
Report To:	Environment & Regeneration Committee	Date:	31 October 2024
Report By:	Director, Environment & Regeneration	Report No:	ENV056/24/SJMM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025-30		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Decision For Information/Noting
- 1.2 To seek approval for the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025-30.
- 1.3 To secure funding from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) every local authority is required to prepare an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The SHIP reinforces the role of the Council as the strategic housing authority for Inverclyde. 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) 2023-2028, and help the Scottish Government complete the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes; and deliver a further 110,000 affordable homes by 2032.
- 1.4 All local authorities were required to submit their SHIPs to the Scottish Government's More Homes Division Area Team by Friday 25 October 2024 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.
- 1.5 As per agreed protocol and due to the date of this Committee meeting, The Scottish Government was advised that Inverclyde Council would submit a draft of the SHIP through HARP pending the decision on its approval at today's Committee meeting.
- 1.6 The SHIP 2025 - 2030 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. The SHIP supporting statement including the summary table is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the Strategic Housing Investment Plan for the five-year period from 2025 - 2030 for submission to the Scottish Government by Inverclyde Council; and
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the content and projects included in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025 – 2030 as detailed at Appendix 1.

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 The SHIP guidance (Guidance on preparing Strategic Housing Investment Plans, July 2022) requires all local authorities to prepare and submit a new five-year SHIP by Friday 25 October 2024. The Scottish Government have 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 2025 - 2030 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.
- 3.2 The SHIP is a rolling programme with annual updates. The 2025-2030 SHIP reflects the priorities contained in the 2023-2028 Local Housing Strategy.
- 3.3 Inverclyde has benefitted from significant investment in new affordable housing to address the housing priorities in our area which most reflect the needs of our residents. National and local housing providers have received around £90 million grant funding since 2017 from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). The RPA for Inverclyde for 24/25 is £7.326m with future years yet to be confirmed.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Efforts are focussed on completing existing projects, however RSLs have put forward a series of proposals for new affordable housing developments across Inverclyde covering the planning period from 2023 to 2028, and our Acquisition Programme aims to deliver around 40 new affordable homes across Inverclyde each year. The 'Summary of Inverclyde SHIP 2025/26 – 2029/2030' table (see Appendix 1) provides details of all projects over the five-year period.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 Scottish Government guidance (Guidance for setting of Local Housing Strategy targets to support the delivery of more wheelchair accessible housing, March 2019) requested a greater focus on the delivery of wheelchair accessible housing across each local authority area. Following a 'Specialist Housing Review' in Inverclyde, a new Wheelchair Accessible Housing Policy was approved for inclusion in the Inverclyde Local Development Plan where the Council will seek the provision of 5% wheelchair accessible housing on new build development sites of 20 units or more. Consultation is currently ongoing on developing targets for the next LDP.
- 3.8 As well as engaging with the effects of depopulation and an aging population profile through specialist housing provision, the SHIP is also geared towards alignment with Inverclyde Alliance's Repopulation Strategy focus of reversing trends of depopulation. The repopulation strategy focus is on how private housing developments can add additional housing supply to enable economically active people to move to Inverclyde, and/or to provide a housing supply offer to retain young households from Inverclyde. The SHIP is to support this in the tenure mix of the

Clune Park development via exploring the possibility of including new supplied shared equity (NSSE) housing units within the Clune Park housing mix. NSSE provides an affordable home ownership option for such households and has the potential to provide a signal to private developers of an untapped market for new build private sector housing.

3.9 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:

- Project meets one or more LHS objectives: 2 points per LHS outcome met.
- Project aligns with the Council's land use policy and Affordable Housing Policy outlined within the LDP: 2 points.
- Project supports the repopulation agenda through an innovative tenure development: 3 points.
- Project supports the objectives of the rapid rehousing plan: 3 points.
- Project mitigates against child poverty: 3 points.
- Project is considered i.) highly deliverable; 6 points; ii.) deliverable: 4 points; iii.) somewhat deliverable 2 points; iv.) feasibility of project questionable but still to be retained: placed in slippage programme; v.) project undeliverable: taken off the SHIP.

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.

3.10 An annual Acquisition Programme has been agreed between the council, RSLs and the Scottish Government. Inverclyde will receive up to £1m grant funding (at a rate of 50% of purchase price, up to £50,000 per property) through the AHSP in the 2024/25 financial year. The AHSP funding will be matched by the contributing RSLs: Cloch Housing Association, River Clyde Homes, Link Housing, Larkfield Housing Association and Oak Tree Housing Association. The fundamental aims of the Acquisition Programme are:

1. To consolidate stock for management and improvement purposes.
2. To secure stock where there is limited supply and limited development opportunities.
3. To secure stock for households with particular requirements.

The partners involved in the Acquisition Programme aim to purchase up to 40 homes annually to add to the affordable housing stock within areas of existing housing in Inverclyde. This will be reduced to 20 homes for the year 24/25 but it is hoped that RSLs will be able to deliver 40 units in future years. Further work is ongoing on improving the process for acquiring stock for specialist use as part of the Local Housing Strategy implementation.

3.11 All stock owned by RSLs must meet the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) standards. EESH 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 the projects 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.

4.0 PROPOSALS

4.1 That Committee approves the Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Programme 2025-2030 and notes the update on current projects below.

4.2 Sanctuary Scotland

Former Health Centre at Duncan Street, Greenock (64 units) - The development at Duncan Street is on the site of the former health centre in Greenock. Once completed, 64 new units for social rent will be provided, a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed houses and flats, inclusive of two wheelchair accessible units. The Duncan Street site is situated in Greenock town centre. Due to its excellent town centre location, Inverclyde Council have been in discussions with Inverclyde HSCP and Sanctuary to also deliver two supported units suitable for bariatric people on this site. Work commenced at the site in July 2024 and expected completion is in 2026.

Bay Street - Port Glasgow (24 units) - This four-storey block will provide twenty-four 1 and 2 bed flats of amenity housing for older people on land beside the A-listed Gourrock Ropeworks. The LHS action plan specifically states that we will 'Deliver older persons housing through RSL newbuild programmes,' to address the growing demographic pressures of an ageing population. The town centre location of the Bay Street site and favourable topography lends itself to older people's housing provision. This development will contribute towards delivery of LHS Outcome 3: People in Inverclyde are supported to live independently and well at home. Site start is expected in the early months of 2025, with an anticipated completion in 2026/2027.

4.3 Link Group

Quarry Drive - Kilmacolm (19 units)

In May 2022, the Scottish Government approved McTaggart & Mickel's proposal to develop 75 new homes at Quarry Drive in Kilmacolm. Outline planning approval was granted at a meeting of the full Inverclyde Council on 4 May 2021.

Policy 18 of the proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plan states that 'There will be a requirement for 25% of houses on greenfield housing sites in the Inverclyde villages to be for affordable housing.'

Due to Inverclyde Council's affordable housing policy, nineteen 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed affordable homes will be delivered in partnership with Link Group at the Quarry Drive site. The properties will be let and managed by Link. The project will be in the later stages of development of the overall site.

4.4 Oak Tree Housing Association

Strone Farm - Greenock (15 units)

As reported in last year's SHIP, there have been delays to completion as the original developer struggled to meet the rise in supply chain costs resulting from Brexit and the Covid 19 Pandemic, (even with an additional grant funding supplied by the Scottish Government), and subsequently went into liquidation resulting in the contract being terminated.

Oak Tree Housing Association have retendered the contract and hope to make a decision in October 2024.

4.5 To Be Confirmed

Clune Park – Port Glasgow (135 units)

In 2023, Inverclyde Council further progressed plans towards its ambition of regenerating the area of Clune Park, as directed to within the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028. This work primarily focused on acquiring properties, to be held empty, with a future aspiration for the demolition of the existing tenement buildings, which are no longer fit for purpose. Inverclyde Council have to date acquired 278 of the 430 flatted properties at the proposed Clune Park development site. This has required significant investment from the Council and there will be ongoing investment to acquire the remaining properties.

