ARGYLL and BUTE
STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN
2022/23 - 2026/27

Bute • Helensburgh • Islay • Oban • Mull • Campbeltown • Iona • Dunoon • Tiree • Lochgilphead • Seil …

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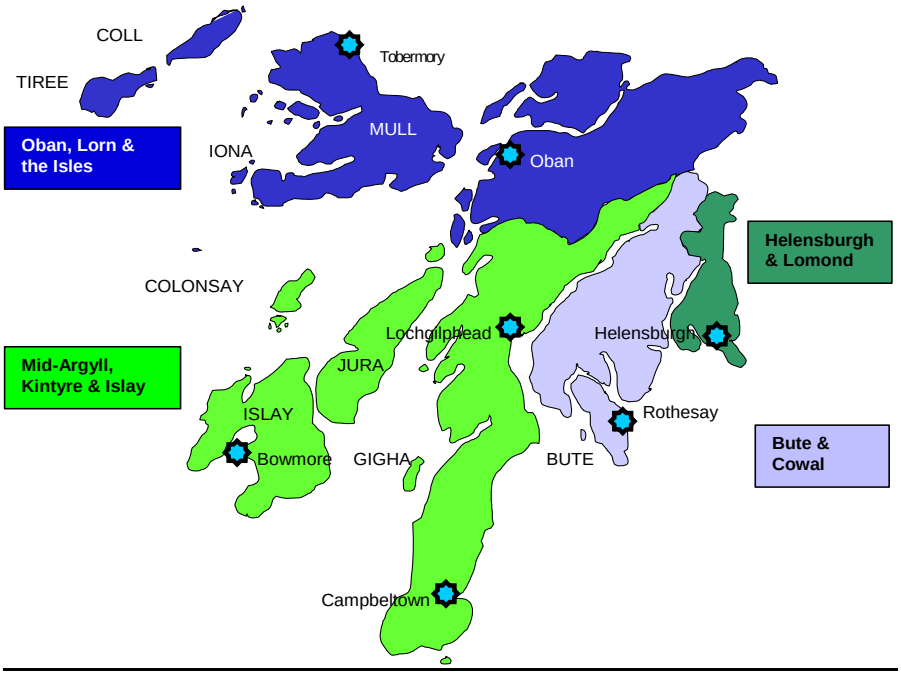


The focus of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is affordable housing provision via new build, replacement, rehabilitation or re-modelling.

"Affordable housing" in this context refers to accommodation made available at a cost below full market value to meet an identified need and includes:

- Social rented housing;
- Subsidised low cost housing for sale (discounted, shared ownership or shared equity);
- Low cost housing without subsidy (entry level housing for sale); and
- Mid-market rental housing provided by social landlords."

Guidance on the Preparation of Strategic Housing Investment Plans, Scottish Government, July 2016

AFFORDABILITY – as a basic rule of thumb, an affordable house price is reckoned to be no more than 3.5 times the annual income of the household; and in terms of renting a property, the affordable benchmark is often considered to be around 25% of the household's income.

1) INTRODUCTION

Argyll and Bute Council remains committed to working closely with the Scottish Government, local housing associations, and other key partners to increase the effective supply of affordable homes across the local authority area so that everyone can access a good quality home that is affordable and that meets their needs.

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is a key local authority document which identifies priority housing projects to support the delivery of both local and national strategic housing targets; as well as helping to increase the supply of housing across other tenures as appropriate.

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets out the strategic policy approach of the council and its partners to delivering high quality housing and related services across all tenures, to meet identified need in the area. The SHIP is directly informed by the strategy and its associated policies.

This plan is an operational document and the core purpose is to set out the strategic investment priorities for affordable housing and other tenures over a 5 year period, to achieve the priorities and outcomes set out in the LHS. It reinforces the Council's role as the strategic housing authority; and informs Scottish Government housing investment decisions. It also underpins the preparation of Strategic Local Programme Agreements (SLPAs).

Specifically, the SHIP is the key document for identifying:

- Proposed strategic housing projects which require funding from the Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply Programme;
- Proposed affordable housing projects which can be provided without Scottish Government funding support; and
- Projects across all tenures requiring grant and loan funding from the Scottish Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund.

This SHIP builds on the previous SHIP published in 2020, and has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders; and following agreement of the strategic local programme in June 2021 with the Scottish Government and individual, partner RSLs. The outline draft plan was also approved by the SHIP Officers' Group and the Strategic Housing Forum in 2021; and the finalised SHIP was approved on 30th September 2021 by full Council for submission to the Scottish Government.

This SHIP covers the 5-year period from 2022/23 to 2026/27.

Content of the SHIP

The SHIP comprises two key elements:

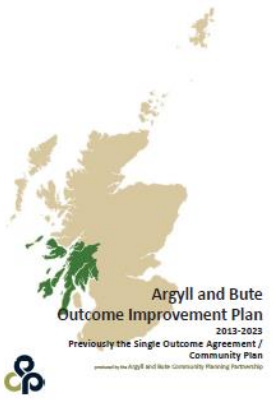
a) This narrative document setting out the context to the plan including:
- The strategic framework and how the SHIP contributes to LHS Priorities and Outcomes;
- A summary of the Project Prioritization Framework;
- Deliverability of projects and Mitigating Development Constraints;
- Resourcing the programme, including the local authority's contribution, the use of council tax on second and empty homes, Scottish Government investment and Developer Contributions;
- Progress towards targets by completions;
- Specialist Provision, in particular wheelchair accessible housing;
- Empty homes services and actions to bring homes back into use;
- Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement
- Impact Assessments: including Equalities; Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency; Health Inequalities; Child Poverty; Homelessness; Gypsy/Travelers; and Rural & Island impacts
- A summary of the Current and Projected Programmes

b) An electronic annex listing affordable housing projects across all tenures that have been identified as priorities for funding over the five year period. This will:
- Include rolling forward existing projects from the previous SHIP (October 2020) where appropriate;
- Set out the funding and delivery mechanism; and
- Demonstrate that the projects and resources will be realistically delivered over the plan period, highlighting any potential risks.

This second element of the SHIP is located on the Scottish Government's online HARP system (Housing and Regeneration Programme), however a summary list of projects is included in this narrative document for ease of reference.

2) THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

- **Argyll & Bute Outcome Improvement Plan (ABOIP)**



The Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-2023 (previously the Single Outcome Agreement / Community Plan) sets out the Community Planning Partnership's (CPP) vision for achieving long term outcomes for communities in Argyll and Bute. As the overarching strategic document for local partners, including the council, it provides the high level context for a wide range of strategies, plans and policies, including both the Local Housing Strategy and the SHIP.

The overall objective of the plan for the 10 years to 2023 is –

Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population.

This objective is underpinned by 6 long term outcomes:-

In Argyll and Bute:
1. The economy is diverse and thriving.
2. We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.
3. Education, skills and training maximises opportunities for all.
4. Children and young people have the best possible start.
5. People live active, healthier and independent lives.
6. People live in safer and stronger communities

While the housing sector has a role to play in achieving all of these outcomes, the provision of affordable new build housing, particularly the delivery of the SHIP, is primarily focused on Outcome 2, in relation to infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.

- **Priorities of Argyll and Bute Council 2017 - 2022**

The current council administration continues until 2022, and is focused on creating and making the most of opportunities while continuing to deliver quality services. Like the communities we represent we are ambitious and we will always be accessible to our constituents and accountable to the people of Argyll and Bute. We are committed to making Argyll and Bute a great place to live, work and do business and we will work hard to deliver better core services and improved support for communities. Local residents know that all councils are facing difficult decisions. Where we can't always provide, we'll enable, support and work in partnership to achieve delivery.

OUR VISION FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL

A Council that grasps opportunities to transform how it delivers services, working in partnership with communities and other public and private sector organizations, with a "can do, will do" attitude, and a strong commitment to community power and to the delivery of first class local services:

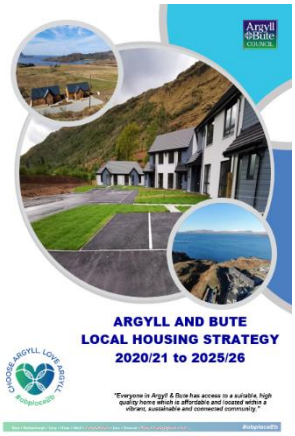
- An education service which enables all young people to achieve their potential;
- Support for the local economy in partnership with local businesses
- Homes for all, tackling poverty and building opportunity
- Greener and cleaner communities

A determination to ensure that our diverse geographic location with remote, rural and island communities is fully taken into account and supported in the distribution of any new funding

With specific regard to Housing, the priority of "**Homes for all, tackling fuel poverty and building opportunity**" is directly related to, and supported by, the SHIP. Relevant actions includes:-

- Work with partners and the Scottish Government to deliver new affordable homes across the Council area, and consider using the resources of pension funds or developer contributions whenever possible to increase numbers;
- Use the council's negotiating and initiating clout to secure lower priced energy for local people to address the issue of fuel poverty that has a significant impact locally;
- Work with partners to provide advice, information and support at an early stage for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

- **Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2021/22-2025/26**



The Council continues to ensure that the investment programme and priorities set out in the SHIP are consistent with the vision, aims and objectives of the LHS; and that these build on the latest assessment of housing need and demand (HNDA). Existing strategic priorities and outcomes continue to be ratified and supported by partners and stakeholders via the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forum. The last LHS was completed in 2021, and a new strategy covering the five year planning period to 2025/26 is in the final phase of consultation. It sets out an updated core vision:

> ***"Everyone in Argyll & Bute has access to a suitable, high quality home which is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community."***

Underpinning this vision are four high level outcomes:

1) Housing Supply and Place Making
2) House Condition, Energy Efficiency and Poverty
3) Specialist Provision and Independent Living
4) Housing Options, Information and Support

The SHIP continues to play a key role in promoting the overall LHS vision and in particular delivering on LHS Outcome One in respect of the affordable Housing Supply Targets (HSTs) for Argyll and Bute. A fully revised HNDA was submitted to the Scottish Government for appraisal in 2021 and the new LHS is due to be fully implemented later in 2021. The emerging Housing Supply Targets will be significantly higher than the baseline HNDA estimate, to address local and national strategic aspirations for repopulation, economic recovery, and overall growth throughout the authority area.

In summary, the SHIP will aim to deliver sufficient suitable and affordable new homes to attract and retain young people and families, to support a sustainable and thriving business sector, and to meet the needs of the elderly/ageing population, and those with particular needs.

- Potentially, up to 10% of the five-year provision could be for alternative tenures such as shared equity; and
- 10% should comprise some form of "specialist provision" including 5% which should be fully wheelchair habitable.

3) PRIORITISING THE PROGRAMME

The SHIP sets out a clear and transparent framework for the prioritisation of projects to be delivered over the next five years. The Council aims to maintain an appropriate balance of housing provision across Argyll & Bute that reflects the affordable housing requirement identified in the latest HNDA, (and any subsequent local Housing Market Area or Community needs assessments) and also contributes towards the outcomes detailed in the LHS, the Argyll and Bute Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and the Argyll & Bute Economic Strategy. A comprehensive revision of the HNDA was completed in 2020/21, and this has informed the development of an updated LHS, and will inform future iterations of the SHIP.

