
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	20 January 2015
Report By:	Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities	Report No:	EDUCOM/02/15/DH
Contact Officer:	Drew Hall, Service Manager	Contact No:	01475 714272
Subject:	Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy Monitoring Report Dec 2014 and Progress Report on Strategy Implementation		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the Monitoring Report on the Local Housing Strategy and to provide an update on the progress of wider Housing Strategy work.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy (the LHS) is a five-year strategy designed to show how Inverclyde Council will provide its housing-related services up to 2016, and how it will co-ordinate the provision of housing and related services by other agencies. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, places a requirement on Inverclyde Council to prepare this strategy.

- 2.2 The Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011–2016 was adopted by Council in 2011. The LHS sets out five strategic outcomes, some of which will be achieved by 2016 and others which will take longer. To help deliver these outcomes, 76 policies were devised for implementation. These policies are being rolled out in six-month blocks, with Blocks 1–6 currently being implemented.

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- 2.3 Monitoring reports are produced every six months, to provide progress updates on the current policies being implemented. The December 2014 Monitoring Report shows that, overall, implementation of the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011–2016 is progressing well. The implementation of the LHS is a collaborative effort by many Council services and external agencies, and results are being produced to the benefit of Inverclyde residents. The December 2014 Monitoring Report forms the Appendix to this report.

Appendix

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the Monitoring Report to the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy Steering Group of December 2014 and the progress made on implementing the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy to date.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The LHS sets out five broad strategic outcomes that partners will work towards achieving in Inverclyde up to 2016. These are:

1. Inverclyde residents have access to a range of suitable housing options
2. Inverclyde residents are able to make best use of their housing
3. Inverclyde residents can enjoy their neighbourhoods
4. Inverclyde residents receive appropriate support when they experience changes to their housing needs
5. Inverclyde residents take responsibility for their housing and communities

4.2 At the appropriate points under these five outcomes, the Strategy acts as Inverclyde Council's formal plan for: homelessness, housing support (formerly Supporting People), fuel poverty and the improvement of conditions in the private housing sector, together with all of the other housing issues traditionally covered by housing strategies.

4.3 The Monitoring Report, which is the subject of this Committee report, provides information on progress to date in implementing the first five blocks of policies (Block 6 is not included as it was only initiated in October 2014). The Monitoring Reports are presented to the Inverclyde LHS Steering Group for scrutiny and approval.

Appendix

4.4 The Steering Group is made up mainly of officers from Inverclyde Council Directorates and the Inverclyde CHCP, while representatives of the Scottish Government Housing Supply Division and the Inverclyde Housing Association Forum are also invited to meetings. The Group membership comes from services which have responsibility for various aspects of the LHS. The Group meets every six months to ensure that implementation work is moving forward.

5.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 There are 41 policies being implemented under the first five blocks of the implementation process. Most of these are being led on by Inverclyde Council and the Inverclyde CHCP services, but there is a wide network of external partners contributing to this work. The Committee will note that the Inverclyde CHCP (the Homelessness Service in particular) and the Safer and Inclusive Communities Service (as the strategic housing service) are leading on the majority of policies to be implemented.

6.0 OUTCOMES AND RESULTS SO FAR

6.1 The Strategy continues to support the development of new housing, improved access to housing, and residents' enjoyment of their homes. Promoting a balance of new developments, the Affordable Housing Policy was adopted by the Council as part of the Inverclyde Local Development Plan in August 2014 (backed by the LHS). Within a private development of the required size, the Policy means that a builder has to include a proportion of housing for the affordable housing sector (social housing, mid-market rent or low-cost home ownership). If affordable housing is not suitable on site, the developer can instead pay a commuted sum into the Council's Affordable Housing Fund.

6.2 Also supported by the LHS is the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme which has been developed by the Inverclyde CHCP's Homelessness Service. The Scheme is being expanded in December 2014 and is funded by the Homelessness Service's partner, the Department for Work and Pensions. This Scheme allows eligible homeless households a more manageable route into private renting because it removes their need to provide an upfront rent deposit. If a legitimate claim is made by the landlord during or at the close of the tenancy, the Scheme pays for costs which would have been covered had there been a deposit paid.

- 6.3 Two key policies promoted by the Strategy help reduce the physical barriers that older and disabled people suffer in their homes. The Joint Equipment Store at the Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living continues to re-provide used specialist equipment which helps make life and mobility easier for residents in their homes. The equipment at the Store is cleaned, repaired, checked for safety and re-issued when and where required. In many ways, Inverclyde Care and Repair acts as a complementary service to the Joint Equipment Store, as the latter can provide free advice and assistance to residents in the private sector, helping them access more substantial adaptations to their properties, allowing them stay at home for longer than their conditions and dwellings may have otherwise permitted.
- 6.4 There are many more policies being implemented which are providing benefits to the residents of Inverclyde. An overview of progress (the Headline Policy Report) is available in the Appendix to this report. The Detailed Policy Report covering all 41 policies is available from the Safer & Inclusive Communities Service on request.

7.0 PROGRESS TRAFFIC LIGHTS

- 7.1 A “traffic light” system of colour coding has been adopted to indicate progress in implementing the various policies. The Monitoring Report in the Appendix to this report provides more detailed explanation.

In summary:

Red: if there are concerns that a policy may not be successfully implemented on time, or at all, it will be labelled as red.

Amber: If there are significant issues hindering implementation – but not enough to prevent ultimate success – it will be labelled amber.

Green: If implementation is going well, it will be labelled green.

This colour coding system provides a clear visual guide to how well the LHS implementation process is going in relation to the 41 policies covered. The “traffic light” grading of these 41 policies is provided in the Appendix.

