



Housing Statement

March 2012



Housing is one of the District's four priorities. This statement explains why and what the council is going to do about it this year.

Why is housing a priority?

SLDC carried out a "strategic housing market assessment" in 2011. This found:

- South Lakeland is a popular place to live - Over the past five years, 32.7% of all house movers in the area moved in from outside the District;
- Median house prices across the District have increased dramatically over the period 2000 to 2010, from around £74,000 in 2000 to £210,000 in 2011; and
- Overall, 9.6% of dwellings are second/holiday homes but this proportion is considerably higher in rural areas of the District.

Across South Lakeland:

- 75.1% of occupied dwellings are owner occupied;
- 15% are rented privately;
- 9.9% are affordable.

The population of South Lakeland is estimated to be 103,800 with projections showing an increase to 111,100 by 2031. The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase by 59.1% (or by 15,200) by 2033.

These figures, along with analysis of the labour force, suggest 640 affordable houses are required each year to 2016 to house the growing local population.

What does SLDC already do?

SLDC, in partnership with the other six Cumbrian local authorities and national park authorities, has produced a Cumbria Housing Strategy.

Specific issues for South Lakeland include:

- Lack of affordable housing;
- The need for employment sites and regeneration of town centres;
- Diversification of the rural economy;
- Suitable housing for an ageing population with appropriate levels of support in accessible locations;
- Providing a range of housing and economic opportunities for young people to retain and attract them to the area;

What SLDC will do in 2012/13

For the first time since 1997 the council has put forward land allocations across South Lakeland for new housing. On these sites at least 35% of housing built will be "affordable"¹. The Land Allocations Development Plan Document (approved at Council in January 2012) lists sites to help meet identified demand for housing and new jobs to 2025. The document is expected to be formally adopted in late 2012, after a further public consultation and scrutiny from an independent planning inspector.

The council is consulting with key stakeholders about its plans for spending funds from the Government New

¹ Affordable housing is a term that is applied to housing with house prices or rents less than open market prices or rents





Housing Statement (cont.)



Homes Bonus. It is intended the money will be used to enable more affordable housing to be built, supporting locally important projects and helping communities that wish to pursue neighbourhood planning.

SLDC will be renewing its "Older People Housing Strategy" in 2012 in order to plan appropriate housing for older people. Meanwhile the council is working with Cumbria County Council and their "supporting people" team to provide options for vulnerable and older people (for example, extra care housing with a scheme manager and carer on site) helping them to live independently. The council will also work closely with social housing providers to ensure fairness and consistency in allocation, so people with greater housing need get priority and homes are let to local people.

The council is supporting affordable housing, tailored to meet the needs of individual communities, by working with:

- Community Land Trusts;
- Housing Associations; and
- Private developers (required to provide a certain percentage of affordable homes).

SLDC formally resolved to transfer the **council's housing stock** to a new style South Lakes Housing (SLH) in December 2011, after an overwhelming majority of South Lakeland Council tenants voted in favour of transferring their homes. Subject to Ministerial approval, this will secure the position of SLH and enable more investment and improvements in the homes in the future.

A Tenancy Strategy will be published in 2012 with the aim of making the best use of social housing in the District to meet local priorities.

With a focus on expanding and improving affordable private housing SLDC offers:

- Renovation grants to landlords and developers to increase the number of affordable rental properties;

- Disabled facilities grants to help adapt homes for people with disabilities;
- Schemes to make homes warmer and advise and promote the Government's "green deal" scheme;
- A Handy Person scheme to provide help with small household jobs for elderly and vulnerable people.

The council also works proactively with owners of empty properties, giving advice and support on how to reuse their empty homes.

With the continuing economic downturn there are risks that homelessness will increase in South Lakeland, following a 20% rise in homelessness nationally from 2010/11. The council is investing heavily in preventing homelessness by working with those most at risk.

The council will publish a new Homelessness Strategy in 2013. Changes in legislation will enable the council to discharge its homeless duties into the private rented sector thereby providing many more housing options for tackling an increase in homelessness. A council priority is to make private rented housing more accessible by developing a private sector access scheme.

For further information in housing matters the council's website is a good first port of call. Alternatively call our contact centre on 0845 050 4434.

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