Appendix 1

Aberdeenshire COUNCIL

Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025 – 2030

1. Introduction

1.1 The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the strategic approach by Aberdeenshire Council and its partners to delivering affordable housing in accordance with the Local Housing Strategy.

1.2 In line with Scottish Government guidance issued June 2024, this SHIP 2025 - 2030 sets out the strategic investment priorities for affordable housing over the 5 year period to achieve the outcomes as set out in the Local Housing Strategy. It also informs Scottish Government housing investment decisions including the Strategic Local Programme Agreement and Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

1.3 Essentially this SHIP

- Sets out investment priorities for affordable housing
- Demonstrates how these will be delivered
- Identifies the resources required to deliver these priorities
- Enables the involvement of key partners

1.4 Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen City Council work closely together to support the Aberdeen City Region Deal agreed with the Scottish and UK Governments. Both Strategic Housing Investment Plans are closely monitored to maximise the potential investment into the North East of Scotland.

1.5 This SHIP will enable the delivery of high quality and energy efficient homes including specialist housing provision with appropriate support, as well as assist in reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions whilst adopting place making principles. It will also enable choice of tenure. Furthermore, it will aid house building across the Aberdeenshire area by supporting investment and creating employment in the house building sector and assist with initiatives such as modern apprenticeships. It also supports and contributes towards the delivery of the Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 vision.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 Local Housing Strategy (LHS)

The Local Housing Strategy 2024 -2029 sets out Aberdeenshire Council's key strategic housing priorities and outcomes and was approved by Communities Committee 5th September 2024. The SHIP is informed by the LHS and will contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan through a place-making approach as part of the wider Place Strategy. Affordable housing cuts across the three key themes of Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Priorities:-

A Sustainable Economy **Connected Communities** **Living Well Locally**

2.1.1 The LHS is monitored and reviewed annually to ensure that it responds to changing pressures and new opportunities. The three outcomes which relate directly to this SHIP are:-

2.1.2 **LHS 2024-2029 Priority - Affordable Housing - Increase supply of housing in Aberdeenshire**

2.1.3 Increasing the supply of affordable housing will primarily take the form of new build units. However, partners will also seek to maximise delivery through the acquisition of 'second hand' stock and also seek to bring empty properties back into use through the rehabilitation of existing stock where appropriate and financially viable. There are several factors which will determine the suitability of properties, both for acquisition and empty homes, to ensure that they meet wider long term strategic aims, and these include housing need; costs; financial viability across the short to long term; and maintenance and management considerations.

2.1.4 The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 and Aberdeenshire Council's waiting list 2024 demonstrate housing need across Aberdeenshire. Housing data, waiting lists, housing stock and relets, are also analysed to highlight any settlements with increased pressure. These are highlighted in Table 1 below in accordance with the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 subareas - Housing Market Areas - and are reflected in this SHIP's programme. It is important to note however, that inclusion in Table 1 below is not a prerequisite for the delivery of affordable housing, with opportunities outwith these towns actively pursued to meet identified local housing need as appropriate. As well as meeting housing need, housing development will also contribute to a wider range of strategic priorities in Aberdeenshire such as town centre regeneration, rural sustainment and strategic growth.

Table 1 - Top 25 Most Pressured Settlements in Aberdeenshire

Settlement	Area	HMA	Housing Demand Score
Inverurie	Garioch	AHMA	8073
Stonehaven	Kincardine & Mearns	AHMA	5303
Peterhead	Buchan	RHMA	4248
Portlethen	Kincardine & Mearns	AHMA	3820
Fraserburgh	Banff & Buchan	RHMA	3544
Westhill	Garioch	AHMA	3322
Banchory	Marr	AHMA	2821
Ellon	Formartine	AHMA	2467
Huntly	Marr	RHMA	1644
Turriff	Formartine	RHMA	1557
Banff	Banff & Buchan	RHMA	1373
Kemnay	Garioch	AHMA	1370
Mintlaw	Buchan	RHMA	1208
Laurencekirk	Kincardine & Mearns	RHMA	910
Newmachar	Garioch	AHMA	884
Balmedie	Formartine	AHMA	752
Alford	Marr	RHMA	734
Kintore	Garioch	AHMA	733
Ballater	Marr	RHMA	710
Oldmeldrum	Formartine	AHMA	675
Newtonhill	Kincardine & Mearns	AHMA	669
Macduff	Banff & Buchan	RHMA	616
Aboyne	Marr	RHMA	597
Drumoak	Kincardine & Mearns	AHMA	595

Blackburn	Garioch	AHMA	584

2.1.5 **Right House Sizes and Types in the Right Location –**
There is significant pressure upon 1 bedroom units, larger 3, 4 and 5 bedroom units along with particular needs housing stock. Latest evidence continues to suggest that in some locations there may be an oversupply of 2 bed properties, in particular flats in the northern most part of Aberdeenshire. This is reflected in homeless presentations where over the course of the last ten years homeless presentations from single person households have increased from 60% to 72% of all homeless presentations, with 79% of the open homelessness cases as at 30.6.24 requiring 1 bedroom properties. Furthermore, the Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 states that according to the 2018 household projections, there is a projected 11% rise in the number of single-person households over the next 10 years**.** Housing Online is Aberdeenshire Council's online portal which allows people to apply and register an interest on vacant properties using a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) system. The majority of properties are advertised through the portal which was introduced in August 2021. Data from CBL shows areas of demand based on current turnover with results from 2023/24 further confirming the pressures on 1, 3 and 4 bedroom units. The turnover of 2 bedroom properties in north Aberdeenshire is higher than the rest of Aberdeenshire combined. There continues to be a really low turnaround of 4 bedroom, mainstream properties – only 8 within the year. In terms of location the average number of bids across all property sizes is highest in Garioch and Kincardine & Mearns. The continued assessment of CBL activity will allow need and demand to be continuously measured to monitor trends as more comparable data becomes available to further shape and inform future affordable housing investment programmes.

2.1.6 Key workers are often considered as essential to providing services to the public and can include professions such as doctors, nurses, teachers, and police officers but can also extend to private sector businesses, and seasonal staff for example. It is also acknowledged that difficulties in the recruitment and retention of key workers can be detrimental to local economic growth and to service provision that is important to the wellbeing of local communities. In Aberdeenshire whilst there is the provision of mid-market rented accommodation through arms-length organisations of our housing association partners and Aberdeenshire Council – Create Homes, these properties are not specifically targeted at key workers but can be a useful resource for local key workers to access affordable accommodation close to their employment. Discussions are ongoing with partners, such as infrastructure providers and the NHS, to identify any specific requirements for key worker accommodation and where appropriate actions will be progressed to meet identified key worker housing need. Actions could include delivering the right size and type of housing in the right location whilst maximising available funding streams subject to securing appropriate approvals and consents and or local lettings initiatives in relation to existing housing stock.

