
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	14 January 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	ENV003/21/MM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 2020 Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the progress to date on the implementation of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 outcomes and action plan.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy supported by an assessment of housing need, demand and provision. The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022 was approved by the Education and Communities Committee in March 2017.
- 2.2 The LHS sets the vision for housing and housing related services in Inverclyde over the five year period between 2017 and 2022. The overarching aim of the strategy is to make Inverclyde a place where people have access to quality, affordable homes in sustainable communities over the duration of the strategy.
- 2.3 The Scottish Government published new LHS guidance in September 2019. The guidance now outlines that it is a statutory requirement for a LHS to be kept under review. The Scottish Government now expects all Local Authorities to review and report on progress annually. To meet the statutory requirements, the attached LHS update (Appendix) evaluates progress made over the past year, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, by Inverclyde Council and its partners on the Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 outcomes since the 2019 update.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the 2020 update on the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 and the progress made to date.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy supported by an assessment of housing need, demand and provision. The Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 was approved by the Education and Communities Committee in March 2017. The Scottish Government published new LHS guidance in September 2019. The guidance now outlines it is a statutory requirement for a LHS to be kept under review. The Scottish Government now expects all Local Authorities to review and report on progress annually. To meet the statutory requirements of the Council, the attached LHS update (Appendix) evaluates progress made over the past year, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, by Inverclyde Council and its partners on the Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 outcomes since the 2019 update.
- 4.2 Underpinning delivery of the LHS is effective partnership working. Contribution towards the implementation of the LHS action plan since its publication has been provided from key stakeholders including:
- Inverclyde Council (Housing Strategy, Planning, Finance and Legal),
 - Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership,
 - Local RSL partners (Cloch Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association. River Clyde Homes, Oak Tree Housing Association),
 - National RSL partners (Link Housing, Sanctuary Housing) and,
 - Third Sector Partners.
- 4.3 The objective of the LHS is to make Inverclyde a place where people have access to quality, affordable homes in sustainable communities over the duration of the strategy. This vision is supported by six overarching strategic outcomes which are reported on within the LHS update (Appendix). These outcomes are:
- Outcome 1: Access to Housing. To promote the supply of good quality affordable housing solutions across all tenures.
 - Outcome 2: Sustainable Places. To ensure that Inverclyde has sustainable, attractive and well-designed communities with well-functioning town centres.
 - Outcome 3: Preventing homelessness. To prevent homelessness where possible through provision of ongoing support to meet the needs of individuals.
 - Outcome 4: Housing and Health. To ensure that people are supported to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities.
 - Outcome 5: Affordable Warmth and Climate Change. To tackle fuel poverty and contribute to meeting the climate change target.
 - Outcome 6: Improving Housing Quality. To improve stock condition across all tenures.
- 4.4 The uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will undoubtedly have a significant impact upon economic activity both in a local and national context. Housing development was halted in March 2020 due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant national lockdown. The shut down and phased return of construction delayed progress on the supply of new affordable homes. Construction sites were closed which resulted in delays to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) programme and underspend of the available Scottish Government grant to deliver affordable housing development.
- 4.5 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 RPA. The delivery of around 800 units across Inverclyde through projects previously estimated for completion by March 2021 were mainly be delayed by three to six months following the easing of lockdown measures.
- 4.6 An updated iteration of the Inverclyde Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) was submitted to the Scottish Government in July 2020. Inverclyde HSCP were notified that year two rapid rehousing funding for 2020/21 was £44,000. The plan is to utilise the start-up costs (£30k funding); the year one funding (£53k) and the year two funding (£44k) totalling £127,000 to part fund a Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer for 23 months (£96,600). A Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer has now been recruited by the HSCP and commenced employment in

October 2020. The officer is responsible for the RRTP working groups and coordinating Inverclyde's response to tackling homelessness in relation to the rapid rehousing agenda.

- 4.7 A working group formed of members (Housing Strategy and Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living) of the Housing Partnership Group (HPG) is undertaking a review of specialist housing provision in Inverclyde. The forecasted growth in the older age population in Inverclyde brings with it significant challenges and a prospective increase in demand for specialist housing. This work is to outline the housing requirements of particular needs groups in Inverclyde. The working group has found this work to be of a significant scale and resource intensive. It is for this reason that progress of the review has initially focused on wheelchair accessible housing although significant work has commenced and will be on-going to investigate the needs of all support groups.
- 4.8 Following the initial review process the working group drafted a suite of recommendations. If agreed, these recommendations will form a subsequently agreed action plan with lead officer ownership across the Housing Partnership Group. Actions will be addressed by working groups comprised of members of the HPG which will be responsible for identifying future specific specialist housing needs. A draft report has been shared with the HPG with a final draft of the review to be shared with the group in early 2021, following consultation, to finalise the report.
- 4.9 Planning consultants, GL Hearn were appointed in April 2020 to undertake research, consultation and produce a development strategy for the Eastern Gateway area of Port Glasgow. This area forms the entry point to Inverclyde for visitors travelling from the west along the A8/M8 corridor from Renfrewshire and the Glasgow City Region. The Eastern Gateway is viewed to be of strategic significance to Inverclyde for attracting investment including private sector housing. This is owing to the excellent transport links to the wider Glasgow City Region, the relatively flat topography of the land, views across the River Clyde and access to services which together contribute towards creating an attractive proposition for prospective residents.
- 4.10 The study has been informed by a detailed programme of engagement with residents, other interested members of the public and stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors. The final report which outlines a long term and joined up strategy for the housing led regeneration of the area will be submitted to the Council in 2021.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Strategic

The Local Housing Strategy is a key strategic document.

5.2 Financial

There are no financial implications of this update.

