
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	14 January 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources	Report No:	ENV004/21/MM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the new annual Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Plan, covering the period from 2021/22 - 2025/26.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 To secure funding every local authority is required to prepare an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The SHIP reinforces the role of the local authority as the strategic housing authority. It sets out the key investment priorities for affordable housing in Inverclyde over a five year period to achieve the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022, and help the Scottish Government complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government issued a process note in July 2020 recognising that local authorities may experience some difficulty in preparing their annual SHIP within the normal submission timescale (end October) due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation. All local authorities were required to submit their SHIPs to the Scottish Government's More Homes Division Area Team by mid-December 2020 via the Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP). HARP is a web-based system designed to store consistent and accurate information about all local authority housing programmes.
- 2.3 As per agreed protocol and due to the date of the Committee meeting, the Scottish Government was advised that Inverclyde Council would submit a draft of the SHIP through HARP in mid-December pending the decision on its approval at today's Committee meeting.
- 2.4 The SHIP 2021/22 - 2025/26 has been prepared in consultation with all our developing RSL partners and includes a full programme of affordable housing development proposals over the five-year period.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee:
- Approves the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for the five-year period from 2021/22 - 2025/26 for submission to the Scottish Government by Inverclyde Council; and
 - Notes the projects included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021/22 - 2025/26 as detailed at Appendix 1.

Martin McNab
Head of Environment & Public Protection

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The updated SHIP process note attached at Appendix 2 requires all local authorities to prepare and submit a new five-year SHIP by mid-December. The Scottish Government has been advised that due to scheduling, we submitted a draft SHIP pending the decision on Committee approval of the SHIP at today's meeting. The SHIP 2021/22 - 2025/26 sets out Inverclyde Council's priorities for affordable housing development and presents an overview of what might be achieved throughout Inverclyde over the next five years. Appendix 3, the Scottish Government's response to the 2020-2025 SHIP is included for information.

5.0 STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2021/22 - 2025/26

5.1 Inverclyde has benefitted from significant investment in new affordable housing which will address the housing priorities in our area which most reflect the needs of our residents. National and local housing providers have received around £48 million grant funding in this parliamentary term from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).

5.2 Housing development was halted in March 2020 due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant national lockdown. Construction sites were closed which resulted in delays to the SHIP programme and underspend of the available Scottish Government grant to deliver affordable housing development.

5.3 However, the Scottish Government has confirmed that grant commitments made prior to lockdown will remain which allows projects previously identified within the SHIP to be taken forward. Any additional Covid-19 related costs which may be awarded will need to be met from the Resource Planning Assumption (RPA). The delivery of around 800 units across Inverclyde through projects previously estimated for completion by March 2021 will now mainly be delayed by 3 to 6 months following the easing of lockdown measures.

5.4 The SHIP is the result of ongoing consultation with RSLs, the Scottish Government and HSCP. Similarly, discussions with Council colleagues such as those in Roads, Planning, Property Services and Legal are fundamental in helping to resolve issues and ensure the delivery of development proposals which contribute appropriate housing for the area.

5.5 RSLs have put forward a comprehensive series of proposals for new affordable housing developments across Inverclyde covering the planning period from 2021/22 to 2025/26. The SHIP table (see Appendix 1) provides details of all projects over the five-year period.

5.6 Depopulation coupled with negative projected household change will result in an increase in the number and proportion of single person households in Inverclyde. 4 out of every 10 households are expected to be single person households by 2029. The majority of these are projected to be inhabited by older persons, who generally wish to continue living independently in home and community settings. This requires serious consideration being paid to future housing provision, including Specialist Provision. By ensuring supply of wheelchair housing; providing specific dementia friendly accommodation; and increased use of technologies such as telehealth and telecare; we are confident that we can address the housing and health needs of our increasing older population and support independent living.

5.7 The Scottish Government SHIP guidance (August 2019) requested a greater focus on the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing across each local authority area. With around 800 units proposed in the SHIP and the Council's current 3% wheelchair accessible target; we would expect at least 24 wheelchair accessible homes to be added to the social rented stock of Inverclyde. Engagement in a Specialist Provision Review and regular and ongoing discussions with the Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living and developing RSLs have resulted in 42 wheelchair accessible homes now being delivered across Inverclyde through the AHSP in 2021/22; this exceeds our current 3% target.

- 5.8 All stock owned by RSLs must meet Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) standards. ESSH aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland and contribute to the Scottish Government target to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045. All of the projects in the SHIP will meet ESSH standards, help to tackle fuel poverty, and ensure that heat is affordable for residents by increasing energy efficiency and reducing the amount of energy required to heat the home.
- 5.9 The methodology which determines which projects are prioritised through the AHSP involves many considerations including suitability of proposed house type/mix; impact new housing might have on older stock in the area; and ownership of the land to be used for development. When asking for SHIP submission forms from our RSLs, Inverclyde Council stipulate that the projects which will be prioritised are those which achieve the best balance between the following categories:
- Reflect LHS outcomes (possible 3 points)
 - Address Housing Need and Demand (possible 6 points)
 - Deliverability (possible 8 points)
- 5.10 We continue to work with RSL and HSCP partners to monitor how successfully the highest priority projects meet the housing need for the area, their efficacy in helping to achieve the LHS outcomes, and their deliverability. This monitoring process ensures that the housing projects delivered in the area are those which best meet the needs of the population.
- 5.11 The SHIP is a five-year plan based on three year Resource Planning Assumptions (RPA), which are ordinarily notified to the local authority on an annual basis. However, due to the delay to the budget, further information on RPA levels post-March 2021 for Inverclyde will be provided as soon as known and will inform the pace at which future programme plans can be delivered.

6.0 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY PROGRAMME - ACTIVITY UPDATE

- 6.1 Two affordable housing developments have reached completion in Inverclyde since last years' SHIP. Combined, Ravenscraig Gardens in Greenock, and the Slaemuir regeneration in Port Glasgow by Oak Tree and River Clyde Homes respectively offer 76 new units for social rent.
- 6.2 Ravenscraig Gardens is the first phase of Oak Tree Housing Association's ambitious plan to deliver 200 affordable homes across Greenock. It was constructed on the site of the former Ravenscraig Primary School. A total of 36 homes have been delivered in a mix of 28 two, three and four-bedroom semi-detached houses, and 8 two-bedroom cottage flats. Oak Tree worked with HSCP to provide Through Care accommodation on the site to provide safe accommodation to rent for young people.
- 6.3 The Slaemuir site in Port Glasgow is a 3 phase development which will provide 96 units of varying house type including 3 bedroom family homes, 1 bedroom flats and wheelchair housing. Phase 2 completed in August 2020 and is comprised of 40 units of one bed flats and two bed cottages. This adds to the 32 units completed in Phase 1 last year, and the final phase of 24 units is expected to complete in 2021.

Many of the following projects were expected to be completed by March 2021 but have been delayed. Completion for most is still expected in 2021.

6.4 Oak Tree Housing Association

Work has started on 69 new homes in the Tweed Street area of Greenock. The two-storey homes will be predominantly houses with a mixture of two, three and four bed accommodation, 32 of the houses can be readily adapted to accommodate wheelchair accessibility. The 16 two, three, and four bed houses to be built at Strone Farm are currently on hold due to contractual issues which are hoped to be resolved shortly. 71 of the new homes currently under construction at Ravenscraig will be passed over to Oak Tree as a turnkey project by Link Group. Oak Tree are also involved in negotiations and looking at proposals to deliver a further

84 units across sites at Drumfrochar Road and Houston Street.

