. In order to do so, a Scottish Social Housing Charter has been developed. The Charter sets out the outcomes and the standards that all social landlords should be aiming to achieve for all their tenants and customers.

Private Sector House Condition in Midlothian

In 2008 Midlothian Council commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey to assess the condition of the private housing stock. 962 dwellings were surveyed internally and externally (3.6% of all private housing in Midlothian). Some of the main findings from this survey included:

- An estimated 288 dwellings (1.1% of all housing) was found to be Below the Tolerable Standard, and therefore not fit for habitation.
- 3.6% of properties were vacant and older properties were most likely to be empty.
- 9.5% of properties had some kind of dampness or condensation present, and were generally found in older properties. Single glazed properties were more likely to have problems of dampness.
- 9.6% of properties required major repairs.
- The general condition of the areas where houses were surveyed was considered good, with only minor problems noted, such as damaged footpaths.

- 21,856 private dwellings (81.4%) are non compliant with the SHQS. However, the majority of homes failed due to not having a high enough standard of energy efficiency or lacking safety aspects such as communal lighting, safe external paving etc. Very few properties failed due to poor property condition.

In addition to the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, the Scottish Government also undertakes the Scottish House Condition Survey which enables comparison to be drawn with other areas of Scotland. Table 5.1, below showed that the majority of housing in Scotland failed the SHQS when samples of properties were surveyed in each area. In Midlothian, 69% of private housing failed the SHQS standard in the 2003 – 2006 surveys, just under the Scottish average of 72%. There has been a considerable reduction in SHQS failures since then, as indicated by the 2009 – 2011 Scottish House Condition Survey. It showed that 58% of private housing failed the SHQS. This means that private housing in Midlothian is generally in better condition compared to Scotland.

This increase in stock meeting the standard is likely to be at least partly due to the significant level of investment into energy efficiency improvements in private housing, through increased central heating installations, loft and cavity wall insulation. West Lothian had a higher proportion of private housing meeting the SHQS, but it is likely that this is due to the average age of the housing stock in Midlothian being older, and older housing is more likely to have areas of improvement required to meet the SHQS.

Table 5.1: Percentage of Private Housing that Failed the SHQS 2003 - 2011

Area	2003 - 2006	2009 - 2011
	% of Stock	% of Stock
Midlothian	69%	58%
East Lothian	68%	49%
West Lothian	55%	50%
Scotland	72%	60%

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey

Table 5.2 shows that a significant proportion of private housing surveyed had an urgent repair required to prevent damage to the fabric of the property. In a survey carried out during 2003 – 2006, it was found that 38% of private housing had some form of urgent repair. This has not changed significantly between the two survey periods, which indicates that disrepair is an ongoing issue in private sector housing in Midlothian, although it is

similar lower than in East Lothian and the Scottish average. Again West Lothian had a lower proportion of older properties than in Midlothian which is likely to result in a lower proportion of properties requiring urgent repairs, as these are more prevalent in older properties.

Table 5.2: Percentage of Private Housing that required Urgent Repairs

Area	2003 - 2006	2009 - 2011
	% of Stock	% of Stock
Midlothian	38%	33%
East Lothian	34%	35%
West Lothian	32%	29%
Scotland	37%	37%

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey

Housing Renewal Areas

Councils have the power to enforce housing standards when a significant number of houses in the locality are sub-standard or when their appearance is adversely affecting the amenity of that locality. There are currently no Housing Renewal Areas in Midlothian, however, the proposed policy for identifying a Housing Renewal Area is set out in Appendix 1.

Midlothian Scheme of Assistance

Midlothian Council's Scheme of Assistance for private households sets out:

- the circumstances in which the Council will provide assistance to address problems in the private sector housing stock within the Midlothian area;
- the assistance it will provide to disabled people to enable them to live independently in their own homes.

Table 5.3 and 5.4 below show that there has been significant reduction in the level of investment made in Midlothian to help people maintain their private properties, in line with the Scottish Government's intention that the responsibility of maintaining homes should rest with the property owners. In terms of assistance to disabled people, this is considered in the next Chapter.

Table 5.3: Funding for Improvement and Repairs in Midlothian

Total Spend 2009/10	£132,307
No. of Works	64

Common Works	Chimney Repairs, Reharling, Roof Repairs
Total Spend 2010/11	£17,952
No. of Works	22
Common Works	Roof Repairs

Table 5.4: Aids and Adaptations in Midlothian

Common Types of Aids and Adaptations	Annual Cost 2010/11	Total Number
Bath Aids, Bed Accessories, Chair Accessories, Hoists, Walking Aids	£252,431	4,042

Stock Condition in the Social Rented Sector

Midlothian Council has undertaken a 100% Stock Condition Survey of its properties in order to inform the Council's progress towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and overall investment needs across an extended 30 year planning period from 2011/12 to 2040/41. This Survey shows that there has been a dramatic improvement in the number of Council homes being compliant with the SHQS in recent years. Overall compliance with the SHQS has increased from 1,640 dwellings (26.9%) meeting the SHQS in 2008, to 5,909 dwellings (88%) in 2013. This means there is a smaller proportion of properties which don't meet the SHQS than in neighbouring local authorities and for Scotland as a whole. In addition, the Council has agreed £29 Million of investment in repair and maintenance of the Council Housing stock to ensure that all council homes meet the SHQS by 2015.

Table 5.5: Percentage of Council Housing Stock Failing the SHQS 2011¹²

Area	% of Council Properties Failing the SHQS
East Lothian	45%
West Lothian	34%
Scotland	43%

Source: Scottish Housing Regulator and Midlothian Council Stock Condition Survey

Table 5.6, below, also indicates the improvement in meeting the SHQS between 2008 and 2011, by electoral ward and house type. It shows that Midlothian South had 84% of

¹² Compliance Levels in other Areas may be slightly out of date in comparison with recently updated Midlothian Council data

properties meeting the SHQS, whilst 69% were compliant with the SHQS in Midlothian East. Bonnyrigg Ward has seen the most significant level of investment – in 2008 only 11% of council housing complied with the SHQS compared to 75% in 2011. There will have been a considerable improvement in these figures since the Survey was undertaken.

Table 5.6: Percentage of Council Housing Stock Compliant with the SHQS 2008 – 2010, by Electoral Ward and House Type

Electoral Ward	2008		2011	
	No.	%	No.	%
Penicuik	437	45%	721	77%
Bonnyrigg	119	11%	774	75%
Dalkeith	442	27%	1,181	76%
Midlothian West	291	36%	591	76%
Midlothian East	158	22%	483	69%
Midlothian South	193	20%	723	84%
House Type	No.	%	No.	%
Terraced House	878	33%	2,011	77%
Semi-Detached/ Detached House	236	20%	893	83%
Flat in Stair	70	11%	361	58%
Four in Block Flat	425	29%	1,157	83%
Amenity/Sheltered	13	15%	28	35%
Homeless Unit	18	25%	23	52%
Total	1,640	27%	4,473	76%

Source: Midlothian Council Stock Condition Survey. Percentages may not add up to exactly due to rounding.

In terms of other Registered Social Landlords, the table below indicates current housing standards in other social rented housing in Midlothian. As of 2011, 70% of social rented housing (let by an RLS other than the Council) met the SHQS, which was slightly lower than the Scottish average for RSLs of 78%, as shown in Table 5.7. RSLs are committed to meeting the 100% target by 2015.