- 7.2 The great majority of policies being implemented (31 policies) are causing no significant concerns. Since summer, three policies have been taken to the stage where they are regarded as “blue” (completed). These are the policies that cover the Joint Equipment Store and the Care and Repair service, as described above (Policies 2.3 and 2.7 respectively) which are ongoing services, and the Affordable Housing Policy of the Local Development Plan (LHS Policy 1.20), which is now in operation. For the first time since the monitoring of this LHS began, we are pleased to report that no policies are classed as “red” (high cause for concern). However, there are seven policies out of the 41 covered which are “amber” (moderate cause for concern).

	Blue – Complete	Red – Significant Slippage	Amber – Slight Slippage	Green – On Track
Current status	3	0	7	

- 7.3 The first three of these amber policies are: setting up the one-stop-shop for housing access and advice (Policy 1), the marketing of housing in partnership between agencies (Policy 1.1), and using alternative methods of responding to homelessness (Policy 4.6). These three are all amber because of the situation with first policy, the one-stop-shop – which strongly affects the success of the last two of this grouping. A temporary one-stop-shop successfully operated from the offices of Oak Tree Housing Association until July 2014. This consisted of the Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR) agencies (Oak Tree, Cloch, Larkfield and Link housing associations) as well as the CHCP’s Homelessness Service, but it did not include Inverclyde’s largest landlord, River Clyde

Homes. The temporary arrangement had to end in the summer because permanent premises were not found. Since then the CHCP has re-affirmed its commitment to helping address the premises issue in 2015 and River Clyde Homes has expressed its wish to enter discussions to help set up a one-stop-shop fully inclusive of all the relevant agencies. The intention is that this would be part of a wider review of how housing and services are delivered in the area. While the setbacks are clear, these new opportunities have helped raise these policies, which were previously “red”, into “amber.”

- 7.4 Another two policies have been classed as “amber.” The goal of having 50% of all housing association lets being offered to homeless people each year (Policy 1.4) has never yet been achieved and was also previously reported as “red.” However, improved information sharing, understanding and liaison between the Homelessness Service and the housing associations is seen as a chance to improve this problem. Also, the private landlord accreditation scheme (Policy 1.9) has two strands to it: training private landlords to improve their knowledge of best practice and their legal requirements, and then accrediting them so they can demonstrate to tenants and future tenants that their housing and services meet good standards. 63 landlords have attended the events (40 at the launch session, 23 at the training events) but since the project began only one landlord has gone on to apply for accreditation. A review of the project will take place early in 2015 to find out why the numbers are so low, and to ensure more landlords move into accreditation in the near future.
- 7.5 The final two policies classed as “amber” are: promoting wheelchair and Lifetime homes (Policy 2.6) and supporting the achievement of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) in all housing association dwellings by March 2015 (Policy 5.6). There is still no lead agency identified to take on the work of promoting wheelchair housing, and no vehicle established through which to deliver the policy. Glasgow City Council promotes wheelchair housing through a policy in its Development Plan and Inverclyde Council’s Regeneration and Planning Service are reviewing the potential for Inverclyde to include such a policy in its own Plan. In relation to the SHQS, most social housing dwellings will be brought up to Standard in time, but it is projected that River Clyde Homes will not achieve the target by the deadline. They are applying for both an extension on the deadline and for exemptions for certain non-traditional types of property.

8.0 FUTURE LHS WORK

- 8.1 **Changes to the LHS process:** The Safer and Inclusive Communities Service is currently consulting stakeholders on proposals for changes to the way that we manage our LHS and its related activities. Key partners – different services within the Council and CHCP, and the local and national Housing Associations – received our four proposals and have provided their comments. The four proposals are to
1. extend the lifespan of the current LHS, so it runs up until 2019 instead of 2016,
 2. reduce the amount of reporting we do on the Strategy in the summer period,
 3. begin holding quarterly practitioner forums and
 4. increase and enhance the extent that we communicate the progress of the Strategy to the residents of Inverclyde.
- 8.2 Their responses have helped us revise and improve our proposals in preparation for discussing them with the Scottish Government. Depending on the feedback we receive from the Government, Safer and Inclusive Communities will submit its proposals seeking approval for them from Committee, on 10 March 2015.
- 8.3 **LHS indicators:** These were developed along with the LHS in time for the launch in October 2011. However, it was discovered that several of these indicators are not fit for purpose. In 2014, Safer and Inclusive Communities has been undertaking an extensive review of the indicators and targets set for the LHS. A wide-range of alternatives have been prepared and discussed with the key partners described above. These are still being finalised and a new set of indicators and targets will also be submitted to Committee in the near future.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial Implications - One off Costs

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

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

There are few financial implications deriving from this report. The implementation of most of the policies referred to within the Monitoring Report is covered within existing service and organisational budgets. However, two policies (the housing options guide and the introduction of private landlord accreditation) have been allocated funding by the Inverclyde Alliance Repopulation Outcome Delivery Group. These policies are expected to support the Group's action plan and encourage households to stay in, or move into, Inverclyde.

9.2 Human Resources:

All housing strategy work is undertaken within existing service and organisational personnel arrangements.

9.3 Legal:

By preparing and implementing the Local Housing Strategy, Inverclyde Council is meeting the statutory requirements of section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

9.4 Equalities:

An equalities impact assessment was undertaken during the preparation of the LHS, to ensure that the policies it contains will not unreasonably have a negative impact on minority groups. Policies are now being implemented in line with the results of this assessment.

9.5 Repopulation:

Many of the LHS policies being implemented will contribute to the aims of the Repopulation Outcome Delivery Group. Some will do this indirectly, for example by improving the housing products and services available in the area, and by making the area more attractive to households who may have otherwise considered leaving Inverclyde. Other policies, if successful, will contribute to the repopulation effort much more directly. For example, the one stop shop (Housing Advice Hub) and the online housing options guide will attempt to create a positive, compelling and effective method of promoting Inverclyde's housing to households outside of Inverclyde, as well as to those currently living in the area.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1
- Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy 2011–2016, report to Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee, 25 October 2011.