Financial Implications - One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

None

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

5.3 Human Resources

None

5.4 Legal

None

5.5 Equalities

When delivering services to our customers, full cognisance is taken of equality and diversity processes and procedures.

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive 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?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO

5.6 Repopulation

The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 is a cross tenure document which sets the vision for housing and housing related services within the region. The strategy outlines Housing Supply Targets based on an assessment of housing need and demand. Targets agreed in accordance with the Inverclyde Local Development Plan have been set to exceed

housing supply estimates as a method of encouraging growth in the housing supply in both the social and private sectors. This approach is anticipated to encourage retention of Inverclyde residents and in-migration based on an improved housing supply offer which meets the needs of current and prospective residents.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 In developing this LHS the following were consulted:

- Inverclyde Council (Housing Strategy, Planning, Finance and Legal),
- Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership,
- Local RSL partners (Cloch Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association. River Clyde Homes, Oak Tree Housing Association),
- National RSL partners (Link Housing, Sanctuary Housing) and,
- Third Sector Partners.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Updates to the LHS are produced annually the last iteration being:

Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022: 2019 Update Environment & Regeneration Committee 31 October 2019 **ENV048/19/MM**

Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy

2017-2022

2020 Update



Inverclyde
council



Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Housing Strategy supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-2022 was approved by the Education and Communities Committee in March 2017. The Inverclyde Alliance Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2022 sets the vision for Inverclyde as:

'Nurturing Inverclyde: Getting it right for every Child, Citizen and Community'

The LHS contributes towards attaining this vision by outlining the outcomes for housing and housing related services in Inverclyde over the five year period between 2017 and 2022. The overarching aim of the strategy is to make Inverclyde a place where people have access to quality, affordable homes in sustainable communities over the duration of the strategy. Underpinning delivery of the LHS is effective partnership working. Contribution towards the implementation of the LHS action plan has been provided from key stakeholders including:

- Inverclyde Council (Housing Strategy, Planning, Finance and Legal),
- Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP),
- Local Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners (Cloch Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association, River Clyde Homes, Oak Tree Housing Association,
- National RSL partners (Link Housing, Sanctuary Housing), and
- Third Sector Partners.

In July 2019, the Scottish Government published their vision for 'Housing to 2040' outlining their future aspirations for an effective housing system in Scotland. The paper notes that housing has a vital role to play in meeting many of the Scottish Government's ambitions for Scotland, including eradicating child poverty and homelessness, ending fuel poverty, tackling the effects of climate change and promoting inclusive growth. The challenges facing Scotland are also key issues within Inverclyde. Inverclyde Council responded to this consultation outlining the key housing issues which face Inverclyde, demonstrating the barriers which need to be overcome locally to work towards meeting the 2040 vision and principles. The LHS will continue to work towards addressing these issues and beyond the duration of the strategy into future editions of the LHS. These issues are inclusive of:

- We have an ageing population and people are living longer;
- The number of households is growing and more people are living alone;
- We need to mitigate the impact of climate change;
- We must act on homelessness;
- We want to tackle child poverty; and
- We need to manage the impact of Brexit and the UK Government's welfare reforms.

The Scottish Government published new LHS guidance in September 2019. It is a statutory requirement for an LHS to be kept under review. The Scottish Government now expects all local authorities to review and report on progress annually. The following update will therefore evaluate progress made over the past year, in light of the Coronavirus pandemic, by Inverclyde Council and its partners on the Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 outcomes since the 2019 update.

Responding to Covid-19

2020 was a pivotal moment for local government, public services and society in general. The COVID-19 pandemic and responses have had and will have far reaching consequences and it is still unknown whether these will be short-lived or if the sheer scale and scope of this crisis will usher in some more fundamental change. Inverclyde Council's ongoing response to Covid-19 is co-ordinated by the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT), which has responsibility for all strategic matters with tactical arrangements discussed and proposed via the Council Resilience Management Team (CRMT). All Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings were suspended from 24th March 2020 and power transferred to the Policy & Resources Executive Sub Committee to consider and approve the decisions taken by the CMT. The normal committee cycle resumed in August 2020 albeit with committees held virtually.

The uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic will undoubtedly have a significant impact upon economic activity both in a local and national context. Housing development was halted in March 2020 due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the resultant national lockdown. The shut down and phased return of construction delayed progress on the supply of new affordable homes. Construction sites were closed which resulted in delays to the Strategic Housing Investment Plan programme 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 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 RPA. The delivery of around 800 units across Inverclyde through projects previously estimated for completion by March 2021 will now mainly be delayed by three to six months following the easing of lockdown measures. The pandemic is also likely to have a significant impact upon housing markets and the operational processes of both homelessness services in the near and distant future.

The Scottish Government passed emergency legislation to protect tenants in Scotland during the COVID-19 outbreak who may be experiencing financial hardship. The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 protects tenants in Scotland from any eviction action for up to six months. This applies to both the private and social rented housing sectors and will ensure the position is absolutely clear for all landlords and tenants in Scotland. This new legislation temporarily extends the amount of notice landlords must give when ending a tenancy. In most cases landlords will now need to give tenants six months' notice, unless they are ending the tenancy for particular reasons, including antisocial and criminal behaviour by the tenant, or where the landlord or their family need to move into the property where the notice period is 3 months.

The legislation also temporarily makes all grounds for eviction in the private rented sector (PRS) discretionary, ensuring that the First Tier Tribunal (FTT) will be able to use discretion and take all factors relating to the impact of COVID-19 has had on both the landlord and tenant into account before deciding whether to issue an eviction order or not.