Table 5.7: RSL Compliance with SHQS in Midlothian

Total No. of RSL Properties	2,948
Total No. (%) of RSL Housing Meeting SHQS	2,057 (70%)
Scottish Average for RSL Compliance with the SHQS	78%

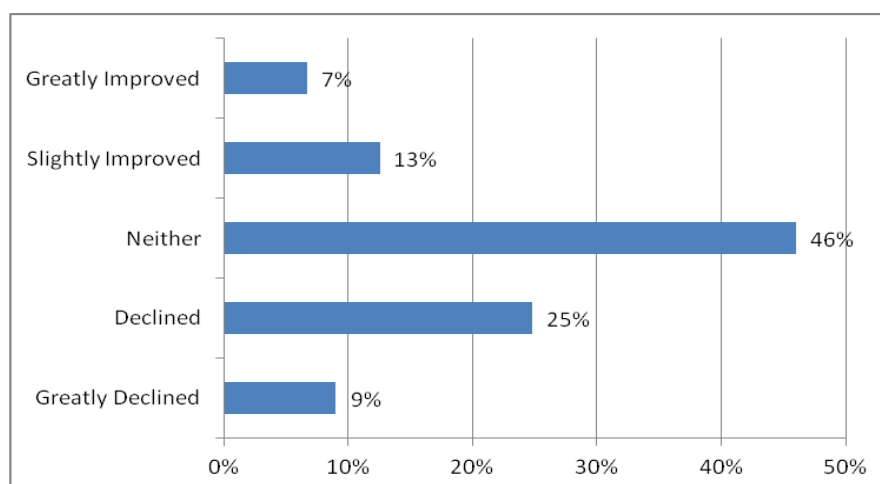
Estate Management

Aside from the quality of housing itself, the quality of the neighbourhood in which residents live can be extremely detrimental to the quality of life for communities. Figure 5.2 shows findings from Midlothian Council's Tenant Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2012. Tenants were asked if they felt their neighbourhood had declined in the past three years. It shows that a significant proportion of householders felt that there their neighbourhood had declined in the past three years. A total of 34% of respondents felt it had declined or greatly declined. When asked what the contributing factors were for neighbourhood decline, the following issues were most commonly reported from those who felt the neighbourhood had declined:

- Dog Fouling (29%)
- Litter (23%)
- Drugs/ Alcohol Problems (13%)
- Noise (12%)
- Problems with Neighbours (10%)
- Vandalism (9%);

Dog fouling and litter were two very commonly reported problems. Findings from the 2011 Scottish Household Survey for Midlothian suggest a very similar range of problems are also a concern for those living in other tenures.

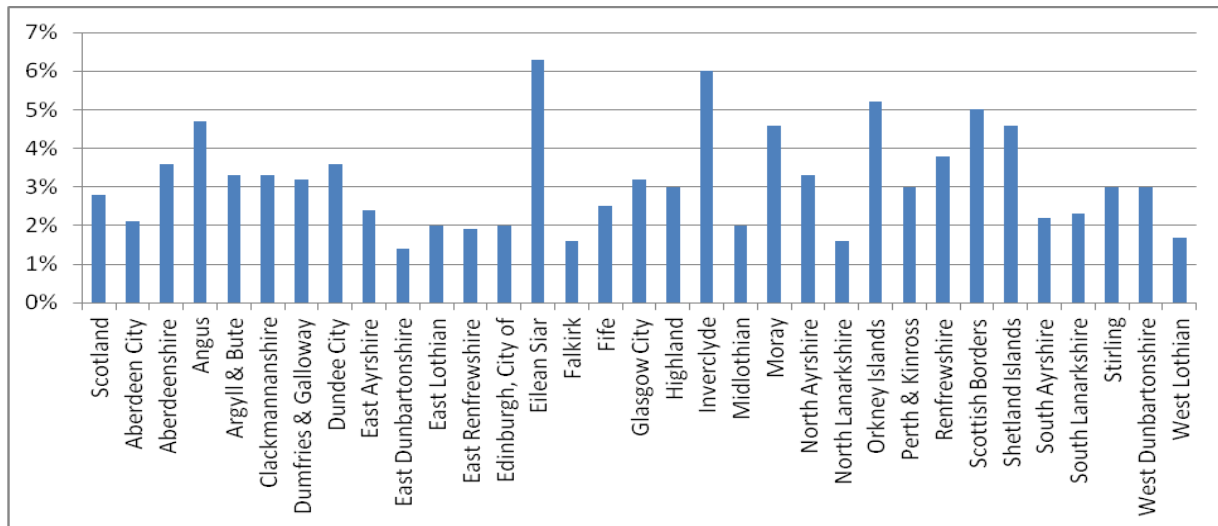
Figure 5.1: Has the neighbourhood improved or declined in the last three years?
Midlothian Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey



In Scotland, it is estimated that there are approximately 70,000 empty homes. Empty homes may be empty for a period of time for a variety of reasons, such as a household moving home and selling the property, or a period when a rented house is not being tenanted. However, homes that are empty for a period of time can cause a number of problems, as they may fall into a state of disrepair or are more likely to be vandalised. They can also be detrimental to the amenity of a neighbourhood. In addition, with a significant number of households in housing need, bringing empty homes back into use is an important tool for meeting housing need.

Figure 5.2, below shows the total proportion of empty homes in each local authority area of Scotland in 2011. In Midlothian, a total of 728 homes were recorded as being vacant, which is 2% of the total housing stock. This compares favourably to the rest of Scotland, with the Scottish average being 2.8% of total housing stock. Not all vacant properties will be empty for long periods, with many being vacant for a short period of time, such as when property is being sold, re-let or renovated. The majority of empty homes in Midlothian are privately owned, with very few social rented homes lying empty for more than a few months until they are re-let. Analysis of the location of empty homes indicates that the majority are located in the larger towns of Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik.

Figure 5.2: Proportion of Empty Homes in Scotland by Council Area 2011¹³



Key Issues in relation to Improving Housing Quality

¹³ Most recent estimate from September 2011:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/theme/households/estimates/2011/index.html>

- A significant proportion of private housing in Midlothian requires repair work, although this is not dissimilar to the national average.
- Investment is required in housing in order that private housing is maintained to adequate standards or adapted to meet particular household requirements.
- Investment is required by all Registered Social Landlords in order that all social rented housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.
- A small proportion of residents have concerns in relation to the quality of neighbourhood that they live in.
- Between 2006 and 2010 the number of empty homes in Midlothian has increased.

Key Actions:

1. Ensure that all social rented property in Midlothian meets the SHQS by 2015.
2. Implement the Estate Management Strategy and Anti Social Behaviour Strategy to ensure that neighbourhoods are in good condition and Anti Social Behaviour is effectively tackled.
3. Improve the quality of housing and management and maintenance standards by ensuring all Private Landlords are registered with the Council and promote Landlord Accreditation.
4. Provide advice and assistance to private households in terms of their repairs and maintenance obligations.
5. Implement initiatives and support to private owners requiring housing repairs and improvements.
6. Continue to monitor the condition of housing in order that disrepair in the housing stock is addressed and where appropriate designate a Housing Renewal Area.
7. Work with partners, including Shelter Scotland's Empty Homes Service to develop an action plan to get long term empty homes back into use.
8. Launch Midlothian Empty Homes Loan Fund to bring at least 10 empty homes back into use by 2015.

Outcome: The condition of housing across all tenures is improved

6. Meeting particular needs

Key Policy and Legislation in Relation to meeting Particular Needs

Equality Act 2010

This Act brings together a number of existing laws in order that the particular needs of equality groups are protected by law. The characteristics that are protected are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Local Housing Strategy addresses ways of advancing equality through the following activities:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Age, Home and Community: A Strategy for Housing for Scotland's Older People: 2012 - 2021

The Scottish Government's vision of "shifting the balance of care" – supporting people to remain at home independently for as long as possible rather than in care homes or in hospitals is an approach which provides better outcomes for elderly people and also saves a significant amount of money. "Age, Home and Community" sets out actions to enable this rebalancing of care to be realised. Key areas of activity which the LHS needs to take account of include:

- Providing information and advice
- Making better use of existing housing
- Providing preventative support services
- Ensuring new housing meets the needs of an ageing population

Midlothian Joint Older People's Strategy 2011 – 2015

This Strategy builds on the success of the previous 2007 – 2010 Strategy. Radical improvements have been made to care and support services, in response to consultation with older people. The key outcomes are that:

- People are supported to live at home, safely and securely, for as long as possible
- Where people require to receive care in formalised settings, it is the highest quality possible.
- People feel involved in the design and delivery of services that affect them or people they care for.
- Communities are supported to become stronger and more enriching, for their members.

It is important that the Local Housing Strategy takes account of the fact that people's housing needs differ. As a consequence, the Local Housing Strategy must make provision for the housing needs of a diverse range of groups in order that their requirements can be understood and addressed during the lifetime of this Strategy.

Older People

Demographic change will have implications on the housing need in Midlothian. Table 6.1, below, shows that the most dramatic change will be the growth in the elderly population of Midlothian, a trend that is also projected across Scotland. It shows that those aged 75 and over will increase by 99.3% between 2008 and 2033. However, this change needs to be addressed in the short term, as the number of households aged 75 and older is projected to increase by 30.4% between 2008 and 2018, so these challenges will need to be addressed during the lifetime of this Strategy.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that people will live longer than in the past, and their expectations of their future housing will be more aspirational than before. Whilst

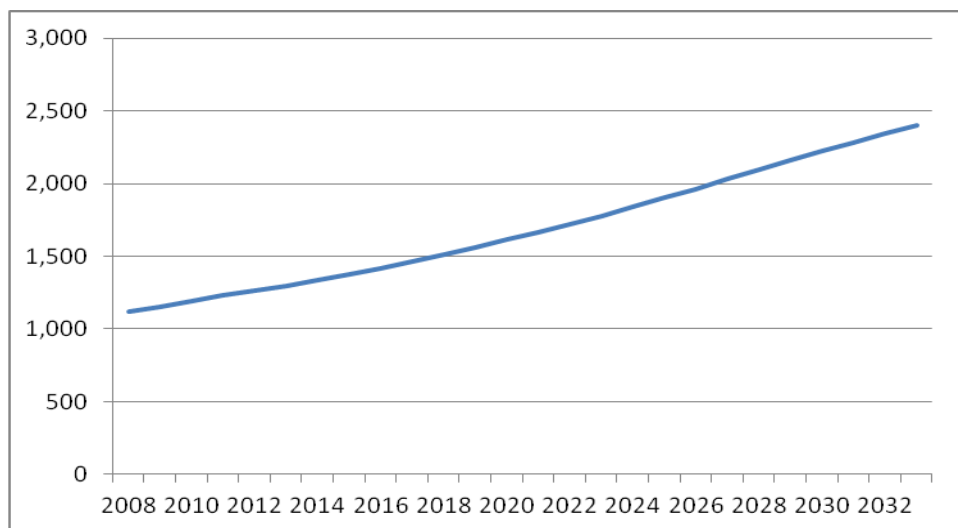
residential care housing has been recognised as too expensive to meet the needs of a growing elderly population, it is also recognised that many older households want to live independently where possible.

Table 6.1: Projected population, by Age Group, 2008 - 2033

Age Group	2008	2013	2018	% change 2008 - 2018	2023	2033	% change 2008 - 2033
All Ages	80,560	82,253	82,839	2.8%	83,335	83,187	3.3%
0-15	15,339	15,188	15,174	-1.1%	15,268	14,807	-3.5%
16-29	13,372	14,589	14,267	6.7%	13,467	13,260	-0.8%
30-49	22,524	20,704	19,417	-13.8%	19,292	20,410	-9.4%
50-64	16,351	16,777	17,267	5.6%	17,032	13,031	-20.3%
65-74	7,262	8,430	9,266	27.6%	9,163	10,293	41.7%
75+	5,712	6,565	7,448	30.4%	9,113	11,386	99.3%

One of the challenges of an increased proportion of older people is that of dementia. Figure 6.1, below, shows how the number of people with dementia will increase due to the growing number of elderly people in Midlothian. It shows that the total numbers of people with dementia is projected to more than double between 2008 and 2032.

Figure 6.1: Projected Dementia Prevalence in Midlothian



There is also a special focus on Dementia in Midlothian, as it is one of three local authorities which have been awarded a Dementia Demonstrator Site Status by the Scottish Government in 2010. This means that Midlothian will be at the heart of the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy and serve as an exemplar for the rest of the Country.

Extra Care Housing

A key feature of the approach towards providing suitable housing options for elderly people with particular needs will be the development of extra care housing in Midlothian. The Council is funding the development of 32 Extra Care Flats in Penicuik in Midlothian. Extra Care Housing provision is designed with the needs of frailer older people in mind and with varying levels of care and support available on site. People who live in Extra Care Housing will have their own self contained homes, accessed through their own front doors with the same secure tenancy agreement as other council tenants, but the properties are designed for those with varying needs including impaired mobility, hearing, sight or cognitive function. In addition, there is a communal Hub building with facilities located onsite, including the residents' lounge, a guest suite to accommodate visitors, laundry facilities, a restaurant and cafe, telecare facilities, and large communal gardens.

As it is likely that several residents will be living with dementia, the development will incorporate best practice for the design of housing to assist people with varying degrees of dementia, including avoiding long, monotonous corridors, and creating “landmark” features. Also, the garden will be designed with consideration for active involvement and sensory stimulation. The picture below shows that the extra care flats will retain the “look” of other Council homes to be built in the area. The Penicuik development is planned for completion in the autumn of 2013.

Artist's impression of Extra Care Housing in Penicuik



Households with a Physical or Learning Disability

The Lothian Joint Physical and Complex Disability Strategy¹⁴ estimated that a total of 4,790 households in Midlothian had a physical or complex disability. It also suggested that the likely proportion of needs within this group was as follows:

- Physical Disability 80%
- Visual Disability 6%
- Hearing Disability 6%
- Speech Disability 2%
- Other 5%

Table 6.2, below shows that there is a significant number of people who have a learning disability in Midlothian, an estimated 646, or approximately 10 people in 1000. This exceeds the Scottish average of 6.4 quite significantly. It is also evident that many of these households are young and may require assistance with securing accommodation. Both groups may require specific adaptations and house designs to meet their needs.

Table 6.2: No. of People with a Learning Disability in Midlothian and Scotland, 2010

Area	Age Category			Total	No. per 1,000
	16 -20	21 -64	65+		
Midlothian	79	491	76	646	10.0
Scotland	3,281	21,343	2,596	27,220	6.4

Source: www.sclid.org.uk

Midlothian Council, and partner RSLs, provide and build new accommodation for households with particular needs, however, the high cost of development of suitable accessible housing for example means that there are significant numbers of households in housing unsuitable for their needs. Table 6.3 shows the number of households with specific housing requirements due to their medical priority:

- Medical Category A is awarded where it is agreed that an applicant can no longer continue to live in their current accommodation with 53 Applicants on the Housing List under this Category.

¹⁴ www.nhslotthian.scot.nhs.uk/OurOrganisation/Strategies/pcds/Documents/finalreport.pdf 2009, It is acknowledged that these figures may have changed since this was published.

- Medical Category B is awarded where it is agreed that rehousing would be of significant benefit to the applicant's health/level of independence, with 375 Applicants on the Housing List under this Category.

Table 6.3: Midlothian Council Housing List Applicants, by Medical Priority

Medical Category	No. of Households	% of all Applications
A	53	1.20%
B	375	8.20%

Investment in Aids and Adaptations

If funding for such works were not made available, a significant number of households would be living in housing unsuitable for their needs. Table 6.4 below shows the amount of money the Council spends on helping private households to live independently in their own home, with 99 households assisted during 2010/11. In addition, 4,042 households in Midlothian received an aid or adaptation during the same period. Also, 1,776 households (as of February 2012) use a telecare package to support their independence and ensure their safety.

Table 6.4: Funding for Improvement and Repairs in Midlothian

Type of Grant	Improvement Grant
Total Spend 2010/11	£455,471
No. of Works	99
Common Works	Level Access Shower Install, Stairlift, Ramp Works

Table 6.5: Aids and Adaptations in Midlothian

Common Types of Aids and Adaptations	Annual Cost 2010/11	Total Number
Bath Aids, Bed Accessories, Chair Accessories, Hoists, Walking Aids	£252,431	4,042

What is Telecare?

Telecare is a term given to offering remote care of old and physically less able people, providing care and assurance. Telecare can be used in a variety of ways, such as: raising alarm in the event of deterioration in movement, health, flooding, fire etc and preventing wandering. Research has shown that the effective use of Telecare and other ways of support, such as Telehealth, results in a reduction in mortality rates, emergency hospital admissions and length of stays in hospitals.

Gypsy/Travellers

The Gypsy Traveller site managed by East Lothian Council on behalf of East and Midlothian Councils has a total of 20 pitches and is open all year round. The average occupancy rate for the period was 66% in 2010. Typically, there is an average of 47 people living on site at any one time. There were only a few cases of illegal encampments on Midlothian Council-owned land. In 2010/11, 7 were reported to the Council.

East Lothian and Midlothian Council appointed Shelter to provide independent information, advice and support service for Gypsy / Travellers living on the permanent site and in other forms of accommodation, throughout East and Midlothian. This Service ensures that Gypsy / Traveller households can access mainstream services, provides access to direct support and advice and facilitates wider social inclusion of Gypsy/Travellers into the community where appropriate. There is no evidence there are travelling show people households within Midlothian, and for this reason the Strategy has not provided information or actions in relation to these households. If more information on this community comes to light then this will be reported on in future Local Housing Strategy Annual Updates.

