

1. Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy Consultation Plan

Scottish local authorities are required to prepare a Local Housing Strategy (LHS) every five years, setting out a vision for the supply, quality and availability of housing in their local area. The LHS is the key planning document, providing a framework of action, investment and partnership working to deliver these local priorities.

As the 2016-2021 Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy is now approaching the final stages of implementation, the Council is now embarking on the development of a new local housing strategy for the area which will run from 2021-2026. To inform the new strategy, the Council has recently completed an extensive household survey on housing need and demand and is currently collating and analysing statistical data to refresh the local Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) by September 2020.

The Council recognise the importance of ensuring that the LHS development process is not only underpinned by high quality analysis and insight on local housing issues, but also high-quality consultation and engagement with local stakeholders and communities on the main priorities for action.



This LHS Consultation Plan sets out the Council's approach to engaging with stakeholders and Communities to ensure that:

- Opportunities for involvement are available throughout the LHS development process, accessible to all stakeholders and communities and offered early on and throughout the process;
- A range of options, media and communication channels are offered to maximise the audience engaging with the LHS development process;
- The views of people with or who share protected characteristics are considered equally and in a representative way;
- People or groups who may be hard to reach are offered clear opportunities for involvement, recognising that some people's views may not be readily heard through traditional engagement methods; and
- Consultation outcomes and feedback clearly influence the development of LHS priorities, outcomes and actions.



2. LHS consultation duties and requirements

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to consult on their proposed local housing strategy (LHS). In addition, the statutory Equality Duty on public bodies requires the involvement, consultation and engagement with as wide a range of local residents as possible. The current Scottish Government LHS guidance places significant emphasis on consultation with the public and stakeholders as part of the process of developing the strategy. This plan aims to provide an effective consultation and engagement programme to help inform the council's future delivery of housing and housing related services in Argyll & Bute.

As a local authority, Argyll & Bute Council holds the duty to consult on the LHS, which includes engagement with the wider community whilst ensuring that equality duties are met. Early engagement helps to ensure that people have a greater opportunity to have their say and influence the future of their communities, including the delivery of housing and housing related services. As a result, the LHS should be a robust strategy that reflects local need accurately and shows the influence that local people have had on the development of LHS priorities and outcomes.

The Scottish Government advocates that LHS engagement is underpinned by a Human Rights Based Approach that is aligned with the Community Empowerment Act (2015) and locality planning. This plan therefore sets out the full range of consultation and engagement approaches to help shape the content of the LHS and to ensure that the principles of co-production are taken in its development.

The Scottish Government strongly advocates a co-production approach to public services. It is a more inclusive process than standard consultation as it places people at the heart of the design and delivery of services. Involving people at the beginning of the LHS development process, facilitates the empowerment of service users and frontline staff, allowing the strategy to be developed “with” and “by” people rather than “for” them. This plan therefore sets out how the Council will engage local communities, representative groups and stakeholders to:

- Consult on the main issues to be tackled;
- Engage in building LHS vision and priorities;
- Codesign solutions and action plan ideas;
- Consult on emerging priorities and future options;
- Appraise options for investment, partnership and action; and
- Review and validate the draft LHS framework.

2.1. National Standards for Community Engagement

The National Standards for Community Engagement are good-practice principles designed to support and inform the process of community engagement and improve what happens as a result. The National Standards for Community Engagement are clear principles that describe the main elements of effective community engagement. They provide detailed performance statements that everyone involved can use to achieve the highest quality results and the greatest impact.

There are 7 National Standards, a series of indicators that can be collected in order to assess performance. The Standards can be used to ensure good practice and hold

communities and partners to account. The Standards aim to transform the quality of community engagement by providing measurable performance statements that can be used by everyone involved to achieve the highest quality processes and results. The goal is for community engagement that is:

- Effective in meeting the needs and expectations of the people involved;
- Efficient by being well informed and properly planned; and
- Fair by giving people who may face additional barriers to getting involved an equal opportunity to participate.

Argyll and Bute Council are committed to ensuring compliance with good practice and improving community engagement and the National Standards provide a framework for consultation and engagement on the LHS 2021-2026.