2.1.7 **LHS 2024-2029 Priority - Where Possible Homelessness is Prevented but where it can't be a Rapid Rehousing Approach is used to Resolve Cases -** Increasing the supply of affordable housing of an appropriate size and in the right locations will assist in meeting the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan's (RRTP) strategic aims of homeless prevention, identifying permanent settled solutions quickly, ensuring that stays in temporary accommodation are minimised and that appropriate support is provided to enable tenancies to be sustained and break the cycle of homelessness**.** Whilst the original 5-year plan (2019-2024) has now expired, there is still a commitment to continue funding in the short-term, albeit at lower levels. We have been extremely successful in achieving the targets that we identified at the beginning of the RRTP journey and the challenge will be to maintain the levels of performance currently being achieved. Rapid rehousing activity will continue to be monitored by way of an annual action plan and as part of the Local Housing Strategy and will be reported to Communities Committee.

2.1.8 **LHS 2024-2029 Priority - Independent Living – Increase the supply of appropriate housing and support to ensure health and wellbeing across all of Aberdeenshire's Communities.**

The SHIP continues to support independent living with the delivery of projects for particular needs clients. Collaboration between Housing and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) colleagues enables individuals to live in the community with appropriate housing and support.

Work continues with AHSCP colleagues on evidencing housing requirements for particular need clients - learning disability, complex care and mental health issues. The Housing Requirements Planning Tool (HRPTK) indicates that there are 145 clients for learning disability and complex care, with the majority requiring 1 bedroomed properties (82) and a significant requirement for 2 bedroomed properties (63). There are 10 complex care clients currently housed 'Out of area' who require overnight support. The areas identified as pressure points are Peterhead, Inverurie and Ellon. The HRPTK for clients with mental health issues identifies 33 clients, similar to the other particular needs client groups, in that the main requirement is for 1 bed properties (28), the majority of which require 4 in a block accommodation, all with appropriate support and care. The areas identified as pressure points being Ellon, Peterhead, Fraserburgh and Banff. Work continues to explore appropriate models of housing with AHSCP colleagues with both extra care housing and core and cluster developments identified as suitable and positive models which can provide appropriate housing, care and support. These details will shape and inform future new build projects subject to securing appropriate approvals and funding.

The Mental Health & Learning Disability Housing Forum continues to identify as early as possible consideration of housing requirements to allow appropriate planning for both existing housing resources by Housing Options staff, as well as potential new build projects.

2.1.9 **Particular Needs Housing**

To support the strategic priorities of the Local Housing Strategy and the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan at least 15% of affordable new build development will be suitable for particular needs households enabling Independent Living and reducing inequalities.

As part of the target of 15% of all new affordable homes to be developed as Particular Needs housing, 10% of this number is required to be wheelchair accessible. Table 2 below shows the completions for the past 3 years.

Table 2 - Number of New Affordable Homes suitable for Particular Needs including Wheelchair Accessible

Year	All Affordable Units	Particular Needs Units	Wheelchair Accessible Units
2021/2022	209	69 (33%)	22 (11%)
2022/2023	196	60 (31%)	26 (13%)
2023/2024	259 *Excludes the 51 Create Homes units	90 (35%)	26 (10%)

An indication of need for wheelchair accessible housing has been obtained through Aberdeenshire Council's housing waiting list and indicates approximately 148 applicants are currently waiting for wheelchair accessible properties. Horizon Housing's report '*Still minding the step?' A new estimation of the housing needs of wheelchair users, 2018, "massive shortfall"* suggests a methodology to estimate unmet need. Applying this methodology to provide a local estimate indicates that there are an estimated 761 households with an unmet need in Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Council supports the Scottish Government's approach as set out in the National Planning Framework 4 'NPF4 position statement' to work with planners and private developers to increase the delivery of all-tenure wheelchair accessible housing targets. Aberdeenshire Council through discussion with planners introduced an all-tenure target and in addition to

10% of all new build developed in the social housing sector, set a target to encourage 10% of all new housing developments in the private sector on developments of 20 or more units to be wheelchair accessible. However, challenges remain around implementation, recording and monitoring of this data. The new Local Development Plan for Aberdeenshire is currently being developed and as part of this the new LDP will adopt NPF4 to implement a policy to increase the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing across all tenures to meet unmet housing need. The outcome of the Scottish Government's Consultation on 'Enhancing the accessibility, adaptability and usability of Scotland's homes' will help shape and inform any future policy development with respect to ensuring health and welllbeing across our communities to enable independent living.

2.1.10 **Adaptations**

Adaptations play an important role in ensuring that people have housing that best suits their needs and allows them to maintain their independence and improve their wellbeing outcomes. Aberdeenshire Council Adaptations Group, which includes partners from Housing, Care & Repair, Registered Social Landlords, and Occupational Therapy Team Managers, continue to streamline and improve adaptations services and delivery, providing a person-centred and tenure-neutral approach in line with Scottish Government's guidance on Equipment and Adaptations. Table 3 below demonstrates the number of adaptations numbers during the last three years. The figures for 'Average Days to Complete' below for Local Authority Housing and 'Private Sector Housing' are based on completely different processes. The main difference between the two is that the Local Authority use their own contractors, drawing works from contracts already in place and have greater control over the delivery of these adaptations. Private Sector adaptations are delivered via grants with clients/owners retaining ownership of the process. They have greater choice around options to meet their needs, are required to sign up to obtaining estimates for each job and have to choose their own contractors.

Table 3 - Number of Adaptations and Average Number of Days between Assessment of Need and Completion of Adaptation by Housing Tenure

	Local Authority		Private Sector	
Year	**Number of Adaptations**	**Average days between assessment of need and completion**	**Number of Adaptations**	**Average days between assessment of need and completion**
2021/22	121	81	228	145
2022/23	97	80	212	124
2023/24	111	71	238	137

2.1.11 **Housing Support services**

The ‘Disabled Persons Housing Service,’ Houseability, provide support and assistance for people with disabilities and those living with long-term conditions. Assistance is provided individually for each client’s particular needs to reduce health inequalities by providing the required support to enable clients to have access to appropriate independent living options. The current contract for Houseability is in place until March 2025 as is the funding from the Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership. Officers are currently scoping out requirements and service provision beyond this date.

