
Report To:	Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee	Date: 9 March 2010
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment and Community Protection	Report No: ECP/Plann/RL10/009
Contact Officer:	Ronny Lee	Contact No: 01475 712069
Subject:	Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy: Report on Engagement for Consultative Draft Report	

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the outcomes of engagement with partners and stakeholders on the main issues to be addressed in the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2011-16, and to seek endorsement of proposals for the development of a Consultative Draft LHS.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scottish Government issued guidance on the preparation of a 'new style' LHS in June 2008 and a revised SPP3 'Planning for Homes' in July 2008. These documents emphasise the Scottish Government's commitment to joint working between planning services and housing services on the preparation of the 'new style' LHS and Development Plans as set out in the *Firm Foundations* consultation document.

- 2.2 The Scottish Government guidance on the 'new style' LHS emphasises the need for engagement with as wide a range of interested parties as possible to ensure that the LHS is well informed and that all issues affecting the development of the LHS have been adequately covered. Appendix 1 provides details of consultees and the themes covered at each of the consultation meetings.

Appendix 1

- 2.3 Appendix 2 provides a summary of the main issues arising out of these initial consultation meetings and identifies a number of recurring themes that should be taken into account in developing the LHS. More detailed notes of all meetings have been prepared and these will form the evidence base, along with the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) outcomes and findings, and other survey information, for the preparation of the LHS 2011-16. A timetable for the production of the first 'new style' LHS is provided in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee:

- (a) note the outcomes of initial engagement with partners and stakeholders on the development of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011-16, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report;
- (b) approve the proposals for the development of a Consultative Draft LHS as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of this report; and
- (c) approve the timetable for the production of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011-16 as set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

Engagement with Partners and Stakeholders

4.1 Over 200 partner organisations, stakeholders' representative groups, and bodies and individuals with an interest in housing were contacted in the summer of 2009 and advised that Inverclyde Council was beginning the process of developing a new LHS. This first contact explained the background to the whole process and invited the consultees to register their interest in taking part in a series of meetings designed to identify the main issues that the new LHS needs to address. Due to the very wide range of consultees involved it was decided that each meeting would have a particular theme to allow for more focussed and informed discussion. This themed approach was adopted rather than inviting people with different interests to larger meetings where they might not have had the opportunity to clearly put forward their views and make comments. Details of all meetings held, the themes covered, and those attending are provided in Appendix 1 to this report.

Appendix 1

Main Issues Arising

4.2 The discussions at the various meetings were very wide ranging however it became clear that a number of common issues were being raised by different groups of consultees and these are set out in Appendix 2 to this report. These recurring issues can be summarised as follows:

Appendix 2

- Development Constraints –
 - Roads capacity, infrastructure issues, and reduced availability of funding for new developments
- Development Aspirations –
 - Preference for houses rather than flats and a wider choice of options
- Wider Issues –
 - More focus on social and economic alongside physical regeneration
- The Maintenance of Housing –
 - Disrepair, lack of investment by owners, and need for strategic response
- The Distribution of Housing –
 - Allocation of scarce resources needs to be reviewed
- Responding to Antisocial Behaviour –
 - A recurring problem noted by all consultees across all tenures
- Housing Support Needs –
 - Population changes need to be reflected in funding for care and support
- Reasons for Households Leaving Inverclyde –
 - Lack of employment opportunities, lack of facilities, perceived levels of crime and antisocial behaviour
- Marketing Inverclyde –
 - Need to address stigmatisation of certain areas and to emphasise the positive aspects of Inverclyde's location, transport links, etc.

4.3 A Monitoring and Update Report on the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 was approved in May 2009. The purpose of this report was to monitor the impact of the existing LHS, establish its continuing relevancy, provide updated information relevant to the Strategy and identify where further work is required to keep it up to date. A range of key issues that emerged from this monitoring exercise are relevant to the review of the current LHS and the preparation of the new LHS. These issues have informed the engagement exercise and are summarised again in Section 5.0 below as they remain relevant to the next stage of LHS work and the preparation of the Consultative Draft 'new style' LHS 2011-2016.

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The 'New Style' LHS

- 4.4 The guidance on the 'new style' LHS reinforces the importance of the LHS as the key planning document for housing across all tenures, including housing for particular needs. The emphasis in the new guidance is on the integration of planning and housing services at local authority level and Inverclyde Council is already working on the joint delivery of the LHS and the new Development Plan. A parallel process of engagement on the pre-Main Issues Report for the Inverclyde Local Development Plan has been taking place over the last six months and this is the subject of a separate report to this Committee. Information gained by planning and by housing staff through these parallel engagement processes is being shared in order to reinforce the integrated approach set out in the relevant guidance.
- 4.5 The 'new style' LHS draws together a number of housing-related strategies including homelessness, the provision of housing support (formerly known as Supporting People), and fuel poverty to provide a definitive statement on all aspects of housing. The Housing Team worked with Social Work Services on the development of the Homelessness Strategy 2009-11 and is currently working on the housing support element of the LHS. The intention is that the LHS will in future be a much more streamlined document ('new style') with a series of key outcomes at local authority level and housing supply targets across all tenures, to inform the Local Development Plan. The initial engagement process recognised the wide spectrum to be covered by the new LHS and this was reflected in the themes chosen for the various consultation meetings.

