

WORKING WITH PARTNERS
AND COMMUNITIES TO
MAKE LIFE BETTER



Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022



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可按要求將本資訊翻譯成其他語言和轉變為其他格式。

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Equalities Statement

Under the Equality Act 2010, public sector bodies have a duty to ensure they give due regard to the need to;

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This statutory duty requires need to be considered in respect of certain protected characteristics. These are;

- Age
- Disability
- Sex (including pregnancy and maternity)
- Gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion and belief.

South Ayrshire Council is fully committed to the general principles of fairness, equality and human rights and seeks to apply these principles in all that it does as a community leader, service provider, education authority and employer by:

- challenging and eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation wherever it can;
- being inclusive, fair minded and transparent in all that it does;
- tackling prejudice and promoting understanding and inclusion;
- and consulting and engaging with service users and employees

This Local Housing Strategy fully supports these principles – as well as the public sector duty which underlies them - and seeks to advance these in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The Local Housing Strategy has been developed in partnership with people from a wide range of backgrounds in order to advance housing policies and practices which are as accessible and inclusive as possible. It has been subject to a full Equalities Impact

Assessment¹, and our outcomes and actions have been reviewed by a specially formed LHS Equalities Review Group.

¹ Equality Impact Assessment available at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/documents/local%20housing%20strategy%202017-2022%20-%20equality%20impact%20assessment.pdf



Foreword

Access to good quality, affordable housing that meets people's various needs is essential. Housing is at the heart of health, well-being, social inclusion and participation, and we're committed to making sure people in South Ayrshire are supported as far as possible to meet their housing needs.

Since our last Strategy was published in 2011, we've made considerable progress. Through cooperation with a wide range of local and national partners, we've implemented innovative approaches in the areas of homelessness, housing support, empty homes, private house condition and tenant involvement.

But there is still much to do.

This Local Housing Strategy builds on our achievements while recognising the challenges ahead. It has been developed in partnership with a broad range of local people, stakeholders and service providers in order to ensure our plans reflect the priorities of the communities we serve. This Strategy is about making sure;

- People across South Ayrshire can find a suitable place to stay.
- Homelessness is prevented where possible and suitable accommodation, advice and support are available where it cannot be avoided.
- People across South Ayrshire are able to access advice and support that helps them to meet their housing needs and aspirations.
- People across South Ayrshire live in well-maintained, energy efficient homes and are proud of their neighbourhoods.

Our Strategy sets out a shared vision for the future of housing in South Ayrshire. Only through working together – and, crucially, involving tenants, residents and communities - will we be able to make this vision for housing a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Saxton', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Philip Saxton

Portfolio Holder for Housing and Customer Services

Introduction to South Ayrshire

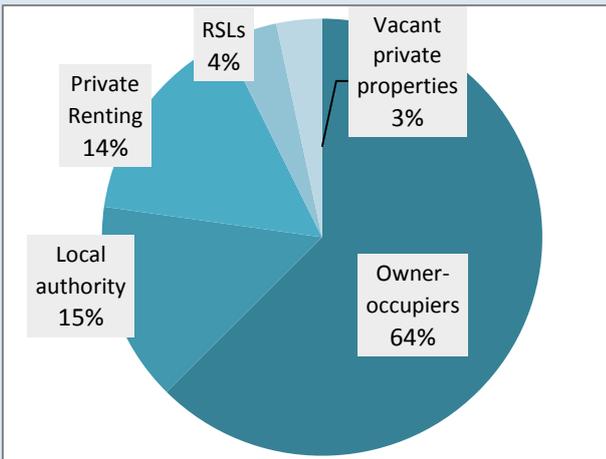
South Ayrshire is a local authority area in the South West of Scotland, sharing borders with the neighbouring authorities of North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire and Dumfries and Galloway.



Population		
Local Plan Area	Est. Population	%
Ayr North and Former Coalfield Communities	20,271	18%
Ayr South and Coylton	31,182	28%
Girvan and South Carrick Villages	9,453	8%
Maybole and North Carrick Communities	9,913	9%
Prestwick	22,973	20%
Tron	18,678	17%
TOTAL	112,470	100%

- Almost 70% of our population live in the main towns of Ayr, Prestwick and Tron.
- A smaller proportion of our population are under 16 compared to the Scottish average.
- A smaller proportion of people are of working age than the Scottish average.
- A higher proportion of people are aged 65+ than the Scottish average.

Housing



Flats	27.5%		
Houses	Terraced	22.8%	72.5%
	Semi-Detached	24.6%	
	Detached	25.1%	

- There are an estimated 54,788 dwellings in South Ayrshire².

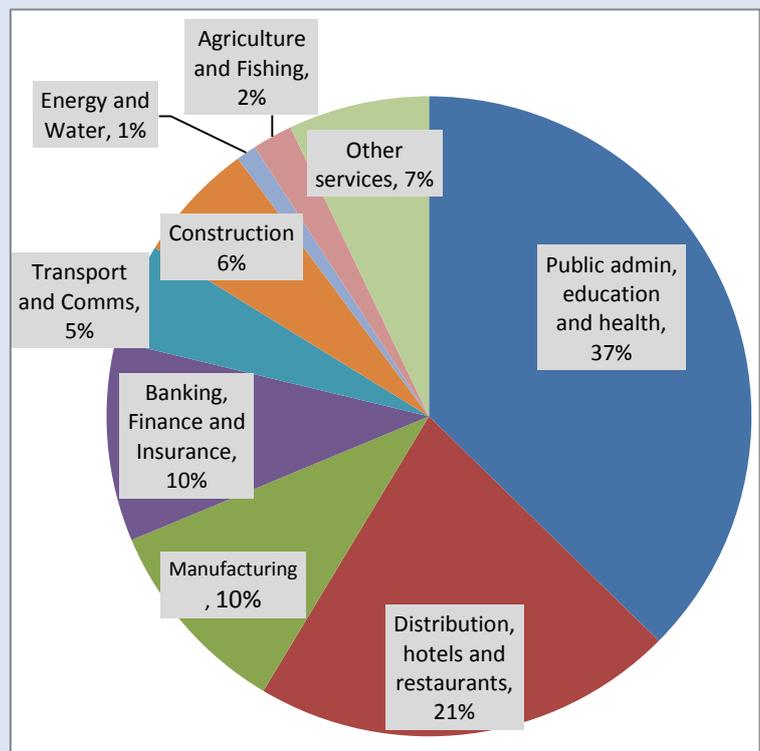
- Of this number, 64% are owner occupied, while 14% are provided for private rent.

- South Ayrshire's social housing stock is provided by the local authority (15% of all stock) and a number of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs, or Housing Associations), providing 4% of all dwellings.

- Three-quarters of dwellings in South Ayrshire are houses, with flats providing the remaining quarter of properties.

Economy

- A breakdown of the industries providing employment in South Ayrshire is provided in the pie chart³.
- The unemployment rate for those aged 16+ in South Ayrshire was 6.2% (3,300 people) as of March 2016. This level was above the Scottish average of 5.7% and British average of 5.1%.

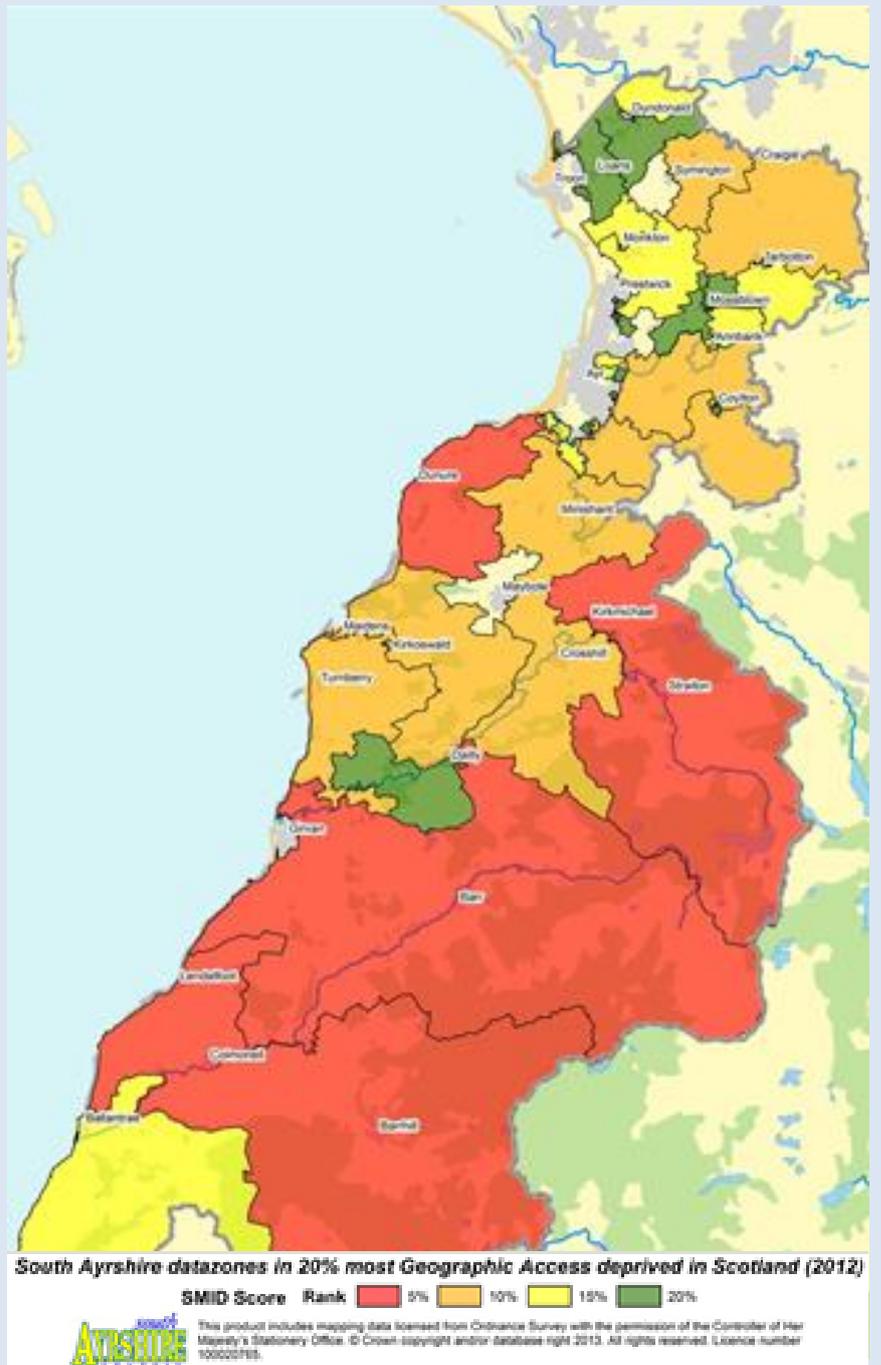


² Housing Statistics for Scotland (2016) *Stock by Tenure*

³ ONS, Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) via Scottish Government

Urban/Rural Context

- 28% (or almost 32,000 people) live in 'rural' areas or 'remote small towns'⁴.
- These areas are currently experiencing problems connected with poor transport links and lack of employment opportunities.
- About one-fifth of areas in South Ayrshire ('datazones') are in the 15% most deprived nationally with regards to accessing services.
- These include rural areas of Carrick North and Carrick South, Coylton, Annbank, Mossblown and Tarbolton, Symington, Monkton and Dundonald. Alloway and Doonfoot.



⁴ Based on the Scottish Government's Rural/Urban classification.

The Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) is about planning for housing and housing-related services to meet the needs of the people of South Ayrshire. The LHS is informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) which identifies the key housing pressures across the Local Authority. The Local Housing Strategy sets out how these needs will be addressed over the following five years.

As well as addressing housing need, the Local Housing Strategy has a key role to play in supporting the achievement of many wider local and national priorities;

National Priorities

National Outcomes – Vision for Housing

Our LHS aims and actions have been designed to support the Scottish Government's overarching Vision for Housing and Regeneration;

- *All people in Scotland live in high quality sustainable homes that they can afford and that meet their needs.*
- *A Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote wellbeing.*

Housing and Regeneration Outcomes

In order to achieve this Vision, the Scottish Government has set out a number of desired outcomes. Our LHS supports these outcomes in the following ways;

- **A well-functioning housing system** – is supported by our commitment to increase housing supply, make good use of existing resources and improve housing options;
- **High quality, sustainable homes** – supported by our commitment to improve property condition, energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty locally;
- **Homes that meet people's needs** – this is a key concern of our LHS, and can be seen across actions relating to housing supply, access to housing and property condition;
- **Sustainable communities** - South Ayrshire Council is committed to enhancing access to services and housing within a high quality local environment, and this is expressed through our Local Development Plan (LDP).

Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Scottish Social Housing Charter has set out a number of key outcomes that social housing providers should seek to achieve – these are summarised below. Our LHS supports the delivery of these broad outcomes in a number of ways;

- **Increased tenant involvement** - Our LHS has set tenant involvement as a key priority, with the aim that “people across South Ayrshire have the opportunity to have their say on issues affecting the communities where they live”.
- **Improving housing and neighbourhoods** – This is an important element in our LHS, with a commitment that “social housing stock continues to meet local and national property condition standards” and people “live in safe, clean and sustainable neighbourhoods”.
- **Improving housing options advice** – Our LHS wishes to ensure “People [...] can access good quality, accredited housing advice”, “Those at risk of homelessness can access effective homelessness prevention measures and support” and “Housing options advice effectively supports people [...] to access suitable and affordable accommodation”.
- **Housing Support and Independent Living** – Our LHS has set an aim that “People across South Ayrshire have access to housing-related support that helps them to live as independently as possible”.
- **Best Value** – Achieving Best Value is a key element in our LHS, including achieving best use of existing resources.

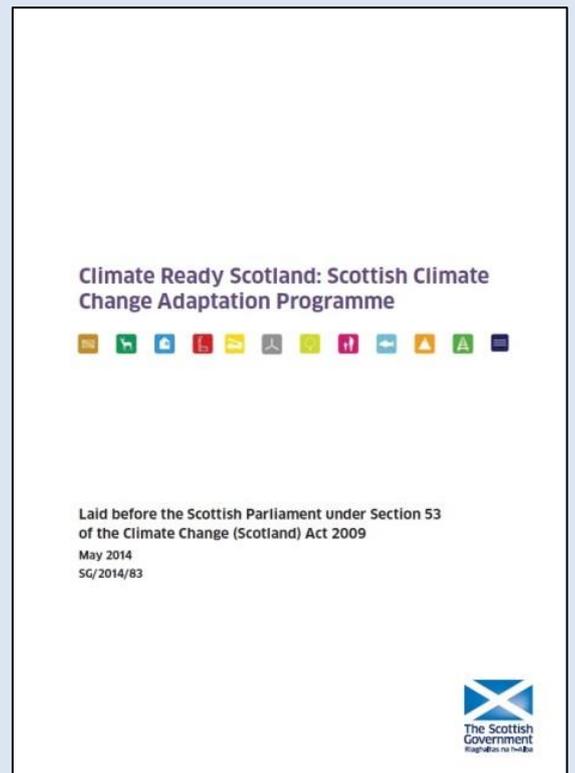
Achieving ‘More Homes Scotland’ targets

- The Scottish Government has this year committed to providing 50,000 new affordable housing units within the lifetime of the parliament and, through More Homes Scotland, has put in place arrangements to support the development of social housing.
- Our LHS supports this aim by committing to build or acquire 675 homes for affordable rent by 2022. This equates to 135 units per year.

Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty targets

- In 2007, all 32 local authorities signed up to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration (SCCD), committing them to mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Following on from this, the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 required Scottish greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by 42% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels.
- The Act placed responsibilities on local authorities to work towards meeting these targets and working sustainably⁵.
- Scotland's Sustainable Housing Strategy outlines key targets for 2020, including;
 - Every home to have loft and cavity wall insulation where feasible;
 - Every home with gas heating to have a highly efficient boiler;
 - At least 100,000 homes to have some form of individual or communal renewable heat technology.
- The eradication of fuel poverty as far as reasonably practicable is a key priority set out within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Our LHS supports these commitments to improving energy efficiency, eradicating Fuel Poverty and mitigating the effects of climate change by putting in place actions to ensure "people across South Ayrshire live in well-maintained, energy efficient homes". This includes improving property condition across the tenures, providing access to energy efficiency measures and helping people to switch suppliers.



