



Health Impact Assessment scoping workshop report - Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy

Policy/service title: Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy 2021-2026

Date of workshop: 22/09/21

Location: via Microsoft Teams

Policy lead: Douglas Whyte, Argyll and Bute Council

Report Author: Jenny Dryden, Health Improvement Lead, Argyll and Bute HSCP

Date of Report: 29/09/21

This is a summary report of a scoping exercise held on 22nd September 2021 to identify how Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy may impact on health, including identifying differential impacts on different population groups. The exercise involved using a health impact checklist to identify populations and health determinants likely to be affected by the Local Housing Strategy.

This report is not a definitive statement or assessment of impacts but presents possible impacts that may require further consideration. Findings are based on the knowledge and experience of those present at the workshop.

The report also includes recommendations to improve impacts on health and enhance actions to reduce health inequalities.

People present:

The following were present at the workshop and contributed to the discussions:

Allan Brandie	Argyll and Bute Council
Douglas Whyte	Argyll and Bute Council
Hristina Tarpanova,	Argyll and Bute Council
Aileen Semple,	Argyll and Bute Council
Kelly Ferns,	Argyll and Bute Council
Jenny Dryden	Argyll and Bute HSCP
Heather McAdam	Argyll and Bute HSCP
Sam Campbell	Argyll and Bute HSCP
Laura Stephenson	Argyll and Bute HSCP

1. Rationale and aims of policy:

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) will set out the vision for housing and housing related services in Argyll & Bute over the next five years (2021-2026). The LHS will also set a Housing Supply Target that guides the assembly of land for housing development to meet local housing need & demand

The LHS will set out a local plan for meeting national housing challenges including:

- Increasing the supply of affordable homes

- Ending homelessness
- Ending fuel poverty & tackling climate change
- Supporting people with particular needs to live independently and well
- Developing successful places & sustainable communities
- Improving the quality & condition of existing homes
- Improving the operation of the Private Rented Sector

2. Population

Q. Who is affected by this policy and which population groups could be affected differentially by the policy? How would they be affected?

The group sought to identify potential differential impacts of the policy on different population groups. These impacts are noted below.

Population groups affected by the policy	How would they be affected?
Older people, children and young people, including Looked After children	<p>Older people are a large proportion of the population and are more likely to have needs for specialist and adapted housing. There is a need for alternatives to care home provision for some older people.</p> <p>LHS should have a positive impact on older people through the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing options advice designed to ensure older people get information about range of housing options including remaining in own home or moving to more suitable accommodation. Includes practical assistance & advice. • Links with TEC enabled care • Advice and assistance services as well as designated Housing OT to fully and accurately assess people's needs • Energy efficiency programme and measures that focus on alleviating fuel poverty for older people as they are one of the groups most likely to experience this • Improved coordination and close partnership work across, Housing, Health and Social Care. • Provision of affordable housing that can attract health & care staff in more remote areas • Ensure a range of housing options

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing represented on Corporate Parenting Board <p>Children & Young People LHS closely aligned with the Child poverty action plan and Children & Young People agenda. LHS should have the following positive impacts on CYP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to identify what can reduce housing costs for families • Improved energy efficiency measures • Affordable homes for families • Points given through the allocation policy for RSL tenancies for single parents or households with vulnerable children • Housing support providers engaging with young people in housing who require additional support • Overcrowding is a key factor of HNDA and housing allocation policy, underpins a lot of the strategy • Leaving Care Housing options protocol in place
<p>Women, men and transgender people (include issues relating to pregnancy / maternity)</p>	<p>Known gender differences in the needs presented by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Women – more likely to be homeless as a result of domestic abuse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing support contract with Women’s aid. Council provides Crisis emergency fund to them. • Pregnancy and maternity needs taken into account when someone’s being assessed for their housing options. <p>Men – more likely to be homeless as a result of complex health issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health/addictions housing practitioner post in place, as part of rapid recovery transition plan.

