

Application to Suspend the Right to Buy

City and County of Swansea
Dinas a Sir Abertawe



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1. Intention

The intention of this report is to set out the evidence to support the application to the Welsh Government to allow the City & County of Swansea to suspend the Right to Buy/ Acquire through the whole of the county for all housing types for initially five years. This will amount to approximately 19,000 homes (see appendix 1 for further breakdown).

2. Core Evidence

Council Housing Waiting List

Fig 1 highlights the number of applications on the council housing waiting list for the past three years. Demand has remained fairly constant but there is still a very high demand for accommodation, a demand that outstrips the supply.

Fig 1: Total waiting list figures including tenant transfer applications from 1/4/12 – 1/4/14

Year	Waiting List	Transfer Applications	Total
1/4/12	3,728	1,418	5,146
1/4/13	3,721	1,400	5,121
22/5/14	3,775	1,462	5,237

The Council's Housing Options service manages the housing waiting list and they have placed a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness in recent times. This has resulted in a reduction of those applying for housing being registered on the waiting list as they were either able to remain in their homes or they were able to secure appropriate alternative accommodation, such as private rented. Housing Options actively publicise their service whilst stringently making the public aware of the shortage of properties available in both the social and private sectors.

Lettings

Fig 2: Ratio of number of number of applicants on the waiting list to the number of lettings

Year	Lettings	Ratio to W/List	Lettings excluding Transfers	Ratio to W/List excluding transfers
31/3/12	1,523	3.5:1	1,202	4:1
31/3/13	1,656	3:1	1,302	4:1
22/5/14	1,674	3:1	1,326	4:1

According to Welsh Government figures, the average ratio within Wales is currently between 4:1 and 5:1 but the average ratio specifically for Council lettings in Swansea over the past three years is around 3:1.

Although the ratio figure has remained constant over the past three years there was a slight increase in demand for both general waiting list applications and transfer applications during the last financial year.

The ratio figures listed above do not currently incorporate the Housing Association figures so do not provide a true reflection of demand throughout the whole city.

There are other factors that make it difficult to determine exact city wide demand, such as Coastal Housing Association will only accept applications onto their waiting list for those who have a realistic chance of being rehoused. If not, the application is not accepted, thus making it difficult to accurately provide the ratio for need and allocations throughout the city.

Housing Register review information

Housing Options manage the Housing Register and they are currently in the process of designing a new review system.

However, they have recently introduced a system where the top 10/20 for different accommodation types on the housing register is reviewed. They found this a useful exercise as it has not only cleaned up the register but also ensures those high on the register have been assessed correctly and their situations are up to date.

HomeSwapper

Council tenants (those who have been tenants for 12+ months) have been able to access HomeSwapper for free since 2008. HomeSwapper is an on-line mutual exchange service. The Council joined the service along with our local partner Housing Associations (Coastal, Family and Gwalia).

One of the aims of the service is to address the changes brought about by Welfare Reform. Over the last few years the Council have been keen to maximise HomeSwapper's use as a management tool and to maximise the number of tenants who are registered through promotion via our tenants' newsletter, intranet and holding home swapping events. The Council have jointly hosted two home swapper events with Coastal, Family, Gwalia and also Neath & Port Talbot Homes to try and encourage more tenants to swap their homes. Whilst all tenants of the respective organisations were invited the event was primarily targeted at those tenants who were under or over occupying.

At the time of writing, there are 891 Council tenants registered on HomeSwapper (Appendix 3b). This figure does tend to fluctuate as many tenants fail to utilise the service for six months or more following their initial registration for the scheme. The scheme is reviewed and failure to respond to written correspondence results in tenants being removed from the site.

A recent Homeswapper Landlord Summary Report (Appendix 3b) highlighted the amount of tenants registered that are either under or over occupying their accommodation but with little scope to move.

Tenants are offered help and advice from Council staff with registering, uploading photos of their properties, etc. Tenants are able to search for potential swaps via location, number of beds, rent totals, property type and there is also a facility to search for properties with adaptations.

The city wide mutual exchange figures are recorded but at this present time it is difficult to attribute all swaps to HomeSwapper which is something the Council is looking to resolve via more robust recording mechanisms.

3. Council & Housing Association Stock

The number of Council and Housing Association properties eligible for the Right to Buy/ Acquire in the City & County of Swansea is as follows;

Fig 3: Council & Housing Association Stock

Council	Gwalia HA	Coastal HA	Family HA	Total
12,563	2,420	2,183	1,564	18,730

The combined total number of properties of the four organisations listed above is 20,821 but 1,840 are category 1 or 2 sheltered, extra care or supported accommodation and therefore exempt from the Right to Buy/ Acquire. These figures need final verification (may be some discrepancies with some OAP designated accommodation) but provide an acceptable indication of the total number of eligible properties.

Analysis of the Council waiting list by District Housing Office area and property type required

The following information details Council waiting list only. The Council has explored the possibility of developing a common housing register in Swansea but at the time of writing there has been little appetite for this amongst the RSLs, hence there being separate housing registers.

The current largest number of applications on the Council's waiting list is for 1 & 2 bed properties. Appendix 4 incorporates the different types of accommodation, i.e. low rise flat, bedsit, house, etc.

The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), undertaken in 2013, found the biggest requirement for affordable housing was 1 & 2 bed properties. This reflects the overall demand on the Council's waiting list.

Fig 4: Current waiting list figures for specific property types

Property Type	Number on the Waiting List	% of Waiting List
1Bed	5,775	61%
2Bed	2,760	29%
3Bed	710	7.5%
4Bed	204	2%
5Bed	18	0.5%
Total	9,467	

The above table shows that there are 9,467 currently on the Council's Waiting List.

This figure contrasts with the applications figure listed in Fig 1 (5,237) as several applications will have been registered for multiple sized properties in accordance with their personal circumstances. For example, a lone applicant who has overnight access to their child may have been registered for both 1 & 2 bed properties in the hope of maximising their chances of being allocated a property. They would also be made fully aware of their need to forgo the access arrangements if allocated a 1 bed

property. There are also 454 applications on the current waiting list that have been assessed as being overcrowded.

4. Urban & Rural accommodation

The City & County of Swansea can be broadly divided into four geographic areas: the open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands in the north; the rural Gower Peninsula in the west, containing a number of rural villages, contrasting coasts and the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the suburban area stretching from the edge of Swansea towards settlements in the west and around the M4 corridor; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, no more than two miles in width, which includes the city centre and adjacent district centres such as Uplands, Sketty and Mumbles.

There is a clear distinction between urban and rural areas in the City & County of Swansea. There is a greater supply of accommodation (fig 5) in the urban areas, which are more densely populated (fig 6).

The LHMA established a need for affordable housing in both urban and rural areas, which is detailed further in the Need & Supply section of this document (page 11).

Fig 5: Council accommodation in the City & County of Swansea

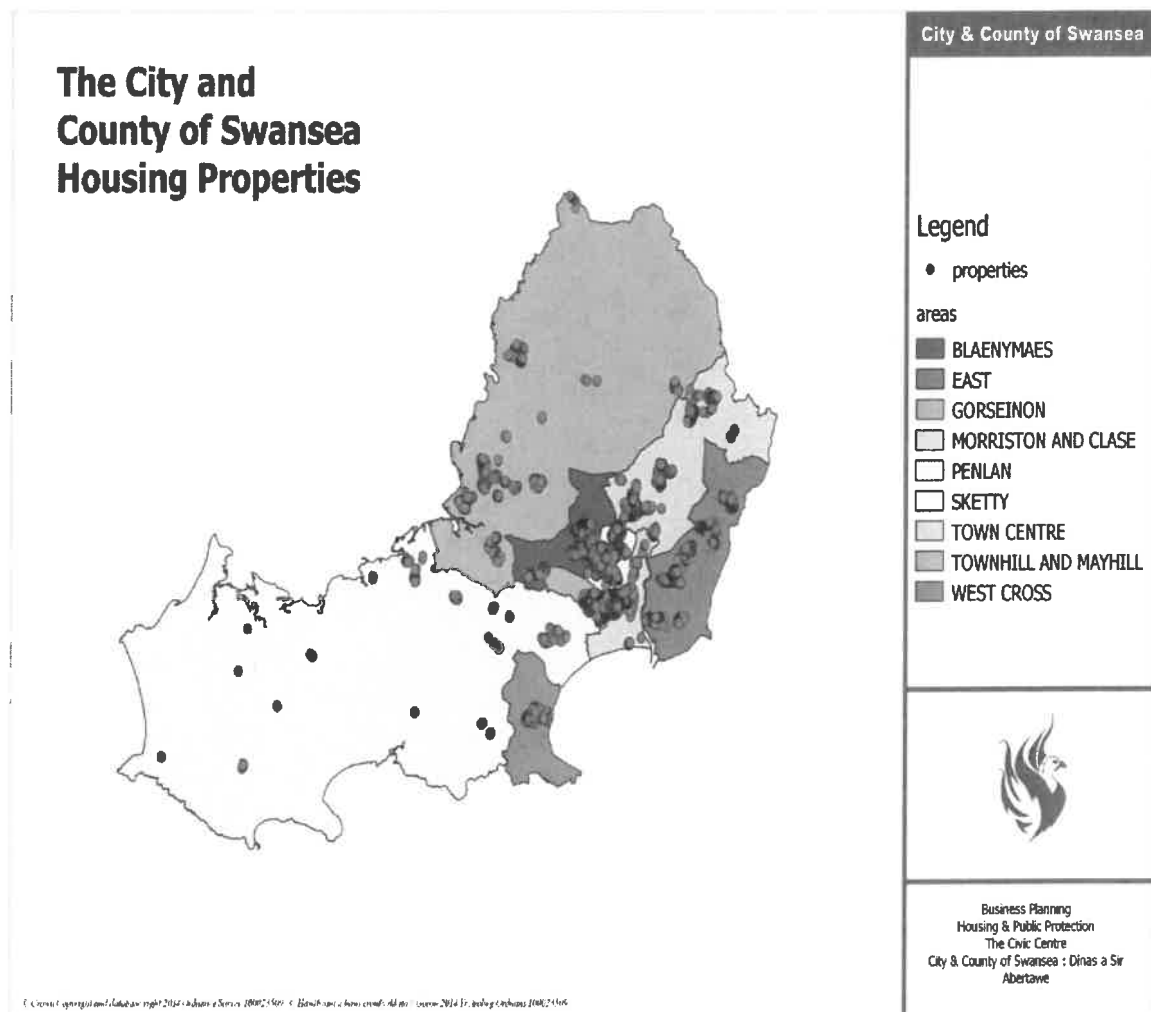
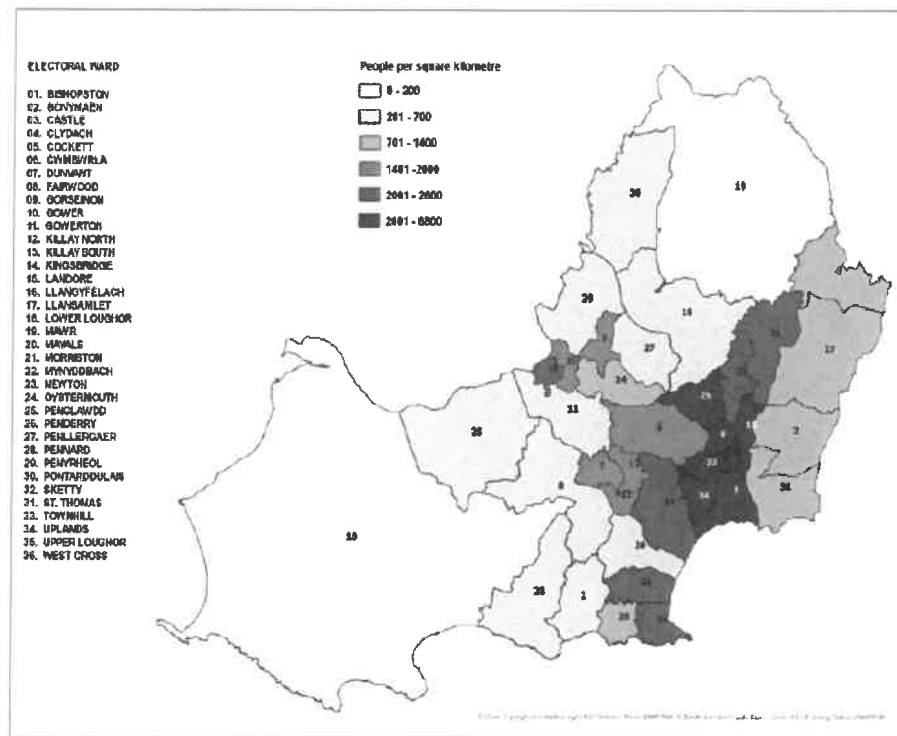


Fig 6: Swansea Population density by Ward 2011



Source: Swansea Ward Population Estimates (ONS, 2011) and land area (km²).

5. Right to Buy/ Acquire activity

The Council has kept an accurate figure of Right to Buy sales since 2000/01, these figures are included below.

The first five years contributed to 1,561 sales but the last ten years has seen a sharp decrease, reflected by the changes in the housing market.

Over the past five years there have been a total of 97 sales but there was an increase in the last financial year which could be attributed to tenants being made aware that their Right to Buy may be suspended in the near future.

Fig 7: Right to Buy sales from 1/4/00

Year	No. of Sales		
2000/01	217		
2001/02	202		
2002/03	305		
2003/04	524		
2004/05	313	Total 2000-2005	1,561
2005/06	148		
2006/07	123		
2007/08	101		
2008/09	30		
2009/10	13	Total 2005-2009	415
2010/11	14		
2011/12	16		
2012/13	19		
2013/14	35		
2014-	23	Total 2009-2014	120

There has been an increase in applications for the Right to Buy over the past two years. Figures in 2012/13 doubled from the previous year. This could be contributed to an upturn in the housing market. There was a further increase in the last financial year, which could be contributed to the publicity surrounding the potential suspension of the Right to Buy.

There is also a United Kingdom wide ideology of people aspiring to own their own homes, with an emphasis on home ownership provided by Central Government.

Fig 8: Right to Buy applications from 1/4/08

Year	No. of Applications
2008/09	71
2009/10	82
2010/11	80
2011/12	50
2012/13	105
2013/14	126
2014-	50
Total	564

At the time of writing, The Council is in a position to provide an estimate for the prospective sales of Local Authority owned housing under the Right to Buy over the next 5 years. These figures are based on the six monthly statistics accrued from April- October 2014.

If the level of applications and sales continues in a consistent manner from the first six months of 2014, then there is likely to be around 230 Local Authority owned properties sold. These figures are subject to flux, so it reasonable to assume that 250 Local Authority owned properties require safeguarding over the period of potential suspension.

Fig 9: Prospective Right to Buy applications and sales from 1/4/14 – 30/3/19

Year	Actual No. of Applications (1/4/14-15/10/14)	Actual No. of Sales (1/4/14-15/10/14)	Prospective No. of Applications	Prospective No. of Sales
2014/15	23	50	46	100
2015/16	-	-	46	100
2016/17	-	-	46	100
2017/18	-	-	46	100
2018/19	-	-	46	100
Total	23	50	230	500

The Right to Acquire sales for the three main Housing Associations operating in Swansea are of little consequence to the overall picture. They have sold a combined total of 6 in the last five years so any suspension of the Right to Buy/ Acquire is likely to have minimal or no impact on how these organisations provide their services.

Similarly any suspension of the Right to Buy will have a neutral effect on the Housing Service's Business Plan and the achievement of the WHQS.

Fig 10: Right to Acquire sales 1/4/09

Housing Association	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Gwalia	0	0	0	0	1
Coastal	0	0	0	1	1
Family	2	0	1	0	0

6. Pressure in the Private Sector

Fig 11: House prices to earnings ratios

Date	Av. Detached (£)	Av. Semi Detached (£)	Av. Terraced (£)	Av. Combined (£)	Av. Household Income (£)	Ratio of av. House price to av. Household income
April 2009	172,070	100,460	80,045	109,970	23,487	4.7:1
April 2010	183,431	107,093	85,331	117,231	24,262	4.8:1
April 2011	172,744	100,853	80,359	110,401	25,214	4.4:1
April 2012	172,733	100,847	80,354	110,394	24,973	4.4:1
April 2013	168,291	98,253	78,287	107,555	24,495	4.4:1

It can be seen from the above information that the ratio to house prices to incomes has remained quite stable over the past five years. This reflects the stagnation in general household incomes coupled with the fact that house prices have dropped slightly.

