

Highland Housing Needs & Demand Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Housing Needs & Demand Assessment?

A Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) is an important research study that all Councils in Scotland must carry out roughly every 5 years. The research findings from the Assessment will be used by Highland Council to develop the next Local Housing Strategy and new Local Development Plan.

The HNDA provides the evidence needed to set targets for the number of new homes that need to be built in Highland, within the next Local Housing Strategy. This includes homes for rent by social and private landlords, as well as the number of new homes to be delivered by private housebuilders. The HNDA will also provide the evidence needed to plan for housing services that will support residents to find and keep a home in Highland and to live well in their local communities. This includes housing services for people with health conditions or disabilities, as well as people who want to take up jobs in the Highland area.

The Housing Need & Demand assessment also provides the evidence needed for the new Local Development Plan to make sure there is enough land allocated in the right places, to build the number of new homes required across the region.

2. Why is the Highland Council doing a Housing Needs & Demand Assessment?

Completing a Housing Needs & Demand Assessment is a legal requirement for Highland Council under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001; and the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning Scotland Act 2019.

The findings from the Housing Need & Demand Assessment will be used to develop the next Local Housing Strategy and the new Local Development Plan, which are both due for publication in 2028.

3. What does the term 'housing need and demand' actually mean?

Housing need refers to households lacking their own housing or living in housing which is not adequate or suitable for the needs of their household. Those in housing need are unlikely to be able to meet their needs in the housing market without some assistance.

Housing demand is the quantity and type of housing which households want to buy or rent and can afford.

An important part of the Housing Need & Demand Assessment involves producing 'housing estimates', which set out the number of new homes the Council and partners will need to develop in the future. Estimates of housing need fall into two categories:

1. **future need** which refers to households who will form their own household in the future and need housing, or those moving into the Highland region who will need housing
2. **existing need** which refers to households currently living in unsuitable housing which cannot be adapted or improved to meet the needs of the household.

The findings of the Housing Need & Demand Assessment will provide broad estimates of what housing need might be over the next 20 years rather than a precise target.

4. How will the Housing Need & Demand Assessment be carried out?

Carrying out the Housing Need & Demand Assessment involves a significant amount of information gathering, statistical analysis, listening to local residents and also consulting with the partners who will be involved in delivering new homes and housing services.

Firstly the HNDA will look at changes to the Highland population and economy to assess what these changes will mean for housing. The research will also look at the existing supply of homes available in Highland and whether these homes are able to meet housing need. This includes assessing what investment is needed in existing housing to improve its condition or suitability for households with health conditions or disabilities. The research will also look at the needs of key groups including older people, key workers, homeless households and those who might need special forms of housing.

At the heart of the research is a calculation of the number of new homes that will be needed in Highland over the next 20 years. As well as statistical analysis, Highland Council will carry out a wide-ranging survey of local households to measure unmet housing need and future housing demand. This means asking Highland residents to tell the Council about their current housing circumstances, the suitability of their homes and whether they, or members of their household will need alternative housing in the future.

5. What is the Housing Needs & Demand Assessment Survey?

The Highland Council is launching a Housing Need & Demand Assessment survey of local households in September 2025. The survey will allow the Council to better understand the housing circumstances and needs of Highland residents so that a good range of housing options can be delivered in the future. The results will help the Council plan for new housing and housing services, making sure the needs of all residents and communities are met.

To make sure that the results are accurate, the Council want to speak to residents across every part of Highland region and living in all types of housing, both rented and owned. To take part, respondents should be aged over 16 and be a main householder.

The survey will be open for 10 weeks and will close on the 7th November 2025.

6. How will the survey be carried out?

The Council is using a professional market research agency called Research Resource to carry out the survey. Research Resource are Market Research Society Company Partners, operating to the MRS Code of Conduct and members of the MRS Interviewer Identification Scheme.

The survey is being carried out in two ways:

- 1. Research Resource will carry out 850 telephone interviews with households living across the Highland Region.** Households will be randomly selected to take part by the Council and if selected, will receive a letter from Highland Council confirming this. Selected households will then be contacted by Research Resource by telephone, unless they have chosen to opt out of the survey process. Households can also contact Research Resource to arrange a convenient time to take part.

Research Resource can be contacted by email at info@researchresource.co.uk or by calling 0141 641 6410.

The sample has been carefully designed to make sure that all households, including those living in rural areas, towns and cities have a good opportunity to take part.

2. **On online survey open to all residents in Highland who are over 16 and a main householder.** The survey will take approximately 5 minutes to take part. Local residents will be able to access the survey by clicking on the following link:
www.researchresource.co.uk/AJHighlandHNDA.html

The survey will be promoted on social media by the Council, local organisations like Community Council's and by big local employers

7. What will happen to the information I provide?

The survey will be entirely confidential and will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Respondents can find out more about how Research Resource will treat the data in their Privacy Notice on their website (www.researchresource.co.uk).

Once the research has been completed, Research Resource will provide a report on the findings to the Council. This will be completely anonymous, and they will not provide individual feedback.

8. When will the survey results be made public?

The survey results will be made available on the Council's website in January 2026.

9. When will the HNDA be published?

Before the Housing Need & Demand Assessment can be published, the Council must submit the research to the Scottish Government who will assess whether the study meets their requirements. When the study passes this assessment, the Scottish Government will give it 'robust and credible' status, which means it can be used by Highland Council for planning the delivery of new homes and housing services.

The Housing Need & Demand Assessment study will be submitted to the Scottish Government by Highland Council on 31st March 2026. Following assessment, the Highland Council will publish the Housing Need & Demand Assessment on its website. This is likely to be in Summer 2026.