The pandemic fundamentally changed the homelessness picture within Inverclyde. In March 2020, with the pandemic unfolding nationally and internationally, a number of key challenges emerged which required a new response locally. These challenges have inadvertently proved beneficial in helping to consider future delivery.

- Public health advice was sought regarding the use of shared accommodation units and ability to implement social distancing, along with need for self-isolation. This led to decreasing the service user population accommodated within the Inverclyde Centre from 31 units to 15. A number of service users required to be moved out of the centre into temporary furnished flats.
- Due to Covid-19 the Scottish Government implemented the Early Prisoner Release Scheme (EPRS) for eligible prisoners due to be liberated in the 12 week period from 4th May 2020 to 31st July 2020. Within Inverclyde during the month of May, 11 prisoners were released under the EPR scheme with 7 being accommodated via homelessness within temporary accommodation. This is in addition to the normal prison liberations which have continued throughout.
- An increase in homelessness presentations has continued throughout the Covid period due to a range of factors, including family/relationship breakdowns and people no longer able to stay in their previous accommodation (Inverclyde HSCP, 2020).

In order to respond to these challenges, an increase in temporary furnished flats (TFFs) within the community was required with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) supporting this by providing an additional 40 flats to the service throughout the first eight weeks of Covid. There are now 65 TFFs within Inverclyde, in the main within Greenock and Port Glasgow. Presentations have continued to increase locally in particular with increasing numbers of young people presenting through family breakdown. Unfortunately this has resulted in an increased use of bed and breakfast accommodation during Covid. Therefore, it is anticipated that to continue to deliver appropriate services post Covid lockdown, the increase in TFFs will require to continue for a period of time (Inverclyde HSCP, 2020). These issues will be examined and addressed through the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan process.

Development and Regeneration

Outcome 1, Access to Housing: Provide a supply of good quality affordable housing solutions across all tenures

The Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 presents that one of the significant challenges to Inverclyde is the projected demographic changes to the region and in particular an ageing and declining population. 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. The key priorities are therefore to encourage population growth in Inverclyde to address depopulation and provide housing solutions for the ageing demographic residing in the region

The average house price in Inverclyde is lower than the Scottish average, indicating owner occupation is a more affordable option than in other areas of Scotland. The UK house price index lists the average house price for Inverclyde was £99,806 in comparison to the average house price being £153,294 for Scotland between August 2019 and August 2020.

Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP)

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 2021 for Inverclyde 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 2.8m 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.

Two affordable housing developments have reached completion in Inverclyde since last years' SHIP. Combined, Auchmead Road in Greenock, and the Slaemuir regeneration in Port Glasgow by Oak Tree and River Clyde Homes respectively offer 76 new units for social rent. As previously noted, the shut down and phased return of construction due to the initial lockdown over the months of March, April and May has delayed progress on the supply of new affordable homes in Inverclyde. Much of the targets and agreed spend on the house building programme which were scheduled to complete by March 2021 have been delayed with some projects carrying on into the 2021/22 financial year if they are not completed on time.

Blackwood Group

Following the decommission of support services in Inverclyde, Blackwood Homes are remodelling their existing Maclehose Court complex in the West End of Greenock. The remodelling of the MacLehose Court care home will result in 22 additional homes being brought to the west end of Greenock; a mixture of one, two and three 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.

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 as Through Care accommodation.

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 include 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. These types of housing will support residents to live independently for as long as possible in their own homes and communities. This variety and number of new affordable homes will improve community cohesion, lift local asset values and assist future regeneration.

Oak Tree

The Auchmead Road development, now known as 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 also worked with the HSCP to provide Through Care accommodation for safe accommodation to rent to young people.

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 including 32 houses which can be readily adapted to accommodate wheelchair accessibility. The plan to deliver 16 units at Strone Farm comprising of two, three, and four bed houses 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

The Slaemuir site in Port Glasgow is a three phase development which will provide 96 units of varying house type including three bedroom family homes, one bedroom flats and

wheelchair housing. Phase 2 which completed in August 2020 comprises of 40 units of one bed flats and two bed cottages and adds to the 32 units completed in Phase 1 last year.

River Clyde Homes have a number of other sites in the current SHIP 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.

Sanctuary

Sanctuary Group has four 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.

Housing Need and Demand and the Local Development Plan

A Development Plan is a statutory document prepared by planning authorities which sets out the strategy and policies for the use of land and buildings within the area it covers and is the principle basis for the determination of planning applications. Inverclyde's current Local Development Plan ('LDP'), which was adopted in 2019, forms the Development Plan for Inverclyde. However, an appeal to the Court of Session regarding the methodology used to calculate the plan's housing land requirement was successful and the housing chapter of the LDP was quashed as a result.

The removal of Chapter 7 means that the current Plan does not provide a development plan policy context for housing and community facility development. Subsequently, work has commenced on preparing a new proposed plan with a timeline for adoption by April 2022.

Work has also commenced on the development of the forthcoming Glasgow and Clyde Valley Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA3). Members of Housing Strategy and Planning Policy act as representatives for Inverclyde Council within this process. It is anticipated this work shall be completed in 2021 This will provide a future robust and credible evidence base for the development of the next LHS and provide estimations of housing need and demand in Inverclyde to inform both the the LDP and LHS.

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

Net migration, particularly of the 20s to 30s age group, continues to be a major contributor to depopulation across Inverclyde. The rate of population decline was projected to slow between the years of 2012-2024, then increase again from 2024-2037. Recently published (2 October 2020) National Records of Scotland (NRS) 2018 based population and household projections show household growth has occurred in Inverclyde since 2012, contrary to the 2012-based projection. Nevertheless the 2018-based projection still shows decline from 2018 onwards so projected population decline remains a challenge.