Mortgage interested rates in the UK are generally around 4% which means the average households in Swansea would not be able to obtain a mortgage without a large cash deposit due to the current ratios being above 4:1.

Although the housing market has generally stagnated over the past 3 years or so, the above figures still emphasise how difficult it can be for first time buyers to access the housing ladder. This, in turn, stresses the need for more affordable housing to be available/ developed in Swansea.

7. Void Rates in Social Housing Stock

On the 31st March 2014 there were 220 void properties in the Council's own stock or 1.62% of the overall stock. This demonstrates that the Housing Service is doing their utmost to ensure that outgoing tenants are replaced as quickly as feasible and that vacant properties are ready for re-letting as quickly as possible.

The low void rates are an indication of the constant demand for Council properties in Swansea, which emphasises the need for more affordable homes in the area.

Fig 12: Council Stock void rates for the past 3 years

Year	Voids	% of Stock
31/3/12	221	1.62
31/3/13	278	2.04
31/3/14	220	1.62

8. Homelessness

Homelessness figures have steadily decreased over the past three years. This could be attributed to more emphasis being placed on prevention, mediation services and housing solutions being found to prevent homelessness. However the overall figures are still high and add to the volume of demand that outstrips current supply.

There are plans to develop an in house Social Lettings Scheme, which will involve and embrace local landlords in the Private Sector.

Fig 13: Number accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need over past 5 years

Year	Total
2009/10	915
2010/11	1060
2011/12	856
2012/13	872
2013/14	847

9. Need & Supply

Local Housing Market Assessment

Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea to undertake a joint, comprehensive study of current and future housing requirements, housing mix and housing need.

The aim was to develop an understanding of the nature and level of housing demand and need and to project that forward to provide a comprehensive study of future housing requirements and housing need.

Housing Demand in Swansea

The most recent Housing Market Assessment has highlighted several significant features which will influence the demand for housing in Swansea.

Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, Swansea's population increased by 15,700 to a total of 239,000 people, representing an increase of 7.0%. This includes 234,400 household residents living in 103,500 households, representing an average household size of 2.26 persons. Furthermore, the total number of households in Swansea increased by 9,100.

National Insurance registration numbers highlight a clear growth in the number of migrants after 2004 when migration rules from Eastern Europe were relaxed, with a notably large number of in-migrants to Swansea, in fact in excess of 1,000 per year.

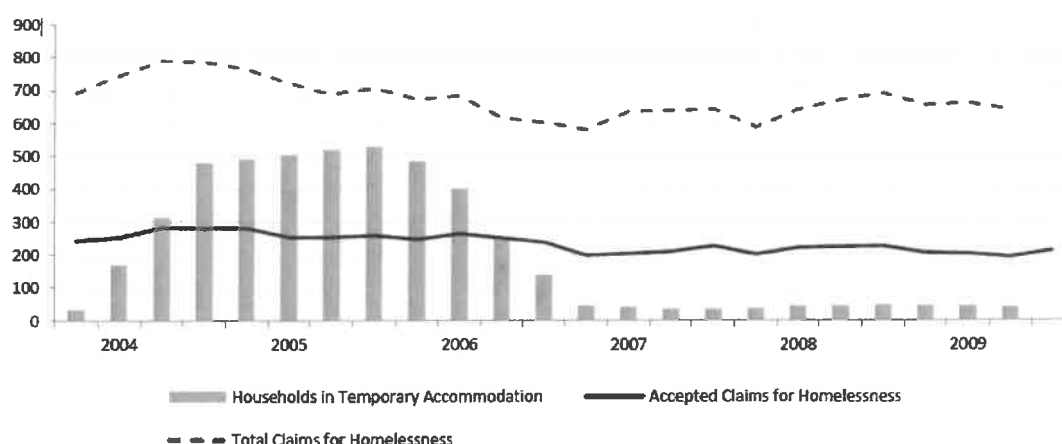
Comparison of the age structure for the population in Swansea against Wales shows a higher proportion of young adults aged 15-34 years, and particularly those aged 20-24 which is largely associated with the significant local student population. There is also a slightly higher proportion of those aged over 75.

Housing Need in Swansea

The Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note 2 defines that housing need exists when a household cannot access suitable housing without financial assistance.

To illustrate the 'sharp end' of housing need, the figure below shows that the total number of claims for homelessness, and the number of accepted claims, has remained relatively steady in Swansea. Fig 14 is taken from the Local Housing Market Assessment 2013.

Fig 14: Homeless applications, acceptances and homeless households in temporary accommodation for Swansea 2003-2009



The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) together with Welsh Housing Statistics show that over 6% of households in Swansea claim housing benefit while living in the private rented sector, which is slightly higher than the average for the whole of Wales. Although many households choose to live in private rented accommodation with housing benefit support, others would like social housing so more affordable housing would need to be provided to reduce the number of households claiming housing benefit in the private rented sector.

The DWP also assess the growth which has occurred in housing benefit claimant numbers in the private rented sector each local authority in Wales between October 2009 and June 2011. It is clear that the highest growth has been in the cities of Cardiff and Swansea. This does not necessarily mean that Swansea has higher levels of local housing need, but may also reflect that it has more capacity in its private rented stock available to house Housing Benefit claimants.

In terms of affordability, which has an impact on the number of households in housing need, unemployment in Wales is above 9% and commentators predict this could remain until at least 2016.

Over 46% of all non-homeowners have incomes of under £10,000 per annum, while 72% have incomes under £20,000 per annum. On such incomes and assuming that housing costs (to be affordable) do not exceed 25% of income, such households can afford no more than social rent and most would need additional Housing Benefit to even meet the cost of social rents in Swansea

Modelling Future Housing Requirements

The ORS model of assessing future housing requirements uses robust and credible evidence to estimate future housing need and demand and then models the required mix of housing over the full planning period from 2011 to 2025. It also models how key housing market drivers (such as affordability) will impact on housing mix.

Whilst Planning Policy Wales (PPW) requires all Council's to use the latest Welsh Government Local Authority Household Projections for Wales as a starting point for estimating future housing requirements, the City and County of Swansea produced their own population projections on the basis of four scenarios. These projections were produced using the nationally recognised and established PopGroup software

model and were able to access more local data sources. Given this context, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has modelled the housing requirements for Swansea based on all four scenarios and the results are presented in Chapter 6 of the main SHMA report.

Nevertheless, sensitivity testing has focussed on the “Medium High” scenario and the results for future housing requirements are as follows:

HIGH:	1,329 dwellings per annum
MEDIUM HIGH :	1,147 dwellings per annum
MEDIUM LOW:	845 dwellings per annum
LOW:	729 dwellings per annum

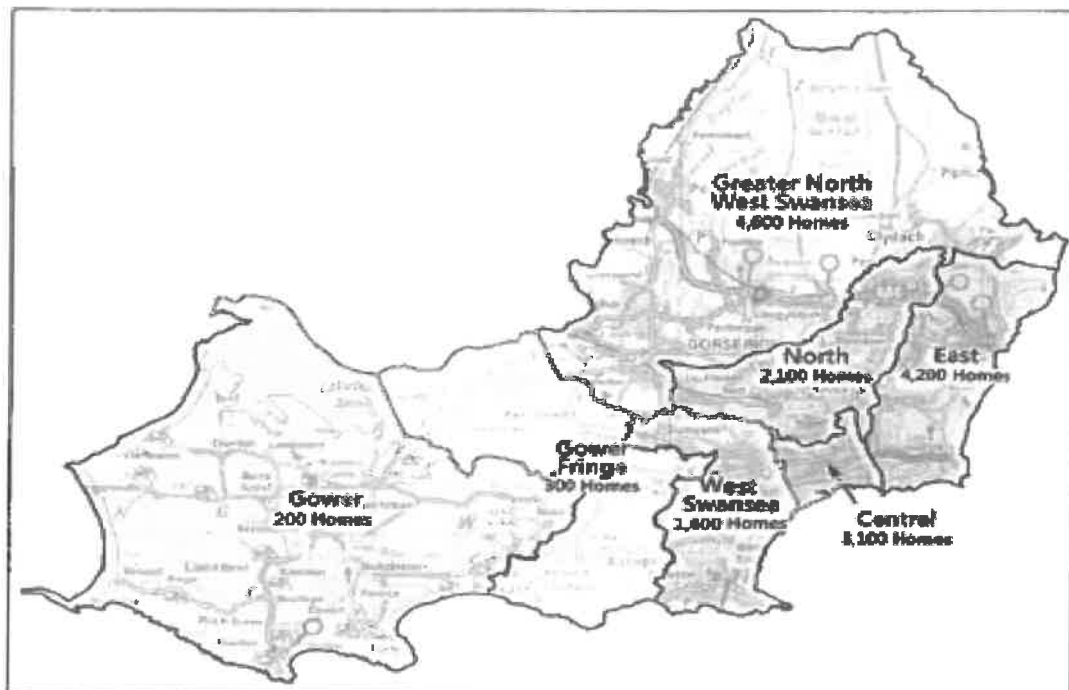
Fig 15: Estimate of the size of housing required produced for the Medium-High scenario, although the distribution within tenures is similar for all scenarios.

Housing Size	Number of Dwellings Required			
	Market Housing	Affordable Housing		TOTAL
		Intermediate	Social	
Net Requirement 2010-2025				
1 bedroom	600	300	1,700	2,400
2 bedrooms	2,000	1,100	1,800	4,800
3 bedrooms	5,000	600	1,400	7,200
4+ bedrooms	1,400	-	100	1,800
Total	9,000	2,000	3,100	16,100

Fig 16: Tenures mix of housing requirement for sub-areas of Swansea to 2025 (all figures are rounded to the nearest 100 so may not sum due to the rounding)

Area	Number of Dwellings Required			Percentage Affordable
	Market	Affordable	TOTAL	
Net Requirement 2010-2025				
Swansea East	3,400	800	4,200	20%
Gower	-	200	200	100%
Gower Fringe	-	300	300	100%
Greater North West Swansea	4,000	600	4,600	14%
Swansea Central	1,300	1,800	3,100	58%
Swansea North	-	2,100	2,100	100%
Swansea West	400	1,200	1,600	72%
Total	9,000	7,100	16,100	44%

Fig 17: Map of Housing Requirement for Sub-Area of Swansea to 2025 (Note: All figures rounded to the nearest 100)



Policy Issues arising from the Local Housing Market Assessment

The results of the modelling exercise show that the areas further west in Swansea, which has both the highest house prices and lowest build rates, show the highest requirement for affordable housing. The Swansea North area also has a disproportionately low dwelling delivery anticipated, but has significant levels of need. Areas in the east of the city typically show less affordable housing requirement due to the availability of a sufficient quantity of more affordable private sector dwellings to meet this need. Northern and western areas of Swansea show a greater requirement for market dwellings, but none is identified on Gower.

The Private Rented Sector is likely to play an increasingly significant role in meeting housing demand in Swansea, for both those in housing need and more affluent households. The housing requirement in this study, projects a high social housing requirement to mitigate the number of households claiming housing benefit in the private rented sector. However, as delivery of high levels of social housing faces challenges and is unlikely to be achieved. There will be implications arising from this which require consideration.

Welfare Reform is likely to lead to a greater demand for shared accommodation from single persons under 35 years. This is likely to increase demand for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation within Swansea. The reforms are also likely to impede the private sector from meeting rising demand.

The delivery of new homes remains a key objective for any housing and planning strategy. The Swansea housing market has exhibited a 'gap' between household growth and dwelling completions between 2003 and 2008 as household numbers have grown but new supply has not kept pace.

This assessment suggests a need for Swansea to deliver between 5,600 and 7,700 affordable dwellings between 2011-25 which equates to around 400 and 550 affordable homes per annum. The ability to deliver the rate of housing required poses a considerable challenge in the current market. Several factors constrain delivery including land supply, viability, finance and Planning policy.

10. Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing

The Authority has already started increasing the supply of affordable housing with 215 completions during 2013/14 compared to 129 in 2012/13.

Affordable Housing Utilising Welsh Government Subsidy

The Authority will continue to fully spend its allocation of Social Housing Grant and continue to bid for extra resources made available by the Welsh Government including any further funding made available under the smaller properties initiative and any additional resources at the end of each financial year as a result of underspends in other budgets.

Planning Policy

The Authority is in the process of developing its LDP. Ensuring there is an increased supply of affordable housing will be a key component of the LDP. A topic paper regarding the options open to the Authority regarding delivering affordable housing has been developed. It is likely that future policy will see the threshold levels (the trigger where affordable housing has to be delivered) be lowered for all future developments. This is further expanded upon in the section "Swansea Unitary Development Plan 2001-16" (see below).

It is anticipated that the LDP will be adopted in 2016.

Alternative Funding Models

Over the last 6 months the Authority has been working with Bellerophon Partnerships to explore alternative funding options and models that could be adopted by the Authority to enable more affordable housing to be built on Housing Revenue Account land.

New Council Housing Building Programme

At the appropriate time, the Council will consider in detail any opportunities for providing new additional Council Housing arising from the proposed exit of Welsh Council's out of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system.

Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy

The Authority will develop a comprehensive HRA Asset management strategy which will identify HRA land that could potentially be used to develop affordable housing on, in areas where the Housing Market Assessment indicates that there is a shortage of affordable units.

Viability Assessments

The Authority has recently purchased the 3 Dragons Viability software. The Authority will use this software when in negotiation with developers to ensure that the maximum number of affordable units is provided by developers subject to the viability of each site.

Housing Market Assessments

The Authority will update its Housing Market Assessment every 2 years using the WG software/model to ensure up to date market information is available to be used in negotiations with developers regarding the number of affordable units to be supplied.

Affordable Housing Target

The Authority is aiming to increase the supply of new affordable Housing by 10% each year throughout the RTB suspension period.

Swansea Unitary Development Plan 2001-16

The Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP): www.swansea.gov.uk/udp which is to be replaced by the LDP in due course, states that in areas where a demonstrable lack of affordable housing exists, the Council will seek to negotiate the inclusion of an appropriate element of affordable housing on sites which are suitable in locational/accessibility terms and where this is not ruled out by exceptional development costs. As a guideline:

- In most areas negotiations will focus on new housing developments of 25+ dwellings, or sites of 1ha+ (or phases of such developments)
- In the large and small villages¹ (e.g. those on Gower) and the Swansea West Housing Policy Zone, negotiations will be sought on new housing developments of 10+ dwellings or sites of 0.4ha+ (or phases of such developments)

UDP Policy makes clear that the subdivision, separate ownership or phasing of larger development sites to fall below these thresholds does not overcome the requirement to provide affordable housing. There will be no change in this position for the LDP. The need for and amount of affordable housing to be provided on sites where the threshold is triggered is determined on a case by case basis in consultation with the Head of Housing Services.

Further policy on local needs affordable housing states that in exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for the development of small sites within and adjoining settlements for the specific purpose of providing affordable housing to meet an existing deficiency for people who need to live in the locality and who cannot reasonably be accommodated through the area's general housing market. This policy is unlikely to change significantly in the LDP.

The current Local Housing Strategy is underpinned by a LHMA undertaken in 2007, which established that of the 851 dwelling units needed to be built per annum within the County, 221 should be affordable units, resulting in an affordable housing target of 25-30% of all new dwellings. This LHMA has recently been reviewed and a new affordable housing target has been identified which highlights a massive gap between supply (which has averaged around 188 dwellings per annum over the past 4 years) and demand which is for around 500 new dwellings per annum (approximately 44% of future projected housebuild).

Review of Local Policy

Table 1 below analyses the delivery of affordable housing since the UDP was adopted in 2008. This shows that of the 884 affordable housing units identified in the 2007 LHMA as being needed over this period, 754 (85%) were delivered. Whilst it is recognised that affordable housing may not be delivered on every site due to the minimum size thresholds of qualifying sites, analysis reveals that planning policy has only made a very small contribution to affordable housing provision over the past four years, i.e. just 69 units, or 9% of the total number of affordable units provided.