6.5 River Clyde Homes

River Clyde Homes have a number of sites under construction across Greenock and Port Glasgow which will add over 400 more affordable homes to Inverclyde. 137 units at James Watt Dock and the 224 units at the old St. Stephen's school site will include a variety of homes from one bedroom assisted living properties to family homes and also provide wheelchair accessible properties. River Clyde Homes are developing proposals for a potential 20 unit at Cumberland Walk which will include technology enabled assistance for older people.

6.6 Sanctuary Scotland

Sanctuary Scotland has 4 soon to be completed sites across Greenock and Port Glasgow at Lilybank Road, Dubbs Road, Mount Pleasant Street and Broadstone Avenue, which combined will deliver 96 units for social rent. The sites will offer a range of house types with cottage flats, family homes, and wheelchair housing and 24 units of amenity housing.

6.7 Cloch Housing Association

Cloch Housing Association will provide 58 units at King's Glen including large family homes and cottage flats, with some homes on split level due to the topography of the site. Consultation with colleagues in HSCP identified a requirement for Through Care accommodation in the area and this has been taken into account in the housing mix proposals with four 2 bedroom cottage flats to be provided for this purpose.

6.8 Link Group

The 149 unit development at the Ravenscraig Hospital site by Link Group in partnership with Oak Tree Housing is currently on site and will help meet the demand for one bedroom and family homes. 71 of the properties will be handed over to Oak Tree on completion and the remaining 78 will be managed by Larkfield Housing Association. The development will benefit from Link's target of providing 10% wheelchair housing and includes two bespoke three-bedroom bungalows, and 11 ground floor flatted dwellings with fully accessible private gardens. The site will also include 25 amenity cottage flats. This type of housing mix will support residents to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities; it will improve community cohesion, lift local asset values and assist future regeneration.

6.9 Blackwood Group

The remodelling of the MacLehose Court care home will result in 22 additional homes being brought to the west end of Greenock, with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed flats including 3 specialist wheelchair units on the ground floor. All flats will have an element of accessibility, will utilise the technology aspects of the Blackwood Design Guide, and meet Housing for Varying Needs Standards.

7.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Strategic

The SHIP 2021/22 - 2025/26 addresses all 6 outcomes of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017 - 2022.

7.2 Financial

The budget for the current Scottish Parliament runs to March 2021. The next budget and three year RPA will be agreed following the delayed Scottish Government budget in January 2021 and the outcome of the next Scottish Parliament election in May 2021. In the absence of RPA post 31 March 2021, local authorities have been instructed to plan on the basis of existing RPA levels. Further information on RPA levels post 2021 will be provided as soon as known and will inform the pace at which these future programme plans can be delivered.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

N/A					
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Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.3 Legal

There are no legal implications for Inverclyde Council arising from this report.

7.4 Personnel

There are no Personnel implications arising from this report.

7.5 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

No This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.

NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

NO

7.6 Repopulation

The provision of new affordable good quality housing is intended to support and complement the work on Repopulation, which is seeking to stabilise the existing population and to attract new people to the Inverclyde Council area by improving the housing quality and expanding the housing options available across Inverclyde.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the following:

- Developing RSLs operating within the Inverclyde Council area;
- All other RSLs operating within the Inverclyde Council area;
- Inverclyde Council's Roads, Planning, Property Services and Legal departments;
- Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership; and
- Scottish Government More Homes Division, Glasgow and Clyde Area Office

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The SHIP is presented to Committee annually the last report being:

Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2020/21-2024-25 Environment & Regeneration
Committee 16 January 2020 **ENV004/20/SA/RD**

INVERCLYDE
STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN
2021/22 - 2025/26
SUPPORTING STATEMENT

DRAFT

Introduction

To secure funding every local authority is required to prepare an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The SHIP reinforces the role of the local authority as the strategic housing authority. It sets out the key investment priorities for affordable housing in Inverclyde over a five year period to achieve the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022, and help the Scottish Government complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes.

Covering the 5 year period, 2021/22 - 2025/26, this SHIP Supporting Statement and corresponding programme table (Appendix 1) sets out the key investment priorities and projected grant requirement to deliver affordable housing in the Inverclyde area.

Inverclyde has benefitted from significant investment in new affordable housing which will address the housing priorities in our area which most reflect the needs of our residents. National and local housing providers have received around £48 million grant funding in this parliamentary term from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP).

The SHIP is a five-year plan based on three year Resource Planning Assumptions (RPA), which are ordinarily notified to the local authority on an annual basis. However, due to the delay to the budget, further information on RPA levels post-March 2021 will be provided as soon as known and will inform the pace at which future programme plans can be delivered. A key investment in the Scottish Government's draft Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-2026 is the allocation of a further 2.8bn in direct capital grant funding to deliver more affordable and social homes, continuing to ensure the right types of homes in the right places reflecting and supporting Local Housing Strategies and regional development priorities.

Delivery of the housing projects included in the SHIP requires close collaboration between a range of stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), the Scottish Government's More Homes Division, the Health and Social Care Partnership and other services within the council, including Planning, Roads and Property Services. Assumptions and forecasts are based on information available at the time of preparation and are therefore subject to refinement and alteration as projects are developed. It is not uncommon for a project to fall out of the SHIP due to any number of development constraints.

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Housing development was halted in March 2020 due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant national lockdown. Construction sites were closed which resulted in delays to the delivery of the SHIP and underspend of the available Scottish Government grant to deliver affordable housing development.

However, the Scottish Government has confirmed that grant commitments made prior to lockdown will remain which allows for the completion of projects previously identified within the SHIP. Any additional Covid-19 related costs which may be awarded will need to be met from the RPA. The delivery of around 800 units across Inverclyde through projects previously estimated for completion by March 2021 will now mainly be delayed by 3 to 6 months following the easing of lockdown measures.

The current development programme remains our priority but the Council and our stakeholders will continue to identify the most appropriate way for additional affordable housing to meet the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy. We will try to address any additional housing requirements necessitated by the impact of the pandemic; whether this is in the form of providing additional new build units or open market acquisitions.

Local Housing Strategy

The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017 - 2022 sets out the strategic policy approach of the Local Authority and its partners to deliver high quality housing and housing related services across all tenures to meet identified need in Inverclyde.

The Inverclyde LHS was designed to overcome many of the challenges that face social tenants, private tenants, home owners and homeless people of Inverclyde; and help us to achieve our vision, aims and outcomes by 2022.

It identified 6 outcomes which the SHIP will help the council and its partners meet:

Outcome 1: Provide a supply of good quality affordable housing solutions across all tenures

Outcome 2: Sustainable, attractive and well-designed communities with well-functioning town centres

Outcome 3: Prevent homelessness where possible through provision of ongoing support to meet the needs of individuals

Outcome 4: People supported to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities

Outcome 5: Tackle fuel poverty and contribute to meeting the climate change target

Outcome 6: Improve stock condition across all tenures

The LHS sets out Housing Supply Targets (HST) for private and affordable housing and the SHIP establishes priorities to achieve the affordable HST and related outcomes, as set out in the LHS. Considering all determining factors, it was calculated that a realistic and deliverable HST for Inverclyde would be 90 affordable units and 170 private sector units per annum over the lifetime of the LHS.

Inverclyde is one of the few local authority areas with a population which is projected to decrease, however the annual HST reflects the continued need to replace poor quality, unsuitable and unsustainable stock and to provide additional choice in the private sector.

Housing Need and Demand Assessment

The LHS was informed by the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA) co-produced by the Strategic Development Authority for the region, Clydeplan, and the eight Glasgow City Region Housing Authorities who collaborate through a Housing Market Partnership. This provides a robust and credible evidence base to support each authority's LHS and Development Plan.

The LHS is prepared every 5 years, and requires the evidence base included in the HNDA to be regularly reviewed and updated. From 2021, preparation will commence on the next Inverclyde LHS and this will require a refreshed evidence base from the next iteration of the HNDA which is currently in progress.

While the HNDA is firmly rooted in evidence and has helped inform local housing requirements, the process has also highlighted areas where further research needs to be conducted in order to fully understand local needs and demands, and to address them appropriately through inter-agency work and partnership arrangements. For example, further local research was recommended on the impacts of poor quality and lower demand housing in Inverclyde and the requirement for wheelchair accessible housing.

Local Development Plan

Inverclyde Council's decision to adopt the Local Development Plan in August 2019 was appealed by developers on the basis that it did not provide sufficient land for housing. In July 2020, the Court of Session decided to uphold the appeal and quash Chapter 7 of the Local Development Plan ('Our Homes and Communities'). A new Local Development Plan will now be prepared.

This decision left the Council without a planning policy framework for housing development, residential areas and community facilities. The Council has therefore prepared a short-life Planning Policy Statement on 'Our Homes and Communities'. The Planning Policy Statement will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the meantime but it will be superseded when the revised Proposed Local Development Plan is published, which is scheduled for April 2021.

Due to the limited supply of affordable housing available and no land identified for affordable housing development within the Inverclyde villages (Kilmacolm, Quarrier's Village, Inverkip and Wemyss Bay), the Local Development Plan adopted in August 2019 required 25% affordable housing to be included on sites built on greenfield areas in the Inverclyde villages, this requirement will remain.

Demographics

Net migration, continues to be a major contributor to depopulation across Inverclyde. Recently published National Records of Scotland 2018-based population and household projections shows a 10% decline in number of households in Inverclyde by 2043. Broken down by age group, 16-29 year olds will reduce by 32%; 30-44 year olds by 18%; 45-59 year olds by 29%; and 60-74 year olds by 15%. However there will be a 59% increase in those over 75 years old.

This reduction in the number of family-sized and working age households will have serious implications for the local economy in terms of lower tax contributions and an increase in the required provision of care. It will put further pressures on already stretched services.

Depopulation coupled with negative projected household size will result in an increase in the number and proportion of single person households in Inverclyde. 4 out of every 10 households are expected to be single person households by 2029. The majority of these are projected to be inhabited by older people, who generally wish to continue living independently

in home and community settings. The changing demographics requires consideration on future housing provision, including Specialist Provision, and has informed the housing size and type being delivered in Inverclyde through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

[Affordable Housing Supply Programme - Activity Update](#)

Two affordable housing developments have reached completion in Inverclyde since last years' SHIP. Combined, Ravenscraig Gardens in Greenock, and the Slaemuir regeneration in Port Glasgow by Oak Tree and River Clyde Homes respectively offer 76 new units for social rent.

Ravenscraig Gardens is the first phase of Oak Tree Housing Association's ambitious plan to deliver 200 affordable homes across Greenock. It was constructed on the site of the former Ravenscraig Primary School. A total of 36 homes have been delivered in a mix of 28 two, three and four-bedroom semi-detached houses, and 8 two-bedroom cottage flats. Oak Tree worked with HSCP to provide Through Care accommodation on the site to provide safe accommodation to rent for young people.

The Slaemuir site in Port Glasgow is a 3 phase development which will provide 96 units of varying house type including 3 bedroom family homes, 1 bedroom flats and wheelchair housing. Phase 2 completed in August 2020 and is comprised of 40 units of one bed flats and two bed cottages. This adds to the 32 units completed in Phase 1 last year, and the final phase of 24 units is expected to complete in 2021.

Many of the following projects were expected to be completed by March 2021 but have been delayed. Completion for most is still expected in 2021.

[Oak Tree Housing Association](#)

Work has started on 69 new homes in the Tweed Street area of Greenock. The two-storey homes will be predominantly houses with a mixture of two, three and four bed accommodation, 32 of the houses can be readily adapted to accommodate wheelchair accessibility. The 16 two, three, and four bed houses to be built at Strone Farm are currently on hold due to contractual issues which are hoped to be resolved shortly. 71 of the new homes currently under construction at Ravenscraig will be passed over to Oak Tree as a turnkey project by Link Group. Oak Tree are also involved in negotiations and looking at proposals to deliver a further 84 units across sites at Drumfrochar Road and Houston Street.

[River Clyde Homes](#)

River Clyde Homes have a number of sites under construction across Greenock and Port Glasgow which will add over 400 more affordable homes to Inverclyde. 137 units at James Watt Dock and the 224 units at the old St. Stephen's school site will include a variety of homes from one bedroom assisted living properties to family homes and also provide wheelchair accessible properties. River Clyde Homes are developing proposals for a potential 20 unit at Cumberland Walk which will include technology enabled assistance for older people.

[Sanctuary Scotland](#)

Sanctuary Scotland has 4 soon to be completed sites across Greenock and Port Glasgow at Lilybank Road, Dubbs Road, Mount Pleasant Street and Broadstone Avenue, which combined will deliver 96 units for social rent. The sites will offer a range of house types with cottage flats, family homes, wheelchair housing and 24 units of amenity housing.

[Cloch Housing Association](#)

Cloch Housing Association will provide 58 units at King's Glen including large family homes and cottage flats, with some homes on split level due to the topography of the site.

Consultation with colleagues in HSCP identified a requirement for Through Care accommodation in the area and this has been taken into account in the housing mix proposals with four 2 bedroom cottage flats to be provided for this purpose.

Link Group

The 149 unit development at the Ravenscraig Hospital site by Link Group in partnership with Oak Tree Housing is currently on site and will help meet the demand for one bedroom and family homes. 71 of the properties will be handed over to Oak Tree on completion and the remaining 78 will be managed by Larkfield Housing Association. The development will benefit from Link's target of providing 10% wheelchair housing and includes two bespoke three-bedroom bungalows, and 11 ground floor flatted dwellings with fully accessible private gardens. The site will also include 25 amenity cottage flats. This type of housing mix will support residents to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities; it will improve community cohesion, lift local asset values and assist future regeneration.

Blackwood Group

The remodelling of the MacLehose Court care home will result in 22 additional homes being brought to the west end of Greenock, with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed flats including 3 specialist wheelchair units on the ground floor. All flats will have an element of accessibility, will utilise the technology aspects of the Blackwood Design Guide, and meet Housing for Varying Needs Standards.

Homelessness and RRTP Update

Local Authorities must produce a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), and develop the plans in collaboration over a planned and costed phase of 5 years (2019-20 to 2023-24).

The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the homelessness picture within Inverclyde with an increase in homelessness presentations due to people no longer being able to remain in their previous accommodation for a variety of reasons; in particular with increasing numbers of young people presenting as homeless through family breakdown.