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5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The initial engagement process for the new LHS had to be very diverse in order to cover the full range of housing issues to be addressed in the strategy. However it is clear that this level of engagement cannot be sustained in the long term given the limited staff and resources available to service such a broad range of interests. It is therefore proposed that a LHS Steering Group be formed to oversee the development of the Consultative Draft LHS and to co-ordinate the production of the final version of the LHS 2011-16 in due course. The Steering Group will be supported by the work of a number of LHS Outcome Groups (based on the draft outcomes proposed by the Steering Group) whose members will be drawn from a range of professional interests and representative groups. Interest in taking part in such groups has already been established as part of the initial engagement process.

Membership of LHS Steering Group

- 5.2 It is proposed that the LHS Steering Group be made up of the following members:
- Staff from the Housing Team of the Planning and Housing Service;
 - Staff from the Planning Policy Team of the Planning and Housing Service;
 - Staff from Social Work Services, including the Homelessness Service and those engaged in Housing Support;
 - Staff from other Inverclyde Council service departments involved in delivering the local outcomes of the Single Outcome Agreement; and
 - Representatives of the Scottish Government Housing Investment Division.

In addition to the normal reporting to Committee, Elected Members will also wish to be involved in the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy and it is proposed that a Member/Officer Group be formally established along similar lines to the current Planning Services group to allow for information sharing with and input from Elected Members.

Key Issues for the LHS

- 5.3 The following strategic aims of the LHS were agreed by Committee in May 2009 and they will remain relevant and valid until the outcomes of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) are known and the full consultation process has been completed by the LHS Steering Group with the support of the LHS Outcome Groups. The aims of

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the LHS over the period from 2009-2011 are to:

- Increase the housing choices that residents and potential residents have in Inverclyde;
- Restructure the housing system so that the private and social houses available match the demand and needs of residents;
- Improve the physical quality of housing in Inverclyde;
- Improve housing for people who have particular needs; and
- Make access to housing easier for potential residents by improving advice in the area.

The key issues for the LHS 2011-16 will emerge from the ongoing consultation process and the outcomes of the HNDA, which in turn will inform housing supply targets across all tenures, including housing for particular needs.

5.4 The LHS Steering Group and the associated LHS Outcome Groups will ensure that all of the key issues set out in paragraph 5.3 above together with the key issues raised by stakeholders through the engagement exercise, and key survey information such as stock conditions and findings from the HNDA are, where appropriate, incorporated into the first 'new style' LHS in 2011.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 **Legal:** there are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

6.2 **Financial:** there are no financial implications, at present.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend	Virement	Other Comments
n/a	n/a	2009/10	Nil	n/a	n/a
		Total	Nil		

6.4 **Personnel:** there are no personnel implications affecting Inverclyde Council.

6.5 **Equalities:** the LHS will be prepared in consultation with community representatives and full cognisance will be taken of equality and diversity processes and procedures.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 This report could not have been produced without the full cooperation of the relevant Council services, our key partners and statutory agencies, public and private stakeholders, community councils and members of the public, all of whom have responded to this engagement exercise.

7.2 In relation to the conclusions and recommendations, particular regard has been paid to the outcomes of consultation with Social Work Services and other relevant Inverclyde Council service departments, and the Scottish Government Housing Investment Division, Paisley Area Office.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The Committee is asked to note the outcomes of the initial engagement with partners and stakeholders on the development of the new LHS, as set out in paragraph 4.2 above and in Appendix 2 to this report. Committee is also asked to approve the proposed formation of a LHS Steering Group and associated LHS Outcome Groups as set out in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 above. The LHS Steering Group will oversee the conclusion of the consultation process and the ultimate delivery of the Inverclyde LHS 2011-16 for approval by Inverclyde Council. Committee is also asked to approve the timetable for production of the new LHS as set out in Appendix 3 to this report.

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND REPORTS

- 9.1 (1) Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009, and Annual Update Reports
- (2) Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009: Monitoring and Update Report 2009 (April 2009), agreed by Committee 5 May 2009.
- (3) Inverclyde Council 'Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010 - 2015' (SHIP) (Finalised Draft, November 2009), agreed by Special Meeting of Committee, 27 November 2009.

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Attachments

Appendix 1 : Record of Consultation Activities Undertaken to January 2010

Appendix 2 : Main Themes and Issues Raised by the Engagement Process

Appendix 3 : Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy: Timeline for Preparation of LHS 2011-2016

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22nd February 2010

SSC Cmtee 2010 IC LHS Report on Engagement for Con Draft Rpt

**Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy: Report on Engagement for Consultative Draft Report
Record of Consultation Activities Undertaken to January 2010**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This appendix is designed to catalogue the various activities that the Inverclyde Planning and Housing Service had arranged to consult with stakeholders on the preparation of the local housing strategy.
- 1.2 As the appendix shows, the consultation process began in July 2009. It will continue up until the final adjustments are made to the strategy before its publication in 2011.