⁵ Section 44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Community Justice

The Scottish Government has recently been working in partnership with stakeholders to develop a new local model for community justice in Scotland from April 2017. This will take the form of a pan Ayrshire approach but oversight for local planning and delivery of community justice will sit with South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership. South Ayrshire Council is keen to support the delivery of this agenda across its services.

Over the next five years, we will work closely with our Community Planning partners to ensure that housing policy and practice supports the overall strategic approach towards reducing re-offending.

Re-shaping Care for Older People

Of the £5 billion spent nationally on health and social care for people over 65 every year, more than half (60%) of this is spent on providing institutional care in hospitals and care homes. The Scottish Government is committed to moving away from this model by ensuring that care packages are available – as far as possible – in the community, and that older people are not in hospital for longer than necessary.

Over the next five years, we will work with colleagues in Health and Social Care to support the provision of services to people in the community helping older people stay in their own homes for longer, rather than being admitted to hospital or a care home.

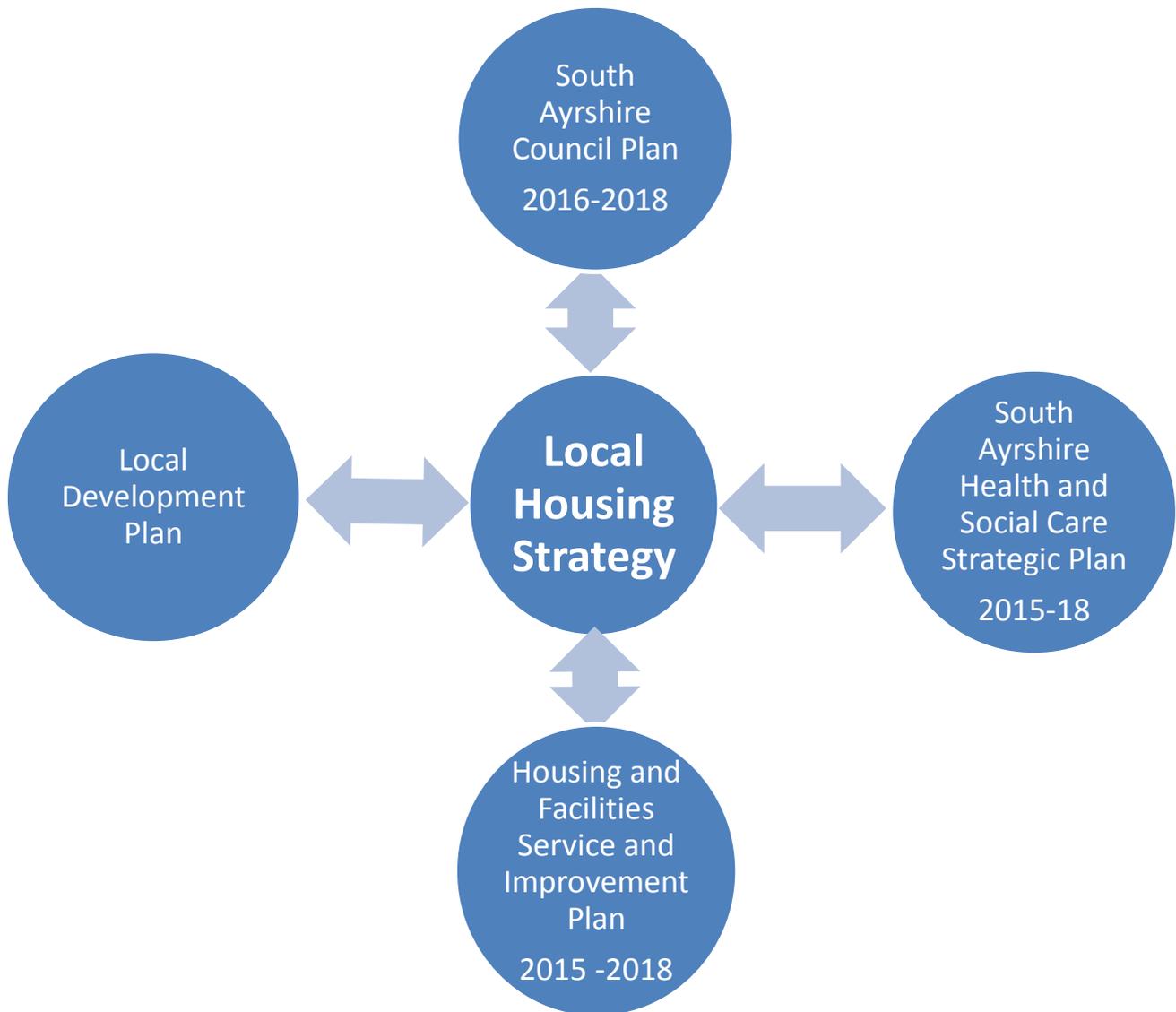
Town Centre First Principles and Developing Sustainable Communities

- In line with the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Principle, South Ayrshire Council will make the health of town centres a priority in its decision-making, seeking to deliver the best local outcomes by directing investment and disinvestment decisions and targeting of available resources to priority town centre sites.
- South Ayrshire Council is committed to supporting the development and maintenance of sustainable communities. Informed by the principles of the Scottish Government policies "Designing Streets" and "Creating Places", our LDP sets out the aim "to establish design priorities for developers, communities and development management to ensure that the allocated housing sites can become successful places, which integrate successfully within settlements"⁶.

⁶ South Ayrshire Council (2014) 'Supplementary Guidance: Housing Site Design Briefs'

Local Context

In addition to supporting national outcomes, our LHS also supports the delivery of local plans and priorities.



Council Plan Strategic Outcomes and Objectives 2016-18

South Ayrshire's Council Plan sets out a number of key strategic outcomes and objectives, with the overarching Vision of *"working with our partners and communities to make life better"*. This involves making the most of our location, natural assets and people and communities to transform South Ayrshire to become the most **dynamic, inclusive** and **sustainable** community in Scotland.

The LHS supports these outcomes with its commitment to working in partnership to ensure people throughout South Ayrshire are able to access good quality, sustainable accommodation that meets their needs and are proud of the Communities they live in. The LHS particularly contributes to and supports the following Strategic Outcomes;

- SO5.2 People are able to find a suitable and affordable place to stay in a community
- SO5.3 People live in warm, well maintained, energy efficient homes

These outcomes are supported by the overarching outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy, particularly:

- **People across South Ayrshire can find a suitable place to stay.**
- **People across South Ayrshire are able to access advice and support that helps them to meet their housing needs and aspirations**
- **People across South Ayrshire live in well-maintained, energy efficient homes and are proud of their neighbourhoods.**

Relationship to Community and Locality Planning

Housing has a key and recognised role to play in Community Planning. The Council is in the process of developing Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP) for each Locality as part of its approach to Community Planning.

The South Ayrshire Local Outcomes Improvement Plan will have two overarching themes:

- Closing the outcomes gap for children and young people in South Ayrshire and,
- Supporting older people to live in good health.

These will be supported by a partnership wide focus on four priority areas:

- Improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

- Providing support for young people who are carers.
- Reducing social isolation.
- Supporting people with dementia and their carers.

These themes are supported by the Local Housing Strategy in a number of ways. In terms of closing the outcomes gap, supporting people to access good quality housing is an important way that we can reduce inequalities across a variety of outcomes, including health and well-being, social integration and educational attainment. The LHS also sets out specific actions to support children and young people in meeting their housing needs, including the needs of care leavers. These include education programmes in schools, targeted housing options advice for care leavers and support for young people experiencing homelessness.

In terms of supporting older people to live in good health, the LHS has set out a specific aim to ensure that ‘people across South Ayrshire have access to housing related support that helps them to live as independently as possible’. Actions supporting this include our accessible and flexible approach to development, the provision of aids and adaptations to help people live independently in their own homes and making sure appropriate advice and support are available to older people about their housing options.

South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership

The Health and Social Care Integration Partnership – in partnership with the Housing Policy and Strategy Team – recently set out housing’s contribution to advancing the wellbeing of people in South Ayrshire in its Full Strategic Plan for 2015-18⁷:

⁷ South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (2015) ‘Full Strategic Plan 2015-18’

“Having a suitable and affordable place to stay is at the very core of addressing an individual’s health and social care needs and in meeting one of the National Outcomes for Health & Social Care regarding ‘Independent Living’ – namely that ‘people, including those with disabilities, long-term conditions, or who are frail, are able to live, as far as reasonably practicable, independently and at home or in a homely setting in their community’.

Housing providers, and those who provide housing services, will be key partners in the provision of health and social care services and in meeting the needs of individuals and families within our communities. Therefore, they will be key to this Strategic Planning process and will be part of the membership of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group.”

(South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Integration Partnership Full Strategic Plan 2015-2018)

This LHS confirms our commitment to working with our Health and Social Care partners to improve health outcomes and support independent living locally.

Housing and Facilities Service and Improvement Plan 2015-18

Our LHS reflects the aims and objectives of the Housing and Facilities Service and Improvement Plan, and articulates an action plan for achieving improvement in a variety of areas across the Housing Service.

Local Development Plan

The LHS uses the HNDA to set a Housing Supply Target. This is the same evidence base as the Local Development Plan (LDP), and this LHS has been developed in partnership with colleagues in planning to lay out a common direction of travel.

The LDP – due to be renewed in late 2018 - sets out the Council’s plan for land use, including the allocation of land for housing as required by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997.

Our LHS supports the major objectives of the LDP, including:

- **Sustainable Development:** Our LHS sets out the Council and our partners’ target to build or acquire 135 new affordable properties per year over the next five years. New build development will adhere to and support LDP policies around sustainable

development, while our work on reducing the number of Empty Homes and Buybacks will make best use of existing resources to achieve our aims while minimising environmental impact.

- **Affordable Housing:** The development of affordable housing in South Ayrshire, highlighted in our LHS, benefits from the LDP's Affordable Housing Policy. Under this policy we ask developers for a contribution of 25% of units on all developments outside of Maybole and Girvan, and 15% of units within these areas. The LHS in turn seeks to support delivery of this LDP objective in the future, by developing procedures to support discussion between private and public partners.
- **Town Centres:** Our LDP set out a commitment to support the development and regeneration of our Town Centres. This regeneration will broadly be achieved through Ayr Renaissance LLP and the Maybole Regeneration Project, however the LHS supports these aims in general by providing support to owners of private properties through our Scheme of Assistance, as well as development in urban locations where appropriate.

Housing Need and Demand in South Ayrshire

Councils in Scotland are required to carry out a regular assessment of housing in their local authority area. This is called the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (or HNDA) and it is used to inform our plan for housing (the Local Housing Strategy), and our plans for development in the area the Local Development Plan. South Ayrshire Council's HNDA was completed in 2015 and covers the period 2015-2020.

Housing Market Areas (HMAs)

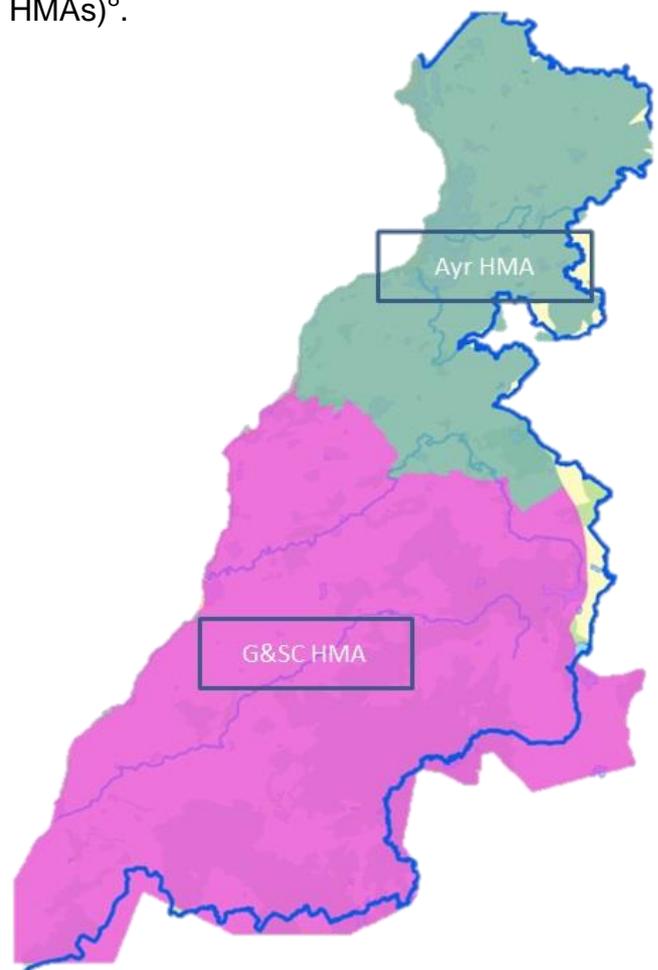
In order to think about how people in South Ayrshire access housing, we've divided the area into two 'sub-Housing Market Areas' (sub-HMAs)⁸.

AYR URBAN HMA

- Encompassing Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and the Rural North villages
- Approximately 49,000 dwellings.
- 81% of dwellings in private-ownership⁹
- Highest demand for affordable housing in Prestwick and Troon.
- A higher proportion of smaller dwellings

GIRVAN & SOUTH CARRICK HMA

- Encompassing Girvan and the Rural South villages.
- Approximately 5,800 dwellings
- 78% of dwellings in private-ownership
- More manageable demand for affordable housing.
- Higher proportion of households overcrowded than Ayr Urban HMA.



⁸Based on Newhaven Research (2007)

⁹APT (2013) Tenure Estimates Table 1 These are estimates and should be considered as indicative of trends rather than a definitive count

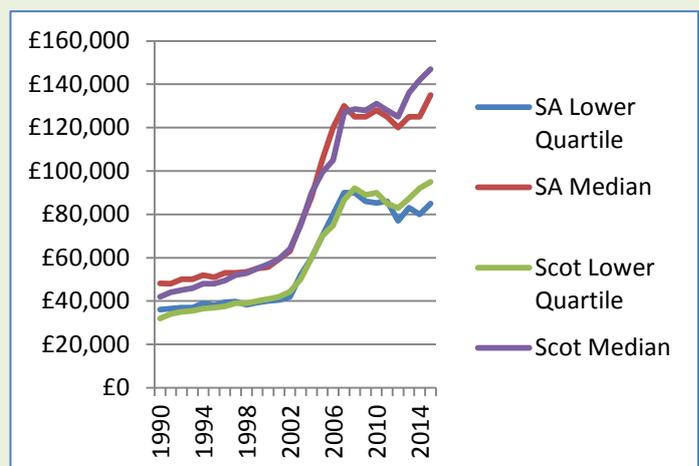
Housing Profile

Tenure

- Recent estimates¹⁰ demonstrate that owner-occupation remains the primary tenure in South Ayrshire, representing almost 63% of dwellings. This is higher than the Scottish average of 58%.
- The Social Rented Sector is the next most common tenure, accommodating almost 20% of households in South Ayrshire. The majority of these dwellings (15%) are provided by the local authority, but a number of housing associations make a small but significant contribution, accounting for 4% of all dwellings.
- As with elsewhere in Scotland, the Private Rented Sector has seen a resurgence in recent years, accommodating almost 10% of households in South Ayrshire.
- In addition, 3% of dwellings in South Ayrshire were estimated to be currently vacant, long-term empty or second homes.

House Sales

- As can be seen in the table¹¹, house prices in South Ayrshire stayed relatively stable during the 1990s, before house prices began to climb rapidly from 2003 onwards. This is in line with changes throughout the rest of Scotland.
- Prices have fluctuated since 2007, with median and lower quartile house prices increasing and decreasing in both South Ayrshire and for Scotland as a whole.
- Analysis suggests that house prices in South Ayrshire could flatten out or increase modestly in the years to come.
- Analysis of Sasines data also shows that around 20 percent of purchasers originate from outwith South Ayrshire, highlighting that demand for housing in South Ayrshire is not restricted to households already in South Ayrshire.



¹⁰ Housing Statistics for Scotland (2016) *Stock Estimates by Tenure*. Available at <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/KeyInfoTables>

¹¹ Analysis based on Sasines data published by the Register of Scotland (RoS) House prices South Ayrshire and Scotland (Excludes sales below £25,000 and over £1,000,000).

