

Local Housing Strategy 2017-22

annual report 2018-19



CONTENTS

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	HOUSING SUPPLY	5
3	GOOD QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES	13
4	HOMELESSNESS	21
5	SUPPORT TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY	25
6	KEY DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD	29

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The Housing [Scotland] Act 2001 places a Statutory Duty on all Local Authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy, framed by Statutory Guidance published by Scottish Government. The current Scottish Borders Local Housing Strategy covers the five year period from April 2017 to March 2022.

The strategy was developed with our partners, stakeholders and voluntary sector over an 18 month period and was formally approved in September 2017. The strategy addresses a wide range of challenges and issues, and sets out outcomes, priorities and actions to deliver our shared vision for housing in the Scottish Borders.

The Local Housing Strategy sets out the vision and priorities for the future of housing and all housing related services across the Scottish Borders

It considers all tenure and types of accommodation and reflects both national priorities and local needs



The vision for the LHS is:

Every person in the Scottish Borders lives in a home that meets their needs

In order to deliver this vision successfully; the following four LHS priorities were defined:

- **LHS Priority 1:** The Supply of Housing Meets the Needs of Our Communities
- **LHS Priority 2:** More People Live In Good Quality, Energy Efficient Homes
- **LHS Priority 3:** Fewer People Are Affected By Homelessness
- **LHS Priority 4:** More People Are Supported To Live Independently In Their Own Homes

Some of the key objectives of the Local Housing Strategy include:

- To help ensure adequate housing supply across all tenures to address the varying and diverse housing need in the Borders.
- To promote and increase awareness of energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty through the development and implementation of a new Home Energy Efficiency & Affordable Warmth Strategy.
- To increase the supply of new affordable housing that meets the needs of our community through the ongoing development and delivery of the next and future Strategic Housing Investment Plans.
- To tackle disrepair and below tolerable standard in the private sector stock and address landlord compliance in the private rented sector.
- To address the Housing, Support and Care needs of the growing Older People population through the implementation of an Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People's Housing, Support and Care Needs.
- To improve the health and wellbeing for people experiencing Homelessness; and ensure fewer people are affected by homelessness.
- To gain a better understanding of the housing aspirations and needs of young people in the Borders

This annual report provides an update on progress from 2018 to 2019; including any key highlights and significant achievements, as well as ongoing challenges for the future.

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

2. HOUSING SUPPLY

Addressing Priority 1: The Supply of Housing Meets the Needs of Our Communities

Highlights

- Record level of Scottish Government funding secured in 2018/19
- SHIP 2018/19 submitted to Scottish Ministers prior to deadline
- SHIP 2018/19 received very positive feedback from Scottish Government
- Site works begin on extra care housing developments in Duns and Galashiels
- 191 affordable homes delivered throughout the Scottish Borders
- Bridge Homes LLP acquires 9 homes and completes its development phase
- SBHA won a Borders Design Award in October 2018, in the Regeneration & Placemaking category, for Stonefield

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

Scottish Government has set an ambitious national target to deliver 50,000 affordable homes over the lifetime of the current Scottish Parliament. Scottish Borders Council area was allocated £14.065m Affordable Housing Investment programme funding from Scottish Government in 2018/19. This is a record level of funding allocated to support affordable housing delivery in Scottish Borders.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan [SHIP] is the sole document for targeting affordable housing investment in the Scottish Borders and provides a rolling 5 year planning horizon. The SHIP 2019/24 annual submission was approved by Council in October 2018 and was submitted to Scottish Ministers prior to the November deadline. This current SHIP sets out proposals for up to 1,047 new affordable homes, and is underpinned by an estimated investment of £162m over the five year plan period. Work has already begun to inform preparation of the next SHIP submission.

192 affordable homes delivered across Scottish Borders in 2018/19

These were provided as follows:

130 new build affordable housing by RSLs:

- 30 at Acredale Phase 3 Eyemouth by Berwickshire Housing Association
- 47 at Easter Langlee Phase 3 Galashiels by Eildon Housing Association
- 34 at Sergeant's Park Phase 1 Newtown St Boswells by Eildon Housing Association
- 9 at Craigpark Gardens Galashiels by Eildon Housing Association
- 10 at Rose Court Galashiels by Scottish Borders Housing Association

9 new build affordable homes for mid-market rental:

- 4 at Hydro Gardens Peebles by Bridge Homes LLP
- 5 at Washington Avenue Kelso by Bridge Homes LLP

31 RSL purchase of existing homes by RSLs:

- 24 at James Hogg Court Innerleithen by Eildon Housing Association
- 1 by Scottish Borders Housing Association
- 6 by Waverley Housing

22 assisted purchases through Scottish Government's Open Market Shared Equity Scheme (OMSE).



