



**(DRAFT) REPORT ON HOUSING NEEDS, CONDITION  
AND VIEWS SURVEY**

**IN**

**Melvich**

**Community Council Area  
(Autumn 2006)**

**BY HSCHT STAFF**

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## **1. MELVICH SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS**

The supporting data for these key findings can be found in the main Melvich survey results and the contextual data that supports this survey.

### **Contextual Information**

#### **1.1 Population and demographic trends**

The census figures (1991 & 2001) show:

- An overall population decrease of 3% between 1991 and 2001
- A nearly a 17% decrease in the number of under 14 year olds.
- A smaller increase (4.2%) in the population that is 45 years old or older.

#### **1.2 School roll trends**

- The primary school roll in 2005/6 (27) is under half that in 1998/9 (46)
- The school population is projected to remain relatively stable (between 21 & 26 pupils) until 2011/12

#### **1.3 Housing stock, tenure and occupancy trends**

- Owner occupation has risen from 57% in 1991 to 64% in 2001
- There has been a similar decline in private rented accommodation (down 8%) and in local authority rental accommodation (down 6%).

#### **1.4 Non effective housing stock trends**

- The number of second homes in Melvich in the 2001 census was nearly double that of the Highland average.

#### **1.5 Housing market trends**

- The average price of a 3 bedroom detached ex-council house is £70-80,000 (local estate agents).

### **Questionnaire Results**

#### **1.6 Questionnaire response rate**

- 32 households, out of 158 (20.3%) responded to the questionnaire survey.

#### **1.7 Household details**

- 10 (31%) households included a person (s) over the age of 60.
- 9 (28%) households were made up exclusively of persons 60 or over.

#### **1.8 Single person households**

- 5(16%) of the returned questionnaires were from single person households.
- 2 (40%) of which were aged over 60.

#### **1.9 Households with children**

- 7 (22%) households had one or more children under the age of 15.

#### **1.10 Owner occupied households**

- The 23 (72%) of responding households own the homes they live in.

### **1.11 Specific general housing needs**

- 6 respondents indicated that there were housing needs in their household.

### **1.12 Housing options preferred by those with needs**

- There was an equal number of respondents showing interest in either rental or low cost home ownership affordable housing options – with the favoured options from this small sample being: housing association rental accommodation, RHOG plots to buy or starter homes.

### **1.13 Demand for council housing**

- Although Melvich still retains a good level of local authority housing stock (45 in 2004), the figures show that 23.5% of the original stock had been sold by 2003.
- The waiting list (5 in 2004) and re-let figures (1 in 2004) show that demand for affordable housing outstrips the availability of vacant accommodation.

### **1.14 Potential returners**

- 3 households indicated that they had a family member who would be seriously interested in returning to live locally, if suitable affordable housing was available.

### **1.15 All views on affordable housing**

- 19 (73%) out of the 26 respondents said that they considered that affordable housing would be of benefit to the community.
- Providing affordable housing for families with children and households with a local workplace connection was seen as the top priority for respondents – 81% expressing this view.
- 77% of respondents would like to see affordable housing going to young people.
- 65% of respondents wanted affordable housing available to key workers in the community, and the same number expressed the view that affordable housing should be aimed at older people or those with special needs.
- The top priorities for the type of affordable housing required were distributed more or less equally amongst RHOG-assisted house plots, house plots from HSCHT, affordable starter homes and crofter grant-assisted houses.
- Melvich was the most popular location overall for affordable housing – with Portskerra as the second option.
- Halladale was a popular location for RHOG plots from HSCHT and crofter grant assisted housing.
- Forsinard was generally a less popular place to develop affordable housing – although the interest in crofter grant assisted housing was similar to the other locations.

### **1.16 Written comments**

The comments made by respondents showed a strong view that affordable housing should be directed at meeting the needs of local people.