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APPENDIX

MONITORING REPORT TO THE INVERCLYDE LHS STEERING GROUP DECEMBER 2014

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### 1 PURPOSE

This monitoring report provides an update on the progress of the implementation of the LHS policies in Blocks 1–5.

The work of policy Block 6 began in October this year, and will be reported in summer 2015.

### 2 LAYOUT

The report comes in the following parts:

1. Monitoring Report
2. Appendices:
  - a. Policy Headline Report
  - b. Detailed Policy Report (Available on request from Safer & Inclusive Communities)
  - c. Additional information on a selection of policies (Available on request from Safer & Inclusive Communities)

The Policy Headline Report shows – at a glance – whether progress on implementing the policies is causing concern or not. The Detailed Policy Report provides readers with more information about progress on each policy currently being implemented.

Please note: policies 1, 2 and 3 are not tied to any one outcome. It is anticipated that they will support the achievement of all the outcomes.

### 3 BACKGROUND

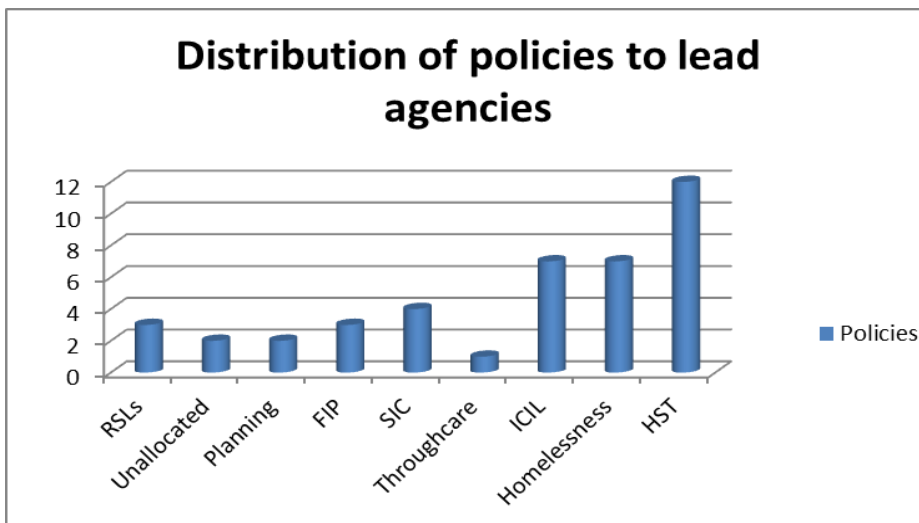
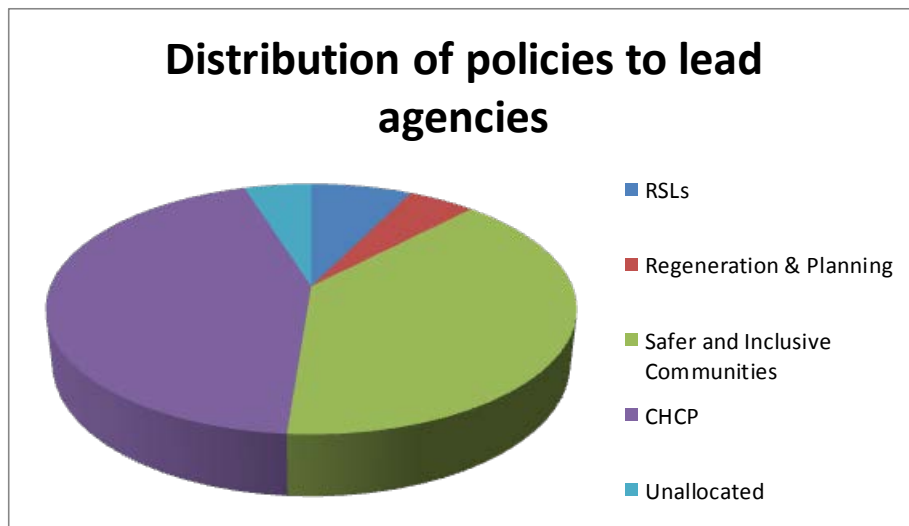
The LHS contains 76 policies/actions to be implemented over the five years of the Strategy. For practical reasons, these were prioritised into seven blocks. Every six months work on a new block of policies begins.

A relevant agency takes the lead on implementing each policy. To do this they bring together implementing partner agencies to agree and undertake the work, in partnership.

This report is based on policy information provided from all the lead agencies of the first five policy blocks.

### 4 POLICY LEADS

Because the implementation of five policies (2.15, 2.17, 4.3, 4.7 and 4.8) was completed before the period of this report (April 2014—September 2014), the report will cover the 41 policies which continued to be monitored after March 2014. The leads on these are:





**Notes for chart above.**

**RSLs: Registered Social Landlords (housing associations)**

**Unallocated: lead agency yet to be confirmed**

**Planning: the Regeneration & Planning Service**

**FIP: Financial Inclusion Partnership**

**SIC: Safer and Inclusive Communities Service (excluding the Housing Strategy Team)**

**Throughcare: from CHCP Children & Families**

**ICIL: CHCP Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living**

**Homelessness: CHCP Homelessness Service**

**HST: Housing Strategy Team (Safer and Inclusive Communities Service)**

As ever, different services within the Council, as well as our external partners, continue to show their support for the Strategy by taking the lead on the implementation of multiple policies. Unsurprisingly, the team dealing with the highest number of policies is the Housing Strategy Team itself, but other teams in Safer and Inclusive Communities, Regeneration and Planning, and, in particular, the Inverclyde Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) are tackling a significant portion of the Strategy's work. Oak Tree and Cloch housing associations are noted as leading on three policies in this report. River Clyde Homes (RCH) had previously led on some which are completed and have taken on new ones which will not be reported on until later in 2015. While the above charts focus on the lead agencies, it must be remembered that many other agencies contribute to the Strategy as implementation partners in a non-lead role.