Affordability

- While house prices have fallen in recent years, affordability still remains an issue for less affluent households in South Ayrshire.
- By looking at house prices, incomes and likely mortgage conditions, our HNDA estimated that a considerable proportion of South Ayrshire households would not be able to meet their housing needs through buying a home.
- This was found to be the case for almost 59% of households in South Ayrshire as a whole. Issues of affordability were more pronounced in the South of the area, with 62.2% of households in Girvan and South Carrick HMA being unable to meet these criteria. Conversely, only around 43% of households in the Rural North and Maybole areas failed to meet affordability criteria.

New Build Rates

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Private Sector	195	142	125	115	231	N/A
Local Authority	68	0	34	7	58	57
Housing Association	99	14	50	0	0	94

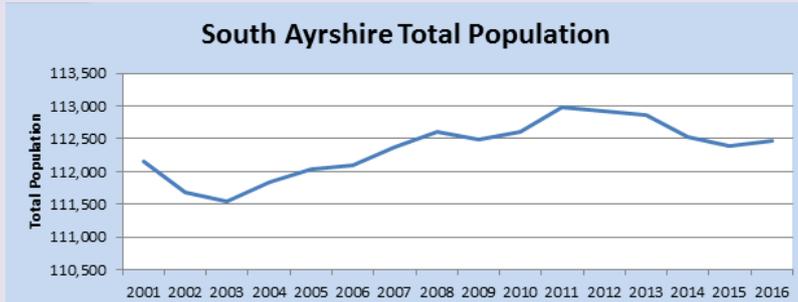
- Over the last five years, new build completions in South Ayrshire have fluctuated in both the private and social sectors¹². Private sector completions, for instance, reduced between 2012-13 and 2014-15, but increased significantly in 2015-16.
- Social sector development tends to depend on both the availability of grant funding and private development, and as such this has also fluctuated in line with these factors. The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Supply programme has resulted in the completion of more than 150 affordable units during 2016-17.

¹² Housing Statistics for Scotland: New House Building (2016-17), data available from <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Housing-Regeneration/HSfS/NewBuild>

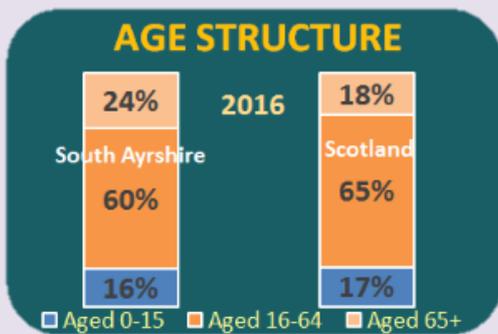
Household Profile¹³

Population

South Ayrshire’s population is estimated to be 112,470 as at 2016. While the population has reduced from a peak of 113,000 between 2011 and 2014 this figure



has remained broadly stable in recent years, showing a slight increase of 0.1% (70 people) between 2015 and 2016.



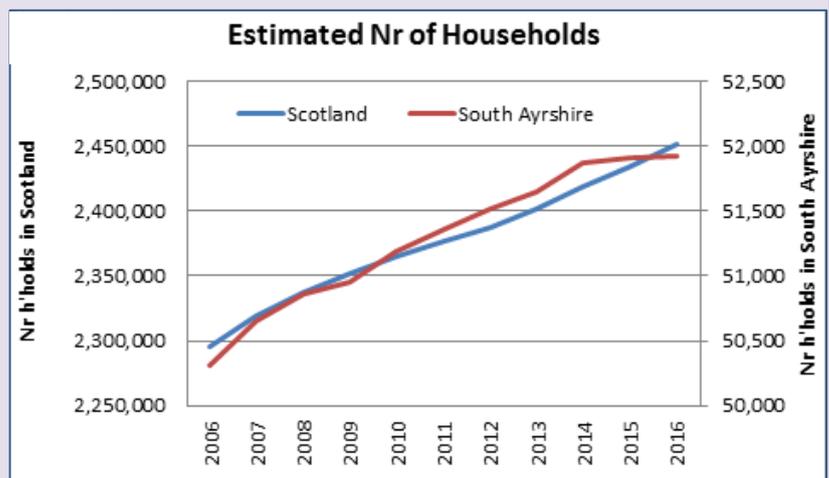
- South Ayrshire’s population is split 52% female to 48% male, while age distributions show that the proportion of our population aged under 16 and those aged 16-64 are both below the Scottish average for these age groups.

- A relatively small proportion (1.4%) of South Ayrshire’s population belong to a Black and Minority

Ethnic (BME) group. This is in contrast to 4.1% of the population of Scotland as a whole.

Households

There are estimated to be 51,923 households in South Ayrshire. As with the rest of Scotland, the overall number of households in South Ayrshire has increased over the last 10 years (an increase of 3.2%), but has increased less than most other



authorities and in comparison to the Scottish average (6.8%).

¹³ National Registers of Scotland 2016 estimates

Population Projections

South Ayrshire's population is projected to decrease over the next 25 years, with the most recent estimates indicating a 2% decrease between 2014 and 2039. This is in contrast to an overall increase for Scotland as a whole of 7%. This projected population decrease is not evenly spread across different age groups. Recent estimates have suggested that by 2039:

- South Ayrshire's population aged under 16 is projected to decrease by 7%.
- South Ayrshire's working age population is projected to decrease by 11%.
- South Ayrshire's pensionable age population is projected to increase by 21%.

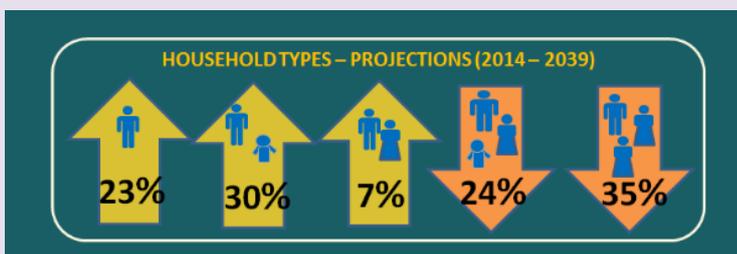
As a result, an estimated 32% of South Ayrshire's population is projected to be of pensionable age by 2039. In addition, the number of people aged 75+ in South Ayrshire is anticipated to increase by 82%, resulting in significantly increased demand for older people's services.

Household Projections

The average household size in South Ayrshire in 2016 was 2.14 people per household. This has remained the same over the last 3 years, but over the last decade this has decreased from 2.20 persons in 2006. It is anticipated that household size will continue to decrease over the next 25 years,



to 1.98 persons per household in 2039 – a decrease of 8%.



This projected trend is the result of people increasingly living alone or in smaller households. Recent estimates suggest that by 2039:

- The number of single person households will increase by 23% to represent 39% of all households.
- The number of single parent households will increase by 30% to represent 7% of all households.
- The number of two adult only households will increase by 7% to make up 34% of all households.

By contrast, the number of larger families is projected to decrease. Recent estimates suggest that:

- The number of households made up of two or more adults with children will decrease by 24% by 2039 (from 17 to 13% of all households).
- The number of households containing three or more adults without children will decrease by 35% (from 8% to 5% of all households).

Consideration of our changing demography is very important if we are to successfully plan to meet current and projected needs and demands in our local authority area.

HNDA Headlines

The key headline findings of our HNDA 2016-2020 are outlined in the section below, followed by some information from evidence and experience about how this is affecting housing locally¹⁴.

SOUTH AYRSHIRE'S POPULATION IS AGEING AND HOUSEHOLDS ARE DECREASING IN SIZE

What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- Demand outstrips supply for 1 and 2 bedroom properties. In 2015-16, we received 5 applicants for every available Council property of this size.
- There is more demand for ground level and accessible housing with 4.5 applicants for every available property.
- The cost of providing private sector disabled adaptations has increased by 23% since 2011.
- The need for Council house adaptations has also increased by 24% since 2011.
- We have seen increased demand for supported housing options within the community.
- There has been an increased demand for housing support and advice services to help older people repair and maintain their homes. The Care and Repair service received 949 requests for assistance during the financial year 2015/16.
- The number of priority re-housing cases due to community care needs has doubled in the last 5 years.



¹⁴ Our full HNDA is available to download from <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/hnda-2016-2020.aspx>

THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS UNAFFORDABLE FOR MANY PEOPLE, PLACING INCREASED PRESSURE ON THE SOCIAL RENTED SECTOR

What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- Almost 60% of our residents are unable to purchase property on the open market.
- The Private Rented Sector (PRS) is unaffordable for many households in receipt of Local Housing Allowance (LHA), with gaps between LHA and actual rents locally.
- 16-25 year olds are consistently over-represented in homeless applications, and 38% of homeless applicants in 2015-16 were in this age group.
- The majority of homeless applications come from single people – 69% in 2015-16.
- Because of changes brought in by Welfare Reform, the housing options available to young people and single people are more limited, particularly in the private sector.

HOMELESSNESS HAS REDUCED BUT MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL LIVING IN UNSUITABLE HOUSING CONDITIONS

What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- Housing options advice and homelessness prevention approaches have led to reductions in homeless applications by 22% since 2011.
- In total, 1,465 Housing Options interviews took place in 2015/16, up from 1,035 in 2014/15.
- Each year South Ayrshire Council receives approximately 3,200 new applications for rehousing.
- The 2011 Census found 384 'concealed households' - people meeting their housing needs by sharing with friends or family
- In 2016 almost 10% of applicants – transfer and waiting list - were living in overcrowded conditions (255 out of 2,579 live applications).
- This suggests there are still significant unmet housing needs locally.



MANY HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS STRUGGLE TO SUSTAIN HOUSING AS A RESULT OF WIDER SUPPORT AND HEALTH NEEDS

What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- Repeat homeless applications have increased from 6% of applications in 2011-12 to more than 11% in 2015-16.
- Almost 19% of tenancies allocated to homeless households are not sustained for more than a year.
- A high proportion of households presenting as homeless who receive a support assessment have mental health (55%) or addiction issues (25%).

A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES FALL BELOW THE TOLERABLE STANDARD, BUT DISREPAIR IS PREVALENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR



What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- Only 267 properties – 0.5% of all dwellings in South Ayrshire - were assessed as Below Tolerable Standard as at March 2016.
 - The vast majority of these were in private ownership. 46% of BTS properties (124) were owner occupied, 33% (88) were in the private rented sector and 5% (14) properties were vacant. The tenures of the remaining 39 properties were unknown.
- Separate estimates – informed by the Scottish House Condition Survey 2012-14 - tell us that 37% of owner-occupied housing in South Ayrshire is estimated to be in 'urgent' disrepair.
 - From our experience, it is clear that many property owners do not set funds aside for ongoing repairs and maintenance.

- As a result there is an increased pressure on the Council to assist owners with repair work.
- Improvements to social housing stock can also be held back due to a difficulty in progressing repairs in mixed tenure blocks.
- As at 31 March 2016, 190 properties (84% of all exemptions and abeyances) were unable to meet the SHQS due to common repairs being held up by private owners in mixed tenure blocks.
- There are a number of specific localities with concentrations of privately owned housing in poor condition, such as Ayr town centre.
- There is an identified need to provide more advice and support to private landlords, to ensure their properties meet required standards. Recent estimates suggest more than 60% of properties in South Ayrshire's PRS are in urgent disrepair.

ALL APPLICABLE SOCIAL RENTED HOUSING IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE MEETS THE SCOTTISH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD, HOWEVER A PROPORTION OF TENANTS ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY OF THEIR HOME



What does this mean in practice?

- 98% of SAC properties met the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) at 31 March 2016.
- The remaining 2% (225 properties) were either classed as exempt or held in abeyance.
- 207 of those 225 properties (92%) were classed as in abeyance as a result of non-engagement of private owners in mixed tenure blocks or due to the tenant's personal circumstances (such as serious ill-health).
- A further 18 properties were exempt from the SHQS due to the disproportionate cost of bringing them up to the standard.
- While social rented properties in South Ayrshire are of a good standard, about a quarter (26%) of tenants noted that they were dissatisfied with the condition of their property at the start of their tenancy in 2015/16.
- Our 2015 Comprehensive Tenants' Survey tells us that 84% of our tenants are satisfied with their home, but 22% had issues with the age or quality of their windows whilst 13% would like to see dampness and condensation tackled.

THERE ARE SPECIFIC HOUSING NEEDS IN RURAL AREAS WHICH REQUIRE A TARGETED RESPONSE, INCLUDING BETTER USE OF EXISTING HOUSING AS WELL AS NEW SUPPLY

What impact is this having on housing and related services?

- A higher proportion (7.8%) of households are overcrowded in the Girvan and South Carrick Housing Market Area. This is lower than the Scottish average of 9% but more than in the Ayr Urban HMA (6.5%).
- Demand for available social rented housing is lowest in Girvan and Maybole.
- 70% of households in our rural areas are under-occupied.
- Despite this, overcrowding is most prevalent in these areas, suggesting there are many concealed households whose needs aren't being met by existing provision in these areas.
- There is therefore a need to carry out an in-depth review of the specific housing needs of our rural communities.
- Difficulties accessing essential amenities and services in rural locations can also affect housing demand in these areas.
- Infrastructure requirements to support new housing development can increase the cost and limit the viability of development in rural areas.
- There is a limited supply of suitable housing in Rural South, particularly specialist provision.
- Comparing supply of housing to demand, the Rural North and Rural South lettings areas received approximately 8 applicants and 5 applicants respectively for every let in 2014/15.
- This demand tends to be due to the changing needs of existing households rather than new households coming into these localities.

Developing our Strategy in Partnership

Consultation – finding out what YOU think

We wanted to be sure that our new strategy reflected the thoughts and opinions of local people throughout South Ayrshire, and addressed the issues that they felt were most important to them in housing and neighbourhoods. Over the last year, South Ayrshire Council has worked with people from a wide range of backgrounds to identify key housing issues to be addressed in our Strategy. This involved considerable consultation with the community, including;

- **11 local discussion sessions**, held in Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and Girvan.
- **An online survey** distributed throughout South Ayrshire.
- **4 discussion sessions with Sheltered Housing tenants** in Ayr, Troon and Maybole.
- **2 discussion sessions with people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction** in Ayr and Troon.
- **1 discussion session with people living in temporary accommodation.**
- **A Pop-up Consultation and Information Stall** at a number of Community events, including Community Fun Days, a Private Rented Sector landlord information event, the South Ayrshire Youth Conference and a number of Participatory Budgeting Events.



Our local discussion sessions were public events and were advertised throughout South Ayrshire. We invited tenants (both public and private), owner-occupiers, Private Rented Sector landlords and community groups to be involved, and invitations were also sent to local and national organisations representing the interests of equalities groups. In order to support participation as far as possible, we also offered to visit groups if this was preferable to attending an event, as well as offering people the option of giving their views using an online survey, by email or by telephone.



Our continued day-to-day engagement with our customers and communities has also influenced the actions to be delivered through the LHS. This was particularly the case with South Ayrshire’s Gypsy/Traveller population whose views have been integral in influencing the design of a new site currently being developed to meet their needs. More information on this is provided later in the

LHS.

More than 300 people participated in our initial Consultation period.

Steering Groups

To turn the views given at Consultation into agreed actions, we established three steering groups made up of representatives from a wide range of local and national partner organisations, each focusing on one of the following themes:



- **Housing Supply** covering housing development, regeneration, temporary accommodation and housing to meet a variety of needs.
- **Access, Advice and Support** covering Housing Options, homelessness prevention, housing support and independent living;
- **Housing Quality and Neighbourhoods** looking at property condition in the social and private sectors, regulation of the PRS, anti-social behaviour, neighbourhoods and community participation.

70 individuals – representing 37 local and national organisations and services – were involved in our Steering Groups. A list of these stakeholders is provided at Appendix 2.

From challenges to action...

These groups played a key role in guiding the direction of the LHS, using evidence from the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), feedback from public consultation and their own experience of providing services to establish agreed outcomes, and produce an action plan to achieve these. This collaborative approach was chosen as it was felt this would allow as many stakeholders as possible to work together and have a real, tangible involvement in the development of the LHS.