The 7 National Standards for Community Engagement

In accordance with the National Standards for Community Engagement, partnership working, consultation and engagement on the Argyll and Bute LHS 20-20 is based on the following principles:





- 1) Fairness, equality and inclusion must underpin all aspects of community engagement and should be reflected in both community engagement policies and the way that everyone involved participates.
- 2) Community engagement should have clear and agreed purposes, and methods that achieve these purposes.
- 3) Improving the quality of community engagement requires commitment to learning from experience.
- 4) Skill must be exercised in order to build communities, to ensure practice of equalities principles, to share ownership of the agenda, and to enable all viewpoints to be reflected.
- 5) As all parties to community engagement possess knowledge based on study, experience, observation and reflection, effective engagement processes will share and use that knowledge.
- 6) All participants should be given the opportunity to build on their knowledge and skills.
- 7) Accurate, timely information is crucial for effective engagement.



3. Partnership Working, Consultation and Engagement

The Scottish Government provides guidance on the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy. The Local Housing Strategy Guidance (2019) advises that local authorities must evidence that wide consultation has taken place on proposed housing strategies. It encourages an asset-based approach to engagement where co-production builds on local strengths and communities' capacity to drive local change.

The guidance encourages early engagement with key partners and stakeholders to identify priorities and agree, through a range of options, how to deal with these priorities. The Local Housing Strategy can also draw on information obtained through continuous engagement with residents, through tenant organisations, satisfaction surveys and specific topic consultations.

























In order to ensure engagement with as many local communities, interest groups and individuals as possible the consultation should be conducted using a range of media. This will also ensure that the make-up of the local population was accurately reflected in the process. Also, every effort must be taken to engage with hard to reach groups, as traditional methods may not be effective.

The Local Housing Strategy should be a corporate document agreed and supported by all relevant local authority departments. It should reflect the views and contributions of stakeholders, including members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as demonstrating the contribution housing can make to the delivery of wider CPP outcomes.

A range of consultation methodologies have been identified to enable strong engagement with key stakeholders throughout the LHS development process. These approaches have been identified to maximise engagement opportunities using well established local communication channels and forums. They include:

- **Digital channels** where widespread consultation across residents and communities will be hosted via the Council's online survey channels and digital tools. Digital channels will capture early consultation outcomes on local housing priorities and will be key in validating that priorities have been addressed in the draft LHS document
- **Established consultation groups and frameworks** who will be used to offer perspectives on local housing issues and priorities at a:
 - Strategic level – Community Planning Partnership
 - Community level – Community Council network
 - Expert level – reflecting the specialisms and experience of LHS delivery partners and stakeholders
 - Representative level – ensuring that specific interest groups, hard to reach groups or populations access consultation opportunities

These channels will support the following LHS consultation and engagement programme including timescales and details of when consultation outcomes will be published. Details of the extent and nature of each consultation and engagement activity are detailed in full in Section 5 of this plan:

		Who? Established groups & channels									
What? LHS Consultation & Engagement Activity	When?	Digital Channels					Established Consultation Groups & Frameworks				When will outcomes be published?
		Online consultation hosted on Argyll & Bute Council Website	Argyll & Bute Council social media channels*	The 'Keep in the Loop' service**	The Argyll & Bute Council Landing Hub	The Argyll & Bute Council wide staff intranet	Community Planning Partnership and Community Council networks	LHS partnership groups (including the Strategic Housing Forum)	Subject matter experts on LHS priorities or main issues	Interest groups (aligned to LHS priorities or specific groups)	
Early engagement activity: encouraging communities and residents to express their views on 'what matters most' on local housing issues	May - July 2020										September 2020 - Briefing paper: Early engagement findings
Building the LHS framework: Consultation on defining the LHS vision, priorities & objectives	Oct-20										November - LHS Conference Outcomes report
Identifying & screening options: Define, review, refine and screen LHS actions & interventions	Nov-20										January 2021 - Option Identification & appraisal report
Option appraisal: Finalise the range of actions to be programmed to deliver LHS outcomes	Dec-20										
Consulting on the draft LHS: encouraging communities and residents to express their views on LHS priorities & action plan	February - April 2020										April 2022 - Draft LHS Consultation outcomes briefing & Final LHS document
*to signpost and promote consultation activity											
**An Argyll & Bute subscription service for interested residents											

The main consultation methodologies and approaches to be used are set out in detail in the following diagram:





As well as using corporate and community consultation frameworks to carry out regular and wide reaching consultation on emerging LHS issues and priorities; a programme of specific LHS development events, meetings and discussion forums have also been set up to enable engagement with key stakeholders on the emerging LHS framework and draft document including:

- Distribution to partners, stakeholders and those who have participated in the development of the consultative draft including range of feedback survey options;
- Strategic Housing Forum: LHS review meetings;
- LHS Steering Group: LHS development meetings;
- LHS Focus Groups via community or stakeholder interest groups;
- Elected Members: briefings and feedback sessions;
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter): online polls, links to feedback surveys, opportunities to register interest, attend events;
- Online consultation opportunities; and
- LHS Pop-up events across Argyll & Bute.