During 2023/24, Houseability had 253 enquiries, supporting 143 clients of which 114 received advocacy. A further 22 clients in hospital were supported to enable quicker hospital discharge to ensure their housing needs were met following discharge. Houseability have noted over the course of the last few years that clients have increasingly more complex health issues and situations aligning with the experiences of AHSCP and Housing Service officers. Houseability continues to adapt their service to ensure time is spent appropriately for each client’s situation. This includes the provision of a variety of methods for engaging with clients such as home visits, telephone and skype consultations to ensure an efficient and effective service. Approximately 60-65% of cases are now considered as complex and this includes clients with multiple disabilities, family members who also have disabilities, and clients requesting advice on multiple services, such as housing options, rent issues, neighbour problems, and signposting to other agencies such as SCARF (an organisation which provides energy efficiency advice and information).

2.1.12 **LHS 2024-2029 Priority - Minority Ethnic Communities – Minority Ethnic Communities, including Gypsy/Travellers, will have access to appropriate land, housing and support encouraging social integration**.

Provision of well-maintained permanent and stopover sites that meet the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller community.

Aberdeenshire Council has a Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee consisting of Members, officers, and partners. The outcomes in the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee Action Plan reflect those outcomes in the Scottish Government Action Plan, 'Improving the lives of Gypsy/Travellers:2019-2021' to:

- Provide more and better accommodation.
- Improve access to services.
- Improve incomes in and out of work.
- Tackle Racism and Discrimination.
- Improve Gypsy/Traveller Representation.

There are two Gypsy/Traveller Sites managed by Aberdeenshire Council.

Aikey Brae, Stopover Site at Maud, Peterhead, consists of 10 pitches where each pitch has an electric pillar and a chemical toilet with water available from communal standpipes/taps. It is accessible throughout the year with the length of stay on site negotiable in discussion with the Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer, who manages the site. Extensive consultation with Gypsy/Travellers has highlighted a desire for improved facilities. An initial bid to Scottish Government's Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund for funding was unsuccessful, but it is hoped that a further bid may be approved in future.

Upgraded in 2020/2021, Greenbanks Travellers Site in Banff has 20 stances each with an amenity chalet with access to electric, a separate toilet, shower and plumbing for a washing machine. 20 stances are available for occupation from April to the end of October and in November 2023, the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee agreed that 10 stances should be made available for occupation throughout the year.

Following consultation with members of the Gypsy/Traveller community, a programme of works was undertaken at both Aikey Brae and Greenbanks, during 2021/2022, using Aberdeenshire Council's funding allocation from Scottish Government '£2m Additional Funding for Public Sector Gypsy/Traveller Sites, Over and Above the Minimum Standards.'

There is also a range of private site provision throughout Aberdeenshire. The Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer provides support to Gypsy/Travellers who would like to develop private sites, as well as support for those who wish to access housing services.

Three potential sites are identified under the Local Development Plan (2023), but it is unlikely that these sites will be developed in the short term. Meantime officers continue to investigate other opportunities to take forward delivery through the Aberdeenshire Gypsy/Traveller Site Provision Strategy 2021-2026.

The Refugee Resettlement team and partners has supported 1221 refugees and displaced persons to resettle in Aberdeenshire between 2016 and 2024. The Ukraine Moving On Housing Project has ensured that clients receive enhanced Housing Options support to transition from sponsor accommodation to their own and sustainable tenancy.

Aberdeenshire New Scots' Integration Strategy aim is to enable refugees to integrate from day of arrival, with social housing across both Aberdeenshire Council and Registered Social Landlords being utilised to provide permanency. There are now well-established New Scots communities in the North East of Scotland.

Aberdeenshire Council will continue to identify current and future housing needs of minority ethnic communities, including migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as any barriers to meeting those needs and provide appropriate housing information and advice. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to work closely with partners to produce the New Scots' Integration Strategy for the period 2025+ following the New Scots' Refugee Integration strategy as published by COSLA, the Scottish Government, and the Scottish Refugee Council with a view to implementing actions as appropriate.

2.2 **Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017**

The Aberdeenshire Child Poverty Action Plan 2022 -2026 outlines the approach to tackling Child Poverty, focusing on root causes and building capacity 'through income maximisation, employability, improving quality of life, helping families manage the impacts of poverty and promoting positive life chances.' The action plan is committed to keeping 'The Promise' which has a specific emphasis on poverty with actions set to ensure this is kept as a particular focus across multiple forums. The Banff & Buchan and Buchan areas of Aberdeenshire account for over 30% of the total number of children and young people living in poverty, and inequalities have widened for those who have a long-term illness or a disability, including children with additional support needs. The commitment in the SHIP to support independent living by ensuring that a minimum of 15% of new affordable homes are suitable for those with particular needs will contribute towards reducing these inequalities. The SHIP identifies up to 400 affordable homes to be developed in the settlements within these areas, of which 378 will be targeted for social rent. These properties will meet the energy efficiency standard for social housing and will complement the significant investment from the Council and local RSLs to meet the standard for their existing stock. The ongoing effect of the rising costs of living has increased the need for additional financial support to ensure that households can cover the cost of essentials including food, fuel and housing costs. Combined efforts across new build, fuel poverty and independent living will help to reduce costs and close the inequalities gap and improve the life chances for children and households living in poverty.

2.3 **Housing Need and Demand Assessment**

The Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023 informs the Local Development Plan as well as the Local Housing Strategy. The assessment estimates the number of housing units required to meet housing need and demand in the future over a number of different scenarios across a 20-year period and forms the basis for setting the Housing Supply Target through the Local Housing Strategy process. In setting a housing supply target, local authorities must take account of a wide range of different factors including, but not limited to, economic and market indicators; build out rate of developers; previous levels of affordable housing delivery; and the availability of resources; all of which will likely have an impact upon the pace and scale of housing delivery. Based on the assessment and the factors above, the housing supply target proposed for affordable housing for Aberdeenshire is 250 units per year; 225 social rent and 25 intermediate.

