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## Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

### Oban, Lorn and the Isles Area Community Planning

8<sup>th</sup> May 2024



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## Argyll Community Housing Association – Annual Update

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### 1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Oban & Lorn and Isles Area Community Planning Group (CPG) with Argyll Community Housing Associations (ACHA) Annual Update.

### 2. Recommendations

2.1 The Area CPG are asked to note the content of this report.

### 3. Background

3.1 ACHA have given a commitment to provide an annual update on the work being undertaken by the Association.

### 4. Detail

#### 4.1 Stock

ACHA have a total of 5175 properties. For the Oban, Lorn and Isles (OLI) Area this is broken down as follows:

- Oban - 890
- Luing - 8
- Mull – 89
- Iona - 1
- Tiree - 24
- Coll - 10
- Lismore – 1

We have a total of 34 garage sites in Oban and Lorn area.

ACHA also have a Travelling Persons Site at Bayview, Ledaig, Benderloch which has 4 pitches available to let to the Gypsy Traveller Community.

#### 4.2 Regeneration Programme

##### **4.2.1 Buying stock on the open market**

ACHA have support from Argyll & Bute Council to acquire 'second hand' stock that is for sale on the open market, if this is the most appropriate method of meeting housing need in a particular area. So far ACHA have been successful in acquiring properties in the Oban, Lorn & Isles.

### **4.3 Investment Programme**

**4.3.1** In previous years extensive programmes of investment have been carried out. This has resulted in the programme this year being targeted at any fails which have been identified as part of our stock condition survey.

**4.3.2** For OLI financial year April 2023 – March 2024 we carried out the following improvements -  
Windows and Doors – 27  
Kitchens and Bathrooms- 8  
Heating and Rewire – 74  
Roof and roughcast – 12  
Refurbishment – 6  
Loft insulation - 6

We are awaiting the programme for 2024-2025

### **4.4 Warm Homes Fund**

**4.4.1** Our warm homes fund project is continuing to replace inefficient electric heating with Air Source Heat Pump systems. At the end of March 2024 we had installed 40 new systems to homes in Oban area.

### **4.5 Investment in Shelter Housing Complexes**

**4.5.1** We have recently completed a project at our Sheltered Housing Scheme at Dunmar Court, Oban and Ford Spence Court, Benderloch, where we have upgraded the warden call systems in both complexes. We have replaced communal doors at Dunmar Court to comply with fire safety Regulation along with individual flat doors.  
We have upgraded the lighting to energy efficient motion sensor in both complexes.

### **4.6 Business Energy Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Whole House Retrofit Programme – 2023 – 2024**

**4.6.1** ACHA have been successful in obtaining funding through a central government scheme to retrofit energy efficiency measures including external wall insulation, internal wall insulation, under floor insulation, windows, doors and renewable heating systems. There were 89 completed priorities in the Oban & Lorn area. These improvements could see tenants benefitting from up to a 60% reduction in energy costs,  
Along with this, 4 properties benefitted from Roof Replacement.  
Unfortunately there is no funding for year 2024/2025

## **4.7 Bayview Travelling Persons Site**

**4.7.1** During 2022 ACHA carried out improvement works to our travelling person's site at Bayview which included improving the lighting, landscaping and increasing the size of the pitches. As a result of these works the pitches at Bayview have doubled in size. This work has reduced the number of pitches at Bayview from 8 down to 4. The site is currently fully let.

**4.7.2** ACHA recognise that further significant works are required to our travelling persons sites and we have been conducting a full consultation exercise with our tenants and the wider gypsy/traveller community in order to prepare a bid for funding from the Scottish Government. We have appointed an Architect, who has just provided us with their phase 2 report with costings for the improvements identified from our most recent consultation exercise. When funds become available we will be in a strong position to submit a successful bid.

## **4.8 Sheltered Housing**

**4.8.1** ACHA is currently reviewing its Sheltered Housing Service. We have carried out a comprehensive consultation with our sheltered housing residents. The review is being carried out in phases and will take account of our tenant's views and preferences. Our sheltered housing schemes at Dunmar Court and Ford Spence Court have been included in Phase 3 and it is anticipated to start April 2025

**4.8.2** The aim of the review is to:

- Provide a bespoke service for our tenants over 60 in mainstream accommodation as well as sheltered housing.
- Reclassify sheltered housing to remove stigma and make the best use of housing stock
- Change workload dynamics to release capacity
- De-register with the Care Inspectorate.

## **4.9 Allocations & Re-letting of Properties**

**4.9.1** ACHA are part of the HOME Argyll partnership (Housing Options Made Easy), along with Argyll & Bute Council, West Highland Housing Association, Fyne Homes and Dunbritton Housing Association. We currently have just over 4679 applicants on our house waiting lists.

## **4.10 Estate Walkabouts**

**4.10.1** During 2023 ACHA introduced Estate Walkabouts for all areas. This is where we invite our residents and any other interested parties to join our staff on Estate Inspections to give their ideas and improvements for the neighbourhoods in which they live. The dates of Estate Walkabouts for the different areas are advertised on our website under Estate Management and we would encourage anyone who is interested to participate.