Within each HMA, investment is mainly targeted at communities exhibiting the greatest affordable housing pressures. These priorities recognize the importance of investing in smaller, fragile rural communities as well as larger urban areas. The communities have been identified by consideration of:

- the relative and absolute pressure on the existing affordable housing;
- the ability to meet need in the wider housing market area;
- recent investment patterns;
- deliverability (site ownership, infrastructure or planning constraints, etc);
- the potential contribution to population and economic growth.

Given that localised “hotspots” or pressured areas may still be masked within the wider geographic HMAs, a further refinement of the evaluation process is also required at the localised settlement (or letting area) level, to reflect the complex rural and island geography of Argyll and Bute. Therefore, the Council continues to employ the following key indicators:-

Criteria	Indicator/Evidence
Identified need	HNDA & local updates – total shortfall in affordable housing.
Pressure ratios	CHR - waiting list applicants per available let on annual basis.
Homeless Pressure	HL1 statistics - applicants & time to close cases; temporary accommodation; % of RSL lets to homeless cases.
Social stock levels	Proportion of existing RSL stock to total number of dwellings on Council Tax Register.
Wider Strategic Fit	Synergies with LDPs; economic development plans or regeneration initiatives; the local improvement plan; and the primary objective of reversing population decline.
Specialist Provision	HNDA/CHR/Health & Social Work caseload – total shortfall for special needs accommodation & evidence from waiting lists or bespoke research.
Risk/ Deliverability	Satisfies key development criteria (site ownership; planning consent; resourced; infrastructure constraints; contractor capacity). Early liaison with Planning remains critical.
Affordability (of proposed rent)	Compared to Scottish Govt. benchmarks and other RSL rents; as % of LHA; and as % of local household incomes.

Prioritisation by Housing Need - In terms of distribution by Housing Market Area (HMA), the main need continues to be evidenced in Oban & Lorn, albeit future demand may be subject to review, dependent on the results of the revised HNDA and strategic aspirations as set out in the updated LHS. Dunbeg remains the immediate development priority for the Council, but additional or alternative sites around Oban are also under consideration.

Strategically, Helensburgh & Lomond is also a high priority in terms of need and potential growth opportunities. Critically, the impact of the increased MOD presence at the Faslane naval base, and the consequential impact from families and dependents, as well as enhanced supply-chain requirements servicing the base, will inevitably result in additional accommodation pressures within this catchment area. Mid Argyll could benefit from further developments albeit this continues to be closely monitored to avoid creating imbalances in the existing system; and Cowal, as the HMA currently most at risk of severe depopulation, could be regenerated with judicious development, operating in tandem with improvements in employment opportunities and transport infrastructure; and there may be emerging particular needs in this HMA for a few larger families requiring specialist provision.

Small-scale developments could also have a significant and positive impact on the Atlantic Islands, and throughout the rural mainland. While Bute and Kintyre appear to be relatively well balanced in terms of current supply and demand (with annual RSL lets sufficient to address waiting list demand, and ongoing evidence of long-term voids in these areas, despite recent strategic stock rationalisation programmes) nevertheless, emerging analysis suggests these local housing markets have also been experiencing significant shifts in demand and potential needs may be evolving and growing, particularly as a consequence of the Covid pandemic.

Prioritisation by Tenure - The LHS continues to require that a majority of the programme should be for social rent, however, alternative tenures such as shared equity, other low cost home ownership options or below-market rent, will be considered on a site-by-site basis in line with local market conditions and needs, and actively encouraged where appropriate, subject to a robust business case being made.

Prioritisation by Size – The SHIP will continue to promote the delivery of smaller properties (1 and 2 bedrooms) where practical, in line with the HNDA and the continuing evidence of the HOMEArgyll common housing register. In 2021, for example, 73% of the active waiting list applicants required 1 or 2 bedroom accommodation; while 12% required three beds and 15% required 4 or more bedded properties. The requirement for larger, family-sized accommodation has increased, and this will continue to be monitored and addressed as appropriate, to allow for a degree of flexibility within the local housing system, particularly where this would support the strategic priorities of attracting and retaining economically active households, and increasing the resident population.

Prioritisation by Particular Needs – Given the impact of the ageing population, and the particular needs of other sectors of the population including the physically disabled and those with learning disabilities or mental health issues, as outlined in the revised HNDA, the LHS specifies a target of 10% of new build should be purpose designed as specialist provision to suit households with medium to high level particular needs. This includes provision of wheelchair and extra care accommodation, and, particularly, medium dependency, amenity housing. As far as possible, all general needs new builds are designed to the minimum lifetime, Housing for Varying Needs Standards, to maximise the accessibility for residents whose circumstances and needs will change over time.

In addition, the extent and nature of the future ageing population, for instance, will necessitate strategic investment in the development and delivery of housing-based care, support and aids and adaptations. To this end, the Council has developed a more cohesive partnership with the Integrated Health & Social Care body to ensure that the SHIP process is fully aligned with the health and social care integration agenda and other relevant plans such as the "Keys to Life" strategy for persons with learning disabilities, the Integrated Children's Services Plan, the refreshed national housing strategy for Older Persons published in August 2018, "Age, Home and Community: the next phase"; and the Fairer Scotland for Disabled People strategy published by the Scottish Government in 2016; among others. Further refinement of the wheelchair housing targets in line with the Scottish Minister's directive are set out in Section 7 of this plan.

The finer detail of the programme will be arrived at through specification of suitable type and size of accommodation for individual developments, taking into account the needs of actual households on the waiting list and, where appropriate and as far as possible, in consultation with local community stakeholders.

Rural and Island Proofing[1] – the Council's Housing Service will continue to apply a policy of rural-proofing housing plans and strategies to ensure the more remote and isolated areas, or those designated as "fragile", are not disadvantaged or adversely affected by investment and development decisions. Critical to this aim, is joint working with local planners to support the development and sustainability of designated key rural settlements across Argyll and Bute as well as supporting the aims of the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park. As well as the ratio of waiting list applicants to available RSL lets and other indicators outlined above, key factors influencing the prioritization of rural developments include: the ratio of social housing to second homes; proportionate historic losses through Right to

[1] Rurality is defined in the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification, see: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/About/Methodology/UrbanRuralClassification. In addition, one definition of fragility is outlined in the report: Review of Fragile Areas and Employment Action Areas in the Highlands and Islands, HIE, November 2014.

Buy; the percentage of social housing to total dwelling stock; and the ratio of local earnings to average or lower quartile house prices and private rents. While existing, evidenced need remains the primary concern, consideration will also be given to rural areas of potential economic development and/or population growth in liaison with Economic Development colleagues and the local business sector. In this context, the potential impact of the proposed Rural Growth Deal (RGD) for Argyll and Bute will be significant, and the SHIP and the housing sector in general can contribute to this strategic agenda. Housing opportunities being pursued via the RGD include innovative construction methods, such as off-site, modular homes for example; with a particular focus on addressing the needs of resident and incoming workers.

The rural/urban housing differential is acknowledged nationally, in the structure of the Scottish Government's benchmark framework for grant funding, whereby Argyll and Bute receives a rural uplift to address the additional costs involved in remote rural and island development. The council previously commissioned dedicated studies of island housing markets, specifically for Mull and Islay[2], which provided evidence on the disproportionate uplift development costs for these areas and highlight specific issues and barriers to development in these contexts.

This SHIP has also been developed within the context of **the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018** which introduced measures to support and help the unique needs of Scotland's islands now and in the future. The Act also seeks to help create the right environment for sustainable growth and empowered communities. With around 23 inhabited islands in this local authority area (more than any other Scottish authority), Argyll and Bute is committed to supporting and sustaining population and economic growth in these communities and will always ensure to engage directly with the islands when new policies and strategies are being developed that may impact on them. The SHIP aims to support the priorities of the island communities, and our consultation reflects this commitment. In addition to the foresaid island studies, we ensure that our overarching HNDA process allows for a significant, representative sample of local households on individual islands to participate and register their housing needs and voice their general views on local housing. A formal Islands Impact Assessment is being developed for the new LHS and this will also encompass the SHIP, moving forward.

Recent engagement in Argyll and Bute and feedback from rural and island residents and stakeholders has reflected the findings of a survey carried out in support on the National Islands Plan in 2021. This provides strong evidence of dissatisfaction with housing provision and limited options on the islands. Only 20% of Argyll islanders believe there is sufficient affordable housing available locally, and only 22% agree that there is a variety of housing types, sizes and tenure to meet local people's needs. 92% of Argyll islanders believe that there is not enough housing to meet local demand. In

[2] "Islay Strategic Housing Overview", Community Housing Scotland (2019); "Isle of Mull Strategic Housing Review", Rural Housing Scotland (2019).

addition, high levels of fuel poverty are recorded on the islands, and very high rates of ineffective stock (mainly second/holiday homes).

Over the five years of the last LHS (2016-2021), a total of 77 new homes were delivered via the SHIP on the islands, amounting to 17% of the total completions. The islands received SHIP investment of over £14m to deliver these new homes, amounting to 19% of the total SHIP investment in completed projects in Argyll and Bute over that period. In addition, there are 18 new builds on site on Islay and Jura in 2020; with potential scope for further units to be delivered across Islay, Colonsay and Mull in the next couple of years; and further options currently being explored for Coll and Tiree, and Gigha. Demand on Bute is also being reviewed and may result in new development activity on the island for the first time in recent years,

As noted in a later section of the Plan, we are also engaging with, and providing support to, island and rural communities who are pursuing funding bids and feasibility studies via the Scottish Government's Rural & Island Housing Fund. These include additional projects on Mull (Ulva Ferry, Pennyghael and Dervaig for example), and other islands such as Colonsay and Gigha.

Ultimately, in terms of project prioritization, final preference will be influenced by project costings, therefore the proposed programme can only be indicative at this stage.

The Impact of Covid-19 on the HNDA and future SHIP programme

Given the unprecedented and unforeseen impact of the pandemic in 2020/21, it is anticipated that future need and demand for housing and related services will be affected in various and potentially significant ways. While that much is clear, the actual longer term impacts remain uncertain and it will be important to plan for a range of possible scenarios. This will affect not only the estimated requirement for affordable new build accommodation, but also the delivery processes, the funding structures and planning framework, and the economic and demographic environment in which policy and investment decisions will need to be made.

As a consequence, priorities are likely to change and evolve over time, and the prioritization framework underpinning the SHIP will also need to respond to these changes. In developing the new HNDA in 2021, and preparing revised Housing Supply Targets for the LHS in 2021-2026, the Council continues to take a pragmatic and realistic approach whilst striving to deliver its ambitious strategic aspirations. The HNDA will encompass a range of options from the worst case scenario of severe demographic and economic decline in the short term; through less severe and stabilizing scenarios; to more optimistic growth scenarios; all of which can be justified and supported by the available evidence and forecast modelling.