Table 1: Affordable Housing Units Completed 2008-2012

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total	Average
Additional affordable housing units completed	299	124	104	297	754	188.5
Additional affordable housing units needed	221	221	221	221	884	221
Total housing units completed	1124	541	629	844	3138	784.5
Percentage completed that were affordable	26.6%	22.9%	16.5%	35.2%	24%	24
No. of affordable units delivered by s106/Planning Obligation	0	0	60	9	69	17.25

Source: Affordable Housing Data Collection, Welsh Government

Thus the vast majority of affordable housing units have actually been delivered by means other than the planning system. Social Housing Grant (SHG) is the main alternative mechanism, however there have been other means, including direct Welsh Government funding to RSL's to purchase units from developers during 2009/10 and 2010/11. The totals also include housing subject to the UK Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme and Housing Association 'off the shelf' purchases. These schemes have disguised the fact that the SHG for Swansea has reduced from a peak of £6.9m in 2007/08 to an allocation of £2.7m for 2013/14, with a notification that the amount will decline in future years

On the basis of recent completions set out in Table 1 above, the average number of affordable housing units completed each year amounts to 188.5, of which only 17.25 are delivered through the planning system. If current trends continued over the 15 year period of the LDP (2010-2025) this would deliver around 2830 affordable housing units, with just 260 being generated through the planning system and 2570 by RSL's. It should be noted however that current build rates are reflective of a period of economic recession with an average of 785 units of both market and affordable housing built per annum over the past four years, which is well below the 15 year 1113 per annum build needed to meet the LDP target of 16700 units. However if/when build rates increase, so will the number of affordable units delivered.

The low level of delivery through the planning system is also in part a reflection of past lack of knowledge and understanding of the cost and viability of schemes. Additional information and resources are now available to overcome this and enable a more informed negotiating position when dealing with planning applications that trigger the affordable housing thresholds. In future the 25-30% target for affordable housing provision on site should be regarded as the absolute minimum position bearing in mind that 44% is the average target for the whole of the LDP period (2010 to 2025). The lower the level of provision accepted now will only increase the level of provision required to be negotiated on schemes brought forward towards the end of the Plan period, which could potentially render them undeliverable. This is considered further in Section 6.0 below.

It has been over 4 years since the current affordable housing provision requirements were introduced through the UDP. During this period the Council has been extremely flexible in making allowances for developers who had completed land transactions without building in sufficient allowance for affordable housing provision. It is now time to draw a line and adopt a more rigid approach, whilst sending a clear message to landowners, that given the acute County-wide shortfall in affordable housing there is almost no scope for disposing of land at full market value and expectations must be lowered accordingly.

As one of the largest landowners in the County, the Council should take the community's need for affordable housing into account as part of its Asset Disposal Strategy by giving consideration to the disposal of public sector land below market value to RSL's and other potential developers conditional upon delivery of affordable housing units – typically through a joint venture. Whilst Councils have a duty to secure best value for land, WG guidance on delivering affordable housing² states that this should include:

An assessment of the contribution disposal of these assets may make to the achievement of strategic policy priorities and objectives. Where delivery of affordable housing is a priority this should be taken into account when considering the options for the disposal of public sector land.

Receipts from the disposal of public sector land over the past 4 years have amounted to over £19m. The Council's current disposal programme projects a further £34m to be raised from disposals, however this makes no allowance for disposal of land below full market value in order to facilitate delivery of affordable housing. In accordance with the WG guidance outlined above, identification of delivery of affordable housing as a strategic policy in the LDP Preferred Strategy will require a review of the value of certain sites in the Council's Disposal Strategy.

A good example of being more proactive in delivering affordable housing units is the Council's Empty Property Strategy, which has introduced a range of measures to bring empty dwellings back into residential use. It specifically targets empty homes in identified areas of housing need and problem empty dwellings/buildings due to their condition, location and detrimental effect on local amenity. During 2011/2012, there were 32 empty properties brought back into use as a result of direct action by the Council and 7 were demolished. Maintenance of this level of intervention over the

fifteen year LDP period could see up to 480 empty dwellings brought back into beneficial use. Not all of these properties will fall into the category of affordable housing and much will depend on the future availability of grants. However there is clear potential for these properties to make a significant contribution to the affordable housing supply.

The Council has relied to a significant extent on larger sites in meeting housing needs and demands with a significant proportion of homes built on sites with a capacity of 10 dwellings or more. Consequently in Swansea West where property value as well as demand for affordable housing is high but supply is limited, smaller sites predominate and the potential opportunity to provide affordable housing is much reduced. Further analysis of the viability of smaller sites is therefore necessary to consider the extent to which the threshold for negotiating affordable housing could be reduced. This is considered further in Section 6.0 below.

However in general terms it would appear that current policy has failed to take into account the very significant uplift in value for small schemes which typically involve development of residential ancillary land i.e. parts of gardens, backland or infill development. On this basis there is scope to take affordable housing contributions from small schemes certainly in the middle and higher property value areas and there is a need to reconsider site size thresholds throughout the County.

To assist in identifying current affordable housing need throughout the County an assessment of the whole Swansea Bay area was jointly commissioned by the Council and Neath and Port Talbot Borough Council to inform the authorities' respective LDPs and Local Housing Strategies. Such collaborative assessments are encouraged by national planning policy where local housing markets cross administrative boundaries.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Impact Assessment screening document was signed off by the Head of Service on 19/5/14 and verified by the Corporate Access to Services team. The EIA report was completed 17/6/04 and determined that most protected characteristics would not be directly affected by any suspension of the Right to Buy (see Appendix 5).

12. Summary of Consultation process and evidence

With regard to internal stakeholders' consultation on the political side, we have consulted with EVH, Senior Management Team, Scrutiny Committee and Full Council in which members voted to make the request to suspend the Right to Buy in February 2014.

Other internal consultation took place with the three major Housing Associations operating in the Swansea area; Gwalia, Coastal and Family. All three associations agreed with the notion of suspending the Right to Buy/ Right to Acquire (see Appendix 8).

Council tenants were made aware of the possibility of the Right to Buy via a Survey that was enclosed in the Spring edition of the tenants' magazine, Open House. The total response rate and results synopsis is Appendix 6.

The Tenants Consultative Panel held a meeting specifically to discuss the possible suspension of the Right to Buy on 16/5/13. The minutes and results table is Appendix 7.

Housing Association tenants were also surveyed by their respective RSL and the results can be found in Appendix 8.

External consultation took place with neighbouring authorities Carmarthenshire and Neath & Port Talbot. The views of local Letting Agents, housing based Solicitors and Shelter Cymru, the results of which form Appendix 9.

13. Conclusion

The evidence in this report provides a clear picture of the extent of housing need in the City & County of Swansea and shows that the current supply of affordable homes is insufficient to meet that need. Measures are being taken to increase the supply of affordable homes through other teams but this is undermined by the continued existence of Right to Buy and the administrative costs that this imposes on the Council.

14. Direction

Direction of the Welsh Ministers to the Local Housing Authority of the City & County of Swansea in relation to the Suspension of the Right to Buy and Related Rights

This Direction of the Welsh Ministers is issued pursuant to section 3 of The Housing (Wales) Measure 2011.

1. Interpretation

1.1 In this Direction:

1.1.1 “the Authority” means the Local Housing Authority of the Council of the City & County of Swansea;

1.1.2 “the Measure” means the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011;

1.1.3 “housing pressure condition” means the condition defined in section 1(2) of the Measure;

1.1.4 “the Right to Buy and Related Rights” means the rights defined in section 1(3) of the Measure;

1.1.5 “the relevant area” means the area referred to in Annex 1.

2. Purpose

2.1 This is a Direction to the Authority made under the powers in section 3 of the Measure. The purpose of the Direction is to maintain the availability of social housing by providing a mechanism to suspend the rights of the Authority’s social housing tenants to purchase their homes while a supply of social housing is increased by other means.

3. The area to which the Direction will apply

3.1 The Direction will apply to the relevant area as defined in Annex 1 to this Direction.

4. Type or types of dwelling house to which this Direction will apply

4.1 The Direction will apply to every type of dwelling house in the relevant area for the purposes of social housing.

5. Period for which the Direction will have effect

- 5.1 The Direction will have effect for a period of five years from the date of this Direction.
- 6. Explanation of the reasons why the Authority has concluded that the housing pressure condition exists**
- 6.1 Annex 2 to this Direction sets out the reasons why the Authority has concluded that the housing pressure condition exists.
- 7. Explanation of the reasons why the Authority has concluded that this Direction is an appropriate response to its having concluded that the housing pressure condition exists**
- 7.1 Annex 3 to this Direction sets out the reasons for the conclusion of the Authority that this Direction is an appropriate response to its having concluded that the housing pressure condition exists.
- 8. Explanation of the action the Authority proposes to take to reduce the imbalance between the demand for social housing and its supply within its area during the period for which this Direction is to have effect**
- 8.1 Annex 4 to this Direction sets out the action the Authority proposes to take to reduce between the demand for social housing and its supply within its area during the period for which this Direction is to have effect.
- 9. Action taken by the Authority to discharge its obligation to carry out a consultation exercise as required under section 2 of the Measure**
- 9.1 Annex 5 to this Direction sets out the action taken by the Authority to discharge its obligation to carry out a consultation exercise as required under section 2 of the Measure.
- 10. The Welsh Ministers agree with the Authority's conclusion as to why the housing pressure condition exists.**
- 11. The Welsh Ministers agree with the Authority's opinion that the Direction is an appropriate response to the Authority having concluded that the housing pressure exists.**
- 12. The Welsh Ministers are satisfied that the proposals made by the Authority under section 3(2)(d) of the Measure are likely to contribute to a reduction in the imbalance between the demand for social housing and its supply within the Authority's area.**

13. The Welsh Ministers are satisfied that the Authority has complied with its obligation to carry out a consultation exercise as required by section 2 of the Measure.

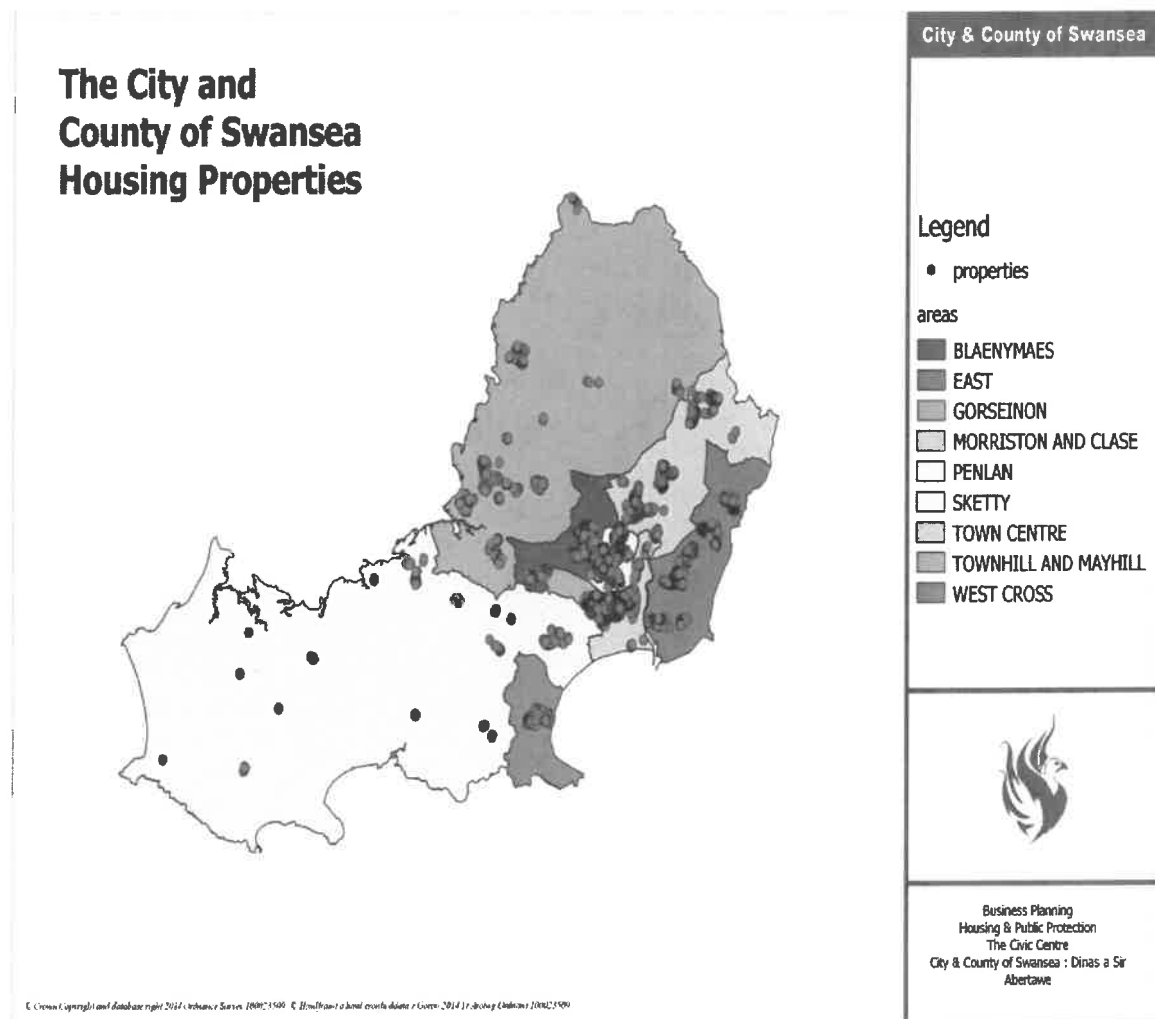
Signed

Minister for Housing, one of the Welsh Ministers

Date

Annex 1

The relevant area to which the Direction will apply.



Annex 2

Reasons why the City & County of Swansea has concluded that the housing pressure condition exists.

Core Evidence

Council Housing Waiting List

Fig 1 highlights the number of applications on the council housing waiting list for the past three years. Demand has remained fairly constant but there is still a very high demand for accommodation, a demand that outstrips the supply.

Fig 1: Total waiting list figures including tenant transfer applications from 1/4/12 – 1/4/14

Year	Waiting List	Transfer Applications	Total
1/4/12	3,728	1,418	5,146
1/4/13	3,721	1,400	5,121
22/5/14	3,775	1,462	5,237

The Council's Housing Options service manages the housing waiting list and they have placed a strong emphasis on the prevention of homelessness in recent times. This has resulted in a reduction of those applying for housing being registered on the waiting list as they were either able to remain in their homes or they were able to secure appropriate alternative accommodation, such as private rented. Housing Options actively publicise their service whilst stringently making the public aware of the shortage of properties available in both the social and private sectors.

Lettings

Fig 2: Ratio of number of number of applicants on the waiting list to the number of lettings

Year	Lettings	Ratio to W/List	Lettings excluding Transfers	Ratio to W/List excluding transfers
31/3/12	1,523	3.5:1	1,202	4:1
31/3/13	1,656	3:1	1,302	4:1
22/5/14	1,674	3:1	1,326	4:1

According to Welsh Government figures, the average ratio within Wales is currently between 4:1 and 5:1 but the average ratio specifically for Council lettings in Swansea over the past three years is around 3:1.

Although the ratio figure has remained constant over the past three years there was a slight increase in demand for both general waiting list applications and transfer applications during the last financial year.

The ratio figures listed above do not currently incorporate the Housing Association figures so do not provide a true reflection of demand throughout the whole city. There are other factors that make it difficult to determine exact city wide demand, such as Coastal Housing Association will only accept applications onto their waiting list for those who have a realistic chance of being rehoused. If not, the application is

not accepted, thus making it difficult to accurately provide the ratio for need and allocations throughout the city.

Housing Register review information

Housing Options manage the Housing Register and they are currently in the process of designing a new review system.

However, they have recently introduced a system where the top 10/20 for different accommodation types on the housing register is reviewed. They found this a useful exercise as it has not only cleaned up the register but also ensures those high on the register have been assessed correctly and their situations are up to date.

HomeSwapper

Council tenants (those who have been tenants for 12+ months) have been able to access HomeSwapper for free since 2008. HomeSwapper is an on-line mutual exchange service. The Council joined the service along with our local partner Housing Associations (Coastal, Family and Gwalia).

