
Report To:	Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee	Date:	17 January 2011
Report By:	Corporate Director Education & Communities	Report No:	SCS/90/12/AH/DH
Contact Officer:	Drew Hall	Contact No:	01475 714228
Subject:	Scheme of Assistance 2012/13 Budget		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides Committee with information on the proposed 2012/13 Scheme of Assistance budget, subject to confirmation of the final outturn figures following completion of year end procedures and the subsequent carry forward of committed budgets from 2011/12.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Scheme of Assistance is the replacement for the private sector housing strategy which is funded from the PSHG and which came into force on 1 April 2010 following the removal of the ring-fenced PSHG budget. From this date the PSHG allocation is included within the overall General Capital Grant award to Inverclyde Council.
- 2.2 In the past PSHG has been used to make improvements to private sector housing in Inverclyde through funding of a range of services and providing grant assistance to owners for a range of works within an overall strategic approach which is directed by the Local Housing Strategy. The Scheme of Assistance continues a strategic approach to improving private sector housing in Inverclyde and in meeting our statutory obligations through the provision of advice & information, practical assistance, and financial assistance.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Committee:
- a) Agree the proposed 2012/13 Scheme of Assistance budget as set out in appendix I of this report; and
 - b) Note the projected carry forward of committed funding into 2012/13.

Albert Henderson
Corporate Director Education and Communities

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Scheme of Assistance takes cognisance of the principles of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and sets out the Council's position in terms of providing advice and information, practical assistance and financial assistance to home owners. It should be noted that the Scheme of Assistance defines an approach as opposed to simply a set of measures and is intended to match assistance to the barriers that owners may experience in exercising their rights and responsibilities.

5.0 POSITION

5.1 Inverclyde Care & Repair

Inverclyde Care & Repair is a partnership between the Scottish Government, Cloch Housing Association and Inverclyde Council. The service provides support to vulnerable clients in maintaining their homes or having their homes adapted to meet their need and is a key partner in the delivery of the advice & information and practical assistance elements of our Scheme of Assistance.

5.1.1 The Small Repairs Service is operated via Inverclyde 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. The revenue costs of this service are funded wholly from the Scheme of Assistance budget and these costs are included in the proposed revenue budget for Care & Repair as noted in appendix I.

5.1.2 A procurement process has begun to ensure the provision of a Care & Repair Service in Inverclyde for the next 3 years. Further reports to the relevant Committee will be prepared in due course and in line with the procurement procedures.

5.2 Adaptations

The delivery of adaptations for home owners is on a needs-led basis with assessment and priority carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT) prior to any application for financial assistance. Upon confirmation of the individual's need Care & Repair carry out a technical and financial assessment, organise quotes, architects drawings and apply for permits as and when necessary. Care & Repair also assist the client in applying for financial assistance from Inverclyde Council in line with our statutory obligations to provide financial assistance to meet the needs of disabled people.

5.3 Private Landlords Information & Advice

The Inverclyde Council private landlords newsletter 'Letting You Know,' allows the Council to disseminate targeted information, promote good practice and provide landlords with information on recent and forthcoming legislative changes.

5.4 Promotion of Scheme of Assistance

The Scheme of Assistance defines an approach, not just a set of measures and successful implementation requires a cultural shift in the attitudes of Inverclyde home owners with regards to property ownership and maintenance. The creation of advice and information sources for owners as well as promotional materials for preparation and distribution throughout 2012/13 will assist in promoting the Scheme of Assistance.

5.5 Lead Pipe Replacement Grants

The Council provides prioritised financial assistance to households wishing to replace lead piping which supplies drinking water where the property is the main residence of one of the undernoted groups;

- children aged 16 and under
- a pregnant woman
- occupiers aged 60 years of age or over

5.6 The Tolerable Standard

Where a property is identified as being below the tolerable standard (BTS) financial assistance will be provided to encourage the owner to bring the property up to at least the tolerable standard. This financial assistance will be at a 50% flat rate of the cost of the works required to meet the tolerable standard subject to a maximum grant of £10,000. Prioritisation and allocation of the budget will be directed by the significance of the element which has led to failure, the findings of the Private Sector Housing Condition Survey and the enforcement work undertaken by colleagues throughout the Council will inform the prioritisation of investment. Housing in areas subject to regeneration initiatives will be considered for eligibility on a case by case basis.

5.7 Energy Efficiency Measures

The award winning service, LESS Inverclyde, offers insulation measures, free energy advice and a free home energy report to every private household in Inverclyde. Funded by a six-figure contribution from Scottish Hydro Electric the scheme has made a significant contribution to reducing CO² emissions, reducing energy use and removing residents from fuel poverty and being at risk of fuel poverty.

- 5.7.1 In August 2011 funding of £470,000 was secured for delivery of area based energy efficiency measures to homeowners in Inverclyde.
- 5.7.2 The funding and measures are aimed at tackling fuel poverty, which is an outcome based action of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011 – 2016. Delivery through LESS Inverclyde will ensure that the issue of income maximisation is addressed through provision of free services such as benefit health checks, tariff checks, energy advice and energy advocacy.

5.8 Central Heating Grants

Means tested central heating grants are delivered by the Care & Repair Service for applicants who do not qualify for the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package (EAP), 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. Where gas central heating is being grant funded, the applicant must install an energy efficient condensing boiler. The installation of a condensing boiler will benefit the householder with lower fuel bills and assist in moving them out of fuel poverty, a key aim of the Council. The boiler scrappage scheme will be factored into Central Heating Grants to ensure that there is no duplication of available services and that the full benefits of the scrappage scheme are factored in for the benefit of Central Heating Grant recipients.

