

Angus Local Housing Strategy 2023-28 Consultation Report

Introduction

The views of our stakeholders and communities are at the heart of the LHS and are key to deliver success.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires all local authorities to consult on their proposed LHS, but beyond this requirement we believe that co-development of the LHS ensures that we hear about the things that really matter to local people, we are in a stronger position to respond to those needs, and we have better opportunities to get things right and help deliver what is needed to make the biggest difference to our communities.

Throughout development of the LHS we have provided a range of opportunities for local people, communities and wider stakeholders to share their views. Our aim was to test the evidence base but also encourage new ideas for change and improvement and inform the development of our LHS.

Methods of Engagement

The following programme of engagement was undertaken to inform development of the LHS 2023-28.

- Housing and related Consultations (2018 to 2022)
- Angus Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2022)
- LHS 2023-28 Stakeholder Engagement Sessions (2020 to 2022)
- LHS 2023-28 Community Engagement Survey (2022)

Further details can be found below, outlining the wide range of partners, people and communities we have engaged with to help develop our LHS. We used a range of methods, from face-to-face meetings and group discussions in the period prior to the pandemic, before hosting a series of online events and developing surveys to gather views and feedback. Each time we utilised web and social media platforms to communicate our plans far and wide and capture a significant audience-base.

Early Engagement – laying the foundations for LHS 2023-28

Our LHS is shaped by the events since our last iteration (2017-22) and of course by our intended direction and the outcomes we want to achieve. As a result the many engagement and consultation initiatives over the past few years have informed our LHS, as we continue to act and help cater for local housing needs.

Housing and Related Consultations

The wide range of consultation surveys and engagement sessions were carried out over the period 2018 to 2022.

- Housing Options Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Allocations Policy Review Survey
- Hard Edges and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Events
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Housing Regeneration Initiatives (New Builds & Demolitions) – community consultations, school consultations
- Child Poverty Survey
- Climate Change and your Home (Social Tenants)
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Survey
- Private Sector Landlords Survey (the effects of the pandemic)
- Private Sector Landlords Survey (energy efficiency standards survey)
- Housing Options for Older People Survey
- Housing Repairs Satisfaction Survey (social sector)
- Housing Rent Setting (social sector)
- Angus Community Councils (People Survey)
- Angus Violence Against Women Survey
- Domestic Abuse Policy Survey
- Homelessness Research Survey (Issues and Policy)
- Young Persons Homelessness Survey
- Housing Options Survey for Mid-Market Rent and Shared Equity
- Gypsy Travellers Consultation (design guide survey)
- Angus Food growing Survey
- Angus Housing Need & Demand Assessment Survey
- Homeowners Survey (energy efficiency standards)
- Housing Beyond 2020 (social sector tenant consultation – Angus wide)

The volume and range of consultations outlines the Council's hands-on approach when engaging with our service users and communities about housing and related matters. The responses enabled us to shape and adopt local policies and initiatives based on the needs of local people and stakeholders, considering the shifting priorities in people's everyday lives as a consequence of the pandemic, and the national approach outlined in Housing to 2040. The continuous programme of engagement has served to provide a solid evidence base for LHS consultation and development.

What did people say to influence LHS 2017-22?

Mindful of the current operating environment and the many changes since 2017, it is important to consider the range of views and priorities identified in development of LHS 2017-22. The most prominent issues were:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing across all tenures (**high priority**)
- More information and advice available regarding housing options (**high priority**)
- Improve options for individuals requiring specialist housing (**high priority**)
- Bring more empty homes back into use (**medium priority**)

- Raise awareness about fuel poverty, energy efficiency and housing quality issues (**medium priority**)

Source: Angus Council LHS 2017-22, Community Survey (285 respondents)

Whilst these issues are still relevant today, the way we live and how we have lived for the past 3 years, and people's shift in attitudes and awareness of wider issues has resulted in a significant change in priorities, which is highlighted in the consultation responses from the HNDA and LHS 2023-28 engagement surveys.