Taking the outcomes of the previous LHS and the findings of the HNDA as our starting point, a revised set of overarching aims and outcomes were developed and these were presented to our first steering group meetings in October 2015.

The Steering Groups commented on these aims, and these were adapted to reflect shared goals and priorities.

During the 'Options Appraisal' stage the steering groups considered:

- Can we deliver this action within the lifespan of the LHS?
- Will this action help us to achieve our outcomes?
- Will we be making best use of resources if we implement the action?



Identifying Challenges –
using HNDA Evidence and
The Views of Local People

Agreeing Outcomes

Generating Actions

Appraising Actions

Our Action Plan for Housing

Options Generation and Appraisal

Following on from the extensive consultation sessions held between November 2015 and February 2016, the Steering Groups reconvened to hear feedback from these sessions.

Consultation feedback from all the sessions and the online survey were collected together and presented to the groups, who used these views to develop 'Actions' which would help us to achieve our shared Outcomes.

An 'Options Appraisal' process was carried out by the Steering Groups, reviewing each of the suggested actions using an Options Appraisal tool. This approach was taken to make sure that consultation with both the public and stakeholders would have a real impact on the actions chosen to achieve each outcome. Stakeholders were able to advise on their experience of particular issues, resulting in actions which are more likely to help us meet the goals we have set¹⁵.

An Equalities Review Group was also established, involving local stakeholders and representatives of South Ayrshire's communities. This group reviewed the LHS action plan and made suggestions on additional considerations which should be taken into account at implementation.

¹⁵ Reports from the Options Appraisal process are available at <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/>

Our Agreed Outcomes, 2017-2022

Following on from these discussions, the Steering Groups agreed on the following overarching outcomes:

HOUSING SUPPLY	
<p>“People across South Ayrshire can find a suitable place to stay”</p>	<p>HS1: 135 units of affordable housing will be built or acquired per year to meet local housing needs</p>
	<p>HS2: A sufficient and flexible supply of temporary accommodation is available to meet the needs of homeless households.</p>
	<p>HS3: There is an adequate supply of housing across South Ayrshire to meet a variety of needs.</p>
	<p>HS4: The existing housing stock across South Ayrshire is used effectively to meet local housing needs.</p>

ACCESS, ADVICE AND SUPPORT	
<p>“Homelessness is prevented where possible, and suitable accommodation, advice and support are available where it cannot be avoided”</p>	<p>AAS1: People across South Ayrshire can access good quality, accredited housing advice.</p>
	<p>AAS2: Service Improvement and development in the Private Rented Sector is supported and the sector is regulated appropriately.</p>
	<p>AAS3: Those at risk of homelessness can access effective prevention measures and support.</p>
	<p>AAS4: Health and Social Care services are available to homeless and potentially homeless households.</p>
	<p>AAS5: The provisions of the national homelessness agenda are implemented within South Ayrshire.</p>
<p>“People across South Ayrshire are able to access advice and support that helps them to meet their housing needs and aspirations”</p>	<p>AAS6: People in South Ayrshire can access good quality, accredited housing advice at any stage of their life.</p>
	<p>AAS7: People across South Ayrshire have access to housing related support that helps them to live as independently as possible.</p>
	<p>AAS8: Housing Options advice effectively supports people to access suitable and affordable accommodation.</p>

HOUSING QUALITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

“People across South Ayrshire live in well-maintained, energy efficient homes and are proud of their neighbourhoods”

HQN1: South Ayrshire’s social housing stock continues to meet the local and national property condition standards.

HQN2: Properties in the Private Rented Sector meet the Repairing Standard.

HQN3: Home owners, landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to property condition and are supported to uphold them.

HQN4: Advice is available to help households reduce the risk of fuel poverty, and people across South Ayrshire are aware of how to access assistance.

HQN5: People across South Ayrshire live in safe, clean and sustainable neighbourhoods

HQN6: People across South Ayrshire have the opportunity to have their say on issues affecting their communities.

Housing Supply



Our first LHS theme is Housing Supply. This theme relates to a variety of issues, including new-build housing development, regeneration, the supply of temporary accommodation and housing to meet a variety of needs.

This theme is about making sure that new build development that meets local needs is supported as far as possible, and that existing housing stock – whether public or

private – is used as efficiently as possible. This section will discuss;

- Setting Housing Supply Targets
- Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Development
- Ensuring a flexible supply of temporary accommodation
- Making best use of existing stock

What have we achieved in the last 5 years?

Since the last Local Housing Strategy, we have:

- Developed 399 affordable housing units in partnership with social and private partners.
- 205 new Council homes built.
- Reviewed our affordable housing policy to support delivery.
- Carried out a review of Housing Options for Older People which informed our Strategy.
- Reviewed possible Gypsy/Traveller transit sites but no site has yet been established.
- Supported interim accommodation was established to support homeless households transitioning to secure accommodation.
- 64 long-term Empty Homes brought back into use since 2011.

- 30 properties purchased for use as temporary accommodation through a bulk leasing scheme since 2014/15.
- Regeneration projects taken forward by Ayr Renaissance, including the Ayr Townscape Heritage initiative, Ayr Town Centre Management and the forthcoming “Meal Market” development.

What do we want to achieve in the next 5 years?

Giving consideration to HNDAs evidence, local people’s views as well as various local housing market factors, the Housing Supply steering group agreed the following overarching priority:

People across South Ayrshire can find a suitable place to stay.

In order to achieve this overarching priority, we have established a number of key supporting outcomes that we and our partners wish to deliver over the next five years.

- 135 units of affordable housing are built or acquired per year to meet need
- A sufficient and flexible supply of temporary accommodation is available to meet the needs of homeless households.
- There is an adequate supply of housing across South Ayrshire to meet a variety of needs.
- The existing housing stock across South Ayrshire is used effectively to meet local housing needs.

How do we currently facilitate housing supply and place-making?



Affordable Housing Policy

One of the ways the Council addresses affordable housing need is through a planning policy framework which seeks a contribution of 25% for all private housing developments of 15 units or more, or equal to or larger than 0.6 hectares. It is the Council's stated preference that affordable housing contributions be made

on site, in whole or in part. Where an onsite contribution is not possible there are other flexible alternatives:

- The delivery of unsubsidised affordable housing units on site.
- Payment of a commuted sum in lieu of on-site affordable housing.
- Provision of a plot on off-site land.

A joint approach is taken to implementing the policy between dedicated officers across Housing, Planning and Legal services in partnership with the private developer and Housing Association partners. All parties work together to achieve the ultimate aim of onsite provision.

Council House Development

The Local Authority has embarked on an ambitious development programme since 2011. This development has been supported by establishing a 4 year contractual framework with a single contractor with sole responsibility for the design and delivery of all new council houses. This has helped to streamline the development process and achieve significant efficiencies and cost savings.



Scottish Government Support

In 2016 the Scottish Government announced the More Homes Scotland initiative, a national programme with a target of supporting the delivery of 50,000 affordable homes over the next 5 years. This is accompanied by increased subsidy levels and a new



Rural Housing Fund to increase the supply of affordable rural housing. Our Council house building programme – as well as our strategic acquisitions and buybacks - receive support through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme

Housing Associations

Local RSLs have historically been central partners in the delivery of affordable housing in South Ayrshire. Reduction in HAG and fewer private development opportunities, as a result of the national slow-down in house building, saw a corresponding reduction in the rate of RSL completions in recent years.

Recent enhanced subsidy levels and an upturn in private sector house building should deliver increased opportunities for RSLs to re-invigorate their development programme, and support the delivery of new affordable housing for rent.

Council land acquisition and disposal policy

The Council's revised Policy for the Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings allows for property to be identified as surplus to requirements where the site has been identified as being suitable for affordable housing. As such, the Leadership Panel may take the decision to dispose of the property, via an internal transfer to Housing Services or disposal to a Housing Association, for the purposes of affordable housing development.

Acquisitions and Buy backs

In recent years South Ayrshire Council has been also able to use Scottish Government subsidy to purchase second hand properties on the open market. The Council has focussed on securing properties that are of strategic importance, for

example flats which would give the Council 100% ownership of a block, and properties in high demand areas. Government subsidy of £40,000 is provided per purchase and the Council's Housing Revenue Account funds the remainder. Once purchased, the properties are rented by the Council as mainstream council housing.

Empty Homes Strategy

The supply of affordable accommodation is also supported by our Empty Homes Strategy. This strategy dedicates resources to finding and encouraging owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into effective use. Support can include advice and assistance, facilitating discounts and providing financial help in the form of an interest-free loan.

Town Centres and Regeneration

South Ayrshire's five main towns – Ayr, Prestwick, Troon, Maybole and Girvan – all have a similar nature in that each has a 'core' town centre – mainly providing retail – and 'peripheral' areas – generally for residential use. Town Centres play a key role in South Ayrshire's economy, with local and national retail stores within the area's historic townscapes. Away from the town centres, retail uses gradually give way to residential accommodation.

South Ayrshire Council works in close partnership with Ayr Renaissance LLP, a wholly-owned subsidiary vehicle created to deliver the regeneration of Ayr town centre. The Council provides ongoing financial support and maintains strong links with the subsidiary. Elected Members and senior officers are represented on the board of directors. Recent projects include:

- **Ayr Townscape Heritage Initiative:** This project sought to improve a number of prominent, priority villages in the high street.
- **Ayr Heritage Trail:** This project seeks to highlight the town's heritable assets through cultural events and attractions such as listening stations.
- **The Meal Market:** This Scottish Government-funded project will regenerate a prominent building in Ayr town centre which has lain empty for almost ten years.

Housing can contribute to town centre regeneration by improving property condition across the tenures through our Scheme of Assistance, Empty Homes Initiative and

Capital Programme. Town centre regeneration may also be supported by new build development where appropriate. Our Housing Capital Programme, for instance, has recently supported the regeneration of the Lochside and Braehead areas of Ayr through the development of 102 new, affordable homes for rent and sale.

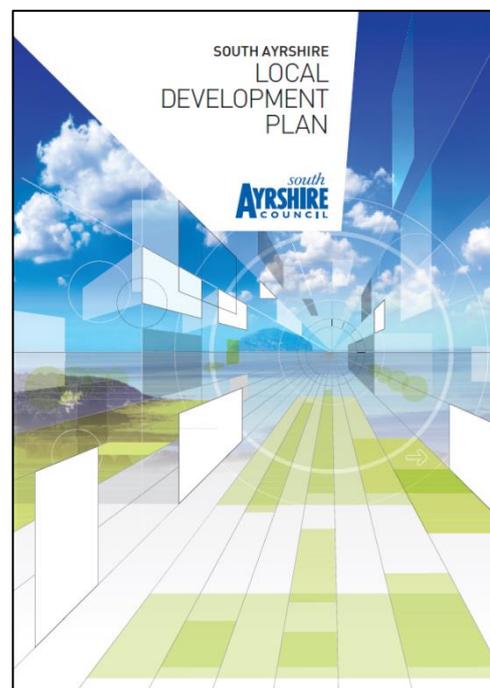
Planning is also underway to deliver a £6m regeneration of Maybole town centre, being carried out ahead of the new bypass, due for completion in 2020. This project is being taken forward by Maybole Community Council with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

LDP and Planning Policy

Sustainable Communities

South Ayrshire Council is committed to supporting the development and maintenance of sustainable communities. Informed by the principles of the Scottish Government policies “Designing Streets” and “Creating Places”, South Ayrshire’s Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out guidance on sustainable development.

This guidance seeks to ensure that critical issues for building sustainable communities, such as accessibility, site layout, building design, landscaping and boundaries are considered at the design stage and that design of housing developments recognises the locality of the site.



Town Centre First

In line with the Scottish Government's Town Centre First Principle, South Ayrshire Council will make the health of town centres a priority in its decision-making, seeking to deliver the best local outcomes by directing investment and targeting available resources to priority town centre sites.

We will encourage public and private sector development proposals in town centres and direct development proposals to appropriate locations in town centres before considering other locations.

Network of Centres and Sequential Approach

A network of centres approach will also be taken in conjunction with a sequential approach in guiding new retail and commercial leisure development. More detail on this is provided in our LDP.

Rural Housing

South Ayrshire Council's LDP (2014) notes that we will give support to "development in rural areas which supports prosperous and sustainable communities while protecting and improving the environment". Housing development outside existing developments should primarily involve:

- reusing existing buildings and replacement housing,
- infill development within existing clusters or groups of housing, and
- housing to meet rural business requirements.

Developments in rural areas which add to an existing cluster should be sympathetic to its character and landscape setting and reflect this in design.

Self-build/Custom Build

South Ayrshire Council has no specific policy relating to self-build and custom build but the same general residential criteria and guiding principles identified in the LDP (particularly policies on 'Sustainable Development' and 'Residential Policy within Settlements') will apply to self-build and custom build projects. It is acknowledged, however, that self-build and custom-build developments could help increase housing supply locally and may help meet housing need as households build properties which meet their own specific needs and preferences.

What are the current Housing Needs across South Ayrshire?

South Ayrshire Council completed our Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) in 2015¹⁶. This analysis of local needs determined that, in order to meet existing and emerging needs, over the next five years South Ayrshire would require:



- Between 506 and 594 additional units in the social rented sector for affordable rent.
- Between 215 and 233 additional units in the mid-market rented sector.
- Between 768 and 838 additional units in the private sector (for owner-occupation and private renting).

The majority of these new units are required in the Ayr Urban HMA, but there is still clear necessity for increased housing supply across the tenures to meet the needs of those seeking accommodation in the South of the area.

An estimate of the need for new accommodation units, as per our recent HNDA is provided below.

	Social Rented	Mid-Market Rented	Private Sector
Ayr Urban HMA	450-528 units	187-206 units	696-756 units
Girvan & SC HMA	55-66 units	26-28 units	72-82 units

¹⁶ South Ayrshire Council HNDA (2015). Available at <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/hnda-2016-2020.aspx>

Available at <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/hnda-2016-2020.aspx>

Key issues – Private Sector Housing Supply

- There is a need, in very specific areas, for mid-market rent and low cost home ownership housing options.
- In the private rented sector Local Housing Allowance rates do not cover the average median rent across all property size.
- Approximately 59% of all households in South Ayrshire cannot afford to purchase property on the open market.
- There is a very active market for properties below £125,000 in and around central Ayr and its suburbs.
- Very active market for properties between £125k and £250k from two income households.
- Much less demand for 'higher value' properties over £250,000 beyond small pockets, such as Troon and Doonfoot.

Key issues – Rural Housing

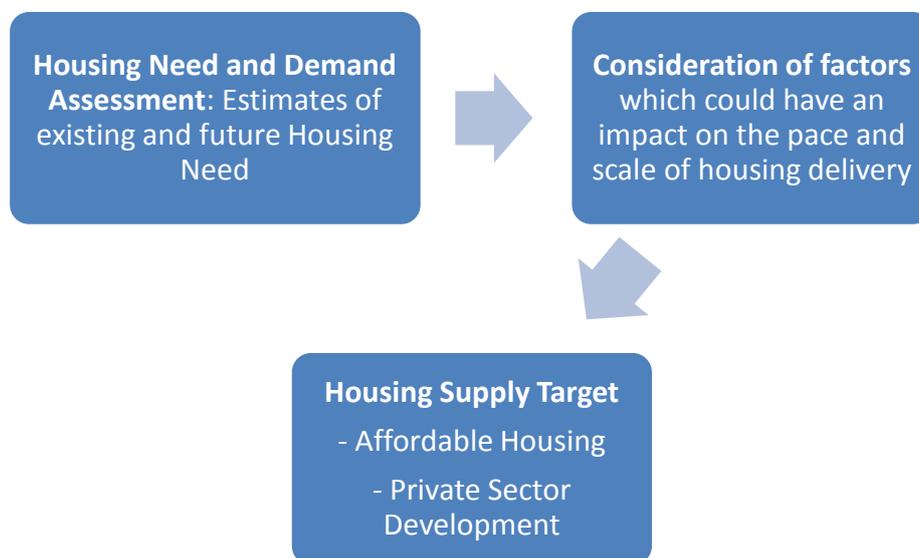
- 28% (or 32,000 people) - of South Ayrshire's population lives in rural locations¹⁷.
- While demand for affordable housing is lower in the rural areas of South Ayrshire, there is clearly considerable unmet need, evidenced by issues of overcrowding.
- This is the result of the more restricted availability of suitable, good quality and affordable accommodation.
- The particular housing needs affecting the Girvan and South Carrick HMA have been considered in the calculation of our Housing Supply Targets. Moving forward, however, we fully recognise that a more in-depth review of housing needs in the Rural localities within South Ayrshire is required to inform. Our LHS has set this as a key action for the next five years.
- As much affordable housing development results from private development, we will seek to stimulate private sector development in rural areas by considering offering small 'packages' of land across multiple sites to make projects more viable.