In order to respond to the increased presentations, a greater number of temporary furnished flats was required and local RSLs have supported this by providing an additional 40 flats to the Homelessness service throughout the first 8 weeks of the pandemic. There are now 65 temporary furnished flats within Inverclyde, up from 25. However, presentations continue to increase and have resulted in additional use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Homeless Network Scotland and Crisis Scotland, working with a focus group of Local Authority and Scottish Government colleagues, have prepared a short guide on what updated recommendations from the Homeless & Rough Sleeping Action Group mean for RRTPs going forward. It is recommended to mitigate against the rise in homelessness due to the effects of the pandemic by broadening the supply and range of housing and quickening access to settled housing options locally.

Working with the Homelessness service and local RSLs, we are conducting an audit of temporary accommodation housing needs by size, area and type of household to help determine additional affordable rented supply requirements; and we are investigating the purchase of properties currently on the market through an Acquisition Programme to meet requirements.

We will also further promote the Mortgage to Rent scheme where the purchase of previously socially rented stock will prevent homelessness by enabling the current tenant to remain in the property. We are considering further housing options to address homelessness through discussions with owners of currently empty homes; increasing access to the PRS sector by working collaboratively with private landlords; and by investigating a programme of leasing private rented tenancies.

A governance structure has been created involving a range of stakeholders to oversee the RRTP plan delivery and tackle the ongoing impact of Covid. A Steering Group will provide oversight of the RRTP delivery and two sub groups will develop the Housing Options and Housing First approaches. An RRTP Partnership Officer has been employed from October 2020 to oversee and facilitate progress.

Independent Living

All of our new build stock will benefit from the requirement to align with Housing for Varying Needs standards which will ensure that properties can be more easily adapted to suit the needs of our older and mobility impaired populations.

We have also been exploring different ways of supplying housing more suitable to older residents with our RSL and HSCP partners, and introducing higher numbers of units within current SHIP projects suitable for this demographic. By providing specific dementia friendly, amenity and wheelchair accommodation; and utilising 24 hour care services allied to technologies such as telehealth and telecare; we will address the housing and health needs of our increasing older population.

Around 100 wheelchair or amenity units suitable for older or mobility impaired residents will be completed in the 2021 calendar year. This number doesn't include the dementia friendly units being discussed for inclusion at St. Stephens or the ongoing discussions between HSCP, Housing Strategy & developing RSLs on rehousing current clients currently living in unsuitable accommodation.

Wheelchair Accessible housing

The current Housing Need and Demand Assessment estimated that between 1% and 5% of all new additional units may be required as wheelchair accessible homes across the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley area but recommended further local assessment of accessible housing need including wheelchair housing provision. Our current LHS stipulates that 3% of all new social rented housing should meet wheelchair accessible standards to help increase the supply of housing suitable for wheelchair users in the area.

Our wheelchair housing will, as a minimum, comply 'basic' requirement for wheelchair users outlined in the Housing for Varying Needs design guide; and we work with developing RSLs to ensure bespoke wheelchair accessible housing is delivered where required and that we meet our target.

A working group comprised of members of the Housing Partnership Group is conducting a Specialist Provision Housing Review to address the first action in our Housing Contribution Statement Action Plan (2019 - 2024):

Action 1 - "Use evidence based need and demand to identify specialist provision housing requirement early in the planning of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme"

The working group aim to ensure that we have more robust data on available specialist housing and specialist housing requirements to inform need, demand and provision. This information will be utilised to identify specialist provision housing requirements in the planning of the AHSP; and to inform a wider discussion on how best to re-provision existing stock and secure stock for households with particular requirements where there is limited supply and limited development opportunities.

Prior to the delays caused by the pandemic, over 800 units with committed funding through the AHSP were to be developed across Inverclyde by March 2021. Following regular and ongoing discussions with the Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living and developing RSLs, 42 wheelchair accessible homes will now be delivered across Inverclyde through the AHSP in 2021/22; this exceeds our current 3% target.

Scottish Government guidance is now available and requires local authorities to set targets across all tenures to support the delivery of more Wheelchair Accessible housing, and to report annually on progress. Currently our target for 3% of new build housing to be wheelchair housing applies only to social rented properties.

It is important to remember that the Local Development Plan is the key document to encourage and reinforce inclusive design principles in the area. The recent Planning Policy Statement on 'Our Homes and Communities' encourages specialist provision housing, including wheelchair accessible homes, to meet requirements. Informed by evidence gathered through our Specialist Provision Review process, Inverclyde Council's annual SHIP and LHS update will include a revised wheelchair accessible target and we will work with our colleagues in Planning to stress the necessity for this target to be reflected across tenures.

Fuel Poverty

A household is in fuel poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use.

All stock owned by RSLs must meet Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) standards. EESH aims to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. It will help to reduce energy consumption, fuel poverty and the emission of greenhouse gases. All of the projects proposed in the SHIP will meet EESH standards, help to tackle fuel poverty, and ensure that heat is affordable for residents by increasing energy efficiency and reducing the amount of energy required to heat the home.

Inverclyde Council have been successful recently in delivering our Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS) programme. From 2013 to date a total of over £11m HEEPS: ABS funding has been awarded to Inverclyde from the Scottish Government. This has helped the council in collaboration with RSLs to provide external wall insulation to over 2200 properties in Inverclyde, making homes more energy efficient and cheaper to keep warm and dry. The latest Scottish House Condition Survey figures show that instances of fuel poverty have reduced from 38% (SHCS 2014-2016) to 31% (SHCS 2016-2018) in Inverclyde due in part to HEEPS: ABS, and AHSP funding.

Quality affordable housing solutions across all tenures

The Council is committed to ensuring that the housing available within Inverclyde meets the needs of existing and new residents. Affordable Housing includes homes for social rent, low cost home ownership/shared equity, shared ownership, mid-market rent and private sector housing delivered below market cost. We continue to investigate a number of low cost housing options and their viability across various sites to address repopulation by increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing solutions across all tenures.

Repopulation is a priority of the Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan. The reasons for population changes are varied and complex, however the availability of good quality housing in places where people want to live is a significant factor. We are discussing the possible delivery of a variety of affordable housing options alongside private homes on an as yet undesignated site. Providing a mix of private and affordable housing on the same site will help to deliver an intergenerational, sustainable community. It would cater for younger people and families who require affordable housing but do not qualify for or simply do not wish to live in socially rented properties; and for older people who may want to downsize or move to more supported accommodation. A variety of appropriate affordable housing allied to proposals for additional private housing will help to retain and attract residents and maintain sustainable communities as part of a wider effort to address population decline.

Delivering new housing is not always the most appropriate method of meeting housing need. Improving housing is the third top priority for people in Scotland after education and the economy, however the condition of some of the private stock in Inverclyde is substandard. This can contribute to public health issues and make the area less appealing to private developers.

We are aware that a lack of factoring arrangements within some mixed tenure areas has led to difficulties in delivering common repairs and improvement works. We have been investigating with local RSLs whether acquisition of 'second hand' stock for sale on the open market might be the most appropriate method of meeting housing need. This would help us to improve stock condition and stock management which will positively impact on public health and community cohesion. It would also enable us to more proactively address an emerging requirement for additional housing options for those with particular housing needs.