2.4 **Housing Market**

Whilst house prices in Aberdeenshire are still above the Scottish average, since 2016 this gap has been narrowing as a consequence of the downturn in the oil and gas sector and impact of Covid 19 restrictions. The Aberdeenshire average house price is £212,037 compared to a Scottish average of £210,382 as at Quarter 4 23/24 (Registers of Scotland). In terms of the number of residential sales, recent data from ASPC for Q2 2024 shows an increase of 5.8% in the number of sales compared to the same quarter in 2023. Typically the second quarter of the year is the most active but this data might indicate that the local housing market is starting to gradually move towards pre-covid levels of activity, with inflation appearing to be easing down with a recent reduction in interest rates. In terms of the private rented sector, Citylets data reports that after a protracted period of rent declines and stagnation, Aberdeen is seeing continued growth with a 9.8% year on year increase as at quarter 4 2023. However, Aberdeen average rental of £867 per calendar month (Q1 2024) is still considerably less than the Scottish average of £1,123 (Citylets). With regards to the number of new build completions there has been a 12% decrease in

Aberdeenshire over the period 2022-2023 (1,013) to 2023-2024 (893) likely in response to the challenging economic climate, compared to a 17% decrease in activity at a Scotland level (Scottish Government). Whilst interest rates have recently reduced to 5.25% in July 2024 this continues to have a significant impact on borrowing and subsequently, the affordability of construction projects and finance within the mortgage market. Market intelligence and Building Cost Information Service suggests tender prices have increased 2.1% in the last year, which is considerably lower than the previous three years whereby tenders returns were subject to increases of around 30-40%, with some projects even higher than that. However, it is important to note this increase of 2.1% is in addition to the higher value increases experienced in the previous three years. Contractors on average are now holding their tender prices for about 60-90 days and the tender validity period has increased over the last 12 months, which is positive, and would indicate movement towards a level of market stability, although this is at the higher pricing level. The availability of building materials has improved over the course of the last year with no major issues reported other than some mechanical and electrical components, with these associated costs rising higher than standard inflation at an estimated 5-8%. Meantime there remains an ongoing skills and labour shortage within the construction industry and the availability of labour is becoming more challenging. This experience seems to be consistent with previous years and has a direct impact on quality and delivery on sites. Bricklayers, stonemasons, mechanical and electrical installers appear to be in peak demand within the current market. Generally, there is a reasonable number of tender returns for projects and contractors' appetite for submitting prices for projects is positive on small to medium sized projects. However, major construction projects with tier 1 contractors are challenging and contractors are looking for 2 stage tendering or framework awards as opposed to pricing on the open market. In Aberdeenshire there are a limited number of contractors in comparison to the Central Belt of Scotland, therefore, this may be susceptible to change if sizeable, more attractive projects are released into the market. There is also more interest from contractors around Aberdeenshire Council's potential programme of construction projects, which would suggest their order books may not be as full as previous years. The Building Cost Information Service forecasts tender prices to increase 3.8% from Q3 2024 to Q3 2025. A high proportion – around 80% - of current and future affordable housing development is or will be as a consequence of contributions from the private development industry to affordable housing through the Local Development Plan's Affordable Housing Policy. The policy states that "all new housing development of four or more homes must include 25% of the serviced plots for affordable housing". Consequently, the SHIP 2025-2030 will be heavily influenced by the development industry's build-out rate, intrinsically linked to the performance of the economy and the local housing market. This current market trend will be monitored in terms of the potential impact on the deliverability and viability of affordable housing developments, across all tenures, particularly in terms of alignment with Scottish Government funding.

3. Delivery

3.1 Affordable Housing Completions

During the period April 2023 to March 2024 a total of 213 units were completed for social rent. 150 units across the Council's New Build programme and 63 units across our RSL partners' New Build programmes. This includes developments across the following locations:- Fraserburgh, St Fergus, Ellon, Tarves, Blackdog, Inverurie, Johnshaven, Alford and Huntly. Of the 213 units, 90 were suitable for particular needs of which 26 units were wheelchair accessible. Of these 213 units, 68 units were delivered on town centre and or brownfield sites in Fraserburgh, Ellon, Inverurie and Huntly. There were also 9 properties purchased for social rent by the Council across the following settlements – Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Ellon, Turriff, Kemnay and Inverurie. Furthermore, there was also 1 unit for Low Cost Shared Equity (LCSE) and 6 LCSE resales, with 15 Shared Equity units and 30 Mid-Market units completed in Chapleton. Additionally, the exit strategy for Create Homes was completed, securing 51 units as Mid Market. Table 4 below details completions by provider, tenure and property size.

Table 4 - Number of Aberdeenshire Completions by Provider, Tenure and House Size during 2023/2024

Provider/Tenure	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed	Totals
Aberdeenshire Council - social rent	58	30	50	12	0	**150**
Registered Social Landlord - social rent	23	14	23	3	0	**63**
Acquisition by Aberdeenshire Council - social rent	2	3	4	0	0	**9**
Acquisition by RSL - social rent	0	0	0	0	0	**0**
Mid-Market Rent - Create Homes	16	23	12	0	0	**51**
Mid-Market Rent - Registered Social Landlords	0	28	2	0	0	**30**
Shared Equity	0	5	10	0	0	**15**
Low Cost Shared Equity - New Build	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
Low Cost Shared Equity - Resales	0	4	2	0	0	**6**
Total	**99**	**108**	**103**	**15**	**0**	**325**
%	**(30%)**	**(33%)**	**(32%)**	**(5%)**	**(0%)**	**(100%)**

Meantime work has recently completed or currently on site for 369 social rent units of which 196 are being delivered through the Council's New Build programme, the remaining 173 through our RSL partners. This includes developments across the following locations - Fraserburgh, Ladysbridge, Peterhead, Mintlaw, Tarves, Blackdog, Inverurie, Kemnay, Westhill, Stonehaven, Laurencekirk, Chapelton, Banchory, Aboyne and Alford. Of these 369 units 98 are suitable for particular needs including 49 for wheelchair users. Two properties have also been purchased from the open market to be brought into Council stock in Peterhead and Gartly. Meantime work has commenced on site for 45 Shared Equity units and 92 units for Mid-Market at Peterhead, Chapelton, Banchory and Aboyne by our RSL partners. Of these 137 units, 25 are suitable for particular needs.

3.2 **SHIP Programme Priorities**

Aberdeenshire Council has developed a programme of affordable housing which provides a range of tenures from renting to home ownership, delivered by a range of partners including Registered Social Landlords, private developers and community groups, effectively seeking to maximise all available funding streams. This programme has been planned so that each development has been placed in the actual year that it could start if resources were available; developments are in the main within allocated sites within the Local Development Plan with the action programme a key tool in driving delivery and addressing any identified constraints within the context of a place making approach. Furthermore, the Affordable Housing Hub seeks to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing through a collaborative and dedicated approach to identifying and resolving any planning or delivery issues timeously. Within each year, the developments are prioritised as high, medium, and low in terms of addressing housing need as set out in Table 1 above. Potentially the SHIP could deliver 1879 new affordable homes, with around 584 suitable for Particular Needs (31%) of which 239 will be fully wheelchair accessible (13%). Around 1469 units will be for social rent (78%) with the remainder as either mid- market rent or some form of affordable home ownership. Of the 1879 units around 235 units will be delivered on either town centre and or brownfield sites. In terms of addressing the pressure points of 1 bed properties and larger family size properties of 3+ bedrooms, around 35% of social rent properties will be 1 bed properties and around 32% will be 3+ bedroom properties. A summary of the SHIP is outlined in Table 5 below.

