

Impact case study (REF3b)

Institution: University of Glasgow
Unit of Assessment: C16: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning
Title of case study: Shaping UK Local Authorities' Social Housing Provision and Planning
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

University of Glasgow research advanced a new conceptual and practical approach to housing systems analysis used by local authorities across the breadth of the UK. The research was instrumental in the drafting of new legislation which required all local authorities to produce evidence-based housing strategies founded upon the approach developed through the Glasgow research. As well as forming the basis of Good Practice Guides used by housing professionals and practitioners, the research underpinned extensive training programmes for housing planners and policy-makers in all 4 countries of the UK.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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Housing economists from Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow have a sustained record of collaborative research and knowledge exchange on housing systems analysis with key stakeholders and user groups since the early 1990s. A fundamental part of this work resulted in the advancement of a new conceptual approach for understanding in practical and planning terms how housing systems operate and change over time, known as Local Housing Systems Analysis (LHSA). The framework was explicitly intended to assist public decision makers to diagnose the need for and nature of policy interventions in the form of public investment.

In 1993 University of Glasgow researchers Duncan Maclennan, Professor – Urban Studies at Glasgow (USG)*; Alison More, Lecturer/RA – USG; and Ken Gibb – Professor USG (research fellow at the time) developed LHSA in partnership with staff at Scottish Homes (*which became 'Communities Scotland' in 2002*). Key partners were Dr. Tony O'Sullivan, then Head of Research and Planning at Scottish Homes (who subsequently became Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow in 2004 and who was appointed Honorary Professor in 2010) and Gillian Young, then Head of Business Intelligence at Scottish Homes.

The University of Glasgow researchers made a unique and significant contribution to the research process given their strong body of expertise in housing economics, housing planning and the geography of housing systems. The initial LHSA framework was largely developed by Maclennan and O'Sullivan with subsequent major contributions from Gibb, More and Young. The key contributions by Glasgow academics were threefold: in terms of the framework's evolving conceptual and practical underpinnings; revising that framework as more data became available and policy/practice needs evolved; and close application through case studies and, in particular, training of housing and planning professionals so that they could use the model effectively.

LHSA was a comprehensive response to significant conceptual and empirical gaps in housing planning and practice in Scotland and elsewhere. In developing the model of LHSA, the Glasgow University researchers argued that a local housing system is not one that should be solely defined by local authority administrative boundaries. Instead, it was their contention, wholly novel at the time, that a local housing system should be understood as a largely self-contained or independent area, one defined by consumer behaviour and choices (expressed by property sale and purchase, household movement, etc.) rather than administrative fiat. The scale and direction of these flows, the researchers argued, would depend on the impact of various forces or drivers, some of which might arise in the wider environment (e.g. economic and demographic change) and others from within the housing system itself (turnover, price change, housing quality, etc). Their research insights revealed that it is a combination of these flows and wider forces that influence the shape of the local housing system over time and space. Central and novel to the framework was the fundamental interdependence of different parts of the housing system: renting and owning, private and social housing. As a result of this, they highlighted that it is vital for housing planners to be aware of and understand these flows or processes in order to consider how to intervene effectively to address key imbalances or systemic local problems.

LHSA embraced planning, demography and economic analysis of the drivers of housing systems, focusing on all tenures and their interdependence within a well-defined housing market area. Undertaking an LHSA required housing planners to undertake a rigorous data audit so that they could map out the external and internal drivers of their housing system, having clarified the appropriate geography and located the analysis in its broader spatial and economic planning context. Not only did this help set objectives, the data audit element may also justify a mixed methods approach utilising qualitative methods where key quantitative information was absent. Working through the LHSA framework allowed the planner to then identify key problems or imbalances which were the essential outputs of the process and which in turn informed investment decisions.

This marked a new approach to the analysis and working definition of local housing systems and signalled a change away from tenure-based partial analysis of how housing provision is assessed.