The need to sustain an increased new-build programme could arise under various scenarios: if economic decline and financial constraints lead to widespread unemployment and hardship with resultant loss of homes or tenancies, then there would be a requirement for the safety net of affordable social rented properties to increase; but on the other hand, if there is a behavioral shift in terms of more home-working, and in-migration to remoter, rural and island havens, then that would also entail a requirement for increased affordable housing supply. Current anecdotal evidence suggests that a property boom is occurring across the authority, even in areas such as Bute which have tended in recent years to be depressed markets with low demand and excessive turnover rates. This may just be an anomalous blip, following lockdown and the freezing of purchase and rental markets; however it will be important to monitor trends closely and review needs assessments and supply targets within the SHIP on a regular basis.

4) DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME: MITIGATING RISKS AND RESOLVING DEVELOPMENT CONTSRAINTS

It is important to identify, assess and respond to any risks or potential constraints that might impact on the overall programme or individual projects; and that effective measures are taken to mitigate these as far and as early as possible. The SHIP aims to provide assurance that, if funding is secured, any other constraints will be resolved by the time of estimated site start of the relevant project. The main risks or constraints that tend to apply to the SHIP programme include:

- Development and Infrastructure constraints
- Financial Assumptions
- Planning issues
- Legal procedural constraints; and
- Effective land supply

In addition, an ongoing, critical factor in the context of this authority is the capacity of the local construction sector and the constrained market for competitive tendering.

The impact of the coronavirus will continue to exacerbate many of these risks and potentially introduce a set of new challenges: health and safety measures and distancing protocols will reduce contractor capacity onsite thus delaying developments; while supply chains, and travel, transport and accommodation constraints are likely to be affected and result in increased costs as well as further delays. The removal of most legal restrictions in August 2021 is welcome but may not lead to an improved environment for development immediately; and the implications of Covid are likely to remain a factor in policy planning and service delivery for some time to come.

The council and its partners are working continuously to minimize these risks and mitigate constraints as far as possible, for example:-

Development Constraints (such as infrastructure issues: roads, utilities, ground condition problems/ abnormal costs) - The core SHIP programme has always aimed to focus on sites that are not subject to significant development constraints such as contaminated brownfield sites, designated greenbelt areas, or sites with restricted infrastructure capacity in terms of access roads or water supply. However, in certain instances within some highly pressured areas where a substantial shortfall in affordable housing is evidenced, or in areas of wider strategic importance, it may be necessary to consider such sites in the absence of more practicable or easily-progressed sites. Apart from the site constraint itself there may be costs associated with carrying out remedial works, preliminary feasibility studies, or mitigating the potential impact on areas of archaeological significance or on historic buildings and this places a further constraint on site development. Mitigation may be aided by ensuring site investigation is carried out at early stages; and seeking to ensure land values reflect any remediation costs. In terms of infrastructure constraints, such as Scottish Water connections/ capacity/ access, early discussions with the Utilities companies will be initiated to address potential issues and achieve possible synergies in investment programmes. Where possible, abnormal costs should be deducted from the land purchase price and unforeseen costs may be met from alternative sources such as the council's Strategic Housing Fund, developer contributions, or other sources such as Rural Growth Deal funding following a successful bid to government.

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) in particular has already proven to be a significant factor in supporting housing development in this authority through grants for sites which are of strategic importance and cannot proceed or have stalled due to exceptional infrastructure works (out with the curtilage of the development); and can help facilitate the unlocking of these sites for the delivery of housing. The council successfully prioritised the further development of Dunbeg, for instance, as a key site for delivery of housing utilising this fund, and was awarded £2.1m in total, in line with the eligibility criteria and guidance set out by the Scottish Government. (See Section 6 for further details regarding the potential HIF investment in Argyll and Bute.)

Effective Land Supply - The historic RSL land bank and available council owned sites have now been depleted and it may be that in the future land assembly will prove a significant challenge. A notable feature of a rural and island authority such as Argyll and Bute is the dominance of large estates in terms of land ownership in many areas exhibiting housing need, and this can present additional challenges in respect of accessing and assembling suitable sites for development. Nevertheless, through collaborative efforts with planning colleagues, the council and National Park are confident that a "generous" supply of land for affordable housing continues to be sustained. The council continues to audit housing allocations in the current Local Development Plan to ensure a more robust and rigorous approach to effective site provision. Partners continue to carefully consider the timing and possible phasing of developments to make

realistic assumptions on when affordable housing will proceed. We aim to ensure that a sufficient supply of sites remains identified in the system to accommodate unforeseen slippage in the timing of projects coming forward; and to maximise the benefits of increased or additional funding. The council's combined Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services' tenth annual Planning Performance Framework, 2020/21 recorded the following National Headline Indicators (NHIs):-

Effective Housing Land Supply	**2020/21**	**2019/20**
Established housing land supply	5,310 units	5,319
5-year effective housing land supply	2,889 units	3,738
5-year effective land supply total capacity	4,998 units	5,051
5-year housing supply target	1,500 units	3,725
5-year effective housing land supply	9.63 years	5.0
Housing approvals	509 units	500
Housing completions over the last 5 years	1,084 units	1,052

The updated housing land audit for 2021 was awaiting approval at time of writing, nevertheless the council does not anticipate issues in respect of the effective land supply over the period of this SHIP. Additional land supply, in parts of Cowal and Lomond, is set out in the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park Plan which operates as the strategic planning authority for these areas within Argyll and Bute. Occasionally, proposed projects are subject to complex or protracted negotiations with private owners and their agents which can impact on the timing and ultimately on their deliverability. Therefore effective liaison with the Scottish Government to prioritise projects and progress site acquisitions to enable projects to be pulled forward if required, is essential. In addition, the impact of both the Council and National Park Affordable Housing Policies continues to prove valuable; and there is an obvious need to sustain practical negotiations with landowners, Estates, private developers and others. Some RSL partners have however raised concerns that in the current climate the application of the Council's Affordable Housing Policy will make site development less attractive and sites are only likely to be developed where there is a pressure to secure a return in the short term. In general, in the medium to long term, the private ownership of many sites in Argyll and Bute means that the Affordable Housing Policy will continue to have a definite role in securing a sufficient supply of affordable housing through developer contributions. Strategic engagement with local communities and agencies such as Highlands & Islands Enterprise to assess potential use of Strategic Land Fund, where appropriate, may provide benefits; and additional mechanisms may also be available via recent initiatives such as the Rural or Island Housing Fund and new Community Empowerment legislation.

The council is also exploring the current legislation around Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and will consider the potential benefits of pursuing these on a case by case basis, where circumstances are proving unreasonably intransigent and there are compelling benefits to the public interest.

Planning issues - Early discussions will continue to be prioritised with planning services (both Council & National Park) regarding road layouts/ car parking requirements, school catchment areas, and other possible issues. The provision of adequate footpaths adjacent to new developments, for instance, have been particular prominent issues in relation to a number of recent SHIP projects. All of the development sites included in the SHIP programme should be effective given that they will, in most cases, require to be already allocated for housing development in the relevant local development plans. Many of the sites identified in the SHIP are of relatively small capacity. The costs associated with progressing smaller sites in the more remote rural areas are likely to be higher if developed as standalone projects. However it is envisaged that, where SHIP sites form part of a larger allocation identified in the LDP, through partnership working with private developers on adjacent sites the risk of such sites not being developed on cost grounds will be reduced.

More rigorous build quality standards, and "greener" standard requirements, can lead to conflicting pressures in terms of resources required per unit. RSLs and their partners continue to highlight concerns in balancing cost and quality considerations, especially given the ongoing cost of securing private finance in recent years.

Local RSLs are also currently committed to exploring effective measures for maximising procurement efficiencies through volume, but also continuity of work and standardisation of specifications and products as far as possible. Historically, the constrained capacity of the local construction sector has been seen as a particular issue and this remains a critical factor for this authority, (particularly beyond the Helensburgh area which benefits from wider competition from out with the local authority boundaries) however there has been an increase in the number of potential contractors operating in the area in recent years and currently it could be argued that the situation in Argyll and Bute is healthier than it has ever been. This is reflected for instance in the emergence of a new RSL/developer within Argyll and Bute, in the Helensburgh area, the Wheatley Group, with a significant project now included in this SHIP.

RSLs in Argyll and Bute have recently made significant progress in delivering alternative tenures such as shared equity units. The future provision for tenures other than social rent will require detailed business plans and must reflect robust and credible assessment of local needs before approval. The Council intends to evaluate the impact of these projects to inform the future programme. The council is keen to encourage and support alternative, intermediate tenures when appropriate to enhance the mix within the local housing system and to increase the range of potential housing options.

5) PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND CONSULTATION

As outlined in previous SHIPs, the preparation of this plan, as well as the planning and delivery of individual projects, remains a continuous, iterative corporate activity. Since 2019, close working relationships have been further enhanced and streamlined as the council's service restructuring brought Housing and Planning Services together with Economic Development and Regeneration in a single department of Development and Infrastructure, under one Head of Service. In addition, the internal joint working will include ad hoc involvement of other departments such as Roads, Property Development/ Estates when appropriate. The SHIP process particularly reflects a strong collaborative approach with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs, or housing associations), the Scottish Government, communities, developers and other stakeholders.

Key partners include:

- The Scottish Government: More Homes Scotland Division
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Argyll & Bute Health & Social Care Partnership
- Argyll Community Housing Association
- Fyne Homes Housing Association
- Dunbritton Housing Association
- West Highland Housing Association
- Link Group Ltd
- Wheatley Group
- Bield Housing Association
- Trust Housing Association
- HMNB Clyde/ MOD
- Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
- Rural Housing Scotland
- Communities Housing Scotland.
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- Veterans Housing Scotland
- Scottish Water
- Home Energy Scotland
- ALIenergy

At the very local level, on a site by site basis, RSLs and Council officials continue to liaise closely with private developers, local land owners, local community groups and development trusts, and a range of other stakeholders to negotiate, facilitate, enable and deliver viable projects within the context of the LHS and the framework of the SHIP. Updates are also being tabled at local area community planning groups; and at the level of specific projects, sites and settlements, a range of community representatives and residents are routinely consulted.

The Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Forum, comprising a wide range of key partners from the Community Planning Partnership, constitutes the overarching Housing Market Partnership with ultimate responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the LHS and the SHIP; and is chaired by the Council Leader. The Strategic Housing Forum is also responsible for making appropriate recommendations to Council Members and for lobbying the Scottish Government in respect of housing issues in Argyll and Bute. The Terms of Reference for the Forum, as the formally constituted local housing market partnership within Argyll and Bute, were reviewed and agreed in September 2020, and are available on request to the council.

The SHIP Officers Development Group - In addition to regular programming meetings between the Council, the Scottish Government and individual RSLs, a dedicated SHIP Officers Group continues to bring practitioners from all these parties together on a quarterly basis to address and progress operational development matters which are then reported to the overarching Strategic Housing Forum. In 2018/19 a secondary SHIP Partners Group was convened involving other partners such as infrastructure services (Roads and Amenities) and agencies such as Scottish Water to consider specific project-based issues. This proved successful in addressing specific constraints and has now been incorporated, as appropriate, within the SHIP Officers Group and the Strategic Housing Forum.