The long-term strategic ambition of the Council is for the redevelopment of mixed tenure housing on the Clune Park site to tie in with both Inverclyde Council and the Inverclyde Alliance’s wider policy objectives stated within the Inverclyde Repopulation Action Plan, namely the retention of the younger population and to attract new residents to the area to facilitate population growth.

Subsequently, Hypostyle Architects were appointed to develop a masterplan for the Clune Park regeneration area based on the housing requirements outlined within the Council’s design brief. The Council is currently engaged in the process of appointing an RSL as development partner to take the masterplan forward.

The project will proceed in two phases. Phase 1 being the redevelopment of the former School, Church and Resource Centre Site comprising of 30 units. Phase 2 proposes development on the site of the existing tenements on Caledonian Street, Bruce Street, Wallace Street, Clune Park Street, Maxwell Street and Robert Street comprising of 105 units.

4.6 Additional Projects

It should be noted that the SHIP is of necessity a snapshot in time and officers continue to work on possible future projects which might deliver benefits and accord with the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)	X	
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability	X	
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

None

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	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					

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

N/A

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

N/A

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required.
X	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, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(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.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Summarise any environmental / climate change impacts which relate to this report.

Environmental impacts of individual developments will be addressed through the planning process.

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 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.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The SHIP is developed in consultation with developing RSLs and the Scottish Government's More Homes Division.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A

Inverclyde Strategic Housing

Investment Plan

2025/26 – 2029/30

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Introduction

Each local authority must create an annual Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to secure funding for affordable housing. This plan outlines investment priorities for affordable housing to achieve Local Housing Strategy (LHS) outcomes as outlined in Inverclyde's Local Housing Strategy covering the period 2023-2028. The SHIP guides the creation of a Strategic Local Programme Agreement that outlines the local authority's yearly plan. Funding from the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) covers new builds, purchasing existing properties, and rehabilitating existing homes.

In March 2021, the Scottish Government released its first long-term housing strategy, called 'Housing to 2040.' This plan outlines the desired look and feel of housing and communities in Scotland and reaffirms commitment to invest in affordable housing. The 2021/22 Government Program set a target of delivering 110,000 affordable homes by 2032, with at least 70% for social rent. To achieve these goals, the Scottish Government outlined they would invest over £3.2 billion in affordable housing during this term. This investment aims to provide suitable homes in the right areas, aligning with local housing strategies and local development plans.

However, the Scottish Government, published on Monday 19th December 2023, that the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) would be allocated £556m for 2024-25, down from £713m as previously indicated. This has ramifications for the future allocation of resources at the local level in Inverclyde. The Scottish Government have indicated that the resources available for future Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) is dependent on budget decisions made by the Scottish Parliament stating that *'the medium-term outlook for capital remains challenging, with a forecast 8.7% real terms cut to our UK capital funding between 2023-24 and 2027-28.'*¹

The More Homes Division of the Scottish Government notified Inverclyde Council that the **RPA for 2024/25 is £7.326 million** pounds which is a reduction from the 2023/24 RPA which was set at £9.595 million².

This forecast indicates that in the coming years there will be significantly less funding available for affordable housing delivery in Inverclyde, contrasting with a previous period which saw significant levels of social housebuilding activity and investment. With consideration towards the available funding indicated by the Scottish Government, the SHIP has been prepared accordingly. Covering the 5-year period, 2025/26 - 2029/30, this SHIP Supporting Statement and corresponding programme table (page 27) sets out the key investment priorities and projected grant requirement to deliver affordable housing in the Inverclyde area to deliver the strategic priorities presented within the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028.

Equalities and Environmental Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken for the Inverclyde LHS 2023 -2028 and highlighted that the LHS is likely to have a positive impact on a range of people who share protected characteristics.

¹ Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme (2024-25) – Inverclyde Council, 29th May 2024

² Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme (2024-25) – Inverclyde Council, 10th September 2024

The development of the SHIP has considered the outcomes of the EqIA. The SHIP aims to improve access to housing and housing related services for everyone including those at risk of social exclusion and disempowerment.

A Pre-screening report was submitted to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Gateway in July 2023 under Section 9(3) of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, indicating that there is no likelihood of significant environmental effects through the Inverclyde LHS 2023 -2028 and consequently the Inverclyde SHIP 2025/26 – 2029/30.

Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

Inverclyde's Local Housing Strategy (LHS) covers the period 2023-2028 and sets out the strategic direction, policies and plans that will enable Inverclyde Council and partners to deliver high quality housing and housing services to meet the needs of local people across all housing tenures. The LHS also sets out the important contribution that housing makes to enabling economic growth and regeneration, improving health and wellbeing, creating connected and sustainable places, reducing climate change, and tackling poverty across Inverclyde.

The LHS was co-produced by Inverclyde Council's Housing Strategy Team, Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners, Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) including the Inverclyde Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service. On the 2nd of November 2023, Inverclyde Council's Environment & Regeneration Committee approved the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028. Approval was also granted for an LHS implementation strategy which determined that the steering group used to oversee LHS development is retained to oversee implementation. In order to inform the steering group, there is a delivery group for each of the four LHS outcomes co-chaired by senior officers from partner organisations.

These delivery groups encompassing: RSL, HSCP, and Council Officers, have now established shared action plans that have created deliverable targets and actions in relation to the broad outcomes set out in the LHS. This SHIP accordingly is informed by these broad outcomes which are discussed in the methodology section.

2023/24 Completions – Acquisitions.

Since the publication of last year's SHIP supporting statement there has been no new build social rented housing completions in Inverclyde. This has been due to lack of development activity by our RSL partners with no site starts in 2022/23.

The LHS notes that there has been a turn away from expanding the total supply of general needs social housing through the AHSP towards investment priorities that either tweak existing stock profiles to better suit the needs of Inverclyde's population, or support innovative tenure mixes that support repopulation objectives. This shared approach led partners to focus on the acquisition of existing properties in 2023/24. Below is an overview of this activity:

Cloch Housing Association – In 2023/24 the RSL acquired 8 properties (6 x smaller, and 2 x larger family homes). The house size and type and number of units is illustrated in the table below:

House Size/Type	Number of Units
1-bedroom flats	2
2-bedroom flat	1
2-bedroom 4-in-a-block flat	1
2-bedroom end terrace house	1
2-bedroom bungalow	1
3-bedroom detached house	1
3-bedroom semi-detached house	1
Total	8

These acquisitions aligned with the strategic parameters of Inverclyde Council's acquisition strategy. The association purchased flats within a mixed tenure block to provide Cloch with a minimum of 75% ownership, consolidating the social housing offer and enabling future investment and maintenance. Cloch also purchased properties to provide alternative homes to tenants following severe flood damage to their existing home and increase the associations stock portfolio of 3- and 4-bedroom homes to meet demand. The total AHSP funding utilised by Cloch Housing Association on the acquisition programme 2023/24 was £182,500 (flats) and £146,000 (larger family homes).

Larkfield Housing Association – In 2023/24 the RSL acquired 4 properties. The house size and type and number of units is illustrated in the table below:

House Size/Type	Number of Units
2 bedroom house	1
3 bedroom house	2
4 bedroom house	1
Total	4

These acquisitions aligned with the strategic parameters of Inverclyde Council's acquisition strategy. The association purchased three- and four-bedroom properties due to limited supply of larger family homes in the area. Larkfield also purchased two properties which were then let through effective partnership working with the Housing Options and Homelessness Service to enable rapid rehousing.

Oak Tree Housing Association - Acquired no properties in 2023/2024

River Clyde Homes -In 2023/24 RCH acquired one 2-bedroom property in Greenock. RCH gained the majority share in the block by purchasing the property. It was noted that the RCH owned properties in the Bow Farm area would benefit from investment and in the coming years will be subject to works to raise the condition of the properties to the Social Housing Net Zero standard. Increasing the share of properties in this area improves the association's ability to deliver investment works, and any reactive repairs that may be required in the meantime.

Methodology

The following methodology involves making the high-level outcomes established within the LHS inform deliverable SHIP projects. Accordingly, this involves establishing with partners a matrix relatable to strategic direction which includes assessing how the SHIP can support the LHS and broader strategic ambitions whilst factoring in issues such as housing need, energy efficiency, accessibility, tenure, and

deliverability requirements. After discussing the broad strokes of these elements, we set out the matrix by which projects are evaluated.