COMPLETED DEVELOPMENTS IN 2018/19



Washington Avenue, Broomlands, Kelso



Hydro Gardens, Peebles



Rose Court, Upper Langlee, Galashiels



Acredale Phase 3, Eyemouth



Sergeant's Park, Newtown St Boswells



James Hogg Court, Innerleithen

ADDRESSING HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND

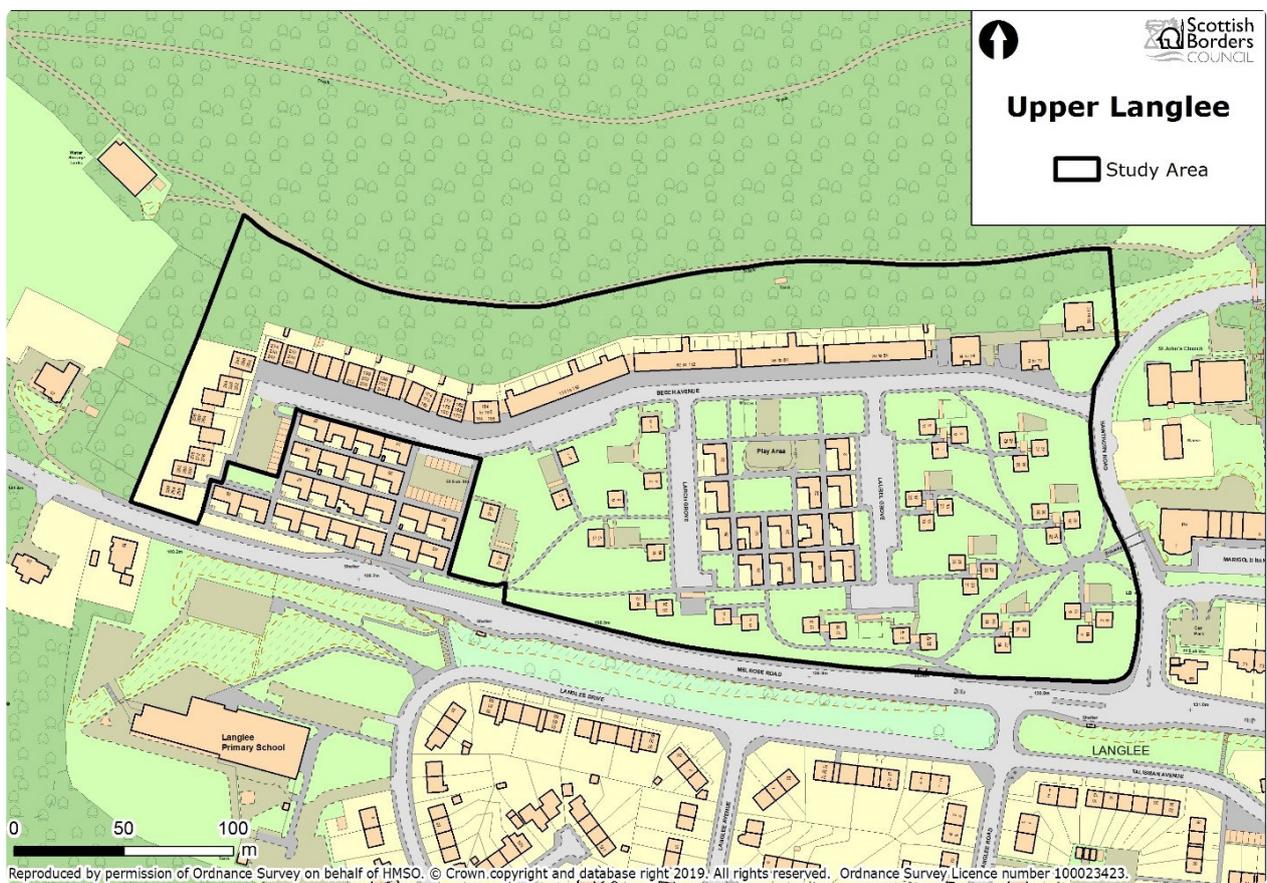
During 2018/19 The Council worked with Waverley Housing on the procurement,

- Berwickshire Housing Association to carry out a master planning study for Beanburn/ Lawfield sites at Ayton
- Master planning study to provide options for the regeneration of Beech Avenue and associated streets in Upper Langlee, Galashiels
- Housing needs and aspirations of young people study
- Complete the delivery of the Scottish Borders Integrated Older Peoples Housing, Care and Support Strategic Plan

MASTERPLAN FOR UPPER LANGLEE, GALASHIELS REGENERATION

The Council led on the procurement, selection and appointment of consultants to carry out a master planning study to develop proposals for a housing led regeneration of Waverley Housing owned housing at Beech Avenue in Galashiels and neighbouring streets. The final report was agreed in summer 2018.

Following a wider residents community consultation exercise, a number of phased projects have been identified and have been included in the Council's current Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019/24. In addition the Council has also agreed to grant assist Waverley to buy back a number of privately owned flats as a precursor to demolition of unpopular and hard to let flatted housing blocks.



BRIDGE HOMES

Bridge Homes is a Limited Liability Partnership established by the Council and Scottish Futures Trust to provide affordable housing for mid-market rental. During 2018/19 Bridge Homes acquired another 4 flats at Hydro Gardens Peebles and 5 houses at Washington Avenue Kelso. This brings an end to Bridge Homes development phase with 54 homes being provided via the National Housing Trust/ Local Authority Variant initiative by the 31 March 2019 deadline.



TWEEDSIDE

Tweedside is a Limited Liability Partnership that was also established by the Council, Scottish Futures Trust and a local developer to provide affordable housing for mid-market rental. During 2016/17, Eildon Housing Association acquired Tweedside's homes at Chris Paterson Place Galashiels, and followed up in 2018/19 by acquiring all Tweedside's remaining 24 homes at James Hogg Court Innerleithen. This was supported by grant funding from Scottish Government's More Homes Division, and enabled the tenants to remain living in their homes.

LOWOOD, TWEEDBANK

During 2018/19, the Council concluded the acquisition of the Lowood Estate which has been identified as providing a key mixed use development site opportunity which is aligned to the Borders Railway Corridor and to City Region Deal partnership working. Work has begun on development of Supplementary Planning Guidance in order to frame the phased development of the area. Work has also been initiated to explore ideas to create a care village as one element of delivery of opportunities for market and affordable housing.

HOUSING SUPPLY STRATEGY

The Housing Supply Strategy 2018 - 2028 has been developed to help better understand how the Council can work with partners, to effectively respond to the challenge of increasing the supply of new and suitable housing for the local area, while achieving the strategic vision for housing growth in the Borders over the next ten years and beyond. The Housing Supply Strategy supports the Local Housing Strategy (2017-2022) with particular focus on strategic priority 1 of the LHS: The supply of housing meets the needs of our communities.

Providing an adequate supply of new affordable, high quality and appropriate housing will aid in not only sustaining rural communities, but also attracting potential new residents.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOUSING STUDY

The Indigo House Group were commissioned to undertake an assessment on the housing needs and aspirations of young people in the Scottish Borders. In order to deliver our strategic priorities, the Council and its partners needed to better understand the housing needs and changing aspirations of young people and what models of housing or accommodation might meet their future hopes or requirements.

The work has involved a multi-method approach and a wide range of engagement with young people and professional stakeholders.