## **5 THE FIVE STRATEGIC OUTCOMES**

This section describes the extent to which we can say that, in the *real* world, we are beginning to achieve our strategic outcomes – in relation to the policies which are being implemented and monitored by this report. Wherever a policy number is cited, these can be found in the appendices.

### **Outcome 1: Inverclyde residents have access to a range of suitable housing options**

#### *Affordable Housing Policy*

There are two parts to this outcome: firstly, increasing and improving the housing that is available and secondly, supporting people to access this housing. In the last six months we have seen progress in both these areas. In the first, the Regeneration and Planning Service has successfully implemented a landmark Affordable Housing Policy within its Local Development Plan, adopted in August 2014. This policy (RES4) will require developments of a significant size to include housing for the affordable sector, or for developers to contribute a commuted payment to the Council's Affordable Housing Fund where this is not practical. Already, there is a planning application being considered where, through RES4, the developer will be making a commuted payment in lieu of on-site provision. This Fund will later be used by other housing providers to develop affordable housing elsewhere in the locality. By helping increase the availability of affordable housing in Inverclyde, this policy is improving the balance and range of housing on offer to current and new residents. For more information on this, refer to LHS Policy 1.20 in the appendices.

#### *Homelessness*

Several different LHS policies are being implemented by the Homelessness Service and its partners for the benefit of their clients – helping them into housing or preventing them losing their homes unnecessarily. Through Policy 1.5, the Service has been developing its rent deposit guarantee scheme in partnership with the scheme's main funder, the Department for Work and Pensions. Procedures are in place and funding secured which will lead to an expansion of the scheme in December 2014. The scheme allows eligible households to take on new tenancies without the burden of providing an upfront deposit payment. During or after the tenancy, any

legitimate claims by landlords for costs which would have been taken out of the tenant's deposit, had there been one, will be covered by the scheme instead. In addition to this scheme, the Homelessness Service has also been working closely with landlords to improve the other processes through which homeless households access housing. Through Policy 1.4, liaison between the Service and housing associations has improved in relation to the legislative requirement for the latter to enter into tenancies with homeless people ("section 5 referrals"), and new systems for monitoring this have been implemented. The Service has also been increasing its engagement with private landlords and the private sector is increasingly becoming a reliable solution to homelessness (see Policy 1.8).

#### *Private landlord accreditation*

This scheme (Policy 1.9) was introduced to improve the quality of the products and services found in the private renting sector, and therefore make that sector more appealing to households searching for housing. Since the scheme began in mid-2014, 63 private landlords and agents have attended accreditation sessions in Inverclyde (40 at the launch event and 23 at the training sessions), learning about best practice and legal requirements in their area of business. The Council's partners, Landlord Accreditation Scotland, have been providing these high quality sessions, and there is no doubt that landlords will be putting their new knowledge into practice for the benefit of their tenants.

#### *Households with particular needs*

The CHCP and RSLs have been working together to help people with particular needs to access housing (Policy 1.3). All locally-based RSLs in Inverclyde have introduced new housing allocation systems whereby applicants bid for specific dwellings they are interested in, instead of sitting on a waiting list until the RSL singles them out for an offer. While this new way of accessing housing will benefit some applicants with particular needs – because the applicant is able to directly select houses which may be more suited to their needs and wants, potentially making their new tenancy more stable – there are other applicants that need more support to participate in the new processes. There is an increased demand on applicants to be proactive, informed and computer-savvy (all applications are now taken online) in their house-searches – requirements which go beyond the skills, knowledge and abilities of some households. In response to this, some services within the CHCP have been offering support to individual clients to help them through the application/bidding process. Also, RCH have introduced a Future Skills project which assists all its applicants with lower levels of IT skills and knowledge, and PCs have been provided in RSL offices for people without access to the internet. The Inverclyde Common Housing Register (ICHR: Oak Tree, Cloch, Larkfield and Link Housing Associations) continues to seek nominations from the CHCP when heavily adapted properties become available, and Trust Housing Association invite the CHCP to take part in assessments of applicants when their own properties come up for let.

### **Outcome 2: Inverclyde residents are able to make best use of their housing**

#### *Physical disabilities*

This outcome is about the Council and its partners helping residents make the most of their housing – removing barriers to the enjoyment of their homes and initiating services which enhance their experiences of their dwellings. Among others, there are two services directly supported by the LHS which aim to reduce the physical barriers older and disabled people suffer in their homes. These are the Joint Equipment Store service provided by the CHCP Inverclyde Centre for Independent Living (ICIL - Policy 2.3) and the Inverclyde Care and Repair Service, based at Cloch Housing Association (Policy 2.7). Used specialist equipment – all of which makes life and mobility in the home easier for people and their carers who need it – is cleaned, repaired, checked for safety and stored at the Joint Equipment Store, for allocation by OTs and re-use by other residents. The other service, Care and Repair, provides free advice and assistance in helping

customers in the private housing sector to access adaptations and services to help them stay in their own homes for longer. There is also a small repairs service provided by Care and Repair.

#### *Freedom from domestic abuse*

Inverclyde Women's Aid and Inverclyde Council's Safer and Inclusive Communities Service have jointly provided free Domestic Abuse Basic Awareness training to 39 members of staff at RCH (LHS Policy 2.11). Housing association staff can have contact with their tenants and applicants in their homes or enter into discussions about their home-life, which may give them more opportunities to spot the signs of domestic abuse. Having undertaken this training, RCH staff have reported that they now feel more informed and empowered to help residents who are or may be suffering abuse at home. Staff in the Homelessness Service are now due to receive the training as well. Housing staff from many services will be in a better position to contribute to helping highlight and bring an end to specific cases of domestic abuse in Inverclyde.