4. LHS stakeholder network

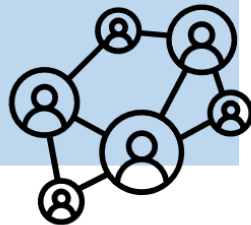
This consultation plan is underpinned by an LHS stakeholder map, which sets out the diverse range of interests and roles involved in developing the LHS ranging from:

- 1) **LHS design and development partners** who will be responsible for the design, development and evaluation of the LHS.
- 2) LHS partners and stakeholder who are **subject matter experts in emerging LHS priorities** and main issues and who will be involved in identifying housing system issues and codesigning potential solutions and interventions.
- 3) **Special Interest Groups and stakeholders** whose plans and strategies are aligned to or impact on the LHS.
- 4) **Wider community and service user networks** in Argyll & Bute including hard to reach groups.
- 5) LHS approval and submission including **Elected Representatives and the Scottish Government**.

The LHS Steering Group is responsible for the design, development and delivery of the Local Housing Strategy. It comprises key officers from the Council's Housing and Development Planning Services and supports the decision-making of the Argyll and Bute Strategic Housing Forum.

The Council is responsible for leading, enabling and facilitating a local housing market partnership of key stakeholders, who are responsible for overseeing:

- The delivery of the Housing Need & Demand Assessment
- The development of the LHS vision, priorities and outcomes
- The implementation of the LHS Action Plan, monitoring its progress and evaluating its impact



The Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Forum is a well-established network of LHS delivery partners formed as the local housing market partnership to drive the development, implementation and evaluation of the Local Housing Strategy in Argyll & Bute.

The Strategic Housing Forum is the key decision-making body guiding the development and delivery of the LHS

Crucially, the Strategic Housing Forum will be instrumental in designing the draft strategy framework for wider consultation, validating and finalising the LHS vision and priorities, and shortlisting future options and interventions.



Membership of the Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Forum includes:

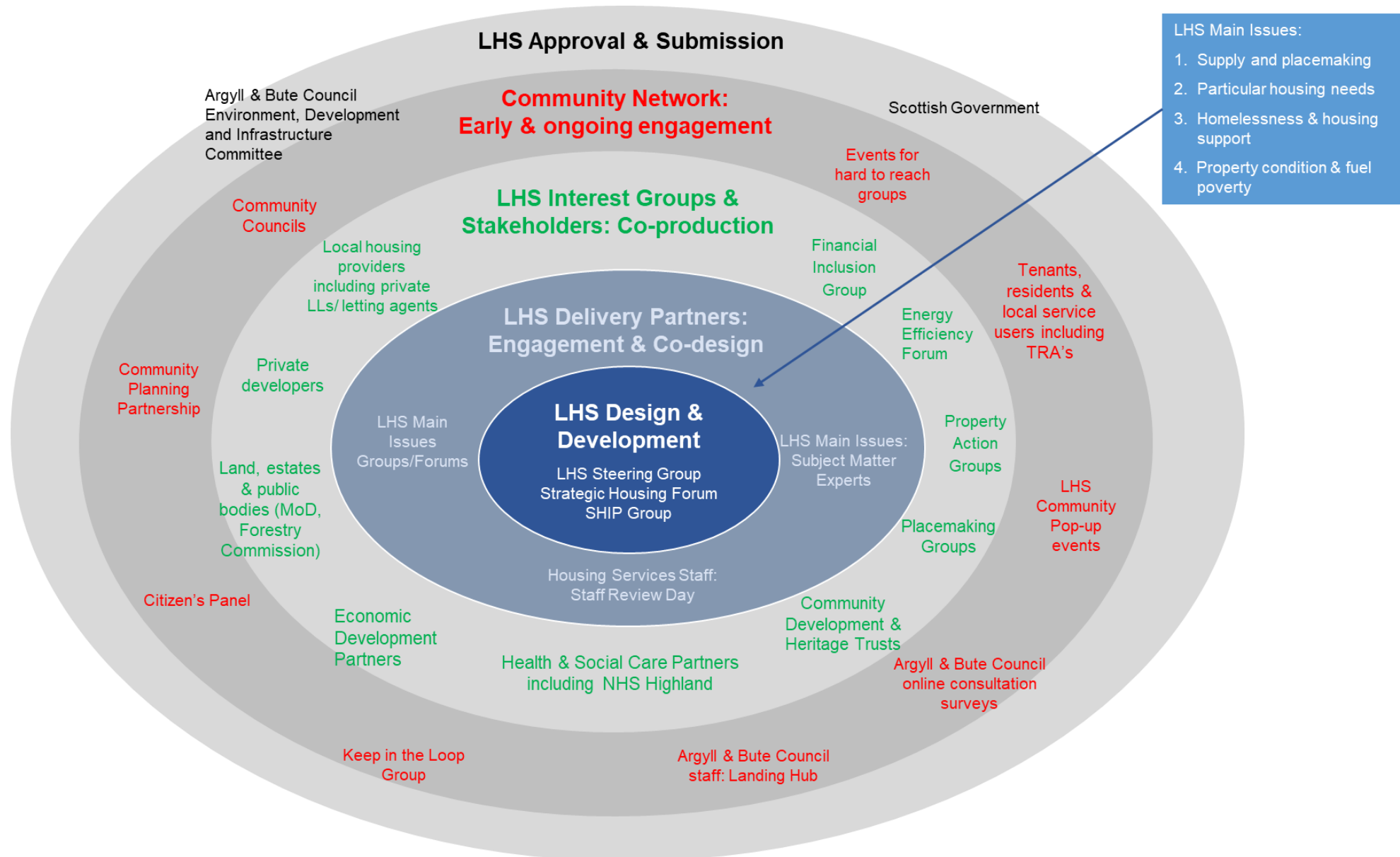
- Scottish Government
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Argyll Community Housing Association
- Bield Housing Association
- Dunbritton Housing Association
- Fyne Homes
- Link Housing
- Trust Housing Association
- West Highland Housing Association
- Rural Housing Scotland
- Community Housing Scotland
- Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park
- Health & Social Care Partnership
- Argyll & Bute Care & Repair
- Scottish Water
- Highlands & Islands Enterprise
- ALIenergy
- Home Energy Scotland



Via the Strategic Housing Forum, the Health & Social Care Partnership will be fully engaged throughout the consultation programme to discuss key health, care and support issues from a planning, commissioning and service delivery perspective. Opportunities will be provided for the HSCP to discuss the important contribution that the housing sector makes to the achievement of national outcomes for health and wellbeing, and how services could be further developed in the future. Representatives will be invited to attend discussions from Homelessness Service, NHS Argyll and Bute, Social Work services and other key HSCP colleagues.

A full list of the stakeholder's groups and representatives who will be engaged in the LHS design and development process have been assembled in a stakeholder map by the LHS Steering Group.

The following map sets out the categories of stakeholders or interests the consultation programme will target