A steering group including a range of Community Planning partners have overseen the research and development of the Action Plan. This has included involvement of the Scottish Borders Children's and Young People Leadership Group. Feedback from these groups has shaped the outcomes and priorities identified in the action plan. These priorities and outcomes are:

- **Priority 1:** A holistic strategic approach for jobs, housing and transport
 - o Outcome 1 - Community planning partners take a holistic and strategic approach to the skills and employment, housing and transport needs of young people in the Scottish Borders
- **Priority 2:** Increasing housing choice and options
 - o Outcome 2 - Young people are able to access a range of different housing options which enable continued skills development and access to employment in the Scottish Borders
- **Priority 3:** Meeting the needs of vulnerable young people
 - o Outcome 3 - Young people are able to access a range of housing information, advice and support to enable independent living
- **Priority 4:** Monitoring and review of the Action Plan
 - o Outcome 4 - The housing needs of young people are understood and services implemented in the context of a wider Local Housing Strategy and the Integrated Children and Young People's Plan

TOWN CENTRE WORK

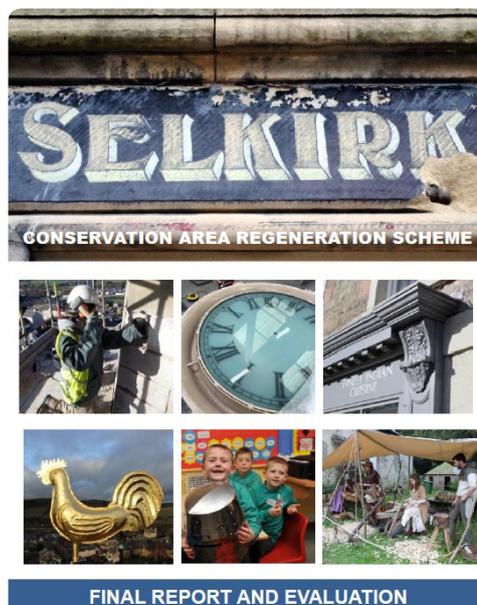
The Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) is part of a national programme to conserve Scotland's traditional buildings and support the regeneration of town centres. CARS activity supports the Scheme of Assistance which helps address issues of housing quality and condition. Information and advice is provided to owner occupiers, landlords and tenants of privately let properties; helping address disrepair and supporting owners of empty property to bring them back into use.

SELKIRK CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)

2018/19 brought the curtain down on the five year Selkirk CARS project. All of the CARS funded works and activities were complete by 31st March 2018 with additional, externally funded works completing to compliment the CARS investment, notably at the Sir Walter Scott's Courthouse and the Streetscape Improvement works in the Market Place.

The five year CARS project has strengthened the community capacity who are now progressing with a variety of initiatives following on for the CARS regeneration activities such as the successful monthly Farmers Market in the Market Place, as well as delivery of the Selkirk BIDS project.

Works are also continuing to regenerate problem/ empty sites within the town with new buildings nearing completion at High Street/ Chapel Street, Scott's Close and Scott's Place/ Viewfield Lane.



JEDBURGH CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)

Jedburgh CARS completed year 2 of its 5 year duration at the end of 2018/19. Over 60 enquiries for building repair funding have been received with 39 applications being submitted to support repairs to 24 buildings within the Conservation Area.

By the end of the year, 12 grant offers totalling over £110k had been made with projects progressing on site. A number of strong applications have been received which require some further development prior to being offered funding. It is anticipated that these will lead to a significant investment during 2019/20 and 2020/21.

An additional component of Jedburgh CARS is the development of a Public Realm project which has focused on the essential repairs to the Abbey Ramparts retaining wall. Investigative works have been carried out and the target is to start on site in August 2019. Discussions regarding complimentary works/enhancements within this area that could be carried out simultaneously have been taking place with the community, although these will likely require additional external funding to deliver.

HAWICK CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS)

Historic Environment Scotland announced Round 8 of CARS funding in August 2018 and invited applications for a share of a £10million funding pot.

Scottish Borders Council developed another strong bid, this time for Hawick town centre, and were awarded £1.314million to support building repairs and wider regeneration activities. The project is likely to launch in summer 2019 for 5 years.

EMPTY HOMES

The Empty Homes Strategy sets out how the Council aims to identify and bring back empty homes into residential use. It identifies potential for new investment to help return empty homes to use, particularly as affordable rented accommodation.

Working with the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, the Council have achieved significant outcomes in relation to developing processes for engaging with owners and maximising opportunities to assist owners getting their properties back into use.

An Action Plan sets out a pathway for developing intervention options in the form of information, advice and support, giving owners' options for their consideration.





SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

3. GOOD QUALITY AND ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

Addressing Priority 2: More People Live In Good Quality, Energy Efficient Homes

Highlights

- Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy has been developed with significant engagement
- SBC allocated £1,293,459 grant funding from Scottish Government for 2018/19
HEEPS: ABS
- Over 2,000 referrals for support via Home Energy Scotland on energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- Change Works in Peebles continues to operate and has been expanded to cover the whole Tweeddale locality
- Borders Home Energy Forum has been established
- Scottish Borders Council currently has almost 6,000 approved registered Landlords and over 8,700 rental properties approved

AFFORDABLE WARMTH AND HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY

To support Priority 2 of the LHS, the new Borders Home Energy Forum was established, and has developed the draft Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy (AWHEEs) which is currently out for consultation. The Strategy will run to 2023 and will be regularly reviewed by the LHS Partnership Group and the Borders Home Energy Forum. It takes lead and inspiration from commitments on fuel poverty and home energy efficiency, as well as the ongoing wider Scottish Government support, to provide an effective Strategy that delivers for all in the Scottish Borders.

The Strategy provides actions to deliver affordable warmth for those that need it most and, a commitment to increase the energy efficiency of all homes regardless of circumstance – providing multiple benefits that reach out to the householder, providers and the wider supply chain.

Covering the period 2019-23, the Vision is that 'more people live in energy efficient and affordably warm homes'. The Priorities that work towards fulfilling this Vision are:

- **Priority 1:** To collectively work with our partners to improve affordable warmth and energy efficiency in homes.
- **Priority 2:** To explore wider measures to better manage energy and increase warmth in the home.
- **Priority 3:** To ensure that the AWHEEs provides opportunities for all in the Scottish Borders.

HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMMES AREA BASED SCHEMES (HEEPS:ABS)

Over the last ten years of working on private tenure energy efficiency programmes in the Scottish Borders, there have been a significant number of installations of a range of measures. Key achievements over ten years of programmes in the Borders include:

1. 10,784 measures have been installed across 8,171 households;
2. This has been funded using £8.5m of Scottish Government funding and leveraged £1.1m of CERT funding and £2.6m ECO funding;
3. Installations have resulted in lifetime financial savings of £49m – the equivalent of a £4 financial saving per £ spent; £5,960 per household assisted (£149 per annum) and; £4,516 per measure (£113 per annum).
4. Installations have resulted in lifetime CO2 savings of 136,573 tonnes – the equivalent of 0.01 tonnes per £ spent; 17 tonnes per household assisted (0.41 tonnes per annum) and; 13 tonnes per measure installed (0.32 tonnes per annum).

Before and after photos for External Wall Installations:



The total amount of Scottish Government HEEPS: ABS 2018/19 awarded is almost £1.3m, and it's anticipated that around 350 homes will receive free or subsidised insulation measures across the Borders. The programme is still live and is due to finish in September 2019. It is targeting the following areas:

1. **External Wall Insulation (EWI):** Targeting specifically Mossilee Crescent, Galashiels; Meigle Row, Clovenfords; Town Yetholm and St Boswells.
2. **Internal Wall Insulation (IWI):** Targeting East Berwickshire specifically.
3. **Hard to treat Cavity Wall Insulation (HTTCs):** Targeting overspill from the 2017/18 Peebles funding and extended to other areas across the Scottish Borders.

So far there have been two well attended public events in Town Yetholm and St Boswells to raise awareness of the EWI scheme with residents. Furthermore, the project has partnered with Home Energy Scotland in Peebles to run an after-care event. This was attended by 15 households and its purpose was to provide support, advice and aftercare for households that received home energy efficiency installs in Peebles during the 17/18 programme.

Table 1: Estimated fuel bills and CO2 savings for 2018/19 HEEPS:ABS based on anticipated measures

Measure	Tenure				CO ₂ Savings (tonnes)		Financial Savings (£)	
	Owner Occupied	Private Rented	Social Landlord	Total	Annual	Lifetime	Annual	Lifetime
Internal Wall Insulation (solid wall)	40	0	0	40	30	229	£21,500	£903,000
External Wall Insulation (solid wall)	87	0	50	137	104	785	£7,200	£259,200
Hard to treat CWI (CWI solution)	215	0	0	215	97	741	£24,660	£887,760
Total	342	0	50	392	231	1755	£53,360	£2,049,960

enhanced monitoring on a sample of households, activities include customer satisfaction surveys; energy usage monitoring and; enhanced monitoring on a sample to households to include effect on temperature and energy and carbon reduction.

HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND REFERRALS

Home Energy Scotland (HES) is funded by the Scottish Government and managed by the Energy Saving Trust to provide free and impartial advice on ways to save energy, reduce fuel bills and make homes cheaper and easier to heat. They have a network of five advice centres across Scotland to help them reach householders, community organisations, businesses and local authorities and to reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions. They can provide advice on energy efficiency, switching suppliers, renewables, saving water, sustainable transport and refer for benefits and tax checks.



Table 2 shows the last four years of interactions data from Home Energy Scotland for the Scottish Borders.

Table 2: Number of Home Energy Scotland interactions

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Inbound Calls	1,223	1,175	934	1,245
Outbound Calls	815	592	705	977
Events	330	299	1379	945
Other (e.g. emails, letters, home visits)	1,343	2,521	2106	2,244
HEEPS:ABS	238	0	0	0
Total advice interactions	3,949	4,587	5,124	5,411

ENERGY EFFICIENT SCOTLAND (EES) PILOT PROJECT

Energy Efficient Scotland is the renaming of Scotland’s Energy Efficiency programme (SEEP). The purpose of the 20-year Route map is to define a set of actions aimed at making Scotland’s buildings near zero carbon by 2050, in a way that is socially and economically feasible. It considers two main policy areas: fuel poverty and climate change. The two main objectives are to:

1. Remove poor energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty.
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through more energy efficient buildings and the decarbonisation of heat supply.

There are 5 measures proposed to improve the energy efficiency in domestic buildings:

1. By 2040 all Scottish homes achieve an EPC C, where technically and financially feasible.
2. Maximise the number of social rented homes achieving EPC B by 2032.
3. Privately rented homes to reach EPC E by 2022, EPC D by 2025, and EPC C by 2030, where technically and financially feasible.
4. All owner occupied homes to reach EPC C by 2040, where technically and financially feasible.
5. All homes with households in fuel poverty to reach EPC C by 2030 and EPC B by 2040, where technically and financially feasible.

The Energy Efficient Scotland pilot project in Peebles (Change Works in Peebles hub – CWiP) focuses specifically on behavioural change and is engaging and supporting local householders and businesses to reduce energy consumption and fuel bills, as well as increasing the uptake of energy efficient measures.



**Change Works
in Peebles**

To date, over 1,400 people have visited the hub (this includes repeat visits and multiple person visits); and there

have been over 500 referrals to Home Energy Scotland for support. Additionally, workshops and events are being held regularly; a survey of all Peebles based businesses has been carried out; school interviews have been completed for the capital works programme and; there has been research across the supply chain on barriers and opportunities to implement energy efficiency measures.

The grant has also funded a Changeworks Senior Education Officer to engage with all schools in Peebles to support the area-based approach to energy efficiency. There have been meetings with all school Heads and Changeworks are now developing up a programme including energy assemblies and workshops for this current school year.

In the recent Energy Efficient Scotland funding (2018-19), the Council have partnered again

with Changeworks and were awarded funding to expand the CWiP Hub to cover the whole of Tweeddale, exploring specifically the self-funded market. This is seen as the first stage to cover all 5 localities during the funding period of Energy Efficient Scotland. The primary target for this self-funded project is owner occupiers with an EPC rating lower than C.

LOCAL HEAT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY STRATEGY (LHEES)

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency (LHEES) is designed to be a coordinated programme to support the local planning and delivery for improving the energy efficiency of homes and buildings in the public, commercial and industrial sectors, in addition to supporting the decarbonisation of their heat supply. It will sit inside the remit of the Energy Efficient Scotland Route Map. To date, local authorities have been encouraged on a voluntary basis, to develop district heating strategies, as well as to outline plans to improve energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation within households.