### **Outcome 3: Inverclyde residents can enjoy their neighbourhoods**

#### *Clune Park Regeneration*

While the Strategy and the Inverclyde Strategic Housing Investment Plan support several neighbourhood-wide regeneration projects across Inverclyde, one of the LHS's flagship initiatives is the regeneration of the Clune Park area of Port Glasgow (LHS Policy 3.3). This area of private housing has endured decades of neglect, low investment and social problems, and the Council's plans to renew the area are well under way. The demolition of existing properties could potentially begin within six months now that all 430 properties have had Demolition Orders served on them, and that pre-demolition surveys and service disconnections have begun. This timescale would not apply to all properties because there are still a significant number of owners and tenants residing there, and 274 appeals against the Demolition Orders have been raised, which are yet to be decided upon in the Sheriff Court. However, immediate positive results are still evident: the number of properties being let there which are below the Tolerable Standard has reduced by 30% since the project began, and RSLs are assisting with surgeries for residents to explore their housing options for moving on. Also, a new affordable housing estate (Lower Mary Street) is being built nearby, by Link Housing Association and many of its properties are being prioritised for residents leaving Clune Park.

### **Outcome 4: Inverclyde residents receive appropriate support when they experience changes to their housing needs**

#### *Preventing people from losing their homes*

The CHCP provides many services aimed at helping keep people in their homes when their needs change (Policy 4.4). These are described in detail in the appendices, but a couple are worth noting here. The ICIL, mentioned earlier, provides support for older people and people with physical disabilities, assessing their needs and developing interventions to promote independence. This might involve referrals to other support services or the provision of specialist equipment. Often working in partnership with the ICIL, the District Nursing Service is an invaluable support for people with medical conditions and disabilities which, without it, could mean the resident's house would no longer be suitable for them. It is a 24-hour service which benefits individuals and their carers, and also eases the demand for hospital beds, as it assists with complex hospital discharges.

#### *Responding when people have lost their homes*

The Homelessness Service and, where relevant, the CHCP Advice Service work to ensure that when residents become homeless they can reposition themselves to take on new permanent

accommodation and avoid repeat homelessness. The Advice Service bases staff in the Inverclyde Centre homelessness hostel to give direct financial advice and to support households to access the Scottish Welfare Fund where eligible, which can help support them in their move into a new home (Policy 4.9). Also, staff in the Homelessness Service have received training on a new system ("Outcome Star") for mapping out the support needs of clients in temporary accommodation, and helping them access the services they need, alongside the Homemaker service which helps them settle into their new homes.

## **Outcome 5: Inverclyde residents take responsibility for their housing and communities**

### *Increasing financial stability and responsibility*

The Inverclyde Financial Inclusion Partnership (FIP) oversees the provision of a wide range of welfare benefits and money advice services to the residents of Inverclyde, which can have a significantly positive effect on their home finances (Policy 5.1). Financial Fitness continues to receive funding to provide advice to RSL tenants, while RCH employees themselves have received benefits and welfare reform training from the CHCP Advice Service. They can use this to help direct their tenants towards relevant services and benefits – not only to resolve financial problems but sometimes just to access what they are entitled to and maximise household income. The FIP is also planning to help further develop and promote the two local credit unions, which can provide manageable financial services to households on lower incomes.

### *Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)*

The majority of community-led housing associations in Inverclyde will successfully bring their properties up to the SHQS by the required year of 2015 (Policy 5.6). RCH are seeking an extension to 2016, and exemptions for some of its difficult-to-upgrade, non-traditional housing. Many are already there, but within the next couple of years, the vast majority of Inverclyde's residents will benefit from increased comfort, safety, energy efficiency and security in their homes provided by the Standard.

## 6 CAUSE FOR CONCERN

From the information gathered in during the monitoring process, progress on each policy is judged to be either a low, moderate or high cause for concern (or completed). For each of these, there is a colour code attached. The definitions for these colours are as below.

### **RED (High cause for concern)**

All evidence currently suggests that the policy will not successfully be implemented on time, or at all.

### **AMBER (Moderate cause for concern)**

Currently experiencing significant issues and delays that need resolved, but which are not enough to jeopardise successful completion.

### **GREEN (Low or no cause for concern)**

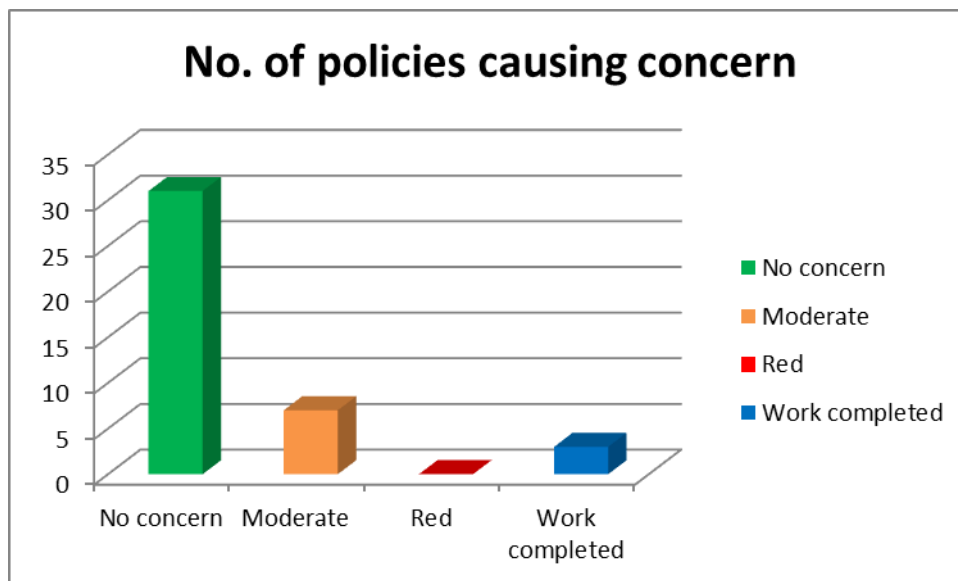
Not currently experiencing significant issues or delays. If experiencing them, plans are in place to resolve the issues and these are likely to be successful.

