

# HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON PARTS

#### Part 1 – Housing Standards

##### *Chapter 1 – Housing renewal areas*

#### Designation of Housing Renewal Areas

25. **Section 1** sets out the criteria for a local authority to designate any locality as a housing renewal area (HRA). These are either that a significant number of the houses in that locality are sub-standard (for example, below the Tolerable Standard or in serious disrepair) or that the appearance or state of repair of any houses in the area is adversely affecting the amenity of the locality. This replaces the Housing Action Areas provisions in sections 89 to 91 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.
26. The procedure for the declaration of a Housing Renewal Area is set out in **section 2, subsection (1)** of which provides that an HRA designation order must set out the reasons for designation (which must be from those set out in **section 1**) and that the order must include an HRA action plan and a map of the area covered by the plan. **Subsection (2)** establishes that the Scottish Ministers must approve a draft designation order before the order can be made.
27. **Schedule 1** details the procedure to be followed where a local authority proposes to designate an HRA. **Paragraph 1** sets out the procedure for notification in the proposed HRA (including who should be notified) and requires that the notice must give information on availability for inspection of the draft designation order, a general indication as to how the scheme of assistance will be applied, and the specific timescale for the local authority to receive representations (which is at local authority discretion, but must not be less than 3 months from the date on which the notice is given). After considering representations the local authority may submit the draft designation order to the Scottish Ministers for approval. Whether the draft is submitted for approval or the local authority chooses not to take forward the HRA, it must give notice of its decision in the same way that it gave notice of the proposal to declare an HRA. The local authority may modify the order to take account of representations, but it cannot extend the area covered by the draft order. The notification given where a draft order is submitted to the Scottish Ministers must contain information on the general effect of any significant modification.
28. **Paragraph 2 of schedule 1** sets out how the Scottish Ministers should consider a draft designation order. Ministers may approve or reject a draft order, and can modify the draft order before they decide to approve or reject. Ministers may not modify the draft designation order to extend the HRA or to identify houses for demolition that were not in the draft order, as submitted by the local authority. In conjunction with **paragraph 4**, it also sets out circumstances where Ministers must consult with planning authorities if they wish to make a modification affecting various listed or protected buildings. Ministers should give their decision as soon as reasonably practicable.

29. **Paragraph 3** of **schedule 1** sets out the notification requirements where a local authority finally makes an HRA designation order. Notice must be given to each owner and occupier of each house in the HRA, in at least two newspapers circulating in the area and in any other way the local authority thinks fit. The notice must describe the general effect of the order, assistance to be offered under the scheme of assistance and where and when a copy of the order will be available for public inspection.
30. **Section 3** makes more detailed provision about HRA action plans. It defines an HRA action plan as a strategy for securing an improvement in the condition and quality of housing in the HRA. **Subsection (2)** requires that the action plan must identify houses in the area covered by the plan which require to be demolished or need work to bring them into (and keep them in) a reasonable state of repair or to enhance the amenity of the HRA. The plan must specify the work (and the standard of the work) required, along with any steps that the local authority requires to be taken in carrying out the work. This work can include demolition. The action plan must also set out how the scheme of assistance will apply where a house is affected by the action plan. **Subsection (3)** lists some examples of what work identified in the action plan may be intended to do. **Subsection (4)** allows for work to be carried out to houses adjacent to or associated with those identified in the action plan. This will, for example, allow work to be carried out to an identified house, which can only be completed by carrying out work on an adjacent house.
31. **Section 4** covers circumstances where the designation order may be varied. The local authority may vary an order on the request of an owner of a house identified in the action plan, but any variation can only apply to that house and the local authority must consult the owner and other people that it feels may be affected. The local authority may vary the designation order at any time in a way that does not significantly adversely affect any person. If a variation is made, the local authority must inform anyone it considers affected by the variation, describing the variation and stating where a copy of the modified designation order may be viewed.
32. **Section 5** covers circumstances where the designation order is revoked. The authority must revoke the order when the work is complete or as directed by the Scottish Ministers. The local authority can, with the consent of the Scottish Ministers, revoke the order if the circumstances which led to the order being made have changed. Where the order is revoked, works notices issued as part of the HRA will no longer have effect. The local authority must notify those it considers to be affected by a revocation, except where revocation is because all the work required has been completed.
33. **Section 6** gives the Scottish Ministers the power to give directions to local authorities about identifying areas suitable for designation as HRAs. Any local authority affected must comply with these directions. Directions can be general or specific, applying to a number of local authorities, an individual local authority as a whole, or to areas within an individual local authority, amongst other things.
34. **Section 7** requires the local authority to make available for free public inspection a copy of each HRA designation order in force for its area. The local authority can choose how to do this, but the copy orders must be reasonably obtainable.