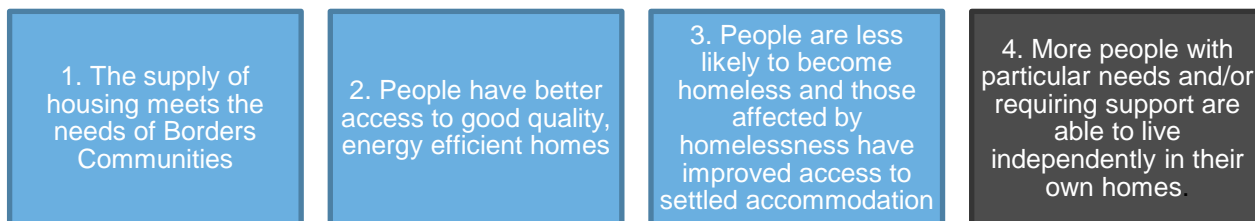


## 1. LHS Development & Main Issues

The Local Housing Strategy for Scottish Borders (2012-2017) is nearing implementation and therefore requires to be redrafted and submitted to Scottish Government Ministers in 2016. The current LHS focuses action, investment and partnership on the following four strategic aims:



To build the new strategy, Scottish Borders Council need to assess whether the previous LHS aims still represent the main housing issues that need to be tackled or whether a refocused set of local priorities will guide action, partnership and investment moving forward. This briefing focuses on promoting independent living in Scottish Borders, presenting evidence on the extent and nature of the problem and progress in tackling it since 2012.

## 2. Promoting Independent Living: What is the nature of the problem in Scottish Borders?

The LHS Guidance states that “independent living is about freedom, choice, dignity and control for those with a disability or long term health condition, those who have become frail or those in need of support”. Wherever possible, independent living should be supported in a person’s own home through appropriate care, support, adaptations or technology. However sometimes alternative accommodation may be required.

If the LHS is to successfully promote independent living across Scottish Borders, a diversity of particular housing needs must be met through specialist housing provision (including accommodation, care and support). The range of needs that should be considered include:

- Older people
- People with a physical disability
- People with a mental health condition
- People with a learning disability
- Young people – e.g. students
- People leaving supported accommodation – e.g. offenders, looked after children
- People needing supported accommodation – e.g. People fleeing domestic abuse/at risk families, homeless households
- Ethnic minorities – e.g. migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, Gypsy/Travellers

At both a national and local level, there has been, and will continue to be, an increase in the number of older people. Life expectancy in Scottish Borders is also much better compared to Scotland, as is the ‘expected years of life in good health’ indicator. Furthermore, the rate of increase in dementia in the Scottish Borders is faster than nationally. A growing older population, particularly those with such needs, means that there is likely to be greater demand for care and support services and for specialist housing provision.

The introduction of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 has also meant that the Council's approach to addressing particular needs should be co-ordinated, collaborative and consistent through the integration of health and social care. From an LHS perspective, it is critical that the Council ensures that housing has a key role in both strategic and locality planning within integration partnerships.

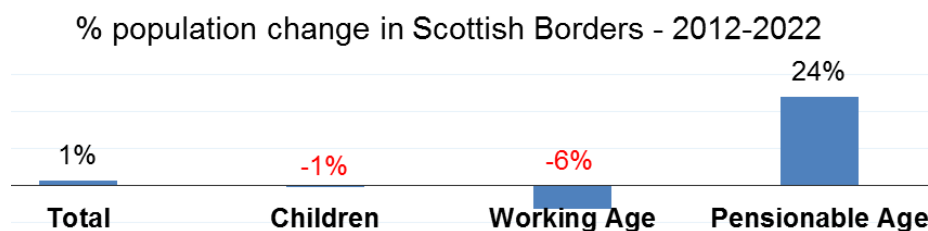
In terms of promoting independent living and addressing particular needs, the LHS is required to address the following policy issues:



### 3. Promoting Independent Living: What is the extent of the problem in Scottish Borders?

Whilst the strategy to promote independent living must address a diversity of particular housing needs, the growing population of older people in Scottish Borders is likely to dominate the independent living agenda.