**All positions relate to the time of the research, unless otherwise stated.*

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Maclennan, D., and K. Gibb. (1993). 'Housing Indicators and Research for Policy from the Perspective of Applied Economics' *Netherlands Journal of Housing and the Built Environment* 8 (No.1): 49-60. ([doi:10.1007/BF02503147](https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02503147))
 2. O'Sullivan, A. (2003) Economics and Housing Planning, in O'Sullivan, A and Gibb, K. (Eds). *Housing Economics and Public Policy*. Blackwell Science: Oxford. ISBN-10: 0632064617
[\[PDF link\]](#)
 3. Young, G O'Sullivan, A and Gibb, K (2010) *Northern Ireland Housing Market Areas*. Northern Ireland Housing Executive: Belfast [\[PDF link\]](#)
 4. Gibb, K., O'Sullivan, A., and Young, G. (2012) Analysing the Belfast housing market: learning lessons from extreme volatility, *Town Planning Review*, 83 (4). pp. 407-430. ISSN Online: 1478-341X ([doi:10.3828/tpr.2012.25](https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.2012.25))
 5. Duncan Maclennan & Anthony O'Sullivan (2012). 'Housing markets, signals and Search', *Journal of Property Research*, 29:4, 324-340, ([doi: 10.1080/09599916.2012.717102](https://doi.org/10.1080/09599916.2012.717102))
 6. Gibb, K. (2013). 'Market signals, planning and social housing', *Town Planning Review*, 84 (1). pp. 63-80. ([doi:10.3828/tpr.2013.4](https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.2013.4))
- [Research outputs (1; 4; 5; 6) published in leading international, high impact journals following rigorous peer-review]*

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

LHSA introduced a new way of understanding local housing systems and led to a change in the way that local authorities are required to justify public investment. LHSA was formally endorsed by the then Scottish Executive through implementation of the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act, which established the preparation of local housing strategies as a statutory local authority duty and required these be informed by an evidence-base created by an LHSA process. The current guidance for housing needs and demand assessment laid down by the Scottish Government continues to draw strongly on the LHSA framework. Current English (and Welsh) housing needs and demand assessment guidance also explicitly acknowledges a continuing debt to LHSA.

Alongside the original 1993 Guidance, Glasgow academics produced LHSA case studies for Edinburgh and Rural Dunbartonshire. Subsequently, when Local Housing Strategies became a statutory requirement after 2001, Glasgow University contributed to teams that carried out the entire LHSA requirement for West Lothian and the rural example of the Western Isles. In each case the complete process of LHSA was undertaken: review of planning and policy documents, assessing the appropriate geography for study, undertaking a data audit, undertaking analysis of external drivers, examining each tenure and their key interactions before identifying key long-term problems or imbalances. The final reports were used by the local authorities in these regions as an evidence base which underpinned and shaped their Local Housing Strategies and forward planning initiatives.

The main impacts of the research, therefore, centre on the application of the research to develop good practice guides to enhance the practice of housing professionals; the extensive influence of the research on the training of housing analysts, researchers and policymakers on LHSA; and the subsequent positive impact that these activities have had on the effective planning and management of social housing, with the research informing the [Local Housing Strategies](#) of numerous local authorities and housing providers. Essentially, LHSA has influenced two decades of public sector housing investment decisions.

Influencing the formation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001:

As noted above, the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 enshrined in law a requirement that all local authorities produce a local housing strategy that was informed by an evidence-base from an LHSA process. The research influenced the forming of this legislation by virtue of Maclennan being invited to chair the Single Housing Plans Group (SHPG), which was established in February 2000 during the drafting stages of the Housing (Scotland) 2001 Bill. The SHPG was tasked with taking forward a Housing Green Paper proposal for a single housing plan for each local authority area. Membership of the group comprised representatives from the Scottish Executive, Scottish Homes, COSLA, local authorities, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Chartered Institute of Housing. The impact of the new law was evident right up until and into 2008 when changes were made to the local housing strategy requirements; significant elements of LHSA remain in the approach and the guidance continues to form part of the cluster of materials adopted by the Scottish Government's Centre for Housing Market analysis.

Production of Good Practice Guides for local authorities:

On the basis of the LHSA research, GU researchers were commissioned by Communities Scotland to co-produce LHSA Good Practice Guides to provide practical assistance to Local Authorities on how to carry out LHSA. In preparing these Guides, titled, *Local Housing Systems Analysis: Good Practice Guide*, the research team contributed to Local Authorities' processes for assessing need and ensuring the effective provision of social housing. The researchers produced successive versions of these Good Practice Guides in 1993, 1998 and 2004.

The subsequent development of Scottish Housing Needs and Demand Assessments (HNDAs), by the Scottish Government in 2008 drew heavily on the LHSA model in its guidance. This is evident in the HNDA Guidance where it states that it is based upon the *Local Housing Market Assessment Guide* of the Welsh Assembly 2006, which was prepared by the research team using the LHSA model; and on the *Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance, Communities and Local Government 2007*, which explicitly states that it is 'based upon the *Local Housing Systems Analysis Best Practice Guide*, Communities Scotland, 2004', which was also based on the LHSA research.

