
Report To:	Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee	Date: 1 September 2009
Report By:	Corporate Director, Environment and Community Protection	Report No: ECP/Plann/ WR/09/025
Contact Officer:	William Rice	Contact No: 01475 712070
Subject:	Private Sector Housing Grant : 2008/09 Outturn and 2009/10 Update	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Committee with information on the outturn of the 2008/09 Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) budget and to seek approval for the revised 2009/10 budget, following confirmation of the final outturn of the 2008/09 budget and the subsequent carry forward of this budget into 2009/10.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 PSHG is received by the Council from the Scottish Government and is aimed at improving private sector housing in Inverclyde through the funding of a range of services and providing grant assistance to owners for a range of works which fit with the three-strand objectives approved by Committee in 2006, of tackling disrepair, assisting disadvantaged owners and supporting the private sector. **[Min Ref: 21/03/06; Para 254]**
- 2.2 This year will be the final year of ring-fenced PSHG, with future years PSHG being provided within the General Capital Grant allocation to Local Authorities. This situation has, for the first time, allowed unspent budgets from the previous year to be carried forward into the next financial year. **[Min Ref: 01/05/08; Para 335]**
- 2.3 This report outlines the strategic expenditure of the PSHG awards received from the Scottish Government in 2008/09 and for 2009/10.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee:
- a) note the outturn of the 2008/09 budget; and
 - b) approve the revised 2009/10 budget.

Fraser K Williamson
Head of Planning and Housing

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its May 2008 meeting, the Committee agreed to utilise PSHG for a number of services, grants and projects in the period 2008/09. The outturn for the 2008/09 budget is outlined in Appendix 1. **[Min Ref: 01/05/08; Para 335]**
- 4.2 At its January 2009 meeting, the Committee agreed to utilise PSHG for a number of services, grants and projects in 2009/10. A revised 2009/10 budget, as a result of an increased carry forward from 2008/09 is outlined also in Appendix 1. **[Min Ref: 13/01/09; Para 29]**
- 4.3 Committee are asked to note the outturn position for 2008/09 and approve the revised budget for 2009/10. The revised budget will allow maximum outturn, outputs and outcomes in line with the strategic approach to PSHG.

5.0 PROPOSALS

Services, Grants and Projects

5.1 The Property Inspection Service

The Property Inspection Service provides an information, advice and inspection service that is free to owners residing within residential properties in Inverclyde. The reports, along with advice and information, have assisted owners in identifying repairs at an early stage, reducing the need for major repairs at a later date and the possibilities of financial assistance being sought from the Council for avoidable major repairs, particularly if an enforcement notice has been served by the Council. The Inspection Service has also been utilised by other Council Services where specialist knowledge has been required to identify and address issues of disrepair. The 2009/10 budget allows for the salary costs of the Property Inspection Officer and an element for advertising and promotion of the service.

Private Sector Information and Advice

- 5.2 With a burgeoning private rented sector in Inverclyde there are increasing demands on the Strategic Housing Team to provide complex advice and assistance to this market, both from landlords and their tenants. In Inverclyde there is currently a partnership with the Legal Services Agency (LSA) to provide information and advice to private sector tenants in terms of homelessness, however, this is provided on an appointment only basis and resources are extremely limited. Additional funding from PSHG has allowed for expansion of the service to provide drop-in surgeries. The surgeries were launched in Port Glasgow on 27th May 2009 and will continue fortnightly thereafter until 31st March 2010.
- 5.3 Inverclyde Council provides registered private landlords in Inverclyde with advice and information to promote good practice and to improve existing relationships with private landlords in Inverclyde. An edition of the private landlords newsletter 'Letting You Know' has recently been distributed to all registered landlords in Inverclyde, disseminating good practice examples and providing landlords with information on recent and forthcoming legislative changes. A minimum of two seminars will be held in 2009/10 by the LSA to promote good practice in particular areas of landlord operation.

Lead Pipe Replacement Grants

- 5.4 The Council provides financial assistance to eligible households wishing to replace lead piping which supplies drinking water. Applicants must satisfy one of three criteria: they must have children under 16; a pregnant woman; or someone aged 60 years of age or over residing at the property as their main residence.