Angus Housing Need and Demand Assessment (2022)

Household Survey

As part of process to produce a robust and credible Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), primary research was undertaken by the consultants Arneil Johnstone (commissioned 'Research Resource' consultancy) to provide consistent, current and reliable intelligence on the extent and nature of housing need and demand throughout Angus. Fieldwork took place between March and April 2021, and a total of 848 interviews were achieved in Angus across both telephone (around 500) and online surveys (350).

The survey covered the following themes which allowed for full exploration of the issues surrounding need and demand, in addition to exploration of the impact of Covid on households and housing need:

- Household tenure and property type
- Suitability of and satisfaction with current home
- Property condition
- Recent moving behaviour (last 5 years)
- Future household formation (next 2 years)
- Future intentions of current households
- Individual needs (health, adaptations, care and particular forms of housing)
- Household composition
- Household income including financial impact of Covid

The survey delivered credible insight into local housing need and demand, with key findings summarised as follows:

- 12% need to move to a more suitable home
- 23% would like to move elsewhere
- 24% had too few rooms in their current homes
- 26% spend more than 25% of their income on housing costs
- 24% has a property condition or disrepair issue
- 24% had someone living in their household who will form a new household in the next 5 years
- 35% have a life limiting illness or disability
- 23% with a life limiting illness or disability live in a home not suitable for their needs
- 5% have a household member who needs specialist accommodation
- 6% are sharing amenities with another household

Although self-reporting, the survey outputs highlight the housing need themes relating to unsuitable housing, housing affordability, adequate space for living, poor house conditions, and newly forming households. The survey was undertaken at a time when we were all still dealing with the effects of the pandemic, but prior to the current cost of living crisis.

The results gave an early indication of the shift in attitude from the historical priorities relating to lack of supply, to more nuanced elements relating to the characteristics of the home – the spaces in which people live, the area in which we live, and property conditions. These were perhaps in part due to the experiences at the time when we were all spending much more time in and around our homes due to the pandemic.

HNDA Stakeholder Events

The events were held to ensure that external partners and stakeholders were given the opportunity to scrutinise, feedback and support the development of the HNDA evidence base. Two stakeholder events were held in May 2021 and December 2021.

The purpose of the first event was to inform the response as part of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF) in Scotland. The discussions focused on the housing estimates in Angus, both existing need and newly arising need. These are key components of the HNDA calculation to inform housing land supply and the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) which is the assessment method recognised by the NPF4. Around 80 delegates attended the event and their feedback was used to inform the planning scenarios and a credible range of housing estimates.

The second event was held so that stakeholders could have the opportunity to scrutinise the HNDA evidence and validate the final housing estimates by sub-area and tenure. A total of 54 delegates attended the event and provided meaningful feedback, validating the range of housing estimates, and providing crucial feedback on the contextual factors which should be considered when using housing estimates as the basis for policy development.

The delegate attendees included:

- Neighbouring local authorities
- Registered social landlords
- Private developers
- Economic development agencies
- Health and social care partnerships
- Third sector organisations

Stakeholders were generally supportive of the proposed housing estimates, agreeing that they reflect the way the Angus housing system has historically operated, and that the HNDA outputs presented a solid foundation for future policy work.

“The figures are a good starting point and reflect how the housing market operates in Angus”

Further Context

A great deal of focus in the stakeholder discussions centred around the migration and economic scenarios that would influence household growth in Angus. The encouraging debate considered the more optimistic view that the recovery from Covid signalled an opportunity for housing-led growth in Angus. We then however experienced significant financial changes, with downturns impacting the whole of the UK economy. Consequently, when developing our housing supply targets the Council opted for a more realistic approach which followed the trajectory of marginal growth (Principal Projections).