One of the aims of the service is to address the changes brought about by Welfare Reform. Over the last few years the Council have been keen to maximise HomeSwapper's use as a management tool and to maximise the number of tenants who are registered through promotion via our tenants' newsletter, intranet and holding home swapping events. The Council have jointly hosted two home swapper events with Coastal, Family, Gwalia and also Neath & Port Talbot Homes to try and encourage more tenants to swap their homes. Whilst all tenants of the respective organisations were invited the event was primarily targeted at those tenants who were under or over occupying.

At the time of writing, there are 891 Council tenants registered on HomeSwapper (Appendix 3b). This figure does tend to fluctuate as many tenants fail to utilise the service for six months or more following their initial registration for the scheme. The scheme is reviewed and failure to respond to written correspondence results in tenants being removed from the site.

A recent Homeswapper Landlord Summary Report (Appendix 3b) highlighted the amount of tenants registered that are either under or over occupying their accommodation but with little scope to move.

Tenants are offered help and advice from Council staff with registering, uploading photos of their properties, etc. Tenants are able to search for potential swaps via location, number of beds, rent totals, property type and there is also a facility to search for properties with adaptations.

The city wide mutual exchange figures are recorded but at this present time it is difficult to attribute all swaps to HomeSwapper which is something the Council is looking to resolve via more robust recording mechanisms.

Council & Housing Association Stock

The number of Council and Housing Association properties eligible for the Right to Buy/ Acquire in the City & County of Swansea is as follows;

Fig 3: Council & Housing Association Stock

Council	Gwalia HA	Coastal HA	Family HA	Total
12,563	2,420	2,183	1,564	18,730

The combined total number of properties of the four organisations listed above is 20,821 but 1,840 are category 1 or 2 sheltered, extra care or supported accommodation and therefore exempt from the Right to Buy/ Acquire. These figures need final verification (may be some discrepancies with some OAP designated accommodation) but provide an acceptable indication of the total number of eligible properties.

Analysis of the Council waiting list by District Housing Office area and property type required

The following information details Council waiting list only. The Council has explored the possibility of developing a common housing register in Swansea but at the time of writing there has been little appetite for this amongst the RSLs, hence there being separate housing registers.

The current largest number of applications on the Council's waiting list is for 1 & 2 bed properties. Appendix 4 incorporates the different types of accommodation, i.e. low rise flat, bedsit, house, etc.

The Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), undertaken in 2013, found the biggest requirement for affordable housing was 1 & 2 bed properties. This reflects the overall demand on the Council's waiting list.

Fig 4: Current waiting list figures for specific property types

Property Type	Number on the Waiting List	% of Waiting List
1Bed	5,775	61%
2Bed	2,760	29%
3Bed	710	7.5%
4Bed	204	2%
5Bed	18	0.5%
Total	9,467	

The above table shows that there are 9,467 currently on the Council's Waiting List.

This figure contrasts with the applications figure listed in Fig 1 (5,237) as several applications will have been registered for multiple sized properties in accordance with their personal circumstances. For example, a lone applicant who has overnight access to their child may have been registered for both 1 & 2 bed properties in the hope of maximising their chances of being allocated a property. They would also be made fully aware of their need to forgo the access arrangements if allocated a 1 bed property. There are also 454 applications on the current waiting list that have been assessed as being overcrowded.

Urban & Rural accommodation

The City & County of Swansea can be broadly divided into four geographic areas: the open moorlands of the Lliw Uplands in the north; the rural Gower Peninsula in the west, containing a number of rural villages, contrasting coasts and the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); the suburban area stretching from the edge of Swansea towards settlements in the west and around the M4 corridor; and the coastal strip around Swansea Bay, no more than two miles in width, which includes the city centre and adjacent district centres such as Uplands, Sketty and Mumbles.

There is a clear distinction between urban and rural areas in the City & County of Swansea. There is a greater supply of accommodation (fig 5) in the urban areas, which are more densely populated (fig 6).

The LHMA established a need for affordable housing in both urban and rural areas, which is detailed further in the Need & Supply section of this document (page 11).

Annex 3

Reasons for the conclusion of the City & County of Swansea that this Direction is an appropriate response to its having concluded that the housing pressure condition exists.

Right to Buy/ Acquire activity

The Council has kept an accurate figure of Right to Buy sales since 2000/01, these figures are included below.

The first five years contributed to 1,561 sales but the last ten years has seen a sharp decrease, reflected by the changes in the housing market.

Over the past five years there have been a total of 97 sales but there was an increase in the last financial year which could be attributed to tenants being made aware that their Right to Buy may be suspended in the near future.

Fig 7: Right to Buy sales from 1/4/00

Year	No. of Sales		
2000/01	217		
2001/02	202		
2002/03	305		
2003/04	524		
2004/05	313	Total 2000-2005	1,561
2005/06	148		
2006/07	123		
2007/08	101		
2008/09	30		
2009/10	13	Total 2005-2009	415
2010/11	14		
2011/12	16		
2012/13	19		
2013/14	35		
2014-	23	Total 2009-2014	120

There has been an increase in applications for the Right to Buy over the past two years. Figures in 2012/13 doubled from the previous year. This could be contributed to an upturn in the housing market. There was a further increase in the last financial year, which could be contributed to the publicity surrounding the potential suspension of the Right to Buy.

There is also a United Kingdom wide ideology of people aspiring to own their own homes, with an emphasis on home ownership provided by Central Government.

Fig 8: Right to Buy applications from 1/4/08

Year	No. of Applications
2008/09	71
2009/10	82

2010/11	80
2011/12	50
2012/13	105
2013/14	126
2014-	50
Total	564

At the time of writing, The Council is in a position to provide an estimate for the prospective sales of Local Authority owned housing under the Right to Buy over the next 5 years. These figures are based on the six monthly statistics accrued from April- October 2014.

If the level of applications and sales continues in a consistent manner from the first six months of 2014, then there is likely to be around 230 Local Authority owned properties sold. These figures are subject to flux, so it reasonable to assume that 250 Local Authority owned properties require safeguarding over the period of potential suspension.

Fig 9: Prospective Right to Buy applications and sales from 1/4/14 – 30/3/19

Year	Actual No. of Applications (1/4/14-15/10/14)	Actual No. of Sales (1/4/14-15/10/14)	Prospective No. of Applications	Prospective No. of Sales
2014/15	23	50	46	100
2015/16	-	-	46	100
2016/17	-	-	46	100
2017/18	-	-	46	100
2018/19	-	-	46	100
Total	23	50	230	500

The Right to Acquire sales for the three main Housing Associations operating in Swansea are of little consequence to the overall picture. They have sold a combined total of 6 in the last five years so any suspension of the Right to Buy/ Acquire is likely to have minimal or no impact on how these organisations provide their services.

Similarly any suspension of the Right to Buy will have a neutral effect on the Housing Service's Business Plan and the achievement of the WHQS.

Fig 10: Right to Acquire sales 1/4/09

Housing Association	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Gwalia	0	0	0	0	1
Coastal	0	0	0	1	1
Family	2	0	1	0	0

Pressure in the Private Sector

Fig 11: House prices to earnings ratios

Date	Av. Detached (£)	Av. Semi Detached (£)	Av. Terraced (£)	Av. Combined (£)	Av. Household Income (£)	Ratio of av. House price to av. Household income
April 2009	172,070	100,460	80,045	109,970	23,487	4.7:1
April 2010	183,431	107,093	85,331	117,231	24,262	4.8:1
April 2011	172,744	100,853	80,359	110,401	25,214	4.4:1
April 2012	172,733	100,847	80,354	110,394	24,973	4.4:1
April 2013	168,291	98,253	78,287	107,555	24,495	4.4:1

It can be seen from the above information that the ratio to house prices to incomes has remained quite stable over the past five years. This reflects the stagnation in general household incomes coupled with the fact that house prices have dropped slightly.

Mortgage interested rates in the UK are generally around 4% which means the average households in Swansea would not be able to obtain a mortgage without a large cash deposit due to the current ratios being above 4:1.

Although the housing market has generally stagnated over the past 3 years or so, the above figures still emphasise how difficult it can be for first time buyers to access the housing ladder. This, in turn, stresses the need for more affordable housing to be available/ developed in Swansea.

Void Rates in Social Housing Stock

On the 31st March 2014 there were 220 void properties in the Council's own stock or 1.62% of the overall stock. This demonstrates that the Housing Service is doing their utmost to ensure that outgoing tenants are replaced as quickly as feasible and that vacant properties are ready for re-letting as quickly as possible.

The low void rates are an indication of the constant demand for Council properties in Swansea, which emphasises the need for more affordable homes in the area.

Fig 12: Council Stock void rates for the past 3 years

Year	Voids	% of Stock
31/3/12	221	1.62
31/3/13	278	2.04
31/3/14	220	1.62

Homelessness

Homelessness figures have steadily decreased over the past three years. This could be attributed to more emphasis being placed on prevention, mediation services and housing solutions being found to prevent homelessness. However the overall figures are still high and add to the volume of demand that outstrips current supply.

There are plans to develop an in house Social Lettings Scheme, which will involve and embrace local landlords in the Private Sector.

Fig 13: Number accepted as unintentionally homeless and in priority need over past 5 years

Year	Total
2009/10	915
2010/11	1060
2011/12	856
2012/13	872
2013/14	847

Need & Supply

Local Housing Market Assessment

Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the City and County of Swansea to undertake a joint, comprehensive study of current and future housing requirements, housing mix and housing need.

The aim was to develop an understanding of the nature and level of housing demand and need and to project that forward to provide a comprehensive study of future housing requirements and housing need.

Housing Demand in Swansea

The most recent Housing Market Assessment has highlighted several significant features which will influence the demand for housing in Swansea.

Between the 2001 and 2011 Census, Swansea's population increased by 15,700 to a total of 239,000 people, representing an increase of 7.0%. This includes 234,400 household residents living in 103,500 households, representing an average household size of 2.26 persons. Furthermore, the total number of households in Swansea increased by 9,100.

National Insurance registration numbers highlight a clear growth in the number of migrants after 2004 when migration rules from Eastern Europe were relaxed, with a notably large number of in-migrants to Swansea, in fact in excess of 1,000 per year.

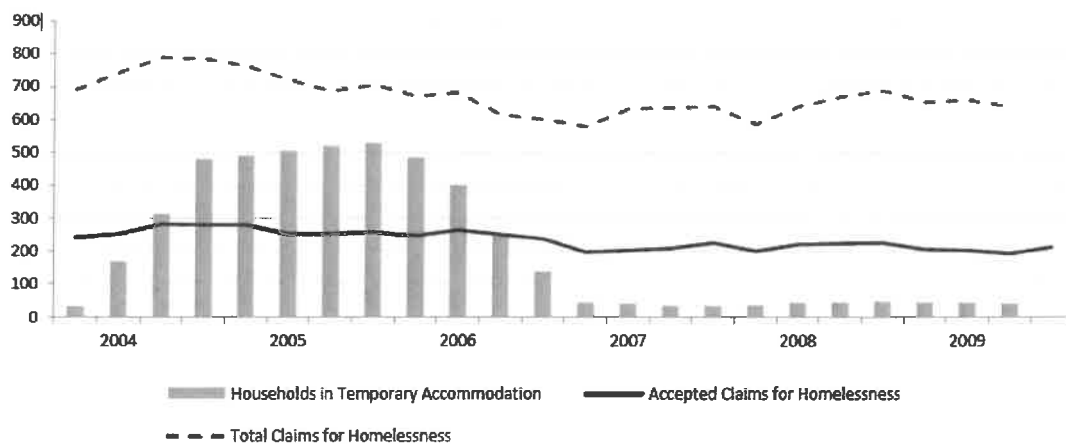
Comparison of the age structure for the population in Swansea against Wales shows a higher proportion of young adults aged 15-34 years, and particularly those aged 20-24 which is largely associated with the significant local student population. There is also a slightly higher proportion of those aged over 75.

Housing Need in Swansea

The Welsh Government's Technical Advice Note 2 defines that housing need exists when a household cannot access suitable housing without financial assistance.

To illustrate the 'sharp end' of housing need, the figure below shows that the total number of claims for homelessness, and the number of accepted claims, has remained relatively steady in Swansea. Fig 14 is taken from the Local Housing Market Assessment 2013.

Fig 14: Homeless applications, acceptances and homeless households in temporary accommodation for Swansea 2003-2009



The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) together with Welsh Housing Statistics show that over 6% of households in Swansea claim housing benefit while living in the private rented sector, which is slightly higher than the average for the whole of Wales. Although many households choose to live in private rented accommodation with housing benefit support, others would like social housing so more affordable housing would need to be provided to reduce the number of households claiming housing benefit in the private rented sector.

The DWP also assess the growth which has occurred in housing benefit claimant numbers in the private rented sector each local authority in Wales between October 2009 and June 2011. It is clear that the highest growth has been in the cities of Cardiff and Swansea. This does not necessarily mean that Swansea has higher levels of local housing need, but may also reflect that it has more capacity in its private rented stock available to house Housing Benefit claimants.

In terms of affordability, which has an impact on the number of households in housing need, unemployment in Wales is above 9% and commentators predict this could remain until at least 2016.

Over 46% of all non-homeowners have incomes of under £10,000 per annum, while 72% have incomes under £20,000 per annum. On such incomes and assuming that housing costs (to be affordable) do not exceed 25% of income, such households can afford no more than social rent and most would need additional Housing Benefit to even meet the cost of social rents in Swansea

Modelling Future Housing Requirements

The ORS model of assessing future housing requirements uses robust and credible evidence to estimate future housing need and demand and then models the required mix of housing over the full planning period from 2011 to 2025. It also models how key housing market drivers (such as affordability) will impact on housing mix.

Whilst Planning Policy Wales (PPW) requires all Council's to use the latest Welsh Government Local Authority Household Projections for Wales as a starting point for estimating future housing requirements, the City and County of Swansea produced their own population projections on the basis of four scenarios. These projections were produced using the nationally recognised and established PopGroup software

model and were able to access more local data sources. Given this context, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has modelled the housing requirements for Swansea based on all four scenarios and the results are presented in Chapter 6 of the main SHMA report.

Nevertheless, sensitivity testing has focussed on the “Medium High” scenario and the results for future housing requirements are as follows:

HIGH:	1,329 dwellings per annum
MEDIUM HIGH :	1,147 dwellings per annum
MEDIUM LOW:	845 dwellings per annum
LOW:	729 dwellings per annum

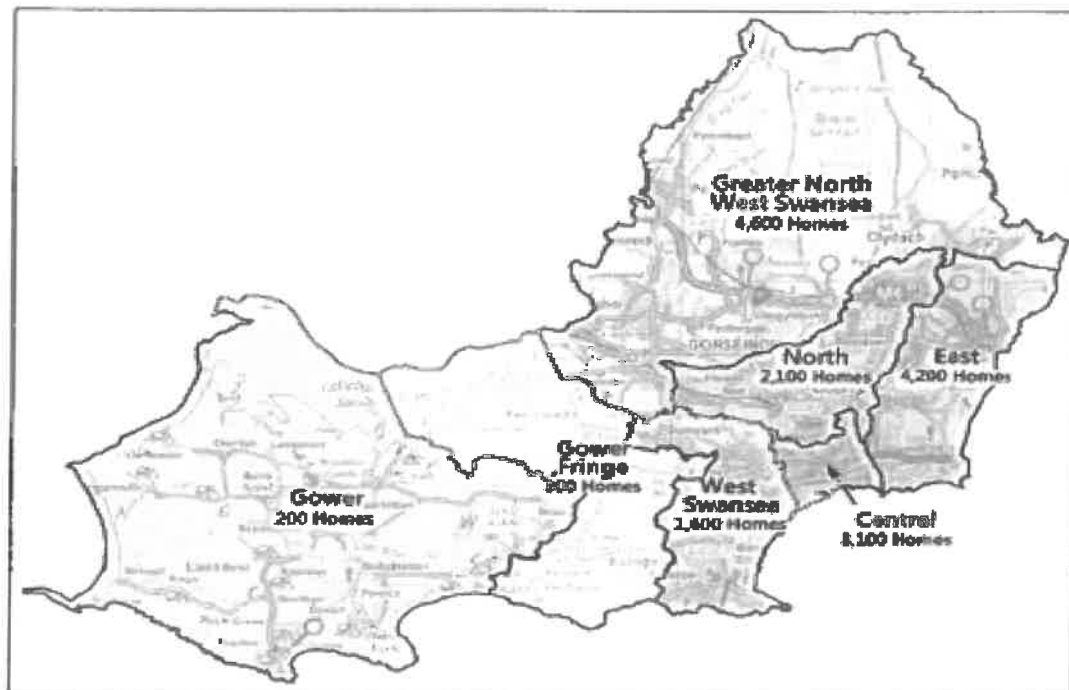
Fig 15: Estimate of the size of housing required produced for the Medium-High scenario, although the distribution within tenures is similar for all scenarios.