The 2011 Census showed that there is a greater proportion of older people in Scottish Borders (21% of the total) than is the case nationally (17%), and a smaller working-age population (62%) than Scotland (66%). This trend looks set to continue over time as shown in the graph; with the working age population set to fall by 6% by 2022 compared to 2012. **Most notably however is amongst the pensionable age population, which is projected to increase by a quarter over the period.**

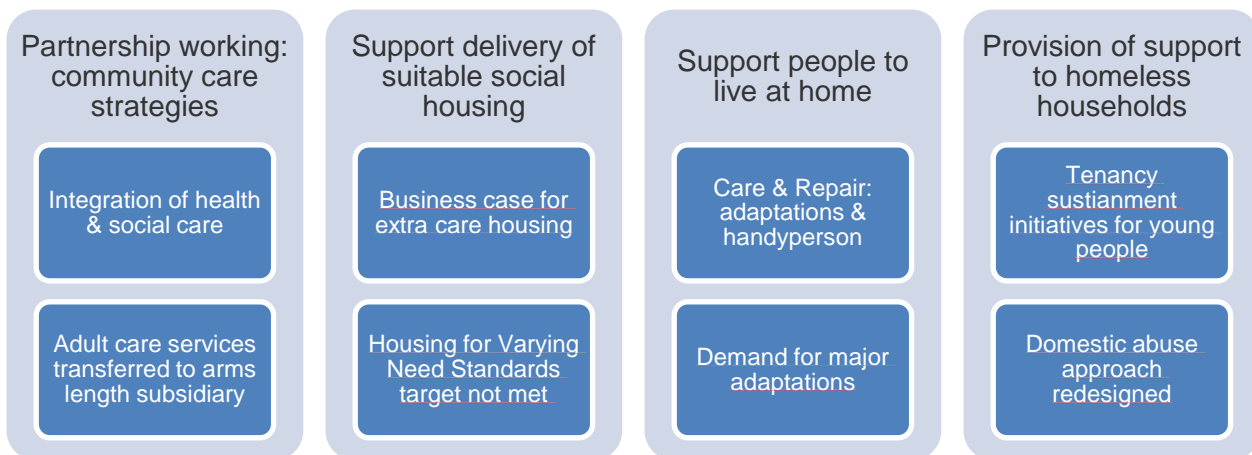


The SESplan HNDA final report notes that the geographical make-up of the Scottish Borders presents particular challenges for older people, particularly a risk of isolation given the rural nature of the area. It also states that *“the majority of older people in the Scottish Borders in receipt of housing support live in sheltered accommodation, with currently supply levels and the suitability of accommodation considered inadequate”*.

**There has been a drop in the number of people living in care homes on a long term basis over the last 10 years;** with a more pronounced reduction than Scotland as a whole. Furthermore, there is evidence that the proportion of adults receiving personal care at home rather than in a care home or hospital has also been consistently higher than Scotland since 2010.

### 4. Promoting Independent Living: LHS response and impact

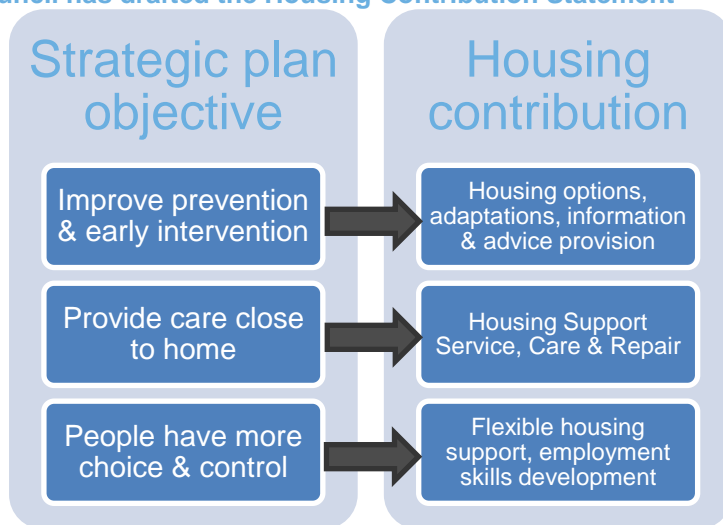
The implementation of the 2012-2017 Local Housing Strategy has focused on the aim of promoting independent living in Scottish Borders by delivering the following objectives:



In terms of **developing partnerships to meet particular housing needs**, recently passed legislation has influenced the Council’s approach. In light of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, which was granted royal assent in April 2014, local authorities and NHS Boards across Scotland have initiated the integration of health and social care.