Armed Forces

Research conducted into the housing needs of ex-personnel indicated armed forces, and their families, have specific housing needs that require support.¹⁵ For example, ex-service personnel are more vulnerable to homelessness than the population at large, and professional pressures can present problems for finding stable housing for soldiers and

¹⁵ <http://www.homeless.org.uk/veterans>

their families as they may move frequently to new postings. Given that Glencorse Barracks, the permanent home of the Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion, is located just outside of Penicuik, the housing needs of armed forces needs to be addressed within the Local Housing Strategy. Members of the armed forces who have been discharged are given a high priority for housing by the Council, but it is intended that the support for armed forces and their families will be strengthened through the establishment of the Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant.

What is the Midlothian Armed Forces Covenant?

For Midlothian Council, NHS Lothian and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of support services, help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. For the Armed Forces Community, the Covenant encourages the integration of service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces to help their local community. An Action Plan has been set out to work on key objectives for the Covenant, including outcomes in relation to housing.

Key issues in relation to Meeting Particular Needs

- The proportion of elderly households, many of whom will have particular housing requirements, will increase. Many people will live longer so consideration needs to be given to the needs of the very elderly, including the needs of those living with dementia. However, older people should be supported to live at home, safely and securely, for as long as possible.
- People with a physical or learning disability may require accommodation designed for their needs.
- Only a small number of gypsy/travellers are living on the Council's Site in Midlothian.
- Armed Forces personnel have more complicated housing needs due to the nature of their employment.

Key Actions:

1. The Council, together with its partners to consider demand for specific groups, and develop an increased proportion of housing stock that meets the needs of households with physical and/or complex learning disabilities and mental health needs.
2. Develop Extra Care Housing for Elderly People through new building and reprovisioning and agree an allocation policy for this type of housing.
3. Contribute to the Midlothian Dementia Demonstrator Project in Midlothian.
4. All new build housing in Midlothian should be built with recognition of particular needs in order that there is a reduced incidence of households being unable to carry on living in their own home, and a reduced requirement for expensive home adaptations.
5. Upgrade the Site facilities at the jointly managed East and Midlothian Gypsy Traveller Site, and continue to provide a support service.
6. Increase the support for the armed forces community in Midlothian through the Midlothian Armed Forces Community Covenant.
7. Maximise use of the Change Fund in meeting the housing needs of older people.
8. Ensure Council staff and partner organisations understand the needs of all equality strands through working with partner organisations and undertaking appropriate training to improve customer service.
9. Ensure households in all tenures can access appropriate aids, adaptations and telecare support to enable them to live independently.

Outcome: The needs of households with particular needs will be addressed and all households will have equal access to housing and housing services

7. Preventing fuel poverty and addressing climate change

Key Policy and Legislation in Relation to Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Progress Report on Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement 2010

The Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement was published in 2002 and set the target for eradicating fuel poverty, where reasonably practicable, by 2016. The Progress Report, published in 2010, noted that there has been a significant increase in fuel poverty in Scotland since 2002. It also explained that the major focus on meeting this target would be through improving house condition, providing energy, benefits and tariff advice, whilst Scottish Ministers had called on the UK Government to address the cost of dramatic increases in gas prices.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

In response to international commitments to the reduction of greenhouse gases, the Scottish Government passed this Act, setting out a range of objectives in order to meet two key targets:

- By 2020 there should be a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- By 2050 there should be an 80% reduction in such emissions

Green Deal

Green Deal is a new initiative due to be launched by the UK Government late in 2012. The Green Deal will allow householders to install energy efficient measures and pay for the improvements with savings on their fuel bill. Householders will pay the cost of the installations over time through their fuel bill, with a change of property ownership or tenancy meaning that the next occupant picks up the ongoing charges. It is also intended that the Scheme will help the most vulnerable and help to deliver major measures, such as solid wall insulation, in order that harder to treat homes are also improved.

What is Fuel Poverty?

A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if they are required to spend 10% or more of their income on maintaining a satisfactory heating regime. A Satisfactory heating regime is defined in the Scottish Government Fuel Poverty Statement 2002:

- For the elderly and infirm, 23°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms, for 16 hours every day
- For other households, 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms for 9 hours every day

There are three main contributory factors to fuel poverty: household income, the energy efficiency of the property, and energy costs. It can also be caused by a combination of factors, such as a person having a low income but also living in a house which has inadequate insulation.

What is the impact of Fuel Poverty?

Fuel poverty has a negative impact on individuals, households and communities. Illnesses such as influenza, heart disease and strokes are all exacerbated by the cold and cold homes can lead to the growth of fungi and dust mites, both being linked to asthma.

Those who are most vulnerable to fuel poverty are the elderly, the very young and people with a disability or long-term illness. These households tend to spend more time in the home and need to heat their homes for longer. Cold and damp housing can aggravate existing health problems and being unable to heat homes adequately can lead to a range of medical conditions.

In addition, if a high proportion of household income is spent on fuel costs, this can mean that less money is available for paying for food or social and recreational activity. There is also a greater likelihood that households will fall into debt if they are paying bills that they cannot afford.

Who are Changeworks?

Changeworks are an Edinburgh based organisation who work with households in Edinburgh and the Lothian's to increase the energy efficiency of housing and increase the use of renewable energy and also carry out a range of activities to reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty. They can provide energy advice to any household in Midlothian and can be contacted (freephone) on 0800 512 012.

Table 7.1, below, shows the number of households in fuel poverty, taken from data drawn from the Scottish House Condition Survey. It showed that 27% of households in Midlothian (10,000 households lived in fuel poverty in 2010), this was slightly lower than for the whole of Scotland, with 28% of households in fuel poverty. In an earlier Survey, from 2003 – 2006, the SHCS estimated that 19% of Midlothian households lived in fuel poverty, meaning that there has been increase of 4,000 fuel poor households in approximately five years. Most at risk are the elderly, with 46% of pensioners living in fuel poverty. Also at risk are low income households, single householders and families with children.

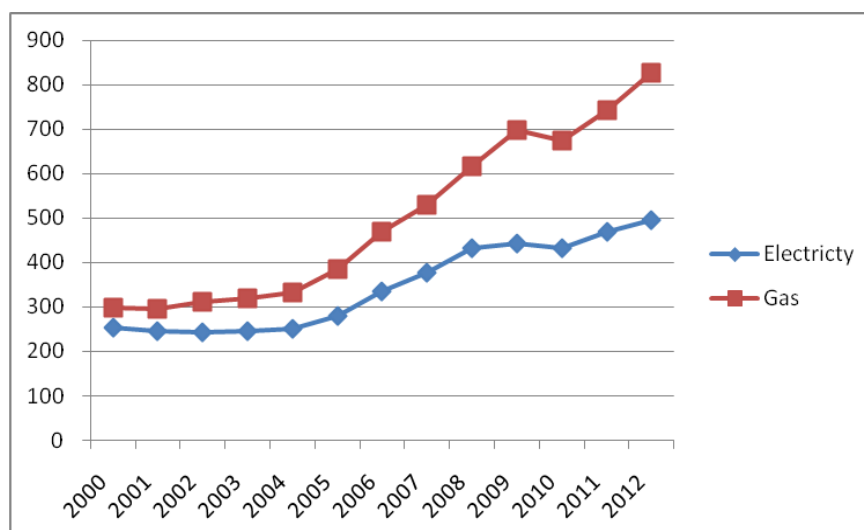
Table 7.1: Fuel Poor Households in Midlothian and Scotland

Area	Number of Fuel Poor Households	% of Households living in Fuel Poverty
Midlothian	10,000	27%
Scotland	660,000	28%

Source: Scottish House Condition Survey 2010

Figure 7.1, below, shows the major contributing factor in the rise of fuel poverty – energy prices have increased significantly in recent years. Between 2000 and 2012, the average household electricity bill in Scotland increased by 44% from £301 per annum to £433 per annum. In addition, the cost of gas, the most common source of heating fuel, increased by 178% from an average annual household bill of £297 to £826. It is also likely that fuel costs will continue to rise over the lifetime of this Strategy.