Inverclyde Care & Repair

- 5.5 Inverclyde Care & Repair provides support to elderly and disabled clients in maintaining their homes or having their homes adapted to meet their needs.
- 5.6 The majority of the revenue (salary and operational) costs of the Service are met by the Scottish Government and Inverclyde Council, with a contribution from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Grant funding to clients of the service comes from PSHG and is split into two categories, namely adaptation grants and repair/improvement grants. The Care & Repair Manager has advised that maternity leave now requires to be factored into the 2009/10 revenue budget and as such, a 0.5% uplift in the budget is required to allow for the additional costs associated with providing maternity cover.
- 5.7 A forward commitment, representative of 10% of the 2008/09 budget, has been created by work that was approved in 2008/09 but not completed by 31st March 2009. It is proposed to raise the previously approved 2009/10 budget by £65,000 to allow for these jobs to be funded in 2009/10 without impacting upon the budget.
- 5.8 Demand for repair grants remains extremely high and a budget of £100,000 has previously been approved for 2009/10. The introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 during 2009/10 will see a change to the delivery of assistance to home owners in maintaining their homes. Financial assistance will no longer be the first step in assisting owners to maintain and repair their home. A report on this subject will be provided at a future Committee meeting.
- 5.9 Central Heating Grants are delivered by the Care & Repair Service for applicants who do not qualify for the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package, irrespective of age, who are in Fuel Poverty and are without heating, who have a heating system that is broken beyond economical repair, or who have a heating system that is inefficient and contributing to their fuel poverty status. The installation of a modern, efficient system will benefit the householder with lower fuel bills and assist them in moving out of Fuel Poverty. Due to increased demand for this type of assistance it is proposed to increase the budget by £25,000. At current average levels this will allow an additional 9 applicants to be assisted in moving out of Fuel Poverty.

Small Repairs Service

- 5.10 The Small Repairs Service is operated via Care & Repair. The service is available to elderly and/or disabled home owners to assist them in carrying out small repairs to their home where they would find it difficult or too costly to source contractors to carry out the work.

Energy Efficiency Advice

- 5.11 A Local Energy Savings Scheme which will see subsidised insulation measures, energy advice and a free home energy report offered to every private household in Inverclyde was launched in November 2008 as 'LESS Inverclyde.' It is anticipated that the scheme will see significant improvements in home energy ratings, reducing CO² emissions and energy use. The £1,000 budget will be utilised to promote LESS Inverclyde within the private housing market. A bid has been submitted to the Scottish Government for a share of the £15m available at a national level and it is hoped that this will allow for further development and increased delivery of LESS Inverclyde.

Repair Grants

- 5.12 General repair grants continue to be unavailable due to competing budgetary pressures. The introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 during 2009/10 will see a change to the delivery of assistance to home owners in maintaining their homes.

Financial assistance will no longer be the first step in assisting owners to maintain and repair their home. A report on this subject will be provided at a future Committee meeting.

5.13 Mandatory Grants

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 provided entitlement to mandatory grant for owners complying with enforcement action. Safer Communities have served a number of enforcement notices in 2008/09 and work is ongoing, resulting in a forward commitment of funding into 2009/10. The introduction of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 has removed the link between enforcement notice and mandatory grant. It is estimated that a budget of £85,000 will be required in 2008/09 to meet our obligations from notices served under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Larkfield Housing Association - Steel Houses

- 5.14 Larkfield Housing Association has undertaken works to ensure their Athol Steel housing stock in the south-west area of Greenock meets the SHQS by 2015. Completion of works to these quarter-villa type properties requires the participation of all owners within a block. Two owners have expressed an interest in participating in the works in 2009/10 and a budget of £40,000 has been set to provide financial assistance to these owners.

Implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006

- 5.15 The remaining parts of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 are to be implemented by 31st March 2010. Work is ongoing to prepare the relevant Scheme of Assistance which will set out our strategy for providing assistance to the home owners of Inverclyde. A report on this subject will be provided at a future Committee meeting.

Regeneration Enabling

- 5.16 A budget of £367,086, which has been increased from £175,700 due to a carry forward from 2008/09, has been set aside for the purpose of regeneration enabling. A site specific Task Group has been established to progress regeneration and work is ongoing to progress this in line with legislative changes, the Strategic Housing Investment Plan and the Governments Investment in Affordable Housing policies.