A decline in the working age population, along with a lower than average projected household formation rate is combining to create a decline in households over the period to 2029. This will reduce the number of family-sized and working age households; resulting in

implications for the local economy in terms of lower tax contributions. It will also put further pressures on already stretched services.

As noted within Inverclyde Council's Housing to 2040 submission to the Scottish Government, there is demand for new owner-occupied homes in Inverclyde, but the market has not recovered enough to provide these at scale within the region since the recession. The subsequent effect of this means that families with aspirations to own a new build private home have limited choices in Inverclyde and in some instances will be leaving to meet their demands elsewhere, further contributing to depopulation. This means it is important that Inverclyde has a variety of housing options to cater for households at different income entry points, which has been a focus of ongoing work to regenerate Inverclyde and create sustainable communities.

Strategic Housing Priority Areas

The Inverclyde Alliance have set as one of the priority actions within the Inverclyde Outcomes Improvement Plan, 'for the population to be stable and sustainable with an appropriate balance of socio - economic groups that is conducive to local economic prosperity and longer term population growth.' Subsequently, the Inverclyde Alliance developed a Repopulation Strategy and Action Plan to achieve the overarching goal to 'halt and reverse the de-population of Inverclyde by 2025 through improving the employment, housing and infrastructure offer.'

Planning consultants, GL Hearn were appointed in April 2020 to undertake research, consultation and produce a development strategy for the Eastern Gateway area of Port Glasgow. This area forms the entry point to Inverclyde for visitors travelling from the west along the A8/M8 corridor from Renfrewshire and the Glasgow City Region. The Eastern Gateway is viewed to be of strategic significance to Inverclyde for attracting investment including private sector housing. This is owing to the excellent transport links to the wider City Region, the relatively flat topography of the land, views across the River Clyde and access to services, contributing towards creating an attractive proposition for prospective residents. The study has been informed by a detailed programme of engagement with residents, other interested members of the public and stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors. The final report which outlines a long term and joined up strategy for the housing led regeneration of the area will be submitted to the Council in early 2021.

The publication of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data in January 2020 presented that the Greenock town centre and East Central S01010891 datazone has replaced Ferguslie Park in Paisley, Renfrewshire as the most deprived area of Scotland. The Environment and Regeneration committee agreed that a similar approach should be taken forward in other key strategic areas of Inverclyde to tackle issues of depopulation and deprivation. These studies will form the basis for Strategic Housing Priority Areas (SPHA) with Greenock town centre and Central Port Glasgow identified as localities in need of attention.

Empty Homes and Clune Park

Empty homes are a wasted resource and can often cause a blight on local communities and surrounding areas. Empty Homes will not solve housing supply issues alone but they can be part of a holistic approach to increase the availability of housing and help regenerate communities. Homes can become empty for a number of reasons, with most empty for only

a short time while awaiting sale, let or renovation. There are also homes which are vacant for some time, not being actively marketed for sale or for rent, are fit for occupation and the owner is not actively trying to bring the property back into residential use. Properties are considered to be long-term empty after six months of non-occupation. To create attractive and sustainable places one of the key aims of the Inverclyde LHS 2017-2022 is to tackle empty homes and low demand, unattractive housing stock causing blight on the area.

The Empty Homes service was set to end in May 2019, however RCH and the Council agreed to extend the post and continue joint funding until May 2020, it was anticipated that the Council would take over 100% of the post at this time. However, due to Covid-19, Council priorities were unable to permit this at that time. The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership together with the Council will continue to fund the post until May 2021. The Council will continue to manage the post however, in order to streamline the process, it was agreed the Empty Homes Officer will continue to be employed by River Clyde Homes and placed on a secondment with Inverclyde Council, Environmental & Public Protection Service.

When the post was created in 2017 there were 647 long term empty properties (properties empty for 6 months or more). The number of long term empty (LTE) properties in Inverclyde (as of September 2020) is now 583 as per Council Tax records. Since the post was created there has been a decrease of 11% long term empty properties and 44 empty properties have been brought back into use (as of September 2020) with over 50 more active cases currently being pursued. Through the Local Housing Strategy, action will be taken to bring more long-term empty properties back into residential use and to ensure that there is an overall reduction in the number of long-term empty homes.

Furthermore, work continues on acquiring properties to be held empty in the Clune Park regeneration area with a future aspiration for demolition of the tenement properties and regeneration of the area. Between April 2019 and March 2020 a further 27 properties were acquired for demolition. The Clune Park task group identified the requirement for a strategic development brief to be produced. Work on this paper is on-going and will outline a strategic vision detailing the Council's aspirations for a new community at Clune Park, clearly articulating these objectives to any prospective delivery partners. This paper will tie in with the overarching goals and visions determined by the Eastern Gateway Development Strategy.

Acquisition Programme

Following last years (2019) report by North Star Consultancy analysing the effect of new build affordable housing on our existing stock, we are conscious that delivering new housing is not always the most appropriate method of meeting housing need. 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 and creating sustainable communities in 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.

Specialist Housing Provision & Homelessness

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

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long-term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping. Informed by evidence based research, the basis of recommendations to address homelessness in Scotland is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach utilising a Housing First model where necessary. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) is reported annually as part of the SHIP process, reflected in the LHS, and fully integrated into Health & Social Care Partnership strategic plans. Separately, delivery of the plan will be reported through the Health and Social Care Committee and the Integration Joint Board.

Rapid Rehousing, Year 1 progress, future plans & funding

The Inverclyde HSCP led the work to develop the RRTP for Inverclyde in collaboration with Housing Strategy, and the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) that operate within Inverclyde. Due to senior management capacity, the steering group took a period of time to be established. It was agreed that it would be chaired jointly by the Head of Strategy and Support Services from the HSCP and the Head of Environmental & Public Protection.