3.3 **Affordable Housing Supply Programme**

In terms of the affordable housing supply programme the SHIP has been drafted in accordance with Scottish Government guidance. Site starts will be subject to the availability of funding from Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council's Housing Revenue Account plan as well as RSLs' business plans and are detailed below in Table 5, along with the Resource Planning Assumptions as advised by Scottish Government.

Appendix 1

Table 5 - Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025-2030 Potential Site Starts

Area	BB	B	F	G	KM	M	Aberdeenshire	Resource Planning Assumption
25/26								
Council - Social Rent	2	56	11	0	2	0	71	
RSL - Social Rent	33	0	36	45	48	37	199	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	56	8	64	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	8	8	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	5	0	0	1	6	
Total	**35**	**56**	**52**	**45**	**106**	**54**	**348**	**£27.69m**
Area	**BB**	**B**	**F**	**G**	**KM**	**M**	**Aberdeenshire**	**Resource Planning Assumption**
26/27								
Council - Social Rent	0	12	20	0	0	0	32	
RSL - Social Rent	12	0	51	73	119	36	291	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	40	51	35	126	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	14	14	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity	2	12	18	5	8	3	48	
Total	**14**	**24**	**89**	**118**	**178**	**88**	**511**	**£28.152m**

Appendix 1

Area	**BB**	**B**	**F**	**G**	**KM**	**M**	**Aberdeenshire**	**Resource Planning Assumption**
27/28								
Council - Social Rent	0	56	0	0	0	0	56	
RSL - Social Rent	0	53	71	143	9	40	316	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	7	16	16	0	39	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity		3	17	8	2	0	30	
Total	**0**	**112**	**95**	**167**	**27**	**40**	**441**	**To be advised**
Area	**BB**	**B**	**F**	**G**	**KM**	**M**	**Aberdeenshire**	**Resource Planning Assumption**
28/29								
Council - Social Rent	0	4	0	0	0	30	34	
RSL - Social Rent		98	86	91	33	27	335	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	7	10	0	0	17	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	8	0	6	2	16	
Total	**0**	**102**	**101**	**101**	**39**	**59**	**402**	**To be advised**
Area	**BB**	**B**	**F**	**G**	**KM**	**M**	**Aberdeenshire**	**Resource Planning Assumption**

29/30								
Council - Social Rent	0	0	42	0	0	0	42	
RSL - Social Rent	0	52	0	22	12	7	93	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	12	12	0	24	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity	0	5	0	4	6	3	18	
Total	**0**	**57**	**42**	**38**	**30**	**10**	**177**	**To be Advised**
Area	**BB**	**B**	**F**	**G**	**KM**	**M**	**Aberdeenshire**	**Resource Planning Assumption**
25/30								
Council - Social Rent	2	128	73	0	2	30	235	
RSL - Social Rent	45	203	244	374	221	147	1234	
Create Homes Aberdeenshire - Mid Market Rent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
RSL - Mid Market Rent	0	0	14	78	135	43	270	
RSL Low Cost Shared Equity	0	0	0	0	0	22	22	
Aberdeenshire Low Cost Shared Equity	2	20	48	17	22	9	118	
Total	**49**	**351**	**379**	**469**	**380**	**251**	**1879**	**£55.842m**

3.4 The Council and Registered Social Landlords' new build programmes seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing through all available funding streams. Partners will continue to investigate and implement new and innovative delivery mechanisms. A small number of landbank sites held by partners will be developed as appropriate; however, as noted previously, a significant proportion of current and future programmes will be as a consequence of the Affordable Housing Policy. As such, timing and alignment with Scottish Government funding will be fundamental to the effective planning and deliverability of our future programme. Affordable housing partners recognise the importance of maximising land supply outwith the Affordable Housing Policy and as such work continues to identify and pursue other opportunities including a collaborative approach to the disposal of partners' land and assets and securing land and properties from the open market where appropriate and viable.

3.5 Affordable Housing Fund (Capital Plan)

In order to enable and support the delivery of affordable housing, Aberdeenshire Council have made available a dedicated funding resource, to supplement, where appropriate, existing funding streams. Essentially this funding will bridge the gap between total development costs and existing funding stream limitations with potential projects subject to scrutiny and assessment to ensure Best Value. In these instances funding will be awarded where it is considered that without 'gap funding' the developments would not otherwise proceed. During 23/24 £1.639 million has been spent supporting the delivery of 91 homes in Fraserburgh (22), Huntly (13), Ellon (40) and Stonehaven (16) all either brownfield sites or conversion of empty buildings. Meantime a further £861,000 has been committed to projects in Mintlaw and Fraserburgh with works well underway to deliver 110 homes. Of this, £163,000 has been allocated in principle to a further development in Ellon which, subject to appropriate approvals, consents, and funding, will enable the further delivery of a further 11 units.

3.6 Second Homes and Empty Homes

In Aberdeenshire, over the course of the last five years the number of second homes has reduced slightly from 1244 in 2019 to 1166 in 2024. Table 6 below shows the number and percentage of second and empty homes in Aberdeenshire, Scotland and in neighbouring councils Aberdeen City, Moray, Highland, Angus and Perth and Kinross.

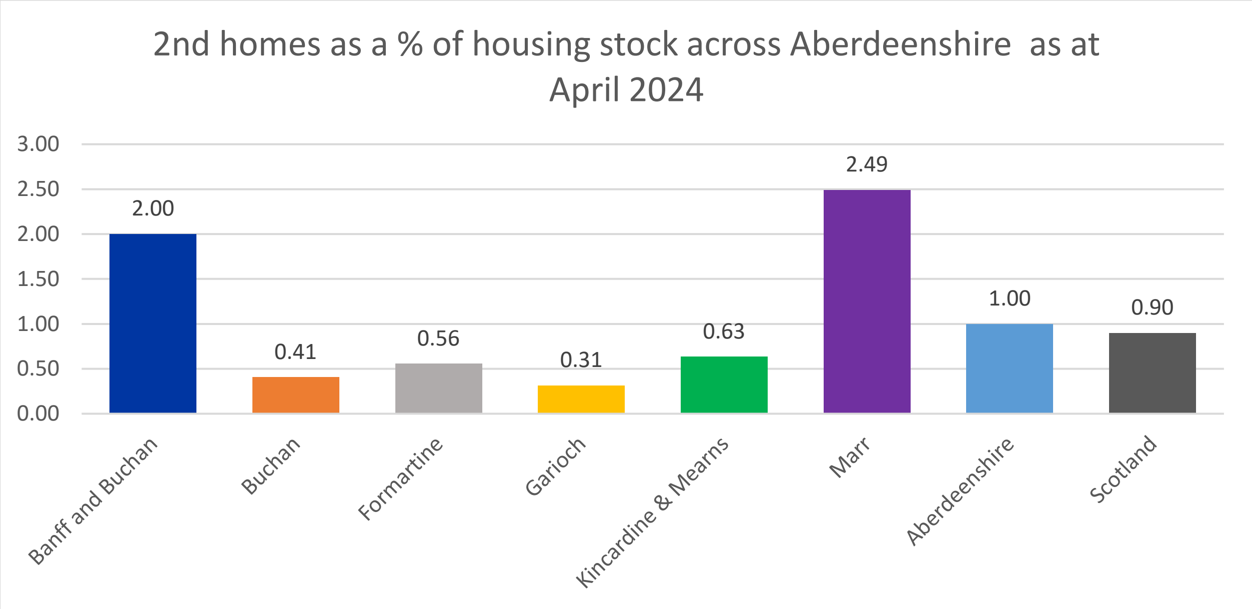
Table 6 - Number and Percentage of Second Homes and Empty Homes