Demographics

Mid-2021 population estimates, published by the National Records of Scotland show that between 1998 and 2021, the population of Inverclyde decreased by 8.9%. This is the highest negative percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 8.2%. National projections predict a continuing population decline, the population of Inverclyde is estimated to reduce by a further 13% by 2040.

Although the population of Inverclyde is expected to decline over the next ten years, this is against the backdrop of an ageing population. Between 2022 to 2032 the older population is expected to grow substantially as people live longer, whilst younger and working age populations are expected to decline. The working age population is projected to decrease by 15% between 2022 -2032 whilst the 65+ age cohorts will increase by 18% overall.

Table 1: Inverclyde Population Change 2022 – 2032 by Age

Age Cohort	2022	2032	Inverclyde % Change	Scotland % Change
Children < 16	12,008	10,259	↓ -15%	↓ -8%
Working Age Population 16-24	47,265	40,995	↓ -15%	→ -2%
Pension Age (65 – 85+)	17,040	20,159	↑ 18%	↑ 20%
Total Population	76,313	71,413	↓ -6%	→ 1%

Source: Population projections (NRS) 2018 Based

Another demographic trend to consider are changes in household composition where there is expected to be 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.³

Without policy intervention to reverse such trends, a declining and ageing population will lead to a reduction of family-sized and working age households and will have serious implications for the local economy in terms of lower tax contributions, and an increase in the required provision of care and suitable housing. It will put further pressures on already stretched services.

The SHIP should accordingly address issues around future housing provision, including specialist provision, housing size and type being delivered, homes suited for key workers, and tenure mixes that can support economic development and population decline reversal.

The 2022 Scottish Census population estimates were published on the 14th of September 2023. Inverclyde's population estimate from the census is 78,400. This figure has decreased since the 2011 Census but is higher than the previously published NRS mid 2021 population estimate of 76,700. This illustrates that although population trends do still show a decline they are not as acute as previously

³ Arneil Johnson (2023). Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

thought. The widening dispersal of asylum seekers and humanitarian interventions such as Homes for Ukraine has introduced additional households to Inverclyde although it is not yet known what the lasting impacts of this will be on the area's population.

Overarching strategic direction

The overarching frame by which this SHIP is shaped is the new LHS. Although at the time of writing this SHIP the LHS working groups which are formed to develop the LHS action plans and workstreams are yet to meet, the LHS signals a basic strategic framework of pertinence for this SHIP. In the context of a diminishing population with concomitant impacts on social rented stock demand the LHS notes a turn away from objectives of absolute supply growth to regeneration of stock.

*'Concentrations of low demand housing stock is often located in areas experiencing deprivation, further limiting the housing choices of the most disadvantaged local people. A key focus of the new Local Housing Strategy is to target available resources from the Strategic Housing Investment Programme towards the housing led regeneration of vulnerable stock, with a lower priority given to new build housing delivery.'*⁴

Regarding what function regeneration programmes should hold, this SHIP is organised around the four main outcomes of the LHS.

- People in Inverclyde live in quality homes in connected communities.
- People in Inverclyde find it easier to access and sustain a home.
- People in Inverclyde are supported to live independently and well at home.
- People in Inverclyde live in good quality, carbon friendly homes and energy efficient homes which reduce fuel poverty.

At the same time the LHS proactively engages with the determinants behind the depopulation of Inverclyde by aligning closely with Inverclyde Alliance's Repopulation Strategy. This strategy notes that tenure balances favoured towards private sector ones by supporting housing market demand that extends a greater reach than Inverclyde's existent population, supports population growth.⁵

Accordingly, the Housing Supply Target support paper for the LHS notes there is a role for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme to promote tenure balances that supports private sector investment.

*'The growth of private sector stock can also be supported through the innovative use of AHSP funding for tenures suited for young people such as Mid-Market Rent (MMR) and New Supplied Shared Equity (NSSE). This is because such tenures bear a closer relation to market allocations than social rented allocations and can therefore send market signals to private developers for regenerated areas in a way that social rented tenure developments cannot.'*⁶

⁴ Arneil Johnson (2023). Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

⁵ Ekos (2019), Inverclyde Alliance Repopulation Strategy

⁶ Inverclyde Council (2023). Internal Document

Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP) outlines Inverclyde Council's strategy, policies, and proposals for land and building use, serving as the key document for determining planning applications and advising on development proposals. The current LDP, adopted in August 2019, guides where development should occur; however, a 2020 court ruling quashed the housing chapter, leading the Council to initiate a new LDP in line with the 2019 Planning (Scotland) Act and National Planning Framework 4. Inverclyde Council and its partners are now developing this new LDP, replacing the 2021 version. An evidence report, including a housing land requirement assessment aligned with the Council's Housing Supply Targets, is currently in production. The new LDP is expected to be adopted by Q1 2026/2027 after passing through several stages, including gate checks, proposed plans, and examinations. The LDP and Local Housing Strategy (LHS) share common goals in regeneration and repopulation, with the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) playing a crucial role in supporting the affordable housing offer that complements private developments. Various tenures, such as social rented, mid-market or intermediate rented, subsidized, and unsubsidized low-cost housing for sale, contribute to affordable housing provision.

Child Poverty Action Plan

This SHIP is aligned with Inverclyde's Child Poverty Action Plan which is a five-year plan for tackling Child Poverty. The Plan was established by Inverclyde Child Poverty Action Group (ICPAG) who are governed by the Inverclyde Alliance Board. The overarching approach to the Plan is to take a person centred, place-based approach to implement actions and improvements for children and families facing the greatest inequalities and living in poverty in Inverclyde. In 2022 the ICPAG outlined a 3-year strategy to take forward a "place-based, person centred" approach to targeting child poverty with services that meet the needs of those with lived experience of poverty and deprivation. It operates around the strategic aim of

"Working together, using all available evidence, to reduce inequalities and poverty and build a community where fewer families are living in relative or absolute poverty by 2025⁷"

One of the chief streams, "Developing our approach to communication and participation by working collaboratively with families with lived experience to ensure services respond effectively and meet their needs", notes that housing providers can offer housing better suited for mitigating against poverty. Interventions from the SHIP can directly improve that offer whether it be through improving the provision of affordable housing stock to be better suited for mitigating against fuel poverty, whether there is adequate housing in place to support care leavers, or whether there are adequate range of units with bedrooms that can meet different sized family needs. To ensure that the SHIP continues to improve this offer members from the Child Poverty working group are included in the LHS delivery groups. Moreover, the matrix of this SHIP includes the mitigation of child poverty within its scoring criteria.

Rapid Rehousing

The SHIP plays a key role in supporting housing supply growth and changes in housing size and type, aiding in preventing and resolving homelessness in Inverclyde. Inverclyde Health and Social Care

⁷ Inverclyde Council, Inverclyde Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022-25

Partnership, like other Scottish authorities, developed a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) for 2019-2024, funded by the Ending Homelessness Together Fund. In 2022, a two-year change program was launched to implement innovative strategies for the RRTP's four key objectives, overseen by a Programme Board and six sub-groups, with the goal of achieving significant progress by September 2024. Evaluation and planning for future service provision has been undertaken. A report with findings on how to move forward has now been passed to leadership teams for review.

The local Housing Strategy Delivery Group 2 which deals with the outcome "People in Inverclyde find it easier to access and sustain a home" has several actions concerned with tackling homelessness. This includes transforming the temporary accommodation model to focus on community-based tenancies, delivering comprehensive support for vulnerable households, and creating a consistent, collaborative housing approach. Efforts will also focus on providing tailored, person-centred housing support to prevent homelessness and ensure that the housing needs of individuals in prison are addressed early through the implementation of SHORE standards.

It is in regard to these areas where the affordable housing supply programme funding could be of assistance in either supporting new builds or acquisitions that can better ensure that the social rented tenure offer that RSLs collectively hold can support the objectives of the RRTP.