Over the last year, the Council have worked in collaboration with Changeworks and the local community to develop a pilot LHEES in Peebles. The output is a draft pilot strategy and implementation plan to increase the level of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heat in Peebles. The implementation plan will provide a series of short term and aspirational targets for the support of owner occupied, private rented, social rented and fuel poor households.

BORDERS HOME ENERGY FORUM

The Borders Home Energy Forum was established in March 2018, to ensure that a strategic, multi-agency approach is taken to help reduce fuel poverty, improve energy efficiency and improve health and well-being in the Scottish Borders, particularly for the most vulnerable households.

The Partnership comprises organisations representing housing associations, statutory bodies, advisory groups, bodies associated with energy, affordable warmth, health and income maximisation, and representatives from Scottish Borders Council.

The Forum has acted as a catalyst for building collective support for ongoing strategies including HEEPS:ABS and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH). Funding opportunities are also being discussed at the Forum; joint proposals have been planned and submitted by RSLs and; upcoming funding opportunities are being discussed proactively and in advance of calls being released. It has additionally served as a platform to promote and facilitate measures and schemes that target alleviating fuel poverty and increasing energy efficiency in households; as well as improving health and wellbeing.

ENERGY EFFICIENT STANDARD FOR SOCIAL HOUSING (ESSH)

The Energy Efficient Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. Social landlords are required to reach a set energy efficiency rating for a household based on the housing type and fuel type used to heat it. The first milestone (ESSH 1) is for all applicable social housing to reach the minimum rating of no lower than an EPC C or D by 31st December 2020.

Progress for 2018/19 against EESSH includes:

- Waverley Housing have spent £349k to achieve 307 EESSH compliant homes this year
- SBHA have progressed to 79% EESSH compliance with a target of 92% by the end of March 2020
- BHA spent £530,755 on improved energy efficiency measures throughout 2018/19, with improvements delivered to 310 homes

COMMUNITY WIND FARM

The Hoprigshiels community windfarm – “Fishermen Three” – is located near Cockburnspath in the Scottish Borders and is a joint venture between Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) and Community Energy Scotland. By supplying energy to the National Grid, the wind farm will create revenue for BHA of around £20 million over the next 25 years – enough to allow them to build 500 new homes over that period.

The amount of energy the wind farm has produced in its first year is equivalent to the annual energy needs of 7,758 homes according to Ofgem figures, which means it’s powering the equivalent of all the Berwickshire Housing Association homes, and a further 6,000 households in the area - or enough to boil a full kettle about 106 million times.

For the 2017/18 year of operation, the wind farm paid £18,750 to Cockburnspath Community Fund and £18,750 to Oldhamstocks Community Fund, so £37,500 in total.



THE IDEA FOR THE WIND FARM CAME WHEN BHA REALISED THAT WE HAD TO BE INNOVATIVE IN ORDER TO SOLVE THE DILEMMA OF HOW TO KEEP BUILDING NEW HOMES FOR SOCIAL RENTAL, WHICH ARE SO BADLY NEEDED IN THIS AREA, AT A TIME WHEN FUNDING FOR NEW HOUSING THROUGH TRADITIONAL CHANNELS WAS IN DECLINE

(Helen Forsyth, Chief Executive of Berwickshire Housing Association)

PRIVATE LANDLORD REGISTRATION

All private landlords and their agents are required to register with the local authority in which they let their property. Landlord Registration gives local authorities the ability to control and regulate who can operate legally as a private landlord.

There are almost 6,000 approved registered Landlords and over 8,700 rental properties approved within the Scottish Borders.

Statutory guidance emphasises the importance of liaising with private landlords and their tenants, including considering a range of actions to help landlords reach the standards required in privately letting properties, and keeping them informed of any changes in legislation.



The Service provided is focused on engagement, and enforcement is applied as a last resort.

Key engagement activities include:

- Delivering the landlord forum; presenting a range of private renting topics and providing opportunity to meet with other landlords, agents, and key council members to raise and discuss issues.
- Promoting training programmes provided by various representative organisation such as Landlord Accreditation Scotland.
- Engaging with landlords and tenants to provide general advice about what constitutes good practice in the letting of houses.
- Providing updates on relevant legislative changes, information and guidance through newsletters.
- Promoting landlord accreditation schemes.
- Reporting upon condition & repairing standards following inspections.

The Liaison & Enforcement Officer has initiated action against 51 private landlords in relation to registration issues. 34 inspections have been undertaken in relation to complaints regarding condition, repairing standards and management practices. This work involves close working with affected parties to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE

Introduced by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, to address issues of housing quality and condition in the private sector, the Scheme of Assistance changed the way local authorities can help homeowners and the private rented sector to carry out repairs, maintenance and improvements.

The Scheme of Assistance is aimed at private home owners including owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants of privately let properties, who are looking for advice and assistance regarding property repairs and adaptation works.



The Scheme of Assistance helps to achieve the Local Housing Strategy's vision, with particular contribution to Priority 1, Priority 2 and Priority 4. These priorities are supported through a range of services which:

- Help older people and people with disabilities who are living in the private sector to make adaptations to their homes (Priority 4)
- Address disrepair in private sector homes (Priority 2)
- Support owners of empty property to bring them back into use (Priority 1 & 2)

The Scheme of Assistance offers:

- Information and advice for private sector housing residents on home repairs, maintenance, improvements and adaptations.
- Practical assistance through services offering help relating to repair and maintenance of private sector homes.
- Financial help to cover some (or all) of the costs of eligible adaptations.
- Information and advice to support empty homes owners to bring them back into use.

The Scheme of Assistance sets out procedures which can offer assistance and support to influence a change of homeowner, tenant and private landlord attitudes towards maintaining the condition of private sector housing. This is complimented by support and advice provided through landlord registration processes.

The Council have further developed the information and advice available, in particular relating to organising common repair which includes working towards a pilot project to introduce missing shares.