### **BLUE (Implementation completed)**

The policy has been successfully implemented, or implemented as far as we are going to take it.

Please note that where there is no “cause for concern” traffic light colour next to a policy on the Policy Headline Report, this is because the policy is not currently being monitored through the LHS monitoring process. It will be phased in later in a new block.

The spread of the “traffic light” and completed colours across all the policies is as follows:



We are pleased to report that LHS-related monitoring on three more policies has completed and that the vast majority of ongoing policies – 31 of them – are causing no concern. Also, of the three

policies that were causing highest concern in the last report, all of them (Policies 1, 1.1 and 1.4) have improved and moved into the “moderate cause for concern” category. More details on each policy causing concern are given below.

### **Red (high cause for concern)**

There are no policies causing a high cause for concern.

### **Amber (moderate cause for concern)**

There are seven policies which have been categorised as amber: a moderate cause for concern. Here is an explanation of each.

#### *1, one-stop-shop and 1.1, partners marketing housing together*

A “near” one-stop-shop, consisting of the ICHR agencies and the Homelessness Service, operated from temporary premises at Oak Tree’s offices until July this year, when it closed. While it was active, it lacked the involvement of Inverclyde’s largest landlord, RCH, and when the temporary arrangements came to an end, it was unable to find alternative premises. Partners believe that the customer satisfaction levels that were achieved by the temporary one-stop-shop have been lost. While these setbacks are clear, the project has entered a new phase. RCH has expressed an interest in beginning discussions with the ICHR partners and Homelessness to look at whether there is the opportunity for a fully-inclusive one-stop-shop to be established. These discussions will be part of a wider review of housing and service delivery. As for the premises issue, an RCH partnership may allow for the use of one of their planned customer hubs, but also, the CHCP has committed to reviewing the premises options early in 2015.

#### *1.4, Section 5 homeless referrals*

As shown earlier, improvements have been made to the processes the Homelessness Service and its RSL partners use to monitor section 5 referral uptake (hence the move from red to amber since the last report) but numbers are still well below the target, which requires 50% of all RSLs being let to go to section 5 homeless households. A review of the target is imminent.

#### *1.9, Landlord accreditation*

While it was also reported earlier that there have been several positive developments related to this policy – including increasing numbers of landlords receiving training – landlords are still not taking the next step to actually become accredited. Since our partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland began, only one new landlord has become accredited (three were accredited before the partnership). The way that the scheme is being promoted will be reviewed early in 2015, so that hopefully those numbers will pick up if we have a second year of partnership.

#### *2.6, Promoting Lifetime and wheelchair homes*

There is still no lead agency to take this policy forward. Glasgow City has this as a policy in its own Development Plan. Information about Glasgow’s approach is being considered by our own Regeneration and Planning Service.

#### *4.6, Methods for responding to homelessness*

Because the work of this policy relies to an extent on successfully establishing a one-stop-shop, this policy has been classed as a moderate cause for concern. The Homelessness Service has nevertheless continued to implement more traditional methods of dealing with homelessness and initiated a “housing options” method for dealing with new cases.

## 5.6, SHQS

This is another policy that is providing good results in some areas (as demonstrated earlier). However, it is anticipated that even if RCH are granted an extension for full achievement of the Standard to 2016 instead of 2015, they will still fall just short of success. They project that 95% of their properties, rather than the required 100%, will meet the SQHS by 2016.

### Blue (implementation completed)

Three policies which have been discussed earlier in this report will be removed from the “live” list of policies being monitored, as they have been completed. The Affordable Housing Policy (1.20) has been adopted and is now in operation, while the Joint Equipment Store (Policy 2.3) and the Care and Repair Service (Policy 2.7) have been recognised by this report as long-running and still-continuing services.

## 7 CONCLUSION

The LHS continues to demonstrate that it is a successful vehicle for promoting partnership working. All housing-related services within the Council are contributing to the Strategy and many external agencies are fully signed up to its implementation. These reports have been produced every six months for a couple of years now, but this is the first time we are able to demonstrate that real-world progress is being made towards achieving all five of the LHS’s outcomes. The majority of the work on policy implementation is going well, with an increasing number being completed, and there are currently no “red” policies (high cause for concern). There are a handful of policies causing a degree of concern – experiencing implementation problems – but a function of this report is to ensure they remain highlighted and partners’ attentions are focussed on the need to find solutions for them.

## 8 APPENDICES

- A. Policy Headline Report
- B. Policy Detailed Report (Available on request from Safer & Inclusive Communities)
- C. Additional information on a selection of policies (Available on request from Safer & Inclusive Communities)

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Inverclyde Local Housing Strategy Steering Group accepts this Monitoring Report and its appendices as an accurate snapshot of the progress being made in the implementation of the Strategy.
2. That the Steering Group accepts that, other than an ongoing review of the Strategy’s indicators and targets, there is no need for changes to the LHS.
3. That the Steering Group approves of this report being submitted to the Inverclyde Council’s Education and Communities Committee as an appendix to a committee report on general strategic housing developments.
4. That the Steering Group approves of the circulation of this report and its appendices to all lead agencies and implementing partners in the work of the Strategy, and to any other interested party.