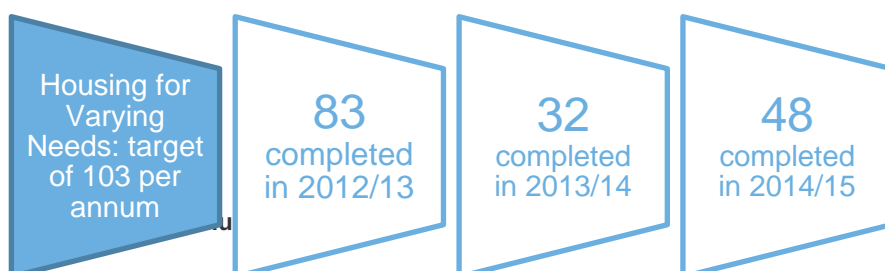
To this end, the Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership has published the second draft of its strategic plan (2016-19) which sets out the approach being taken by NHS Borders, Scottish Borders Council and their partners to working together. **The Council has drafted the Housing Contribution Statement which will feed into this, outlining the steps which will be taken by housing colleagues to help deliver each of the strategic plan objectives. The diagram on the right shows three examples of this.**

One of the priorities within the strategic plan is – which is also recognised within the current LHS - was to further develop the case for extra care housing for older people. This has already been pursued, with an external consultant’s business case for the provision of extra care housing in Berwickshire published in September 2015, which recommended a mixed tenure approach is pursued as a potentially feasible option.



From April 2015, the Council implemented an arms-length Council-owned company for the provision of in-house adult social care services in Scottish Borders, including home care, day care and the management of five residential homes. The business case for this highlighted that this would be cost effective, whilst maintaining quality services and continuing to meet the Council’s statutory duties.

**Housing for Varying Needs Standards** are recommended design standards for new housing supply. These standards aim to ensure that housing should be flexible enough to accommodate a range of needs and abilities. The current LHS set a target that 103 new homes built per annum in Scottish Borders – which is the total target for all new build



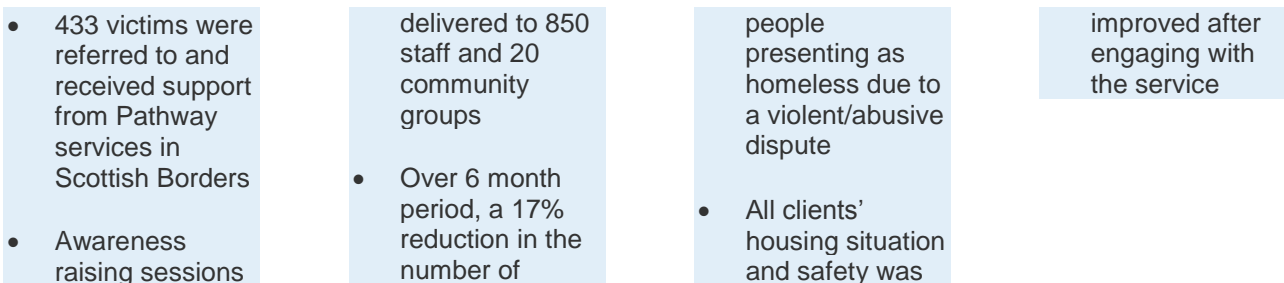
homes – are built to these standards. However, as shown in the diagram, since the launch of the last LHS, these targets have not been met.

The commitment within the LHS to support people to live at home independently has been supported by Care and Repair, as well as the Scheme of Assistance. In the last quarter of 2014/15, Care & Repair delivered minor adaptations to 355 households, and the handyman service completed almost 4,500 jobs; both of which exceeded the target set for the quarter and were an increase on the previous years. The number of Stage 3 adaptations also exceeded the target set, however all four of the main RSLs in Scottish Borders had a waiting list at the end of the financial year, which is likely to impact on waiting times for households requiring the adaptation.

The Council has been working in partnership with RSLs in order to develop tenancy sustainment initiatives for young people across Scottish Borders. As well as a peer mentoring scheme and developing a new housing support model, the Council and Scottish Borders Housing Association have drafted a Young Persons Tenancy Sustainment Protocol.

Although the rate of homelessness in the Scottish Borders has fluctuated recently, there has been a consistent fall in the number of young people (aged 16-24) presenting as homeless (fell by 6% in the last year and by 8% in the last two years). This is perhaps reflected in the high proportion of young people (compared to Scotland as a whole) receiving preventative information and advice by the Council (as recorded on the PREVENT1 return).

Since the publication of the current LHS, the Council has worked in partnership to launch The Pathway Project; a new, joined up approach to supporting victims of domestic abuse in Scottish Borders. The Council's Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support Service is one of three strands of the Pathway Project. The following headlines emerged from the service's first year of operation:



### 5. What strategic questions should be considered at the LHS Conference?

The purpose of the LHS conference is to agree the main housing issues that require intervention in Scottish Borders, examine the main issues in detail and generate ideas for action and investment. Key issues for consideration in the Independent Living Focus Group are:

