

Argyll and Bute Council: Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment

Section 1: About the proposal

Title of Proposal

ARGYLL & BUTE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2022 - 2027

Intended outcome of proposal

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.”*

Description of proposal

The Strategy is a statutory requirement for local authorities, under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and subsequent legislation and guidance. The LHS must be based on a robust and credible Housing Need & Demand Assessment and should set out an Action Plan for addressing local needs and national priorities and delivering targets in respect of Housing and associated services over a five year period. It should provide a holistic approach to developing a healthy, well-balanced housing system, across all tenures and sectors of the market; and provides the strategic housing framework for all communities and residents within the local authority area.

The four key strategic outcomes/themes are:

1. Housing Supply & Place-making - To facilitate access to sufficient, suitable and affordable housing across all tenures;
2. Property Condition, Energy Efficiency, Tackling Climate Change & Poverty - To regenerate communities by improving the quality, condition and energy efficiency of housing and by tackling fuel poverty;
3. Specialist Provision & Independent Living - To enable people with particular needs to live independently in their own homes and to remain in their communities;
4. Housing Options, Information, Advice & Support - To promote individual housing options to meet housing need and ensure everyone has access to appropriate, accurate and timeous information, advice and assistance

Business Outcome(s) / Corporate Outcome(s) to which the proposal contributes

Argyll & Bute Outcome Improvement Plan –

The economy is diverse and thriving

We have infrastructure that supports sustainable growth.

Children and young people have the best possible start.

People live active, healthier and independent lives.

People live in safer and stronger communities.

Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services (2019-2022)

BO103 We enable a choice of suitable housing options


PR103_01 Number of new affordable homes completed per annum.

PR103_02 The percentage of positive homeless prevention interventions (prevent 1).

PR103_03 Number of empty properties back in use per annum

BO102 We provide support, prevention and opportunities to help people make better lifestyle choices

PR102_03 Amount of income generated by Welfare Rights.

Lead officer details:	
Name of lead officer	Douglas Whyte
Job title	Housing Strategy Manager
Department	Development & Economic Growth
Appropriate officer details:	
Name of appropriate officer	Allan Brandie
Job title	Research & Development Officer
Department	Development & Economic Growth
Sign off of EqSEIA	
Date of sign off	21/10/21

Who will deliver the proposal?
Council Housing Services and Partners

Section 2: Evidence used in the course of carrying out EqSEIA

Consultation / engagement

An extensive consultation & stakeholder engagement process has underpinned the HNDA and LHS. This includes:

Helensburgh & Lomond Housing Market Study 2018

HNDA Household Survey 2019

LHS Early Engagement Survey 2020

Private Landlord / Letting Agents Survey 2020

Housing & Business Sector Conferences 2018/19

LHS Stakeholder Conference 2020

Housing Services LHS Review Day 2020

LHS Options Appraisal workshops 2020/21

Community Housing Surveys for North Lorn; Mull & Iona; Islay; Tarbert & Skipness et al

Community Planning Place Standard Tool community workshops

Wheelchair User, Support Services & Representatives Surveys 2020/21

Gypsy/Travellers Consultation (workshops/surveys/meetings) 2020/21

Armed Forces Personnel & Veterans consultation, 2020/21

Housing & HSCP engagement, including surveys, workshops, option appraisals, short-term working groups

Ongoing engagement with service providers & representatives for Homeless, Learning Disabled & persons with Autism, Older People; those suffering domestic abuse.

The consultation covered the range of equalities protected characteristics, particularly those who require specialist forms of accommodation or support; and communities across rural mainland, islands, and main towns.

A range of virtual & actual engagement opportunities were undertaken.

Critically, the core outcomes and the SMART Action Plan for the strategy were developed through a formal Option Appraisal process with key partners and stakeholders. This involved applying a set of 5 agreed and weighted criteria to a range of proposals for inclusion in the LHS. The top ranked and highest weighted criterion was in relation to Equalities: Does this option promote equality of opportunity? Will the option proactively address housing inequality and socio-economic disadvantage?

- Option makes a major contribution to tackling housing inequality for disadvantaged groups = high score
- Option makes a contribution to tackling housing inequality for disadvantaged groups = medium score
- Option makes no clear contribution to tackling housing inequality for disadvantaged groups = low score

Results of this work determined the vision, objectives, priorities, options & action plan, and the general content of the LHS. Therefore, equalities principles are embedded fundamentally at the heart of the LHS.

Data

An extensive range of data has informed the Argyll & Bute HNDA 2021 as well as the LHS 2022-2027: including national and local datasets, primary and secondary research, housing management information from a range of services and organisations, and joint Health, Care & Housing Needs assessment 2018, among others. The Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder informed key elements of the HNDA & strategy

Other information

Wide range of local and national reports and research also informed the strategy: from Scottish Government; CIH; SFHA; JRF; NRS; Economic institutions; etc.

Gaps in evidence

The primary research listed above and bespoke client engagement was designed to address known data gaps particularly for groups such as wheelchair users, veterans, Gypsy/Travellers, Learning Disabled, older persons and children with families (particularly vulnerable children and young people in poverty).

The principle of continuous and iterative needs assessment and engagement with equalities groups and households with particular needs is embedded in the HNDA/LHS process and forms key actions for further activity during the life of this strategy. New and emerging needs will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Section 3: Impact of proposal

Impact on service users:

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:				
Age			✓	
Disability			✓	
Ethnicity			✓	
Sex			✓	
Gender reassignment			✓	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			✓	
Pregnancy and Maternity			✓	
Religion			✓	
Sexual Orientation			✓	
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population			✓	
Island populations			✓	
Low income			✓	
Low wealth			✓	
Material deprivation			✓	
Area deprivation			✓	
Socio-economic background			✓	
Communities of place			✓	
Communities of interest			✓	

If you have identified any impacts on service users, explain what these will be.

The LHS will improve the housing circumstances and options available for all local residents by increasing the supply of affordable and suitable accommodation to meet the range of specific household needs; minimising or ameliorating inequalities in the housing system and in delivery of related services; and by improving the health & well-being of local communities.

The LHS is also subject to the Fairer Scotland Duty as it will have a direct and significant impact on tackling socio-economic disadvantage by directly supporting local economies, local businesses and local employees. It will have a positive impact on low income, low wealth and material deprivation; also helping to create and sustain jobs and apprenticeships; provide opportunities for skills development; and by increasing the supply of affordable housing and energy-efficient homes with reduced running costs. The LHS also sets out a specific commitment to increase the provision of affordable housing built to Housing for Varying Needs Standards, wheelchair habitable housing, supported accommodation, adapted and accessible housing, and other models of specialist provision for those with particular needs. This will in turn promote and enable independence and provide the basis for improving and sustaining other aspects of a healthy, fulfilling life.

Area deprivation will also be reduced through the wide range of strategic interventions that promote the regeneration of town centres, and the sustainability of rural and island settlements, helping to address their decline and create vibrant, thriving communities. Overall, the LHS is designed to address housing inequalities and promote fair and equitable access to suitable, affordable homes and services, and to enable residents and those wishing to live in the area to occupy those homes effectively and as independently as possible.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

Impact on service deliverers (including employees, volunteers etc):

	Negative	No impact	Positive	Don't know
Protected characteristics:		✓		
Age		✓		
Disability		✓		
Ethnicity		✓		
Sex		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership		✓		
Pregnancy and Maternity		✓		
Religion		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Fairer Scotland Duty:				
Mainland rural population		✓		
Island populations		✓		
Low income		✓		
Low wealth		✓		
Material deprivation		✓		
Area deprivation		✓		
Socio-economic background		✓		
Communities of place		✓		
Communities of interest		✓		

If you have identified any impacts on service deliverers, explain what these will be.

If any 'don't know's have been identified, at what point will impacts on these groups become identifiable?

How has 'due regard' been given to any negative impacts that have been identified?

n/a

Section 4: Interdependencies

Is this proposal likely to have any knock-on effects for any other activities carried out by or on behalf of the council?	Yes
--	-----

Details of knock-on effects identified

The LHS is interdependent with Planning functions (Local Development Plans); and aspects of Health & Social Care (the HSCP Strategic Plan).
Land use for housing development is influenced by the HNDA & LHS Housing Supply Targets;
HSCP activity is mutually influenced by specialist housing provision; aids & adaptations; housing support, information & advice services; energy efficiency, property repairs & maintenance and other housing interventions.
The LHS will also ultimately impact on employment and local businesses' ability to attract and retain staff, thus impinging on Economic Development & Growth functions; and on Education in terms of supporting local school catchments by actively promoting repopulation.
Regular engagement with relevant services and organisations ensure effective joint working, improved early planning, and where possible complimentary resourcing approaches.
The LHS should have positive impacts on HSCP services by reducing residents' pressures on services.

Section 5: Monitoring and review

How will you monitor and evaluate the equality impacts of your proposal?

The LHS Action Plan & monitoring and evaluation framework include a range of indicators and targets which will be reported quarterly and annually. Key indicators will help monitor progress and delivery of targets and outcomes will allow us to evaluate success and impact of the strategy.
Wherever possible housing activity will be disaggregated by key characteristics of clients/households and locations (for monitoring island & rural impacts). This will include types & sizes of new build housing and circumstances of allocations; homeless outcomes; housing support outcomes; provision of adaptations; provision of housing options information & advice; provision of energy efficiency measures; etc.
Annual LHS reports will go to HMT, committee, full Council, the Strategic Housing Forum, the Scottish Government and be published online.