5.9 Support For Owners

Whilst the approach and policy for the Support For Owners fund is set out within the Scheme of Assistance this is a ring-fenced budget and, as such, is the subject of a separate report to Committee.

5.10 Owners in RSL Programmes

Improving house condition is a key tenet of the Local Housing Strategy and a number of owners are affected where communal works are required by Housing Associations. Owners within River Clyde Homes factored properties can access financial assistance through the Support For Owners fund however, the owners in properties of other Housing Associations cannot access the Support For Owners fund.

- 5.10.1 Investment plans submitted by the local Housing Associations form part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010/11 – 2014/15 (SHIP) and indicate projects which may have a significant financial impact upon owners where common works are required. The 2010/11 budget was overspent by £2,082 and the proposed 2011/12 budget of £25,000 is reflective of the future programmes and progress made in SHQS attainment by local RSLs, outwith Support For Owners. To encourage take up of the financial assistance available to resident owners affected by the common works of local Housing Associations it is proposed that the grant be offered on a full means tested basis with a maximum grant limit of £10,000.

5.11 Regeneration Enabling

A separate report relating to the regeneration of the Clune Park report is included on the agenda for this Committee.

5.12 Empty Homes Initiative

The Scottish Government in conjunction with Shelter Scotland have created the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership to assist local authorities in identifying and bringing back into use empty homes in the area.

- 5.12.1 Inverclyde Council has signed up to the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership and has been working with Oak Tree Housing Association to develop an Inverclyde Empty Homes Initiative. A number of properties have been identified for a pilot project and owners of these empty homes who have expressed an interest will be contact shortly to progress the initiative.

5.13 Committed Carry Forward

In 2011/12 a figure of £441,663 was carried forward from the 2010/11 budget which reflected grants that had been committed but not paid out in that year. This situation is created each year by the legislation which states that a grant remains available for a 12 month period from date of approval. In 2011/12 it is estimated that a figure of £450,933 will be committed but not fully paid out by year end and will require to be carried forward into the 2012/13 budget. Monthly monitoring and update figures are provided to Finance to ensure that budget commitment and outturn figures are as accurate as possible. A final outturn report will be prepared when year end procedures are finalized for 2011/12.

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 Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010/11 – 2015/16, the Scheme of Assistance will make a valuable contribution to several strategic aims and objectives as set out in the:

- Single Outcome Agreement;
- Joint Community Care Strategy;
- Community Plan;
- Corporate Plan; and
- Directorate Plan

Financial

- 6.2 In 2011/12 PSHG funding has been split 70% Capital and 30% revenue. The budgets outlined in Appendix 1 can be contained within the available funding.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend This Report	Virement From	Other Comments
PSHG	PSHG Capital	2011/12/13	530,000	n/a	As set out in appendix I
PSHG	PSHG Revenue	2011/12/13	433,000	n/a	As set out in appendix I
PSHG	Adaptations Capital	2011/12/13	200,000	n/a	As set out in appendix I

PSHG	Additional Adaptations Capital	2011/12/13	150,000	n/a	As set out in appendix I
PSHG	Carry forward	2011/12	441,663	n/a	As set out in appendix I
PSHG	Carry forward	2012/13	450,933	n/a	As set out in appendix I

Legal

6.3 There are no Legal implications arising from this report as the estimated demand for statutory adaptations can be met from the proposed budget.

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 the Chief Financial Officer.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 – Monitoring and Update Report 2009;
- Scheme of Assistance (Section 72 Statement) – SSC Committee 27 Oct 2009;
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16 (November 2010);
- Private Sector Housing Grant: 2008/09 Update - ECP/Plann/WR09/002;
- Scheme of Assistance: PSHG Budget Proposal 2010/11 – ECP/Plann/WR10/006; and
- PSHG 2009/10 Outturn and Scheme of Assistance Update – ECP/SCS/JA/10.

Attachment

Appendix I: Estimated 2011/12 Commitment and Outturn figures and proposed 2012/13 Scheme of Assistance budget

Appendix I

Category	Sub heading	2011/12 Budget	Estimated Commitment at year end	Estimated Outturn at year end	Draft 2012/13 Budget
Assistance To Support Independent Living					
Care & Repair	Care & Repair Revenue (inc. Small Repairs Service)	256,900	256,900	256,900	246,000
Grant Assistance	Adaptations (inc. additional funding)	950,000	950,000	880,000	960,000
House Condition Works					
Advice & Info	Private Landlord Advice	435	400	0	500
	Implement Scheme of Ass	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Sub-Standard Housing	Lead Pipe Replacement	4,000	7,000	5,500	7,000
	BTS Housing	33,000	53,000	2,930	50,000
Other Condition Works	Energy Efficiency	400	400	400	433
	Central Heating grants	35,000	50,000	50,000	65,000
	RSL Owners	25,000	50,000	50,000	35,000
	Empty Homes Fund	30,000	30,000	30,000	50,000
Other	Regeneration Enabling	75,000	378,963	20,000	379,000
	Salary Costs	7,000	7,000	7,000	0
Totals		1,417,735	1,784,663	1,303,730	1,793,933
Funded by:					
	PSHG Capital Block Grant	530,000			530,000
	Adaptations Capital	200,000			200,000
	Adaptations Additional Capital	150,000			150,000
	PSHG Revenue Block Grant	433,000			433,000
	Carry Forward of Commitment*	441,663			480,933
	Additional uncommitted funding	30,000			0
		1,784,663			1,793,933

* committed carry forward to be confirmed following completion of year end procedures

8th Dec 2011