Owners in RSL Programmes

- 5.17 A budget of £50,000 has been set aside in 2009/10 to support owners where communal works are required by the Housing Associations in Inverclyde not covered by the Support For Owners agreement between Inverclyde Council, River Clyde Homes and the Scottish Government. Information received from the local RSLs, as part of the development of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, indicates the potential for full expenditure of this budget and discussion is underway with Larkfield HA with regards to owner participation in their investment programme.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Strategic

- 6.1 The delivery of services to vulnerable client groups both in partnership and directly from Inverclyde Council allows the Council to deliver the aims of several key documents and strategies, as does the inclusion of owners within refurbishment schemes and communal works. In addition to the Local Housing Strategy and 2008 Strategic Housing Investment Plan, PSHG makes a valuable contribution to several strategic aims and objectives as set out in the:

- Joint Futures Agenda;
- Joint Community Care Strategy;
- Community Plan; and
- Corporate Plan.

Financial

6.2 All proposed virements will be met from the carry forward of PSHG from 2008/09.

Legal

6.3 There are no Legal implications arising from this report.

Personnel

6.4 There are no Personnel implications arising from this report.

Equalities

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

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Chief Financial Officer
- Inverclyde Care & Repair Service.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Care & Repair Business Plan 2006-2009
- PSHG 2007/08: Update – SSC Cmtte Report, January 2008
- PSHG 2006/07: Update and 2007/08 Position – SSC Cmtte Report, May 2008
- Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 (and 2007 Review)
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2009 – 2014 (November 2008)
- Correspondence dated 16th December 2008 from the Scottish Government
- Private Sector Housing Grant: 2008/09 Update –SSC Cmtte Report, January 2009

Attachment - Appendix 1: Budget Monitoring 2008/09 & 2009/10

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7th August 2009

SCC Cmtte 2009 PSHG Update

Appendix 1

Budget Heading	Strategic Fit	2008/09 Budget	2008/09 Outturn	Original 2009/10 Budget	Revised 2009/10 Budget	Virement £	Virement Description
Property Inspection Service	Private Sector Support	13,000	12,085	30,000	30,000	0	
PS Info & Advice	Private Sector Support	0	173	15,000	15,000	0	
Small Repairs Service	Assis Disadv O/Occs	72,000	72,000	75,410	75,410	0	
Lead Pipe Grant	Tackling Disrepair	10,000	2,618	5,000	5,000	0	
Private Landlords Info & Advice	Private Sector Support	1,000	121	3,000	3,000	0	
C & R - Adaptations	Assis Disadv O/Occs	650,000	585,671	490,000	555,000	65,000	From 2008/09 carry forward
C & R - Repair Grants	Assis Disadv O/Occs	175,000	172,851	100,000	100,000	0	
PS Energy Efficiency	Assis Disadv O/Occs	1,000	960	1,000	1,000	0	
Central Heating Grants	Tackling Disrepair	75,000	74,753	50,000	75,000	25,000	From 2008/09 carry forward
Mandatory Grants	Tackling Disrepair	94,000	9,622	60,000	85,000	25,000	From 2008/09 carry forward
Regeneration Enabling	Enabling Works	195,490	0	306,400	367,086	60,686	From 2008/09 carry forward
Implementation of H(S)A 06	Implement Legislation	1,000	0	10,000	10,000	0	
Sub-total Committed		1,287,490	930,854	1,145,810	1,321,496	175,686	
LHA Steel House	Tackling Disrepair	34,000	34,400	40,000	40,000	0	
ODS 2/4 John St	Tackling Disrepair	210	210	0	0	0	
Owners in RSL Projects	Tackling Disrepair	0	0	50,000	50,000	0	
Sub-total Committed		34,210	34,610	90,000	90,000	0	
C&R Revenue (PSHG Element)*	Private Sector Support	198,300	198,230	117,890	122,810	4,920	From 2008/09 carry forward
Total Budget Commitments							
PSHG Award		1,199,000	1,199,000	1,178,000	1,178,000		
Additional PSHG Award		321,000	321,000	0	0		
Carry forward from 08/09		0	0	175,700	356,306		
Total PSHG Budget Available		1,520,000	1,520,000	1,353,700	1,534,306		
Spent/Committed		1,520,000	1,163,694		1,534,306	180,606	
Carry forward		0	356,306		0		
*C&R Revenue does not include Councils non-PSHG contribution of £50,000							07/08/09