Delivery of training courses for practitioners in Scotland:

In addition to producing new guidance for housing professionals, members of the research team wrote and delivered successive waves of training courses to staff at Scottish Homes; Communities Scotland; Scottish Office/Executive staff; housing associations; and local authorities in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh. The team carried out several rounds of this 2-day and 3-day training courses, which involved:

- Conceptualising housing as a system and exploring its practical implications
- Undertaking data audit and sources of housing data
- Housing market geography
- LHSA and economic analysis
- The meaning of housing need
- Housing needs assessment
- Drivers of housing change
- Balance and imbalance.

The training involved a mix of plenary sessions and practical exercises. Training courses were provided around both the 1998 and 2004 guidance publications (largely to councils, Scottish

Homes and Communities Scotland staff but also Government, housing association and other housing specialists). Training was also organised with the Scottish Housing Best Value Network (twice in 2007 and 2010) and for Glasgow city council staff transferring to Glasgow Housing Association. Each session, either 2 or 3 days long, was attended by 25-30 delegates i.e. around 200-240 delegates in total.

Extension of Reach – NI and Wales:

The demand for guidance and training in LHSA extended beyond public bodies and local authorities in Scotland and over the period from 1993 to 2011 the Glasgow University researchers developed analogous LHSA Good Practice Guides for the Welsh Assembly and undertook extensive research and training with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Influencing housing strategies in Northern Ireland:

Most recently (2007-12), Young, O'Sullivan and Gibb, carried out a comprehensive, major study of Greater Belfast and a mini-LHSA study for the town of Larne, for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). The Head of Research at NIHE stated that the University of Glasgow research '*identified potential future imbalances in the Northern Ireland's housing market, enabling scarce resources to be targeted in a more meaningful way*'.

The Belfast study involved identifying appropriate geographical areas for study, developing a good practice guidance report and conducting a systematic case study of Belfast alongside training delivered by members of the research team in Belfast in 2010-11. The Head of Research at NIHE further explained that this training ensured that '*the planning teams were equipped to undertake LHSA for the remaining 10 housing market areas*'; additionally, the Head of Research went on to affirm that:

[T]hese key strategic research studies have had a major influence on the development of housing strategies and the social housing programme in recent years. The fact that our strategic and area planning teams have recently begun their three-yearly review and update of the current 11 LHSA's must be seen as a testament to their impact on government policy and strategy in relation to planning for housing in Northern Ireland in recent years.

Thus, confirming the continued significance and value of the LHSA research to the work of NIHE.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Policy Memorandum re: Housing (Scotland) Bill 2001 detailing impact of SHPG recommendations (para 75): [Link](#)

Good practice guidance and training

2. *LHSA: Good Practice Guide*, 1993 Edinburgh: Scottish Executive: [Available from HEI].
3. *LHSA: Good Practice Guide*, 1998 Edinburgh: Scottish Executive: [Available from HEI].
4. *LHSA: Good Practice Guide*, 2004 Edinburgh: Scottish Government: [Link](#)
5. *Local Housing Market Assessment Guide*, 2006, Welsh Assembly: [Link](#); Guidance still in force as demonstrated in, and supplemented by, *Getting Started with your Local Housing Market Assessment*, 2012, Welsh Assembly: [Link](#)
6. *Housing Need and Demand Assessment Guidance*, 2008 Edinburgh: Scottish Government (LHSA Good Practice Guide 2004 referred to throughout HNDA Guidance): [Link](#)
7. *Strategic Housing Market Assessments: Practice Guidance*, 2007, Communities and Local Government: [Link](#)
8. Statement: Head of Centre of Housing Market Analysis, Scottish Government on the usefulness and legacy of LHSA research, materials and training for the work of CHMA: [Available from HEI]

Housing strategies in Northern Ireland

9. *Northern Ireland Housing Market Areas*. Project Report. NIHE, Belfast: [Link](#) ; and Belfast Metropolitan Housing Market Area: a local housing system analysis, NIHE: [Link](#)
10. Statement from Head of Research at Northern Ireland Housing Executive, quoted from in case study and corroborating impact of LHSA research on NIHE. [Available from HEI]