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

4. HOMELESSNESS

Addressing Priority 3: Fewer People Are Affected By Homelessness

Highlights

- 843 households approached the Council's Homelessness team for advice and/or assistance
- 629 were assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness
- Only 4% of new homelessness assessments had applied within the previous year
- 78% of unintentionally homeless households were permanently rehoused
- Over 90% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation
- A new Borders Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership was established
- The Council and its partners developed a Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
- RSLs have made changes to their Allocations Policies that will help to prevent homelessness, along with the commitment to improving the housing options approach

KEY HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

- During 2018/2019, 843 households approached the Council's Homelessness team for advice and/ or assistance.
- 770 of these households were assessed under the homelessness legislation. This is the highest number of statutory homelessness applications received since the implementation of the housing options model of homelessness prevention during 2011/2012 and 2012/2013. It appears likely that there are a number of contributory factors to this increase and it is expected that the implementation of the Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/2024 will help prevent and alleviate homelessness in the Scottish Borders.
- 629 households were assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness under the homelessness legislation, of which 578 households were assessed as unintentionally homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- The proportion of homelessness assessments which were completed within 28 days continued to improve and increased to 87%.
- The level of repeat homelessness applications in Scottish Borders remains low, with only 4%, of new applications having already made an application within the previous year in comparison with the most recent national average of 6%.

- There was a significant reduction of over 30% in the proportion of homelessness cases where contact with the applicant was lost.
- Between April 2018 and March 2019, the number of open cases was reduced by over 10%. This indicator is especially encouraging in the context of the Scottish Governments 'Ending Homelessness Together' commitment, and our corresponding Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan commitment, to reducing the 'backlog' of homelessness cases and, correspondingly, the level of need for temporary accommodation.
- 78% of households assessed as unintentionally homeless secured settled accommodation. This was a significant increase in comparison with the previous year and compares favourably with the most recent national average of 69%.
- 270 households entered temporary accommodation during 2018/2019.
- Over 90% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of temporary accommodation provided.
- The use of bed and breakfast as a temporary accommodation option in Scottish Borders remains minimal with only 5 households in bed and breakfast during the year.



PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Scottish Borders Council works in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and other providers to improve housing and support services for care leavers and care experienced young people. Under Scottish Borders Corporate Parenting approach issues of housing, employability and support are being developed and are a priority area in the Corporate Parenting Action Plan. The 'Housing Options Protocol for Care Leavers in the Scottish Borders', which was developed and implemented in partnership with the four locally based Registered Social Landlords in 2017/2018, seeks to ensure that the priority accommodation and support needs of care leavers are recognised in order that their needs for suitable housing are met in a planned and sustainable way and that they do not need to enter the homelessness system in order to access housing. Continuing application of the Protocol during 2018/2019 saw the number of statutory homelessness applications received from care leavers fall by a further 25%, an overall reduction of 46% since the introduction of the Protocol in 2018/2019.

The 'Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone' (SHORE) standards, which were launched nationally 2017, are intended to ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed from an early stage and in a consistent way across Scotland. The standards are designed to ensure that people leaving prison can access services and accommodation in the same way as people living in the community. During 2018/2019 SBC continued to work with RSL partners, Four Square, and the Scottish Prison Service to implement the locally agreed arrangements for SHORE. This included continuing the arrangement with Four Square to provide tenancy sustainment support and resettlement advice for people who are in custody at HMP Edinburgh. In partnership with the Scottish Prison Service, SBC started providing a homelessness assessment service at HMP Edinburgh for prisoners who need it. In addition, the Homelessness Service work with our Housing Options Hub partners and with the Scottish Prison Service to develop an information sharing protocol to assist with meeting the needs of prisoners upon release.



The "flipping" of temporary accommodation into RSL permanent tenancies has been recently piloted and although applied in only a small number of cases so far, it has produced successful results and is a tool that could be developed and utilised further where this outcome would benefit the tenant and reduce disruption on the household.

BORDERS HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP (BHHSP)

To support the priorities identified in the Local Housing Strategy (2017-22), in particular priorities 3 and 4, in 2018/19 a new Borders Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership (BHHSP) was established. The BHHSP includes senior officers from the Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders with responsibility in homelessness, health and social care, public health, social work, property management and housing strategy, and senior officers from the 4 locally based Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) who own the majority of the social rented housing stock in the Borders, Berwickshire Housing Association, Eildon Housing Association, Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) and Waverley Housing.

RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

All 32 local authority areas in Scotland have been asked to produce Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) by December 2018, for implementation over the 5 years from April 2019. A 'first iteration' RRTP was required to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 31 December 2018 and a finalised RRTP completed and submitted by the end of March 2019, ready for commencing implementation from April 2019.



Rapid Rehousing is a key element of a whole-system approach whereby the responsibility for tackling homelessness lies not just with Local Authorities but with housing providers, Health and Social Care Partnerships and the broad range of organisations that provide support. Housing First is a key component of this. Housing First provides general settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs, recognising that a safe and secure home is the best base for recovery, and offers personalised, open-ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address wider needs.

Development of the Scottish Borders RRTP has been led by the Borders Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership and has included consultation with key partners including the Borders Housing Alliance and the Health and Social Care Integration Strategic Planning Group. As required, a 'first iteration' RRTP was submitted to the Scottish Government in December 2018 and further work has since been done to complete our RRTP for submission to the Scottish Government in early 2019.

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

5. SUPPORT TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

Addressing Priority 4: More People Are Supported To Live Independently In Their Own Homes

Highlights

- Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People's Housing Care and Support launched in June 2018
- The Council have agreed to contribute up to £3.4m to assist Eildon and Trust Housing Associations to deliver developments in Galashiels and Duns
- The needs of vulnerable Young people have been considered through the development of Young People's Housing Need Study
- Health & Social Care Strategic Plan, and Housing contribution Statement published in 2018
- Funding secured to carry out study on Wheelchair Accessible Housing in the Borders
- SBHA and SBC have committed to jointly fund 16+ transitions Project Housing options Worker post for 3 years to enable continuation of housing options advice and support to Care Leavers in the Scottish Borders
- SBHA has augmented its SG grant allocation by an additional £100k in 2018/19 and will do the same in 2019/20. This additional funding has come from SBHA's annual Planned Maintenance Programme

INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLAN FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING, CARE AND SUPPORT 2018-2028

Working with commissioned consultants, along with our strategic partners, the Council have developed an Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People's Housing, Care and Support 2018-2028, which was launched at an event in Tweed Horizons in June 2018. This recognises that most people want to remain living in the community for as long as possible. Scottish Borders partners agree that suitable housing has a pivotal role to play in helping to meet older peoples' health and well-being. As well as offering security and independence, housing provides



the residential setting within which other elements of care and support services will be delivered. Getting the residential right also provides a basis for reforming services, allowing partners to better meet need as demands increase in the future.