Acquisition Programme

Inverclyde Council have been discussing with partners the benefits of using a proportion of AHSP funding to help purchase stock for sale on the open market as an appropriate method of meeting strategic housing objectives in Inverclyde.

The work we have been engaged in to ensure a sufficient supply of housing to meet the requirements of the RRTP, and to also address unmet housing need highlighted through the Specialist Provision housing review, has dovetailed with the ongoing work on Action 7 of our current Housing Contribution Statement:

[‘Assess whether an Acquisition programme assisted by the Affordable Housing Supply Programme might better address health inequalities & build stronger communities’.](#)

The new build programme helps to meet additional need for provision of homeless accommodation, wheelchair accessible homes and other specialist requirements. However

buying properties 'off the shelf' will allow us to repair, renovate and regenerate areas while addressing the need for additional Specialist Provision and homeless accommodation in areas of existing housing. We believe that a rolling Acquisition programme funded through the AHSP will become an essential method to best meet the housing needs of Inverclyde.

In collaboration with RSLs, the Homelessness Service and HSCP client group leads, we will produce an Acquisition & Refurbishment Strategy; a clear local plan to inform an Acquisition Programme. The Acquisition Programme will help us to:

- Consolidate stock for management and improvement purposes
- Secure stock where there is limited supply and limited development opportunities
- Secure stock for households with particular requirements

The use of AHSP funding to acquire housing for social rent through the Acquisition Programme will help to meet the 6 outcomes of our LHS; and the 3 key priority areas in the Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan: Repopulation; Reducing Inequalities; and Environment, Culture and Heritage.

Suitable stock for acquisition identified by RSLs will be located close to their existing stock base for management and maintenance purposes. Current unmet need in terms of stock type, size and location identified by HSCP and the Homelessness service will be cross referenced to stock identified by RSLs in the first hand. Consideration will also be given to the acquisition of properties on the open market where they might present the best geographical opportunity to address a current unmet need.

Consultation

This SHIP is the result of ongoing consultation with RSLs, the Scottish Government and HSCP. Similarly, discussions with council colleagues such as those in Roads, Planning, Property Services and Legal are fundamental in helping to resolve issues and ensure the delivery of development proposals.

In Inverclyde, the council, the HSCP, and RSLs regularly attend a Housing Partnership Group. One of this group's key functions is to analyse the need for specialist housing and housing for particular needs to be included in projects included in the SHIP.

Regular programme meetings take place with representation from each of the RSLs and the More Homes Division of the Scottish Government to ensure that sites are progressing as they should. This affords the partners the opportunity to discuss any programme delays and possible solutions.

The ongoing work of the Housing Partnership Group and the regular programme meetings between Housing Strategy, RSLs and the Scottish Government helps to shape the methodology which determines strategic investment priorities and delivers the housing type appropriate for the area.

Methodology

The decision making process which determines what projects to prioritise involves many considerations including proposed house type/mix; impact new housing might have on older stock in the area; and ownership of the land to be used for development. When asking for SHIP submission forms from our RSLs, Inverclyde Council stipulate that the projects which will be prioritised are those which achieve the best balance between the following categories:

- Reflect LHS outcomes (possible 3 points)
- Address Housing Need and Demand (possible 6 points)
- Deliverability (possible 8 points)

We use a matrix to determine the priority of each of the proposed sites in the current SHIP. Points are awarded for meeting criteria which relate to each of the three categories. The project with the highest number of points achieves the top position in the SHIP table at Appendix 1. All other projects are listed in order of priority.

Though many projects in the SHIP are rolled forward from previous submissions, we continue to work with RSL and HSCP partners to monitor how successfully the highest priority projects meet the housing need for the area, their efficacy in helping to achieve the LHS outcomes, and their deliverability. This monitoring process ensures that the housing projects delivered in the area are those which best meet the needs of the population.

Within the SHIP guidance, the Scottish Government stress the importance of applying a 'minimum slippage factor of 25%' to the first year of the SHIP period. We have already benefitted from accelerating alternative projects due to slippage. Our 'over programmed' approach helps to ensure that the RPA is fully utilised and delivers for the area. Where slippage occurs on our higher priority sites, we have 'slippage projects' which can replace other projects as needed.

Following agreement between the Council, RSLs and the Scottish Government, RSLs will also be given the opportunity to propose acquisition projects receive funding through the AHSP based on criteria set out in our forthcoming Acquisition & Refurbishment Strategy.

Development Constraints

We strive to identify and highlight potential development constraints very early on by engaging with internal local authority stakeholders including Roads, Planning, Environmental Health, and our Contaminated Land Officer. We also engage with external public bodies as required.

However, Covid was an unseen constraint which has resulted in escalating construction costs and a delay to the programme of between 3-6 months.

The former Ravenscraig Hospital site received adverse reaction locally due to a number of negative reports in local press relating to contamination levels on the site and a new pedestrian crossing. These reports proved to be unsubstantiated. However, this situation highlighted to us that public perception due to unfounded negative press allegations can be a very real development constraint.

Public and political fears have since been allayed but the perception created of the site and the volume of work involved in responding to queries has highlighted a key lesson to be learned: clear public communication is essential to timely progress of a site. We are now investigating the efficacy of requesting a communications strategy with each SHIP submission form and issuing purposeful, clear and informative press releases at a very early stage of any future major SHIP development project.

The Housing Infrastructure Fund aims to assist key strategic housing projects which have been blocked or unable to proceed due to the extent and costs/financing of infrastructure works involved. The Ravenscraig site has benefitted from this additional funding on offsite works to two junctions which allow entrance to the site for general use on the A78 and

emergency vehicular access across a bridge owned by Network Rail. Just under £2 million provided through the Scottish Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund has helped to alleviate these development constraints.

Community benefits

Together with providing contributions to local community groups, all of the RSLs' developers deliver benefits to the community proportional to the value of the development contract. They provide local jobs for local people, apprenticeship opportunities and educational support. They also provide a number of site based work experience placements and contribute to employment fairs throughout the Inverclyde area.

Council Tax on second and empty homes & Developer Contributions

We received £593,000 from Council Tax on Second and Empty Homes for 2019/20, an increase on last year's collection of £459,000. This is due to a combination of increased empty homes levy, the work of our Empty Homes Officer, and more efficient debt collection procedures. From the 1st April 2019 Inverclyde Council introduced a 200% Council tax for properties which have been unoccupied for 12 months or more (it was previously set at 150%).

The number of long term empty (LTE) properties in Inverclyde has decreased from 647 in 2017 (when the Empty Homes Officer was appointed) to 583 as at September 2020. 44 empty properties have been brought back into use with over 50 more current active cases. Moneys from the LTE levy will be redirected into affordable housing in the area. The highest priority for investment with these funds lies in tackling the current degraded condition of the housing stock and contributing to the regeneration of Clune Park.

As a condition in the stock transfer agreement, a development fund was created to hold monies generated from the sale of assets by River Clyde Homes, to be returned to the Council and distributed to assist in affordable housing delivery. In 2014/15 we received £66,124 from River Clyde Homes due to the sale of land. £15,076 of this was paid to the Scottish Government for knotweed remediation and the remainder was used to pay for unforeseen roads works in phase 3 of the Woodhall development. Any further funding received will be channelled to enable the delivery of affordable homes.