Following the submission of the Inverclyde RRTP 2019/20 - 2024/25, the Inverclyde RRTP steering group was established in Autumn 2019. The steering group is constituted by members from key stakeholders inclusive of the HSCP, RSLs and Inverclyde Council's Housing Strategy team. The steering group meets on a quarterly basis with a schedule of meetings in place to take forward oversight of the delivery of the RRTP.

The two sub groups, which will focus on the delivery of Housing Options and Housing First in Inverclyde, are now in operation and are developing work plans. The Housing Options Sub group is considering the use of the wider Private Rented sector which is not traditionally utilised within Inverclyde to ensure there is a larger portfolio of options for service users.

As previously highlighted, the Covid-19 pandemic has drastically influenced the response to providing temporary accommodation and homelessness service provision. During the initial national lockdown, the Homelessness service had to very quickly increase the number of temporary furnished flats taken on from the RSLs by the Homelessness services and plans are now in place for a pilot to "flip" four tenancies with our biggest local RSL, River Clyde Homes.

A new iteration of the Inverclyde RRTP was submitted to the Scottish Government in July 2020 and feedback has been received. Inverclyde HSCP were notified that year two rapid rehousing funding for 2020/21 was £44,000. The plan is to utilise the start-up costs (£30k funding); the year one funding (£53k) and the year two funding (£44k) totalling £127,000 to part fund a Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer for 23 months (£96,600).

A Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer has now been recruited by the HSCP and commenced employment in October 2020. The officer is responsible for the RRTP working groups and coordinating Inverclyde's response to tackling homelessness in relation to the rapid rehousing agenda.

Working with the homelessness service and local RSLs, we are conducting a post-covid audit of temporary accommodation housing needs by size, area and type of homeless households to help determine additional affordable rented supply requirements and we are currently investigating the purchase of properties currently on the market through the proposed Acquisition Programme to meet requirements.

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

Specialist Housing Provision Review

A shared vision of both the LHS and the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is to enable and support people to live independently at home or in a homely setting within our communities. Given the policy direction set both locally and nationally, the forecasted growth in the older age population in Inverclyde brings with it significant challenges and a prospective increase in demand for specialist housing provision. Delivery of housing, health and wellbeing outcomes for Inverclyde is underpinned by effective partnership working within the Housing Partnership Group (HPG). The group consists of:

- Inverclyde Council (Housing Strategy),
- Inverclyde HSCP,
- Local RSLs, and
- Third Sector Partners.

It was identified within the production of the Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) (developed in partnership with the Inverclyde HSCP) that there was a requirement to conduct a review of specialist housing provision. An action was included within the HCS action plan to 'use evidence based need and demand to identify the specialist provision housing requirement early in the planning of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme.

A working group formed of members of the HPG (Housing Strategy and Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living) is undertaking a review of specialist housing provision (SHPR) in Inverclyde. Given the policy direction set both locally and nationally, the forecasted growth in the older age population in Inverclyde brings with it significant challenges and a prospective increase in demand for specialist housing. This work is to outline the housing requirements of particular needs groups in Inverclyde.

The working group aimed to ensure that robust data on local specialist housing to inform need, demand and supply was gathered to inform the specialist housing requirements of the residents of Inverclyde. Throughout this process, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected to build a well-rounded and informed evidence base. It was important for the working group to review current processes and partnership working to understand where relationships, current practices and processes can be improved as well as analysing demographic profiles, projections and housing need and demand data. The working group has found this work to be of a significant scale and resource intensive. It is for this reason that progress of the review

has initially focused on wheelchair accessible housing although significant work has commenced and will be on-going to investigate the needs of all support groups.

The 'Still Minding the Step' document published by Horizon Housing is the only research in Scotland to apply a statistical approach to calculate the housing needs of wheelchair users (Horizon Housing, Mind the Step, 2019). This research offers a methodology to estimate wheelchair accessible housing need in Scotland based on new, up to date projections.

By applying the 'still minding the step' methodology to Inverclyde projections, it is estimated that in 2016 there were 266 households with unmet wheelchair accessible housing need, rising to 456 households in 2026. Local data, at the time of collation, demonstrated that there were currently 37 households who required either a bespoke new build property or to be let an existing wheelchair accessible property. These properties are therefore reliant on turnover in stock, of which there are only 85 properties classified as wheelchair adapted in Inverclyde. The housing reports shared by ICIL also outlined 85 clients required some form of housing solution to enable them to live independently within their own home.

The information and data within the draft review suggests that more wheelchair accessible housing is required with housing need ever changing, following the initial review process the working group drafted a suite of recommendations. If agreed, these recommendations will form a subsequently agreed action plan with lead officer ownership across the Housing Partnership Group. Actions will be addressed by working groups comprised of members of the HPG which will be responsible for identifying future specific specialist housing needs. A draft report has been shared with the HPG with a final draft of the review to be shared in early 2021 following consultation.

Development

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

Housing Strategy 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.

The current LHS stipulates that 3% of all new social rented housing should meet wheelchair accessible standards. A focus of the Specialist Housing Provision Review has been to engage with developing RSLs to ensure this target is being met and that specialist provision housing is well represented within the current programme inclusive of wheelchair accessible housing, amenity, dementia friendly housing, through care and adaptable housing.

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.

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.

Adaptations

Intrinsically linked with the review of specialist housing provision, the HCS also requires a joint review of adaptations to be conducted by the HPG which will commence in 2021. The total number of requests for adaptations to RSL's for 2019/20 was 662 which was an increase from the previous year where there were 629 requests. In the private sector there were 64 adaptations carried out in 2019/20 and 180 in 2018/19.