2.0 Publicising the Consultation

- 2.1 On *1 July 2009* a short letter was distributed to key stakeholders of the Inverclyde housing system. This was sent as a courtesy to advise them that the process for preparation of the next Inverclyde local housing strategy would be beginning within the next couple of months. The letter was sent to 25 stakeholders, including the registered social landlords that operate in Inverclyde, the Scottish Government, other Council services and a selection of private and voluntary organisations.
- 2.2 After giving consideration to the variety of stakeholders that could potentially have an interest in the development of the housing strategy, contact details of 177 agencies, groups and services were gathered by the Planning and Housing Service. A letter (or in some cases, email) was sent to them all on *27 August 2009*. This letter introduced the concept of the local housing strategy for those who may not have heard of it before and invited them to take part in the consultation. In some cases, one individual was written to as a representative of more than one group or agency, where they have multiple roles within the housing system.
- 2.3 To open the process up to a wider audience adverts were placed in the Greenock Telegraph newspaper (*15 September 2009*), the Inverclyde Council In View magazine (*September 2009 edition*) and in the Scottish Association of Landlords' newsletter and website (*September 2009*) inviting private landlords and members of the public to take part. Unfortunately, these advertisements were unsuccessful in achieving their goals. Only one private landlord contacted the Planning and Housing Service in response to this method of communication; the landlord had directly responded to the notice that appeared in the Greenock Telegraph.

3.0 Making Definite Arrangements

- 3.1 On *27 October 2009* a final letter (for this stage of the process) was sent on to 156 stakeholders providing them with a tick-box response sheet containing options for their involvement in the preparation of the housing strategy. A stamped, addressed envelope was also included to make it easier and more likely that stakeholders would respond to this correspondence. Slightly fewer stakeholders were written to on this occasion compared with *27 August 2009* because some agencies had advised us that they did not want to take part.

3.2 The options provided on the response sheet were generally the same for each stakeholder and included:

- Not taking part
- Attending a one-off themed focus group meeting for stakeholders with similar interests in the housing system (dates for each of these meetings were provided)
- Taking part in regular meetings overseeing the preparation of the housing strategy
- Requesting a *one-on-one* meeting the Planning and Housing Service without other stakeholder involvement
- Requesting a representative from the Planning and Housing Service meet with a group at one of their own programmed meetings
- More remote involvement including (where stakeholders were invited to provide comments):
 - Postal/email surveys
 - Updates on the development of the strategy
 - Notes of policy proposals
 - Drafts of the strategy

3.3 Space was provided for respondents to advise the Service of any other stakeholders they thought would be interested in taking part, as well as explaining any special requirements they themselves had that should be considered in making their involvement more practical.

3.4 Responses to this letter were received by the Planning and Housing Service over the months of November and December 2009 and January 2010 and there may still be more to come. By the end of January around 80 responses had been received: an impressive response rate, especially compared to the achievements of the advertising campaign mentioned above.

4.0 Meetings

4.1 The three letters from July to October 2009 resulted in many meetings been set up in which the Council's Housing Team gathered the views, opinions and requests of the housing system's stakeholders. The outputs of the meetings are described in Appendix 2 of this report.

4.2 Each meeting was attended and chaired by various members of the Planning and Housing Service. The meetings were as follows.

4.3 *One-on-One Meetings*

Date	Stakeholder
17 September 2009	Clydeport
18 September 2009	Inverclyde Council's Corporate Director of Improvement and Performance (along with the Strategic Partnership Manager and the Programme Manager of the Single Outcome Agreement)
21 October 2009	Inverclyde Council's Corporate Director of Regeneration and Resources
11 November 2009	Strathclyde Police
27 January 2010	Scottish Government's Housing Investment Division

4.4 *Meetings of External Stakeholders that Planning and Housing Representatives were Invited to Attend, to discuss the local housing strategy*

Date	Stakeholder
27 October 2009	Kilmacolm Community Council*
5 November 2009	Inverkip/Wemyss Bay Community Council
12 November 2009	Your Voice Inverclyde Community Care Forum 'Moving On' Training Session
18 November 2009	Greenock Central/Cartsdyke/East Community Council
25 November 2009	The Federation of Inverclyde Tenants and Residents Associations

*All of Inverclyde's community councils were approached by the Planning and Housing Service and as indicated, three have responded and taken part. The Service will continue to invite the others to become involved as the process continues.