¹⁷South Ayrshire Citizens' Panel (SA1000) Quality of Life Survey 2012

Setting Housing Supply Targets

A Housing Supply Group was established as part of the Local Housing Strategy development process, comprising a range of stakeholders and interested parties. This included representatives from South Ayrshire Council departments (including Housing Policy and Strategy, Housing Operations, Planning and estates), local Registered Social Landlords, private developers, surveyors, the local Regeneration initiative and the Scottish Government.

The group had responsibility for developing a Housing Supply target. This involved the consideration of a range of issues, as identified in the diagram below;



The group considered the following issues during these discussions;

- Estimates of Additional Future Housing Need provided by the Housing need and Demand Assessment
- The recent and projected pace of private housing development.
- Capacity of the Council and local RSL partners to build new affordable homes within current business plans.
- The capacity of local contractors to develop.
- Projected land release through the Local Development Plan.
- Infrastructure requirements of new housing development.
- Current and projected land values.
- Socio-economic factors likely to impact on development in the social and private sectors.

As it is unlikely that mid-market renting (MMR) options will be developed in South Ayrshire given the limited demand for this, the identified need for MMR highlighted in the HNDA has been counted as need for affordable housing.

The estimate of additional housing units in the HNDA was developed using the Centre for Housing Market Analysis' HNDA Tool, testing a number of scenarios and taking into account a range of factors, including population projections, existing need, prices and affordability and other housing market factors. More detail on this process is available on the HNDA page of the Council's website¹⁸.

Taking these factors into account, the group considered three possible overall targets additional affordable housing units. These were;

- 100 units per year for the next five years across South Ayrshire;
- 135 units per year for the next five years across South Ayrshire (based on lower estimate provided by HNDA);
- 150 units per year for the next five years across South Ayrshire (based on higher estimate provided by HNDA).

The group felt that the target of 150 units per year would be very difficult to achieve, given current capacity in the private and social sectors, and that as development would to a large extent rely on private sector development (and the Section 75 arrangements in place) this was a target it would be difficult to achieve. The target of 100 units would be more achievable, but this would not meet the need identified in the HNDA. The group agreed that an aspirational target of 135 additional units of affordable housing per year should be set, as this would both reflect the need identified in the HNDA and offer an achievable target to work towards¹⁹.

This target was split between the Ayr Urban and Girvan and South Carrick HMAs with reference to the split used in the HNDA²⁰. The target for new private sector housing was set based on the figures provided by the HNDA.

¹⁸ <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/hnda-2016-2020.aspx>

¹⁹ A record of this decision-making process is available at <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/documents/Housing%20Supply%20Options%20Appraisal%20Proceedings%20note.pdf>

²⁰ The HNDA estimated that 11.3% of additional units should be in Girvan and South Carrick HMA. Applying this to the Housing Supply Target gave a total of 76 units for the G&SC HMA, which was rounded up to 80 additional units over 5 years.

- **675 units of affordable housing are built or acquired to meet need by 2022. This is comprised of a target of;**
 - 595 units in Ayr Urban HMA
 - 80 units in Girvan and South Carrick HMA
- **Between 768 and 838 units of private sector housing built to meet need by 2022. This is comprised of;**
 - Between 696 and 756 units in Ayr Urban HMA
 - Between 72 and 82 units in Girvan and South Carrick HMA.

Investment in Affordable Housing

South Ayrshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) shows how affordable housing investment priorities identified within the Local Housing Strategy are to be delivered in practice. The most recent SHIP identified investment for the period 2017-2022. A Resource Planning Assumption (RPA) for 2016/17 of £7,343,000 was used, with RPAs for subsequent years set as follows;

- 2017/18 £5,874,000
- 2018/19 £4,406,000
- 2019/20 £2,937,000
- 2020/21 £2,937,000²¹
- 2021/22 £2,937,000

This equates to £19,091,000 over the five year period. Funding from 2nd Home Council Tax and Commuted Sums under Section 75 arrangements will also be used to support new build development.

In line with its commitment to building 50,000 homes, the Scottish Government has increased the RPAs significantly from 2017/18 on. As such RPAs are as follows;

- 2018/19 £10,503,000
- 2019/20 £11,833,000
- 2020/21 £12,680,000
- 2021/22 £12,680,000²²
- 2022/23 £12,680,000

²¹ As per SG SHIP Guidance (July 2016) "For working purposes the RPA notified to you for 2019-20 should be used as the basis for the projects detailed in the SHIP for 2020/21 and 2021/22."

²² As per SG SHIP Guidance (July 2016) "For working purposes the RPA notified to you for 2019-20 should be used as the basis for the projects detailed in the SHIP for 2020/21 and 2021/22."

This funding will be (and is currently being) used to support the delivery of additional affordable housing in South Ayrshire, and will include new build development and second-hand market purchases. New build development and second hand purchases will be undertaken by both South Ayrshire Council and RSL partners, with prospective projects being taken forward by;

- Ayrshire Housing
- Hanover Housing
- West of Scotland Housing Association

RSLs are anticipated to develop just under half of the units on prospective sites identified in the SHIP.

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

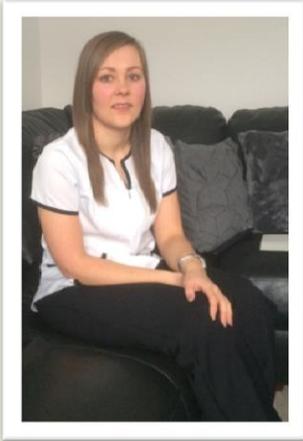
<p><i>“Ensure new-build design is desirable and practical, and design distinctions between social and private housing are removed as far as possible”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a South Ayrshire design guide setting out key requirements for affordable housing in this authority area.
<p><i>“Alternative models of affordable housing provision should be considered in order to ensure people have a range of options to buy or rent”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to explore opportunities to develop Low Cost Home Ownership and Mid-Market Renting locally.
<p><i>“Build affordable housing in areas of most demand, close to amenities and employment opportunities”.</i></p> <p><i>“The location and nature of developments should be guided by current and projected need and demand locally. High demand areas should be prioritised for future development”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our targets for Housing Supply locally have been developed using information from our recent assessment of Housing Need and Demand, determined to be robust and credible by the Scottish Government in January 2016. • This same information is used to inform our Local Development Plan, which guides affordable and private development in the area
<p><i>“Develop affordable housing in rural towns and villages in order to respond to the unmet need for housing in these areas”.</i></p> <p><i>“Development in rural towns and villages should be constrained and new development should be sympathetic to existing properties”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We intend to carry out an in-depth review of rural needs to identify specific housing issues relating to these communities. • Our LDP places requirements on developers to ensure new build projects within clusters are in-keeping with existing design.

**Achieving our Outcomes –
Housing Supply**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>To develop or acquire 135 new affordable homes per year within Business Plan and Planning service requirements.</p>	Review all council owned land, including that which is designated 'Open Space' to assess potential for residential development.
	Establish a Housing Development Forum with local RSLs to identify development opportunities.
	Increase acquisitions and buy backs in priority areas where land supply is limited.
	Review the Affordable Housing policy to ensure it maximises on site provision of affordable housing.
	Develop a 'South Ayrshire Affordable Homes Design Guide' to better inform private developers of social housing requirements.
	Consider development of low cost home ownership and mid-market rent in specific areas which demonstrates need for this.
	Develop procedures to support discussion between private developers and social landlords at pre-application stage.
	Review the calculation of commuted sums payments to ensure they can realistically facilitate affordable housing elsewhere across the LA.
	Review the Empty Homes Strategy to maximise incentives for owners to lease or sell their properties.
	Explore funding options to help private and social developers bring contaminated brownfield sites into use.
<p>Ensure new build affordable housing meets a wide variety of</p>	Work with Health and Social Partnership to identify opportunities to develop future specialist

<p>needs, including the needs of older people and people with disabilities.</p>	<p>housing provision for older people and people with disabilities.</p>
<p>To address the existing housing needs across rural communities.</p>	<p>Where possible, ensure affordable housing developments in South Ayrshire are built to a standard that can be easily adapted to meet households' changing needs.</p>
<p>To address the existing housing needs across rural communities.</p>	<p>Develop 'packages' of small gap sites across multiple rural locations, to increase overall viability of rural projects for private developers.</p>
<p>To address the existing housing needs across rural communities.</p>	<p>Introduce incentives to encourage tenants to downsize, and support self-build where appropriate</p>
<p>To address the existing housing needs across rural communities.</p>	<p>Consider an in-depth review of specific rural housing needs across the authority.</p>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR... PEOPLE APPLYING FOR HOUSING?



Kayley and her partner have recently been rehoused in South Ayrshire Council's new build housing development at Lochside in Ayr. Prior to this, the family was living in the Private Rented Sector locally. This was costing more than the couple could afford, despite both working full-time, and this led to the family giving up their house and moving in with Kayley's parents.

Soon after moving in, Kayley and her partner were contacted by South Ayrshire Council about a two bedroom property in Lochside, which at that time was nearing completion. The family promptly accepted the offer, and moved into their new home in March 2016. "In private housing, you could get a notice to quit, but this really feels like it's yours".

Overall, Kayley was delighted with her new property. "I love this house – I don't think I'll ever move!" Of particular importance to the family was the design of the house, its size and its front and back garden. The property's location was also a major advantage, as it is situated close to their friends and family, and in close proximity to town.

The properties at Lochside were built in fulfilment of our previous Local Housing Strategy (for the period 2011 to 2016). A key aspect of this development was that the houses would be built to "Housing for Varying Needs" standard – a standard designed to support people's changing needs over time. Kayley's property – like all of the houses at Lochside – has been built to be easily adapted to meet the needs of a wheelchair user, to support the installation of a downstairs shower room and to accommodate a stair lift. "These houses have been built very well, and they've been well-designed. They've thought of everything".

Our new Local Housing Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to develop more good quality, affordable housing throughout South Ayrshire, helping more people find suitable accommodation that meets their needs at a price they can afford. In addition, the LHS intends to develop an accessible design standard for affordable housing in South Ayrshire.

More generally, in conjunction with our Local Development Plan, our LHS is committed to supporting the conditions required to increase housing supply and encourage developers to invest in the area. This includes exploring low-cost homeownership and mid-market renting options, and will help people throughout South Ayrshire – whether they are looking for housing in the social or private sectors – to access the kind of housing they need.

Temporary Accommodation

South Ayrshire Council uses a variety of housing types to provide temporary accommodation to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. As at August 2016, 244 units of temporary accommodation are available in South Ayrshire for people in housing need. This is made up as follows:

Accommodation Type	Units	%
Temporary Furnished Social Housing Stock	88	36%
Council owned Hostel	49	20%
Private Sector Leasing Scheme	47	19%
Bulk Leasing Scheme	30	12%
Supported Accommodation managed by Third Sector Agencies	30	12%
TOTAL	244	100%

- Households spent an average of almost 83 days in temporary accommodation in 2015/16, an improvement on the 91 days reported in the previous year.
- Since the previous LHS, we have expanded our Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme, making use of the Private Rented Sector to offer good quality temporary accommodation.
- Despite this success, PSL is reliant on individual landlords wishing to continue to be part of the scheme.
- In order to counter this risk, we have developed a Bulk Leasing Scheme, where a single supplier provides up to 50 properties to be used as temporary accommodation for an agreed period of time (usually 10 years).
- So far 30 properties have been acquired under the Bulk Leasing arrangements.
- The current average rent for council owned temporary accommodation is £310.48 per week.
- The Council provides 49 units of hostel accommodation across three sites at an average rent level of £363.99 per week.
- Recent months have seen a higher number of temporary accommodation voids, but this situation can vary on a monthly basis. As such, there is a need to ensure the supply of temporary accommodation is flexible and sustainable.

Welfare Reform, Housing Options and Homelessness Services

Households under the age of 35

Young single people under the age of 35 are already restricted to the 'shared room rate' in the private rented sector, which reduces their options for securing and sustaining accommodation. The introduction of Universal Credit will see the shared room rate extended to Council and RSL temporary accommodation, and this group will also receive the minimum shared room rate per week for housing costs. As such, consideration will need to be given to the housing options of this group.

The scarcity of appropriately sized accommodation to meet the needs of single households will further impact on the Council's ability to discharge their homeless duty to this group. Further development of sharing schemes such as '2Share' piloted by Seascope will be a key feature of addressing homelessness for the under 35s.

Temporary Accommodation

Welfare reform and the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) could also significantly impact on the provision of temporary accommodation services for Homeless People. While there remains uncertainty on what the specific impacts, it is predicted that:

- The pressure to provide sufficient one bedroom temporary accommodation units will increase
- Temporary accommodation at current rent levels will become unaffordable under Universal Credit for many households who are benefit reliant.
- The extension of the shared room rate to Council and RSL temporary accommodation will have a particularly negative impact on homeless single people under the age of 35.
- Direct payment of the housing element of UC and the potential capping of temporary accommodation rents presents a potential financial risk.

As yet digital rollout arrangements remain unclarified and Universal Credit is yet to extend into temporary accommodation. The council has begun to look at the likely financial impact based on the current income from Housing Benefit used to fund temporary accommodation, and, in the meantime, the Scottish Government is yet to clarify its arrangements for enacting its new powers in relation to Social Security set outlined in the Scotland Act (2016).

**Achieving our outcomes –
Temporary Accommodation**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>The move to a single subsidy regime for temporary accommodation as part of new Welfare Reforms will mean council owned temporary accommodation will be unaffordable for homeless households.</p>	<p>Implement a full options Appraisal to identify how the impact of the single subsidy regime can be mitigated, including considering reconfiguration of hostels and the restructure of temporary accommodation rent levels.</p>
<p>High level of repeat homelessness.</p>	<p>Move to expand the Council’s private sector leasing scheme to place less demand on council and RSL owned temp accommodation.</p>
<p>High level of voids across temporary accommodation units in recent months.</p>	<p>Increase the range of supported interim accommodation options.</p> <p>Review the support provided across all temporary accommodation units to ensure it promotes capacity building and tenancy preparation.</p>
<p>High level of voids across temporary accommodation units in recent months.</p>	<p>Implement a detailed analysis of demand for temporary accommodation and review arrangements with providers of non-council temp accommodation accordingly.</p>

Making best use of existing stock

- In June 2016 there were a total of 494 properties receiving a discount of some sort due to non-occupancy of the dwelling, excluding second homes.
- This adds up to a significant loss of income for the Council and puts greater pressure on council services, including responding to dilapidated properties.
- 107 council-owned properties were void as at 31 March 2016, of which 7 properties had been void for more than a year.
- 136 void properties in 2015/16 were in low or zero demand properties. The 88 'no demand' properties were mostly 3 bedroom flats.
- Improved procedures and processes are now well established in our operational teams with well-established links between housing and property maintenance teams. Pre-allocation is being maximised and takes place where appropriate.
- Approximately 71% of all dwellings in South Ayrshire are under-occupied, while about 7% of dwellings are overcrowded.
- As such, there is a need to improve the use of existing housing to better meet the needs of households living locally, for example by supporting households to downsize through mutual exchanges and tenant incentives.



A privately owned property in Girvan – empty for almost 15 years - brought back into use with support from our Empty Homes Officer.

Empty Homes

In June 2016 a total of 494 private sector properties were in receipt of a discount due to non-occupancy of the dwelling. This represents a significant loss of income for the Council and puts greater pressure on council services, including those required to respond to properties in poor physical condition.

South Ayrshire Council is committed to responding to the issues arising from the presence of long-term empty homes in our area. This represents both a challenge – given the high cost associated with empty homes – and an opportunity – in that empty homes can be used to help increase the supply of affordable housing locally.