Scheme of Assistance

Housing adaptations and other preventative services are essential to both improving housing quality within the private sector and ensure homeowners are supported to live independently at home in a property which is appropriate for their needs. The Scheme of Assistance (SOA) provides assistance to allow disabled or elderly people to live in their homes independently for longer. The SOA assisted 169 households in 2019/20 with £610,161 funding being used to facilitate this. The services have maintained a consistent demand between 2015 and 2020.

The support available to those living in the private sector, including the PRS includes:

- Adapt their homes to meet the needs of a disabled or elderly person
- Access 'Care & Repair' and 'Small Repairs' services for Inverclyde
- Tackle fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of housing in the private sector.

When a house no longer meets the needs of a disabled or elderly person, The Council, through the HSCP, will assess a person's needs for equipment or an adaptation to allow them to continue to live in their house independently for as long as possible. The assessment is carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT), and, if appropriate, they will make a referral for grant assistance. The following is an example of the most common works eligible for grant assistance:

- Wet floor shower area
- Level access shower
- Over bath shower
- Doorway widening
 - Through floor lift

- Stair lift
- External stair lift
- Access ramp
- Professional fee's; Architects/Surveyors etc. including fees for work that might not go ahead

In some cases if the homeowner's property is no longer suitable to meet their needs and adaptations are not practical, alternative solutions maybe suggested by an OT including moving to a more suitable house. In such circumstances financial assistance can be offered to assist with moving expenses.

All OT referrals for grant assistance are made to Care and Repair who will assist with progressing the required works and the grant application.

Care & Repair' and 'Small Repairs' services for Inverclyde

Care and Repair provide a full project management service for grant eligible adaptation works, including carrying out home visits, providing advice and practical assistance with the grant application process to the Council. This will include assisting in the completion of application forms, carrying out a financial assessment of clients to determine grant entitlement, obtaining quotations from a procured list of contractors or a main contractor from the Trusted Trader scheme and assisting clients to make informed decisions to proceed with adaptations

Care and Repair also operate a Small Repairs Service for plumbing, electrical, joinery and general household jobs, including:

- Fitting battery operated smoke alarms and replacing batteries.
- Changing light bulbs / light fittings, wiring plugs, changing fuses and taking down and re-fitting light shades for cleaning.
- Putting up / repairing shelves and or cupboard doors.
- Fitting curtain rails and hanging curtains.
- Fitting small accessories to the bathroom and or kitchen.
- Fit roller blinds.

Care and Repair and Small Repairs services for Inverclyde are managed by Bridgewater Housing Association and are available to homeowners and tenants in the private sector who are either disabled or are over 60 years of age

Work will continue over the duration of the LHS and thereafter to realise the outcomes set within the HCS, ensuring people are supported to live independently in their own homes and communities.

Housing Quality, Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Outcome 5, Affordable Warmth and Climate Change: Tackling fuel poverty and contributing towards meeting the climate change target

Climate change, tackling fuel poverty and ensuring an adequate housing supply which is fit for purpose remain key priorities for both the Scottish Government and locally in Inverclyde. In Inverclyde as across Scotland, many people do not live in a house that is warm, dry and affordable, with people on low incomes being disproportionately affected. Local Councils, COSLA and the Scottish Government are working hard to deal with fuel poverty, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to tackle the threat of climate change.

Fuel poverty is defined by the Scottish Government as a proportion of household income required to heat a home to an adequate level. The mean household income for Inverclyde is £28,786 which is lower than the average of £31,977 for Scotland. This is particularly concerning with regards to households in Inverclyde with older residents who are at particular risk of experiencing fuel poverty (Scottish Government, Scottish House Condition Survey 2016-2018, 2020). Table 1 demonstrates that fuel poverty and extreme fuel poverty has decreased in Inverclyde since last reported on in the LHS

Table 1: Fuel Poverty and Extreme Fuel Poverty in Inverclyde (Source Scottish House Condition Survey)

	% of Local Authority		Fuel Poverty by Household attribute		
	in Fuel Poverty	in extreme Fuel Poverty	Older People	Families	Other
2013-15 SHCS	41	7	60	37	52
2014-16 SHCS	38	8	51	33	30
2015-17 SHCS	31	6	41	21	26
2016-18 SHCS	31*	14*	36*	31*	27*

**These are a best estimate of fuel poverty/extreme fuel poverty under the new definition of fuel poverty and cannot be compared to previous local authority analysis figures.*

As part of a range of programmes aimed at achieving these objectives, the Scottish Government has developed and funded Energy Efficiency Scotland Area Based Scheme (ABS). From 2013 to date a total over £11,733,853 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 2353 properties in Inverclyde, making homes more energy efficient and cheaper to keep warm and dry.

Inverclyde Council continue to provide funding for the HSCP Affordable Warmth Scheme through i.HEAT. This funding allows i.HEAT to provide support to Inverclyde households across tenure who have a family member aged 75 or over. If the household is in, or in danger of fuel poverty, i.HEAT provides a token payment of £150 to enable the household to heat their property. During 2019/20, i.HEAT provided £19,125 funding to these households. As part of this funding, i.HEAT were also able to allocate £4,632.49 as part of the emergency fund where a small repair to their heating system may be required that will allow households to have a satisfactory level of comfort.