Council	Number of 2nd homes	% of dwellings that are 2nd homes	Number of empty homes	% of dwellings that are empty
Aberdeenshire	1166	1.0%	2704	2.2%
Aberdeen City	686	0.6%	5594	4.5%
Moray	791	1.7%	928	2.0%
Highland	3753	3.0%	3390	2.7%
Angus	389	0.7%	1236	2.1%
Perth & Kinross	1202	1.6%	1275	1.7%

Scotland	24,061	0.9%	46,217	1.7%

Source: Long term empty properties in Aberdeenshire and Scotland (NRS Households and Dwellings in Scotland) published June 2024 house-est-23-data.xlsx (live.com)

In terms of second homes the Scottish percentage is 0.90% with Aberdeenshire's percentage at 1%. However, when looking at each administrative area within Aberdeenshire the percentages vary, with Banff and Buchan and Marr being 2% and 2.49% respectively, as demonstrated in the graph below.



Source: Aberdeenshire Council Tax data April 2024 and house-est-23-data.xlsx (live.com)

In Banff and Buchan there are many small coastal villages that are in areas associated with tourism, however the turnover of social rented stock within the small coastal villages is typically healthy enough to accommodate the majority of those households on the waiting list. Nonetheless, some households may have difficulty in accessing suitable housing despite the lower than Aberdeenshire average private housing costs when considering lower than Aberdeenshire average household incomes. Similarly, Marr includes the Royal Deeside towns of Ballater and Braemar and this likely explains why these areas have a higher than average percentage of second homes due to being popular tourist destinations. In the smaller villages within the Marr area the availability of social rented stock is limited, this coupled alongside limited and higher than Aberdeenshire average private housing costs can mean that it is challenging for some households to access housing. Marr is predominantly a rural area and local intelligence suggests that many people work locally in Braemar and Ballater and do not want to travel further. Traditionally the main industries are hospitality, accommodation and retail due to the high number of visitors to this area each year, but this work is typically seasonal and low paid. Therefore, expensive private rented or owner occupied properties, even if available, would not be affordable to most.

In terms of empty homes, Table 6 shows that 2.2% of dwellings that have been empty for a period of more than 6 months in Aberdeenshire, compared to a Scottish Average of 1.7% with Aberdeen City at 4.5% and Moray at 2%. These figures capture the data as at September 2023. Aberdeenshire Council Tax data demonstrates that Aberdeenshire Council have 2590 empty properties as at 30.04.24.

Table 7 below provides a summary of the empty homes brought back into use as affordable housing in Aberdeenshire over the course of the last three years from 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Table 7 - Empty Homes Projects 2021-2024 by funding, length of time empty and tenure

21/22 Empty Property details				**Funding Source/Amount**					
No	**Length of time empty**	**Total No of completed properties**	**Tenure**	**SGovt Grant £**	**HRA/RSL £**	**Developer Obligations - Cash £**	**2nd Homes Council Tax £**	**General Fund £**	**Total Funding £**
1	< 6 months	1	social rent	42,000	70,639	0	0	0	112,639
4	6-12 months	4	social rent	168,035	295,807	76,801	0	0	540,643
3	1-2 years	3	social rent	126,070	222,244	24,549	0	0	372,863
1	5-10 years	1	social rent	42,000	69,923	0	0	0	111,923
9		**9**		**£378,105**	**£658,613**	**£101,350**	**£0**	**£0**	**£1,138,068**

Appendix 1

22/23 Empty Property details				Funding Source/Amount					
No	**Length of time empty**	**Total No of completed properties**	**Tenure**	**SGovt Grant £**	**HRA/RSL £**	**Developer Obligations - Cash £**	**2nd Homes Council Tax £**	**General Fund £**	**Total Funding £**
2	< 6months	2	social rent	42,000	139,368	3,714	0	0	185,082
5	6-12 months	5	social rent	210,000	248,225	18,008	0	0	476,233
2	1-2 years	2	social rent	84,000	207,192	9,628	0	0	300,820
3	2-5 years	3	social rent	126,000	205,961	51,562	0	0	383,523
1	> 10 years	12	social rent	797,756	1,177,517	0	0	0	1,975,273
13		**24**		**£1,259,756**	**£1,978,263**	**£82,912**	**£0**	**£0**	**£3,320,931**

Appendix 1

23/24 Empty Property details				**Funding Source/Amount**					
No	**Length of time empty**	**Total No of completed properties**	**Tenure**	**SGovt Grant £**	**HRA/RSL £**	**Developer Obligations - Cash £**	**2nd Homes Council Tax £**	**General Fund £**	**Total Funding £**
3	< 6months	3	social rent	172,000	186,373	0	0	0	358,373
1	6-12 months	1	social rent	65,000	113,972	0	0	0	178,972
3	1-2 years	3	social rent	172,000	214,064	4,586	0	0	390,650
2	2-5 years	14	social rent	1,575,000	1,223,364	8,781	160,000	564,000	3,531,145
1	5-10 years	6	social rent	621,000	474,241	129,301	108,000	175,000	1,507,542
10		**27**		**£2,605,000**	**£2,212,014**	**£142,668**	**£268,000**	**£739,000**	**£5,966,682**
32	**<6mths=6 6-12 mths=10 1-2 years=8 2-5 years=5 5-10 years=2 >10 years=1**	**60**	**60 social rent; 0 LCSE**	**£4,242,861**	**£4,848,890**	**£326,930**	**£268,000**	**£739,000**	**£10,425,681**

The Empty Homes Framework developed by the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP) is embedded in our commitment to bring empty homes back into use. We will continue to encourage and support empty homeowners to do so using the resources and initiatives available via the dedicated Empty Homes Service to provide individualised advice. As part of this approach to bringing empty properties back into use, during 23/24, 8 empty properties were bought from the open market by Aberdeenshire Council in Peterhead, Turriff, Fraserburgh, Kemnay and Inverurie. This has resulted in the delivery of 8 energy efficient affordable homes for social rent of which 1 is suitable for particular needs households. 1 empty property in Fraserburgh was converted into 6 affordable homes for social rent of which 2 are suitable for particular needs households and a further 1 empty property in Huntly was converted into 13 affordable homes for social rent of which 3 are suitable for particular needs households. Not only does this assist in meeting housing need but also supports wider aims such as town centre regeneration, rural sustainment, community safety and carbon neutrality all within a placemaking approach to the provision of affordable housing.