Wider Stakeholders, Local Business, and Economic Development - Other stakeholders and strategic partners will be engaged on an ad hoc basis as appropriate. Increasingly, given the overarching strategic imperatives, economic development and regeneration partners are also emerging as key associates in the SHIP and LHS process. This has led, for instance, to an ad hoc working group (facilitated by Housing, Economic Development and HIE) co-ordinating dedicated events in August 2018 and September 2019, for local employers and representatives of the business sector to engage with housing providers, and explore innovative delivery mechanisms and opportunities such as the Rural Growth Deal. The events also provided networking opportunities for local community representatives as well as RSLs (which of course constitute local, community-based and focused organisations and charitable associations in their own right). In total, over 50 organisations, agencies, services and individuals attended the events, and the intention is to retain this network as one thematic interest group for future consultation and engagement when developing the next Local Housing Strategy.

Community Engagement - In addition to the above, the council has recently reviewed and updated its approach to localised housing need and demand assessment; building on a number of years' experience with community councils, development trusts, local study groups, green belt groups, tenants and residents' associations, and various other local bodies across mainland Argyll and throughout the islands. The result is a detailed resource for local communities and third party support agencies to carry out surveys, stakeholder engagement, and data analysis, with the support of council staff, in order to assemble the crucial, "high quality, fit for purpose" evidence base required to

secure public funding and help to deliver practical housing solutions[3]. The council has engaged with local representatives on Mull, and community councils in North Lorn, for instance, to implement the new toolkit; and this is now available both proactively and on demand.

Health and Social Care Partners

As a priority, the Council continues to foster closer engagement with the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) at all levels (from senior management group to locality planning groups) and at the earliest possible stages in the process. The HSCP's current three-year Strategic Plan was launched in April 2019, incorporating a revised and updated Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) which outlines the essential role that housing plays in supporting and maintaining independence, health and well-being of all residents.
The SHIP has a direct and significant contribution to make to these outcomes.

Following the production of the joint Health, Care and Housing Needs Assessment in 2018, and the recommendations which were appraised by a wide range of cross-sectoral stakeholders at a dedicated workshop session and subsequently approved by the Strategic Housing Forum that year, the revised HCS sets out a joint vision for housing, health and social care in Argyll and Bute:

"People in Argyll and Bute with health and social care needs have access to housing options that maximise their health, wellbeing and independence"

To achieve this, people need to be enabled, through their contacts with services and provision of information, to live at home, or in a homely setting, as independently as possible and to be well connected to their communities. The delivery of suitable specialist provision via the SHIP programme will be critical to this.

A dedicated Housing Occupational Therapist (OT) post was created to take this agenda forward and cement the close partnership working between the council, RSLs and the HSCP. This includes reviewing the circumstances and requirements of families with particular needs; developing a better understanding of the accommodation and support needs of wheelchair users;

[3] The Argyll and Bute Community Housing Assessment Toolkit (CHAT) is available on demand from Council Housing Services. See contact details on the final page of this Plan.

and facilitating early interventions, particularly in relation to adaptations. One innovative outcome of this joint working was the delivery of a cross-sectoral training programme for partners, and this will also help to inform the SHIP process and promote greater engagement across the board.

The Housing OT and relevant HSCP officers will continue to participate in the SHIP Operational Group as well as the Strategic Housing Forum. In 2021, the council approved the recommendation that this post should become permanent, funded by Housing Services. Working closely with the Council's LHS Team, the Housing OT had a key role in research and consultation with wheelchair users across Argyll and Bute, to help identify specific new build targets for wheelchair accommodation, which have been incorporated into this plan and take immediate effect in respect of the SHIP programme. In 2021, Council Housing Services also appointed a dedicated Mental Health/Addictions Housing Practitioner with a focus on supporting the delivery of the Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan, and further enhancing the strategic and operational links between housing, health and social care.

HMNB Clyde / MOD engagement

As reported in previous SHIPs, the Strategic Delivery and Development Framework (SDDF) was established between the Council and HMNB Clyde to achieve maximum benefit for the Base and the wider community as a consequence of the proposals for increasing the naval presence at Faslane. This dedicated working group continues to explore the potential accommodation needs arising from the development of the naval base as the Royal Navy's UK Submarine Centre of Specialization; and the consequent economic impact this is likely to have in the local area. The SHIP is therefore required to take full account of the associated emerging accommodation needs in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. To this end a comprehensive housing market study of the area was completed in 2018 which involved further extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement; and a wider economic study is being carried out by the council in partnership with the MOD.

A key issue in relation to housing and potential requirements for the SHIP, is the implementation of the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) which is being piloted by the MOD. The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) committed the Ministry of Defence to make a new accommodation offer, to help more service personnel live in private accommodation and meet their aspirations for home ownership. The way people live and work is changing and the FAM reflects this, giving more choice to more Service personnel and their families over where, how and with whom they live. This 3 year (approximately) pilot is a chance for the MOD to test the policy and the way it is delivered before a decision is made about whether to roll out the FAM across the UK. If this is confirmed, the majority of bases will gradually transition to the FAM over the next decade or two. The FAM pilot was launched in September 2019 for the Faslane site, and this will have a direct impact on the Helensburgh & Lomond housing market area, and beyond. Ensuring sufficient and suitable capacity within the

local housing system to address the anticipated increased demand will be a priority for the SHIP over the next 5 – 10 years.

In addition, the council has carried out a dedicated in-house study of the particular needs of veterans, and serving military personnel more widely i.e. beyond those based at or leaving Faslane; and the results have informed the new HNDA and LHS in 2021. This has involved engagement with local and national organizations such as Veterans Housing Scotland and Poppy Scotland among others. The final report will be available on the council website at: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-consultations-and-research-0

6) RESOURCING THE PROGRAMME & THE COUNCIL'S CONTRIBUTION

The three primary funding sources for the SHIP remain as follows:

a) Scottish Government Grant (the Affordable Housing Supply Programme – AHSP)
b) Council grant or long-term loan (the Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Fund – SHF; which may be supplemented from Council central reserves)
c) Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Private Finance Borrowing

The majority of developments will require a complex package of funding from at least all of these sources (additional investment from other sources may also be required – some of these are outlined below).

a) **Scottish Government Resource Planning Assumptions (RPAs)**

In July 2021 the Scottish Government confirmed local authorities' RPAs for the next 5 years up to 2025/26, as follows.

TABLE 3.7: RESOURCE PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS (RPA) 2021- 2026 (£m)

Argyll & Bute	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total
Minimum RPA	£21.250	£18.317	£18.264	£18.328	£18.632	£94.791

Source: Scottish Government Letter to Councils – AHSP RPA 2021-26, July 2021

As the current SHIP covers the period 2022/23 to 2026/27, we do not have an RPA figure for year 5 of that planning period, 2026/27, but might extrapolate a notional five year estimate roughly equivalent to the 5 year total above, in the region of £90-94m.

The actual AHSP spend in 2020/21 was lower than the original RPA for that year, due in part to the impact of covid on delivery of the programme, however previous year's spend significantly exceeded the RPA and consequently over the planning period expenditure tends to balance out, and the council will continue to encourage

RSLs/developers to maximise funding opportunities and utilise the available RPA as far as possible. This might for instance include increasing off-the-shelf / buy-back acquisitions, land banking in areas of identified need or designated future economic growth spots. In relation to this approach, the Council will develop a strategic plan to ensure that identified housing need and demand is met through this process. While it is likely that there may still be some slippage in achieved expenditure and project completions as an ongoing result of Covid-19 this year, it is also possible that there will be opportunities to maximise and accelerate spend on pipeline projects dependent on the local and national situation and the progress of the government's route map to recovery.

b) **The Council's Contribution – The Strategic Housing Fund**

Resourcing the SHIP programme also requires a significant contribution from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund (SHF). This Fund is primarily based on the revenue raised from reduced tax discounts on empty and second homes: where local authorities have used discretionary powers and reduced the empty and second homes tax discounts, the additional revenue ***must*** be used to support affordable housing delivery in their areas. In addition, since 2013 local authorities have had flexibility to remove the discount entirely and to apply a levy of up to 100% on long-term empty properties. These revenues are not ring-fenced although their use to bring long-term empty properties back into use, or to support affordable housing provision, is encouraged by the Scottish Government.

Since 2007, the SHF in Argyll and Bute has been used for the following eligible expenditure:

- Expenditure incurred in relation to assets formally held on the Housing Revenue Account;
- Expenditure relating to the acquisition of sites for the landbank;
- Expenditure related to the delivery of the Empty Homes Initiative;
- Payments to enhance infrastructure where this is restricting the development of affordable housing; and
- Payments to registered social landlords (RSLs) to partially fund proposed projects to deliver homes in accordance with the local housing strategy
- Following the council's annual policy review of the Strategic Housing Fund in 2018, potential grant payment of £12k per unit was also extended to local community bodies, which have been awarded Scottish Government support from the Rural or Island Housing funds, to deliver affordable homes.

Total income to the fund in 2020/21 amounted to £2.283m and total expenditure that year was £2.629m. It is anticipated that the SHF will continue to accrue annual revenue in the order of £2m over the SHIP planning period.

Argyll & Bute Council Strategic Housing Fund, balance as of March 2021

Income 2020/21	Expenditure 2020/21	Balance March 2021	Committed Spend	Available to support SHIP
£2.283m	**£2.629m**	**£9.999m**	**£3.118m**	**£6.881m**

The balance of this Fund as of 31 March 2021 was £9.999m; of which £3.118m was already committed and £6.881m was available to fund the SHIP programme.

The SHIP sets out plans to fully utilise this balance over the planning period to support the affordable housing development programme, including empty homes activity and community-led projects out with the core SHIP. Since April 2016 the Council has provided grant funding of £12k per unit, to supplement Scottish Government grant; and an evaluation exercise carried out by independent consultants in 2016 confirmed that this remains the most appropriate and cost effective level of grant aid to support the SHIP programme.

The council reviewed the Strategic Housing Fund policy in 2018/19 and a further comprehensive audit was carried out in 2019/20 with a view to ensuring that this resource continues to complement Scottish Government priorities for Housing Beyond 2021. Final outcomes from the internal audit were reported in 2021, with a positive appraisal of the process and policies underpinning the SHF.

An indicative minimum estimate of circa £9.312m would be required to support the core projects outlined in this SHIP (£12k x 776 units), excluding the 2021/22 programme; and further funding will be required to deliver anticipated projects in Year 5 plus any additional projects brought forward during the planning period, either by RSLs or local communities out with the core SHIP.