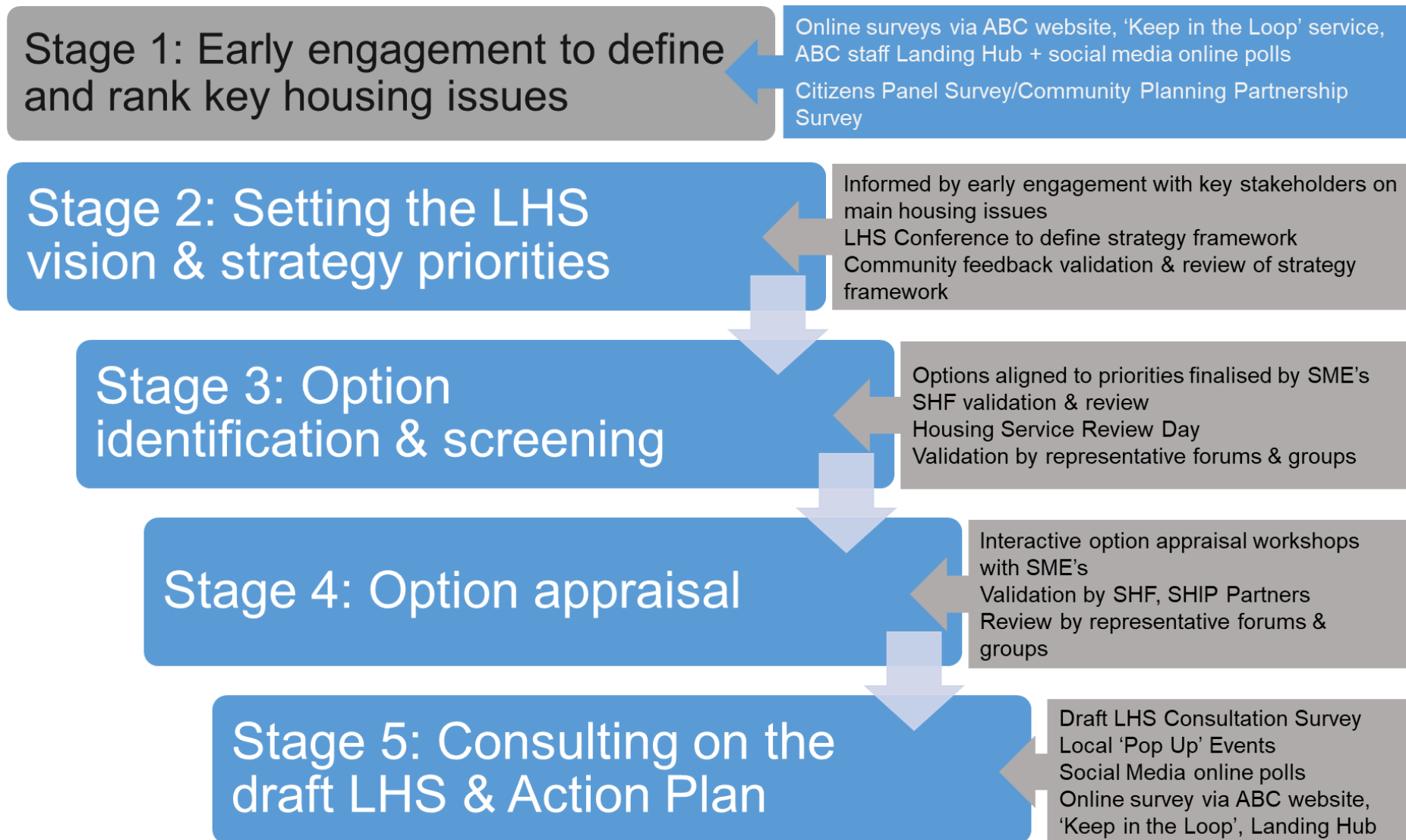




5. Stakeholder engagement programme

This consultation plan sets out a range of approaches to be deployed to help shape the content of the LHS and to ensure that the principles of co-production are taken in its development. The consultation programme will run in a series of phases from May 2020 until March 2021 ensuring a wide variety of methods and media are deployed to maximise participation and engagement. The Council have engaged Arneil Johnston, independent housing consultants, to support the consultation and engagement process underpinning LHS development.

As well as the various stakeholder categories identified in the stakeholder map above; the LHS steering group has identified specific groups for further consultation as they have been identified in the HNDA as important in better understand particular housing needs. The consultation programme will be structured into the following stages:



A range of consultation methods and approaches will be tailored to the objectives of each stage and the needs and interests of each stakeholder category as follows:

5.1. Stage 1: Early Engagement

Informed by the outcomes of the Housing Need & Demand Study and prior to defining and ranking the main issues that stakeholders will consider as LHS priorities; an early engagement exercise will take place encouraging communities and residents across Argyll & Bute to express their views on 'what matters most' on local housing issues.

A short, interactive electronic survey will be developed to encourage stakeholders to define and rank key housing system issues in Argyll and Bute; and to encourage respondents to identify issues, options or key questions for further analysis and debate. Residents will have the opportunity to identify important local issues which have been omitted from consultation options.

At an early stage, residents and community groups from across Argyll and Bute will also be encouraged to share their views on a wide range of local housing issues including (but not restricted to): housing access and choice, housing related services, housing affordability, housing condition and repair, housing suitability and homelessness.

Well established community anchors such as Community Councils, Community Development Groups, Community Heritage Trusts and Place-making Groups will be engaged. Furthermore, the Community Planning Partnership framework will also be consulted to ensure that a multi-agency perspective is offered on key housing issues at a strategic level.

The Argyll & Bute Citizen's Panel will also be used as a basis for early LHS engagement activity. Membership of the panel is representative of the population of Argyll and Bute by gender, age, employment status, housing tenure, ethnic origin and geographic location and therefore provides a helpful sounding board for engagement on LHS issues, priorities and options.