4.5 Themed Focus Group Meetings

Notes:

- Non-attendance by a stakeholder does not necessarily indicate a lack of interest on their part. Some were unable to attend because of other commitments.
- A small minority of stakeholders listed as 'in attendance' had provided input before or after the meeting via the telephone because they were unable to attend the meetings.
- IC: Inverclyde Council

Date	Theme of Meeting	Stakeholders Invited	Stakeholders in Attendance
3 December 2009	The production of housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alex McKay Construction Ltd • 6 no. architect companies • 5 no. significant landowners • 7 no. housing developers • IC Planning Policy • IC Development Management and Building Standards • IC Environmental Services • Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority • Historic Scotland • Homes for Scotland • SEPA • Scottish Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC Development Management and Building Standards • 3 no. architect companies • 2 no. housing developers • 2 no. significant landowners • SEPA • Scottish Water
10 December 2009	Supported housing, health issues etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 no. Care homes • IC Community Care • COSLA • IC Education & Social Care • Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board • IC Homelessness Services • Inverclyde Housing and Accommodation Sub Group • Integrated Children's Services • Inverclyde Alcohol & Drug Forum • Inverclyde Association for Mental Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverclyde Carers Centre • Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living • Inverclyde Care and Repair • Inverclyde Association for Mental Health • Inverclyde Elderly Forum • Inverclyde Homelessness Services • Inverclyde Community Health Partnership

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inverclyde Carers Centre • Inverclyde Care and Repair • Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living • Inverclyde Community Care Forum • Inverclyde Community Health Partnership • Inverclyde Council on Disability • Inverclyde Elderly Forum • Joint Improvement Team • Inverclyde Learning Disability Services • IC Older People and Physical Disability Services • SAMH • Scottish Council for Single Homeless • Head of IC Social Work Services • Housing Support Enabling Unit • Youth Connections • IC Youth Team 	
15 December 2009	Social landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All nine social landlords that operate in Inverclyde • SFHA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloch Housing Association • Oak Tree Housing Association • Larkfield Housing Association • Trust Housing Association
17 December 2009	Housing maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 no. surveyor companies • 6 no. factoring companies • Solas Insulation • IC Senior Grants Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 no. surveyor companies • 2 no. factoring companies • IC Senior Grants Officer
12 January 2010	Private housing market transactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 no. lettings agents/private landlords/estate agents • Council of Mortgage Lenders • Scottish Association of Landlords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 no. lettings agents • 2 no. estate agents
14 January 2010	General discussion for those with a strategic/corporate interest in the housing system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chartered Institute of Housing • IC Corporate Director of Environment and Community Protection • IC Chief Finance Officer • IC Accountant • IC Housing Policy Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC Housing Policy Officer • IC Senior Grants Officer • IC Head of Safer Communities • IC Corporate Director of Environment & Community Protection • IC Strategic Partnership Manager

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC Corporate Director of Improvement & Performance • IC Chief Executive • IC Head of Legal & Administration Services • IC Head of Performance Management & Procurement Services • Scottish Housing Best Value Network • IC Strategic Partnership Manager • IC Programme Manager (SOA) • IC Head of Safer Communities • IC Senior Grants Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC Head of Performance Management & Procurement Services
21 January 2010	Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Gas • Careers Scotland • COSLA • Diocese of Paisley • IC Head of Economic & Social Regeneration • Energy Action Scotland • Energy Saving Trust • Equality Network • Greenock Chamber of Commerce • Humanist Society • Inverclyde Community Development Trust • IC – Schools • Inverclyde Leisure • Job Centre Plus • Positive Action in Housing • Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley • IC Corporate Director of Regeneration & Resources • Riverside Inverclyde • Scottish Financial Inclusion Champion • Scottish Power • Stonewall Scotland • Strathclyde Partnership for Transport • Inverclyde Housing Rights Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside Inverclyde • Energy Saving Trust • Strathclyde Central Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre • Scottish Power • IC Corporate Director for Regeneration & Resources • Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley • Stonewall Scotland • IC Senior Grants Officer

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare Rights Unit • West of Scotland Regional Equality Council • Strathclyde Central Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre • IC Senior Grants Officer 	
26 January 2010	Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IC Head of Safer Communities • IC Housing Liaison Officer (NASSO) • Inverclyde Child Protection Committee • Inverclyde Women's Aid • Scottish Prison Service • Strathclyde Fire & Rescue • Strathclyde Police • Victim Support Inverclyde 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathclyde Police • IC Housing Liaison Officer (NASSO) • Inverclyde Child Protection Committee • Strathclyde Fire & Rescue • IC Head of Safer Communities

5.0 Other Methods of Consultation

- 5.1 The Planning and Housing Service received a letter from Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, dated *1 October 2009*. This letter included their observations, comments and recommendations for the housing system in Inverclyde.
- 5.2 On *13 October 2009* the Planning and Housing Service attended Inverclyde Council's Polish Migrants Information and Advice Day. At the event the Service invited Polish community members to complete a survey through which they could provide the Council with information about their housing circumstances and needs. The chance to win shopping vouchers was offered to all participants. Of the approximately 30 Polish migrants in attendance, 25 of them completed the survey. The results have been analysed and will inform the preparation of the housing strategy.

Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy: Report on Engagement for Consultative Draft Report

Main Themes and Issues raised by the Engagement Process

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 For the next local housing strategy to become a successful reflection of the current Inverclyde housing system and an appropriate driver for the changes that ought to take place over the next several years, it should consider, as thoroughly as possible, the views of a wide range of stakeholders. There are benefits to be gained from beginning this process in advance of the development of policy proposals. The risk of these proposals facing opposition from stakeholders at a later date is reduced if they are formulated in response to public and professional opinion (as established through the consultation process) from the outset. Also, early engagement in the process provides the opportunity for stakeholders to develop a sense of ownership of the strategy and trust in the Council. By influencing the development of the strategy at this stage they are, effectively, co-authors of the LHS, more so than they may have been if they had only been permitted to comment on a draft strategy.
- 1.2 To maximise the advantages described above, the Planning and Housing Service consulted with housing system stakeholders over the period from September 2009 to January 2010. The main consultation vehicle was a series of meetings between representatives from the Planning and Housing Service and a variety of stakeholders. Details of these themed meetings and the stakeholders who attended are contained in Appendix 1 of this report. The Planning and Housing Service developed sets of questions tailored to the interests of each group of stakeholders and these questions were used as prompts for discussion of strategic housing issues in Inverclyde. Extensive notes were taken at each meeting as a record of the discussions and as the evidence base for future development of the LHS.
- 1.3 The purpose of this appendix is to set out the main themes and issues that were identified by stakeholders. It would not be possible to cover the very wide range of matters discussed in this appendix. This appendix highlights and discusses some of the potentially or currently significant, recurrent comments made. The inclusion of particular comments in this appendix does not imply commitment to any of the proposals suggested through the consultation process.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

- 2.1 Existing policies of various stakeholders dictate that any housing strategy looking to cover a five year period must address matters relating to the production of new housing, whether it is being developed for the private or social sectors. There is currently no intention to provide new council housing in Inverclyde and there has been no call for this in the consultation to date. Before covering the type of housing development works that stakeholders would like to see in Inverclyde this appendix highlights some of the barriers that developers, community members, planners and other interested groups see as constraints to housing development in Inverclyde.
- 2.2 A number of consultees stated that there are important infrastructural limitations in Inverclyde that need to be addressed before certain developments can or should take place. The road systems throughout the area and their ability to support new developments and consequent increases in road traffic were singled out as being of particular concern. There were fears about pressures on road systems that lead into the west of the Inverclyde Council area. However, it was also suggested that the A8 giving access to Inverclyde from the east limits the

development of housing along the waterfront due to traffic management issues. There is a perceived risk that developments to the north of the A8 could become 'cut off' from the rest of Greenock and Port Glasgow due to the volume of traffic on this arterial road. Power supply issues were also raised together with the problem of some parts of Inverclyde not being able to access mains gas supplies as these can make developing in certain areas very expensive and can also contribute to fuel poverty by limiting the fuel supply options available to residents.

- 2.3 There were mixed opinions expressed concerning the land available for housing developments in Inverclyde. The overall view of the planning system in Inverclyde was that it is both responsive and positive however there was some concern that there has not been enough suitable land released for middle-to-upper market developments in the area. It was suggested that some of the designated sites have remained undeveloped because they are not appropriate for this purpose and that different small pockets of good quality Green Belt land should be released instead. For some stakeholders, this would be central to any strategy that aimed to attract more affluent households into Inverclyde.
- 2.4 Fundamental to the development of housing is the availability of funding, both for its construction and subsequent sale/resale (in the private sector). A key matter discussed was the decline in the number of first time home buyers in Inverclyde. This was explained by mortgage lenders adopting tighter lending restrictions than in the recent past but also by a change in attitudes towards housing. The perceived decline in the value of housing has meant that it is being viewed by less people as a profitable investment. There is a belief amongst some stakeholders that local and central government should be doing more to support house sales in the lower, first time buyer, end of the market, which will have a knock-on effect of stimulating the rest of the market, which may be stagnating at present. The Scottish Government's low cost home ownership schemes are not currently filling enough of the gap in the market. In particular, the Low-cost Initiative for First-time Buyers (LIFT) was seen as well-intentioned yet poorly executed. Potential beneficiaries of the initiative lost out on purchases because the application process did not move as fast as the housing on the market did. In the meantime, it is acknowledged that the recession will lead to an increase in the demand for rented properties as opposed to home ownership.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS

- 3.1 The problems that developers are facing are set out in Section 2.0 above. If these constraints were removed, consultees were invited to comment on the types of developments that they would like to see in the area during the lifetime of the housing strategy. Consultees were firmly of the view that more houses should be built and that the building of flats should be limited to areas where the topography was unsuitable for houses. It was conceded that flats can be appropriate for single people, or for households who want to live in town centres, but there seems to be a consensus that houses with front and back doors should be the dominant house type of the future and that they should be available to meet a greater range of household incomes. There was also a specific call for more housing (not flats) suitable for older and disabled people. There were concerns over the lack of sheltered housing and housing that can be easily adapted and accessed by older and disabled people. This was seen as an Inverclyde-wide problem but it was also highlighted that some settlements, such as Kilmacolm, need more of this type of housing.
- 3.2 Many views were put forward about the broader approach to the creation or redevelopment of housing estates. The Planning and Housing Service's attention was drawn to a development strategy made famous in Barcelona where developers focussed their efforts into intensive regeneration within relatively tight geographical boundaries. It was proposed that this model be used in Inverclyde because of the wider improvements that could naturally spring from it. In the Barcelona example, new households were attracted into these small improved areas and were followed by further investment. In turn, more new households were drawn into the outskirts of

the new, more appealing area and this cycle led to further growth and improvements across a wider geographical area over time. Closer to home, Branchton and Gibshill in Inverclyde were cited as good examples of housing-led redevelopment initiatives, with the implication being that these examples are worthy of replication in the future, where suitable.

3.3 There was continued support for the mixed-tenure approach to housing developments in order to provide a range of owner occupied, private and social rented housing within one location. The theory behind mixed-tenure housing developments is that if housing of different tenures is developed together a locality will be able to avoid social problems that arise from concentrations of poverty and the polarisation of more affluent and poorer communities. Mixed-tenure housing estates do not eliminate poverty in themselves but they do contribute to that overall aim. There are, of course, exceptions to the generalisation that more affluent people tend to own their homes and poorer people rent from social landlords which makes it important and re-assuring that stakeholders are aware that mixed-tenure solutions will not work in all situations.

3.4 It was acknowledged that some mono-tenure housing estates, both social rented and owner-occupied, have succeeded in providing a quality living environment for households of different income levels. In different parts of Inverclyde mixed-tenure developments were also understood as needing to be a two way process. The potential for introducing owner occupied (and shared ownership/equity) housing into areas where social housing dominates and, alternatively, for introducing social (and shared ownership/equity) housing where owner occupation dominates were both suggested. It was warned, however, that there is a risk of some households using ownership in a poorer area as a stepping stone to moving onto an affluent area in the former case and possibility of owner occupied house prices depressing if social housing is introduced in the latter case.

4.0 WIDER ISSUES

4.1 It was recognised by many stakeholders that the development of a housing estate will only be worthwhile if the housing development is linked to the development and improvement of facilities and services that would be needed and used by residents. When viewed as a whole the comments made are so comprehensive and in some cases so fundamental that they seem obvious. However, anecdotal evidence from the consultation process to date suggests that the inter-dependent development of housing and related facilities has been insufficient in parts of Inverclyde in the past and may have contributed to the decline of several estates. The general consensus was that successful housing developments can only be achieved in partnership with other key non-housing agencies and partners within the context of a wider development strategy (i.e. a holistic approach).

4.2 To convey how complex yet pivotal this approach will be, some of the main demands for non-housing improvements to housing estates and wider residential areas are listed below:

- More green spaces and play parks for communal use;
- An improved and more widely accessible bus service, especially in the evenings;
- More local shops – particularly for older and disabled people, and those without cars;
- Improved road access to certain settlements;
- Facilities aimed at households that would potentially live in the upper-end market housing e.g. secure parking, gyms, wine bars, etc;
- A wider variety of employment opportunities across different sectors and industries;
- Improvements to town centres in terms of shopping and quality of the environment;
- A better appreciation of the effect that the quality and location of schools can have on the desirability of an area; and
- Improvements in the quality and accessibility of services provided by all sectors.

5.0 THE MAINTENANCE OF HOUSING

- 5.1 Throughout the initial phase of the consultation insights were offered on the causes, extent and recommended responses to the problem of disrepair which blights a considerable portion of the area's housing. It was stated that social housing in Inverclyde, particularly that owned by River Clyde Homes, has suffered from too little investment in its modernisation and repair in the past, however, it was conceded that efforts to bring houses up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard were having an impact on the overall state of repair of the social housing stock.
- 5.2 Most consultees guided discussions towards the matter of disrepair within the privately owned and private rented sectors. It was warned that some dwellings in Inverclyde are falling to the same levels of disrepair that were common in the 1970s and '80s. The Planning and Housing Service was advised that some housing is in such bad condition that it is proving impossible for owners to sell on the open market. Some tenement properties in the private sector were held up as the worst examples of this problem. It is believed that the two main reasons for this situation are that home owners in these properties are either unable or unwilling to invest in the repair and maintenance of their homes. The general view was that some owners simply do not have adequate funds to invest in the maintenance of their dwellings and that, in some cases, only an emergency, such as flooding, forces them to take action. It was also suggested that, while owners of properties may in fact have the necessary resources to reasonably maintain their homes, there has been a rise in the number who do not believe that it is their responsibility to do so. Home maintenance can be seen by owners as a low priority and there were even reports of people selling up and moving on instead of facing the challenge of maintaining their property.
- 5.3 It was clear from the consultation that most commentators are looking to the Council to address this situation. Following the two main causes of disrepair set out above, there were two corresponding responses proposed by stakeholders. The first - to ease the difficulty of owners lacking funds for maintenance - was that of the Council increasing its budget for providing grants to home owners for improvement and repair works. The current Private Sector Housing Grant made available by the Council to owners was described as being insufficient to tackle the problem. The issue of addressing the unwillingness of owners to repair their properties is more difficult and there were calls to formally extend the Scottish Housing Quality Standard to the private sector and calls for the Council to become more uncompromising in the use of the powers of enforcement that it has in relation to housing standards. It was even proposed that the Council make more ready use of the power it has to enforce the purchase of properties from irresponsible owners, though this was viewed by some participants as potentially too extreme a response.