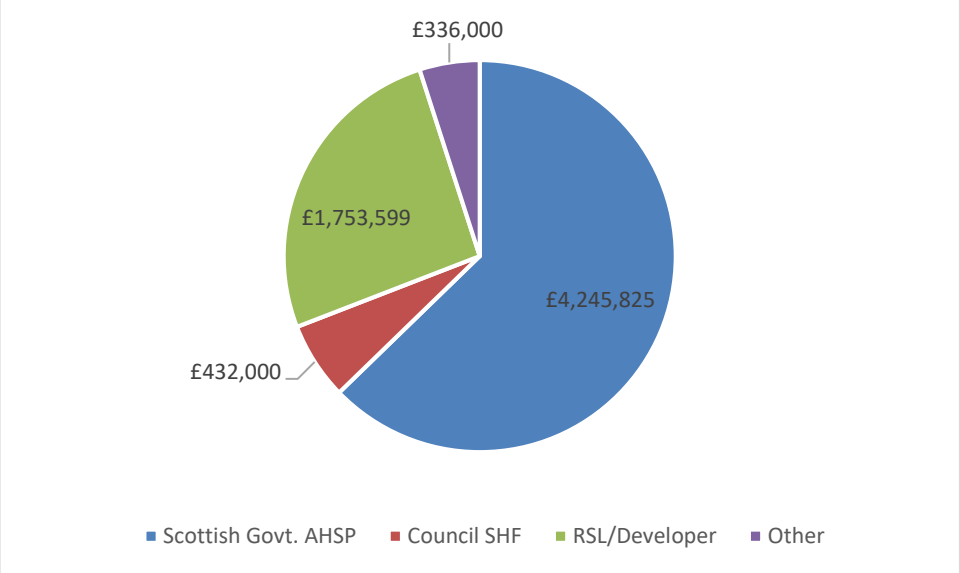
In addition, the Council has also used its financial reserves on occasion to advance long term loans to support RSL projects and this commitment is subject to ongoing review.

c) **RSL's Private Finance Borrowing**

Banks and other lenders in the private sector also remain vitally important partners in the delivery of affordable housing, and RSLs are required to demonstrate that sufficient borrowing capacity or reserves exist to ensure delivery of the proposed development programme. Following a period of restrictive lending, with greater scrutiny of projects, higher lending rates and the requirement for additional security from existing stock, which often resulted in RSLs being forced to use their own reserves rather than borrow under such conditions; RSLs are now reporting positive improvements in their potential to access private finance; and at a national level the sector continues to explore innovative funding models. Private finance in support of the 4 SHIP projects completed in 2020/21 (excluding final 12 units carried over from the previous year at Glenshellach, Oban), totaled over **£2.089m,** approximately 31% of the total investment for those projects.

Additional investment in support of the SHIP programme includes, inter alia, Scottish Water grant; sales revenue on New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) schemes; and other partner contributions, such as local Estates. Total investment from all sources for all SHIP projects completed in 2020/21 (as opposed to the actual spend within the year, and excluding the final units at Glenshellach) amounted to **£6.767m**.

Figure 1: Breakdown of SHIP investment for projects completed in 2020/21



Source: Council/RSL Records 2020/21

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)

The Housing Infrastructure Fund supports housing development through grants and loans with priority given to sites which are of strategic importance and cannot proceed or have stalled due to infrastructure requirements. Grant is available to local authorities and RSLs for works which are a) out with the curtilage of the affordable housing site and/or b) of scale and will open up larger sites for housing development. Loans are available for viable non-public sector led sites to support infrastructure delivery.

The Council's main priority for HIF funding is the Dunbeg development in Lorn, being delivered by the Link Group; and as reported in previous SHIPs, the Scottish Government awarded Housing Infrastructure Fund grant amounting to **£2,129,247** for upgrade works to Kirk Road to enable the development of 300 new affordable homes to proceed at this site. This remains a major priority for the council, Link and West Highland Housing Associations who are working in partnership to deliver the project. Housing Services has worked with colleagues across the Council and the Scottish Government to ensure the project is completed timeously and in 2019/20 the project received accelerated AHSP funding of over £2m to progress this. While the infrastructure issues have been addressed, the impact of Covid-19 in 2020/21 meant that the completion of all 300 units has been delayed and consequently the final units may not be fully delivered until 2022.

While the Scottish Government has confirmed that the HIF will be extended post 2021, there is no guarantee that Argyll and Bute will receive further awards from this source; nevertheless the council and RSL partners will continue to propose

potential projects within the SHIP that could benefit from HIF investment. These could include the following:-

SHIP Projects with potential HIF requirement, as of August 2021

Project	RSL	Total Units	Estimated HIF Requirement
Glencruitten, Oban	LINK	100 (tbc)	£715k (est.)
Hospital Field, Oban	LINK	50	£1.4m
Dunbeg Phases 4-6	LINK	150	£2.5m

Rural and Islands Housing Funds (R&IHF)

The Scottish Government also established a £25 million Rural Housing Fund and a £5 million Islands Housing Fund which ran initially to 2021. Both funds aimed to increase the supply of affordable housing of all tenures in rural Scotland and contribute to the national affordable homes targets. The Islands Housing Fund provided £5 million ring-fenced for islands housing projects and comprises two parts:

1. a main fund that offers capital support (grants and loans) for direct provision of new affordable housing, and refurbishment of existing empty properties
2. a small fund that contributes to feasibility studies

Both funds are open to a wide range of applicants including: community organizations; development trusts; private landowners; private developers; and traditional housing providers; however applications from individuals will not be accepted. Eligible projects must have a specific site or properties identified; be in an eligible rural area – levels 4, 5, and 6 of the six-fold urban/rural classification, which includes the majority of Argyll and Bute.

Islands Housing Fund applications must be located on a Scottish Island; demonstrate evidence of housing pressure in the location identified; have the support of the relevant local authority; be prepared to undertake appropriate community engagement; and be able to provide long term affordable housing.

Applicants can apply for either the rural Housing Fund or the Islands Housing Fund, not both.

In 2019, local community-led bids for Mull, Ulva, Islay, Colonsay and Gigha sought R&IHF support to carry out feasibility studies for small scale developments on island sites, with support from the council and third party agencies such as Rural Housing Scotland and Community Housing Scotland.

In 2020, Mull & Iona Community Trust were successfully awarded £777,855 from the Rural Housing Fund towards the delivery of 4 affordable homes at Ulva Ferry on Mull.

The council supported local communities and partners in lobbying for these funds to be continued post 2021, and in November 2020 the Minister confirmed that the funds would be extended beyond March 2021.

Other Initiatives

The council and strategic partners are also interested in exploring other potential funding sources, such as the Scottish Government's Building Scotland Fund and the national Self-Build Loan Fund; as well as the wider Partnership Support for Regeneration scheme. Such initiatives could facilitate the delivery of the SHIP and/or alternative affordable housing provision in the future.

The Scottish Land Fund (SLF) provided support to Colonsay Community Development Company, with a grant award of £390k to meet site acquisition costs for a mixed tenure affordable housing project on the island. Additional funding contributions have been secured from the Council's Strategic Housing Fund and from Highlands & Islands Enterprise. The SLF also enabled Ulva community to acquire ownership of the island with an award of £2m, and plans are now being developed for appropriate housing on Ulva.

We will also continue to explore and, where appropriate, promote non-AHSP financing models such as Build-to-Rent, Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT), Help to Buy (Scotland) and Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE), which may fall out with the remit of the SHIP.

The potential impact of the proposed **Rural Growth Deal (RGD**) for Argyll and Bute will complement the SHIP process, and partners will contribute to this strategic agenda. Housing opportunities being pursued via the RGD include addressing infrastructure issues at potential housing sites, innovative Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing models; and a particular focus on addressing the housing needs of key and essential workers. The RGD is worth £30m in total, and £3m of this is earmarked for housing projects. A steering group has been established and the SHIP prioritisation framework is being adapted to help assess potential bids.

Buybacks, second-hand acquisitions, and off-the-shelf purchases

While it is expected that the majority of homes delivered through the SHIP will be new build units (which could include 'off the shelf' purchases from developers), nevertheless where it can be demonstrated that acquisition of 'second hand' stock available for sale on the open market is the most appropriate method of meeting housing need in a particular area, this is supported both by the Council and by the Scottish Government. (For example, as noted in "Strategic Housing Investment Plan: guidance note MHDGN 2021/01" published in July 2021, which states that AHSP investment could include the purchase of former local authority housing. The Scottish Government and the relevant local authority will require to agree the number of such purchases that can be approved each year.) This must support the aims of increasing the supply of affordable housing, and priority property types and sizes in areas of high demand (particularly where stock has historically been depleted through Right To Buy); and meeting specific and urgent housing need.

Developer Contributions

Argyll and Bute falls within the purview of two planning authorities: while the council covers most of the mainland and islands, Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park is the planning authority for parts of Cowal and Lomond. Both authorities have set out formal Affordable Housing Policies in their respective Local Development Plans. These policies outline mechanisms and options to secure developer contributions, where there is a demonstrated need for affordable housing.

The council's current policy was adopted in supplementary guidance to the LDP in March 2016, and requires that out with specified housing allocations and Potential Development Areas (PDAs) new private developments proposing 8 or more homes should deliver a minimum of 25% affordable housing units. Given the revised and re-enforced strategic vision of growth and repopulation for the whole of Argyll and Bute, it is likely that the affordable housing policy will be applied presumptively across all HMAs.

Developer contributions can be delivered by a variety of means including social rented housing, mid-market rented housing, payment of commuted sums and also the building of houses/apartments designed to meet the needs of first time buyers (provided these are available at affordable levels as defined by the council's HNDA and with reference to the relevant local housing market).

The sequential mechanisms for securing Affordable Housing via the policy are applied in the following order:

- on-site provision;
- off-site provision;
- commuted payment;
- discounted low cost sale;
- affordability by design without subsidy.

To date, no commuted sums have been received and the preferred approach has been to engage with an RSL to deliver the affordable quota on site.

The National Park policy follows a generally similar approach, with a requirement for 25%, 33% or 50% affordable provision on sites of 4 or more units depending on the location. Sites of up to 3 units in accessible rural areas may also have a policy requirement under certain circumstances. A formal policy for calculating commuted sums has been established but again, to date, little or no payments have been received.

The delivery of unsubsidized affordable housing for purchase via the Affordable Housing Policy, but without Scottish Government funding, will normally target a different client group and requires close working between Housing Services and Planning colleagues to ensure these models are in fact affordable in accordance with the LHS and SHIP priorities.

7) SPECIALIST PROVISION, WHEELCHAIR HABITABLE HOUSING, & EQUALITIES ISSUES

The SHIP aims to address the housing needs of all the communities we serve, and continues to reflect a positive approach to equalities issues in line with the policies of the council and its partners, and the principles of diversity and inclusion in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. The new, revised HNDA (2021) provides robust evidence of accommodation and support needs across the range of protected equalities characteristics, and these have been translated into the SHIP priorities. The joint Argyll and Bute Health, Care & Housing Needs Assessment, completed in 2018, provided supporting evidence of the requirements for wheelchair accommodation, supported housing, and other forms of specialist provision. In 2019/20, the council undertook further specific studies on the need and demand for specialist provision for wheelchair users, gypsy/travellers, military personnel and veterans, and persons who are autistic or have learning disabilities. The findings have now informed the full revision of the new HNDA in 2021 and in turn will support revised Housing Supply Targets for the LHS and SHIP which will be approved later in 2021.
The previous LHS was supported by an overarching Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) in 2016 which is currently being reviewed as part of the development of the new LHS; and this will continue to inform the SHIP, and how the strategic aims are embodied in the housing priorities of the programme. The original EIA can be accessed on the council website at the following link: https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-consultations-and-research-0; and the revised assessment will be posted online later in the year.