A commuted sum of £150,000 is due from the developer of the navy buildings site in Eldon Street, Greenock. Payment of the commuted sum is dependent on the number of private units the developer is able to complete. 38 of the 98 proposed units were built in 2019/20 which delivered a commuted sum of £60,000 to the council.

Inverclyde Council previously received £40,000 from a development at Auchneagh Road, and used the sum to buy out the lease of a commercial property at Cumberland Road to allow for the construction of affordable housing. The original flats have now been demolished, the site is now cleared and ready for site investigation and feasibility stage works, and River Clyde Homes are developing proposals for a potential 20 unit project including technology enabled assistance for older people.

Affordable housing projects for Gypsy/Travellers

Inverclyde Council and Inverclyde HSCP are committed to ensuring equality and diversity. In conjunction with our partners in Police Scotland, we fully recognise the rights and

responsibilities of the Gypsy/Traveller community, and the rights of all residents of Inverclyde to enjoy equity of access to services in an atmosphere free from prejudice and discrimination.

We will at all times adopt an approach of co-operation and assistance in response to encampments to ensure that the rights of Gypsy/Travellers and those in the broader community are mutually respected. The responsibility for co-ordinating Inverclyde Council's services to Gypsy/Travellers lies within the HSCP.

Inverclyde Council has no current official site provision for Gypsy/Travellers, either independently or in conjunction with neighbouring authorities. This being the case, the council fully recognises Scottish Government Guidelines for Managing Unauthorised Camping by Gypsy/Travellers. There have been no unauthorised encampments in the area in the past year.

Equalities and Environmental Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 and highlighted that the LHS is likely to have an impact on a range of people who share protected characteristics. It is clear that those who were experiencing homelessness and those in need of an affordable housing solution will benefit from this strategy given the range of measures to enable vulnerable households to access affordable housing.

The development of the SHIP has taken into account the outcomes of the equalities impact assessment and current strategic environmental assessment undertaken within the current Inverclyde LHS and Local Development Plan. The SHIP aims to improve access to housing and housing related services for everyone including those at risk of social exclusion and disempowerment.

In their SHIP submission forms RSL's describe various measures they will take which will meet the equalities agenda such as homes being built to Housing for Varying Needs standard. The RSLs have developed high specification wheelchair and amenity housing to provide a more complete response to the needs of some residents, and their Allocations Policies will also take account of the requirements of equalities legislation.

A Pre-screening report was submitted to SEA Gateway under Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, indicating that there is no likelihood of significant environmental effects through the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022.

December 2020

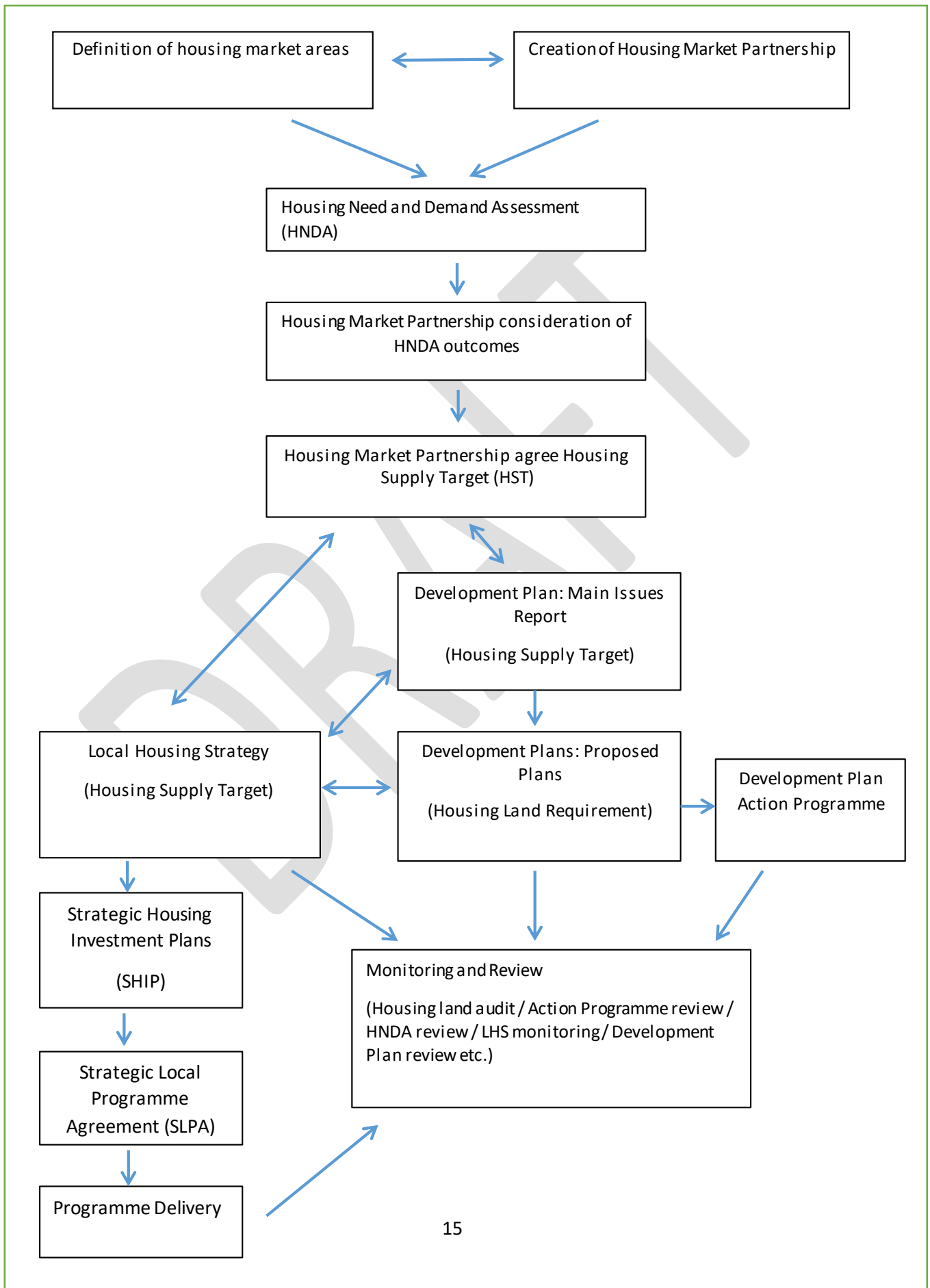
Appendix 1 - Summary of Inverclyde SHIP 2021/22 - 2025/26