Figure 7.1: Average annual household cost of Gas and Electricity in Scotland 2000 - 2012



Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

Collective Switching

Reducing the cost of fuel bills will help to reduce the number of fuel poor households. In 2012 the Department for Energy Efficiency and Climate Change (DECC) announced the 'Cheaper Energy Together' scheme, which is a £5 million fund designed to support the development of innovative collective switching schemes, where consumers group together, through a trusted third party, and use market power to negotiate lower energy bills. Through a partnership with Changeworks and UKTogether, a collective of local authorities in the South East of Scotland successfully bid for funding from the DECC to facilitate a collective switching project.

The Scotland Together Collective Switching Project involves getting households in participating local authorities including Midlothian and the participating areas together to sign up to a single buying group, and then, following an auction held with utility suppliers, to negotiate a better deal from an energy supplier. There will be no obligation to switch suppliers and if the householder is already on the best deal for them this will be made clear to them. A project similar to this has been undertaken before in Cornwall, called "Cornwall Together" 1,100 households signed up with an average saving of £133 per household, per annum, though a small proportion of households saved in excess of £700.

What is a NHER Rating?

NHER stands for National Home Energy Rating. The NHER covers all energy use in the home including cooking and electrical appliances and allows for regional and geographic climate variations. Properties are rated on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 10 (excellent).

It is evident that the energy efficiency of the housing stock in Midlothian has improved in recent years. Table 7.2, below shows the NHER Ratings for properties in Midlothian and Scotland from surveys taken in between 2003 and 2011. It showed that the proportion of properties with a poor NHER rating reduced from 5% of stock to 3% of stock between the surveys undertaken in 2003 - 2006 to 2009 - 2011, whilst the proportion of properties with a high NHER rating increased from 38% to 61%. However, this is still less than the Scotland total of 56% of properties having a high NHER rating.

Table 7.2: NHER Rating of Properties in Midlothian, 2003 - 2011

Area	0-2		3-6		7-10	
	000s	Row %	000s	Row %	000s	Row %
2003 - 2006						
Midlothian	2	5	19	57	13	38
Scotland	114	5	1,170	51	1,011	44
2009 - 2011						
Midlothian	1	3	17	41	16	56
Scotland	74	3	969	36	1,301	61

Table 7.3, below, shows how energy efficiency varies according to tenure. The Council and Registered Social Landlord housing have a higher standard of energy efficiency and have improved from 72% of stock having an NHER rating of 6 or better when the stock was surveyed in 2003 to 2006, to 88% of stock when surveyed during 2009 to 2011. Private sector stock has improved from 58% in the Surveys of 2003 – 2006 and to 68% of stock by the period 2009 to 2011. However, both private and council/RSL housing have a lower proportion of energy efficient stock than the Scottish average for each of these tenures.

Table 7.3: Private and Public Housing with an NHER Rating of 6 or better, 2003 - 2011

Area	Private Housing		Council and RSL Housing	
	000s	%	000s	Row %
2003 - 2006				
Midlothian	14	58	7	72
Scotland	936	56	476	77
2009 - 2011				
Midlothian	18	68	17	88
Scotland	1,214	71	546	86

One of the main reasons for council and RSL housing having an improved level of energy efficiency is that this type of housing is required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, which has standards of energy efficiency, including having an efficient heating system and adequate insulation. A further factor in the energy efficiency of a home can be the age of a property. Generally older properties are less energy efficient, and are also harder to improve – for instance because many older homes may not have a loft space

that can be insulated or a cavity wall that can be insulated. As a result, the Scottish House Condition Survey 2009 – 2011 showed that in Midlothian, only 44% of homes built before the Second World War had an NHER rating of 6 or better, compared to 81% of homes built after the Second World War.

What is Climate Change?

Any process that causes adjustments to our climate – from a volcanic eruption to a cyclical change in solar activity – could be described as creating "climate change". However, climate change usually refers to changes in the climate being caused by people.¹⁶ The principal way in which people are understood to be affecting the climate is through the release of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the air – this release of greenhouse gases principally relates to the burning of fossil fuel, such as coal, gas and oil to use for heating or transport.

What is the impact of Climate Change?

Around 25% of greenhouse gas emissions come from houses so measures to improve domestic energy efficiency in both new and existing homes will be a major factor in reducing emissions.

There are three ways in which the Local Housing Strategy intends to address climate change:

- Mitigation – by reducing harmful emissions
- Adaptation – adjusting behaviour to limit harm, or exploit potential opportunities arising from climate change.
- Sustainability – means ensuring that social, economic and environmental aspects are considered alongside the impact of greenhouse gas emissions.

¹⁶ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/dec/21/what-is-climate-change>

Welfare Reform and Fuel Poverty

Recent research by the Scottish Government¹⁷ indicated that the poorest households will lose more of their income than richer households as a result of the benefits changes. For example, 140,000 households in Scotland will see a reduction in their income as a result of the introduction of universal credit. The effect of a reduction in income for low income households will be that there will be an increase in fuel poverty in Midlothian. It is likely to be particularly evident among working age households rather than elderly households as there are not as dramatically affected by welfare reform at present. Local Housing Strategy activity related to fuel poverty will need to address this through intervention with households whose incomes are reduced.

Specific actions at the end of this section have been developed which are intended to mitigate the effects of reform.

Key Issues in relation to Addressing Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

- The number of households living in fuel poverty in Midlothian has increased in recent years, most at risk are the elderly, single people and families with children.
- Rising energy costs are main reason behind the increase in fuel poverty.
- The energy efficiency of housing in Midlothian has improved, but a significant proportion of properties remain inefficient.
- Approximately 25% of greenhouse gas emissions come from houses.
- Sustaining a tenancy/mortgage will become more challenging for low income households due to rising fuel prices and the economic outlook.
- Those who are elderly, disabled or who have health problems often spend longer periods in the home, making them more vulnerable to fuel poverty or ill health if they live in a cold home.

¹⁷ Summary of Institute for Fiscal Studies Analysis, Scottish Government, 2012

Key Actions:

1. Improve the energy efficiency of social rented housing by ensuring that all social housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.
2. Improve the energy efficiency standard of new build housing across all tenures.
3. Bid for funding for initiatives which will improve the energy efficiency of housing in all tenures.
4. Continue to pursue opportunities for lowering household fuel costs in areas which are off the Gas Grid.
5. Support activities to promote the “green deal” and ECO through awareness raising activity and signposting householders in order that they make informed decisions.
6. Continue to work with Changeworks and other partners to ensure that fuel poor households or households at risk of fuel poverty are able to access advice and assistance to help them reduce the proportion of income they spend on fuel bills.
7. Work with Community Planning Partners and MFIN to raise awareness of risks for households in fuel poverty.
8. Ensure those at risk of fuel poverty are helped to maximise their incomes through appropriate advice services.
9. Ensure households at risk of fuel poverty are supported to learn life skills to maintain an affordably warm home.
10. Promote the collective switching scheme to all households in Midlothian.

Outcome: Housing in all tenures will be more energy efficient and fewer households will live in, or be at risk of, fuel poverty

8. Resourcing the Strategy and Addressing Risks

In order that the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy are realised, resources are required in order to implement the Strategy.

Types of Financial Resources

Midlothian Council Funding

Income and expenditure in relation to a local authority's own direct provision of housing is ring fenced and recorded within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Schedule 15 to the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 details the income and expenditure which should be charged to the HRA. The main items of income and expenditure are:

- income from rents
- expenditure on managing, maintaining and repairing the housing stock
- expenditure on loan charges

In general, local authorities are expected to ensure that they collect sufficient income from rents to cover their HRA current expenditure. Councils may transfer HRA surpluses to the general services account. However, they are not permitted to budget for a transfer of funds from general services into the HRA. The HRA is not permitted to show a deficit at the end of the financial year. If this occurs, authorities are required to transfer funds from the general services account to cover this deficit.

Previously councils have raised substantial amounts of money, mainly from the sale of council houses but also the sale of land. These are known as HRA capital receipts. The requirement to set aside 75% of "Right to Buy" receipts and 50% from land and other HRA assets, which was introduced on 1 April 1996 to help redeem HRA debt, was removed from 1 April 2004. Some councils continue to generate financial surpluses from rental income in order to supplement their capital programmes whilst others do not and rely instead on capital receipts and prudential borrowing. Total HRA capital expenditure is usually funded in one of three ways:

- from prudential HRA borrowing;
- from any surpluses commonly referred to as capital expenditure funded from rental income (known as Capital Funded from Current Revenue or CFCR); and
- capital receipts (from the sale of council houses, land and any other HRA assets etc).

