



Local Authority Chief Executives

Copy to:

Local Authority Directors of Housing  
Local Authority Directors of Planning

26 June 2008

Dear Colleague,

### **New Guidance on Local Housing Strategies**

I am writing to inform you that new guidance for local authorities on Local Housing Strategies has now been issued jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Minister for Communities and Sport and COSLA's spokesperson for Community Wellbeing and Safety both welcomed the collaborative approach that was adopted in drafting this guidance, and regard the guidance as affirming the primacy of the Local Housing Strategy as driving the delivery of the housing policy agenda. This is available on the Scottish Government's website <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/supply-demand/lhs>.

The new guidance sets out key changes to the status, focus, format and content of Local Housing Strategies. These are in line with changes in national policy direction and in accordance with the new relationship between central and local government established through the Concordat. In drafting the guidance advice and comments were sought from the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers and the Scottish Housing Best Value Network.

The Scottish Government and COSLA share the long-term ambition to achieve an increase in housing supply across all tenures to address the nation's future housing requirements. We have been working together closely on reforms to the policy and delivery framework for housing and planning as part of an overall drive to improve the operation and responsiveness of Scotland's housing system. These reforms lay the foundation for the effective integration of housing and planning activity at regional and local levels with the aim of ensuring that the right number of houses is built in the right place.

Local Housing Strategies are a critical part of the new framework, particularly in terms of their influence on housing land supply in development plans and their role in influencing future housing investment. The new arrangements, set out in the guidance, enable local authorities to play a greater strategic role in shaping the


housing systems in their areas through their Local Housing Strategies. As such, Local Housing Strategies now have a clearly enhanced status and are expected to be a key corporate planning activity for local authorities.

Consistent with the commitments within the Concordat to streamline government systems and processes, the opportunity has also been taken to rationalise the requirement for a number of related housing and support strategies. Local Housing Strategies will therefore now be the sole strategic document on housing, homelessness, housing support services and fuel poverty. This provides the opportunity to strengthen the integration of these areas into mainstream strategic planning for housing and to enhance their corporate profile.

We are currently considering how central and local government can best work together on jointly agreed work streams aimed at building capacity to deliver the new arrangements and further information on the proposed approach is expected to be available shortly.

If you have any queries in relation to the guidance please contact Jackie Wilkins on 01224 624960 (email to [Jackie.wilkins@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Jackie.wilkins@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)), your regional Scottish Government housing contact listed in the guidance or Caroline Johnston on 0131 474 9259 (email to [caroline@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:caroline@cosla.gov.uk)).

Yours sincerely,



Mike Foulis  
Director for Housing and Regeneration  
Scottish Government



Rory Mair  
Chief Executive  
COSLA