PRIORITY PROJECT	AREA	DEVELOPER	UNITS					APPROVAL DATE	COMPLETION DATE					AHSP FUNDING REQUIREMENT	
			Total Units	Type	GN	Specialist Provision	Type of Specialist Provision	Year (Est. or actual)	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total Completions over Period of SHIP	Total funding required Over SHIP Period (£m)
Ravenscraig Hospital	Greenock	Link	149	SR	108	41	16 Wheelchair Accessible / 25 Amenity	2018/19	0	149	0	0	0	149	13.316
Ravenscraig phase 2	Greenock	Link	49	SR	37	12	3 Wheelchair Accessible / 9 Amenity	2019/20	0	49	0	0	0	49	5.053
St Stephens	Port Glasgow	River Clyde Homes	224	SR	176	48	10 Wheelchair Accessible / 38 Amenity	2019/20	224	0	0	0	0	224	16.128
Kings Glen	Greenock	Cloch	57	SR	53	4	Through Care	2017/18	57	0	0	0	0	57	4.031
JWD phase 1 & 2	Greenock	River Clyde Homes	137	SR	129	8	Wheelchair Accessible	2018/19	137	0	0	0	0	137	9.936
Slaemuir Phase 3	Port Glasgow	River Clyde Homes	24	SR	23	1	Wheelchair Accessible	2018/19	24	0	0	0	0	24	1.728
Tweed Street (Bow Farm)	Greenock	Oak Tree	69	SR	67	2	Wheelchair Accessible	2019/20	69	0	0	0	0	69	5.045
Strone Farm	Greenock	Oak Tree	15	SR	15	0		2019/20	15	0	0	0	0	15	1.278
MacLehose Court Remodel	Greenock	Blackwood	21	SR	18	3	Wheelchair Accessible	2020/21	22	0	0	0	0	22	1.584
Acquisition Programme	Inverclyde	TBC	TBC	TBC				2021/22						TBC	TBC
Cumberland Walk	Greenock	RCH	20	SR	18	2	Wheelchair Accessible	2021/22		20					1.44
Total			765		644	121			548	218	0	0	0	746	59.539

SLIPPAGE PROJECT

Houston Street	Greenock	Oak Tree	20	SR	19	1	Wheelchair Accessible	2019/20	0	0	20	0	0	20	1.569
Drumfrochar Road	Greenock	Oak Tree	64	SR	62	2	Wheelchair Accessible	2019/20	0	0	64	0	0	64	5.367
West Stewart St./Argyle Street	Greenock	TBC	24	TBC	21	3	Wheelchair Accessible	2020/21	0	0	24	0	0	24	1.205
To Be Confirmed	TBC	Loretto	37	TBC	34	3	Wheelchair Accessible	2021/22	0	37	0	0	0	37	2.05
An Other 1	TBC	Oak Tree	30	TBC	29	1	Wheelchair Accessible	2022/23	0	0	30	0	0	30	2.354
An Other 2	TBC	Oak Tree	15	TBC	15	0		2022/23	0	0	15	0	0	15	1.177
An Other 3	TBC	Oak Tree	30	TBC	29	1	Wheelchair Accessible	2023/24	0	0	0	30	0	30	2.355
An Other 4	TBC	Oak Tree	15	TBC	15	0		2023/24	0	0	0	15	0	15	1.117
Total			235		224	11			0	37	153	45	0	235	17.194

Figure 1 – The Housing Planning Framework





APPENDIX 2

T: 0131-244 07968
E: lisa.bullen@gov.scot

Local Authority Senior Housing Official

9 July 2020

Dear Colleague

The Scottish Government recognises that local authorities may experience some difficulty in preparing their annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) within the normal submission timescale (end October) due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation. In recognition of this, local authorities should prepare **a light SHIP** only this year covering the period 2021-26

When preparing this document, local authorities should:

- Provide a short narrative summarising any revisions/changes to existing SHIP priorities due to the impact of COVID-19. This should include information on any contingency plans that have either been put in place or there are plans to put in place (for example, the purchase of 'off the shelf' and/or second hand stock to address homelessness). Where local authorities have introduced (or are planning to introduce) new activities / approaches in response to local circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, they should set out clearly how these activities are supporting the priorities and objectives of the Local Housing Strategy. For example, the criteria that the Council is applying in cases where buy backs or other acquisitions are being pursued should be clearly set out.
- Update SHIP Tables to show planned investment priorities for the period 2021–2026 – these should (a) reflect any newly identified priorities (b) take account of delivery delays due to, for example, the introduction of safe operating procedures on construction sites and (c) be reflected on HARP.



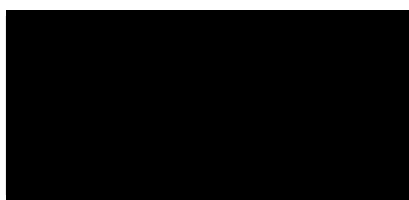
- Provide confirmation that the SHIP has been agreed by the Council's relevant Committee.
- Ensure that the SHIP is submitted to the Scottish Government no later than mid-December 2020 although we encourage it to be sent to us earlier than this date if the local authority is in a position to do so.
- Include information in the narrative on what consultation has been undertaken with stakeholders to help inform any revisions/changes to existing SHIP priorities.

More Homes Division Area Teams will review your SHIP and provide feedback.

For further input on the development of the SHIP please contact your local Area Team Manager in the first instance:

Glasgow & Clyde	Anne-Marie Thomson	Anne-Marie.Thomson@gov.scot
Highlands, Islands & Moray	Mairi Ross Grey	Mairi.RossGrey@gov.scot
North & East	Maureen Esplin	Maureen.Esplin@gov.scot
South East	Alastair Dee	Alastair.Dee@gov.scot
South & West	Pauline Gilroy	Pauline.Gilroy@gov.scot

Regards



Lisa Bullen
Housing Planning Team Leader
More Homes Division

APPENDIX 3

Housing,
and
Social
Justice
Directorate
More
Homes
Martin
McNab
Inverclyde
Council

αβχδεφγη

via email

16 June 2020

Dear Martin

INVERCLYDE COUNCIL STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2020 – 2025

Thank you for submitting the Inverclyde Council Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2020-2025.

More Homes Division is endeavouring to operate as close to normal as possible at this time with staff working remotely during the COVID-19 restrictions. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me or my team.

With the impact of the 'effective lock down' there is a necessary pause in the delivery of affordable homes at what was a critical time in the five year target period, when the final site starts were scheduled to proceed. Once normal activity has resumed we will be clearer about the full effect this will have on the timing of the delivery of these homes. However, it is unlikely we will now meet the 50,000 target by the end of March 2021. This is of course disappointing, as we were on track to deliver on our affordable homes commitment. We are grateful for the incredible amount of work that has been undertaken to date by a wide range of partner organisations towards delivering these homes.

The priority now of course is the health and wellbeing of the people of Scotland and keeping people safe. However, it will be vital in the time ahead to maintain a focus on delivering your council's SHIP priorities. Please be assured that my team and I will work with you as we move forward. We are liaising with the housing sector

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through the SFHA and the SG/COSLA resilience groups and will work with all partners across the housing sector in order that the programme can be progressed, when it is safe for housebuilding to resume.

We know that councils need as much advance notice as possible of longer term resource planning assumptions. In addition to providing RPAs for councils to March 2021, the Scottish Government has provided an interim commitment of £300 million funding certainty for 2021-22 ahead of the spending review later this year, to ensure that affordable homes continue to be delivered.

We will continue to seek updates to SHIPs on an annual basis, and will therefore be seeking an update to your SHIP by 31 October 2020, if that is possible. It remains important that all councils continue to secure the appropriate corporate buy-in to these plans and that there is full corporate and stakeholder support to deliver the projects included in your Strategic Housing Investment Plan. We of course appreciate that there may be difficulties with these arrangements, given the current circumstances, and we can discuss this further at the meeting arranged with you on 29 June 2020.

The Scottish Government has reviewed the SHIP submitted by you for the period 2020 to 2025. I have structured comments around the four overarching themes.

SHIP fit with LHS Outcomes

The SHIP demonstrates a clear fit with the relevant 6 outcomes the Council's LHS. This is helpfully supported by information throughout the document on how these can be delivered through a range of means.