All SHIP projects, seeking public subsidy from the Council or Scottish Government, are required to meet basic design and building standards (of the Housing for Varying Needs Standard as a minimum) and should incorporate adequate provision to meet any additional identified particular needs. Prioritisation of projects will give due weight to those which incorporate elements of design or additional specifications for specialist forms of housing where the local profile of need and demand indicates such a requirement. The committed and planned programmes include provision for elderly and disabled residents and through the close partnership working with Health & Social Work, including Occupational Therapists, the SHIP will continue to ensure the strategic aims of the LHS in this respect are carried forward.

In particular, the post of dedicated Housing OT which was established in October 2018 to co-ordinate and promote these needs through the SHIP group, was made permanent in 2021, funded in full by the council Housing Services but working very closely with RSLs and the HSCP. In practice, this commitment to equalities principles will ensure:

- building all new affordable housing to HfVN Standards;
- implementing design solutions which help to meet the needs of disabled and infirm households;

- assessing and seeking to resolve the needs and aspirations of households with community care needs in partnership;
- developing communities with a good mix of households;
- allocating housing via HOME Argyll and national RSL partners who have strong commitments to equal opportunities; and
- providing affordable housing in rural areas which enables young and old people to remain within their communities.

Housing for Varying Needs (HfVNs) is a Design Guide published in two volumes (Parts 1 and 2). While not mandatory, the standards outlined in the guide have been used as the basis for standards for housing developments seeking grant funding support. The standards are intended to ensure that the housing is accessible, adaptable for different needs and over its lifetime represents good value for money. They are based on the principle that the design of a property should not hinder a person's ability to live as independently as possible and should recognize the needs of people as they age, become less able or whose mobility, dexterity, cognitive function, hearing or sight is impaired.

The idea of designing all housing to accommodate the needs of less able people is known as "barrier free" design and this is reflected in the core guidance of the design guide; but the guide also recognizes that barrier free design in itself is not a substitute for homes designed specifically for people with particular needs so it identifies additional features that should be included to address these needs.

Updated analysis of the HOMEArgyll Common Housing Register in 2021 suggests that around 4% of applicants could still benefit from some form of specialist provision; and of these, 100 applicants included wheelchair accessible accommodation as an option; although only 24 of these applicants did not also select some other form of accommodation, including general needs/ mainstream housing. Applicants requesting wheelchair provision are evenly split by bedroom sizes required, with 22% requiring 1, 3 and 4+ bedrooms respectively; while the main need (34%) is for 2 bedrooms. In the wider population as a whole, the Health, Care & Housing Needs Assessment (2018) identified the following key points:-

- Around 350 wheelchairs are issued each year to people in Argyll & Bute
- The majority of wheelchairs issued are manual chairs
- Over 1,300 people in Argyll and Bute have wheelchairs on issue
- 55% of people with wheelchairs are aged 75+
- Up to 280 people a year may be new wheelchair users
- There could be 240 additional people needing wheelchairs by 2027
- The most common reason for a wheelchair is cerebrovascular disease (stroke) but the main reasons for wheelchair vary by age with Cerebral palsy being the most common reason in people under 25.

Correlating the data sources may suggest that a majority of wheelchair users are satisfactorily housed or do not aspire to social rented properties. However,

some wheelchair users who could benefit from suitable, specialist provision in the social rented sector may not apply due to lack of awareness or misperceptions regarding the suitability and availability of stock. This was identified as a key area for further research and analysis, and in 2019/20 an in-house study was duly completed jointly by the council's strategy team and the Housing OT. A key finding of this study, collated with national research, is that wheelchair users and those who might benefit from wheelchair accommodation are not a homogenous group, and that for many a range of specialist models would be appropriate.

On that basis, while in situ solutions such as aids and adaptations or support services will have a crucial role to play, nevertheless, the SHIP will continue to require a target of 10% of the new build programme to provide some form of specialist provision (to include retirement housing, amenity housing, and other specially adapted properties); and within that, half (i.e. 5% of the total new builds) should be built to the fully wheelchair habitable standard as defined in the relevant section of the current HfVN standards guidance.
The SHIP Officers Group and the Strategic Housing Forum approved this policy with immediate effect in 2020. RSL partners also continue to explore with HSCP partners requirements for extra care provision and replacement models for existing care homes which may no longer be deemed fit for purpose. Where possible, the council will strive to incorporate such needs within the SHIP programme as it rolls forward.

As far as possible, the wheelchair housing targets will also be encouraged within the private sector, across all tenures, on all developments where this would be appropriate.

Gypsy/Travellers

Argyll and Bute Council continues to support the Scottish Government's commitment to improve the lives of our Gypsy/Traveller communities; and to prioritise joint working with ACHA (who own and manage the two official, operational, Travelling Person sites in Argyll and Bute) and other stakeholders to drive forward positive improvements for this client group.

The Council continues to allocate ACHA an annual grant from the Strategic Housing Fund as a contribution towards the operation and maintenance of the two remaining Travelling Persons Sites at Bayview near Oban, and Duncholgan near Lochgilphead. A Minute of Agreement set up at the point of stock transfer in 2006 set the sum at £30k plus annual indexation. In 2018, the sum payable was reduced to reflect the withdrawal of the Torlochan site near Dunoon, which was deemed to be surplus to requirements due to the lack of demand. Recent council investment in the official sites is summarised below:

ACHA Gypsy/Traveller Sites – Annual Council Funding

Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	5 year Total
Grant	£39,660	£41,228	£31,001	£28,939	£29,338	£170,166

As part of the comprehensive refresh of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment for Argyll and Bute, the council carried out a dedicated study to assess the accommodation and support needs of Gypsy/ Travellers in the area. This included an assessment of any "bricks and mortar" mainstream accommodation that may be required. The study has involved extensive primary engagement with Gypsy/Travellers and their representatives; and this work has informed the development of the latest LHS for Argyll and Bute.

In March 2020 the Scottish Government announced the allocation of a one-off short-term funding initiative in support of the national Gypsy/Travelers Action Plan which was launched in 2019. ACHA were awarded **£108,726**, to be administered by the Council, for improvements to the local Gypsy/Travelers sites, beyond the minimum standards. A range of positive options are being explored jointly with local site tenants and the ultimate aim is to deliver immediate benefits and improve the quality of life for these residents. A further bid has been prepared jointly be ACHA and the council in 2021 for additional resources which the Scottish Government has made available for this purpose.

8) ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY

Promoting energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty remain strategic priorities for the LHS and key commitments for the council; and maximizing opportunities for sustainability in development remains a key principle underpinning the SHIP. As with all public bodies, this Council is also required to meet its statutory duties arising from the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and the LHS and SHIP have been developed to ensure that the provision of new affordable housing complies with the Act; and that all housing activities and outputs should contribute to the overarching net zero targets and principles.

The Council requires affordable housing developments, as far as possible, to have a low environmental impact and to contribute to the LHS objectives of addressing fuel poverty and to ensure at least minimum standards of sustainability as required under Scottish Building Standards Agency regulations. This remains a key assessment criterion for any project seeking public subsidy from the Scottish Government or the Council.

There are significant challenges in delivering higher quality, energy efficient developments in an authority such as Argyll & Bute - for instance, a significant proportion of the area's rural properties are not connected to the gas grid and many rely on costly oil heating – all of which impact on costs and on the ability to achieve sustainability targets. Nevertheless, local RSL partners continue to embrace sustainability principles which promote local material sourcing, recycling, insulation standards, and renewable energy, as far as possible within

***Developers are encouraged to deliver the "Greener Standard" as default in all new developments; and* the current SHIP indicates that 100% of the proposed programme will deliver to this standard.**

the current financial climate. It is expected that all SHIP partners will continue to follow these principles to the best of their abilities despite the resourcing constraints under which they are currently operating. In particular, all new build RSL stock will be required to address the national Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH). Specific projects in the current SHIP include an innovative PassivHaus scheme at Garelochhead by ACHA, working with developers, Stewart & Shields

Sustainable Design

The SHIP and LHS are closely aligned with the LDP processes and the Council and its partners will explore sustainable design principles, not only to addresses climate change and provide energy efficient homes, but also to contribute to the creation of safe, sustainable communities which have a real sense of identify and place. In order to achieve a sense of community in new developments (whilst also delivering low environmental impact housing) we will work with partners to ensure a range of factors are considered; and when developing new areas sustainability principles will also be central to the design process. Wherever possible, use of the Place Standard Tool will be encouraged.

9) HOMELESSNESS & RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLANS

Scottish Ministers have made an ongoing commitment to end homelessness in Scotland and consequently set up a national Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to bring forward recommendations to address this. A key proposal was that each local authority should develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by December 2018, covering a 5 year period, or longer if required, to enable the implementation of this new approach. The RRTP maximises prevention and sets out the council's approach to minimise the time a household remains homeless and to ensure that they can access appropriate suitable accommodation as soon as possible.

Local Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans should be reflected in the LHS and also be fully integrated into Health & Social Care Partnership strategic plans. The Argyll and Bute RRTP has consequently been included in the current Housing Contribution Statement to ensure it forms part of the planning framework. In line with the previous SHIP guidance issued in August 2019, this SHIP's strategic housing priorities are aligned and consistent with the proposed RRTP priorities and outcomes. A crucial objective is to facilitate and deliver more affordable housing via the SHIP.

In the report "Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing", produced by the Indigo Group on behalf of the Scottish Government's HARSAG in June 2018, two specific recommendations were made in relation to the SHIP:

- Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans could be seen as an integral part of the SHIPs, and should be annually reviewed as part of the SHIP process

- The Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator should improve data collection from local authorities or housing associations on completions and lettings relative to housing need.

With this in mind, Argyll and Bute Council continues to liaise with RSL partners and other key stakeholders to develop and implement the RRTP; and will aim to ensure that homelessness remains a critical factor in the SHIP process. This includes: homelessness as one criterion for assessing need, prioritising projects, and awarding grants from the Strategic Housing Fund. SHIP projects are expected to contribute directly or indirectly to alleviating homelessness across Argyll and Bute (for example, as a result of direct allocations or via consequential lets to existing properties freed up on transfer of occupants to new build properties). The performance of developing landlords in respect of the proportion of allocations to homeless households and time taken to rehouse these clients will continue to be material considerations in SHIP programming decisions and resource allocation moving forward.