**2. Results of the HSCHT HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF**  
**THE PERMANENTLY RESIDENT HOUSEHOLDS**  
**OF**  
**Melvich**  
 (Autumn 2006)

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**Response rate to questionnaire**

Number distributed – 158

Number completed returns – 32 (20%)

**2.1 Household Details**

- 10 (31%) households included a person (s) over the age of 60
- 9 (28%) households were made up exclusively of persons 60 or over
- There were 5 (16%) single households
- 2 (40%) of which were aged over 60
- 7 (15%) of the respondents had households with one or more children under the age of 15

**2.2 Housing Tenure**

**Occupancy**

**Lease Type**

Owner/occupier	72%	Long term secure	3%
Renting privately	3%	Short Assured	0
Renting from Housing Association	0	Seasonal let	0
Renting from Council	9%	No written agreement	0
Tied housing	0	Other	3%
Other	3%		

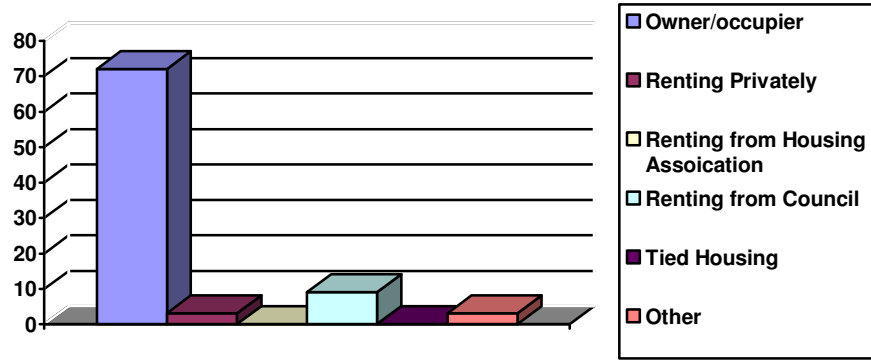


Figure 1 Occupancy Tenure

## 2.3 Household Housing Needs

Numbers of respondents expressing a housing need

*In some cases more than one reason was stated by the respondent e.g. living in short-term accommodation and in overcrowded accommodation. Additionally, not all respondents stated how many people are affected by housing need.*

Reason	No. of respondents	No. affected
Likely to become homeless in the near future	1	1
Young adults in house seeking independent housing	4	4
Hoping to buy/build but can't afford to	1	?
House needs repairs/improvements	2	2
<b>Total number of Households with Housing Needs</b>		<b>6</b>

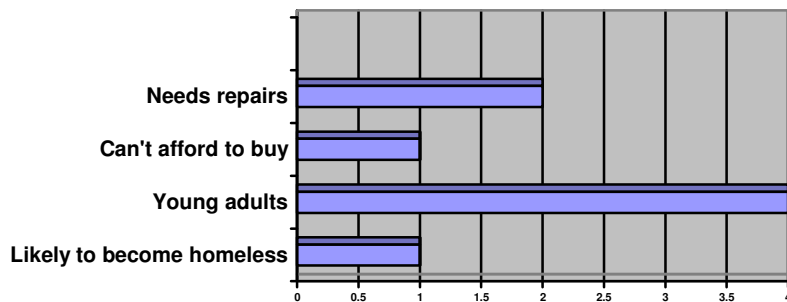


Figure 2 Numbers in Housing Need

b The urgency of housing need

Timing	Numbers
Urgently	0
With 1 -2 years	3
Not for 2 + years	1

## 2.4 Housing options preferred by those with housing needs

### 4a *Housing Options of interest to those in need*

<b><u>Rented options</u></b>	Yes	Perhaps	No
Council Housing	0	0	1
Housing Association	2	0	0
Private	0	2	0
<b>Total number of respondents</b>			<b>2</b>

<b><u>Home Ownership Options</u></b>	Yes	Perhaps	No
RHOG grant to buy or build house	2	1	0
Affordable service plot, with HSCHT buy-back conditions	1	1	0
Shared ownership/equity with local housing association	0	1	0
Affordable starter home built by private developer	1	1	0
Crofter grant assisted house	0	2	0
Open market house or plot	0	1	0
<b>Total number of respondents</b>			<b>3</b>