Gross HRA capital expenditure is effectively the level of capital investment in the local authority housing stock which includes not only expenditure on the existing stock but also any expenditure incurred on new council housing. Local authority landlords are free to build new council housing subject to their self-imposed prudential borrowing limits but they are also required to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015 for the existing stock and this also requires significant investment resources.

In Midlothian, income receivable from rents is credited to the Housing Revenue Account and is projected to be approximately £19.526 million this financial year (2012/13). Most, if not all, is ring-fenced to pay for Housing Services as detailed in the Housing Acts to include:

- ❖ Capital & Revenue Expenditure & Investments
- ❖ Repairs & Maintenance
- ❖ Management & Supervision
- ❖ Loan Charges.

In March 2010, all 6,375 tenants and 3,703 waiting list applicants were consulted on, with a range of options presented for the period April 2011 – 2016, on rent increases from 4% - 7% being proposed. 2% of tenants responded and 7.8% of waiting list applicants responded. Whilst this is still a low number of responses, it is significantly better than what has been achieved in previous years, for instance in 2007, only 1% of tenants responded, and waiting list applicants were not consulted with.

Tenants and waiting list applicants were given a range of options as shown in the table below. Tenants and applicants were also made aware that the level of rent increase had an effect on the potential number of new council homes that could be built.

Table 8.1: Results of Midlothian Council Rent Consultation 2010

Percentage Increase	Number of New Homes Built	% of Respondents
4%	-	16%
4.5	150	14%
5%	270	26%
6%	560	12%
7%	800	32%

It was also noted that the higher the rises, the greater the number of additional new build council homes could be built. The majority of respondents were supportive of higher rents to enable additional council housing to be built.

The rent strategy in Midlothian was agreed at Council on 25 January, 2011 which resulted in a 6% rent increase over a 5 year period with agreement to fund the Social Housing Programme of new build. Midlothian Council average weekly rent in 2011 was £54.43 and the 6% applied resulted in a £3.08 rise for households. Even after the 2nd Phase of new build housing the average rent charge in Midlothian will be mid-table in comparison to other local authorities.

Additionally, the Council also administers an Affordable Housing Fund, raised through an increased council tax for second home owners, which is allocated to specific affordable housing projects. The Council also funds the homeless service, including temporary accommodation charges and the anti social behaviour team. It also manages investment in improvement grants for elderly and disabled private households and scheme of assistance works for properties in disrepair. It also contributes to the costs of aids and adaptations.

Public Works Loan Board

The Public Works Loan Board is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office, an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. The Public Works Loan Board functions to lend money to local authorities and loans can include the financing of new affordable housing, such as new council housing or the National Housing Trust housing model. Using this resource is very useful because the rate of interest is lower

than commercial market rates, therefore development of housing is made more affordable. However, if the rate of interest was to increase it may result in a reduction in new affordable housing, due to loans no longer being affordable.

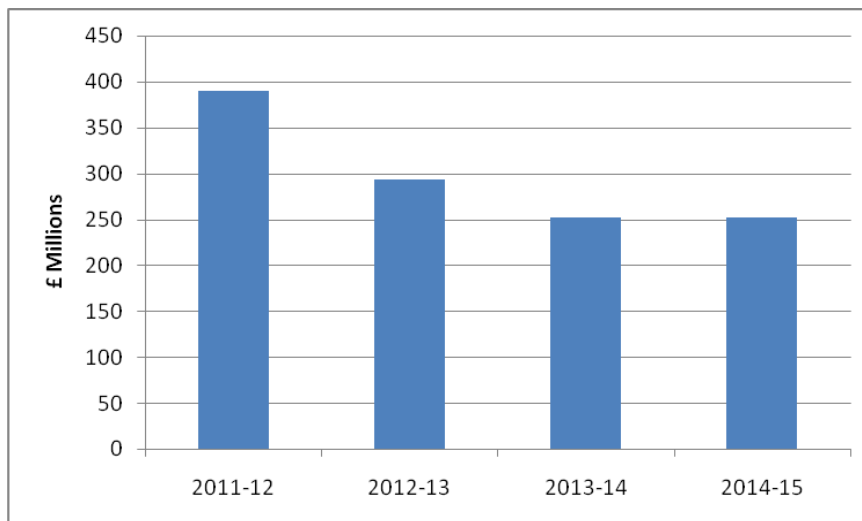
Availability of Private Finance

It is evident that since the financial crisis occurred from 2007, the availability of mortgage finance has diminished, particularly for households on a lower income who cannot afford a large deposit. Therefore, the increased availability of financial products would help to meet the housing needs of a significant proportion of households who want to buy property or access finance to pay for the repair and maintenance of their home. In addition, Registered Social Landlords and Private Housing Developers are often dependent on private finance for funding new housing development so more favourable borrowing to these organisations would be beneficial to the local housing market.

Scottish Government Affordable Housing Investment Programme

The Scottish Government sets a budget for subsidising new build affordable housing development. This budget has been significantly reduced following the Scottish Spending Review in 2011 and it is anticipated that the budget will reduce by 35% between 2011/12 and 2014/15. Between 2012 and 2015 the Scottish Government has allocated a total of £7.682 Million to affordable housing projects in Midlothian, helping to develop 137 new affordable homes. In addition, the Scottish Government has set a benchmark of £40,000 per new affordable home for RSLs, however, this may not be enough subsidy to develop suitable housing on specific sites.

Table 8.1: Scottish Budget for Housing and Regeneration 2011/12 – 2014/15 (At 2011/12 Prices)



Funding for fuel poverty and energy efficiency

There are various funding streams which support improved energy of housing stock, and which contribute to the reduction in fuel poverty. The most notable is the Universal Home Insulation Scheme, which has supported the extension of the gas pipeline in Pathhead and other rural areas and provided free cavity wall and loft insulation to households in specific areas. Midlothian was allocated £450,000 for these projects in 2011/12.

Welfare Reform

Many of the issues outline in the Local Housing Strategy relate to problems of poverty, such as homelessness and fuel poverty. The impact of welfare reform is likely to have a negative effect on individuals and communities where there are already high levels of existing deprivation.

What is Co-production? How can it help to meet Local Housing Strategy Outcomes?

The current pressures upon local authorities to achieve unprecedented savings while continuing to deliver excellent public services which meet the changing needs of the population require Councils to use innovative approaches in both service planning and delivery. Co-production has been identified by Midlothian Council as one approach to maximising resources. Co-production has been described as:

“Delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.”¹⁸

Consequently, some of the LHS Key Actions have been identified as suitable for a co-production approach and this greater community involvement can help to ensure the success of these Activities and the LHS overall. Use of coproduction in the implementation of the LHS will be reported on in future updates of the Strategy.

Types of Non Financial Resources

Land

It is recognised that the lack of availability of land, in addition to other constraints to development, such as lack of water/sewage infrastructure or flood risks will hamper the level of housing development. Consequently, the availability of publicly owned land, and land secured through the Council's Affordable Housing Policy is essential to the continued development of affordable housing.

Organisational Capacity

As staff time and resources are limited in both the Council and partner organisations, it is essential that there is some element of prioritisation in the Local Housing Strategy, in order that there is a focus on the most important outcomes over the period 2013 – 2017.

Risks to achieving Local Housing Strategy Outcomes

As part of regular monitoring of activities related to achieving Local Housing Strategy outcomes, it is intended to develop a risk register to identify the key risks which could have a negative impact on achievement of the outcomes set out in the Local Housing Strategy. This will be reported on annually.

¹⁸ Boyle, D. And M Harris, 2009, The Challenge of Coproduction: how equal partnerships between professionals and the public are crucial to improving public services, NESTA

9. Feedback and Monitoring the Strategy

An update on the progress of the Local Housing Strategy will be published annually during the lifetime of the Strategy, together with an updated Action Plan. You are welcome to make comments on the Strategy, or to find out more, please contact:

Housing Strategy and Performance Section
Midlothian Council
Buccleuch House
1 White Hart Street
Dalkeith
Midlothian
EH22 1AE

Telephone: 0131 271 6698

You can also email your comments to: housingstrategy@midlothian.gov.uk

Thanks are extended to the Local Housing Strategy Working Groups and those who provided feedback on the Strategy during the consultation period.