Action 2.4 of the LHS states that we will 'transform the temporary accommodation model in Inverclyde to provide more community-based tenancies with support and decommission the Inverclyde Centre.' As part of this work, Housing Strategy and the Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service have commenced discussion on how best to develop an evidence base to support the requirement for additional units to be utilised in tackling homelessness. The objective is to quantify both potential demand for additional temporary accommodation units as well as permanent solutions for service users and enable rapid rehousing. The acquisition programme provides opportunity for suitable properties to be identified and enhance a person-centred response to homelessness in Inverclyde.

As such, these priorities feed into the matrix for selection of projects in the methodology section.

In addition to this, the Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service is considering further housing options to address homelessness through discussions with owners of currently empty homes and increasing access to the private rented sector by working collaboratively with private landlords. The service deals with dynamic changing circumstances which can introduce pressures such as widening dispersal of asylum seekers and humanitarian interventions such as Homes for Ukraine.

It should be noted that revised RPAs for 2024/25 were provided to Local Authorities in September 2024 to reflect the additional £40m added to the AHSP budget in 2024-25, the allocation of which was agreed with COSLA leaders and Ministers on Friday 30th August. Inverclyde Council received an uplift in its RPA of £41,000 for 2024/25 which is to be directed towards acquisitions to help address temporary accommodation pressures or, where appropriate, to bring long term voids back into use.

[Addressing Housing Need](#)

The SHIP forms an integral part of strategic housing planning in Inverclyde. This process involves the LHS setting the strategic direction. The LHS is informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) which is a stock flow model that estimates what additional housing is required across tenures within a region or local authority, based on demographic, housing trends, and socio-economic projections. As partners within the Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership, Inverclyde Council have recently completed a Housing Need & Demand Assessment (HNDA3) which was

approved as ‘robust and credible,’ by the Centre for Housing Market Analysis in June 2024. The HNDA provides a statistical estimate of how much additional housing units, by tenure and type, will be required to meet all future housing need and demand in the area over the next ten years. These are set out in table 2 below:

Table 2: HNDA 3 projections

Principle Scenario Projection of New Households	
Owner Occupation	0
Private Rent	0
Below Market Rent	0
Social Rent	180
Total	180

The HNDA represents a baseline of housing need. Housing Supply Targets go above what has been set out in the HNDA as Inverclyde’s Housing Supply Target function is directed towards how housing can support a broader range of outcomes than can be accounted for in the HNDA. The targets set out in Inverclyde’s Housing Supply Target Paper are focussed on growing the population and our repopulation strategy identifies that private tenure focus is the way to support such objectives. How this SHIP can support these tenures growth has already been discussed earlier on in this statement in relation to Inverclyde’s LHS and Housing Supply Targets.

Regarding social rented developments these are organised around supporting the four outcomes of the LHS. HNDA figures as ‘policy off⁸’ estimates of need are accordingly unsuited for understanding what needs stand within the current tenure regarding house type such as specialist or general needs, flatted or non-flatted units, and number of bedrooms. A closer study of social housing demand has been undertaken which feeds into the SHIP matrix; this is summarised below.

Inverclyde Social Housing Demand Assessment

In June 2024 both the Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) and River Clyde Homes (RCH) were asked by Inverclyde Council’s Housing Strategy team to provide information from their respective housing registers. The intention of this request is to use the data provided to inform strategic decision making in relation to future housing development as part of the SHIP. The data submitted to Inverclyde Council by both housing registers presents a snapshot in time and can only provide inferences of housing demand at the time of extraction. Nevertheless, it can provide housing strategy with information on current trends and pressures in relation to demand for social rented housing.

Both housing registers illustrate that the majority of the affordable housing pressure in Inverclyde is for one and two-bedroom properties. An average of the two registers would suggest that housing demand for one-bedroom properties is 48% and demand for two-bedroom properties is 32%.

⁸ Policy off is information or data which provides an evidence base or projection of what is expected to happen without intervention. Policy on is where local policies and aspirations are applied to the evidence base to generate a projection of what will happen should these policy objectives be successful in achieving the desired outcomes.

The demand for larger family homes is not as acute, average demand for three-bedroom properties is 15% and for four-bedroom properties or larger it is 5%. Although the proportion of applicants for larger family homes is not as pronounced, there are still significant pressures for this type of housing. In Inverclyde there are approximately 7 registered applicants for every available let. Furthermore, 43 applications are made for every property advertised by partners.⁹ More investigation is required to understand the pressures on the available social housing stock profile in Inverclyde to ensure that it is appropriately meeting housing need and demand and minimise waiting times for those seeking properties which are not as prominent. This is a focus of LHS delivery group workstreams.

Greater interrogation of the housing register may provide some indications as to how future development can shape the Inverclyde housing stock to be more responsive to the long-term needs of future Inverclyde residents and tenants of our RSL partners. Development partners should be cognisant of the following points in relation to housing demand and their proposals for new developments:

1. At the time of submission, there was a total of 4,162 applicants on the ICHR waiting list, up from applicants 3,919 in the 2023 assessment.
2. At the time of submission, there was a total of 6,721 applicants on the RCH waiting list, up from 5,843 applicants in the 2023 assessment.
3. Both housing registers illustrate that the majority of affordable housing pressure in Inverclyde is for one and two-bedroom properties.
4. 84% of demand from RCH register and 76% of demand from the ICHR register is for one- and two-bedroom properties.
5. The development of housing in Inverclyde should consider the changing demographic profile of the area and seek to future proof homes to meet these requirements as well as incorporating adaptability within. This is further supported with the age profile of the ICHR waiting list showing 21% of applicants are over the age of 55 and 47% of applicants have a disability up 2% from 2023. Housing development through the SHIP should accordingly be geared towards supporting accessibility.
6. The information provided within the Inverclyde Social Housing Demand Assessment on specialist housing demand should be considered within the future planning of new build social housing.¹⁰

Consultation

The development of the matrix and selection of projects was undertaken with consultation with all relevant agencies including RSLs, communities (via the mediation of RSLs, HSCP, LHS consultation process), developers, HSCP (Inverclyde Housing Options and Homelessness Advice Service and occupational therapists) which ensured that strategic priorities could be realised in concrete deliverable projects. Consultation was achieved through a series of tripartite meetings between the Council, Scottish Government and RSLs; the Housing Partnership Group; and one to one meetings.

Furthermore, the commencement of LHS Delivery Group meetings has led to further discussions and consultation on future delivery of affordable housing in Inverclyde, directly feeding into this statement. Delivery Group 1 in particular has a focus on regeneration, placemaking and the delivery of new

⁹ Arneil Johnson (2023). Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

¹⁰ Inverclyde Council (2024), Internal Document

housing across tenures to achieve the stated outcome *‘People in Inverclyde live in quality homes in connected communities.’*

Deliverability

Anticipation over the deliverability of projects is established through collaboration between all partners who have a role to play in the development and delivery of the SHIP. This includes Council services like Environmental Health, Corporate Policy, Planning, Roads, and Property Services, HSCP, RSLs, and the Scottish Government’s More Homes Division. The judgement over whether projects are deliverable is established through these partnership discussions.

Nevertheless, as assumptions and forecasts are based on available information and can be subject to change as projects develop can mean that some projects – hitherto adjudged to be deliverable - may not proceed due to development limitations. Since the SHIP is a five-year rolling programme a project categorised as highly deliverable in one SHIP may be recategorized as less deliverable in another SHIP. Any changes in deliverability on an annual basis will be reassessed in that SHIP’s matrix.

Matrix

The SHIP is accordingly organised around regeneration to support the main outcomes of the LHS and to support the Council’s regeneration objectives. Projects should also be deliverable. Potential projects are evaluated based on these objectives; these are scored on the following basis:

- Project meets one or more LHS objectives: 2 points per LHS outcome met.
- Project aligns with the Council’s land use policy and Affordable Housing Policy outlined within the LDP: 2 points.
- Project supports the repopulation agenda through an innovative tenure development: 3 points.
- Project supports the objectives of the rapid rehousing plan: 3 points.
- Project mitigates against child poverty: 3 points
- Project presents a housing mix which aligns with the recommendations from the Inverclyde Social Housing Demand Assessment. 2 points

Project Ranking	Points
Highly Deliverable	6 points
Deliverable	4 points
Somewhat Deliverable	2 points
Feasibility of project questionable but still to be retained	Placed in slippage programme
Project undeliverable:	Taken off the SHIP.