In support of this RRTP the Council received £95,000 core funding from the Scottish Government in September 2019. In addition £30,000 was carried forward from the previous year in relation to enabling funding to assist with preparing the initial Plan. The main aims of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is that by March 31st 2024:

- The number of homeless applicants will reduce from 517 per annum (2017/18) to 300 (2023/24).
  Progress: 416 (2020/21)
- Units of temporary accommodation are accordingly reduced from 140 to 100 (2023/24). (Due to COVID-19 the Council initially increased the number of temporary accommodation units to 188 in 2020/21.)
  Progress: Additional units successfully reduced to 129 by August 2021.
- Support for those homeless or threatened with homelessness is integrated between tenancy, mental health and addiction services. The dedicated post of Mental Health Practitioner was advertised in 2020.
  Progress: Mental Health/Addictions Housing Practitioner appointed, 2021
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary tenancies before finding permanent re-housing; and no more than 26 weeks without good reason, reducing to 20 weeks by 2024.
  Progress: 29 weeks in 2020/21
- People sustain permanent tenancies with a reduction in repeat homelessness.
  Progress: Repeat homelessness increased by 5 cases in 2020/21

Council Housing Services have taken forward 6 key work strands within the original RRTP investing £53,979 in 2019/20 and £94,372 in 2020/21; of the £105,000 allocated that year for this purpose by the Scottish Government, in addition to the £71,021 carried forward from previous years. It is proposed that we continue to focus on the 6 areas of activity detailed above, with the funding allocation as follows:-

- Rent arrears prevention fund - £50,000
- Decoration project - £35,000
- Flexible Emergency Fund - £11,000
- Mental Health /Addictions Practitioner - £50,000 (part year)
- Housing First / RRTP training - £5,000
- Establish a Housing First model - £25,000 (creation of 10 tenancies)

10) UPDATE FROM THE 2020 SHIP

Current Progress: Outputs 2020/21

Building on the 411 units completed between 2016/17 and 2019/20, there were a further 48 units completed in 2020/21; bringing the five-year cumulative total to 459 which is 84% of the LHS target for at least 550 new affordable homes to be completed by the end of the 5-year planning period. Given the extremely challenging conditions of 2020/21, this is very positive outcome for the previous LHS and SHIP; and a significant number of projects are on-site and will complete over the coming year.

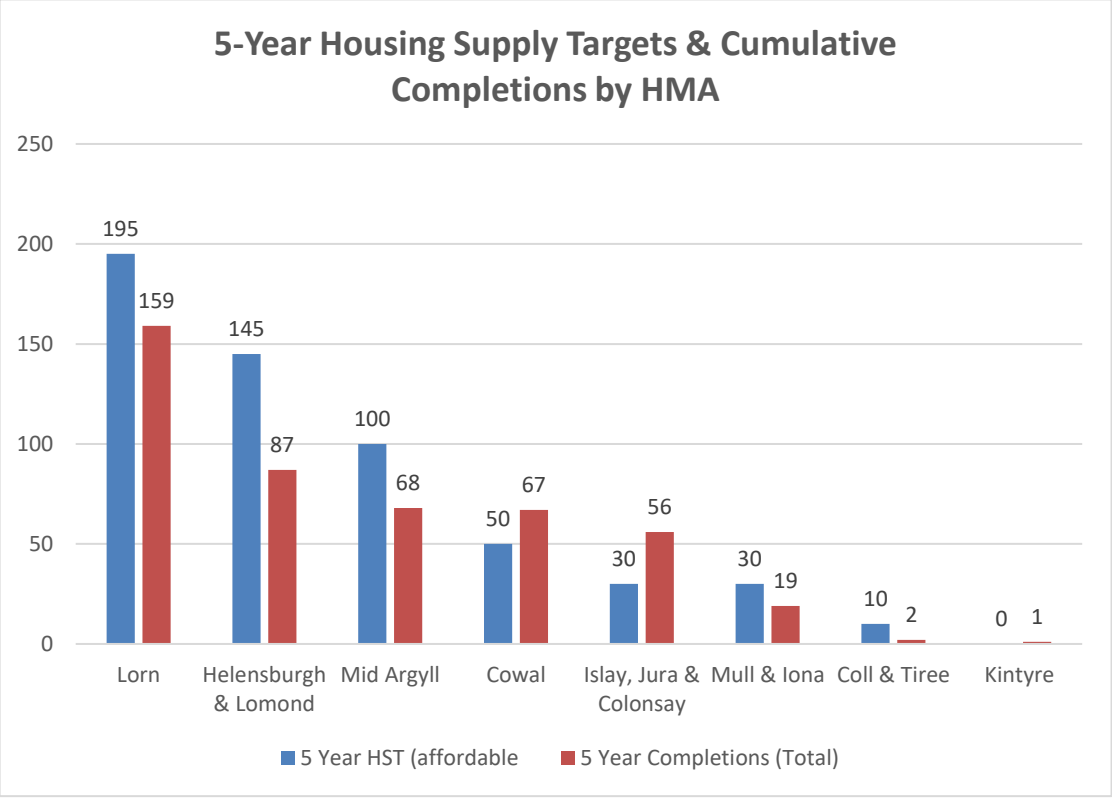
TABLE 1: SHIP New Build Homes by HMA & Project, 2020/21

Housing Market Area	Projects	Completions	% of Total
Cowal	Dunoon (refurb)	1	2%
	Tighnabruaich	20	42%
Lorn	Glenshellach, Oban Phases 11-13 (final units)	12	25%
	Barcaldine	10	21%
Mid Argyll	Cairnbaan	5	10%
TOTALS		**48**	100%

Three of the local RSLs contributed to the total programme. ACHA delivered 18 of the new builds; Fyne Homes provided 20; and West Highland completed 10. In terms of tenure, 4 units (8%) were for shared equity in line with LHS targets.

Reviewing overall progress at the end of Year 5 of the previous LHS, despite slippage due to Covid-19, the SHIP programme only narrowly fell short of the Housing Supply Target for Argyll and Bute as noted above, with a number of onsite projects, including a proportion of the Dunbeg development of 300 units, being delivered in the first quarter of 2021/22 as a result of inevitable slippage arising from the pandemic.

In terms of original HMA targets (2016 based), the main requirement was to progress delivery in Oban/Dunbeg and Helensburgh & Lomond, as well as some of the islands. The following graph illustrates the cumulative completions over the last five years against the LHS targets.



11) THE REVISED PROGRAMME

The current year, 2021/22, is covered by the Strategic Local Programme Agreement (SLPA) between the council, the Scottish Government, and the developing RSLs, and the previous SHIP (approved in 2020); while this new SHIP will commence from 2022/23. The programme is subject to ongoing change as either barriers to progress or windfall opportunities arise. Consequently, the following tables simply summarise all proposals at the time of writing (August 2021), including those projects which were expected to complete in 2021/22 and for which funding has already been drawn down. It should be noted that the status of many future projects, particularly in the later years, remains provisional and purely indicative at this stage; some may not proceed, or complete, within the timescale. However there is also scope for additional proposals to be brought forward or included in the programme.

Further details of the programme and individual projects are outlined in the electronic reports recorded on the Scottish Government's Housing and Regeneration Programme (HARP) system.

TABLE 2 SHIP Projects – Completions/Anticipated Completions in 2021/22

Project address	Developer	Units	Anticipated Completion Date
Garelochhead (Passivhaus model)	ACHA	10	June 2021
Milknowe, Kintyre	ACHA	1	July 2021
Cairndow	FYNE Homes	6	May 2021
Kirk Road, Dunbeg	WHHA	4	May 2021
Dunbeg Phase 3 (partial handover)	LINK	118	March 2022
Imereval, Islay, Phase 3	WHHA	8	Oct. 2021
Tarbert Phase 2	ACHA	4	March 2022
Jura	WHHA	10	Jan. 2022
Argyll & Bute 2021/22 Total Completions (est.)		**161**	**March 2022**

TABLE 3: SHIP Core Programme - Potential Completions by March 2027

Project address	Developer	Units	Anticipated Completion[1]
Dunbeg Phase 3 (final handover)	LINK	182	June 22
Keills, Islay	ACHA	4	Feb. 2022
North Connel Phase 2	ACHA	2	2022
Rowan Cottage, Port Appin	WHHA	6	2022
Creamery, Port Charlotte	WHHA	8	2022
Inveraray, Phase 2	ACHA	10	2022
Eton Avenue, Dunoon	ACHA	4	2022
Jeanie Deans Site, Helensburgh	Dunbritton	12	June 2022
Sawmill field, Helensburgh	Wheatley Group	36	Sept. 2022
Tobermory (Phase 3)	WHHA	12	Sept. 2022
Colonsay	WHHA	5	Oct. 2022
Rosneath	LINK	49	Oct. 2022/tbc
Bowmore (Phase 4)	ACHA	18	Oct. 2022
Imereval, Islay, Phase 4	WHHA	20	Jan. 2023
18th Tee, Helensburgh	Dunbritton	16	Feb. 2023
Lonan Drive, Oban	LINK	46	March 2023
Hospital Field, Oban	LINK	50	May 2023
Inveraray	Fyne Homes	16	2023
Salen, Mull	WHHA	8	Aug. 2023
Dalintober, Campbeltown	ACHA	25	Nov. 2023
Golf Club Site, Helensburgh	Dunbritton	52	March 2024
Tighcargaman, Port Ellen	ACHA	20	March 2024
Lochgilphead Phase 6	Fyne Homes	1	2022/23
Dunbeg Phases 4, 5 & 6	LINK	150	Feb. 2025
Lochgilphead Riverside Drive	Fyne Homes	6	2023/24
Glencruitten, Oban	LINK	100	2026
Cardross	DHA	35	2025
Tighnabruiach Phase 2	FYNE Homes	10	2026/27
Port Appin Phase 2&3	WHHA	24	TBC
Rothesay Academy, Bute	FYNE Homes	20	2025
Cairndow Phase 2	FYNE Homes	4	2026
Argyll and ButeTotal		951	2022-2027

[1] NB. Timescales are indicative and subject to change; and will be monitored on a regular basis. Some projects could also revise their final number of units.

If this programme is successfully delivered in full within the planning period (plus completions in 2021/22), it could provide over 1100 new affordable homes across Argyll and Bute by March 2027. Over 38% of these would be in rural mainland, island and/or fragile communities; around 45% in the key strategic settlements of Oban and Dunbeg; 15% in Helensburgh; with just over 2% in the other main towns of Dunoon and Lochgilphead.

There is an expectation that the majority of these units will be built to allow for future adaptation to meet changing needs over time; and in addition approximately 10% (i.e. 95 units, if above programme is delivered in full) should be purpose-designed to medium or high dependency standards with potentially 48 of those units (5% of the total) being fully wheelchair accessible.

However, the council is currently also in ongoing discussions with the HSCP to review and explore potential models for the re-provisioning or replacement of existing care homes no longer fit for purpose (with the crucial proviso that SHIP investment is only eligible for accommodation elements of any proposals). This could include “close” cluster specialist accommodation and/or more dispersed cluster units to address the needs of those who might historically have occupied facilities such as Eadar Glinn in Lorn, Ardfenaig in Mid Argyll, and Struan Lodge in Cowal. In principle, the council is supportive of the inclusion of these projects in the SHIP, in full or in part depending on detailed and realistic proposals coming forward, with a view to delivery early in the new programme if feasible.