Local RSL partners continue to invest in Inverclyde’s social rented housing stock to ensure it is of a high standard and provides tenants with energy efficient homes. Cloch and Oak Tree Housing Associations both meet 100% compliance for properties at or above the appropriate NHER or SAP ratings specified in element 35 of the SHQS. Larkfield Housing Association reported 99.48% compliance and River Clyde Homes 98.92% (Scottish Housing Regulator, ARC Returns, 2019). This was the most up to data at the time of publication, the Scottish Housing Regulator extended the timescales for all landlords to submit the Annual Return on the Charter to the end of July 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. Only limited information has been published from the landlord reports thus far.

Outcome 6: Improving Housing Quality: To improve stock condition across all tenures

Efforts continue to address sub-standard accommodation by the Public Health and Housing team as well as the on-going regeneration efforts at Clune Park in Port Glasgow. The team deal with cross tenure enquiries on housing standards and provide advice on how best to address concerns. This includes; how to contact neighboring owners regarding common disrepair, where to find contact details, how to identify what work needs done and obtain quotes for the work. Meetings can be hosted where possible and referrals are made to mediation where appropriate. Investigation of housing conditions are carried out and, where necessary, Statutory Notices are served to require those responsible to address issues. Default work may be undertaken where the circumstances warrant it.

Furthermore, the Council promotes the use of “missing shares” which allows the majority of owners to apply to the Council to pay the share(s) for owners who do not pay their share of maintenance works allowing it to proceed and the Council to recover the costs from the relevant owners therefore avoiding properties becoming sub-standard as a result of lack of maintenance.

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) is the main way housing quality is measured within the social rented housing sector in Scotland with EESSH scheduled to replace SHQS elements 31-35. RSLs are required to continue to meet the energy efficiency elements of the SHQS until December 2020 and will not be required to demonstrate that they comply with SHQS elements 31-35 from 1st January 2021. The LHS reported that in 2015, 23.8% of all social housing stock in Inverclyde was failing this. Since then, investment to improve stock condition across Inverclyde has contributed towards improving housing quality within the social rented sector, demonstrated in table 2:

Table 2: Scottish Housing Quality Standard compliance in Inverclyde (Local RSLs) 2019/20 (Source Scottish Housing Regulator)

RSL	Percentage of Stock meeting SHQS
RCH	79.3%
Cloch	100%
Oak Tree	98.1%
Larkfield	94.5%
Scottish Average	94.4%

Private Sector & Landlord Registraton

As of September 2020, within Inverclyde there were 2620 registered landlords and 3608 registered properties within the PRS. The majority of landlords and agents conduct

themselves in a proper manner and thereby contribute to the Local Authorities objective to support good quality housing and proper management within the PRS. However, a small number of landlords and agents locally continue to perform to an unacceptable standard in their compliance with housing legislation. Therefore, a number of processes have been put in place to manage these individuals into compliance, or to remove them from the register. To date a total of 73 Landlords have been subject to the process; 51 successfully.

The Public Health and Housing team respond to enquiries and concerns from tenants, private landlords and householders in relation to both physical standards within private rented properties and in relation to matters which affect common areas and other occupiers of common properties. Information and guidance is provided and referrals made to partner agencies such as the Legal Services Agency regarding security of tenure. Proportionate response to concerns regarding physical condition are investigated and non compliance with relevant legislation including service of Statutory Notice or undertaking default works on occasion. Private Rented properties must meet the Repairing Standard and tenants are advised and supported to refer matters regarding non compliance to the Housing and Property Chamber First Teir Tribunal, thus driving up standards within the sector.

The Scottish Government planned to introduce regulations which set out the minimum level of energy efficiency for properties in the PRS using energy performance certificate (EPC) ratings as the method to measure this standard. The intentions were to tackle the least energy efficient properties in Scotland (those with a rating of F or G on their EPC) and form part of a framework of standards which will be phased in gradually over time to tackle the energy efficiency of all buildings in Scotland.

Prior to the Covid 19 outbreak, the Scottish Government proposed that landlords of PRS properties may not grant a new tenancy for a property rated EPC F or G (unless an exemption applies). These Energy Efficiency regulations were due to come into effect on the 1st April of this year, however, because of the COVID-19 crisis, the decision was made by the Scottish Government not to launch these regulations. This decision was taken to reduce the burden on local authorities, and for the safety of tenants and workers. The regulations were "introduced" to Parliament in February, but with the COVID-19 situation developing so quickly, the regulations didn't come into force on the 1st April, they were not deferred - they effectively ceased to exist. Instead, the Scottish Government stated that work on improving energy efficiency in private rented housing will resume once circumstances permit and they will continue to engage with local authorities and COSLA to discuss and develop the local authority role in enforcement.

Furthermore, the Scottish Government had published proposals to improve energy efficiency standards in owner occupied properties. These proposals were outlined within the Scottish Government's consultation paper which closed in March 2020 prior to the Covid pandemic. The proposals outlined that the standard for domestic properties, like the PRS regulations, should be based on the Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The consultation paper recommended that homes should reach at least an EER of Band C, where it is technically feasible and cost effective to do so. The Council await further information on these proposals.

In order to assess the condition of private sector housing in Inverclyde and assess the extent to which the housing stock complies with any future regulations which may be introduced,

Inverclyde Council will commission a Private Sector House Condition Survey (PSHCS). The last PSHCS conducted in Inverclyde was undertaken in 2010/11. In preparation for the next LHS, this work will help to develop an informed evidence base and to structure strategic interventions and decision making in relation to private sector housing. The PSHCS is required to be undertaken in 2021/22.

The Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill

The Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill was announced by Pauline McNeill MSP on 9 March 2019 and aims to “protect private sector tenants by introducing measures to limit rent increases and to increase the availability of information about rent levels.”