As well as consulting with community networks, the early engagement survey will also be available and promoted across a wide range of Argyll & Bute Council digital channels including:

- The Council own online survey tool (via the Argyll & Bute Council website);
- Argyll & Bute Council social media tools (to signpost and promote consultation activity);
- The 'Keep in the Loop' Group, an Argyll & Bute alert service for interested residents; and
- The Argyll & Bute Council Landing Hub, a Council wide staff intranet.

Early LHS engagement activity will run from May 2020 to August 2020 and will be instrumental in testing, defining and ranking the key local housing system issues that will form the basis of the LHS strategy framework.

5.2. Stage 2: Setting the LHS Framework

Informed by early stakeholder engagement feedback from local communities and residents and based on the key housing system issues arising from the Housing Need & Demand Assessment; the Strategic Housing Forum will design and host an LHS development

conference. Arneil Johnston will facilitate a full day conference event to define and agree the draft LHS vision, strategic priorities and housing system interventions. A range of consultation methodologies will be deployed to stimulate debate and achieve genuine coproduction and engagement including structured discussion groups, system thinking techniques, interactive activities and electronic voting. We will work with the LHS Steering Group to design, finalise and deliver a conference agenda, topic guides and engagement materials to support the effective delivery of the LHS Conference programme.

As well as providing briefing sessions on the LHS development process and the evidence base underpinning the strategy, the morning Conference session will focus on the strategic drivers for change and improvement in the local housing system, in order to define a vision which tackles housing system imbalance in Argyll & Bute.

Prior to the event, draft LHS aims will be defined and agreed with the LHS Steering Group based on the main housing system issues which require stakeholder consideration and action. These issues will be defined through analysis of the emerging HNDA outputs, early engagement outcomes and by assembling/reviewing further housing system evidence. Impact analysis of the current LHS Action Plan and an evaluation of LHS outcomes will also inform this process.

Informed by the evidence, briefing papers which detail the main LHS issues, will provide discussion topics to structure stakeholder consultation activity and will be circulated to stakeholders prior to the Conference. A number of questions will be posed in advance to aid and stimulate thinking and debate. A wide range of stakeholders will be invited to participate from across Argyll & Bute Council, The Scottish Government, statutory agencies, RSLs, Private landlords and letting agents, third sector agencies Representatives from tenant and resident groups, Community Councils and scrutiny panels.

In the afternoon session, each draft LHS aim will be used as a basis for structured focus groups to examine the impact of key housing system imbalances and validate the main LHS issues. Four thematic focus group sessions will be delivered, which concentrate on validating strategic aims and identifying LHS interventions and options which require further investigation and appraisal. These sessions can be held in two rounds to ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in more than one focus group each. The engagement outcomes arising from the LHS stakeholder conference will be as follows:

- a range of draft options to define the LHS vision;
- the agreed focus and scope of each strategic priority (based on a validation of the LHS main issues); and
- the key housing system interventions which could be prioritised in the development of LHS options.

5.3. Stage 3: Option Identification & Screening

Supported by the LHS Steering Group, the Strategic Housing Forum (SHF) will validate and finalise the draft LHS vision and strategic priorities arising from the LHS Conference event. The SHF will also review, refine and screen the range of interventions and options identified under each LHS priority. A shortlist of LHS options will then be circulated to a network of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on each LHS priority for further refinement or

development. This process should develop a credible shortlist of LHS interventions and options under each strategic priority for further consultation and analysis.

Engagement on LHS options via a network of community interest groups and partners will also enable the LHS Steering Group to finalise the shortlist to be considered at option appraisal. The shortlist of options under each LHS priority will also be shared with local community or interest groups who represent those affected by the main issues under consideration. Existing planning networks who are involved in or affected by LHS delivery will be fully engaged in the process including:

- Local housing providers including private LLs/letting agents;
- Private developers;
- Land, estates & public bodies (MoD, Forestry Commission);
- Economic Development Partners;
- Area Property Action Groups;
- Energy Efficiency Forum; and
- Financial Inclusion Group.

Furthermore, hard to reach groups will be targeted for their views and perspectives on LHS priorities and draft interventions including advocacy and planning groups such as:

- Access Panels;
- Homelessness Café/Hope Kitchen;
- Young Scot/Youth Café;
- Housing Support Forum;
- MeCOP Forum (Gypsy Travellers);
- SSAFA and veterans groups; and
- Wheelchair users network

A range of discussion materials will be provided to provide updates on different aspects of the LHS tailored to the needs of specific interest groups. These will include by topic guides for interactive/online activities and thematic discussions.