The Empty Homes Strategy seeks to deal with these issues by supporting the owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use. A full-time Policy Officer is employed with Empty Homes as a central element of their remit, engaging with owners and offering support. This includes;

- an interest-free loan to owners of up-to £20,000 on the condition that the property is rented at an affordable rate for a minimum duration of three years;
- discounts on materials from builders' merchants;
- support in accessing a reduced rate of VAT on the costs of building works and materials;
- advice and support on renting and selling.

The Empty Homes Officer monitors the impact of the strategy and records successful interventions. These are submitted regularly to the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, administered by Shelter on behalf of the Scottish Government. The Partnership collates the information supplied by each local authority for annual statistical reporting to the Scottish Government.

At the present time, South Ayrshire Council offers a 100% discount for unoccupied and unfurnished dwellings²³ for six months, then 50% discount for a further six months. A 10% discount is then applied to all dwellings which are empty in the long term.

²³ Under Section 33 of the Local Government Act (2003)

Recent legislative changes²⁴ allow local authorities to either remove this discount or increase the charge by up to 100%. South Ayrshire Council is currently considering its position with regard to discounts and increased charges. Council Tax income on long-term empty and second homes is used by South Ayrshire Council to help increase the supply of affordable housing. Our Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017-2022 noted that the balance in the 2nd Homes Council Tax Fund as at 31st March 2016 was £1,153,963. £349,000 was reported as having been committed in 2016/17 in relation to the following a number of new build development projects;

- Wood Park, Ayr - £47,000
- Elba Gardens, Ayr - £102,000
- Citadel Place, Ayr - £200,000

A total of £804,963 remained uncommitted in this fund as at 13 October 2016.

Currently in Scotland there are no specific enforcement powers directly linked to empty homes; however there are existing powers which can be used, such as Compulsory Purchase Orders which allow authorities to acquire land without the owner's permission, providing there is a strong enough case for this being in the public interest. If undertaken these powers may benefit the immediate population and in some cases the wider public by improving the amenity of the area.

South Ayrshire Council's approach to Empty Homes is broadly supportive rather than punitive. We recognise that a wide range of circumstances may lead to a home becoming a long-term empty, and as such we always attempt to find solutions that respect owners' circumstances where possible. South Ayrshire Council believes that enforcement should be used sparingly and proportionately, and should only occur where every other option has been explored.

²⁴ The Local Government Finance (Unoccupied Properties etc.) (Scotland) Act 2012

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

“Regeneration of South Ayrshire’s town centres should be a strategic priority, and housing should be a key part of this”.

- We will continue to explore opportunities to work in partnership with Ayr Renaissance to provide housing in central locations as part of wider regeneration projects.

“The Council should do more to bring empty homes back into use, including enforcement options”.

- A Review of our Empty Homes Strategy is planned to ensure a range of options are available to help owners bring their properties back into use.
- Any new solutions will build on our existing suite of options which includes an interest-free loan, support in accessing VAT reductions and advice and assistance.

“Improve knowledge base of maintenance and adaptations to existing stock in order that properties can be maintained and allocated effectively”.

- An asset management database is planned to make best use of existing stock and guide investment/disinvestment decisions.

**Achieving our outcomes – Making
best use of existing stock**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>There is a proportion of low demand social rented housing stock which no longer meets needs.</p> <p>A significant proportion of council tenants are living in properties that are too large for them.</p> <p>The private rented sector is unaffordable for many households in housing need.</p> <p>Facilitate housing supply whilst also bolstering town centres.</p>	<p>Explore options for demolition and new build in these areas.</p>
	<p>Review the Housing Allocations policy to utilise all existing council housing stock to meet housing needs.</p>
	<p>Develop an Accessibility Register to make best use of our existing housing stock by recording key details about our properties – including adaptations and accessibility issues.</p>
	<p>Introduce incentives to encourage council tenants to downsize where possible.</p>
<p>The private rented sector is unaffordable for many households in housing need.</p> <p>Facilitate housing supply whilst also bolstering town centres.</p>	<p>Explore new and innovative ways to support private tenants to access and sustain accommodation, including tenancy support and potential funding schemes.</p>
	<p>Continue to work in partnership with Ayr Renaissance to develop, convert and regenerate town centres through new housing development.</p>
	<p>Review the Empty Homes Strategy to maximise incentives for owners to make use of their properties, and to potentially include support for bringing empty commercial units back into use.</p>

Access, Advice and Support

The second of our LHS Themes is Access, Advice and Support. This Theme covers the provision of information and support to help people access and sustain accommodation that meets their needs. This theme relates to two critical elements of the LHS;

- ***Housing Options and Preventing Homelessness***, and
- ***Specialist Provision and Independent Living***.

Getting good quality advice can make all the difference to people in housing need. The Council and our partners are committed to making sure people in South Ayrshire can access excellent housing advice when they need it, whatever their circumstances and aspirations. For some households, however, a little extra support is required to live independently. Our LHS is committed to making sure independent living is supported locally, and people throughout South Ayrshire are able to meet their housing needs.

Housing Options and Preventing Homelessness

What have we achieved in the last 5 years?

Since the last Local Housing Strategy, we have:

- Reduced incidences of homelessness by 22% - from 948 in 2011 to 742 in 2015/16.
- Implemented substantial improvements in the advice and assistance we offer, including a renewed emphasis on Housing Options and Prevention.
- Abolished the use of Bed and Breakfasts as temporary accommodation – from 70 households in Bed and Breakfast at 31 March 2011 to zero as at 31 March 2016.
- Introduced quality assurance procedures for homelessness decision making.
- Introduced intensive housing support for households at key points of transition, including those leaving prison.
- Established a system for recording and monitoring a households housing support journey.
- Streamlined housing support and advice services to focus on tenure sustainment and homelessness prevention.
- 95% of previous LHS actions completed or partially completed.

What do we want to achieve in the next 5 years?

Giving consideration to the findings of the HNDA, the views of service users and our progress against the previous LHS, the Access, Advice and Support steering group set the following overarching outcome relating to homelessness services:

Homelessness is prevented where possible and suitable accommodation, advice and support are available where it cannot be avoided.

In order to achieve this overarching outcome, the steering group agreed the following individual supporting outcomes:

- People in South Ayrshire can access good quality, accredited housing advice.
- Service Improvement and development in the Private Rented Sector is supported and the sector is regulated appropriately.
- Those at risk of homelessness can access effective prevention measures and support.
- Health and Social Care support services are available to homeless and potentially homeless households.
- The provisions of the national homelessness agenda are implemented within South Ayrshire.

How do we currently assist homeless households?

Housing Options

The Council introduced a new Housing Options service in 2010 which focused on preventing people from becoming homeless through proactive housing options advice and information.

The service is currently accredited to Type 1 of the National Homepoint Standards. This change in approach has significantly reduced incidences of homelessness and led to better outcomes for homeless households in South Ayrshire.



Ayrshire and South Housing Options Hub

The Ayrshire and South Housing Options Hub is one of five regional Hubs established to promote a housing options approach to homelessness prevention.

The member authorities of the Ayrshire and South Housing Options Hub are:

- North Ayrshire Council
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- Inverclyde Council
- South Ayrshire Council.

The development of each hub is taken forward by the local authority members who work to approved action plans to deliver the aims of the Hub.

The Hubs focus on delivering housing options through a combination of sharing best practice, commissioning joint training and research.

The Ayrshire and South Housing Options Hub have developed an action plan for 2017/18 which concentrates on the following projects and incorporates best practice elements as follows:

- A **joint working** project with our partner Housing Options Hubs to develop a housing options training toolkit which provides a **consistent approach to housing options delivery**.
- Holding our annual Ayrshire and South Hub event in **partnership with local housing providers** and agencies which:
 - Raises awareness of the housing options approach
 - **Shares and promotes good practice** in delivering housing a options service
 - Encourages partners to promote their services and **work together** with the Hub to **jointly develop and improve** housing options within South Ayrshire.
- **Joint working** with the Scottish Housing Network to implement Housing Options guidance **consistently across our Hub Members** to meet statutory obligations.
- **Consultation workshops** with staff, elected members and partner organisations to raise awareness of current homelessness challenges, and consult on our approach to **implementing housing options guidance consistently** across the Hub authorities.

Housing Support and Advice

As per the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, South Ayrshire Council offers an assessment of support needs where we believe the household requires housing support²⁵. We then enable the provision of this support to those assessed as needing it.

We also provide good quality, accredited housing advice people in housing need²⁶. This includes the provision of housing advice that reflects local conditions, advice on accessing specialist services and financial advice as appropriate.



²⁵ As prescribed in the Housing Support Services (Homelessness) (Scotland) Regulations 2012

²⁶ Set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and The Homeless Persons Advice and Assistance (Scotland) Regulations 2002.

In addition to our in-house housing management services, the Council contracts third sector partners to deliver:

- Housing support to council tenants and homeless households.
- A cross tenure homelessness prevention, advice and advocacy service.
- Intensive housing support service to people with complex and interrelated support needs.
- Supported accommodation for adults with complex needs.
- Housing advice and information within local prisons.
- Health and Homelessness nursing posts.
- A crisis response and mediation service to help households resolve disputes before entering the homeless system.

Measuring Progress

Of the 628 households assessed to be homeless or threatened with homelessness in 2015/16, 444 were given a support needs assessment and 441 were found to have some Housing Support requirement.

Clients' support requirements are recorded on a support needs monitoring system (Better Futures), and progress is monitored by service providers to demonstrate clients' progression or regression towards desired outcomes.

Planning for known milestones and Supporting Vulnerable Homeless Households

Specialist Provision for Young People and People Leaving Care



While most young people would be able to be suitably accommodated in mainstream housing, it is important to recognise that some young people will have particular needs that should be addressed in order to support them in successfully sustaining a tenancy. South Ayrshire Council is committed to joined-

up responses to meeting the needs of young people in the local authority area.

Young people leaving care

Local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare young people for ceasing to be looked after ("Throughcare") and to provide advice, guidance and assistance for young people who have ceased to be looked after ("Aftercare") on or after their 16th birthday²⁷.

These duties place specific responsibilities on local authorities in relation to meeting housing needs and how young people are supported through their transition out of care and provided with a range of appropriate and sustainable accommodation options. In South Ayrshire this work is supported through the South Ayrshire's Integrated Children's Service Arrangements for children leaving care.

Youth Housing Support Group

The South Ayrshire Council Youth Housing Support Group (YHSG) is a multi-disciplinary team which works collaboratively to prevent and alleviate the effects of homelessness for young people in South Ayrshire. The Group consists of representatives from Housing and Homelessness Management, Housing Support, Family Mediation, Training and Employment support, Social Work and Through-care and Criminal Justice services. It was developed based on the recognition that young

²⁷ The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (as amended) and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014

people can become homeless as a result of a range of multi-dimensional issues including; leaving home in an unplanned way due to relationship difficulties, having no income or knowledge of the benefits system, no chance of returning home, limited housing options, unrealistic expectations and emotional upset and crisis.

The Group meets fortnightly to review the cases of all young people under the age of 21 who are in housing need, in homeless accommodation or who are leaving Care. The Group monitors an average of 120 cases at any given time and all members work together to identify the appropriate interventions which are required to assist the young person to maintain, access, and sustain settled accommodation, with a primary focus on assisting the young person to remain in the family home if it is safe and reasonable to do so. The YHSG allows relevant agencies to jointly plan support for the young person and also helps to target resources to meet their needs. Individual support plans are developed with input from all group members, looking beyond the young person's housing needs and assesses support needs in relation to safety and security, social networks, independent living, physical and mental health, training and employment, legal issues and addiction issues.

Throughcare

As part of South Ayrshire Council's Corporate Parenting responsibility, our Throughcare Support Team helps young people aged 16-21, but gives priority to those leaving care or who are homeless. Their service includes:

- Giving advice and information on housing matters
- Helping young people deal with agencies like the Benefits Agency and the Housing Department
- Supporting young people to live independently.

Referrals are made by Throughcare to agencies such as Quarriers, who offer temporary accommodation to young people in six, self-contained, single person flats grouped together with 24/7 staff support. This support is provided until it is agreed that the young person is ready to move towards a secure tenancy, or until a suitable alternative housing option is found.

START/STEP projects

The START project is aimed at young people aged 18 – 25 who are experiencing homelessness and involves project workers assisting young people to find accommodation in the private rented sector or help apply for council and housing association properties.

In addition, the STEP project (Skills Towards Employment Project) is aimed at helping young people experiencing difficulty in obtaining or sustaining employment or training opportunities.

Pre-Tenancy Training and Education

South Ayrshire Council also provides pre-tenancy training and homelessness education targeted at young people through our Housing Support contracts. The First Home Project, for instance, seeks to prepare young people for their first tenancies and help them to consider the costs and responsibilities associated with running a home. These sessions take a capacity building approach to supporting young people, and aim to arm them with the practical skills required to manage a successful tenancy. In addition, Housing advice sessions are in place across local hospitals and Prisons as part of discharge planning protocols.

Support for people leaving prison

South Ayrshire Council currently provides housing options advice to people leaving prison through our Housing Support contract. At the present time, an intensive support service is provided to people in prison, in order to better manage the transition back into the community and ensure appropriate accommodation is in place upon release.

South Ayrshire Council's current allocations policy also allows existing tenants of SAC to maintain their tenancy if they are going to be in prison for less than 13 weeks. This removes the need to secure new accommodation on discharge, and allows individuals to maintain local connections and support.

Over the next five years, we intend to continue to work with Community Planning Partners to ensure housing and homelessness services support the delivery of the wider Community Justice agenda locally and particularly to those who have served longer prison sentences.

Students

For students, the University of West of Scotland offers accommodation in its Halls of Residence for up to 200 students. Any further requirement for shared accommodation by this group will be met in the market.

Specialist Provision for People Fleeing Violence

South Ayrshire Council's Housing and Homelessness Services Domestic Abuse Policy sets out our approach to Domestic Abuse;

- We will treat the victims of domestic abuse fairly and with respect.
- We will work with partner agencies to provide services throughout South Ayrshire for men and women who are the victims of domestic abuse, and provide access to accommodation, advice and support where appropriate.
- Where victims of domestic abuse wish to remain within their own home, we will aim to achieve this where possible with appropriate support.

A number of different agencies are involved in providing care and support to households who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse. These range from Women's Aid, Social Work Services, Children and Adult services as well as health services.

In terms of specialist provision, Women's Aid provides temporary safe accommodation with support, for women and their children experiencing domestic abuse. The accommodation available includes:

- 8 non self-contained units; and
- 5 self-contained scatter flats to assist households to enable, safe self-contained living.

People fleeing domestic violence are also awarded priority for rehousing in mainstream accommodation when applying to South Ayrshire Council as well as our local RSL partners.

Despite this, we recognise that domestic abuse remains a key area of concern, and a common cause of homelessness locally. As such, we will work to ensure a more joined-up approach is taken to meeting the needs of people fleeing domestic violence.

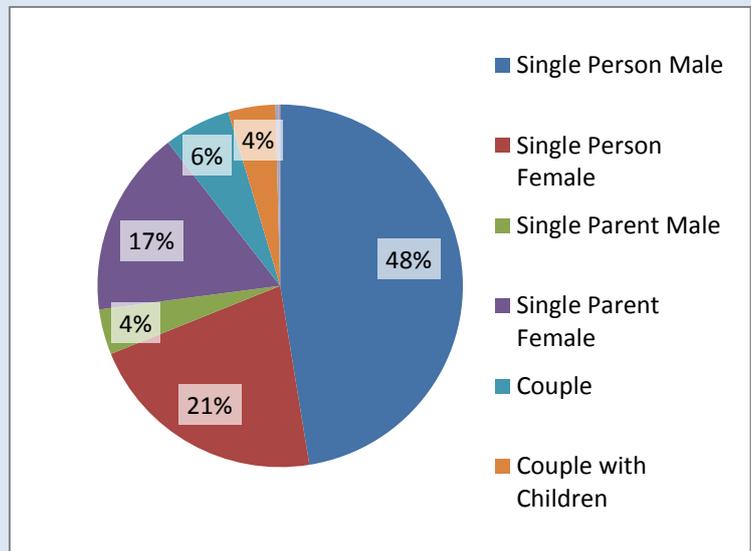
What is the Current Profile of Homelessness in South Ayrshire?