Housing Size	Number of Dwellings Required			
	Market Housing	Affordable Housing		TOTAL
		Intermediate	Social	
Net Requirement 2010-2025				
1 bedroom	600	300	1,700	2,400
2 bedrooms	2,000	1,100	1,800	4,800
3 bedrooms	5,000	600	1,400	7,200
4+ bedrooms	1,400	-	100	1,800
Total	9,000	2,000	5,100	16,100

Fig 16: Tenures mix of housing requirement for sub-areas of Swansea to 2025 (all figures are rounded to the nearest 100 so may not sum due to the rounding)

Area	Number of Dwellings Required			Percentage Affordable
	Market	Affordable	TOTAL	
Net Requirement 2010-2025				
Swansea East	3,400	800	4,200	20%
Gower	-	200	200	100%
Gower Fringe	-	300	300	100%
Greater North West Swansea	4,000	600	4,600	14%
Swansea Central	1,300	1,800	3,100	58%
Swansea North	-	2,100	2,100	100%
Swansea West	400	1,200	1,600	72%
Total	9,000	7,100	16,100	44%

Fig 17: Map of Housing Requirement for Sub-Area of Swansea to 2025 (Note: All figures rounded to the nearest 100)



Policy Issues arising from the Local Housing Market Assessment

The results of the modelling exercise show that the areas further west in Swansea, which has both the highest house prices and lowest build rates, show the highest requirement for affordable housing. The Swansea North area also has a disproportionately low dwelling delivery anticipated, but has significant levels of need. Areas in the east of the city typically show less affordable housing requirement due to the availability of a sufficient quantity of more affordable private sector dwellings to meet this need. Northern and western areas of Swansea show a greater requirement for market dwellings, but none is identified on Gower.

The Private Rented Sector is likely to play an increasingly significant role in meeting housing demand in Swansea, for both those in housing need and more affluent households. The housing requirement in this study, projects a high social housing requirement to mitigate the number of households claiming housing benefit in the private rented sector. However, as delivery of high levels of social housing faces challenges and is unlikely to be achieved. There will be implications arising from this which require consideration.

Welfare Reform is likely to lead to a greater demand for shared accommodation from single persons under 35 years. This is likely to increase demand for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation within Swansea. The reforms are also likely to impede the private sector from meeting rising demand.

The delivery of new homes remains a key objective for any housing and planning strategy. The Swansea housing market has exhibited a 'gap' between household growth and dwelling completions between 2003 and 2008 as household numbers have grown but new supply has not kept pace.

This assessment suggests a need for Swansea to deliver between 5,600 and 7,700 affordable dwellings between 2011-25 which equates to around 400 and 550 affordable homes per annum. The ability to deliver the rate of housing required poses a considerable challenge in the current market. Several factors constrain delivery including land supply, viability, finance and Planning policy.

Annex 4

Action that the City & County of Swansea proposes to take to reduce between the demand for social housing and its supply within its area during the period for which this Direction is to have effect.

Increasing the Supply of Affordable Housing

The Authority has already started increasing the supply of affordable housing with 215 completions during 2013/14 compared to 129 in 2012/13.

Affordable Housing Utilising Welsh Government Subsidy

The Authority will continue to fully spend its allocation of Social Housing Grant and continue to bid for extra resources made available by the Welsh Government including any further funding made available under the smaller properties initiative and any additional resources at the end of each financial year as a result of underspends in other budgets.

Planning Policy

The Authority is in the process of developing its LDP. Ensuring there is an increased supply of affordable housing will be a key component of the LDP. A topic paper regarding the options open to the Authority regarding delivering affordable housing has been developed. It is likely that future policy will see the threshold levels (the trigger where affordable housing has to be delivered) be lowered for all future developments. This is further expanded upon in the section "Swansea Unitary Development Plan 2001-16" (see below).

It is anticipated that the LDP will be adopted in 2016.

Alternative Funding Models

Over the last 6 months the Authority has been working with Bellerophon Partnerships to explore alternative funding options and models that could be adopted by the Authority to enable more affordable housing to be built on Housing Revenue Account land.

New Council Housing Building Programme

At the appropriate time, the Council will consider in detail any opportunities for providing new additional Council Housing arising from the proposed exit of Welsh Council's out of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system.

Housing Revenue Account Asset Management Strategy

The Authority will develop a comprehensive HRA Asset management strategy which will identify HRA land that could potentially be used to develop affordable housing on, in areas where the Housing Market Assessment indicates that there is a shortage of affordable units.

Viability Assessments

The Authority has recently purchased the 3 Dragons Viability software. The Authority will use this software when in negotiation with developers to ensure that the maximum number of affordable units is provided by developers subject to the viability of each site.

Housing Market Assessments

The Authority will update its Housing Market Assessment every 2 years using the WG software/model to ensure up to date market information is available to be used in negotiations with developers regarding the number of affordable units to be supplied.

Affordable Housing Target

The Authority is aiming to increase the supply of new affordable Housing by 10% each year throughout the RTB suspension period.

Swansea Unitary Development Plan 2001-16

The Swansea Unitary Development Plan (UDP): www.swansea.gov.uk/udp which is to be replaced by the LDP in due course, states that in areas where a demonstrable lack of affordable housing exists, the Council will seek to negotiate the inclusion of an appropriate element of affordable housing on sites which are suitable in locational/accessibility terms and where this is not ruled out by exceptional development costs. As a guideline:

- In most areas negotiations will focus on new housing developments of 25+ dwellings, or sites of 1ha+ (or phases of such developments)
- In the large and small villages³ (e.g. those on Gower) and the Swansea West Housing Policy Zone, negotiations will be sought on new housing developments of 10+ dwellings or sites of 0.4ha+ (or phases of such developments)

UDP Policy makes clear that the subdivision, separate ownership or phasing of larger development sites to fall below these thresholds does not overcome the requirement to provide affordable housing. There will be no change in this position for the LDP. The need for and amount of affordable housing to be provided on sites where the threshold is triggered is determined on a case by case basis in consultation with the Head of Housing Services.

Further policy on local needs affordable housing states that in exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for the development of small sites within and adjoining settlements for the specific purpose of providing affordable housing to meet an existing deficiency for people who need to live in the locality and who cannot reasonably be accommodated through the area's general housing market. This policy is unlikely to change significantly in the LDP.

The current Local Housing Strategy is underpinned by a LHMA undertaken in 2007, which established that of the 851 dwelling units needed to be built per annum within

the County, 221 should be affordable units, resulting in an affordable housing target of 25-30% of all new dwellings. This LHMA has recently been reviewed and a new affordable housing target has been identified which highlights a massive gap between supply (which has averaged around 188 dwellings per annum over the past 4 years) and demand which is for around 500 new dwellings per annum (approximately 44% of future projected housebuild).

Review of Local Policy

Table 1 below analyses the delivery of affordable housing since the UDP was adopted in 2008. This shows that of the 884 affordable housing units identified in the 2007 LHMA as being needed over this period, 754 (85%) were delivered. Whilst it is recognised that affordable housing may not be delivered on every site due to the minimum size thresholds of qualifying sites, analysis reveals that planning policy has only made a very small contribution to affordable housing provision over the past four years, i.e. just 69 units, or 9% of the total number of affordable units provided.

Table 1: Affordable Housing Units Completed 2008-2012

	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total	Average
Additional affordable housing units completed	299	124	104	297	754	188.5
Additional affordable housing units needed	221	221	221	221	884	221
Total housing units completed	1124	541	629	844	3138	784.5
Percentage completed that were affordable	26.6%	22.9%	16.5%	35.2%	24%	24
No. of affordable units delivered by s106/Planning Obligation	0	0	60	9	69	17.25

Source: Affordable Housing Data Collection, Welsh Government

Thus the vast majority of affordable housing units have actually been delivered by means other than the planning system. Social Housing Grant (SHG) is the main alternative mechanism, however there have been other means, including direct Welsh Government funding to RSL's to purchase units from developers during 2009/10 and 2010/11. The totals also include housing subject to the UK Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme and Housing Association 'off the shelf' purchases. These schemes have disguised the fact that the SHG for Swansea has reduced from a peak of £6.9m in 2007/08 to an allocation of £2.7m for 2013/14, with a notification that the amount will decline in future years

On the basis of recent completions set out in Table 1 above, the average number of affordable housing units completed each year amounts to 188.5, of which only 17.25 are delivered through the planning system. If current trends continued over the 15 year period of the LDP (2010-2025) this would deliver around 2830 affordable

housing units, with just 260 being generated through the planning system and 2570 by RSL's. It should be noted however that current build rates are reflective of a period of economic recession with an average of 785 units of both market and affordable housing built per annum over the past four years, which is well below the 15 year 1113 per annum build needed to meet the LDP target of 16700 units. However if/when build rates increase, so will the number of affordable units delivered.

The low level of delivery through the planning system is also in part a reflection of past lack of knowledge and understanding of the cost and viability of schemes. Additional information and resources are now available to overcome this and enable a more informed negotiating position when dealing with planning applications that trigger the affordable housing thresholds. In future the 25-30% target for affordable housing provision on site should be regarded as the absolute minimum position bearing in mind that 44% is the average target for the whole of the LDP period (2010 to 2025). The lower the level of provision accepted now will only increase the level of provision required to be negotiated on schemes brought forward towards the end of the Plan period, which could potentially render them undeliverable. This is considered further in Section 6.0 below.

It has been over 4 years since the current affordable housing provision requirements were introduced through the UDP. During this period the Council has been extremely flexible in making allowances for developers who had completed land transactions without building in sufficient allowance for affordable housing provision. It is now time to draw a line and adopt a more rigid approach, whilst sending a clear message to landowners, that given the acute County-wide shortfall in affordable housing there is almost no scope for disposing of land at full market value and expectations must be lowered accordingly.

As one of the largest landowners in the County, the Council should take the community's need for affordable housing into account as part of its Asset Disposal Strategy by giving consideration to the disposal of public sector land below market value to RSL's and other potential developers conditional upon delivery of affordable housing units – typically through a joint venture. Whilst Councils have a duty to secure best value for land, WG guidance on delivering affordable housing⁴ states that this should include:

An assessment of the contribution disposal of these assets may make to the achievement of strategic policy priorities and objectives. Where delivery of affordable housing is a priority this should be taken into account when considering the options for the disposal of public sector land.

Receipts from the disposal of public sector land over the past 4 years have amounted to over £19m. The Council's current disposal programme projects a further £34m to be raised from disposals, however this makes no allowance for disposal of land below full market value in order to facilitate delivery of affordable housing. In accordance with the WG guidance outlined above, identification of delivery of affordable housing as a strategic policy in the LDP Preferred Strategy will require a review of the value of certain sites in the Council's Disposal Strategy.

A good example of being more proactive in delivering affordable housing units is the Council's Empty Property Strategy, which has introduced a range of measures to bring empty dwellings back into residential use. It specifically targets empty homes in identified areas of housing need and problem empty dwellings/buildings due to their condition, location and detrimental effect on local amenity. During 2011/2012, there were 32 empty properties brought back into use as a result of direct action by the Council and 7 were demolished. Maintenance of this level of intervention over the fifteen year LDP period could see up to 480 empty dwellings brought back into beneficial use. Not all of these properties will fall into the category of affordable housing and much will depend on the future availability of grants. However there is clear potential for these properties to make a significant contribution to the affordable housing supply.

The Council has relied to a significant extent on larger sites in meeting housing needs and demands with a significant proportion of homes built on sites with a capacity of 10 dwellings or more. Consequently in Swansea West where property value as well as demand for affordable housing is high but supply is limited, smaller sites predominate and the potential opportunity to provide affordable housing is much reduced. Further analysis of the viability of smaller sites is therefore necessary to consider the extent to which the threshold for negotiating affordable housing could be reduced. This is considered further in Section 6.0 below.

However in general terms it would appear that current policy has failed to take into account the very significant uplift in value for small schemes which typically involve development of residential ancillary land i.e. parts of gardens, backland or infill development. On this basis there is scope to take affordable housing contributions from small schemes certainly in the middle and higher property value areas and there is a need to reconsider site size thresholds throughout the County.

To assist in identifying current affordable housing need throughout the County an assessment of the whole Swansea Bay area was jointly commissioned by the Council and Neath and Port Talbot Borough Council to inform the authorities' respective LDPs and Local Housing Strategies. Such collaborative assessments are encouraged by national planning policy where local housing markets cross administrative boundaries.

Annex 5

Action taken by the City & County of Swansea to discharge its obligation to carry out a consultation exercise as required under Section 2 of the Measure.

Summary of Consultation process and evidence

With regard to internal stakeholders' consultation on the political side, we have consulted with EVH, Senior Management Team, Scrutiny Committee and Full Council in which members voted to make the request to suspend the Right to Buy in February 2014.

Other internal consultation took place with the three major Housing Associations operating in the Swansea area; Gwalia, Coastal and Family. All three associations agreed with the notion of suspending the Right to Buy/ Right to Acquire (see Appendix 8).

Council tenants were made aware of the possibility of the Right to Buy via a Survey that was enclosed in the Spring edition of the tenants' magazine, Open House. The total response rate and results synopsis is Appendix 6.

The Tenants Consultative Panel held a meeting specifically to discuss the possible suspension of the Right to Buy on 16/5/13. The minutes and results table is Appendix 7.

Housing Association tenants were also surveyed by their respective RSL and the results can be found in Appendix 8.

External consultation took place with neighbouring authorities Carmarthenshire and Neath & Port Talbot. The views of local Letting Agents, housing based Solicitors and Shelter Cymru, the results of which form Appendix 9.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Total accommodation types eligible for Right to Buy/ Acquire of the Council, Gwalia, Coastal & Family Housing Associations

Accommodation Type	Bedrooms	Gwalia	Coastal	Family	Council	Total
Bedsit	1	1	56	2	92	151
OAP Bedsit	1				63	63
Bungalow	1				6	6
OAP Bungalow	1			3	129	132
Ground Floor Flat	1				441	441
High Rise Flat	1				184	184
Low Rise Flat	1	726	674	411	833	2644
OAP Flat	1			288	106	394
House	1	8	16	11	1	36
Maisonette	1			1	1	2
Bungalow	2		85	22	19	126
OAP Bungalow	2				220	220
Ground Floor Flat	2				469	469
High Rise Flat	2				348	348
Low Rise Flat	2	359	516	91	797	1763
OAP Flat	2			110	97	207
House	2	519	332	265	3662	4778
Maisonette	2			2	23	23
Bungalow	3		22	3	17	42
OAP Bungalow	3				2	2
Child Designated Flat	3				4	4
Ground Floor Flat	3				53	53
High Rise Flat	3		13		77	90
Low Rise Flat	3	1			155	156
OAP Flat	3			2	2	4
House	3	745	424	329	4625	6123
Maisonette	3			3	4	7
House	4	60	33	20	85	198
Bungalow	4		3	1	4	8
Bungalow	5		2		2	4
House	5	1	5		38	44
House	6		2		4	6
Total		2420	2183	1564	12563	18728

Appendix 2 (overleaf) evidences the lettings figures for the Council's District Housing Office areas from April 2011 - March 2014.

The figures are split quarterly and provide the overall annual total.

The lettings figures have been divided into three different categories; those rehoused via tenant transfer, those rehoused via statutory homeless legislation and general housing applicants.