## **4.11 Customer Involvement Strategy**

ACHA worked with our tenant scrutiny group “Your Voice” to develop a customer involvement strategy. We consulted all ACHA tenants, Factored owners, Registered Tenant Organisations, Argyll & Bute schools, Community Councils and other stakeholders on the strategy. The consultation was also promoted on Facebook and our website. ACHA’s Board of Management approved the new Customer & Involvement Strategy on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and a copy can be found on our website.

We aim to ensure the continued development of customer involvement and participation. We plan to do this in partnership with our customers under the following Strategy Outcomes:

- Continuously develop ways of improving communication and information sharing to meet the needs of all customers
- Consult effectively with our customers and take account of their views before making decisions
- Raise awareness of customer involvement opportunities and create more opportunities to be involved.
- Providing resources, support, and training to assist customers to get involved
- Monitoring implementation of the Customer Involvement Strategy

## **4.12 Welfare Rights**

**4.12.1 – ACHA’s** welfare rights service for Oban, Lorn and Isles has brought in a total of £1,165,110.84 income for 345 clients during 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. All ACHA tenants are offered an appointment with our Welfare Rights Officer.

## **4.13 Adaptations**

**4.13.1** During 2023/2024 ACHA were successful in obtaining £450,000.00 in Scottish Government grant to allow us to progress essential aids and adaptations for our most vulnerable customers. In Oban we recently completed 56 adaptations.

We are currently waiting on the budget for 2024/2025 and should know this by end of June 2024

#### **4.14 Scotland Housing Awards 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**4.14.1** ACHA is delighted to announce that our Tenant Scrutiny Group the “Your Voice Group” won the **Excellence in Tenant Scrutiny award**. This award is for Landlords and their tenants who can show excellence in working collaboratively to scrutinise work and embed scrutiny within the culture of the organisation. The Your Voice Group are a group of tenants from across Argyll and Bute who take an in depth look at ACHA’s housing services, identifying areas where they think things might be improved or changed.

**4.14.2** ACHA’s Warm Home Team won the **Net Zero in Housing Award** for their whole house retrofit project at the Chartered Institute of Housings Scotland Housing Awards 2023. The new zero housing award recognises partnership work with the contractor Procast to deliver whole house retrofit upgrades to properties across various locations in Argyll including Tiree. The project forms part of ACHA’s long term journey to net zero and climate change with the residents being at the forefront.

#### **4.15 Scottish Energy Efficiency Awards June 2023**

**4.15.1** ACHA were nominated for 2 awards at this year’s Scottish Energy Efficiency awards and were successful in winning the **Regional Large Project of the Year** category, along with receiving highly commended in the **Regional Landlord/Housing Association of the Year** category.

#### **4.16 – Tenant Advisory Service (TIS) National Excellence Awards 2023**

The Your Voice Group also won the Excellence in Scrutiny Danny Mullen award at the recent TIS National Excellence Awards at the end of 2023. This award recognised how the Group had influenced ACHA’s decisions on housing policies, services and standards.

#### **4.17 ACHA’s 10 10 10 Initiative**

**4.17.1** 11 Schools in Argyll and Bute received an award during the year 2023-2024 including Oban High School and Aringour Primary School.

The fund is open for applications for 2024/2025

#### **4.18 ACHA’s Community Action Fund**

**4.18.1** We continue to welcome applications for funding from the Community Action Fund. 12 registered charities received an award from the fund of up to £500 during year 2023/2024, including Sidekick, 1<sup>st</sup> Connel Brownies, Seil Island Community Hall, Lorn Toy Library, Oban Festive Lights, The Rockfield Centre, Soroba

Community Enterprise, Dalmally Community Company, Highland & Island Music & Dance Festival, Rockfield Primary School PTA..

The fund is open for applications for 2024/2025

#### **4.19 Customer Satisfaction**

**4.19.1** In July 2023 ACHA commissioned Research Resource to carry out a satisfaction survey across all ACHA customers. The survey was developed to capture feedback from customers to help inform the transformation of the organisation, seeking customers' views on preferences to accessing services now and in the future.

**4.19.2** A total of 1004 interviews were carried out with ACHA tenants including sheltered housing tenants. Interviews were undertaken using a combination of door to door and telephone interviews. This represents a 20% response rate from our tenants.

**4.19.3** The satisfaction survey shows that ACHA is performing well with over 9 in 10 tenants being satisfied with all but 2 service aspects. All but one indicator has seen significant improvements in the satisfaction compared to the last survey in 2021. ACHA is performing well compared to the Scottish average with satisfaction levels in general being higher than the Scottish average.

**4.19.4** From the survey ACHA have produced an action plan to take account of what our tenants have told us through the survey and to improve areas of lower satisfaction.

#### **5. Conclusions**

**5.1** ACHA is continuing to meet its targets and priorities within local Strategies.

#### **Name of Lead Officer**

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#### **For further information please contact:**

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