Our dedicated Empty homes - Aberdeenshire Council service also provides advice and information to individuals who are looking for help to bring their empty property back into use. During 2023/24, 94 enquiries were received at emptyhomes@aberdeenshire.gov.uk with advice and information provided as follows:-

- 48 funding and financial related queries
- 18 seeking advice re buying and or selling including the Matchmakers scheme
- 7 general enquiries
- 2 renovation and maintenance enquiries
- 5 seeking advice re renting
- 14 reporting an empty property

Over the course of 2023/24, contact was made with the liable parties of 1856 empty homes in April and 1673 in October. As a result, 46 have advised that for varying reasons the property is now occupied/sold or no longer an empty property. 4 requested information on funding and financial matters, 1 requested rental advice, 18 requested renovations advice, 3 requested buying and selling advice, 2 advised property is up for sale and 6 were looking for general advice. Further targeting will continue to ensure all empty home owners in Aberdeenshire are aware of the Empty Homes Service and the practical support and assistance available.

During 23/24 £2.024 million was generated through Council Tax revenues by the reduction of discount on Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties and this is ringfenced for affordable housing purposes in line with legislative powers. £0.970 million of Second Homes Council Tax was spent to support the delivery of 35 council new build homes in Huntly, Fraserburgh and Ellon during 2023/2024, with £1.729 million committed to 110 units currently on site across 2 developments in Fraserburgh and Mintlaw and a further £6.349 million to future projects to deliver 171 units. This funding stream continues to enable and support the Council's New Build programme and is fully committed to the Council's New Build programme in order to optimise capacity within the HRA to meet identified affordable housing need. Any income generated through the powers to increase council tax charges by a 100% levy on both Empty Homes (since April 2014) and Second Homes (since April 2024) are not currently directed to support the delivery of affordable housing or bringing empty properties back into use but directed at the Council's wider plan and activities.

3.7 Developer Obligations

During 2023/2024 there were 316 new supply affordable housing completions in Aberdeenshire as detailed in Table 8 below.

Table 8 - Number of Aberdeenshire Completions 2023/2024 supported by the Affordable Housing Policy

Number of Completions	S75	Non S75	Total
Scottish Government Funding	163	153	316
Without Scottish Government Funding	0	0	0
Total	163	153	316

Of these completions, 163 (52%) were delivered through S75 - Affordable Housing policy - land and/or commuted sums, with all of these units also supported by Scottish Government funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme. The remaining 153 units were not delivered through the Affordable Housing policy but did receive Scottish Government funding.

Through the Local Development Plan's Affordable Housing Policy, commuted payments are in exceptional circumstances received in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. Table 9 below sets out Developer Obligations Commuted Payments as at July 2024.

Appendix 1

Table 9 - Developer Obligations Commuted Payments As At July 2024

Catchment	Total cash (£)	Paid in (£)	Committed (£)	Expended (£)	Balance (£)
Aberdeenshire	238,621	239,971	1,750	238,221	0
Aboyne	474,324	467,268	75,958	391,310	0
Alford	564,932	534,859	0	453,897	80,962
Banchory	852,437	884,562	94,722	634,745	155,095
Banff	669,558	762,334	0	597,642	164,692
Ellon	672,101	595,755	3,966	506,436	85,353
Fraserburgh	689,982	651,255	0	624,573	26,682
Huntly	648,085	604,130	0	603,512	618
Inverurie	1,564,422	1,532,931	0	1,467,101	65,830
Kemnay	756,104	797,890	0	797,291	599
Mackie (Stonehaven)	859,695	861,198	0	831,116	30,082
Mearns (Laurencekirk)	361,144	365,590	0	359,701	5,889
Oldmeldrum	1,349,768	1,311,968	0	1,245,752	66,216
Mintlaw	791,463	732,613	244,572	273,482	214,559
Peterhead	445,822	447,302	0	443,311	3,991
Portlethen	163,455	155,072	0	155,072	0
Turriff	583,643	573,328	0	565,828	7,500
Westhill	94,240	94,240	0	94,240	0
Other Towns/Areas	91,300	91,300	0	84,489	6,811
LCHO Resales	1,747,265	1,747,265	0	0	1,747,265
LCHO Staircasing	230,023	230,023	0	0	230,023
Total	**13,271,167**	**13,680,854**	**420,968**	**10,367,719**	**2,892,167**

During 2023/24, £770,000 of this funding stream has assisted in the acquisition of 3 purchases from the open market to be brought into use as social rent as part of the Council's stock; the delivery of 22 units across 2 developments as part of the Council's new build programme; and 37 particular needs adaptations.

Priorities for spend of commuted payments are:-

1) Council New Build Programme.
2) Enabling Registered Social Landlord development programme.
3) Enabling empty properties to be brought back into use.
4) Enabling delivery of affordable housing through private estates and community groups.
5) Purchase of open market housing for use as affordable housing; either for mainstream or temporary accommodation subject to identified housing need.
6) Particular needs adaptations.

3.8 **Delivery Models**

Aberdeenshire Council and its partners will continue to work with Scottish Government to support the delivery of the Housing to 2040 vision by exploring new delivery models for affordable housing. Officers continue to assess the UK and beyond for best practice in delivery models. The following models of affordable housing are currently being delivered in Aberdeenshire:-

3.8.1 **Low Cost Shared Equity**

Through the Local Development Plan's Affordable Housing Policy, Aberdeenshire Council, in partnership with private developers, deliver low cost homes for sale in the form of shared equity through S75 agreements which are aimed at first time buyers on low to modest incomes. The Deed of Conditions ensures that properties remain affordable, and provides an element of control over future sales price in the event that any properties are sold. Since 2008 this unsubsidised affordable housing tenure has proved successful and currently there are 309 LCSE properties across Aberdeenshire, of which 98 have been resold with some on more than one occasion as households' circumstances change. However, it is worth noting that the delivery rate has slowed in alignment with the local economy and housing market activity.