Appendix 2

NEW LETTING SIGNINGS by DISTRICT OFFICE April 2011 to March 2012

	1 st quarter 11/12	2 nd quarter 11/12	3 rd quarter 11/12	4 th quarter 11/12	YEAR 2011/2012
Townhill lettings					
Transfer	16	19	15	12	62
Waiting List	26	35	45	35	141
Homeless	33	24	15	29	101
Sketty lettings					
Transfer	2	4	6	8	20
Waiting List	10	9	10	16	45
Homeless	11	14	6	20	51
West X lettings					
Transfer	5	3	7	6	21
Waiting List	4	3	5	2	14
Homeless	8	6	11	5	30
Bymaes lettings					
Transfer	7	11	7	13	38
Waiting List	17	12	13	25	67
Homeless	20	43	23	26	112
Gors'n lettings					
Transfer	10	9	5	14	38
Waiting List	12	18	13	30	73
Homeless	10	14	11	7	42
Eastside lettings					
Transfer	6	9	6	9	30
Waiting List	10	4	12	11	37
Homeless	13	12	11	20	56
Mor'ston lettings					
Transfer	11	13	9	12	45
Waiting List	7	12	14	22	55
Homeless	22	24	19	30	95
Penlan lettings					
Transfer	6	11	6	17	40
Waiting List	20	19	26	27	92
Homeless	21	18	15	24	78
Town C lettings					
Transfer	5	6	6	10	27
Waiting List	12	14	21	16	63
Homeless	11	15	12	12	50
CITY lettings					
Transfer	68 (20.3%)	85 (22.3%)	67 (19.2%)	101 (22%)	321 (21.1%)
Waiting List	118 (35.2%)	126 (33.1%)	159 (45.6%)	184 (40.2%)	587 (38.5%)
Homeless	149 (44.5%)	170 (44.6%)	123 (35.2%)	173 (37.8%)	615 (40.4%)
TOTAL lettings	335	381	349	458	1,523

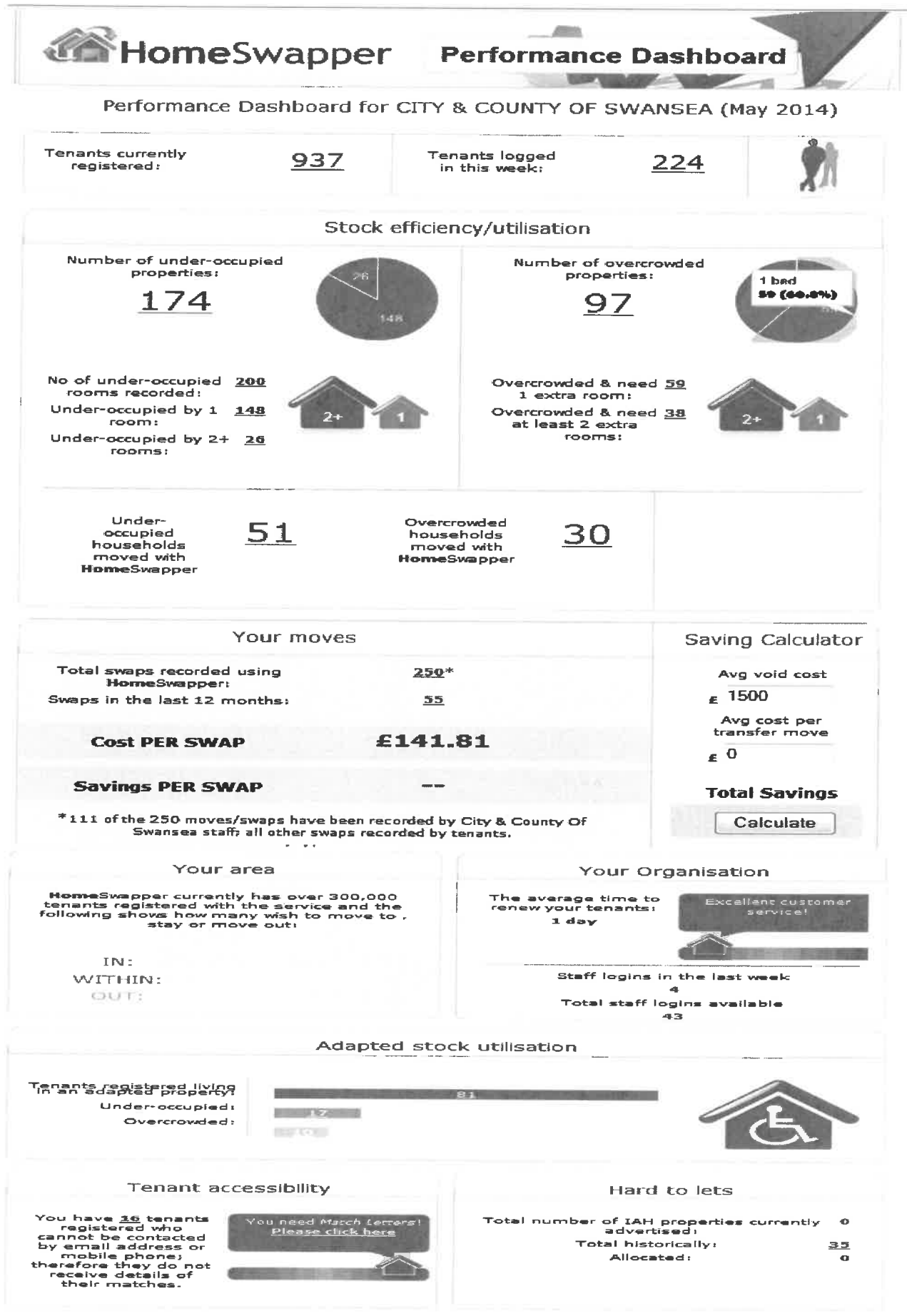
NEW LETTING SIGNINGS by DISTRICT OFFICE
April 2012 to March 2013

	1 st quarter 12/13	2 nd quarter 12/13	3 rd quarter 12/13	4 th quarter 12/13	YEAR 2012/2013
Townhill lettings					
Transfer	14	20	19	18	71
Waiting List	20	33	54	54	161
Homeless	23	25	16	27	91
Sketty lettings					
Transfer	3	6	6	5	20
Waiting List	14	19	17	15	65
Homeless	3	14	7	3	27
West X lettings					
Transfer	2	5	4	2	13
Waiting List	9	9	2	3	23
Homeless	4	3	4	6	17
Bymaes lettings					
Transfer	7	7	18	17	49
Waiting List	6	25	28	23	82
Homeless	24	31	25	14	94
Gors'n lettings					
Transfer	8	14	7	12	41
Waiting List	14	11	26	22	73
Homeless	7	8	15	11	41
Eastside lettings					
Transfer	4	6	9	8	27
Waiting List	17	15	12	15	59
Homeless	10	15	15	26	66
Mor'ston lettings					
Transfer	5	12	15	18	50
Waiting List	15	19	25	30	89
Homeless	23	23	27	21	94
Penlan lettings					
Transfer	15	15	12	19	61
Waiting List	32	31	22	34	119
Homeless	19	23	21	31	94
Town C lettings					
Transfer	2	5	11	4	22
Waiting List	19	17	15	22	73
Homeless	4	10	10	10	34
CITY lettings					
Transfer	60 18.6%	90 21.4%	101 22.9%	103 21.9%	354 21.4%
Waiting List	146 45.2%	179 42.5%	201 45.5%	218 46.4%	744 44.9%
Homeless	117 36.2%	152 36.1%	140 31.7%	149 31.7%	558 33.7%
TOTAL lettings	323	421	442	470	1656

NEW LETTING SIGNINGS by DISTRICT OFFICE
April 2013 to March 2014

	1 st quarter 13/14	2 nd quarter 13/14	3 rd quarter 13/14	4 th quarter 13/14	YEAR 2013/2014
Townhill lettings					
Transfer	15	29	11	14	69
Waiting List	27	35	45	42	149
Homeless	19	15	20	33	87
89					
Sketty lettings					
Transfer	5	6	3	8	22
Waiting List	7	17	11	18	53
Homeless	8	4	10	9	31
35					
West X lettings					
Transfer	4	3	3	5	15
Waiting List	1	8	9	5	23
Homeless	3	3	3	5	14
15					
Bymaes lettings					
Transfer	11	11	14	11	47
Waiting List	22	19	24	25	90
Homeless	20	20	27	14	81
Gors'n lettings					
Transfer	8	11	5	5	29
Waiting List	13	17	21	22	73
Homeless	10	11	5	6	32
Eastside lettings					
Transfer	7	14	8	11	40
Waiting List	10	19	16	21	66
Homeless	10	13	21	13	57
Mor'ston lettings					
Transfer	13	14	17	10	54
Waiting List	23	24	27	35	109
Homeless	30	27	20	28	105
Penlan lettings					
Transfer	15	10	16	11	52
Waiting List	30	31	39	40	140
Homeless	27	24	23	33	107
Town C lettings					
Transfer	5	4	6	5	20
Waiting List	13	17	14	19	63
Homeless	14	12	8	12	46
CITY lettings					
Transfer	83-22.4%	102-24.4%	83 -19.5%	80-17.4%	348-20.8%
Waiting List	146-39.5%	187-44.7%	206 – 48.3%	227-49.3%	766-45.8%
Homeless	141-38.1%	129-30.9%	137 – 32.2%	153-33.3%	560-33.4%
TOTAL lettings	370	418	426	460	1,674

Appendix 3a



Appendix 3b

HomeSwapper Landlord Summary Report

Statistics - City & County Of Swansea

City & County Of Swansea tenants currently registered:	891
Total City & County Of Swansea tenants registered since launch:	5536
Average time to renew:	1
Number of under-occupied rooms:	1030
Number of under occupied household who moved through HomeSwapper:	52
Number of overcrowded properties:	594
- overcrowded and require at least 1 extra room:	343
- overcrowded and require 2 or more rooms:	251
Number of overcrowded households who moved through HomeSwapper:	30
Tenants registered living in an adapted property:	380
- under occupied:	82
- overcrowded:	53
Tenants who have not supplied either an email address or mobile phone; therefore they do not receive ANY property matches:	16
Total swaps recorded using HomeSwapper:	251*
- swaps in the last 12 months:	26

Appendix 4

Council Waiting List figures as of 21/5/14

Prop type	Total beds	Number of apps
BEDSIT	1	301
BEDSIT	2	6
BEDSIT	3	1
BEDSIT	4	2
BEDSIT OAP	1	23
BEDSIT OAP	2	3
BEDSIT OAP	3	1
BEDSIT OAP	4	2
BUNGALOW	1	247
BUNGALOW	2	170
BUNGALOW	3	25
BUNGALOW	4	5
BUNGALOW OAP	1	329
BUNGALOW OAP	2	118
BUNGALOW OAP	3	3
BUNGALOW OAP	4	2
FLAT CHILDREN	1	10
FLAT CHILDREN	2	176
FLAT CHILDREN	3	38
FLAT CHILDREN	4	4
FLAT GROUND FLOOR	1	1807
FLAT GROUND FLOOR	2	700
FLAT GROUND FLOOR	3	101
FLAT GROUND FLOOR	4	6
FLAT HIGH RISE	1	1168
FLAT HIGH RISE	2	162
FLAT HIGH RISE	3	19
FLAT HIGH RISE	4	2
FLAT LOW RISE	1	1606
FLAT LOW RISE	2	540
FLAT LOW RISE	3	88
FLAT LOW RISE	4	6
FLAT OAP	1	257
FLAT OAP	2	50
FLAT OAP	3	1
FLAT OAP	4	2
HOUSE	1	24
HOUSE	2	789
HOUSE	3	419
HOUSE	4	171
HOUSE	5	18
MAISONETTE	1	3
MAISONETTE	2	46
MAISONETTE	3	14
MAISONETTE	4	2
		9467

Appendix 5

Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Form

Please ensure that you refer to the 'Screening Form Guidance' while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact your directorate support officer or the Access to Services team (see guidance for details).

Section 1

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Housing & Public Protection

Directorate: Place

Q1(a) WHAT ARE YOU SCREENING FOR RELEVANCE?

Service/
Function

☐

Policy/
Procedure

☐

Project

☐

Strategy

☐

Plan

☐

Proposal

Y

(b) Please name and describe below

Applying to the Welsh Government to suspend the Right to Buy within the City & County of Swansea

Q2(a) WHAT DOES Q1a RELATE TO?

Direct front line
service delivery

Y (H)

Indirect front line
service delivery

(M)

Indirect back room
service delivery

☐ **(L)**

(b) DO YOUR CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS ACCESS THIS SERVICE...?

Because they
need to

☐ **(H)**

Because they
want to

Y (M)

Because it is
automatically provided to
everyone in Swansea

(M)

On an internal
basis
i.e. Staff

☐ **(L)**

Q3 WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE FOLLOWING...

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	→ Y		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	→ Y		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or (non-)belief	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	→ <input type="checkbox"/>		Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	→ Y		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Carers	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4 Have you / will you undertake any public consultation and engagement relating to the initiative?

☒ Yes

☐ No

(If no, you need to consider whether you should be undertaking consultation and engagement – please see the guidance)

If yes, please provide details below

Consultation and engagement has taken place with the following;

- Council & Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Tenants
- Cabinet
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Shelter Cymru
- Local Solicitors
- Local Estate & Letting Agents

**Q5 (a) HOW VISIBLE IS THIS SERVICE/FUNCTION/POLICY/PROCEDURE/
PROJECT/ STRATEGY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC?**

High visibility
to general public

☐ (H)

Medium visibility
to general public

Y (M)

Low visibility
to general public

☐ (L)

(b) WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK TO THE COUNCIL'S REPUTATION?
*(Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public
perception etc...)*

High risk
to reputation

☐ (H)

Medium risk
to reputation

(M)

Low risk
to reputation

Y (L)

Q6 HOW DID YOU SCORE?

Please tick the relevant box

**MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY → ☒ EIA to be completed
Please go to Section 2**

**MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT → ☐ Do not complete EIA
Please go to Q7 followed
by Section 2**

**Q7 If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this
service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must
provide adequate explanation below (Please use additional pages if
necessary).**

Section 2

**NB: Please send this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement
before obtaining email approval from your Head of Service.**

Screener- This to be completed by the person responsible for completing this screening
Name: Michael Scott
Location: Civic Offices, Penllergaer
Telephone Number: 635042
Date: 8/5/14
Approval by Head of Service
Name: Lee Morgan
Position: Head of Service
Date:

Please return the completed form to accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Report

This form should be completed for each Equality Impact Assessment on a new or existing function, a reduction or closure of service, any policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project which has been screened and found relevant to Equality and Diversity.

Please refer to the 'Equality Impact Assessment Guidance' while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact the Access to Services Team (see Guidance for details).

Where do you work?
Service Area: Housing & Public Protection
Directorate: Place

(a) This EIA is being completed for a...

Service/ Function <input type="checkbox"/>	Policy/ Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>	Project <input type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	Proposal Y
--	--	---	--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------

(b) Please name and describe below...

Application to suspend the Right to Buy for eligible Council owned properties and the Right to Acquire for eligible Registered Social Landlord owned properties.

(c) It was initially screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity on

19/05/2014

(d) It was found to be relevant to...

Age	Y	Sex	Y
Disability	Y	Sexual orientation	Y
Gender reassignment	Y	Welsh language	Y
Marriage & civil partnership	Y	Poverty/social exclusion	Y
Pregnancy and maternity	Y	Carers	Y
Race	Y	Community cohesion	Y
Religion or (non-)belief	Y		

**(e) Lead Officer
Service**

Name: Michael Scott

Job title: Policy Officer

Date: 17/06/2014

(f) Approved by Head of

Name: Lee Morgan

Date: 17/06/2014

Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):

Briefly describe the aims of the function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan, proposal or project:

What are the aims?

The aim of suspending the Right to Buy/Acquire is to relieve pressure in the housing sector in Swansea

Who has responsibility?

Housing & Public Protection, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

Who are the stakeholders?

Council and RSL housing applicants and tenants and the staff who work in Right to Buy/ Acquire teams

Section 2 - Information about Service Users (See guidance):

Please tick what information you know about your service users and provide details/ evidence of how this information is collected.

Age	Y	Race.....	Y
Disability	Y	Religion or (non-)belief	Y
Gender reassignment	Y	Sex.....	Y
Marriage & civil partnership	Y	Sexual orientation	Y
Pregnancy and maternity.....	Y	Welsh language	Y
Carers.....	Y		

What information do you know about your service users and how is this information collected?

The details of all housing applicants are recorded when they apply for housing with the Council. These details should incorporate the listed information above. The corporate About You form also collates information for those who approach the Council for services.

Any Actions Required?