Summary of investment priorities

Inverclyde's economic ambitions and actions are outlined in the Inverclyde Economic Regeneration Strategy 2021-25. The vision of the strategy is:

Inverclyde is a vibrant part of a strong city region with a competitive and thriving economy, sustainable communities and flexible and skilled workforce.

It is important that housing investment is maximised as part of Inverclyde's economic strategy and that good quality housing options are made available for working age households. Housing and economic growth are fundamentally linked, and a lack of suitable, affordable housing can be a barrier to the economy being able to recruit and retain staff to grow their businesses and in turn grow the local economy. Housing has an important contribution to make to the growth of the local economy, ensuring that the working age population can be recruited and retained by connecting jobs to quality, affordable homes. Housing is also viewed as a key component by the Inverclyde Alliance, the Inverclyde Local Outcomes Improvement Plan states that:

"Inverclyde will be a more attractive place to live and work with excellent education provision, leisure facilities, transport links, good quality housing and employment opportunities".

To achieve this vision, it will be important that future housing planning is informed by Inverclyde's economic growth strategy and vision for the future. Current demographic projections predict continued depopulation in Inverclyde at a scale unprecedented in Scotland. Future housing estimates which drive investment in housing reflect this population decline. Connecting housing to economic development strategies through regeneration masterplans is a key strategy. Based on this, housing led regeneration is a central focus of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028. The following LHS actions focus on regeneration and will shape future investment priorities and housing delivery for the duration of the SHIP:

Action	Action(s) and Commitments for Outcome Delivery
1.1.	Commission viability studies which bring partners together to appraise options for housing regeneration, the creation of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the delivery of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
1.2.	Ensure housing regeneration is at the centre of the Inverclyde Alliance population strategy by aligning housing investment, economic development, placemaking and active transport priorities within a suite of area-based regeneration masterplans
1.3.	Work with RSLs on asset management and regeneration proposals including the sale of land assets which could attract private investment and support repopulation
1.5.	Facilitate the regeneration of Clune Park, Port Glasgow
1.6.	Engage the Scottish Government in a review of the SHIP aligned to RSL regeneration priorities and proposals, with a view to increasing funding for investment in existing stock which is no longer fit for purpose
1.8.	Consider and address the sustainability of low demand housing stock as part of a targeted housing-led regeneration programme
1.9.	Work with national government and public bodies to explore funding mechanisms to support mixed tenure regeneration and investment projects in Inverclyde

Larger family homes

As previously outlined, housing can play a key role in supporting the growth and retention of the working age population in Inverclyde. Finding new and creative ways to target quality affordable housing to working households will be a crucial aspect of supporting the ambitious economic regeneration strategy for the area. The Inverclyde Social Housing Demand Assessment identified that although demand for larger family homes is not as acute, it accounts for 20% of applicants for social housing. The average demand for three-bedroom properties is 15% and for four-bedroom properties or larger it is 5%.

In 2023/24, Cloch Housing Association purchased 2 three-bedroom properties to increase the associations stock portfolio of larger family home homes to meet demand. It is the association's intention to acquire 4 larger family homes (3 or 4 bedspaces) in 2024/25 to further alleviate pressures on the affordable housing supply.

Key workers

The Glasgow City Region, Housing Need and Demand Assessment does not identify a requirement for housing provision for key workers in Inverclyde¹¹. Nevertheless, the demographic profile of Inverclyde is shifting. Between 2022 to 2032 the older population is expected to grow substantially as people live longer, whilst younger and working age populations are expected to decline.

With the reduction in working age residents, the ageing demographic may place pressures on the provision of care and health services in the coming years. Inverclyde Council are aware that the provision of housing for key workers may become a more pronounced issue in the future. Furthermore, Inverclyde Council acknowledge that the provision of housing for key workers can assist in the employment and retention of people vital to the delivery of and improving essential local services which could positively contribute to the long-term repopulation strategy of the Council.

Acquisitions Strategy

In 2021, Inverclyde Council's proposal to the Scottish Government for the acquisition of second-hand properties in Inverclyde determined the three fundamental purposes of the programme which are:

1. Consolidate stock for management and improvement purposes.
2. Secure stock where there is limited supply and limited development opportunities.
3. Secure stock for specialist housing requirements (including temporary accommodation and units which enable rapid rehousing).

Inverclyde Council determined that any acquisition must address identified housing need within Inverclyde and provide value for money; the purchase must not exceed market value and must be agreed by the Council. On completion of purchase and any necessary refurbishments, RSLs are expected to update Inverclyde Council to assist with monitoring of the Programme.

¹¹ Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership, Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3

The strategic approach outlined above remains the shared strategic objectives of Inverclyde Council and its partners for the acquisition programme. Inverclyde Council's approach towards the acquisition of second-hand properties has been reiterated within the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028.

*'To address these issues and to improve the sustainability of communities and places, Inverclyde Council and local RSLs have recognised the importance of investing in existing poor-quality housing through a Housing Acquisition Programme negotiated with the Scottish Government in 2021. The Acquisition Programme was designed to complement the Affordable Housing Investment Programme...buying properties from the market allows social landlords to repair, renovate and regenerate; whilst continuing to address the need for additional specialist provision and homeless accommodation in areas where new homes cannot be built.'*¹²

The LHS recognises the potential transformational effect the acquisition programme could have on Inverclyde's housing supply, stock condition and how it can positively contribute towards regenerating existing communities. Therefore, the LHS proposes over the duration of the next strategy the acquisition programme will be further extended.

The following points outline the key principles of the Inverclyde Acquisition Programme:

1. Action 1.10 of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028 instructs Inverclyde Council and partners to 'extend the RSL Acquisition Scheme by enhancing the budget and reshaping the criteria.'
2. Inverclyde SHIP 2025 – 2030 will allocate funding for 40 units per annum towards the acquisition of second-hand properties over the five-year period.
3. Inverclyde Council will support AHSP funding requests from RSL partners for the acquisition of second-hand properties as part of the Inverclyde Acquisition Programme. Requests must comply with More Homes Division Guidance Note 2023/01. Acquisitions must also meet the strategic objectives as outlined above in line with the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028.
4. Inverclyde Council have determined the programme will retain the same funding assumptions previously introduced in the formation of the Inverclyde Acquisition Programme e.g., 50% of purchase price (up to a maximum of £50,000 grant assistance per unit)
5. The use of the council's Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) may be used to assist purchases where the market value exceeds £100k and the acquisition meets our strategic criteria in points 3 and 4 above.
6. In reference to point 5, the use of the AHF to this end would necessitate early communication with the Council to discuss this on a case-by-case basis and how the acquisition would meet the strategic objectives of both the programme and the LHS. Inverclyde Council reserve the right to refuse this funding request.
7. Based on stakeholder feedback, a review of the acquisition process is required with further consideration towards how partners acquire properties suitable for specialist housing and ensure the programme can be useful to this end. This will be a focus of LHS Delivery Group 2.¹³

¹² Arneil Johnston, Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

¹³ Inverclyde Council , Internal Document, 2023.

Inverclyde Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Inverclyde's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and accompanying Delivery Plan was approved and published, May 2024. It is a place based and locally led strategy covering the following aims:

- Improving the energy efficiency and decarbonising the heat supply of all of Inverclyde
- Reducing inequality by eliminating poor energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty.

These two aims are guided by the priority of a just transition to net zero in Inverclyde. This strategy will play a crucial role in helping the Council meet its 2045 Net Zero target. It addresses the changes required to Inverclyde's buildings and infrastructure, including all domestic and non-domestic buildings¹⁴. The Council's acquisition programme could be fundamental to support and enable future intervention in retrofitting multi tenure buildings, improving housing condition and contribute towards the Council's LHEES.