6.0 THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING

- 6.1 Discussions around the physical production and maintenance of dwellings and housing estates led to the more controversial matter of how the housing stock is distributed, either by market forces or by the decisions of the voluntary and public sectors, to households across Inverclyde.
- 6.2 The way that housing is allocated to certain households was said to be a major contributor to antisocial behaviour in Inverclyde. There were contrasting views on the role of private landlords who were said to be unconcerned about taking on tenants who subsequently use their property for criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. On the other hand, it was also said that private landlords have the strictest allocations processes which are generally dependent on detailed reference checks of prospective tenants that allow landlords to be very selective. Aside from these issues in the private sector, it was claimed that social landlords, together with Inverclyde Council Homelessness Services, too often put general needs and homeless

households into inappropriate buildings and neighbourhoods. Primarily, this was because of the disruption that antisocial households can cause to their neighbours. It should be made clear at this stage that, though social tenants and homeless households were regularly linked to these problems by consultees, the Planning and Housing Service recognises that not all households who are homeless or rent from a social landlord are antisocial.

6.3 Beyond the antisocial consequences of housing allocations, there were other concerns raised over the way properties are matched to households in the area. It was proposed that households who are required to live in social housing, whether through the standard letting process or through the homelessness system, have less choice or freedom of movement between housing than, for example, those who can afford to buy their own home. Some consultees said that the sequence of events experienced by households progressing through the homelessness system is too disruptive and unresponsive to individual needs. The need for temporary housing was questioned when it was believed that being placed directly in permanent accommodation would allow households to settle quicker. Also, it was suggested that the lack of emergency accommodation in Inverclyde added stress to an already difficult predicament for homeless people. Tenants of social landlords can sometimes feel trapped in their situation even if they are living in inappropriate housing, a neighbourhood they do not like, or if they feel they are receiving a poor service from their landlord, because they cannot afford to quit their tenancy and move on. They feel they are at the mercy of allocations policies which cannot guarantee them a move to better accommodation. It is understood, however, that to a degree the lettings activities of social landlords and the Homelessness Service are restricted by legislation, the direction given by their committees and a limited stock of social housing.

7.0 RESPONDING TO ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

7.1 The Planning and Housing Service gathered in comments on a variety of subjects that relate to different aspects of the experience of living in housing in Inverclyde. Suggestions were made about the relationship of landlord and tenant, the affordability of mortgages and rents, and the provision of housing-related services, fire safety and domestic crime/abuse. There are limits to how much this appendix can discuss such a wide range of issues. Nevertheless it is important to note that all of these topics will be taken into consideration in the preparation of the LHS. However, antisocial behaviour has to be singled out due to the frequency of the topic being raised by consultees. A great deal of conversation was prompted over the matter of *who* is responsible for tackling antisocial behaviour. The following suggestions were made.

Social Landlords

7.2 Housing officers should be aiming to intervene in antisocial cases earlier, with more determination and, in appropriate cases, involving or informing agencies such as the police and social work services earlier. It was also recommended that short-term tenancies be used more often with known antisocial households. There was also a desire expressed that social landlords give more consideration to where they house antisocial households to reduce disruption to tenants and residents and the problems associated with such behaviour.

Inverclyde Council

7.3 The continued activities of the Council's antisocial behaviour response team (ASIST) was supported but there were also calls for more action by service departments in assisting with the enforcement of close cleaning, the correct use of bins and bin stores and the prevention of fly-tipping. There were also complaints that the schools in Inverclyde are not doing enough to control antisocial behaviour caused by pupils going to and from their schools. Consultees also considered that the Council's Social Work Services have a role in remedying certain problem behaviour in residents who are eligible for housing and other kinds of support.

Strathclyde Police

7.4 Contrary to some of the other statements made in the consultation, some stakeholders felt the main agency for dealing with antisocial behaviour should be the Police, with other agencies acting in a supporting, rather than prominent, role. The Police are in fact the main agency, however it was suggested that this may not continue to be realistic considering the anticipated changes in Police funding over the coming years.