- Need to ensure that population increase is considered, specifically the ageing population

Section 3 - Impact on Protected Characteristics (See guidance):

Please consider the possible impact on the different protected characteristics. This could be based on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs further investigation
Age	→ Y	Y		
Disability	→ Y	Y		
Gender reassignment	→		Y	
Marriage & civil partnership	→		Y	
Pregnancy and maternity	→		Y	
Race	→		Y	
Religion or (non-)belief	→		Y	
Sex	→		Y	
Sexual orientation	→		Y	
Welsh language	→		Y	
Carers	→		Y	

Thinking about your answers above, please explain in detail why this is the case?

With regard to age, the Right to Buy helps younger people access accommodation, keeps ground floor accommodation for the elderly, etc. Conceivably, there will be more accommodation available for an ageing population. Conversely, people aged 40 and above who may be able to qualify for a mortgage currently may not be able to if the Right to Buy is suspended for 5-10 years.

With regard to disability, suspending the Right to Buy helps protect accommodation suitable for people with disabilities and/or low income.

All other characteristics not directly affected, i.e. to qualify for Right to Buy/ Acquire people just need to be a Council or RSL tenant irrespective of gender, race, religious beliefs, etc.

What consultation and engagement has been undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support your view? Please provide details below.

Consultation and engagement has taken place with;

- Council & Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Tenants
- Cabinet
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- RSLs
- Shelter Cymru
- Local Solicitors
- Local Estate & Letting Agents

Any actions required (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).

N/A

Section 4 - Other Impacts:

Please consider how the initiative might address the following issues. You could base this on service user information, data, consultation and research or professional experience (e.g. comments and complaints).

Foster good relations between different groups	Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
Elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Reduction of social exclusion and poverty

(Please see guidance for definitions on the above)

Please explain any possible impact on each of the above.

There is likely to be minimal impact on each of the above as qualification for the Right to Buy is based on tenants meeting the requisite requirements to be able to purchase their home, irrespective of their standing in the community, language spoken, ethnicity, etc. Suspension should help reduce levels of social exclusion and poverty as it would provide more accommodation for those unable to rent or buy market housing.

What work have you already done to improve any of the above?

All tenants are provided with information packs when they become tenants. There have been tenant events focussing on the RTB and all tenants have been consulted on the possibility of the RTB being suspended.

Is the initiative likely to impact on Community Cohesion (see the guidance for more information)?

Any impact is likely to be minimal, whether positive or negative due to the small number of properties that would be affected over a 5 year period.

How will the initiative treat the Welsh language in the same way as the English language?

Welsh language speakers will be treated exactly the same way as English and non-English language speakers with all relevant information being provided in the format of the tenants' choosing.

Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).

- There is a wealth of information available for tenants and housing staff are well versed and are able to address any questions

Section 5 - Monitoring arrangements:

Please explain the arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:

Monitoring arrangements: Current monitoring- Right to Buy applications & sales, waiting list figures (both RSL and Council), new housing developments.

Actions: If the suspension of the Right to Buy is agreed, all Council & RSL tenants will be informed of the decision

Section 6 – Outcomes:

Having completed sections 1-5, please indicate which of the outcomes listed below applies to your initiative (refer to guidance for further information on this section).

Outcome 1: Continue the initiative...

Y

Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative...

Outcome 3: Justify the initiative...

Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative...



For outcome 3, detail the justification for proceeding here:

N/A

Section 7 - Publication arrangements:

On completion, please follow this 3-step procedure:

- 1. Forward this EIA report and action plan to the Access to Services Team for feedback and approval – accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk**
- 2. Make any necessary amendments/additions.**
- 3. Provide the final version of this report to the team for publication, including email approval of the EIA from your Head of Service. The EIA will be published on the Council's website - this is a legal requirement.**

Appendix 6

Synopsis of the results from the Right to Buy suspension survey included in Open House;

Total Responses	74	
In Favour	30	(41%)
Against	44	(59%)

Here is a snapshot of the accompanying comments

In Favour

- "Increase affordable social housing stock to meet present day needs and bring more empty buildings into use for housing"
- "People buying their council homes are depriving those who cannot afford their own property"
- "With hindsight, I think Council properties should NEVER be sold. There should be a ruling that they are offered back to the Council before the Open Market"
- "I care deeply about the plight of so many people becoming homeless or in danger of being homeless. The so called "bedroom tax" ranges from the absurd to cruel in its practical implications and is going to increase debt, as more people fall into the hands of loan sharks. I really think it's time to invest in Social Housing- please do not sell any more council homes!!"

Against

- "I am devastated at the thought that my opportunity to buy my house may be removed. When the houses were sold, why wasn't the money used to build new council houses?"
- "Couldn't the money made from selling these houses be used to build more or make empty houses habitable?"
- "I am a public sector worker and cannot afford to buy elsewhere. The Right to Buy is a council tenant's right and it should not be taken away"
- "Ring fence proceeds of sales to invest in new, modern council properties"

Tenants Consultative Panel
Suspension of the Right to Buy (RTB)
Minutes of the Meeting

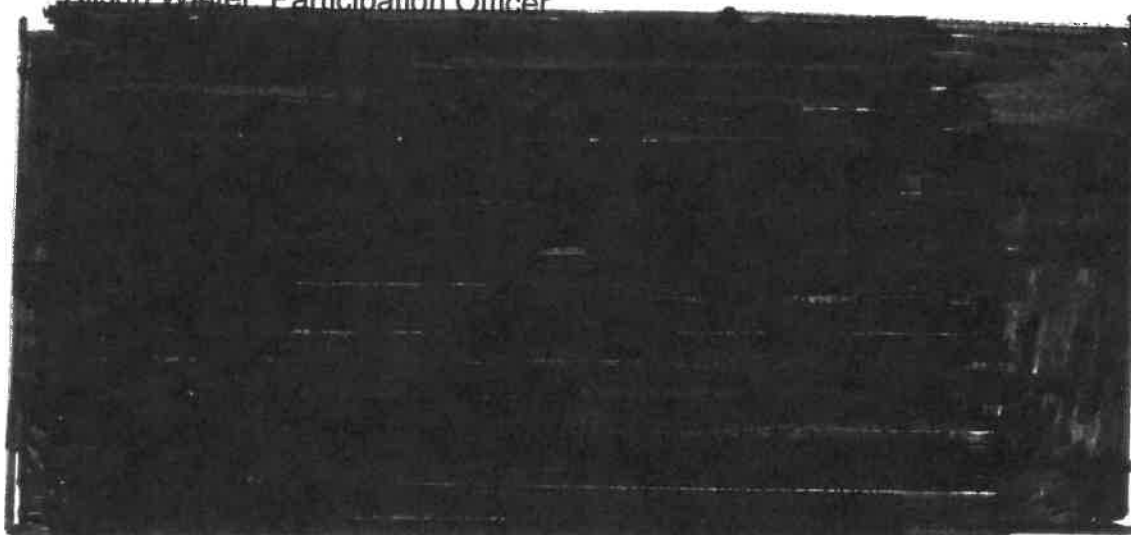
16th May 2013
2.30pm – 4.30pm
Committee Room 2, Civic Centre

Present

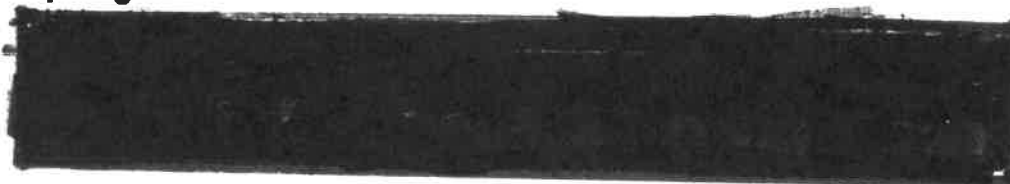
Peter Williams, Strategic Planning and Enabling Manager

Gail Evans, Senior Policy Officer

Alison Winter, Participation Officer



Apologies



1.0 Introductions and Welcome

- 1.1 Peter Williams opened the meeting and did the introductions and welcome.
Group advised of housekeeping i.e. fire drills, evacuation procedure.

2.0 Suspension of the Right to Buy Presentation

- 2.1 Peter delivered a presentation on the proposed suspension of the Right to Buy.
Presentation is attached for further reference.

3.0 Information provided to group

- 3.1 When applying for the suspension of the RTB, there is a set procedure that must be followed. This procedure does not include a ballot for tenants.

- 3.2 The process for suspending the RTB is inclusive of Housing Association tenants too
- 3.3 Suspending the RTB is only available in Wales
- 3.4 One hundred responses received to date from the RTB survey included in Open House
- 3.5 Information for this proposal has come from many sources
- 3.6 The bedroom tax is a separate issue to the suspension of the RTB
- 3.7 Money from the sales of RTB went to Central Government
- 3.8 The council are looking at the sale of assets such as land
- 3.9 Tenants were reassured all comments would be carefully considered..
- 3.10 The Environment Department has an Empty Properties Officer, Paula Livingstone, her contact number is 01792 635626.
- 3.11 Eligibility criteria for the RTB includes maintaining a 5 year secure tenancy from any Registered Social Landlord or public sector service.
- 3.12 Until recently, the council has been unable to build properties due to restrictions in legislation.
- 3.13 If a tenant bought their council house and was unable to make their payments the Local Authority would be able to buy the property back
- 3.14 All properties let to asylum seekers have been returned to housing
- 3.15 If the RTB is suspended no one will be able to buy their property
- 4.0 Comments and views of tenants and leaseholders**
- 4.1 If the suspension of the RTB is approved a tenant who has spent a considerable sum of money on their property should be excluded
- 4.2 Tenants should be involved at all stages in this process.
- 4.3 Tenants feel pressured to move to a smaller property or they will lose their home because they can't buy it.
- 4.4 This proposal is being dictated to tenants
- 4.5 Young people need a hand to get on the housing ladder but these properties also need to be available for the young people coming up behind them
- 4.6 Freezing the RTB would free up housing
- 4.7 It is unfair millions of pounds have been pumped in to building houses in England, why is Wales different?

4.8 The RTB is a right that should be maintained

4.9 When council housing was built tenants were not given the RTB

4.10 To collect the remaining information will take approximately another three months

4.11 Tenants feel worried about other tenants who will not be able to afford to buy their properties and may need to go into private rented accommodation

4.12 Tenants would like to attend meetings with the Welsh Government

4.13 Building bungalows should be a priority

4.14 Money from the council seems to favour private sector development such as the LC

4.15 The majority of tenants are against suspending the RTB

4.16 With the small number of properties sold last year it seems pointless to suspend the RTB

4.17 To exercise your RTB is the ultimate achievement for a tenant.

5.0 Summary and Close

5.1 Peter Williams thanked everyone for attending and their questions and comments

Suspension of the Right to Buy Tenant Consultation Results

Housing Provider	No. of Tenants Contacted	No. of Responses	In Favour	% of those who responded	Against	% of those who responded	Don't know	%
City & County of Swansea	13250	74 (0.55%)	30	41%	44	59%	/	/
TCP Meeting	28	28 (100%)	11	61%	17	39%	/	/
Coastal HA	3030	0 (0%)	/	/	/	/	/	/
Family HA	1600	71 (4.4%)	44	62%	16	23%	11	15%
Gwalia HA	400	58 (14.5%)	22	38%	30	52%	6	10%
Total	18308	231 (1.26%)	107		107		17	

Appendix 8

Correspondence from Chris Gange, Coastal Housing

23rd July 2014

Peter

Thanks for this.

Debbie and I are pretty ambiguous about this. On the one hand for some of our tenants the scheme offers the only realistic means of achieving home ownership and it's unfortunate to deny them this opportunity. Unlike the Local Authority we have a reasonable number of smaller properties that tenants could downsize to if they so wished

On the other hand, we have had relatively few numbers of applications to purchase. Many of our properties are on estates or in blocks of flats and the issue of on-going service charges is contentious and also eats in to the tenants ability to service a mortgage.

Given that this is time limited and that presumably any submissions made prior to implementation would be able to proceed then we will support the suspension.

Regards

Chris

Correspondence from Andrew Vye, Gwalia Housing

25th July 2014

Dear Peter,

Your request for a response about the suspension of Right to Buy/Right to Acquire has been passed to me for reply. We agree that the current level of Right to Buy or Right to Acquire applications is low and that many of the applications that we do receive appear to be speculative and the applicants are found, for a variety of reasons, to be ineligible. (We can supply more detailed information about the number of applications received and properties sold if you wish). Gwalia manages only a small number of Secure tenancies anyway where the tenants would be eligible for Right to Buy.

Right to Acquire is more significant in terms of eligibility given the nature of our development programme over the relevant time period. The low number of applications is probably due to factors such as the economic capacity of the tenants and the availability of mortgage finance. We would have to carry out a more detailed study on the potential for eligible tenants to exercise the Right to Acquire.

Apart from exceptions due to specific type or area, our experience is that demand for affordable housing is strong and as the Authority's Housing Market Assessment would suggest, there will be a considerable and increasing shortfall in the supply of affordable housing in the future. This is despite the development programmes that we currently have. Suspending the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire will be an important step in helping to maintain the supply of affordable housing. For example,

some properties bought under these provisions will eventually be sold into the open market and bought or rented without subsidy and are therefore in many cases no longer affordable.

There are other options funded separately for households wishing to move to subsidised home ownership. In partnership with the Local Authority, Gwalia provides properties for sale through 'Section 106' provisions and we have developed and sold other properties through a subsidised purchase scheme. Other new build homes are now available through the 'Help to Buy' scheme of course.

Therefore, we support the Authority's proposal to suspend the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire for the initial 5 year period.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Kind Regards

Andrew

Correspondence from Phil Dennis, Family Housing

25th July 2014

Peter

Just to let you know that we are presenting a report recommending support of your proposals to our Board meeting next Thursday.

Regards

Phil

Acting Chief Executive

5th August 2014

Peter

I can confirm that the Board supported the suspension.

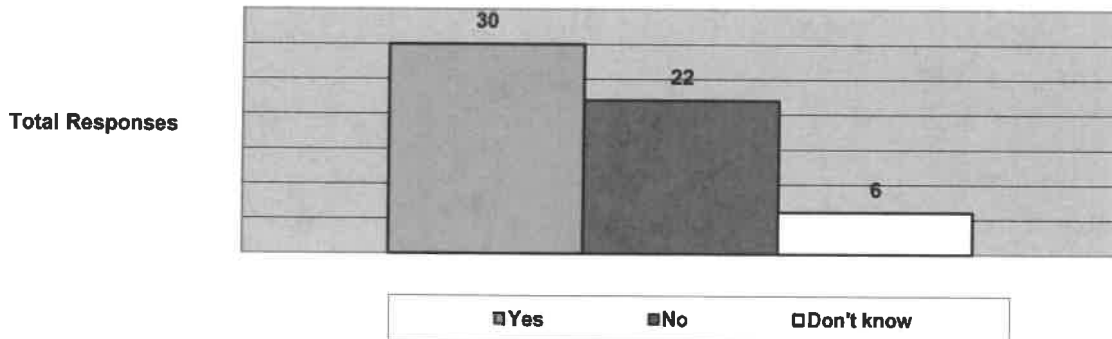
Phil

**Director of Operations
Family Housing Association**

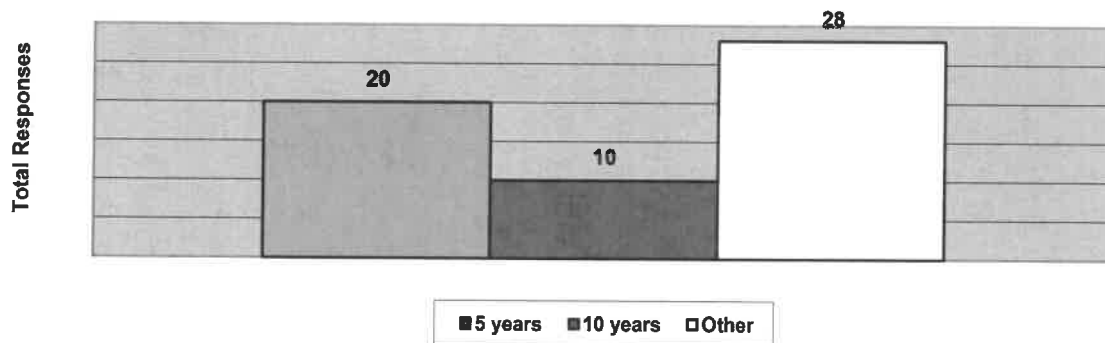
Gwalia HA

Suspending the Right to Buy

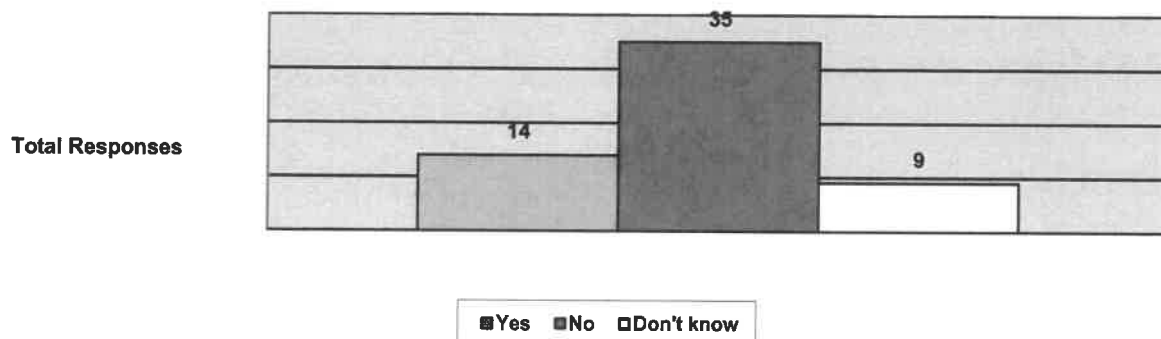
Do you agree that an application should be made to the Welsh Government for a suspension of the Right to Buy (RTB) and Right to Acquire (RTA)?