In addition to this core programme, a number of other potential proposals are being developed for further consideration in later years of the SHIP, subject to robust assessments of need and demand, site assembly or acquisition, and available funding. Some of these projects therefore remain notional at this stage or are subject to development constraints that require to be addressed/ mitigated before they can proceed. These projects are also dependent on clarification of local need or potential demand to support growth and recovery agendas; and will be considered in future updates of the SHIP.

The council will also continue to actively explore other sites and projects out with the core SHIP funding programme, as outlined in previous sections of this plan, where these are consistent with LDP policy/housing land provisions and align with high quality, fit-for-purpose assessments of local housing need and demand.

Finally, a number of community-led projects or private developments with associated affordable requirements but no RSL attached, may be delivered out with the core SHIP programme but will be significant adjuncts to this process and should deliver major synergies with the SHIP. Several projects are already progressing, and at least two have been completed at time of writing. While small in scale these community-based projects deliver substantial impacts at the local level, and help to ensure the viability and sustainability of fragile communities. The following table summarises the current programme for rural and island projects out with the core SHIP programme.

TABLE 4: COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING PROJECTS

HMA	PROJECT/COMMUNITY	UNITS	Est. DATE
Mull & Iona	Ulva Ferry	4	Completed 2021
Mull & Iona	Ulva	6	Nov. 2021
Mull & Iona	Pennyghael	1 off-shelf	Completed 2021
Mull & Iona	Glengorm	5	2021
Mull & Iona	Dervaig	3 rent + 2 LCHO	TBC.
Kintyre	Gigha	4+2 plots	TBC
Islay, Jura & Colonsay	Scalasaig, Colonsay (Phase 1)	12 mixed tenure: rent, LCHO & self-build plots	TBC.
Coll & Tiree	Hynish, Tiree	6-12	2022

12) MONITORING AND REVIEW

The SHIP will continue to be appraised on an annual basis by the Scottish Government and affordable housing outcomes are monitored regularly by the Council's Housing Management Team; local authority Members via the corporate Pyramid performance management system; the overarching Community Planning Partnership via the ABOIP framework; and partners on the Strategic Housing Forum; as well as the boards and committees of the individual SHIP partners. In addition, as appropriate, wider stakeholder involvement will be sought via consultation with local communities, private developers and relevant particular interest groups. All pertinent feedback will help to inform the ongoing development and regular revisions of the SHIP.

The Council has also been exploring potential mechanisms for establishing a wider evaluation framework to capture the broader social return on investment and economic impacts of the SHIP programme, as well as the basic cost effectiveness and value for money of specific projects. Working with RSL partners, the council is keen to implement a formal evaluation procedure which will capture evidence on the wide range of strategic benefits that the SHIP actually delivers, beyond monitoring the basic number of completions.

13) IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Health Impact Assessment

In addition to the formal LHS Equality Impact Assessment referred to in Section 7 above, which encompasses this SHIP, the council also carried out a Health Impact Assessment in 2017 for Housing Services, this plan and the LHS in accordance with national good practice, and as a further step towards fostering closer linkages between Housing, Health and Social Care. It is

intended to review and update this Health Inequality Assessment in light of the comprehensive revision of the LHS and this SHIP. We will also continue to monitor and assess the impact of the SHIP and the LHS in terms of equalities and human rights, health inequalities, child rights, poverty and wellbeing, and in line with the principles of the Fairer Scotland Duty. Any relevant findings from such assessments will be reflected in the SHIP and future updates of the LHS and other associated plans, policies and strategies.

Child Poverty and Housing – In line with the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017, the council produces an annual Argyll & Bute Child Poverty Action Plan report which sets out progress against the four statutory, income-based targets (all after housing costs), to be achieved by 2030, which are in summary:

- Less than 10% of children are in relative poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in absolute poverty
- Less than 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation
- Less than 5% of children are in persistent poverty

The local vision is for an "Argyll and Bute where no-one lives in poverty. Everyone should be able to achieve their potential and feel healthy, happy and valued. … a place where everyone understands that tackling poverty is a shared responsibility. We believe that if we act locally, and in partnership, we can make a difference". The annual report highlights Housing's contribution to child poverty, and notes that the availability and nature and costs of housing impacts on the cost of living of individual households and the wider economy. A good housing environment can make a difference to the experiences of children, young people and their families. Households with children living in homes that fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) are 46.3% in Argyll and Bute as opposed to the Scottish average of 41.6% according to recent SHCS reports. The Child Poverty Action Plan report acknowledges that through its Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) the Council is attempting to provide more affordable housing for rent to support families with children; partners in HOMEArgyll aim to increase and improve the stock of social housing; it also works with private landlords and home owners to improve housing conditions; rents are maintained at an affordable level (ACHA for example rents at 3.8% below the national average for Registered Social Landlords); and in addition the Housing partnership is working to ensure that appropriate accommodation is offered to families with children: there are no children placed in unsuitable Bed and Breakfast accommodation and such a move is only considered in cases of extreme emergency as a last resort.

The SHIP will continue to prioritise positive benefits for families and children wherever possible.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

As the "Responsible Authority" under the terms of the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council has previously determined that the LHS (and

by association it's ancillary component, the SHIP) does not require a full SEA. The primary document in relation to land use planning is the Local Development Plan which is subject to a full SEA and which will ultimately cover all housing projects set out in the SHIP. The SHIP is an investment plan which sits underneath the LHS and sets out how the LHS objectives can be delivered. As such it is primarily an operational, working document and it will therefore not change the policy directions set out in the LHS and LDPs.

14) CONCLUSION

The Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Investment Plan for 2022/23 to 2026/27 sets out an ambitious but realistic programme for the delivery of more than 750 new affordable homes (plus over 340 to be delivered in 2021/22); of which the majority would be built to lifetime standards, allowing for future adaptation to meet changing needs over time; and around 10% will be purpose-designed for specialist needs, with half of those i.e. 5% of the total being fully wheelchair accessible. The programme reflects a strong commitment to the economic growth agenda for Argyll and Bute; and over a third of the proposed developments will also directly support the sustainability of fragile rural and island communities.

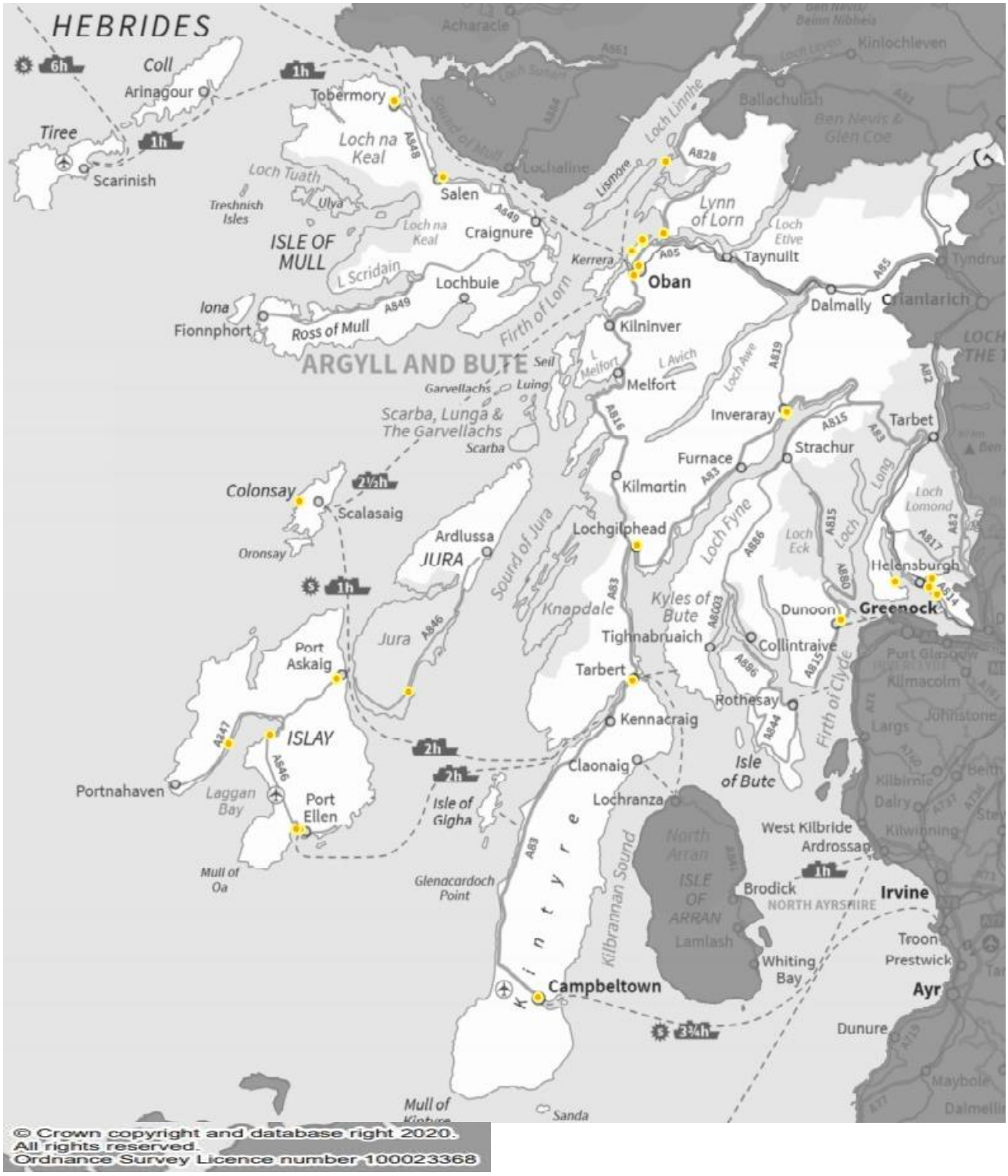
This programme is in line with the emerging, minimum Housing Supply Targets for affordable housing which will be ratified in November 2021 following final phase of LHS consultation in September 2021. These new targets take account of the council's ambitious strategic objectives as well as the potential increased demand for social housing arising from the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic; the increased presence at the MOD base in Helensburgh & Lomond; the anticipated impacts of the Rural Growth Deal and other local and national resources and strategic imperatives for repopulation, recovery and growth; and therefore the scale of the proposed programme is likely to be more in line with actual requirements as well as our aspirational goals for Argyll and Bute.

A number of additional, potential projects have also been identified for consideration in later years and some of these may be brought forward as the programme is reviewed on an annual basis, subject to identification of robust need and demand; and the council and its partners are committed to maximizing available resources where possible, and will continue actively to explore opportunities for growth in the programme.

This SHIP clearly and directly aligns with the LHS and LOIP outcomes; sets out a core programme which is feasible to deliver; highlights the contribution of the council, developers and other partners; evidences the support and facilitation role of the local authority; outlines the extensive stakeholder engagement underpinning the planning and delivery of the programme; and explicitly reflects the central importance of equality issues for all partners.

ANNEX ONE

SHIP DEVELOPMENTS ACROSS ARGYLL & BUTE:
Projects in the Core Programme



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