Communities

7.5 As well as a general perceived decline in parental responsibility, where children are perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, there was also a sense developing that communities, as wider entities, need to start accepting more responsibility for the extent that antisocial behaviour is tolerated in their neighbourhoods. It was felt that residents depend on the above agencies too much with regard to antisocial behaviour and that they should be more willing to exercise peer-pressure and a 'zero tolerance' attitude to disorder of this kind. It was acknowledged that considerable confidence building would be needed in communities to enable the adoption of this approach.

General

7.6 It was seen that all agencies and stakeholders need to take on more of a sense of responsibility in response to antisocial behaviour. The view was expressed that they should come to a common agreement to let old habits of expecting other agencies to deal with problem households come to an end.

8.0 HOUSING SUPPORT NEEDS

8.1 There were three principal sources of concern for stakeholders with an interest in support provision: the need for increased funding across many of the services providing support, the way these services are measured, justified and managed, and the use of institutional or independent living models for planning for housing in the future.

8.2 Arguments were made that current and anticipated funding of support services for homeless people, older people (including Care and Repair), young people, disabled people and carers among others, is not going to be enough to provide the support that is required by residents, especially as the number of people with these needs is forecast to be increasing. It was thought that a crisis was about to develop over this matter. Also, there was anxiety expressed over the difficulties these services are going to face in competing for funding now that housing support is no longer a ring-fenced local authority budget.

8.3 It was acknowledged that it can be difficult to provide measurable evidence regarding the benefits drawn from housing support to persuade decision-makers of the need for funding. A further disadvantage is that, with budgets being allocated on an annual basis it was felt that it was particularly challenging to try to highlight the savings that can be made to other services through the provision of housing support, in the longer term. Consultees also gave their comments on potential models of housing for supported households in Inverclyde. They pointed out that the move from institutional living to independent living was not suitable for all residents and that, while some would gain most benefit from fully institutionalised living, provided this is carried out well, others would gain from varying degrees of supported and independent living both individually in the community or in shared accommodation. It was noted that inappropriate independent living can place added burdens on carers.

9.0 REASONS FOR HOUSEHOLDS LEAVING INVERCLYDE

9.1 It is a major concern of Inverclyde Council that the population within its boundaries has been decreasing. With this in mind, the Planning and Housing Service, as the lead service on the housing strategy, decided to seek the views of consultees on the role that housing and housing-related services is playing in this phenomenon. At each consultation meeting the Housing Team asked stakeholders if they thought that residents were leaving the locality because of the housing situation here. On the whole, there was a wide consensus that Inverclyde's housing is not the reason that people are leaving. At the most it was acknowledged as a lesser, contributing factor but stakeholders had many other opinions about why the population has been reducing. Some of these were:

- A lack of a range of employment opportunities, especially for professionals;
- Perceived levels of crime and antisocial behaviour;
- The road networks being insufficient for the volume of traffic;
- A view that educational services are better outside of Inverclyde;
- A view that choices for shopping are better outside of Inverclyde;
- Inverclyde is seen to lack a range of recreational and leisure facilities and venues; and
- The convenience and flexibility of the public transport systems are questioned.

9.2 As supported by earlier comments in this appendix relating to the lack of mobility of less affluent households who may be dependent on social housing, it is recognised that it is the younger, more educated and more affluent households of Inverclyde that are leaving the area as opposed to other segments of the population. They are considered to be leaving to access opportunities and lifestyles they recognise as being more readily available elsewhere.

10.0 MARKETING INVERCLYDE

10.1 Despite housing not being seen as a major contributor to the decline in Inverclyde's population it is considered that it will be an important component of any strategy aimed at attracting households into the locality and of retaining existing citizens. Tackling the stigma attached to some the housing estates, social and private, will involve a considerable amount of work by housing agencies. Housing developers and those involved in improving the housing stock will also have to accept the task of attracting a range of households back into Inverclyde through the creation of appealing and stable properties and housing estates. However, it is expected that this will only lead to longer term benefits if the other, non-housing, problems cited in this appendix are addressed alongside these efforts.

**Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy: Report on Engagement for Consultative Draft Report
Timeline for Preparation of LHS 2011 – 2016**

Key Task	2009								2010												2011				
	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
SSCC M/U Report	Completed Task																								
Project Plan	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task																							
Agree Research			Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task																					
Conduct Research					Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task														
Analyse Results											Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task												
Liaison - LHS Group		Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task
SHIP 2009 Preparation		Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task																				
SSCC SHIP Report						Milestone for Completion																			
Refine SHIP Submission						Ongoing Task	Completed Task																		
HNDA Process	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task													
Pre-Consultation Engagement					Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Milestone for Completion														
Prepare Draft LHS											Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Milestone for Completion							
SSCC Approval																			Milestone for Completion						
Consultative Draft LHS																		Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task				
SSCC LHS Report																					Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task	Milestone for Completion		
Revise LHS 11-16																						Ongoing Task	Ongoing Task		
Submit LHS to SG																								Ongoing Task	
Publish LHS 11-16																									Ongoing Task

	Completed Task		Programmed Task		Milestone for Completion		Ongoing Task		SSCC Meeting
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