LHS 2023-28 – Consultation and Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

Prior to our community engagement, we undertook a number of stakeholder engagement sessions, from late 2020 to mid-2022. We developed our LHS topic evidence papers to share with our partners to sense-check the data. The topic papers intended to set the scene, summarising the national and local policy position, as well as presenting key local evidence to help identify the issues and challenges in relation to each particular topic. The LHS topic engagement sessions were:

- Fuel Poverty, Energy Efficiency, House Conditions and Climate Change
- Preventing and Addressing Homelessness
- Specialist Provision and Independent Living
- Housing Delivery and Placemaking

Due to their wide-ranging impact, the themes relating to child poverty and the climate emergency were interwoven into these topic sessions, ensuring all stakeholders had the opportunity to provide feedback.

In addition to the topic sessions, we also held a LHS Vision Development Session whereby we asked a range of key partners and stakeholders to provide their ideas and experiences so that we can develop a new housing vision that is for purpose and serve the Council and the LHS on the road to 2040.

A wide range of stakeholders attended the sessions, including:

- Fuel Poverty and Energy Advice agencies
- Private Developers
- Estate Agents and Private Landlord representatives
- Planning Consultants and Land Agents
- Health & Social Care professionals
- Angus Community Groups
- Planning professionals and consultants
- Building Standards professionals
- Trading Standards professionals
- Welfare Rights professionals
- Housing Management professionals
- Land and Estate Owners
- Third Sector professionals and representatives
- Homes for Scotland representatives
- Registered Social Landlords
- Community Safety professionals
- National Health Service professionals
- Economic Development professionals

The stakeholder engagement sessions were a key starting point in presenting the local evidence base. They served as an opportunity to define the main issues to be tackled, enabling consultation on both the emerging priorities and future options. The method emphasised the LHS development process of

codesign, whereby our stakeholders and communities are empowered to have a voice via early engagement.

What they said...creating a Vision

We developed and presented materials to provide attendees with an overview of the local housing scene, detailing the historical and projected demographic changes, housing market and affordability characteristics, stock traits, housing need and demand analysis, new supply activity, and an overview of Housing to 2040. Following the introduction we used an interactive activity to help set our vision.

We asked attendees:

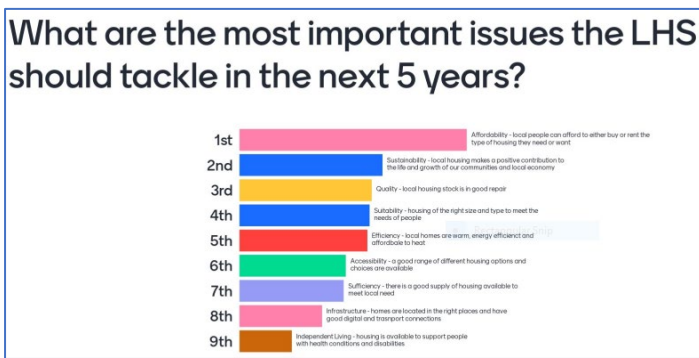


The participants identified a clear message that housing means – a **home, safety, and affordable**.

The emphasis on **home** which offers the security and comfort for **all people**.

The most important issues to tackle were:

1. Affordability (for all people)
2. Sustainability (growing communities & the economy)
3. Quality (condition)
4. Suitability (size & type)
5. Efficiency (energy efficient & affordable to heat)



The next interactive activity involved attendees accessing and contributing to a virtual whiteboard. We asked them:

Q. How should housing look and feel in the next 5 years?

They said -

- Sufficient supply of affordable housing to provide more options and range of homes
- Improved energy efficiency in existing and new stock
- Future proof housing to ensure homes are fit for anyone
- More efficient use of existing housing, reduce empty stock

Q. What do you think are the specific actions that will help us achieve these improvements?

They said -

- Maximise investment and grant funding opportunities
- Prioritise investment in existing stock, maximise investment opportunities for private sector
- Identify a best practice retrofit framework
- Lead by example and get best value from Council stock, utilise enforcement powers toward long-term empty stock

Q. What do you think are the main barriers to making these improvements?

They said -

- The financial climate – lack of funding / investment opportunities; inflation
- Awareness, knowledge and appetite in the private sector tenures
- The skill-base to deliver mass retrofits
- Funding/investment, public sector resources; lack of control over private sector

The feedback was used to inform the development of our new LHS Vision and Delivery Plan.