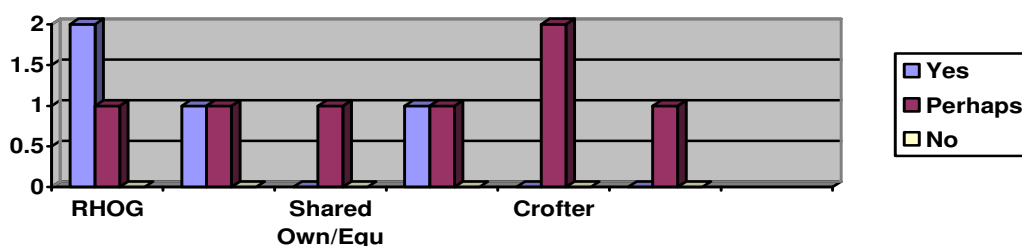


Figure 3 Home Ownership options

### 4b *Preferred Location for those in housing need*

Melvich	2
Halladale	4
Elsewhere	-

## 2.5 Potential returners to the community

3 (9.4%) respondents indicated that they had a family member who would return to Melvich if appropriate affordable housing was available.

## 2.6 Views on new affordable housing options

26 (78%) households (out of 32 returned questionnaires) responded to the question of whether see the provision of affordable housing would be beneficial to the community.

- 19 (56.3%) respondents said 'yes' to new affordable homes
- 6 (19%) respondents said 'perhaps' to new affordable homes
- 1 (3%) respondents said 'no' to new affordable homes

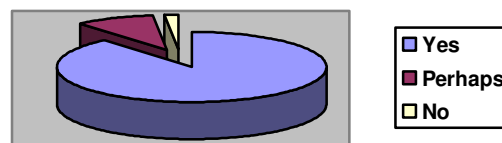


Figure 4 Affordable housing responses

Housing options that respondents would like to see provided locally	Yes	Perhaps	No
Housing Association rented	15	3	1
Private rented	4	2	2
RHOG assisted houses	15	1	1
Locally affordable house plots from HSCHT	13	0	1
Shared ownership/equity	8	2	1
Affordable starter homes	15	4	1
Crofter grant assisted houses	13	2	2
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total number of respondents</b>			<b>27</b>

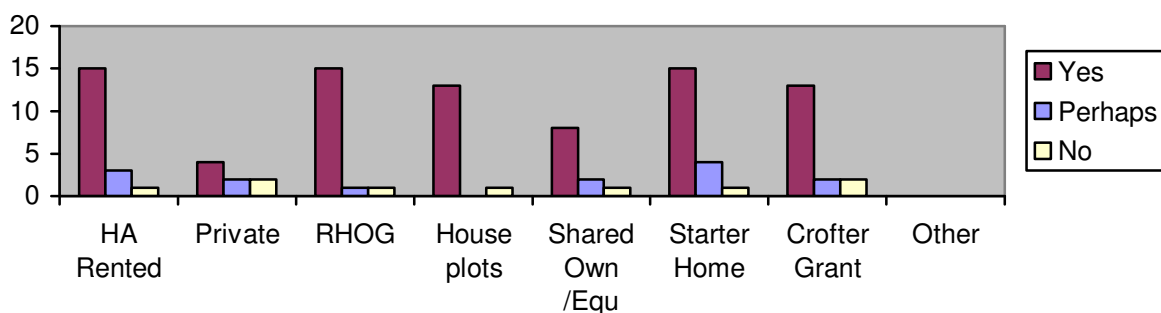


Figure 5 'Yes' to affordable housing options

<u>Where should the houses be located?</u>						
	HA rented	RHOG plots HSCHT	RHOG	Shared ownership	Starter Homes	Crofter
Melvich	14	10	5	10	17	9
Portskerra	11	8	3	6	12	7
Halladale	6	10	6	5	6	10
Forsinard	2	3	3	1	3	7
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0