Specialist Provision

The Local Housing Strategy reports that in August 2022, there were over 3,500 people on the housing list. Of these, there are 73 applicants seeking wheelchair housing and a further 221 applicants who require level access housing. Furthermore, 52 applicants had a high (gold) priority for health/medical reasons.¹⁵ In the past year the situation has become further exacerbated with the total applicants nearly reaching 4,000 and a greater number of applicants with specialist requirements.¹⁶

It is evident that based on projections the population of Inverclyde will continue to decline over the next 20 years or more if no policy interventions are used to reverse this outlook. The older age groups of the population are forecasted to significantly increase during this same period despite the projected population decline. This implies that in the coming years Inverclyde is going to develop an ageing demographic profile and with this comes the associated issues of providing appropriate housing to support our residents.

The development of housing in Inverclyde should consider this changing demographic profile of the area and seek to future proof homes to meet these requirements as well as incorporating adaptability within. This is further supported with the age profile of the Inverclyde Common Housing Register waiting list showing 21% of applicants are over the age of 55 and 47% of applicants have a disability.

The increasing numbers of applicants requiring specialist intervention further highlights the existing and future pressures placed on the affordable housing supply for these endeavours. Action 3.10 of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028 states that it is Inverclyde Council and its partners intent to 'Increase tenure choice for older people by encouraging the delivery of intermediate and market housing options.' The action plan specifically states that we will '*Deliver older persons housing through RSL newbuild programmes.*' LHS Delivery Group 3 will seek to find ways to work towards implementing these actions although proposals for the Clune Park development and Bay Street site already seek to address older people's housing needs.

¹⁴ Turner and Townsend, Inverclyde Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, 2024

¹⁵ Arneil Johnson, Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028, 2023

¹⁶ Data provided by the Inverclyde Common Housing Register in June 2023).

Housing for varying needs

All 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.

Wheelchair Accessible Housing

The Inverclyde Specialist Housing Provision Review presented an evidence base to support the need for more wheelchair housing in Inverclyde. A recommendation of the review was for a new cross-tenure Wheelchair Accessible Housing Target. The target proposed sought the provision of 5% of all new housing in Inverclyde to be wheelchair accessible. This recommendation was discussed during the consultation process of Inverclyde's Proposed LDP.

Subsequently, the Proposed LDP received Committee approval for the implementation of a new Wheelchair Accessible Housing Policy: "POLICY 21 - WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING - The Council will seek the provision of 5% wheelchair accessible housing on new build development sites of 20 or more units." The Wheelchair Accessible Housing Policy also requires private developers to provide wheelchair accessible homes on future sites in Inverclyde, increasing housing options for residents.

All wheelchair accessible housing will, as a minimum, comply with the design criteria indicated as a 'basic' requirement for wheelchair users, as outlined within the current Housing for Varying Needs (HfVN) design guide. Inverclyde Council works closely with our RSLs and HSCP to ensure wheelchair accessible housing is delivered, and that we meet our wheelchair accessible housing target with regards to new build social rented housing.

Action 3.2 of the LHS instructs the Council to '*Review and update wheelchair accessible housing policy across all tenures.*' This work shall commence shortly as Inverclyde Council prepares its evidence report for the development of the next Local Development Plan. The review will examine the policy's deliverability within the private sector in particular with consideration toward Inverclyde Council and its partners wider regeneration and repopulation objectives.

Future Specialist Housing Projects

Clune Park - The Clune Park design brief states that all housing developed on the proposed Clune Park development site will be required to meet the HfVN standard and in cognisance of an ageing population, the inclusion of dementia friendly design principles would be welcomed within the development. This aligns with action 3.4 of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028 which states Inverclyde Council, and its partners will '*Investigate opportunities for dementia friendly design features in retrofitting existing stock and in the specification of new build.*'

Furthermore, the brief also stipulates that a developing RSL partner will ensure 25% of units delivered on site will be amenity housing suitable for older people. This aligns with action 3.10 of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028 as highlighted previously. Further information is available within the future projects update.

Bay Street - The LHS action plan specifically states that we will '*Deliver older persons housing through RSL newbuild programmes,*' to address the growing demographic pressures of an ageing population. The town centre location of the Bay Street site and favourable topography lends itself to older people's

housing provision. 24 Amenity housing units will be delivered on this site and the development will contribute towards the delivery of LHS Outcome 3: People in Inverclyde are supported to live independently and well at home.

Duncan Street –Inverclyde Council have worked in partnership with colleagues from the Inverclyde HSCP and Sanctuary Scotland to develop proposals to deliver 2 units suitable for bariatric service users on the Duncan Street site, situated in Greenock town centre. Work commenced on the site of the former health centre in July 2024.

Acquisition Programme - Inverclyde council and our housing and health partners agreed that an Acquisition Programme was an essential method of addressing recent and historic housing issues across Inverclyde. Acquisitions can play an important role in addressing individual needs/cases identified by our HSCP partners. In some scenarios, the acquisition programme can offer a more reactive and cost-effective option in addressing immediate specialist housing needs, avoiding the potential delays and planning issues associated in delivering new build affordable housing.

Therefore, as part of the acquisitions strategy, it was agreed with Inverclyde Council's strategic partners that one of the three fundamental purposes of the programme is to '*Secure stock for households with particular requirements.*' To date, the programme has yielded limited acquisitions for the purpose of specialist housing. Action 3.10 of the LHS is to 'review and update the RSL Acquisition programme and processes for purchasing specialist housing,' to investigate how partners can utilise this funding more effectively to this end.

Children's Services - Action 3.8 of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2023-2028 states that Inverclyde Council and its partners will "continue to improve housing outcomes across a range of measures for young people, including care leavers and young adults with complex needs." To address these issues, a renewed Young People's Housing Strategy will be developed, superseding the one produced in 2017.

To this end, discussions have begun with Inverclyde HSCP Children's Services and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) through LHS Delivery Group 3 to assess the future housing requirements of care leavers and young adults with complex needs in Inverclyde. Further work is needed to identify any shortfall in provision and to develop a robust evidence base. This will inform the support model to be advocated for in the strategy.

Regarding young people more broadly, a literature review has been drafted that explores barriers at a macro level to accessing housing across tenures. This review sets the broad parameters for conducting a localised assessment of young people's access to housing and review of whether the current supply and housing market adequately meets their needs and identify unmet needs and barriers to tenure at the local level. Consultation with RSL partners will be necessary to determine whether these housing needs can be met using existing housing stock or if a bespoke solution is required, potentially utilising Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) funding via the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP).

Gypsy travellers

The Council retains a statutory duty to assess the housing and support needs of Gypsy/ Travellers and to ensure that appropriate provision is made available. Inverclyde Council does not own or manage

any Gypsy Traveller sites. In recent years, on average around 6 roadside encampments were reported to the Council which is a reduction from historic trends and in line with the national profile. Encampments are generally small in scale, typically 3 caravans or less.

The Glasgow City Region, Housing Need and Demand Assessment does not identify a requirement for site provision in Inverclyde. Improving the lives and outcomes of Gypsy/Traveller communities is an equality outcome for Inverclyde Council. It should be noted that there is no population of either Gypsy/Travellers or Travelling Showpeople residing in Inverclyde other than on a very temporary basis¹⁷.

Town Centres

Revitalising Town Centres are a central objective of both the Scottish Government and Inverclyde Council. Housing is considered a key part of this revitalisation process at both central and local levels of Government. The Scottish Government outline in Housing to 2040 a specific action (Action 3) in that regard wherein they will *“support the delivery of homes in town centres and at the heart of communities by developing vacant and derelict land, repurposing existing properties and locating homes closer to services and facilities within 20-minute neighbourhoods”*. Inverclyde’s LHS states that for Outcome 1: *‘People in Inverclyde live in quality homes in connected communities’* and that a Town Centre First approach will be adopted in developing masterplans in partnership with communities that activate such ambitions.