Stakeholder Topic Engagement Sessions

At each session we presented the evidence base to sense check the data, and we asked attendees to help us identify the main issues and challenges both currently and on the road to 2040. They can be summarised as follows:

Places	People
Housing affordability	Prevent and reduce homelessness
New supply of affordable housing – widening the product range	Increase housing options for people with specialist housing requirements (learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health)
The quality and condition of existing stock	Increase homes for people with accessibility issues (wheelchair housing, accessible housing)
The volume of ineffective stock (empty homes)	Improve the range and access to supported housing
Energy inefficiency – particularly private sector stock	Improve the adaptations system
Sustaining our places – rural communities, town centres, regeneration	Promote inclusion and equalities
Support and sustain the private rented sector	

Throughout each session it became apparent that the thinking was very much aligned and that the issues and challenges identified could be divided into two themes – **Places** and **People**. These themes were further developed to form the cornerstone of the LHS Delivery Plan.

Community Engagement Survey

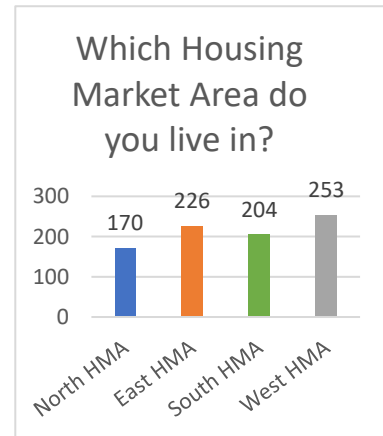
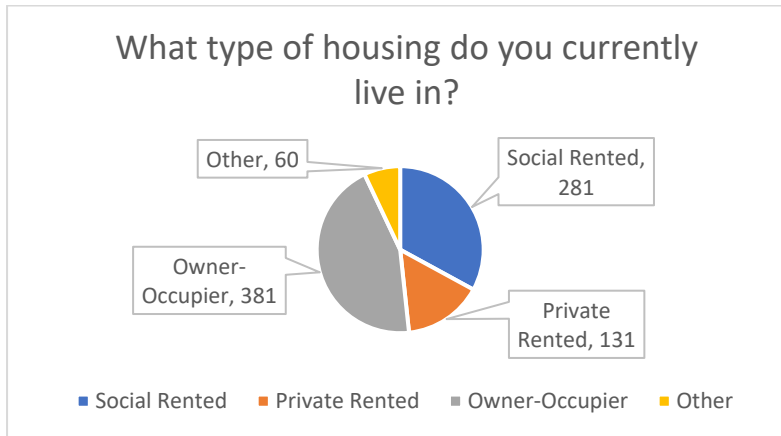
The survey was made available to all people and communities across Angus. There was extensive promotion via social media channels, community group networks, schools, housing tenant and waiting list networks, gypsy traveller and refugee resettlement groups, health and social care network groups, and a range of Council news platforms. The survey was made available in accessible formats, either online or paper format.

Open for a period of 4 weeks (1 February 2023 to 28 February 2023), there were a total of **853 respondents**, significantly surpassing the volume of participants in the LHS 2017-22 survey (285).

About the people / households who responded:

- There were more respondents from the owner-occupier sector (381), and more people in the West and East Housing market areas told us their views.

- Working age residents were the most active, with 92% (786) aged 18 to 64 years old
- Households with children provided the majority of responses (707), around 83%, and around 70% of those had 2 or more children
- Around 18% (159) of all respondents have a specialist housing requirement – such as fitted adaptations, level access requirement, supported housing requirement, or wheelchair adapted



The type of household you live in – household members	Number of Responses	As a Percentage of Total
Single Adult Household	306	35%
Couple Household	544	64%
Single Adult with Children (1 or more)	245	29%
Couple with Children (1 or more)	454	53%
Adults with no children	120	14%
Households with 1 child	207	24%
Households with 2 or more children	492	57%

We asked our residents about what makes their home a good home, the impact of the pandemic on their home life, what could make their home better, and the 5 things that they think are the most important housing challenges that the Council should address. We used the results to create a word cloud and emphasise the key and prominent responses.