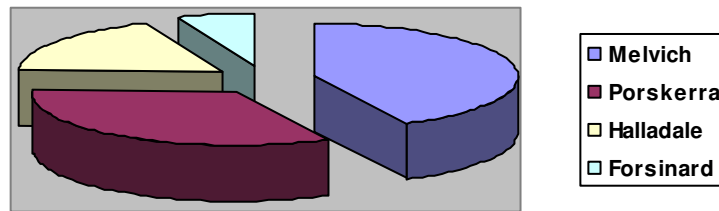


Figure 6 Location of rented affordable housing

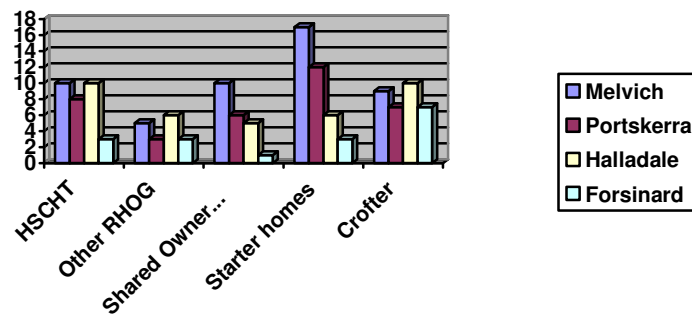
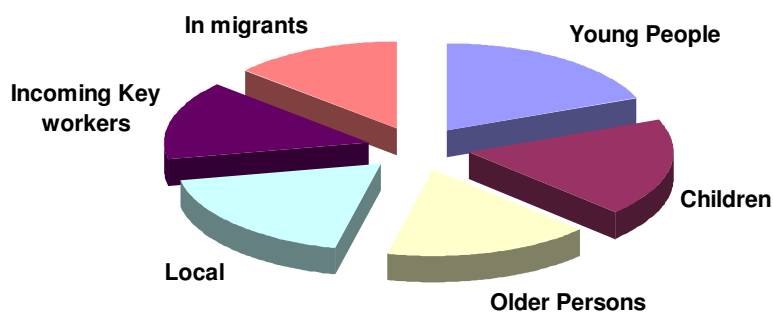


Figure 7 - Location of ownership affordable housing

- a) Views on which groups of people any new affordable housing opportunities being provided in the Melvich area should be aimed at helping?

<b><u>Who should new affordable housing be for?</u></b>	Yes	Perhaps	No
Helping young people secure affordable homes	23	0	0
Helping to keep up the numbers of children attending local schools etc	22	1	0
Helping older persons and / or those with special care needs to be more suitably housed	20	3	0
Enabling households with a local workplace or family connection to live in the community	22	0	0
Assisting key incoming workers (like teachers, nurses etc) to find suitable accommodation	18	6	0
Making it easier for in-migrants to live and work locally	8	6	4
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total number of respondents</b>			<b>27</b>



**Figure 8 Groups of People that respondents say 'yes' to**

- b) Landowners (or those with control over land) were asked if they would consider selling a site for the provision of affordable housing (if this survey reveals a local requirement for additional housing)?

Yes	0
Perhaps	9
No	4

## **2.7 GENERAL COMMENTS**

*Regardless of whether they had a personal housing need, participants were invited to contribute any comments they would like to make on housing related issues.*

*Comments are recorded in the following categories – some may have been paraphrased in order to retain anonymity.*

### Affordable Housing for local needs (6)

- Young people living locally cannot compete on the property market.
- In some cases local people are overlooked for council housing in favour of people from outwith the community.
- Its little wonder that so many of our younger generation move away from the area.
- We should be looking at every option to help our young locals.
- Housing should only be for local needs.
- Any housing should be for locals.

### Location of new housing (1)

- Perhaps more houses would be best built in Bettyhill.

### Miscellaneous comments (6)

- Would value a grant to repair existing house
- The Highlands full of white settlers who, in my opinion do not contribute much to the area and local community.
- In reality the 'community designation is possibly misleading as the community council area is no better way of defining this community than say of dividing north Sutherland into coastal and inland.
- I hope all this information is going to lead to a more joined-up view of the local area and plans for it.
- I presume councils have lists of people looking for homes, so why this form?
- When surplus housing has been available there have been problems with tenants from outwith the area.