<p>Disabled people (includes physical and learning disability, sensory impairment, long term medical conditions, mental health problems.</p>	<p>People with a disability including mental health problems – may require specialist or adapted housing, or housing with support. People with mental health problems may have difficulty sustaining tenancies; partnership working is needed to ensure they have appropriate support.</p> <p>Disabled people should be positively impacted by the LHS through the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated housing OT who ensures people on the waiting list are assessed accurately • LHS sits within LD steering group working to deliver core and cluster within new housing projects • 10% specialist provision housing target with 5% dedicated to wheelchair housing • Adaptations to meet a variety of needs including sensory needs • Fuel poverty work targeting people with long-term conditions. Promoting available funding • Focus on dementia and people on the autistic spectrum
<p>People who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership</p>	<p>Assessed as neutral/minimal impact, as everyone is assessed on individual needs.</p>
<p>Minority ethnic people (including Gypsy / Travellers, non-English speakers</p> <p>Refugee & asylum seekers</p>	<p>LHS should have a positive impact on minority ethnic people through the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Gypsy/Travellers groups to inform the Local Housing Strategy. Looking at their current housing provision and looking to improve it and meet their needs. • Partnership working with MECOPP • Housing Need and Demand Assessment takes needs into account.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to interpreter service • The Local Housing Strategy can be produced in different formats on request. • Some refugees who have been successfully accommodated.
People with different religions or beliefs	Assessed as neutral/minimal impact.
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	Assessed as neutral/minimal impact.
People in poverty / people of low income	<p>In general, people in poverty/of low income may benefit from more affordable homes and improvements that reduce fuel poverty. Argyll and Bute experienced higher than national average fuel poverty rates.</p> <p>LH should positively impact on this population group through the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare rights partnership working that help people to maximise their income • Good partnership working with RSLs, Home Energy Scotland, and National Advice Line for all energy efficiency programmes, etc... • Making sure all national schemes are advertised in A&B. • Increase in new build affordable housing • Low cost ownership • Affordable market housing pilots on Mull and Islay
Carers (include parents, especially lone parents; and elderly carers)	<p>Generally positive impacts as per other equalities groups, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Support • Fuel Poverty / energy efficiency measures • Welfare Rights - income maximisation • Housing Options advice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable homes for families <p>Particular positive effects may be delivered by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate mix, size and type of property is available for parents and for carers living with children/ person cared for; • that allocation policies take account of such households where possible; • and that appropriate support, advice and assistance is available. <p>In addition, it is worth noting that aspects of the LHS will be delivered in liaison with key partner agency MECOPP who work with Minority Ethnic Carers to actively challenge and address barriers that deny carers from minority backgrounds access to health, social work and housing services. In this context the LHS activity relates specifically to Gypsy/Traveller families.</p> <p>The LHS will also aim to ensure that planning for housing and support services aligns with the emerging proposals for a National Care Service which is currently out to consultation. This will be achieved through the LHS focus on preventative principles which help people to sustain their home or tenancy and avoid recourse to more intense health or social care services where possible.</p>
Homeless people	See 'Women, men and transgender people (include issues relating to pregnancy / maternity)', above.
People involved in the criminal justice system	Prison leavers may require support to retain or access tenancies, and maintaining tenancies can reduce re-offending. Over 50% of the housing support hours go to existing tenancies to try and ensure tenancy sustainment.
Staff (including people with different work patterns e.g. part/ full-time, short term, job share, seasonal)	Argyll and Bute employment is more heavily linked to tourism than most other areas in Scotland. This has been negatively impacted by COVID-19, and therefore certain groups of staff may now be experiencing low income and poverty.

	In previous years it was identified that may struggle to find affordable accommodation. This has been exacerbated by COVID-19 and now many workers, including education, health and social care staff are impacted.
People with low literacy / numeracy	<p>Those with low literacy/numeracy may be negatively impacted by online application processes and online methods of accessing support. Those with poor digital skills may be disadvantaged by the above, and this compounded by poor digital connections.</p> <p>Housing services are trialing the use of Near Me as an additional method of communication and support.</p>
People in remote, rural and/or island locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIP programme targeting island communities and rural areas • The high level of ineffective stock has been taken into consideration in the strategy- holiday homes, empty homes • Reports done by SHELTER on impacts of empty homes and second holiday homes on some of the islands. Working with some of the community groups to maximise the supply of affordable housing on the islands. • Focus on the impact of Airbnb; dedicated research was commissioned last year to inform the strategy • Housing strategy with focus on sustaining the fragile island communities • Area based scheme insulation programme –criteria has been extended for island areas as people on the islands are more likely to experience fuel poverty. Uplifted grants for those who live on islands or very remote postcodes.
Other – armed services and veterans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive detailed consideration in LHS and HNDA

3. How will the policy impact on the causes of health inequalities (health determinants)?

Q. Which positive and negative impacts do you think there may be? Are there any impacts about which you feel uncertain? Which groups will be affected by these impacts?

The group identified the following potential impacts of the policy on the causes of health inequalities

Will the policy impact on?	Potential impacts and any particular groups affected
<p>What impact will the proposal have on health-related behaviour?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet and nutrition • Exercise and physical activity • Substance use: tobacco, alcohol or drugs • Sexual health • Learning Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduced housing costs releasing income for healthier diets - Improved homes- environment both indoors and outdoors, within neighbourhood - Promote active movement/walking to accessible amenities/town centres etc. - Opportunities for apprenticeships in construction sector - Improved home circumstances facilities learning and study - Minimum housing standard- everyone has access to clean and suitable cooking facilities and food preparation areas - Housing support for young people who need to learn skills to manage their homes and bills for the first time - Encouraging the Place making tool kit for new build developments - Housing support contract that includes trips when possible - Involvement in the Antisocial behaviour group to minimise impact on the wider community - Involvement in the Alcohol and Drugs partnership
<p>What impact will the proposal have on the social environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social status • Employment (paid or unpaid) • Income and income equality • Crime and fear of crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Help move onto/up housing ladder; secure permanent home in turn helping with education and employment - Jobs/apprenticeships in construction sector; health/care sectors and other businesses maximising income. - Improved communities (new homes, remove derelict/vacant properties etc) - Engagement in strategic planning process; community consultation on new