The two main beneficiaries of this approach will be Greenock Central and Lower Port Glasgow both of which were identified by Inverclyde Alliance as ‘Priority Place Areas’. The LHS states that in each area, masterplans will be informed by an updated private sector house condition survey, a review of specialist housing provision and the development of an acquisition and refurbishment strategy by local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). In such a context, Inverclyde’s town centres can be sites where projects that support a diversity of tenure forms can be initiated that supports the repopulation objectives that are set out in the Housing Supply Targets paper.

Greenock Town Centre

In regard to the housing offer, the Greenock Central Regeneration Strategy recommended new units be developed of Mid-Market-Rent tenures that would provide "different housing supply to the local area and changing the demographic composition in the area". It is in that regard that Affordable Housing Supply Programme through the SHIP can enable such a vision and consideration towards improving the housing offer in the area remains a consideration.

Lower Port Glasgow

In a similar vein to the Greenock Central Regeneration Strategy, Inverclyde Council Officers have developed a procurement brief to appoint a consultancy team to prepare a development strategy and overarching masterplan for the Lower Port Glasgow Priority Place Area (PPA) with a view to enabling housing led physical regeneration. Housing Strategy are working with the Council’s Procurement team to appoint a consultant to undertake this work. Once this study has been completed, its findings will be processed within the LHS delivery groups and will cascade into the SHIP.

¹⁷ Glasgow City Region Housing Market Partnership, Housing Need and Demand Assessment 3

Methods of construction

Inverclyde Council has partnered with our RSLs to improve the quality of affordable social rented housing in the area. All new homes built in Inverclyde include high levels of insulation, large double-glazed windows and photovoltaic panels allowing for reduced bills.

Inverclyde Council are continually striving to transform our local authority area and we recognise that one of the keys to achieving our ambitions is to provide highly desirable housing. We understand that maximising the potential of innovative design and construction techniques allows us to deliver a greater number of greener homes, which assists us in our goal of providing sustainable neighbourhoods and other economic opportunities. The delivery groups of the LHS will provide a forum to harness new approaches to construction including methods such as modern methods of construction.

Community benefits

Together with providing contributions to local community groups, all of the RSL 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.

Anticipating impacts on the Resource Planning Assumptions

As has been signalled in the LHS there has been a turn away from expanding the total supply of general needs social housing through the AHSP towards investment priorities that either tweak existing stock profiles to better suit the needs of Inverclyde's population, or support innovative tenure mixes that support repopulation objectives. In that regard, this reflects a national trend of declining approval and starts. The work of the LHS delivery groups is to enable understanding of how the AHSP could better support Inverclyde's needs going forward. The delivery Groups have held initial discussions on how best to ensure the housing supply meets the needs of Inverclyde and how partners can utilise available funding to this end.

Constraints on Projects

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.

Our RSL partners have previously cited the challenges of inflated borrowing costs, and the current benchmark levels available to them as barriers to them delivering new build social rented housing in the immediate future. Having previously embarked on large scale new build development programmes over the duration of the previous LHS, local RSL partners have expressed concerns on the effect additional new supply will have on their existing housing supply, subsequently creating low demand housing stock. This position remains the same with local partners focusing on the acquisition of existing properties to support regeneration objectives.

The HNDA provides an estimation of 180 units or 18 per annum will be required between 2022 and 2040. This SHIP anticipates delivery will exceed HNDA estimates in the next five years which supports RSL concerns.

Other Funding of projects

Empty Homes

Tackling empty homes can be part of a holistic approach to increasing the availability of housing and helping to regenerate communities. To deal with such challenges, the Inverclyde Empty Homes Service was set up in 2017 as a partnership between Inverclyde Council, River Clyde Homes and the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership. When an Empty Homes Officer was appointed in 2017 there were 647 long term empty properties (properties empty for 6 months or more).

The partnership between the Council and RCH has now evolved with Inverclyde Council employing one full time Empty Homes Officer post. The number of long-term empty properties in Inverclyde now stands at 575. To date, our Empty Homes Officer has provided over 550 owners of empty homes with advice and information and through direct engagement has brought over 55 empty homes back into use. Table 3 outlines empty homes activity between 2022/21 and 2022/23:

Table 3: Empty Homes Activity 2020/21 – 2022/23

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of empty homes brought back into use	11	n/a. No Empty Homes Officer between June 2021 and May 2022.	2	2
Length of time homes have been empty	Majority of cases between 1 and 5 years. One property was less than a year, one property was empty between 5 and 10 years.	n/a	One property was empty for less than a year. One property was empty for 2 to 5 years.	One property was empty for over a year. One property was empty for over 10 years

Inverclyde Council introduced a 200% Council tax for properties which have been unoccupied for 12 months or more from April 2019 (it was previously set at 150%). Inverclyde Council received £412,453 from Council Tax on Empty Homes in 2023/24.

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. A proportion of the income generated from the empty home levy is allocated to the affordable housing budget and an allocation of this is used to fund the Empty Homes Officer post. The empty homes advice service is provided

through the Empty Homes Officer, there is no grant/loan funding available to support empty homeowners in Inverclyde.

The Local Housing Strategy programmes further action to bring more long-term empty properties back into residential use, ensuring that there is a continued reduction in the number of long-term empty homes. Action 2.3 of the LHS directs Inverclyde Council's Housing Strategy team to develop an empty homes strategy which will:

'Prioritise targeted investment in the Inverclyde Empty Homes Service in areas where local housing pressure is evidenced.'

Work has commenced on developing the Inverclyde Empty Homes Strategy 2025-2030 which will outline how tackling empty homes can contribute towards the wider strategic outcomes presented within the LHS and the necessary interventions to achieve this. As part of the strategy's development, Inverclyde Council's Housing Strategy team have undertaken a mapping exercise of empty properties in Inverclyde. To obtain a greater insight into vacant and empty dwellings in Inverclyde, Inverclyde Council's Housing Strategy team requested Council Tax information to outline a useful snapshot of where potential empty property hotspots are located and areas where targeted interventions may yield significant impacts. This exercise has been completed and the next steps is to understand how our collective strategic response can be coordinated to ensure the affordable housing supply is adequately supplemented, positively contributing to our regeneration outcomes determined within the LHS. It is hoped that the acquisition programme can be utilised to this end.

Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund

In 2022, the Scottish Government introduced the Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund and is working with Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to increase the number of homes available to support the longer-term resettlement of Ukrainian Displaced Persons (UDPs)¹⁸.

River Clyde Homes in partnership with Inverclyde Council have utilised this fund to bring long term voids back into use and provide much needed homes for Ukrainian families. Phase 1 of RCH's project to improve void tenemental flats in Port Glasgow received £255,000 to bring 14 properties back into use. Phase 1 was completed in 2024.

Oak Tree Housing Association in partnership with Inverclyde Council have utilised this fund for the improvement of 17 low rise flats which were void in Greenock. The association received £151,000 towards this work.

RCH and Oak Tree Housing Association have worked in partnership with Inverclyde HSCP's New to Scotland team to successfully allocate these properties to Ukrainian families.

In 2023 River Clyde Homes made a further funding application for a Phase 2 project under the ULTRF. This involved delivering 30 properties with the total funding to bring these properties into use being £1,003,441.

¹⁸ Scottish Government, Ukraine Longer Term Resettlement Fund: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/ukraine-longer-term-resettlement-fund/>

Developer Contributions

Developer contributions have been made historically as a result of the Inverclyde Affordable Housing Policy to support the delivery of affordable housing. Section 75 and other mechanisms are used, where justified, to secure developer contribution where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing.

As a general principle the sums generated through these means can be used for any purpose which assists in the provision of affordable housing. Any spend would be subject to committee approval except for the specific instance of assisting local RSLs in the purchase of housing where this is to address an identified specialist housing need where delegated authority exists to facilitate a quick response to the housing market.

The Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) provides Inverclyde Council with additional funding to support projects within the SHIP. The AHF is financed through commuted sums from Section 75 agreements, where private developers, in agreement with the Council, contribute money instead of directly providing affordable housing on-site. These funds are then used to support affordable housing developments in other locations.

Since the last SHIP, no new commuted sums have been received, and the AHF has not been utilised during this period. However, the Council's Finance team has confirmed that £150,000 is available for use from the AHF between 2024 and 2027.