As well as engaging with hard to reach groups such as homeless households, gypsy travelers, veterans, looked after children; specific efforts will be made to target young people as it is recognised that they are a particularly hard to reach group. A discussion group will be arranged at the Oban Youth Café to speak to young people about their current housing issues and challenges, specifically to help inform the development of a Youth Housing Statement which aims to ensure young people most at risk can access appropriate housing and related services. This provides an opportunity for young people to have their say on issues that are important to them and what they believe should be the top priority in the LHS.

Following this, Arneil Johnston will facilitate a morning session at the Council's Housing Service Review day to engage and consult with housing employees on the shortlist of LHS interventions under consideration. The Housing Service Review Day as an opportunity to

further validate and add value to the outputs of the Conference by stimulating discussion on strategy aims and the potential interventions defined by partners, stakeholders and SMEs. The focus of this session will be to communicate the outcomes of the LHS Conference and to invite staff to participate in workshops to review and define potential LHS options. The range of options defined at the LHS Conference will be examined, refined and finalised for further scrutiny at option appraisal workshops. A range of consultation methodologies will be deployed in order to stimulate debate such as structured discussion activities, system thinking techniques and electronic voting.

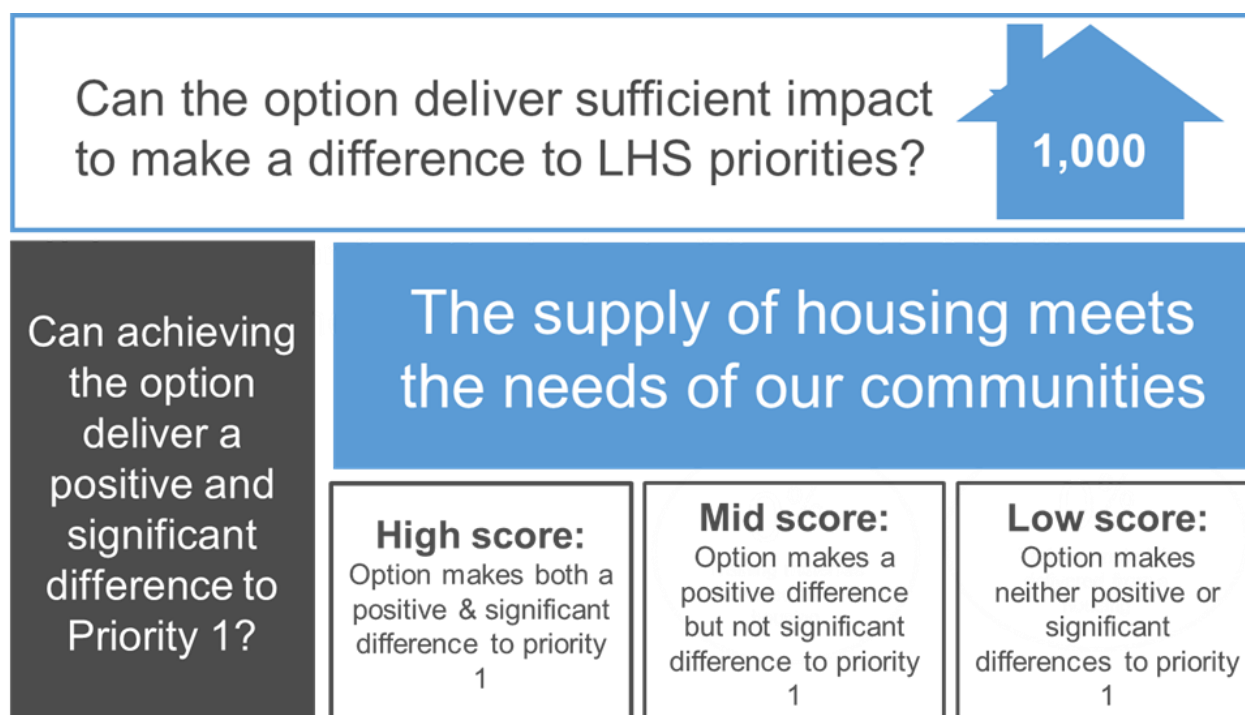
Stage 3 will enable a final shortlist of options to be developed under each LHS priority for systematic assessment at option appraisal.