A number of key outcomes and an action plan as well as governance arrangements have been agreed. Governance, monitoring and evaluation of the Plan will be led by the Council's Corporate Management Team, with regular reports on achievement against the action plan and target also being provided to the Integrated Joint Board.

DELIVERING EXTRA CARE HOUSING

Following a needs assessment exercise, in 2016 the Council agreed a delivery framework to provide new extra care housing developments in Duns, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso and Peebles. Delivery of these developments is now being overseen as one work stream of the Integrated Strategic Plan for Older Peoples' Housing Care and Support arrangements. 2018/19 has been an especially busy and productive year with the Council agreeing to contribute up to £3.4m to assist Eildon and Trust Housing Associations to deliver developments in Galashiels and Duns, where site works have started on both. The Council has disposed of a site in Hawick to Eildon Housing Association, and the Association is in discussions with a developer in order to provide a development in Kelso as part of the proposed re-development of a former school. A site has now also been identified for the proposed Eyemouth development.

CARE AND REPAIR

The Council has a contract with Eildon Housing Association to deliver the Borders Care and Repair Service. The aim of the service is to enable older people and people with disabilities living in the private sector to have warm, well maintained and safe homes. Care & Repair helps to achieve this by:

- Providing help and advice on housing repairs, improvements and adaptations, and to ensure the work is carried out in accordance with The Care & Repair Standards.
- Providing a Home Handyperson service to help to support community care groups (prioritising older people and people with disabilities), to continue to live at home through the provision of practical household help and support.

The Service includes project managing adaptations, including grant application submissions for major adaptations, on behalf of private sector clients.

The Care and Repair Service ensures that the Council meets the mandatory duty set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, to provide assistance to households seeking to meet the needs of a disabled occupant.

DISABLED ADAPTATION OUTCOMES

A major adaptation involves permanent changes to the structure of a person's home. These works are subject to mandatory grant provision and are prioritised for financial assistance by Scottish Borders Council. These include:

- Provision of standard amenities which can include an extension to provide any or all of the standard amenities;
- Provision of structural adaptations with the exception of extensions, to provide living accommodation.

Table 4: Major Adaptations Completed in 2018/19

Type of Adaption	Number Completed	Spend
Level Access Shower	45	£203,654
Platform Lift	1	£9,775
External Ramp	11	£37,848
Level Pathway	1	£915
Create Showerroom	1	£4,883
Curved Stairlift	3	£9,152
Straight Stairlift	18	£51,856
Wet Floor Shower	2	£3,325
Wetroom	3	£31,062
Through Floor Lift	1	£1,050
Create Bedroom with ensuite in Garage	1	£20,423
Create Bedroom	1	£12,515
Adapt Livingroom into Bedroom	1	£3,587
Tracking Hoist	2	£6,256
Clos-o-mat	2	£5,938
Level Path and Driveway	1	£3,413
Total	94	£405,651

Table 5: Small Repair & Adaptations & Handyperson 2018/19

	Number Completed	Spend
Small Repairs & Adaptions	421	£81,946.23
Handyperson Jobs	4,058	Subscription Service

In 2011 there was a significant move to the development of a 'One Stop Shop' model for all adaptations in the Borders, which was achieved through an agreement with each of the four local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). This provides a consistent adaptation service to all people in the Borders regardless of tenure. Through the One Stop Shop approach, Care and Repair effectively spend the funding awarded from the Scottish Government national budget, referred to as Stage 3 funding, for each of the RSLs.

Table 6: Adaptations in RSLs in 2018/19

RSL	Number Completed	Spend
Berwickshire Housing Association	17	£73,435
Eildon Housing Association	37	£122,301
Scottish Borders Housing Association	61	£219,604
Waverly Housing	13	£37,257
Total	128	£452,615

WHEELCHAIR HOUSING STUDY

As part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) Guidance 2018, local authorities are required to support a greater focus on wheelchair accessible housing, providing a position statement in the SHIP on the following:

- What their current evidence base tells them about the requirement for wheelchair accessible housing, and any plans to develop this work further.
- The approach, if any, they have set in their Local Housing Strategy/ Local Development Plan to wheelchair accessible housing including any target/ quota that the local authority currently has in place.
- The number of affordable wheelchair accessible houses they plan to deliver over the five years as part of their broader plans for specialist provision.

The Council is in the process of commissioning consultants to develop an assessment of the requirements and need for wheelchair accessible housing in the Scottish Borders. This will provide the Council and its partners with key information around what the current and future need is. This study will be of particular support to Priority 1 and Priority 4 of the LHS. The work will be undertaken during 2019/20.

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022

6. KEY DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The year ahead will see continued efforts, and a significant amount of work being undertaken, to help ensure that every person in the Scottish Borders lives in a home that meets their needs. This will be through the delivery of more affordable homes; ensuring people live in good quality, energy efficient homes and ensuring people have the support they need to live independently. Scottish Borders Council greatly appreciate the hard work that our local partners and communities have already contributed towards the delivery of our ambitious targets set out in the LHS and will continue to build on those excellent foundations, maintaining the momentum of delivering on the Local Housing Strategy.

STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN (SHIP) 2020-2025

The Scottish Government has now allocated the 2019/20 Resource Planning Assumptions and the Scottish Borders will receive £15.998m to assist the planned programme of new affordable homes which will be outlined in the new Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), developed in 2019/20.

TOWN CENTRE WORK

Housing has a significant role to play in contributing to, and helping to maintain, the vibrancy of our Town Centres. Through implementing actions outlined in the LHS, in 2019 the Council will continue to work with partners on initiatives to improve our town centres, including support to reduce the number of vacant properties, the preparation of Town Centre Housing Contribution Statements for Hawick and Eyemouth, targeting energy efficiency measures within CARS areas, such as Jedburgh; as well as piloting an approach to missing shares in these areas.