### **3. CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIREMENTS IN MELVICH (2006)**

The contextual information for Melvich has been gathered using primarily The Highland Council and Census data.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Age distribution 1991</b>	<b>% age distribution of population 1991</b>	<b>Age distribution 2001</b>	<b>% age distribution of population 2001</b>	<b>Highland average % in age group 2001</b>	<b>Trend % increase /decrease of population 1991 - 2001</b>
Total	541		525			
0-4	181	33	22	16	5.4%	<b>-17%</b>
5-14			63		12.9%	
15 – 24	193	36	47	33	10.6%	<b>-3%</b>
25 – 44			127		27.4%	
45 – 64	211	39	165	42	27.1%	<b>+3%</b>
65 - 74			11		9.3%	
75 +	41	8	9	9	7.35	<b>+1%</b>

*(source: 1991 & 2001 census)*

#### **3.1 Population and Demographic trends**

<b>Population</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>
Highland	204,004	208,914

*(source: 1991 & 2001 census)*

### 3.2 School rolls

Date	Melvich Primary School	
1977/78	65	
1978/79	64	
1979/80	48	
1980/81	50	
1981/82	51	
1982/83	46	
1983/84	44	
1984/85	51	
1985/86	42	
1986/87	34	
1987/88	34	
1988/89	36	
1989/90	38	
1990/91	44	
1991/92	41	
1992/93	42	
1993/94	49	
1994/95	46	
1995/96	43	
1996/97	43	
1997/98	40	
1998/99	46	
1999/00	38	
2000/01	36	
2001/02	35	
2002/03	34	
2003/04	33	
2004/05	29	
2005/06	27	
2006/07		26
2007/08	<i>Projected</i>	22
2008/09	<i>Projected</i>	22
2009/10	<i>Projected</i>	21
2010/11	<i>Projected</i>	23
2011/12	<i>Projected</i>	25

(source: The Highland Council)

### 3.3 Melvich Resident households and tenure trends

Households	1991		2001		Trend:
	Number	%	Number	%	Increase /decrease %
<b>Total number</b>	240		251		
<b>Owner-occupied</b>	136	57	167	64	+7%
<b>Private rented</b>	39	16	20	8	-8%
<b>The Highland Council</b>	59	25	47	19	-6%
<b>Housing Association</b>	2	1	0	0	-1%
<b>Living rent free</b>	-	-	17	7	-

(source: 1991 & 2001 census)

### 3.4 Vacant/Second Homes

	Melvich 1991 %	Highland 1991 %	Melvich 2001 %	Highland 2001 %	Melvich Trend Increase / decrease % 1991 - 2001
Vacant Homes	-	NA	3.4%	4%	-
Second / Holiday Home	10%	7.2%	11.2%	6.2%	<b>+1.2%</b>

(source: 1991 & 2001 censuses)

### 3.5 The Highland Council Housing Stock (SZ)

Area	Housing stock (2004)	Waiting List (1 <sup>st</sup> preference) (2004)	Sold to 2003 (right to buy)		Re-lets each year		
			No.s	%	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5
Melvich	45	5	12	23.5	3	1	0

(Source: The Highland Council)

### 3.6 Housing Association Stock (SZ) - None

### 3.7 House prices in Melvich

Source	Average price
Local estate agents (2006)	<b>£70-80,000</b> (for 3-bedroom ex-council house)
Nethouseprices (internet site) (2005)	<b>£80,000</b>

### 3.8 Comparator Number of house sales and prices for Highland Region

	House sales, numbers	House sales, median price	House sales, average price
1993	<b>3,916</b>	<b>£38,225</b>	<b>£49,340</b>
2004	<b>5,003</b>	<b>£83,250</b>	<b>£104,935</b>
2005			<b>£122,294</b>

(source: Halifax Building Society and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics)

### **3.9 Types of Employment (SZ)**

	1991 %	2001 %
Agriculture/hunting/forestry	20	3.8
Mining/quarrying	0	0.9
Manufacturing	5	16.4
Electricity/gas/water supply	5	0
Construction	5	13
Transport/storage/communication	20	2.8
Financial	5	4.2
Fishing/fish farming	30	14.1
Wholesale/retail/motor vehicle repair		2.8
Hotels/catering		6.1
Real estate/renting/business		17.4
Public administration/ defense		6.6
Education		8.9
Health/social work		12.2
Other		5.2

*(source: 1991 & 2001 census)*

### **3.10 Main local landowners**

Estate	Acreage	Owner
Ackron	1750	Michael & Elaine Stuart
Bighouse	1210	Donald SH Mackay
Golual 218	1544	James Ross
Kirkton Farm	2887	William Webster Finlay

*(source: who owns Scotland)*