# LHS Policy Headline Report

3 December 2014

Policy Number Policy Name

Policy Status

Cause for Concern

## Outcome 1 - Inverclyde residents have access to a range of suitable housing options

| Policy Number | Policy Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Policy Status | Cause for Concern |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1             | Partners open a central "one stop shop" providing housing access and advice services.                                                                                                                                                                   | In Progress   | Moderate          |
| 2             | Partners encourage housing-related agencies to record equalities information, to analyse it for planning purposes and to share it with other relevant agencies.                                                                                         | Not Started   | Low/none          |
| 3             | Establish and improve links between the Council and private landlords in Inverclyde.                                                                                                                                                                    | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.1           | RSLs, private landlords and Council work together to market available RSL and registered private lets effectively in Inverclyde.                                                                                                                        | In Progress   | Moderate          |
| 1.2           | Continue to develop a housing options guide (HOG) for the area as proposed by the southwest regional Housing Options Hub in partnership with Inverclyde Council, RSLs, private landlords, estate agents, etc. Promote the guide and measure popularity. | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.3           | Partners jointly review and agree processes for households with particular needs accessing stable and appropriate housing.                                                                                                                              | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.4           | Inverclyde Council will work with RSLs to secure 50% of their total annual lets for section 5 referrals.                                                                                                                                                | In Progress   | Moderate          |
| 1.5           | The Council will expand its Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme.                                                                                                                                                                                              | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.6           | The Council will investigate the possibility of guaranteeing the deposits of household mortgages.                                                                                                                                                       | In Progress   |                   |
| 1.7           | Partners work together to develop schemes which assist more households in accessing affordable mortgages.                                                                                                                                               | Not Started   | Low/none          |
| 1.8           | Partners make better use of the private rented sector in developing solutions to homelessness.                                                                                                                                                          | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.9           | Use an accreditation scheme and other initiatives to promote Inverclyde's private rented sector as tenure of choice.                                                                                                                                    | In Progress   | Moderate          |
| 1.10          | Develop a protocol for young people leaving care to avoid having to go down the homelessness route.                                                                                                                                                     | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 1.11          | Support the work of the multi-agency, interdisciplinary Housing & Accommodation Sub Group to ensure that, as far as possible, housing and support/care providers can respond to changing needs and demand.                                              | In Progress   | Low/none          |



**Outcome 1 - Inverclyde residents have access to a range of suitable housing options**

| Policy Number | Policy Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Policy Status | Cause for Concern       |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 1.12          | The Council and its partners will develop an approach to identifying and rehabilitating empty homes and properties, to increase the housing supply in Inverclyde, including buying back houses to address shortfalls in particular areas and in sizes and . . . | In Progress   |                         |
| 1.13          | Continue to support initiatives aimed at addressing imbalances in the housing stock such as ROTS (Rental off the Shelf) and buy backs of houses to secure an expansion of choice and widening of housing options.                                               | In Progress   |                         |
| 1.14          | The Council will work with RSLs to investigate alternative methods of funding affordable housing development in Inverclyde.                                                                                                                                     | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 1.15          | Hold a publicity event to promote Inverclyde's housing development opportunities and sites to developers from across Scotland.                                                                                                                                  | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 1.16          | Create and promote a self-build information pack.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Not Started   |                         |
| 1.17          | Investigate methods for establishing and improving links between the Council and private developers.                                                                                                                                                            | In Progress   |                         |
| 1.18          | All agencies in Inverclyde will review how their portfolio of land can be used to increase housing development.                                                                                                                                                 | In Progress   |                         |
| 1.19          | Support private developers and RSLs to form development partnerships.                                                                                                                                                                                           | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 1.20          | Prepare an affordable housing policy in conjunction with the Local Development Plan.                                                                                                                                                                            | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 1.21          | Support the improvement of liaison and co-operation between infrastructure agencies and developers.                                                                                                                                                             | In Progress   |                         |
| 1.22          | Explore options for the expansion of affordable housing across all tenures.                                                                                                                                                                                     | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 1.23          | Continue research into the suitability of current housing and the varieties of housing which will be required to satisfy need and demand in Inverclyde.                                                                                                         | In Progress   |                         |

**Outcome 2 - Inverclyde residents are able to make best use of their housing**

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |             |                         |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| 2.1  | Assess the problems that residents face in coming-and-going from their neighbourhoods and dwellings, and develop co-ordinated responses to these problems.                                      | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.2  | Partners create central database of adapted properties to be used by housing providers and referral agencies working to house people with particular needs.                                     | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.3  | Continue use of multi-agency store where used equipment is kept until a new household can benefit from it.                                                                                      | Completed   | Implementation complete |
| 2.4  | Partners review the approach they take to defining a practical and accessible dwelling for residents with particular needs.                                                                     | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.5  | Partners carry out a cross-sector review of funding of equipment and adaptations in Inverclyde, and investigate ways of increasing this and using it more effectively.                          | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.6  | Promote the development of wheelchair accessible and lifetime homes across all tenures in Inverclyde.                                                                                           | In Progress | Moderate                |
| 2.7  | Continue to provide the Care and Repair service for older and disabled residents in the private sectors of Inverclyde.                                                                          | In Progress | Implementation complete |
| 2.8  | Increase the number of residents who benefit from home security and safety checks.                                                                                                              | Not Started |                         |
| 2.9  | Landlords will develop a securing standard for their properties.                                                                                                                                | Not Started |                         |
| 2.10 | Encourage private and housing association landlords to arrange fire service home visits as part of new tenancy/settling in arrangements.                                                        | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.11 | Establish an ongoing training system to ensure housing agency staff can confidently respond to suspected or actual cases of domestic, vulnerable person or child abuse in the homes they visit. | In Progress | Low/none                |
| 2.12 | Promote the wider uptake of contents and buildings insurance by households in all sectors.                                                                                                      | In Progress |                         |