IMPLEMENTING THE YOUNG PEOPLES HOUSING NEEDS ACTIONS PLAN

This 5 year Action Plan aims to improve the housing options and outcomes available to all our young people aged from 16 to 34 across the Borders. The plan has developed a range of policy and practical responses, with commitment from a range of partners, which will enable young people to make more successful and sustainable transitions into their own housing. In 2019 the new plan will be presented to all our community planning partners and put in to action.

UNDERTAKING AN ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE SOCIAL HOUSING SECTOR

Undertaking an assessment into the demand and supply of housing in the Scottish Borders will provide key information around the mismatch that may be present within the Scottish Borders social housing sector, as the gap between demand and supply of housing of the right type and quality in the right places is considered to be an issue in some areas. With social housing under increasing pressure it is important to understand what can be done to better utilise current stock and ensure that future stock is addressing the need and demand of the Borders population, including those at risk of, or currently facing, homelessness.

This study will be of particular support to Priority 1 and 3 of the LHS. This Action Plan will also play a vital role in the delivery of the Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which aims to prevent, and ultimately eradicate, homelessness through the timely provision of a stable and suitable home.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

The private sector is the biggest tenure in the Scottish Borders with a large percentage of the population either owning their own homes or renting privately. One of the key challenges in this sector is to ensure everyone is living in good quality homes. Good quality housing makes an important contribution to many aspects of a successful Borders including supporting local economies, improving individual's health and well-being and by making communities safer.

Over the next year, the Council will be undertaking a significant amount of work to improve our understanding of the condition of private sector housing through the development of an action plan. The plan will set out how the Council, with partners, will support the improvement of private sector house conditions by tackling disrepair and below tolerable standards across tenures. The draft Private Sector Housing Condition Improvement Action Plan has been developed and will be finalised in June 2019.

FUEL POVERTY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Living in a warm, comfortable and energy efficient home is something that everyone should have access to and this is why it is a priority in the LHS. The Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy has been developed throughout 2018/19 and the first year of the strategy will be implemented throughout 2019/20.

The Borders Home Energy Forum is in a strong position to deliver, and monitor progress against the Affordable Warmth and Home Energy Efficiency Strategy. It will continue to work closely to deliver against Scottish Government targets, as well as targeting efforts to work collectively on issues of fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

HOMELESSNESS

The Council's vision for Rapid Rehousing in the Scottish Borders is:

- Homelessness is prevented wherever possible but where homelessness cannot be prevented a settled, mainstream housing outcome is secured as quickly as possible.
- When temporary accommodation is needed it will be mainstream, furnished accommodation within a community, and time spent in it will be minimal, with as few transitions as possible.
- Housing First will be the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages and the Council will work collaboratively with the Health and Social Care Partnership, and other relevant services, to ensure tenancies are supported and sustained.

To achieve this vision over the period to March 2024 we aim to do the following:

- The Council and its partners will continue to improve the quality and integration of our housing, homelessness, social care and health and other support services to maximise housing sustainment, optimise housing options, and prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible.
- This will be done in such a way that allows us to reduce our stock of temporary accommodation by 75% on a year by year basis to a maximum of 30 properties by 2024; and when homelessness cannot be prevented our aim is to make time spent in temporary accommodation a maximum of 60 days by 2024.
- Temporary accommodation provision will continue to be high quality, mainstream, fully furnished accommodation within the community which meets the needs and choice of homeless households as far as is possible in a rural context.
- We will seek to develop and implement a Housing First model that meets the needs of people with multiple needs in the Scottish Borders and which, as far as is possible in a rural context, conforms with the 7 principles of Housing First.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING STUDY

Housing, planning, health and social care policy agendas all seek to increase the supply of greener, affordable and accessible homes that contribute to social inclusion and sustain communities. In particular, the requirement for accessible homes which are suitable for wheelchair users is being driven upwards by demographic changes and medical advances.

Living in unsuitable homes makes it hard for wheelchair users to develop relationships and to participate in the economic and social life of their communities. In response to these drivers, the Scottish Government has asked that Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs) clarify the proposed number of affordable wheelchair homes to be delivered in the next 5 years alongside supporting evidence and any plans to improve this evidence further.

2019 will see the completion of this study which, through partnership working and knowledge sharing, will have identified clear targets for the delivery of new wheelchair accessible housing in the Scottish Borders.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Housing has an important role to play in our communities, not just by providing safe, secure and affordable homes but by contributing on a wider scale to the places and spaces in which we live and where communities can thrive. There is a significant stimulus to the local economy with the development of new housing, but Housing Associations also support a range of community initiatives and provide a wide scope of additional services such as befriending services, support services, financial inclusion activity, community gardens, supporting the third sector and many other examples from all our local RSLs. Some examples from Berwickshire Housing Association planned for 2019/20 include:

- Developing a dementia friendly sensory garden at Todlaw in partnership with A Heart for Duns, CIC and with HARTS who are main contractors in the housing development at Todlaw.
- A Community Garden at Todlaw in a slightly larger gap site between new housing developments. This will be done in partnership with Abundant Borders and will include an orchard, raised beds and other facilities to encourage use of the garden by tenants and their families.
- BHA will sponsor and support the Living and Caring for Dementia Event due to be held in Duns in September 2019 which will give information about the services, organisations and practical support that is available locally to people affected by dementia and their carers / families.

There are a number of challenges facing us over the lifetime of this Local Housing Strategy, however, Scottish Borders Council and LHS Partners recognise the opportunities not only to provide good quality homes for all within sustainable communities, but to also stimulate community regeneration, the local economy, protect the environment and improve social wellbeing and inclusion.

Collaborative working to deliver on the ambitions of this LHS is paramount, and through continued effective partnership working the vision of the LHS is being taken forward. Collectively we will build upon our achievements to ensure the Scottish Borders remains a place where everyone is able to enjoy affordable, good quality housing in a pleasant and safe environment.

You can get this document on audio CD, in large print, and various other formats by contacting us at the address below. In addition, contact the address below for information on language translations, additional copies, or to arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any areas of the publication that you would like clarified.

HOUSING STRATEGY, POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT
Council Headquarters | Newtown St. Boswell | MELROSE | TD6 0SA
tel: 01896 661392 | email: housingenquiries@scotborders.gov.uk