5.4. Stage 4: Option Appraisal

Using the final shortlisted options under each LHS priority, Arneil Johnston will host a programme of half day option appraisal workshops with LHS partners, stakeholders and subject matter experts to define the range of actions to be programmed to deliver LHS outcomes.

A range of subject matter experts has been identified as part of the stakeholder mapping exercise under each LHS priority. This Group will form the basis of the participants who carry out live option appraisal of LHS options.

The purpose of each option appraisal workshop will be to systematically assess LHS options against a pre-defined criteria scoring system (see below for example).



Before the workshops, the LHS Steering Group and Strategic Housing Forum will define the option appraisal criteria that will be applied consistently to all options. Scoring will be used to populate an option appraisal framework which operates on the following basis:

- each option is systematically assessed against the same criteria;

- criteria are weighted by importance;
- options are marked out of 10 against ability to meet criteria;
- marks multiplied by weightings provide overall score; and
- high scoring options prioritised for implementation.

This process will enable the Strategic Housing Forum to identify the most effective range of actions under each strategic aim in the draft Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy.

5.5. Stage 5: Consulting on the Draft LHS & Action Plan

Following the Stages 1-4 of the LHS consultation and engagement programme, an LHS consultation document will be prepared which presents the key issues and the proposed framework for action, together with a series of consultation questions to prompt a structured response from stakeholders, communities and residents across Argyll & Bute.

It will be widely circulated via the Council's digital channels including:

- The Council own online survey tool (via the Argyll & Bute Council website);
- Argyll & Bute Council social media tools (to signpost and promote consultation activity);
- The 'Keep in the Loop' Group, an Argyll & Bute alert service for interested residents; and
- The Argyll & Bute Council Landing Hub, a Council wide staff intranet.

Well established community anchors such as Community Councils, Community Development Groups, Community Heritage Trusts and Place-making Groups will be invited to feedback on the consultation document. Furthermore, the Community Planning Partnership framework will also be consulted to ensure that a multi-agency perspective is offered on the emerging Local Housing Strategy and its contribution to the wider strategic agenda locally.

The Argyll & Bute Citizen's Panel will also be used as a basis for testing the LHS vision, priorities and actions. Furthermore, the consultation document will be circulated widely at Council offices and outlets, RSL offices and GP surgeries; posted on the websites of Strategic Housing Forum members; and advertised through social media.

Pop-up events across Argyll and Bute, delivered by Housing Services staff, will also be used to enable a wider audience to participate in the consultation process. This will provide an opportunity for people who may not normally participate in consultation to have their say on issues that are important to them and what they believe should be the top priority in the LHS. The events themselves involve a pop-up stand consisting of a pull up banner and a small table with copies of the draft LHS, questionnaires and comment cards.

5.6. Engagement programme and timetable

Aligned to each stage of the LHS consultation and engagement programme, the following timetable has been developed.

Each stage has been allocated time to enable a range of consultation activities to be carried out and to offer as many opportunities as possible to maximise community, resident and stakeholder engagement and encourage feedback.



The LHS Steering Group and Strategic Housing Forum will be responsible for monitoring the progress of the Consultation programme including participation and engagement levels.

	Action	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21			
1	Early stakeholder engagement activity		*1	*2	*2	*3/4											
2	LHS Stakeholder conference					*1	*2	*3/4									
3	LHS option identification & screening							*1	*2	*3							
4	LHS Options Appraisal									*1	*1/2						
5	Draft LHS Consultation Document										*1/2	*3	*3	*4			
	Action	Key milestone *1				Key milestone *2			Key milestone *3			Key milestone *4					
1	Early stakeholder engagement activity	Social media recruitment				Online survey launched: ABC website			Community Council/Citizen's Panel Survey			Community Group engagement including hard to reach groups					
2	LHS stakeholder engagement conference	Review of previous LHS				Planning & preparation of Conference materials			Stakeholder Conference + Thematic Workshops: Main			Conference report prepared					
3	LHS option identification & screening	SHF draft vision, priorities and LHS options				Circulate draft LHS options to SMEs and Interest Groups			Housing Service Review Day								
4	LHS Options Appraisal	Planning & preparation of materials				Interactive option appraisal workshops											
5	Draft LHS Consultation Document	Review options appraisal outcomes				Draft LHS Action Plan			Produce & circulate LHS Consultation draft			Assess consultation feedback to finalise action plan					