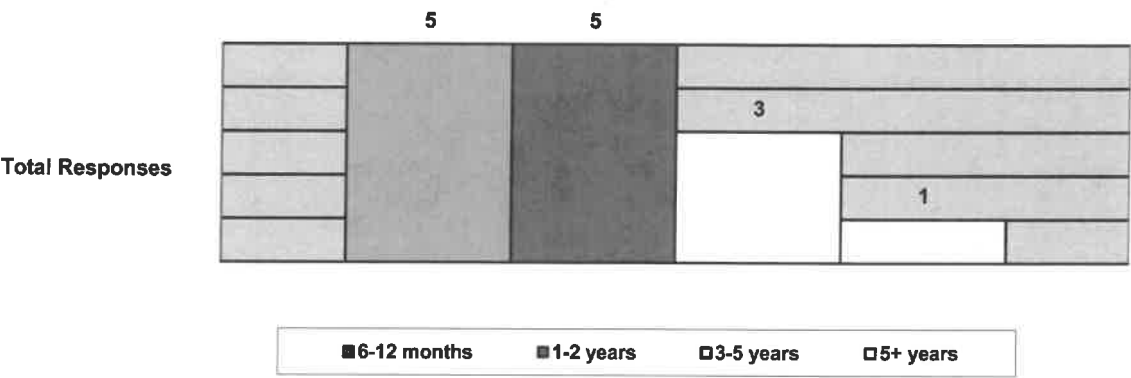
If an application for a suspension is made, what period do you think it should last for?



Are you presently considering applying to buy your house or flat under the RTB or RTA scheme?



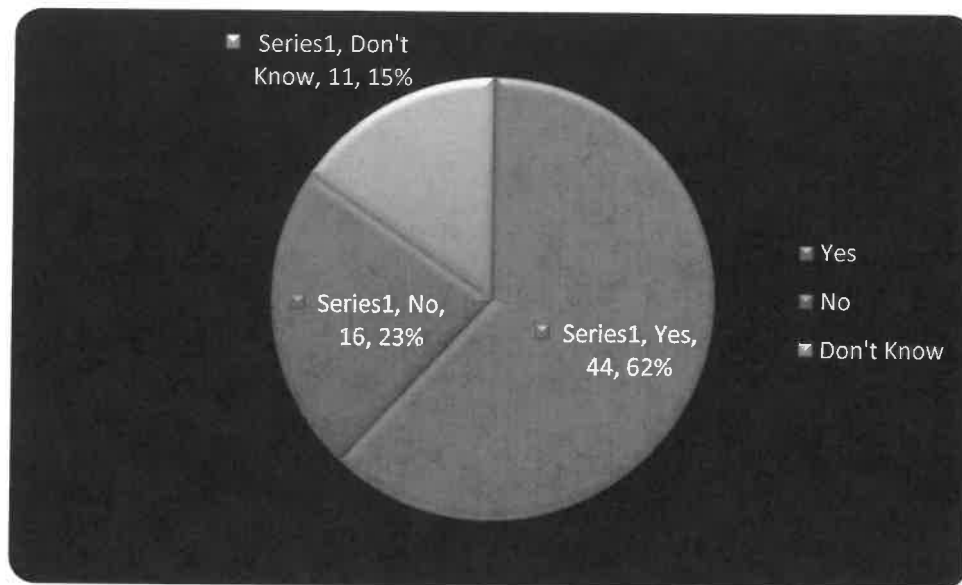
If your answer is “yes” are you hoping to apply within the next:



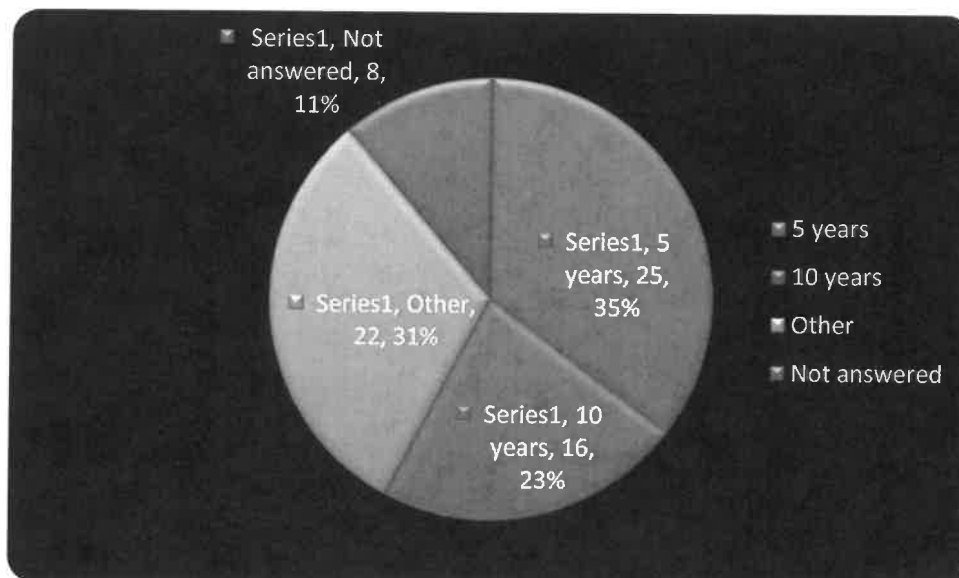
Family Housing Association

Suspending the Right To Buy

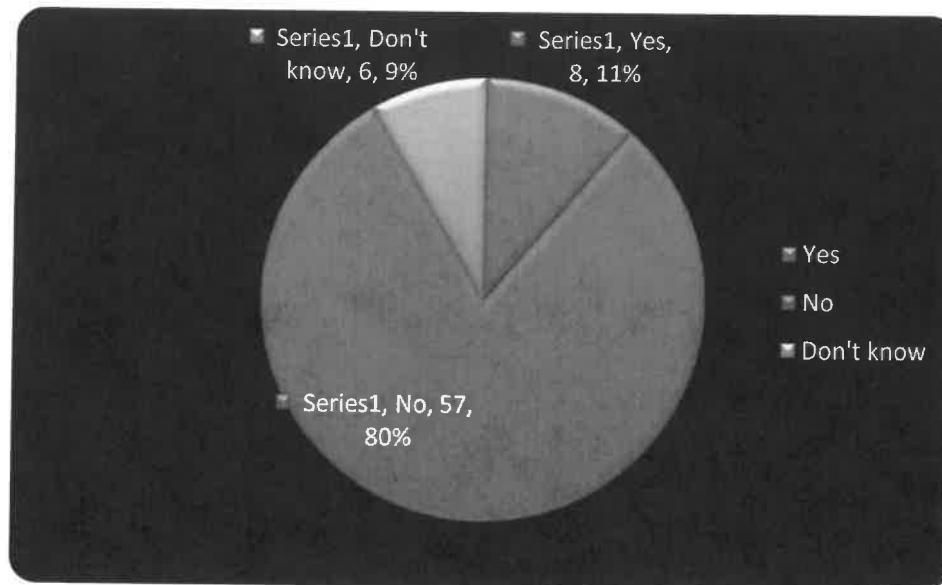
Do you agree that the application should be made to the Welsh Government for a suspension of the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire?



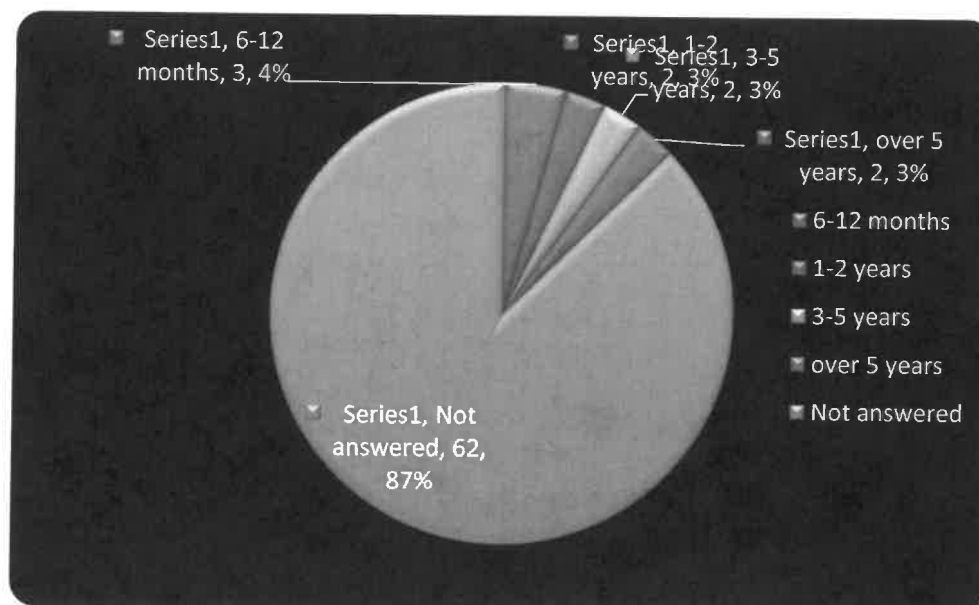
If an application for a suspension is made, what period do you think it should last for?



Are you presently considering applying to buy your house or flat under the right to buy or right to acquire scheme



If your answer is "yes", are you hoping to apply within the next:



Additional comments

- Existing tenants should have right to buy, new tenants could have no rights, in the long terms it means better cheaper homes for existing tenants
- If I had the money I would love to buy my flat
- When this was introduced my father said then it's a backward step and buy early he was right
- We think that "the right to buy" diminishes the stock of social housing thereby adding to social problems of which there are many
- These houses were built for people who could not afford to build their own home, Thatcher is wrong in what she done, these days every council house bought have three or more cars outside, and young people have no chance to get a home of their own
- It is important that social housing needs are met, especially because of financial difficulties which are now families are experiencing
- Properties should only be available to rent
- The Right to buy initiative was brought in to encourage home ownership with a discount for years rent has been paid which in a way is compensation for rental investment over the years
- They should also have the power to move people to smaller places when they under occupy
- The Right to buy initiative was brought in to encourage home ownership with a discount for years rent has been paid which in a way is compensation for rental investment over the years
- I believe people who already planned to buy their home they are renting should not have the right taken away, why not apply it to new tenants and not ones in existing tenancies
- I am strongly against the suspension of the right to buy scheme and I sincerely hope that the welsh ministers will vote against it
- The right to buy should not have been introduced in the first place

- It would deny unfairly the option to buy or acquire for existing tenants. Put pressure on government to find and provide funding for immediate building programs, this has the much added benefit of employment and much needed boost to the economy
- If we were not forced to house immigrants there be more houses available for British people, British people have the right to improve their lives and to own their own home.

Results of the Right to Buy surveys

Council

Total responses	74	
In favour	30	(41%)
Against	44	(59%)

TCP Meeting

Total attendees	28	
In favour	11	(61%)
Against	17	(39%)

Family HA

Total responses	71	
In favour	44	(62%)
Against	16	(23%)
Don't know	11	(15%)

Gwalia HA

Total responses	58	
In favour	22	(38%)
Against	30	(52%)
Don't know	6	(10%)

Coastal – no responses but they did send out surveys to over 3,000 tenants

Total Council & RSL combined responses

Total responses	231	
In favour	107	(46%)
Against	107	(46%)
Don't know	17	(8%)

Appendix 9

Private Sector Accommodation Testimonies

16/4/14

Mandy Spencer (Peter Alan)

Rent levels have not noticeably increased or decreased in recent times

[REDACTED]

The most popular requested accommodation is one bedroom.

The company does struggle to let on occasion but mainly due to their criteria as opposed to there being a dearth of accommodation and/or potential tenants.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Swansea Property Agents

No noticeable increase in rents.

There has been an increase in prospective tenants who claim HB.

Difficulty letting properties at the lower end of the market (rents of £400-500pcm) due to potential tenants not having cash bonds.

The demand for lower end accommodation is outstripping the supply.

Properties in the Marina are usually let within a week of being advertised, different market

Robert Lewis (Michael G Lewis & Son)

Rents have remained static for all types of accommodation.

1 & 2 bed properties are the most sought after.

The amount of Letting Agents operating in Swansea is a cause for concern, too many of them, not enough accommodation to spread.

Haven't identified any rhyme or reason for the accommodation and areas that people rent, i.e. a tenant could move from Morriston to Clydach to Townhill.

Feel that the competition is more with other landlords rather than tenants, not enough "reasonable quality" tenants.

The properties available currently outstrips the tenants

"Decent homes in reasonable areas"

Paula Livingstone (EVH)

Increase in HMO vacancies, student numbers decreasing. Lot of empty HMO properties in the city.

No figures available, other than complaints about noise & nuisance.

Ricky Purdy (Dawsons) 301000

"There has been an increase within the rental sector, the amounts in question (as an average) would depend on the period over which we look and the geographical areas again in which we look. The SA1 developments, areas of M4 convenience that outskirt Swansea, SA3 and high spec shared accommodation, have all seen an increase in some form and more so than Swansea as a whole in general terms. Supply and demand as seen by the public (current or potential landlords) may also be contributing on a small scale, with less property and seemingly more demand nudging PCM up a little each quarter.

There has and continues to be an increase in the PRS, be that for new accommodation or commitment to a current. We see the reasoning behind this as in year's past- the difficulties in securing a mortgage, reluctance to commit in an apparent changing, market, insufficient funds, etc, etc. Contributing to these typical factors is the lack of property now producing more interest in demand for what is available at any one time.

Yes, competition has increased for properties of a high standard in all areas of Swansea, especially within the areas noted in point 1. It appears apartments in almost all areas of Swansea are more sought after, and furnished accommodations as a whole now outweighs unfurnished as an initial request.

There continues to be an obvious divide between East and West (as an average), as has been the case for many, many years. Property types between the two in general differ, SA3 offering more family type accommodation over East offering small scales of the same and 2 bedroom accommodation. Contributing factors include location, school catchments, amenities and the like. Rents PCM are relevant, but we see as "over proportionate" to scale and standard in favour of SA3/ West.

No obvious difference or change in this instance if I am honest, some enquiries to our Swansea and Morriston offices enquire on bond board or similar options, but with the need for cleared funds for bond and first months' rent as standard it's not an issue of note with ourselves."

Rightmove.co.uk

Swansea's lettings figures 23/4/14

Of 196 houses available

79 x 5+ bedrooms	(40%)	minimum rent is at least £1,000 pcm
44 x 2 bed	(22%)	
40 x 3 bed	(20%)	

Of 120 flats available

42 x 1 bed	(35%)
38 x 2 bed	(32%)

Research & Information (Leanne Holt)

The Census 2011 indicates that there are;

- 15,260 households renting privately in the Swansea area, 15% of the household population of Swansea
- The two wards with the most households living in privately rented accommodation are Castle (2766/ 18%) and Uplands (2265/ 15%)
- These wards have large student and BME populations
- Currently 1,969 empty privately owned properties in the Swansea area (as of 24/4/14)