We note that Inverclyde is one of the few Local Authority areas in Scotland projected to have a decrease in population, with net migration a particular issue in the 20's and 30's age groups. We welcome the consideration given to the demographics around this which will inform future plans, particularly in relation to specialist provision. We recognise the Council's consideration to affordable housing solutions across all tenures to meet the needs of its aging population and welcome the consideration given to possible solutions such as New Supplied Shared Equity (NSSE) as a housing option for older people.

The SHIP document highlights that the Council is investigating different ways of supplying housing for older residents, and we welcome the discussions you have been having with RSL and HSCP partners to address the housing and health needs of the authority's older population. It is noted that the Council is seeking to increase the number of units within current SHIP projects which are suitable for older people. Over the period of the SHIP, 148 units across 16 projects are identified for wheelchair or amenity housing which is to be commended. It is further noted this number may increase given discussions around dementia friendly units at the St Stephens development.

As a stock transfer authority, the Council relies on its partners to help it discharge its statutory homelessness duty therefore the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) has been developed with partner organisations. The SHIP outlines a clear fit with the RRTP and this is helpfully supported by information on how RRTP outcomes will be addressed, such as through the RRTP working group with members from across HSCP, RSLs and Council Departments covering Housing Strategy, Commissioning and Finance.

Prioritisation and Deliverability

The SHIP narrative provides a clear description of the decision making process on how projects are prioritised using its revised prioritising methodology. This methodology takes into account how projects meet the local housing need and demand and how they address the LHS outcomes, all within the context of deliverability. The additional information within this year's SHIP showing the points allocated is useful and helps emphasise the level of consideration the Council has given to how the SHIP programme will be achieved.

The additional detail in the SHIP document on how the Council has worked with colleagues in other departments and external public bodies to identify potential development constraints at an early stage is welcomed.

We acknowledge the Council's 'over programmed' approach and note that significant slippage has been built in to the programme over the next 5 years. This is welcome and highlights the continuing ability of the Council to deliver a strong programme. We will agree with the Council the prioritisation of projects within the constraints of the available RPA. The Council is to be commended for considering alternative funding sources such as the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund where appropriate.

The Council has demonstrated a track record of being able to meet its allocated Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) Target with its RSL partners. In the last financial year in particular the Council has been able to take up significant additional resources to its original RPA, enabling new projects to be accommodated in the programme and accelerating other projects from future years.

Local Authority Contribution/ Engagement

The Council has worked with all appropriate service areas, including Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership, and RSLs in the preparation of its SHIP. We note that the Council's Housing Partnership Group is one of the means used to monitor and review the SHIP process and this is to be commended. The Council and its partners have been able to respond to changing circumstances and realise opportunities for additional resources when they have been available.

There is no evidence of wider consultation on the SHIP, such as with tenants and residents organisations, and this may be an aspect the Council may wish to consider in the development of future SHIPs.

Equalities

We note that an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the LHS which indicated the strategy would have a positive impact on a range of people who share protected characteristics. It is not clear however whether the SHIP 2020-25 update was subjected to an Integrated Impact Assessment and we would request that the Council address this in future to identify any concerns about the way the delivery of the SHIP is likely to affect any of the equalities groupings. The SHIP document confirms that a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been carried out on the LHS however it would also be useful to carry out a pre-screening assessment of the SHIP in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

The SHIP document highlights work the Council is undertaking to harmonise categories of supported accommodation across all social landlords in Inverclyde to develop a knowledge base and map availability of current supply across different communities which is to be commended. We also welcome the establishment of working group, comprising representatives of the Housing Partnership Group, to conduct a Specialist Provision Housing Review and look forward to seeing the outcome of this research

The SHIP document indicates that with over 800 units proposed in the SHIP period, and the Council's current 3% wheelchair accessible target, there is an expectation that around 30 wheelchair accessible units will become available in the next 5 years. We would highlight the requirement for local authorities to have all tenure targets and require clarification that targets meets the definition of homes suitable for wheelchair users to live in as set out in section 3 of the wheelchair accessible housing guidance. Please refer to my colleague Lisa Bullen's letter dated 19 December 2019 on wheelchair accessible housing targets across all tenures which asks all local authorities to provide details to the Scottish Government of their all tenure targets and the work to support its implementation.

While the SHIP highlights the issue of unauthorised encampments on a short-term basis by the Gypsy/Traveller community when travelling through Inverclyde, the document does not include details of any specific housing proposals to support the gypsy traveller community. This is an issue the Council may wish to develop, in consultation with neighbouring authorities, for the next SHIP.

General comments

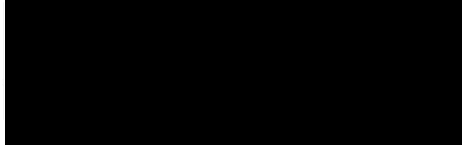
- The 2020-21 to 2024-25 SHIP was submitted as a "Consultative Draft". It is not clear if Council Committee approval has been granted as the submitted SHIP has not been made "Live" on HARP.

- We note that the narrative and Table 1 was completed and submitted timeously to the Scottish Government and that the 2020 SHIP (Table 1) was submitted on HARP. We would emphasise that the 2021 SHIP (for the 5 year period 2021/22-2025/26), due for submission by local authorities, if possible by 31 October 2020, should also be submitted on HARP.
- It is noted that the SHIP document includes reference to a potential HIF project at the former Ravenscraig Hospital site. It should be noted that whilst the document states the development had benefited from the HIF, the junction works mentioned were only approved for HIF support in February 2020 and the bridge works are subject to a current application and appraisal
- The SHIP document provides good detail on all topic matters though we would welcome further detail in the next SHIP in relation to the impact the plan will have on equalities groups. The SHIP is well laid out and covers assessment of the key strategic priorities of the Council. It links to other strategic documents and seeks to address the priorities laid out in these documents by identifying a number of development opportunities. The scale of development proposed matches that of recent years and the number of new project opportunities remains high.
- The SHIP document is developed in accordance with the current Scottish Government Guidance issued in August 2019. Methods of project prioritisation have been illustrated and constraints have been addressed through the SHIP process and there is a project prioritisation weighting matrix to ensure that projects are deliverable and meet strategic objectives. The SHIP also addresses the contribution that the project priorities make to energy efficiency, environmental standards and sustainability.
- The SHIP demonstrates a significant level of ambition from the Council including a healthy programme going forward and we will agree with you how the identified programme is to be delivered within the context of available resources.
- We note the Council received £459,000 from Council Tax on Second Homes in 2018/19 and that the Council prioritise these funds to tackling the condition of the housing stock in the Clune Park estate as part of a co-ordinated strategic approach to tackling the issues within this area.
- The Development Fund, created under the terms of the stock transfer to River Clyde Homes, exists to hold monies generated from the sale of assets by RCH. The implication in the SHIP document is that this Fund currently does not hold any resources and we would welcome further discussion with the Council on this in the context of disposals approved by Scottish Ministers in the past few years.

I hope that you find these comments helpful as you take the SHIP forward. In the meantime, please contact me if you want to discuss the contents of this letter further, or any other aspect of the SHIP process.

Please continue to ensure that the SHIP is an available plan that is published on the Inverclyde Council website once the final version of the SHIP has been agreed.

Yours sincerely



Anne-Marie Thomson
Area Manager - Glasgow and Clyde
More Homes Division