Household Composition

742 homeless applications were received in 2015/16, a reduction of 22% on the number of applications received in 2011-12. Of this number;

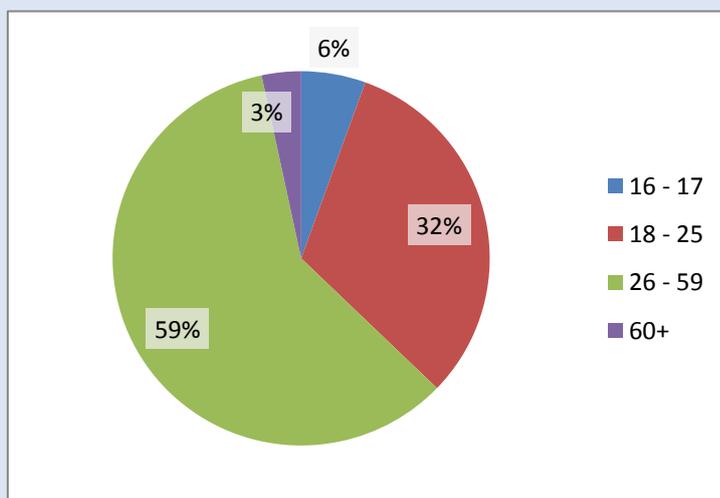
- The vast majority (69%) of homeless households were single people, and this has changed little since 2011-12.
- Single parent families are consistently over-represented, making up 21% of all applications in 2015-16.

Homeless applications by household composition



(Source: South Ayrshire Council homelessness statistics, 2015-16)

Homeless applications by age group, 2015-16



(Source: South Ayrshire Council Homelessness Statistics, 2015-16)

Age of homeless applicants

- About 38% of homeless applicants are under the age of 25.
- The highest proportion of applicants is in the 26-59 age group.
- While a consistently small number of applicants were aged 16-17 or 60+ between 2011-12 and 2015-16, it is

important to recognise the particular needs of these potentially vulnerable groups in developing homeless services.

Location

Previous settled location of households applying as homeless in 2015/16 by local plan area

The majority of homeless applicants applying from within South Ayrshire listed a last settled address in Ayr (65%) and most wished to continue to live in Ayr.

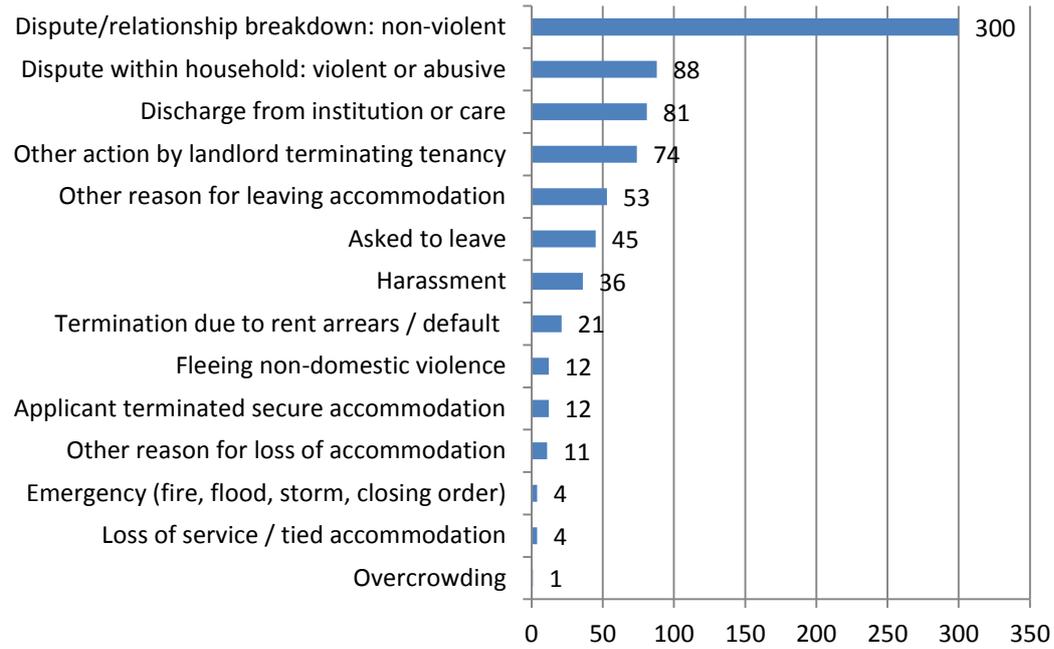
Despite being home to an estimated number of households less than half that of Prestwick, Troon or the Rural North, a

disproportionately high number of applicants cited addresses in Maybole as their last settled accommodation.

Local Plan Area	Applications 2015-16	Household estimates 2014	Applications per 1,000 households
Ayr	278	22,006	12.6
Troon	37	7,373	5.0
Rural North	36	6,198	5.8
Prestwick	31	7,521	4.1
Maybole	25	3,022	8.3
Girvan	11	3,337	3.3
Rural South	5	2,197	2.3
Outwith South Ayrshire	78	-	-
Outside Scotland	33	-	-
Not Known	208	-	-
TOTAL	742	51,654	14.4

Reasons for homelessness locally

- Non-violent household dispute is the most common reason for homelessness, representing 40% of all applicants.
- This has shown only minor change since the previous LHS, as this was also the primary reason for homelessness in 2011-12 (42%).
- Discharges from institutions, such as prisons and hospitals have increased slightly since the previous LHS, from around 9% in 2011-12 to 11% of applications in 2015-16.
- Homelessness due to mortgage or rent arrears and due to other action by landlord have both decreased as a proportion of all applications since 2011-12, representing around 13% of applications in 2015-16.
- The proportion of households applying from the PRS increased in 2014-15 but levelled off in 2015-16.



Other relevant information about homelessness locally

- The level of repeat homelessness (where a person has been assessed as homeless within the preceding 12 months), is higher than the Scottish average at 12%, and is showing signs of increasing.
- 70% of all homeless households are assessed as having some level of support need.
- In 2015/16, the average case duration for homeless and potentially homeless households was 17 weeks, a significant reduction on previous years.
- While no current homeless applicants in temporary accommodation are on Universal Credit at the present time, 160 tenants are presently in receipt of this benefit.

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

<p><i>“Housing advice providers should have a wide range of knowledge and be able to point households towards the services they need”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will make sure those delivering housing advice meet a quality framework and are accredited. • We will ensure independent, accredited housing advice is available throughout South Ayrshire.
<p><i>“Housing advice should be widely available, and should be presented in an accessible format.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review the Council’s model of providing housing advice to make sure it is supportive to all, accessible and meets clients’ various needs.
<p><i>“A variety of measures should be in place to improve tenancy sustainment for households’ vulnerable to homelessness”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will carry out a full review of the model and structure of housing and homelessness support, and services aimed at maximising the prevention of homelessness.
<p><i>“Offer more practical support for those who are vulnerable or moving into their first tenancy”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore options for developing and expanding schemes offering pre-tenancy training and support for homeless households. • We will develop support targeted at key points of transition to help households manage changes to their circumstances and increase the chances of sustaining their accommodation.
<p><i>“Consider different models of housing including shared, supported housing for people leaving temporary accommodation”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work to increase the range of supported and interim accommodation options available for vulnerable households locally.

Achieving our Outcomes - Homelessness

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>Despite continual decline in presentations since 2011, there has been a 5% increase in homeless presentations in the past year.</p>	<p>Improve the quality and accessibility of housing advice and information through service review and accreditation.</p>
<p>Housing Benefit restrictions for single homeless households as a result of Welfare Reforms.</p>	<p>Explore tenancy share schemes, income maximisation and review the provision of temporary accommodation.</p>
<p>Increase in the number of homeless households presenting from the Private Rented Sector.</p>	<p>Increase tenancy support for private tenants and develop training and education for private landlords.</p>
<p>Levels of repeat homelessness are 5% higher than the Scottish average.</p>	<p>Review the model and structure of housing and homelessness support services to better assist resettlement and tenancy sustainment.</p>
<p>Dispute within households is the main reason for homelessness.</p>	<p>Review support and advice services to include family mediation and housing education within schools and communities.</p>
<p>There is high proportion of homeless households who have health issues and resultant support needs.</p>	<p>Review pathways to health services for homeless households and develop support and advice to facilitate access to these services.</p>
<p>The majority of homeless households present from Ayr and want to be re-housed in Ayr.</p>	<p>Increase the range of interim and supported accommodation options available locally.</p>
	<p>Review the Housing and Homelessness Allocations policy to maximise use of all council stock across the Local Authority.</p>
	<p>Review the arrangements in place with Housing Association partners to increase availability of accommodation.</p>

<p>Higher than reasonable proportion of young people leaving care struggle to access suitable accommodation, or have to rely on homelessness service.</p>	<p>Work with Children and Families Services to increase supported accommodation options for young people looked after or accommodated by the local authority.</p>
<p>People leaving prison face barriers to accessing appropriate accommodation locally.</p>	<p>Integrate the Housing Options approach into Throughcare services in partnership with Children and Families Services to support effective planning to meet these needs.</p> <p>Review our allocations and housing management policies to ensure these support wider Community Justice objectives.</p>

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR... PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?



Michael currently lives in hostel accommodation in Ayr. A number of personal issues, including poor mental health, have meant that he has had difficulty managing tenancies in the community.

Because of this, Michael has unfortunately become homeless on a number of occasions and has been in hostel accommodation 6 times in recent years.

Michael is happy with his temporary accommodation at the moment, but felt he needed time before moving into longer-term accommodation; "I'd like to stay here as long as I can. I've started going to the gym and have been back attending the church".

The hostel accommodation he's in at the moment has given Michael the chance to improve his ability to manage a tenancy too; "There are room checks here every week, and I want to show people that I'm trying harder than I've ever tried before. I just want a roof over my head just now to get sorted out. I want people to see I'm doing fine and to prove to myself I'd be able to manage".

The supported interim accommodation proposed in our Local Housing Strategy would be in many ways ideal for people like Michael who are not yet ready to move into permanent housing but who would benefit from both independence and in-house support.

Supported interim accommodation would allow people at similar stages in their lives to receive support in the longer-term and to build longer-lasting ties than temporary accommodation allows.

Specialist Provision and Independent Living

What have we achieved in the last 5 years?

Since the last Local Housing Strategy, we have:

- Improved the advice and assistance we give to older people and people with disabilities;
- Published a Community Care and Housing contacts directory.
- Completed an Accessibility Review in partnership with tenants.
- Carried out an Adaptations Review and introduced a monitoring tool.
- Established a clear referral process between housing and social work to support children in the homeless system identified as being at risk.
- Provided Child Protection and Domestic Abuse training to staff.
- Made ground level temporary accommodation available in Ayr for households with physical disabilities.
- Falls Prevention work across sheltered complexes
- Developed the Council's first Housing with Care service in Girvan.

What do we want to achieve in the next 5 years?

Giving consideration to:

- The feedback from public consultation
- The HNDA evidence relating to ageing population and community care needs.
- The introduction of Health and Social Care Partnerships

The Access, Advice and Support steering group set the following overarching outcome in relation to Specialist Provision and independent Living:

People across South Ayrshire are able to access advice and support that helps them to meet their housing needs and aspirations

In order to achieve this overarching outcome, the steering group agreed the following individual supporting outcomes:

- People in South Ayrshire can access good quality, accredited housing advice at any stage of their life.
- People across South Ayrshire have access to housing-related support that helps them to live as independently as possible.
- Housing options advice effectively supports people across South Ayrshire to access suitable and affordable accommodation.

How do we currently support independent living?

Older People and People with Physical Disabilities

Adaptations

Helping older people and people with disabilities to remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible is a key element in our approach to 'independent living'. This can involve the adaptation of people's homes to meet their needs. In South Ayrshire, funding for adaptations comes from three separate sources;



- **Private Sector** – paid through SAC's Scheme of Assistance. Homeowners and private tenants can request financial assistance if there is an assessed need for an adaptation.
- **Council Housing** – paid by South Ayrshire Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Adaptations are either carried out on a reactive basis or as part of a planned modernisation programme.
- **RSLs** – Disabled adaptations for housing association tenants are paid through Scottish Government funding.

Aids and adaptations are offered to help older people and people with disabilities in South Ayrshire by supporting them to live safely, comfortably, and independently at home.

Examples of adaptations include:

- Replacing a bath with a level access shower.
- Improving the accessibility of someone's home.
- Lowering work surfaces to make the kitchen easier to use.

These adaptations can be seen to embody a 'spend-to-save' approach while also supporting improved outcomes for individuals. Adaptations have been found to play a positive role in reducing the incidence of emergency hospital admissions through falls and other accidents in the home. By supporting independent living, adaptations also play a positive role in reducing the need for home care as well as the need for long-term residential care. Adaptations can delay the need for these more costly services and support people to live independently at home for longer.

Sheltered Housing

Sheltered Housing refers to specifically built and designed properties that are intended to support older people and people with disabilities²⁸. In South Ayrshire, Sheltered Housing Support Workers operate an 'active ageing' programme to assist residents maintain general all round health and well-being.



South Ayrshire Council has 20 Sheltered Housing Complexes with 771 individual units; this includes 324 units of Amenity Housing at Riverside Place.

There are also 4 Sheltered and Amenity Housing complexes owned by Housing Associations. Of these complexes, one has been specifically designed to meet the needs of people with dementia.

Housing with Care

In 2013 the Council entered into a partnership with Trust Housing Association to develop a 'Housing with Care' service in Girvan. This provides 31 self-contained tenancies within a complex which are owned and managed by Trust. As part of the contract Trust also provides all care services that residents require. The service is

²⁸ For more information, see Appendix 5 of South Ayrshire Council's HNDA at <http://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/housingstrategy/lhs/documents/SA%20HNDA%202015%20Appendix%205%20Profile%20of%20Sheltered%20Housing%20in%20South%20Ayrshire%20March%202015.pdf>

designed to promote independent living for as long as possible and delay the requirement for residential care.

Telecare

Telecare equipment is available in South Ayrshire for elderly and disabled people if there is an assessed need for this type of 24/7 care. Telecare remotely monitors to identify real time emergencies and lifestyle changes via various sensors and devices in order to minimise the risks associated with independent living.

Care and Repair

South Ayrshire Care and Repair is a local not-for-profit organisation funded by South Ayrshire Council which offers independent advice and assistance to help homeowners repair, improve or adapt their homes so that they can live in comfort and safety in their community. The free and confidential service is for anyone aged over 60 or, if under 60, is referred to Care and Repair by Social Work or Health.

Falls Prevention

Sheltered Housing Support Workers in conjunction with the NHS have piloted and implemented a Falls Prevention Programme to improve residents' self-management and reduces the risk of falling both during summer and winter months. Positive Steps is a partnership programme between Health and Social Care and was established to design a cost effective and sustainable falls training programme for Housing Support Workers and residents. The overall aim of the project was to reduce the number of falls within sheltered housing units and establish the Housing Support Workers as Falls Champions. The personal contact that staff have with residents ensures equipment needs are met and fall monitors are in place through a system of referral which allows residents to live independently and safely within their own homes.



New Build

New social housing development in South Ayrshire has been enhanced by adopting a “lifetime homes” approach to new build properties.

This means that houses are built to achieve Housing for Varying Need standard and

incorporate accessibility features from the outset. These properties are designed to be adaptable over time to accommodate an individual or family's changing needs (which could include the need for a wheelchair). This approach has most recently been put into practice at the Council's new build development at Lochside in Ayr.

In addition, South Ayrshire Council is keen to explore opportunities to develop new-build specialist accommodation that also allows the care needs of older people and people with disabilities to be met on site. One such 'core and cluster' development is planned in Ayr, and the authority will work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to identify opportunities for development in the years to come.

Residential Care

Care Home Provision in South Ayrshire by type of provision, 2015

Type of Provision	Care Homes	Places	Occupied	Occupancy Rate
All Adults	30	1,139	1,009	89
Older People	24	1,054	929	88
Physical Disabilities	0	0	0	0
Adults with Mental Health Issues	0	0	0	0
Adults with Learning Disabilities	6	85	80	94
Other Groups	0	0	0	0

Information and advice

Advice is offered to older people and people with disabilities through our Scheme of Assistance, Occupational Therapy and Housing Options services, including consideration of other housing options. Households are encouraged to consider the full suite of options open to them, including alternative properties that may better meet their needs, including sheltered housing.