In terms of **what makes their home a good home**, they told us:



When people think of their home, it is clear that they think beyond the front door and about the wider area – their neighbours, safety, outdoor space, location, and being close to amenities.

When telling us about the **impact of the pandemic on their home life**, they told us:



It comes as no surprise that rising energy prices are the main concern (77%), but we can also see that space limitations (18%), reduced earnings (18%), less disposable income (30%), and issues relating to finding a new home (24%) are key.

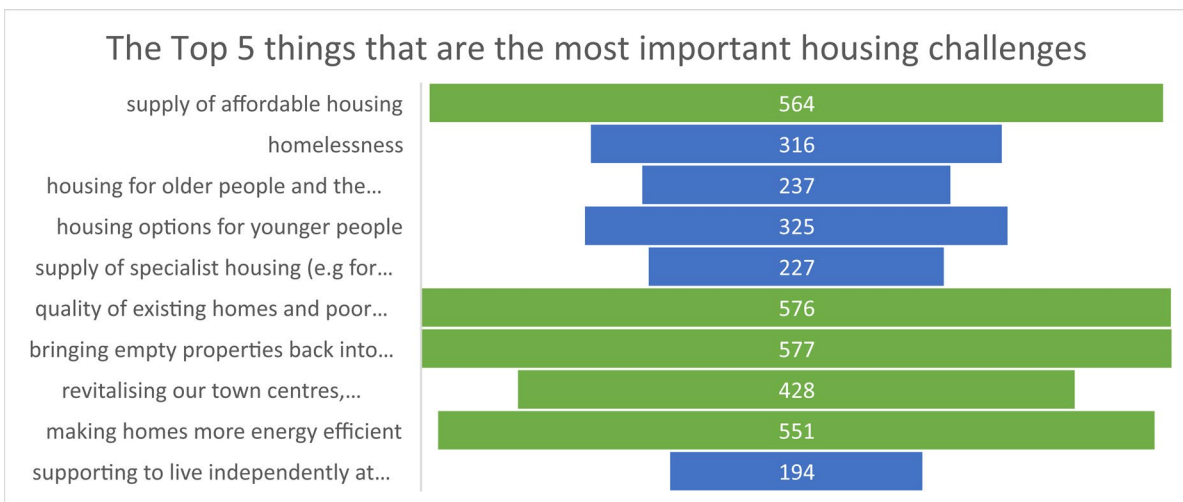
We asked them to tell us **what could make their home better**, they told us:



The things that people wanted the most related to measures that would improve the energy efficiency of their home.

As well as more space, both internal and external, to improve the quality of life.

When we asked them **what 5 things the Council should prioritise**, they told us:



Housing Challenges	Percentage of Survey Respondents	Rank Order 1-10
the supply of more affordable housing	68%	3
preventing and addressing homelessness	38%	7
increase the supply of housing for older people and the ageing population	28%	8
increase the housing options for younger people	39%	6
increase the supply of specialist housing (e.g for people with a physical or learning disability, a mental health issue)	27%	9
tackling the quality of existing homes and poor house conditions	70%	2
bringing empty properties back into use	70%	1
revitalising our town centres, regeneration areas, rural areas and areas of low housing demand	52%	5
making homes more energy efficient	67%	4
supporting people to live independently at home	23%	10

A vast majority of respondents told us that bringing empty homes back into use, tackling the quality of existing homes, supply more affordable homes, make homes more energy efficient, and revitalise and regenerate areas were their main concerns.

Although not in a majority, there were still concerns surrounding housing options for younger and older people, preventing homelessness, and supply specialist housing solutions and support people to live independently.

The feedback represents a significant shift in priorities from the public, and a contrast from the priorities identified in the development of LHS 2017-22. It is clear that the focus is more on sustainability – improving existing stock, maximising the use of empty homes and ensuring that the quality and energy efficiency of these homes is improved.