A full copy of Midlothian's Local Housing Strategy can be viewed or downloaded at:
www.midlothian.gov.uk/housing

Appendix 1

Local Housing Strategy Action Plan

Local Housing Strategy Outcome		Households have improved housing options across all tenures		
Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (Date)	Targets	Timescale
Scottish Government Affordable Housing Supply Funding	Triennially by Scottish Government	£2.5 Million 2012 - 2015	Increase on baseline figure	By 2015
Number of new affordable homes	Annually by Scottish Government	173 (2011/12)	165 per annum	By 2015
Number of new affordable Homes, by Size	Local Authority/RSL Data	40% 2 bedroom LA Data Only (2011/12)	At least 70% of new homes will be 1 or 2 bedroom per annum	By 2014
Number of new private homes	Annually by Scottish Government	278 (2011/12)	400 per annum	By 2013
Overall housing supply target	Annually by Scottish Government	469 (2011/12)	565 per annum	By 2013
Number of Households on Council Waiting List	Annually by Council	4,162 (2011/12)	Reduce by 10%	By 2017
Number of Households on Council Transfer List	Annually by Council	529 (2011/12)	Reduce by 10%	By 2015
Number of council house allocations	Annually by Council	624 (2011/12)	Maintain at this level	By 2013
Number of RSL allocations	Annually by Scottish Government	246 (2011/12)	Maintain at this level	By 2013
Number of Private Rented Properties in Midlothian	Annually by Council	2,406 (2011/12)	Increase by 10%	By 2017
Number of HMOs in Midlothian	Annually by Scottish Government	43 (2011/12)	Increase to 70 units	By 2017
Number of Council mutual exchanges	Annually by Council/RSLs	31 (2011/12)	Increase to 60 swaps per annum	By 2017
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	Key Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of a second phase of Midlothian Council's affordable housing programme to build up to 1,300 new council homes by 2017. 2. Develop affordable housing using innovative models for securing more affordable homes which requires less subsidy, such as Mid Market Rented Housing. 3. Increase the use of the private rented sector in meeting housing need, including through the use of HMOs. 4. Build smaller housing to address the growing number of single person households and to avoid households under-occupying larger homes in the social rented sector. 5. Work with partners in the public and private sector to meet the housing supply target of 565 new homes per annum. 6. Improve social housing choice and access through social housing allocation policies. 7. Improve mobility in the social rented housing through use of mutual exchanges and readily available lets. 8. Ensure households at risk of welfare reform are informed of changes that will affect them and offer solutions, such as use of incentive to move and downsizing schemes. 9. Secure homes and resources for affordable housing through Midlothian Council's Affordable Housing Policy. 10. Work with partners to provide options for home ownership for low income residents of Midlothian. 11. Contribute to wider strategic planning for housing in the South 			

	<p>East of Scotland Development Plan area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Develop an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan to set out the areas and Sites for priorities for investment. 13. Support the local economy by promoting opportunities for training and employment schemes through housing construction programmes. 14. Support the involvement of tenants and residents in housing services in Midlothian. 15. Investigate options for developing a Common Housing Register by 2013. 16. Support initiatives that assist first time buyers to purchase a property. <p>Commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By housing developers to work in partnership to make best use of available resources for affordable housing development. 2. By Council Officers and RSL Officers to work collaboratively with tenants and residents groups. 3. By locally based landlords to work together to develop a Common Housing Register. 4. By local employers to provide training and employment opportunities.
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Local Housing Strategy Outcome	Homeless households and those threatened with homelessness are able to access support and advice services and all unintentionally homeless households will be able to access settled accommodation			
Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (Date)	Targets	Timescale
Number of Homeless Presentations	Annually by the Council	716 (2011/12)	Reduce to 500	By 2017
% of unintentionally homeless households entitled to settled accommodation	Annual Scottish Government Monitoring	92% (2011/12)	100%	By 2012
Number of households living in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	Monthly by Council	80 (end of March 2012)	40	By 2017
Proportion of council housing lets being allocated to homeless households	Annually by Council	40% (2011/12)	45%	By 2013
Number of Temporary Accommodation Units	Monthly by Council	417 (2012)	457	By 2014
% of homeless households who sustained a Council tenancy for at least 12 months	Annually by Council	94% (2011/12)	95%	By 2014
Proportion of RSL lets being allocated to homeless households	Annually by Scottish Government	19% (2011/12)	37.5%	By 2013
Number of households accessing the Council's housing advice and assistance services	Annually by Council	764 (2011/12)	850	By 2013
Number of households accessing the Council's tenancy support service	Annually by Council	220 (2011/12)	Maintain the baseline	By 2013
% of homeless service users that described themselves as satisfied with the overall service provided to them	Annually by Council	N/A	80%	By 2013
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	Key Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation. 2. Reduce the average number of homeless households living in bed and breakfast accommodation by 50% by 2017. 3. Increase the number and proportion of housing allocations to homeless households by social landlords, including a target of 45% of all council house allocations per annum. 4. Reduce the amount of time homeless households spend in temporary accommodation. 5. Reduce the number of breaches of unsuitable temporary accommodation to zero. 6. Provide up to 40 additional temporary accommodation units for homeless households in Midlothian by 2014. 7. Provide a good quality housing information and advice in a variety of formats, including through face to face contact, over the telephone, on the web, and through printed materials which are widely distributed. 8. Work with accredited private landlords to increase the use of private rented housing used to accommodate homeless households, and those at risk of becoming homeless. 9. Reduce the number of homeless presentations by 20% through early intervention, homeless prevention activity (including skills development) and by providing housing options. 			

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Ensure all households who require housing support are able to access appropriate services promptly. 11. Provide housing options support and skills development to young people leaving care in order that they can avoid homelessness. 12. Work with MFIN partners to increase financial inclusion among all those at risk of homelessness through income maximisation service. 13. Ensure those at risk of domestic abuse are provided with appropriate support. 14. Work with the South East Scotland Housing Options Hub to increase the availability of housing options in Midlothian. 15. Maintain a high level of tenancy sustainment in all tenancies through providing a range of support services. 16. Continue to provide up to 250 properties as temporary accommodation in the private sector. 17. Ensure the quality and standard of temporary accommodation in monitored through periodic inspection and customer surveys. 18. Retender hostel staffing and tenancy support services used by Midlothian Council tenants and service users by 2013. 19. Provide private rented sector lets through the Letfirst Scheme. 20. Provide a youth homelessness prevention service to reduce the number of homeless presentations from those aged 16 – 25. <p>Commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By private sector landlords to provide housing for homeless households. 2. By the Council to increase the number of permanent lets to homeless households. 3. By Registered Social Landlords to increase the number of temporary and permanent lets to homeless households. 4. By the Local Housing Strategy and Homelessness Working Group to provide strategic input; monitor delivery of objectives and assess performance. 5. By all Councils to collaborate effectively together as part of the South East Scotland Housing Options Hub.
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Local Housing Strategy Outcome	The condition of housing across all tenures is improved			
Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (Date)	Targets	Timescale
Number of households provided with advice/information	Annually by Council	TBC	TBC	By 2015
Number and % of council housing that meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	Annually by Scottish Housing Regulator	1,341, 19% (2011/12)	0	By 2015
Number and % of RSL housing that meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard	Annually by Scottish Housing Regulator	394, 13% (2011/12)	0	By 2015
Number of BTS properties	Scottish House Condition Survey	288 (1% of stock) 2009	Reduce to less than 1%	By 2016
Number of Registered Private Landlords in Midlothian	Annually by Council	2,301 (2011/12)	Increase by 10%	By 2017
Number of Long Term Empty Homes in Midlothian (Properties empty for 12 months or more)	Annually by Council	228 (2012)	Reduce by 10%	By 2015
Number of Aids and Adaptations to Council Houses	Annually by Council	4,042 (2010/11)	Maintain this baseline	By 2014
Number of Grants for Aids and Adaptations to Private Sector Housing	Annually by Council	99 Total Spend £455,471 (2011/12)	Maintain this baseline	By 2014
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Key Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that all social rented property in Midlothian meets the SHQS by 2015. 2. Implement the Estate Management Strategy and Anti Social Behaviour Strategy to ensure that neighbourhoods are in good condition and Anti Social Behaviour is effectively tackled. 3. Improve the quality of housing and management and maintenance standards by ensuring all Private Landlords are registered with the Council and promote Landlord Accreditation. 4. Provide advice and assistance to private households in terms of their repairs and maintenance obligations. 5. Implement initiatives and support to private owners requiring housing repairs and improvements. 6. Continue to monitor the condition of housing in order that disrepair in the housing stock is addressed and where appropriate designate a Housing Renewal Area. 7. Work with partners, including Shelter Scotland's Empty Homes Service to develop an action plan to get long term empty homes back into use. 8. Launch Midlothian Empty Homes Loan Fund to bring at least 10 empty homes back into use by 2015. <p>Commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By all RSLs to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. 2. By all RSLs and tenants and residents groups to contribute to the Estate Management/Anti Social Behaviour Strategy. 3. By all private landlords to register with the Council and consider becoming an "accredited" landlord. 4. By private owners to ensure they maintain their homes. 5. By Council Officers, Shelter Scotland, Empty Home Owners and other relevant organisations to get empty homes back into use. 			