Stock Transfer Agreement

As a condition of the stock transfer agreement, monies generated by the sale of assets by River Clyde Homes must be returned to the Scottish Government via the Council. If the use of these monies for the development of affordable housing is agreed by the Council and Scottish Government, the funds can be directed towards this. No funds were received from RCH in 2023/24.

Housing infrastructure fund projects

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. We anticipate no new projects at the time of publication require the assistance of the Housing Infrastructure Fund. This will be reviewed regularly through the LHS Delivery Group mechanism.

Vacant and derelict land

No projects at the time of publication require the assistance of the Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme. This will be reviewed regularly through the LHS Delivery Group mechanism.

Existing and Future projects

The following section is an overview of future projects which are included within the SHIP over the next five years. Inverclyde's priority programme is detailed within the tables at the end of this section.

Acquisition Programme 2024/2025 (20 units)

Cloch Housing Association have indicated that they intend on acquiring a further 8 properties in 2024/25. It is the association's intention to acquire 4 larger family homes (3 or 4 bedspaces) utilising £83,548 of AHSP funding per purchase, totalling £334,192. 4 smaller homes / flats (1 or 2 bedspaces) utilising £50,000 of AHSP funding per purchase totalling £200,000. These purchases will be to continue the RSLs efforts to consolidate stock for management and improvement purposes and to purchase larger family homes due to limited supply and limited development opportunities.

Larkfield Housing Association have indicated that they intend on acquiring a further 6 properties in 2024/25. It is the association's intention to target larger properties (in limited supply), properties suitable for specialist provision and for the consolidation of mixed tenure block.

Oak Tree Housing Association have indicated they intend on acquiring 6 properties in 2024/2025. They are seeking 3 amenity flats and 3 general needs units, to be 2 bed 4 person properties. The properties will provide accommodation to meet the needs of their current tenants and those on the housing waiting list. In addition, the association will seek to acquire properties which will tip the majority ownership in mixed tenure into the Association's favour to proceed with planned/cyclical maintenance activities to preserve, maintain the fabric and longevity of the building.

River Clyde Homes have indicated they do not intend on acquiring any properties in 2024/25 due to budget restrictions. The association remains committed to the acquisition programme and will seek to utilise the available funding in 2025/26 to acquire further properties.

Clune Park Port Glasgow (135 units)

Inverclyde Council continue to progress plans towards its ambition of regenerating the area of Clune Park in Port Glasgow. The long-term strategic ambition of the Council is for the redevelopment of mixed tenure housing on the Clune Park site to tie in with both Inverclyde Council and the Inverclyde Alliance's wider policy objectives stated within the Inverclyde Repopulation Action Plan, namely the retention of the younger population and to attract new residents to the area to facilitate population growth.

Furthermore, Action 1.5 of the Inverclyde LHS 2023-2028 Action Plan supports these proposals by stating that Inverclyde Council and partners will 'Facilitate the regeneration of Clune Park, Port Glasgow.' As part of this work, a design brief was developed to communicate Inverclyde Council's requirements for the delivery of mixed tenure housing on the Clune Park site and inform masterplanning of the regeneration area, supported by an assessment of housing need and demand. Subsequently, Hypostyle Architects were appointed to develop a masterplan for the Clune Park regeneration area based on the housing requirements outlined within the Council's design brief.

The Council is now working on the appointment of a development partner to take the project forward through the SHIP in future years.

Clune Park Site

The Clune Park site is located within the town of Port Glasgow and is in close vicinity to the town centre, retail park, coronation park and the A8/M8 which functions as the main arterial route in and out of Inverclyde to neighbouring authority Renfrewshire and further afield across the Glasgow city region. The existing site already aligns with the Scottish Government's approach towards placemaking and creating 20-minute neighbourhoods supporting the intervention for residential redevelopment of the Clune Park estate to positively contribute towards the regeneration of the area.

The proposed site offers a mainly flat topography for future development and in this regard is somewhat unique to many other development opportunities in Inverclyde which are faced with more challenging landscapes because of the local geography. The location and flat topography of Clune Park provides an excellent opportunity to deliver both mainstream and specialist house types, supported by the existing road networks and pedestrian access due to its location. With Clune Park set to become a flagship development for Inverclyde Council and its strategic housing partners this development seeks to embrace forward thinking design principles and future proof units for prospective residents with respect to the demographic profile of the region.

An updated vision and masterplan for the site has recently been completed. The project will proceed in two phases. Phase 1 being the redevelopment of the former School, Church and Resource Centre Site comprising of 30 units. Phase 2 proposes development on the site of the existing tenements on Caledonian Street, Bruce Street, Wallace Street, Clune Park Street, Maxwell Street and Robert Street.

Sanctuary Scotland

Bay Street - Port Glasgow (24 units)

This four-storey block will provide twenty-four 1 and 2 bed flats of amenity housing for older people on land beside the A-listed Gourrock Ropeworks. The LHS action plan specifically states that we will 'Deliver older persons housing through RSL newbuild programmes,' to address the growing demographic pressures of an ageing population.

The town centre location of the Bay Street site and favourable topography lends itself to older people's housing provision. This development will contribute towards delivery of LHS Outcome 3: People in Inverclyde are supported to live independently and well at home. Site start is expected in the early months of 2025, with an anticipated completion in 2026/2027



Duncan Street - Greenock (64 units)

The proposed development at Duncan Street is on the site of the former health centre in Greenock. Once completed, 64 new units for social rent will be provided, a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed houses and flats, inclusive of two wheelchair accessible units.

The Duncan Street site is situated in Greenock town centre. Due to its excellent town centre location, Inverclyde Council have been in discussions with Inverclyde HSCP and Sanctuary to also deliver two supported units suitable for bariatric people on this site. Work commenced on the site of the former health centre in July 2024 and its expected completion is in 2026.

Link Group

Quarry Drive - Kilmacolm (19 units)

In May 2022, the Scottish Government approved McTaggart & Mickel's proposal to develop 75 new homes at Quarry Drive in Kilmacolm. Outline planning approval was granted at a meeting of the full Inverclyde Council on 4 May 2021. However, the Scottish Government subsequently wanted to review the application.

Policy 18 of the proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plan states that 'There will be a requirement for 25% of houses on greenfield housing sites in the Inverclyde villages to be for affordable housing.'

Due to Inverclyde Council's affordable housing policy, nineteen 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed affordable homes will be delivered in partnership with Link Group at the Quarry Drive site. The properties will be let and managed by Link. The project is expected to commence in 2026.

Oak Tree Housing Association

Strone Farm - Greenock (15 units)

A mix of 2 and 3 bed properties and a 4-bed home to address the requirement for additional larger family homes in the area will be provided at this site.

Oak Tree Housing Association have retendered the contract and hope to make a decision in October 2024. It is anticipated work will commence on the site in 2025/26

SHIP Programme Tables: 2024/25- 2028/29

PRIORITY PROJECT	AREA	DEVELOPER	UNITS TYPE					COMPLETION DATE					Total Grant Requirement (£m)
			Total Units	Type	GN	Specialist Provision	Type of Specialist Provision	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	
Strone Farm	Greenock	Oak Tree	15	SR	15			15	0	0	0	0	1.024
Duncan Street	Greenock	Sanctuary	64	SR	60	4	2 Wheelchair / 2 Bariatric	30	34	0	0	0	5.700
Bay Street	Port Glasgow	Sanctuary	24	SR	0	24	Amenity	0	24	0	0	0	2.345
Quarry Drive	Kilmacolm	Link	19	SR/MMR/NSSE	15	4	Wheelchair	0	0	19	0	0	2.237
Acquisition Programme	Inverclyde	Various	200	SR	180	20	TBC	40	40	40	40	40	10.000
Clune Park Phase 1	Port Glasgow	TBC	30	SR/NSSE/MMR	7	23	Wheelchair / Amenity	0	0	10	10	10	2.340
Clune Park Phase 2	Port Glasgow	TBC	105	SR/NSSE/MMR	93	12	Wheelchair / Amenity	0	0	0	10	20	8.190
Total			457		370	87		85	98	69	60	70	31.836