The Feedback - Taking a Closer Look

There were similarities between the household characteristics of the social and private rented sectors, however the owner-occupier sector was dominated by couple households.

Social Sector (281 respondents)

The type of household you live in – household members	Number of Responses	As a Percentage of Total
Single Adult Household	149	53%
Couple Household	126	45%
Single Adult with Children (1 or more)	124	45%
Couple with Children (1 or more)	112	40%
Adults with no children	39	14%
Households with 1 child	66	23%
Households with 2 or more children	168	60%

When they told us what would make their home better, they said:

- New windows
- Bigger kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms
- Outdoor space / garden
- More insulation
- Better quality / condition

When they told us about the top 5 things the Council should prioritise, they said:

- Increase new supply
- More affordable housing options
- Make homes more energy efficient
- Better conditions in social homes
- Maximise the use of empty homes

We also surveyed applicants who are currently on the housing waiting list for a new property. They said:

- Increase the supply of more affordable housing
- Prevent and address homelessness
- Increase the supply of housing for older people and those with specialist housing needs

Private Rented Sector (131 respondents)

The type of household you live in – household members	Number of Responses	As a Percentage of Total
Single Adult Household	62	47%
Couple Household	64	47%
Single Adult with Children (1 or more)	58	44%
Couple with Children (1 or more)	53	44%
Adults with no children	15	11%
Households with 1 child	36	27%
Households with 2 or more children	75	57%

When they told us what would make their home better, they said:

- More affordable / cheaper housing options
- More space – inside and outside
- Make more energy efficient
- Better living space for children / families

When they told us about the top 5 things the Council should prioritise, they said:

- Affordable housing – more options
- More social housing
- Tackle empty properties
- Larger properties / more space / accommodation for families
- Improve energy efficiency

Owner-Occupiers (381 respondents)

The type of household you live in – household members	Number of Responses	As a Percentage of Total
Single Adult Household	49	13%
Couple Household	329	86%
Single Adult with Children (1 or more)	42	11%
Couple with Children (1 or more)	275	72%
Adults with no children	61	16%
Households with 1 child	92	24%
Households with 2 or more children	225	59%

When they told us what would make their home better, they said:

- Better energy efficiency (more insulation)
- Improved roads, access
- Lower energy costs
- More space – inside and outside

When they told us about the top 5 things the Council should prioritise, they said:

- More affordable housing
- Make homes more efficient – more support with energy costs
- Make use of existing properties (empty homes)
- Revitalise town centres / other areas
- Improving services, protecting spaces, regeneration

Overview

There are some clear patterns when we look at the responses from each housing tenure. More affordable housing, improved energy efficiency and tackling empty homes are the most important issues across the tenures.

Social Sector	Private Rented	Owner-Occupier
Increase new supply	Affordable housing – more options	More affordable housing
More affordable housing options	More social housing	Make homes more efficient – more support with energy costs
Make homes more energy efficient	Tackle empty properties	Make use of existing properties (empty homes)
Better conditions in social homes	Larger properties / more space / accommodation for families	Revitalise town centres / other areas
Maximise the use of empty homes	Improve energy efficiency	Improving services, protecting spaces, regeneration

The most common improvements that people would like to see are ‘better energy efficiency’ and ‘lower energy costs’, a view held across all tenures.

However general housing affordability and the supply of affordable housing options are more prominent requests from households in the social and private rented sectors. The rented sectors also highlighted issues relating to space (indoor and outdoor) and condition quality.

Making better use of empty properties featured heavily, although less so from the owner-occupier respondents. This suggests that the issue of 'wasted' housing stock is more prominent for those who may have limited choice and/or affordability restraints.

What is clear is the supply of affordable housing remains a dominant issue (3rd). Other issues relating to the prevention of homelessness, the supply of housing for younger and older people as well as the provision of specialist housing also remain key challenges. However the survey results indicate a shift in priorities with more people asserting that bringing empty homes back into use (1st), and improving the quality and condition of existing homes (2nd) as the top priorities.