Local Housing Strategy Outcome		The needs of households with particular needs will be addressed and all households will have equal access to housing and housing services		
Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (Date)	Targets	Timescale
No. of Gypsy Traveller households on Council Site	Ongoing by Council	9 (2011/12)	15	By 2014
Number of affordable homes built for those with particular needs	Annually by Council	Phase 1 Council Builds 8 Wheelchair Houses, 100% of Housing for Varying Needs 2011/12	5% of New Build Stock in Phase 2	By 2017
Number of Extra Care Houses in Midlothian	Annually by Council	45 (2011/12)	143	By 2015
Number of households accessing telecare/telehealth packages	Annually by Council	1900 (2011/2012)	Maintain this baseline	By 2014
% of Council Tenants over 65 years old	Biennial Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey	43% (2011/12)	45%	By 2014
% of applications for Council housing from disabled households	Monthly by Council	1% (2011/12)	Increase in line with Census	By 2012
% of Council/RSL house allocations to disabled households	Monthly by Council	4% (2011/12)	Maintain this baseline	By 2012
% of applications for Council housing from BME and Non White Scottish (NWS) households	Monthly by Council	1% BME 6% NWS (2011/12)	Maintain in proportion to Census	By 2012
% of Council/RSL house allocations to BME and NWS households	Monthly by Council	LA:2% BME 4% NWS RSL:1% BME 8% NWS (2011/12)	Maintain in proportion to Census	By 2012
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	Key Actions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council, together with its partners to consider demand for specific groups, and develop an increased proportion of housing stock that meets the needs of households with physical and/or complex learning disabilities and mental health needs. 2. Develop Extra Care Housing for Elderly People through new building and reprovisioning and agree an allocation policy for this type of housing. 3. Contribute to the Midlothian Dementia Demonstrator Project in Midlothian. 4. All new build housing in Midlothian should be built with recognition of particular needs in order that there is a reduced incidence of households being unable to carry on living in their own home, and a reduced requirement for expensive home adaptations. 5. Upgrade the Site facilities at the jointly managed East and Midlothian Gypsy Traveller Site, and continue to provide a support service. 6. Increase the support for the armed forces community in Midlothian through the Midlothian Armed Forces Community Covenant. 			

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Maximise use of the Change Fund in meeting the housing needs of older people. 8. Ensure Council staff and partner organisations understand the needs of all equality strands through working with partner organisations and undertaking appropriate training to improve customer service. 9. Ensure households in all tenures can access appropriate aids, adaptations and telecare support to enable them to live independently. <p>Commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By Council Officers to work collaboratively with related organisations and groups in relation to meeting housing needs for households with physical and/or complex learning disabilities and mental health needs. 2. By all RSLs to work towards meeting good practice guidance in terms of households with dementia. 3. By East Lothian and Midlothian Councils towards providing suitable site provision for gypsy/travellers. 4. By Community Planning partners in engaging with the Armed Forces Community Covenant.
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Local Housing Strategy Outcome		Housing in all tenures will be more energy efficient and fewer households will live in, or be at risk of, fuel poverty		
Relevant Indicators	Data Frequency/Type/Source	Baseline (Date)	Targets	Timescale
Number and % of households in Fuel Poverty	Scottish House Condition Survey	10,000, 27% (2010)	0	By 2016
% of homes with a National Home Energy Rating of 6+ in Private Housing	Scottish House Condition Survey	64% (2010)	85%	By 2016
Number and % of homes with a National Home Energy Rating of 6+ in Social Rented Housing	Scottish House Condition Survey	80% (2010)	100%	By 2016
Number of households accessing Energy Saving or Fuel Poverty Advice Assistance Schemes	Energy Saving Trust	1,000 (estimated) (2011/12)	Maintain at this level	By 2013
Number of households accessing Green Deal	Energy Saving Trust	0 2011/12	TBC	By 2014
Key actions and commitment by local partners for this outcome	<p>Key Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the energy efficiency of social rented housing by ensuring that all social housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015. 2. Improve the energy efficiency standard of new build housing across all tenures. 3. Bid for funding for initiatives which will improve the energy efficiency of housing in all tenures. 4. Continue to pursue opportunities for lowering household fuel costs in areas which are off the Gas Grid. 5. Support activities to promote the “green deal” and ECO through awareness raising activity and signposting householders in order that they make informed decisions. 6. Continue to work with Changeworks and other partners to ensure that fuel poor households or households at risk of fuel poverty are able to access advice and assistance to help them reduce the proportion of income they spend on fuel bills. 7. Work with Community Planning Partners and MFIN to raise awareness of risks for households in fuel poverty. 8. Ensure those at risk of fuel poverty are helped to maximise their incomes through appropriate advice services. 9. Ensure households at risk of fuel poverty are supported to learn life skills to maintain an affordably warm home. 10. Promote the collective switching scheme to all households in Midlothian. <p>Commitments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By all Local Housing Strategy Partners to contribute to the reduction of fuel poor households. 2. By Changeworks and the Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre to achieve set targets. 3. By partners to work together to raise awareness of fuel poverty and climate change issues and develop partnership projects to tackle these issues. 4. By private householders to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. 			

Appendix 2: Declaration of a Housing Renewal Area

1. When the Council will designate a HRA

The designated area must have a significant number of properties that are substandard or in serious disrepair. In identifying particular areas the Council will take in to consideration the number of properties where the property owners have failed to participate in voluntary schemes, the number of works notices that may be required and the views of local communities. Information which will be used to determine the requirement for an HRA include:

- House Condition Survey
- Information gathered by Council Departments and partner organisations regarding poor house conditions.
- Other reliable sources of evidence, including complaints.

Prior to the designation of an HRA the Council must be satisfied that it has exhausted all other means of improving the area to a satisfactory standard, particularly through the encouragement of property owners to participate on a voluntary basis in improvement and/ or repair schemes. It will also produce a Map which will delineate the scope of HRA.

A Report on the proposed Actions would be presented to the Council's Cabinet for authorisation.

2. Setting out Actions

An Action Plan will be developed for securing the condition and quality of housing in the HRA. The Plan will:

- Identify each house in the HRA which the Council deems to be sub standard and whether the house ought to be closed, demolished or ought to have work carried out in relation to it or for the purposes of bringing it into (and keeping it) to a reasonable standard of repair.
- Identify any houses within the HRA which ought to have work carried out in relation to it for the purposes of bringing it into, and keeping it in, a reasonable state of repair.
- Specify the standard to which any demolition required by the Plan must be carried out.
- The work which the plan requires to be carried out, including the standards required upon completion of this work, and any steps which the Council requires to be taken in carrying out this work.
- Describe the level of assistance which the Council will provide to owners of properties affected by the HRA.

Midlothian Council has the power to carry out the work detailed within a Work Notice where the owner is agreeable. The owner would be liable for the costs associated with the works. A completion certificate will only be issued when the outstanding account for the works has been settled.

3. Consultation

Midlothian Council will consult with all property owners in the proposed area. Prior to designating an HRA the Council will set out the precise nature of the work to be undertaken, estimated costs, the timescale for delivery, how the scheme of assistance will apply and any arrangement for the payment of compensation.

The Council will also consult with all appropriate statutory organisations, the local community, local RSL's and local interest groups.