The primary purpose of the Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill is to improve the way rents are set in Scotland within the PRS, to bring fairness into the PRS, to reduce poverty and support low income tenants and their families. To create a better balance of power between the landlord and tenant in Scotland the Bill will limit the amount a landlord can increase rent. It also allows a tenant to apply for a fair open market rent to be set. This fair rent has to take into account the condition of the property and other issues. The Bill also aims to improve the information that is available in public about rent levels.

The Local Government and Communities Committee launched a call for views on the Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill on the 12th October. Inverclyde Council’s response to the Bill welcomes the new changes. Introducing ‘fair open market rents’ will have a positive long term financial impact for Inverclyde residents who are PRS tenants and protect them from excessive rent increases. Accessible information on rent data, it is anticipated, would create greater accountability within the sector, driving better standards of housing and fair affordable rents. Empowering Landlord Registration to collect landlord data on private sector rents will also empower the Council to more effectively regulate the PRS in Inverclyde. The additional information will also inform the Council as the Strategic Housing Authority to understand the local housing market in more detail and inform decision making.

SUMMARY OF UPDATES

Outcome 1

- 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).
- Due to the delay to the budget, further information on RPA levels post 2021 for Inverclyde will be provided as soon as known and will inform the pace at which future programme plans can be delivered
- The adopted Inverclyde LDP was quashed: An appeal to the Court of Session regarding the methodology used to calculate the plan's housing land requirement was successful and the housing chapter of the LDP was quashed as a result
- Work has commenced on preparing a new proposed plan with a timeline for adoption by April 2022.
- Work has commenced and is ongoing in the development of the forthcoming Glasgow and Clyde Valley HNDA3.

Outcome 2

- GL Hearn Consultants appointed to produce an Eastern Gateway Development Strategy. The study has been informed by a detailed programme of engagement with residents, other interested members of the public and stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors.
- Draft Eastern Gateway Development Strategy completed. The final report creating a long term and joined up strategy for the housing led regeneration of the area will be submitted to the Council in early 2021.
- Work continues on acquiring properties to be held empty in the Clune Park regeneration area with a future aspiration for demolition of the tenement properties and regeneration of the area. Between April 2019 and March 2020 a further 27 properties were acquired for demolition.
- Production of the Clune Park Strategic Development Brief on going.
- Central Greenock Strategic Housing Priority Area study to commence.
- Work commenced and ongoing on Acquisition & Refurbishment Strategy with RSL partners.
- As of May 2020, The Scottish Empty Homes Partnership together with the Council will continue to fund the Empty Home post until May 2021.
- 44 empty properties have been brought back into use (as of September 2020).
- Over 50 active empty homes cases on their way to being brought back into use.

Outcome 3

- Inverclyde RRTP steering group was established in Autumn 2019
- RRTP Working Groups established. Two working groups which focus on the delivery of Housing Options and Housing First in Inverclyde.
- A new iteration of the Inverclyde RRTP was submitted to the Scottish Government in July 2020.
- Inverclyde HSCP were notified that year two rapid rehousing funding for 2020/21 was £44,000. The plan is to utilise the start-up costs (£30k funding); the year one funding (£53k) and the year two funding (£44k) totalling £127,000 to part fund a Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer for 23 months (£96,600).

SUMMARY OF UPDATES (continued)

- A Rapid Rehousing Partnership Officer has been recruited to lead on the rapid rehousing transition in Inverclyde and commenced employment with the HSCP, October 2020.

Outcome 4

- A working group formed of members of the HPG (Housing Strategy and Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living) have worked on a review of specialist housing provision (SHPR) in Inverclyde.
- The information and data within the draft review suggests that more wheelchair accessible housing is required in Inverclyde.
- A final draft of the review will be shared with the HPG in early 2021. Agreed recommendations will form a subsequently agreed action plan with lead officer ownership across the Housing Partnership Group.
- 42 wheelchair accessible units proposed for delivery through the programme which would exceed the 3% target, there will also be six through care units for care leavers and an estimated 100 additional units which will be amenity/adaptable.
- The total number of requests for adaptations to RSL's for 2019/20 was 662 which was an increase from the previous year where there were 629 requests.
- In the private sector there were 64 adaptations carried out in 2019/20 and 180 in 2018/19.
- The Scheme of Assistance supported 169 households in 2019/20 with £610,161 funding being used to facilitate this.
- Care & Repair and Small Repairs services for Inverclyde are managed by Bridgewater Housing Association, available to homeowners and tenants in the private sector who are either disabled or are over 60 years of age

Outcome 5

- From 2013 to date a total over £11,505,494.69 HEEPS 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 2353 properties in Inverclyde.
- Cloch and Oak Tree Housing Associations both meet 100% compliance for properties at or above the appropriate NHER or SAP ratings specified in element 35 of the SHQS. Larkfield Housing Association reported 99.48% compliance and River Clyde Homes 98.92%
- £19,125 funding distributed by i.HEAT to HSCP Affordable Warmth Scheme.
- i.HEAT were also able to allocate £4,632.49 as part of the emergency fund where a small repair to their heating system may be required that will allow households to have a satisfactory level of comfort.

Outcome 6

- As of September 2020, within Inverclyde there were 2620 registered landlords and 3608 registered properties within the private rented sector (PRS).
- A number of processes have been put in place to manage uncompliant landlords, or to remove them from the register. To date a total of 73 Landlords have been subject to the process; 51 successfully.
- In preparation for the next LHS, a Private Sector House Condition Survey will be commissioned which will help inform the development of the forthcoming LHS identifying interventions to improve property condition within PRS housing.
- Call for views on The Fair Rents (Scotland) Bill which aims to "protect private sector tenants by introducing measures to limit rent increases and to increase the availability of information about rent levels." Inverclyde Council response supportive of new measures.