**Outcome 2 - Inverclyde residents are able to make best use of their housing**

| Policy Number | Policy Name                                                                                                                                              | Policy Status | Cause for Concern       |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| 2.13          | Review access to household communications across Inverclyde and develop solutions to improve access where needed.                                        | Not Started   |                         |
| 2.14          | Investigate with suppliers the potential to supply gas to currently all-electric dwellings in Inverclyde.                                                | Not Started   |                         |
| 2.15          | Develop an area based, cross-tenure scheme for delivery of all relevant domestic energy efficiency, carbon reduction and fuel poverty activity.          | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 2.16          | Explore with energy suppliers the potential for beneficial rates for residents in Inverclyde.                                                            | Not Started   | Low/none                |
| 2.17          | Improve existing RSL energy and heating advice provision.                                                                                                | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 2.18          | Investigate alternative ways to support and complement the work of informal carers.                                                                      | In Progress   |                         |
| 2.19          | Inverclyde Council will continue to expand the private landlord register and investigate ways of making use of it to benefit the sector and its tenants. | In Progress   |                         |

Policy Number Policy Name

Policy Status

Cause for Concern

**Outcome 3 - Inverclyde residents can enjoy their neighbourhoods**

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |             |          |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------|
| 3.1 | Review local response to neighbourhood vandalism and graffiti and investigate potential to improve this.                                                                                                                                          | Not Started |          |
| 3.2 | Continue the programme of demolishing low demand and below standard housing association dwellings, where they cannot be brought up to standard at reasonable cost.                                                                                | In Progress |          |
| 3.3 | Regenerate Clune Park, Port Glasgow.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | In Progress | Low/none |
| 3.4 | Assess the potential for HRAs in Inverclyde. Review criteria for deciding areas where these would be suitable.                                                                                                                                    | In Progress | Low/none |
| 3.5 | Investigate options for converting more households to greener energy use.                                                                                                                                                                         | In Progress |          |
| 3.6 | Improve the arrangements by which housing and other agencies provide a co-ordinated response to neighbourhood crime and antisocial behaviour.                                                                                                     | In Progress |          |
| 3.7 | Continue to target the use of mobile CCTV in hot spots.                                                                                                                                                                                           | In Progress |          |
| 3.8 | Housing agencies will provide Fire and Rescue with comprehensive and regular updates on planned demolitions and construction work, enabling them to plan their service around the increased fire risks associated with empty sites and buildings. | In Progress |          |

| Policy Number                                                                                                           | Policy Name                                                                                                                                                              | Policy Status | Cause for Concern       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Outcome 4 - Inverclyde residents receive appropriate support when they experience changes to their housing needs</b> |                                                                                                                                                                          |               |                         |
| 4.1                                                                                                                     | Review housing finance advice and training provision in Inverclyde and investigate the potential for increased co-ordination of service provision.                       | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.2                                                                                                                     | Partners provide landlords with training and advice for when their tenants homes are at risk.                                                                            | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.3                                                                                                                     | Investigate ways of ensuring tenants can sustain their tenancy during hospital stays, rehabilitation and re-ablement.                                                    | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 4.4                                                                                                                     | Expand and improve existing services that allow people to stay in their homes when they develop care needs or their needs change.                                        | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.5                                                                                                                     | Investigate the requirement for an increased uptake of mortgage-to-rent cases in Inverclyde.                                                                             | Not Started   |                         |
| 4.6                                                                                                                     | Review and improve the methods the Homelessness Service and its partners use to respond to homeless presentations, including introducing the 'housing options' approach. | In Progress   | Moderate                |
| 4.7                                                                                                                     | Review the Homelessness Services ability to respond to the earliest indications of repossession procedures.                                                              | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 4.8                                                                                                                     | Investigate the potential for increasing the number of emergency homes available to the households presenting to the Homelessness Service.                               | Completed     | Implementation complete |
| 4.9                                                                                                                     | All homeless households and those at risk of homelessness are provided with a welfare rights/household finance assessment where this would be helpful.                   | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.10                                                                                                                    | Develop and adopt improved methods of reviewing residents' housing support needs.                                                                                        | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.11                                                                                                                    | Review and improve interagency housing support assessment processes in Inverclyde.                                                                                       | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.12                                                                                                                    | Develop support programmes for preparing people to manage their own households.                                                                                          | In Progress   | Low/none                |
| 4.13                                                                                                                    | Develop ways in which landlords can play a greater role in identifying potential support needs of their applicants or tenants and in responding to those.                | Not Started   | Low/none                |

Policy Number Policy Name

Policy Status

Cause for Concern

**Outcome 5 - Inverclyde residents take responsibility for their housing and communities**

| Policy Number | Policy Name                                                                                                                              | Policy Status | Cause for Concern |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 5.1           | Promote income maximisation, savings schemes and rightful uptake of benefits in Inverclyde.                                              | In Progress   | Low/none          |
| 5.2           | Continue to provide opportunities for local people to be employed and trained in the housing sector.                                     | In Progress   |                   |
| 5.3           | Partners develop ways of monitoring and improving the maintenance of dwellings across all dwellings in Inverclyde.                       | In Progress   |                   |
| 5.4           | Review the criteria used by the Council for deciding which households receive assistance when improving their property conditions.       | Not Started   |                   |
| 5.5           | Investigate ways of improving the Council's advice provision to private households in regards to their property conditions.              | Not Started   |                   |
| 5.6           | Support RSL work towards the achievement of the SHQS.                                                                                    | In Progress   | Moderate          |
| 5.7           | Inverclyde Council continue to support RSLs in remedying communal area disrepair in mixed tenure blocks.                                 | In Progress   |                   |
| 5.8           | Partners continue to investigate alternative methods of providing housing support which can replace or complement traditional practices. | Not Started   |                   |
| 5.9           | Investigate ways of making efficiency savings in Council-funded housing support services                                                 | Not Started   |                   |
| 5.10          | Develop ways of measuring the benefits and savings that housing support services provide.                                                | Not Started   |                   |