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support & social networks • Stress, resilience & community assets • Participation & social interaction • Influence and sense of control • Identity and belonging 	<p>developments; CHAT exercises; Place standard Tool etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with Community Justice to ensure people leaving prison are housed on release - Part of the MAPPA process to try and find housing for registered sex offenders that would have minimal impact on communities and victims - Creating opportunities for local people to purchase a home through Local Home Ownership - Rural Growth Deal focusing on delivering affordable housing market value properties particular on the islands - Working with community groups and third party agencies to carry out community housing need and demand assessments on a very local level
<p>What impact will the proposal have on the physical environment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living conditions • Working conditions • Natural space • Pollution – air, water, soil • Climate change (waste, energy, resource use, transport patterns) • Unintentional injuries & public safety • Transmission of infectious diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved properties, neighbourhoods, places - Improved/increased home working options, improved town centres, reduction in need for commuting - Enhanced/increased green space by design - Renewable energy/heat systems; improved energy efficiency measures; greener development processes. - External and internal wall insulation programmes contributing to reduction of dampness and better external appearance of buildings - Scheme of assistance that supports private owners to make property improvements. - Focusing on the 20 minute neighbourhood principals, where appropriate for rural areas
<p>How will proposal impact on access to & quality of services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Transport and connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve staffing of healthcare and links to amenities - Focus on 20-minute neighbourhood principal - Support school catchments; opportunities for training/skills development - Dedicated Housing OT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social services • Housing quality, mix, flexibility • Education provision • Culture, leisure and play provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting effective partnership working to ensure better digital connectivity - Access to health services via Near Me
<p>What impact will proposal have on equality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination against groups of people • Promoting equality of opportunity • Tackling harassment • Promoting positive attitudes • Promoting good relations between different groups • Community capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principles of fairness, reduce inequality and discrimination; accessible, affordable suitable housing - Mixed tenure schemes - Supporting local community-led developments and projects, needs assessments etc - Close work with community groups to improve community capacity building. - Future Equality policy changes will be taken into account in the Local Housing Strategy Annual updates.

4. Summary of key impacts

Overall, the discussion highlighted that the measures in the LHS would be expected to have positive impacts on health overall. Affordable, high quality housing is a key determinant of health. Improvements in housing will have a direct positive impact on the health of those that benefit from such improvements. Likewise, improvements in energy efficiency and actions to reduce fuel poverty/maximise income will have positive impacts on health.

High quality housing that meets the needs of the population can have positive impacts on education outcomes (e.g. appropriate space within homes for children to learn and study; effects of children feeling safe and secure at home). People who are satisfied with their housing have been shown to have lower stress and increased wellbeing. Having housing that is available and appropriate for key workers is essential for services such as education, health and social care. Having a range of housing options can encourage family support & maintain social networks, as people do not need to move out of the area to find housing that meets their needs. The LHS also builds on previous HIA recommendations to offer preventative housing options service to older people to provide information on alternative housing at an earlier stage.

The LHS and ongoing work contains several measures that will have positive impacts on reducing health inequalities by targeting and putting in place services for specific groups, e.g. designated housing OT, mental health and addictions Housing Practitioner, links with Learning Disability group and Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.

Improvements in housing quality, availability & affordability can attract migration to Argyll and Bute. This is important for economic viability of rural areas, however important to be aware of possible displacement of existing communities and loss of community connectedness. The LHS mitigates against this by supporting community groups to deliver housing in their communities. For example the Colonsay Community Development Company – new housing will mean that families can remain on the island and sustain the education system.

5. Suggested initial recommendations

During the workshop participants identified some initial suggestions to enhance the positive impacts of the LHS and mitigate against the negative impacts:

- Ensure that digital inclusion & connectivity plays a key role in the LHS. There is a potential negative impact on households if access to reliable and affordable broadband is not considered within the strategy. Noted that households can be provided with tablets if they don't have sufficient access but considering digital access universally can prevent stigma.
- Take forward issue of electric charging provision for cars in new builds (planning issue)
- Continue to work with communities to:
 - Support local community-led developments, projects and needs assessments, and build capacity within communities.

- Increase community connections by encouraging tenant and community participation in the planning of new developments.
- Continue to ensure that positive impacts identified within the LHS are maximised by targeting to individuals and communities in greatest need. For example, ensure that energy efficiency programmes and measures are targeted to priority population groups (e.g. those on low income, those who are disabled, older adults, carers).
- Recognise that travel and transport links can have impacts on health, and that there can be challenges with this in rural areas. In relation to public transport, the strategy identifies the '20 minute neighbourhood' which will be challenging in rural local authority area.
- Ensure that LHS annual updates take into account future equality policy changes.
- Strengthen links between Housing/rural growth deal and Public Health Department, to carry out further health impact assessment on both housing related issues and wider planning.
- Assess if LHS needs to take into account potential housing needs of Asylum seekers from Afghanistan.