3.8.2 **Create Homes Aberdeenshire MMR**

Following on from the agreed exit strategy as approved 9th March 2023 by Aberdeenshire Council, the Scottish Futures Trust retired from the partnership on 11 November 2023 and the Scottish Government guarantee agreement was discharged. The new Create Homes Aberdeenshire MMR Limited Liability Partnership was formed with Scottish Government grant secured to acquire the 51 units across four developments in Aberdeenshire to continue providing mid-market rented accommodation through Private Residential Tenancies which are targeted at households with modest incomes. This model enables the delivery of mid-market housing whilst maintaining a neutral impact on the Housing Revenue Account. Officers will continue to identify opportunities for further units which will be assessed and progressed, where appropriate, subject to funding availability, viability and consents.

3.8.3 **Open Market Shared Equity**

During 2023-2024 in Aberdeenshire, there were 144 applications to the Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Scheme (OMSE) managed by LINK Housing. 124 of those were approved and received passport letters, with 85 sales, 40 expired passports and 1 declined. The remaining live passports at the end of March were carried over into 2024-2025.

3.8.4 **Rural Housing Fund and Community Led Housing**

Scottish Government's Rural Housing Fund aims to increase the availability of affordable housing for rent and sale in rural areas through grants or loans. It is open to a wide range of organisations and seeks to empower communities by helping them to meet local housing need. This funding stream is particularly relevant in predominantly rural Aberdeenshire and Aberdeenshire Council will support and facilitate the identification and development of opportunities through a place-making approach to delivery as part of the proposal to implement Place Plans. In Braemar, a community group have successfully secured planning permission, subject to conditions, for 15 affordable housing units. Discussions are currently ongoing wth a local Registered Social Landlord to explore a collaborative approach to the next phase of the project. Aberdeenshire Council have provisionally offered in the region of £70k, subject to securing match funding and nomination rights to support the delivery of the project. In Tarland, a community group continue to explore potential affordable housing sites within the village – greenfield, brownfield, and existing properties. They continue to work with the Communities Housing Trust to identify potential opportunities which are financially viable and sustainable whilst addressing local housing need.

3.8.5 **Rural Key Workers Housing Fund**

The Scottish Government's Rural Key Workers Housing Fund can help bring empty properties back into use or allow for the purchase of properties on the open market through local authorities or registered social landlords by making them available to key workers in rural areas in order to meet the housing needs of these local communities. Officers will continue to identify and develop any proposals to meet identified key worker housing need by working closely with stakeholders and progressing actions as appropriate.

3.8.6 **Housing Infrastructure Fund**

As part of the Aberdeen City Region Deal, a £20m Housing Infrastructure Fund has been made available for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing in the North East of Scotland. As and when it is appropriate to do so, officers will work with interested parties to provide advice and support to maximise any potential opportunities which meet Scottish Government criteria.

3.8.7 **Offsite Construction and Procurement**

Given the rural nature of the Aberdeenshire area, there continues to be challenges around modular construction. Generally, Aberdeenshire Council's new build programme delivers sites which average around 20-30 units, with projects ranging from around 6 units up to the largest project of 73 units, and a proportion are gap sites. Offsite manufacturing is more suited to larger, higher density, repetitive developments, to provide the required economies of scale, rather than the small-medium size one-off projects which typically come through the affordable housing programme in Aberdeenshire. Modular buildings and bathroom /shower room pods have been assessed but the market opportunities are limited within the local supply chains. Payment terms within off-site manufacturing are challenging with some contractors looking for 50% payment upfront when ordering and the balance prior to site delivery which may pose additional risks which require careful management. However, officers continue to explore and examine opportunities for alternative mechanisms and will implement these as and when appropriate and viable to do so.

To maximise the delivery of affordable housing, Aberdeenshire Council was a funding member of the Scotland Excel New Build Residential Framework which was launched August 2019 and expired July 2024. The renewal framework is expected to be awarded mid-September 2024. This framework should assist in the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025 – 2030 by accelerating the process, as well as freeing up resources and finances that can be invested in employment initiatives, deliver community benefits, and reduce environmental impact. Procurement is an evolving part of the construction industry and officers continue to monitor the options available to provide best value. To achieve competitive tenders and the best value available in the market, the procurement of each development is assessed on its own merit as to whether the Scotland Excel Framework is the most suitable option or whether alternative frameworks or an open tender exercise via Public Contracts Scotland should be considered. However, it is important to note that the construction industry is still experiencing a challenging period as noted in paragraph 2.4, resulting in increases in borrowing costs, material cost increases levelling off at a higher rate and labour inflation/shortages across certain trades driving up tender prices.

4. Consultation

4.1 This SHIP is produced using the existing partnership approach of an Affordable Housing Forum and an Affordable Housing Delivery Team which both meet on a regular basis. These enable a shared understanding of the issues and challenges and help to shape and inform both the Local Housing Strategy as well as the SHIP.

4.2 Further to the public engagement on the development of the Local Housing Strategy, a number of consultations have taken, or will take, place to inform this SHIP. These include:

- Discussions with Registered Social Landlord partners, private developers and other services including Planning, Health & Social Care and Property.
- Tenant consultation via a live Tenant Engagement Event 29th August 2024 and Engage Aberdeenshire – Aberdeenshire Council's public consultation web portal during August and September 2024.

4.3 This SHIP was also considered and commented upon by the six Area Committees during August and September 2024 and thereafter reported to Communities Committee on 7th November 2024 for approval.

4.4 Responses to the consultation have been positive, welcoming the collaborative approach to the delivery of affordable housing across Aberdeenshire, albeit noting and highlighting the challenges in the current economic climate. Areas of particular interest included:- New Scots Integration Strategy; identifying housing need and affordable housing solutions for key workers and in rural areas; the repurposing of existing and or empty properties given the challenges with regards to land availability; the prioritisation of social rent housing and housing with appropriate support for older people; and ensuring that any developments are supported by the appropriate infrastructure and amenities to promote placemaking and mixed and sustainable communities.

5. Equalities

5.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been carried out and is included as additional information. Positive and neutral impacts have been identified and these link clearly to the strategic outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy as outlined above at 2.1 Local Housing Strategy.

6. Environmental Assessment

6.1 A Pre-Screening report was submitted to the SEA Gateway stating that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the SHIP, as the primary document in relation to land use planning is the Local Development Plan which is subject to a full SEA and which will ultimately cover all housing projects set out in the SHIP. This has been accepted by the consultation authorities.

7. Outcome

7.1 The main outcome of this SHIP is to enable the delivery of high quality, energy efficient housing, which support climate adaptation, maximising a range of funding streams and delivery models to address housing need across a variety of affordable housing tenures, whilst adopting place making principles.