People with Learning Disabilities

There are approximately 520 people in South Ayrshire with identified learning disabilities. Our Learning Disability Strategy is currently under review, but Support Services provided by South Ayrshire Council and our partners currently include;

- **Home Care** – personal care to support people with learning disabilities to live independently at home. A range of independent and voluntary sector organisation deliver this support in South Ayrshire;

- **Residential Care** – supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities;
- **Supported Living Services** – support for people with learning disabilities to live independently in their own tenancies;
- **Telecare services** – using technology to allow people with learning disabilities to maintain their independence at home;
- **Advocacy services** – including specialist advocacy for people with learning disabilities;
- **Advice and Information** – self-help organisations, groups and phone lines; and
- **Support into education, volunteering and employment support** – supporting people into opportunities that will increase independence.

From a housing perspective, the coming years will see the development of South Ayrshire Council's first purpose-built accommodation for people with Learning Disabilities at Citadel Place in Ayr. This 'core and cluster' development will allow accommodation and support needs to be met 'on-site' and support independent living for the households accommodated there. The coming years will also see housing work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to identify other opportunities for further development of similar projects.

Gypsy/Travellers

Until recently, South Ayrshire Council had one site for gypsy/travellers at Houdston near Girvan. This site had eight ground level pitches, with one pitch available with facilities to meet the needs of a person with a physical disability. This site had a full-time manager and tenant surveys frequently showed very high levels of satisfaction with the provision available. This long-standing site was unfortunately flooded in December 2015 and as a result eight families had to be moved to alternative accommodation. An immediate decision was made to provide temporary accommodation from the Council's stock, but some families did not accept this and instead set up a temporary camp near the previous site. It also became apparent early on that it would not be possible to reuse the Houdston site, and that families did not want to return to this site even if it were viable.

As such, a decision was taken to establish a temporary site at Coalpots Road in Girvan whilst looking for a longer-term solution that met the families' needs. The Council put out a call for sites, making reference to recent guidance on standards for Gypsy/Travellers' sites – particularly the requirement to ensure access to schooling and amenities. We also took into account the needs identified in our HNDA through Consultation with this group, again around accessibility, space for vehicles and access to services. Of the identified sites, the temporary site at Coalpots Road was considered to be the best, due in large part to its proximity to existing services and the availability of utilities.

Our Housing Capital Programme Coordinator has engaged with the families to be accommodated on this site since January 2016. This consultation began with a discussion about their culture and what this meant to them. The families spoke about their community's lifestyle changing over time, and highlighted a site in Perth which they felt would be a model for the type of site they'd want to live on. This site comprised static caravans with separate kitchens, and these discussions led to initial plans being developed for a site in South Ayrshire.

Discussions also touched on other related issues, including the future energy needs of this community and the type of accommodation the families would want for their children and for future generations. The families wanted to preserve their traditions while having accommodation that was easy to heat, safer and more secure in terms of tenancy. Following on from the flood at the Houdston site, families were also keen to make sure they could access insurance.

The resultant proposals involved developing eight semi-detached 'lodges', each with a separate kitchen area acting as a buffer between properties, bathroom and open plan living space. The proposed lodges have been designed to let in as much light as possible, incorporating rooflights, windows and open spaces. These lodges are arranged facing inward towards a central common area, with space for vehicles throughout and room for a tow at the top of the site.

A physical model was built to help the families' visualise the proposals and provide feedback on how well this would meet their needs. The reaction from families was very positive. The lodges met the demands of this population but would also allow the Council to access funding from the Scottish Government and offer Scottish

Secure Tenancies to the families. All eight lodges are adaptable to meet changing needs, and are all wheelchair accessible. Property sizes have been built to meet current needs with some projection.

Having agreed a proposed design with families, the next steps for this site involve wider community consultation, seeking planning permission and ensuring permanent utility supplies are in place at this site.

In addition to this engagement, South Ayrshire Council Housing Service also ensures the needs of Gypsy/Traveller families are met through quarterly visits, attended by our Tenant Participation Officer and the Housing Officer for the area. Our experience has shown that regular engagement works best for fostering good relations with families and making sure they are satisfied with the service they're receiving. Annual surveys – completed on a face-to-face basis with support from officers to counteract literacy issues – also help us in meeting our Charter obligations to this group.

Travelling Showpeople

The temporary requirements of Travelling Show People are similar to those offered by a Transit site for Gypsy Travellers. There are currently no existing services for Travelling Show People in South Ayrshire, however the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain (Scottish Section) have been contacted by letter and email offering advice and assistance if required

Migrant Communities

South Ayrshire Council will consider the legal framework surrounding the relocation of migrants within the UK when identifying status, determining the leave to remain and assessing the evidence of the right to reside of any migrant applying for housing or requesting homelessness assistance.

Interpreting and translation will be considered at each stage of the process leading to an offer of housing to ensure the applicant is aware of their tenancy obligations. South Ayrshire Council will consider introducing a migrant support plan to ensure affordability is discussed at the start of each tenancy and that the tenant is signposted to other agencies and services which could assist in securing employment or welfare benefit entitlements.

Current Profile of Housing and Care Needs

Older people and people with physical disabilities

- South Ayrshire has an ageing population and it is estimated that 27% of households will be over the age of 75 by 2037.
- 188 private sector disabled adaptations were carried out in 2015/16, at a cost of £671,000. This followed 222 private sector adaptations in 2014/15.
- South Ayrshire sees a relatively high demand for Sheltered Housing, with approximately 4.5 applicants for every void in 2015/16. This demand has decreased in recent years but is anticipated to climb in the coming years.
- The number of Long Stay Residents in South Ayrshire's care homes has increased by 13% since 2006, from 899 in 2006 to 1,017 in 2015.
- The majority of sheltered housing in South Ayrshire is provided in the population centres of Ayr Urban HMA.
- This to some extent reflects demand, but it is worth noting that there are no sheltered units or housing with support in Rural South, meaning that people with support needs in this area currently must be supported in their own home or move to their nearest town – typically Maybole or Girvan.
- As at March 2016, 1,541 people over 50 in South Ayrshire received a home care package, 1,168 received telecare only and 164 received meals only.

People with mental health needs and learning disabilities

- 521 adults in South Ayrshire have an identified learning disability.
- 37% of adults with mental health needs are in receipt of a care package.
- 80% of people with a learning disability are in receipt of some type of service. This may be day care, home care, supported living, Telecare or advocacy.
- In South Ayrshire, it is estimated that 2,500 people (around two percent of the population) are currently living with dementia.

Hospital Discharges

- In March 2016, 34 discharges from hospital were delayed for residents of South Ayrshire. Of this number, 2 people were waiting to go home while 1 was awaiting a Care Home place. 16 were awaiting funding for a Care Home

Place. Since November 2015 there has been an increase in delayed discharges for this reason.

- As at July 2016, 10 people were held for priority rehousing for medical reasons, while 5 were held for priority rehousing to meet their Community Care needs.

Over the next five years we intend to respond to these issues by increasing the availability of suitable specialist accommodation (such as 'Core and Cluster' supported housing and accommodation built to a Lifetime Homes standard), supporting disabled adaptations as well as ensuring new build properties can be easily adapted (for example through Housing for Varying Needs standards).

Future Need for Specialist Provision

Older People and People with Disabilities

Recent population projections²⁹ found that:

- The population of South Ayrshire is projected to decrease by 2% over the next 25 years, from 112,530 in 2014 to 110,104 by 2039, in contrast to a 7% increase in Scotland.
- The pensionable age population in South Ayrshire is projected to increase by 21%, compared with a 28% increase in Scotland. This population is predicted to increase by 3.4% by 2024.
- The South Ayrshire population aged 75+ is projected to increase by +82%, compared with a 85% increase in Scotland. This population is projected to increase by 32.2% by 2024.
- As a result, the projected proportion of the population of South Ayrshire of pensionable age increases from 26% in 2014 to 32% in 2039.
- Recent estimates suggest that an additional 529 care home places and an additional 547 sheltered housing units would be required by 2024 to retain the current level of provision in the context of an ageing population³⁰.
- In line with the agenda towards shifting the balance of care, however, it is clear that some of the need for additional Care Home spaces may increasingly be met in people's own homes.

With regard to meeting the future needs of people with disabilities, our recent HNDA found a need for:

- More specialist accommodation that can meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, including wheelchair users and those who require amenity housing.
- A small housing development for adults with a learning disability, which would allow a number of adults to be supported to live independently in their own home with adequate support.

²⁹ National Records of Scotland (2016) Population Projections for Scottish Areas (2014-based)

³⁰ Update of estimates provided in the HNDA, using Mid-2014-based population projections. See HNDA for original calculation.

- A greater awareness of the accessibility features and adaptations which have taken place to housing stock locally.

While most older people and people with disabilities will live independently in their own homes with little or no support, it is important that services and assistance are available when required.

South Ayrshire Council is committed to ensuring people are able to live independently for as long as possible. In order to help achieve this, over the next five years we will:

- Continue to deliver housing adaptations in cooperation with the Health and Social Care Partnership.
- Review how we provide adaptations, making sure good quality advice is available to support people in making long-term decisions about housing.
- Work with partner organisations and developers to increase the range of supported housing options available for older people and people with disabilities in the community.
- Work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to identify opportunities for future housing provision to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
- Ensure as far as possible new build affordable housing in South Ayrshire is accessible and can be easily adapted in the future.
- Develop 'core and cluster' accommodation to facilitate independent living while providing support where required.
- Produce an asset management database to make effective use of existing housing stock.

South Ayrshire Council is keen to ensure its new build affordable housing stock meets these changing needs, and as such new build developments will – as far as practicable – incorporate accessible design features as standard. In addition, we are committed to ensuring our homes can be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of our population and of the families who live in these homes.



Our recent developments, for example, have been built to Lifetime Homes standard³¹ - a set of specifications aimed at improving the long-term accessibility of homes - while units within these developments have also incorporated Housing for Varying Needs standards³² - a standard that allows for homes to be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of its occupants.

Taken together, these approaches demonstrate our forward-thinking approach to development that will help to future proof our stock for the years to come. These measures will support us in our aim to the needs of people throughout South Ayrshire in the context of an ageing population, supporting people to live as independently as possible. We will continue to work with partners in Health and Social Care to ensure these actions are delivered.

Homeless Households

- The number of people making homeless applications in South Ayrshire has decreased in recent years, falling by almost 22% since 2011/12 to 742 applications in 2015/16.
- Despite this, repeat homelessness in 2015/16 was higher than the Scottish average, at almost 12%.
- The number of homeless applications received in the future will depend on a variety of factors, including economic changes, housing market pressures, national housing and homelessness policies and welfare reform.

While it is not possible to predict trends in this area, it is possible to set out actions which will allow us to respond to changing needs effectively. It is also possible to plan ahead to prevent homelessness from occurring and help people sustain tenancies as far as possible. To this end, we will:

- Review the Council's model of providing housing advice to make sure it is supportive to all, accessible and meets clients' various needs.

³¹ More information on the Lifetime Homes standard is available at <http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>

³² <https://www.thenbs.com/PublicationIndex/documents/details?Pub=TSO&DocId=201930>

- Make sure those delivering housing advice meet a quality framework and are accredited.
- Ensure independent, accredited housing advice is available throughout South Ayrshire.
- Conduct a full review of the model and structure of housing support to ensure this is as effective as possible at helping sustain tenancies.
- Increase the range of supported and interim accommodation options available for vulnerable households locally, including exploring options around 'core and cluster' housing and Housing First approaches.

Young People and People Leaving Care

As noted previously, about 38% of people applying as homeless in 2015/16 were under the age of 25. This proportion is expected to increase in the years to come as a result of welfare reform. This is because the housing options available to this group are likely to be constrained by limits on LHA, leading to more people in this age group becoming homeless or finding themselves in housing need.

While the number of Looked After children in South Ayrshire has seen a slight decrease in recent years, there were still 343 young people being Looked After in 2014. 25% of these young people had additional support needs, and as such it is important that we continue to work closely with our partners to ensure the future needs of young care leavers are met.

In order to meet the future needs of young people and people leaving care over the next five years, we will:

- Explore options for developing and expanding schemes offering pre-tenancy training and support in order to effectively prepare people for their first tenancy.
- Provide support at key points of transition (including leaving care) to help people manage changes to their circumstances and increase the chances of sustaining their accommodation.
- Explore the option of tenancy share schemes as an additional housing option for young people in housing need.

- Review support and advice services to include family mediation and housing education within schools and communities.
- Work with Children and Families Services to increase supported accommodation options for young people looked after or accommodated by the local authority.
- Integrate the Housing Options approach into Throughcare services in partnership with Children and Families Services to support effective planning to meet these needs.

People Fleeing Violence

Our HNDA found that, in order to meet the needs of people fleeing (or at risk of) violence, it will be necessary to maintain support at current levels. We will:

- Work with partner agencies to provide services throughout South Ayrshire for men and women who are the victims of domestic abuse, and provide access to accommodation, advice and support where appropriate.
- Where victims of domestic abuse wish to remain within their own home, we will aim to achieve this where possible with appropriate support.
- We will work with partners to ensure a more joined-up approach is taken to meeting the longer-term needs of people fleeing domestic violence.

Gypsy/Travellers

The proposed permanent Gypsy/Travellers' Site in Girvan has been designed to meet existing need, with some projection for the future based on households' circumstances. Over the next five years, we will:

- Look to establish suitable long term accommodation for travellers locally.
- Explore options around future transit sites.

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

“Help people to remain in their homes for as long as possible with practical assistance and adaptations”

“More information should be provided to help people make informed decisions about housing and care”

“Take a more pro-active approach to helping older people and people with disabilities live independently”

- We will continue to deliver housing adaptations in cooperation with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

- In order to make best use of resources, we will review how we provide adaptations, making sure good quality advice is available to support people in making long-term decisions.

- We will continue to work in partnership with our colleagues in Health and Social Care to make sure housing solutions meet people’s long-term housing, health and care needs.

- We will make sure that new build affordable housing in South Ayrshire is accessible and can be easily adapted in the future.

- A South Ayrshire design guide will be produced to support this ‘Housing for Varying Needs’ approach to new build development.

- We will develop ‘core and cluster’ accommodation to facilitate independent living while providing support where required.

**Achieving our outcomes –
Supporting Independent Living**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>Ageing population has increased the need for reactive adaptation.</p>	Review the policy and process in place for the provision of disabled adaptations and integrate housing options advice appropriately.
	Development of a South Ayrshire accessible design standard to which all new affordable housing should comply.
<p>Increasing demand for accommodation for older people and people with disabilities.</p>	Work with partner organisations and developers to increase the range of supported housing options available for older people and people with disabilities in the community.
	Work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to identify opportunities for future housing provision to meet the needs of older people and people with disabilities.
	Ensure appropriate consultation procedures are in place to receive future tenants' perspectives on new build specialist housing.
	Develop the Council's first purpose-built 'core and cluster' accommodation at Citadel Place to meet the needs of people with Learning Disabilities through 'on site' support provision.
<p>Identified need to improve the accommodation options available for people with Learning Disabilities.</p>	Work with the Health and Social Care Partnership to identify opportunities for future housing provision to meet the needs of people with Learning Disabilities.
	Explore council owned and private site options to establish suitable long term accommodation for travellers and transit sites.
<p>Pressure on the availability of suitable long and short term accommodation for gypsy travellers.</p>	

<p>Increased pressure on available funding for care provision.</p>	<p>Explore options for development of 'core and cluster' specialist housing to reduce the cost of individual care packages.</p>
<p>Increased number of older people who are unable to maintain or sustain their existing property.</p>	<p>Review the provision of housing advice and information to older people to ensure it is accessible and available at the earliest point possible.</p>
<p>Increasing number of people with urgent need for suitable social rented housing due to health issues.</p>	<p>Review the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure priority is awarded appropriately and seek to increase the supply of accessible /ground level affordable homes.</p> <p>Develop an Accessibility Register to make best use of our existing housing stock by recording key details about our properties – including adaptations and accessibility issues.</p>

Housing Quality and Neighbourhoods

Our final LHS Theme is Housing Quality and Neighbourhoods. This Theme is about ensuring that property condition, regardless of tenure, improves in the years to come, and that our neighbourhoods are well-maintained and positive places to live. This theme relates to three key elements of the LHS;

- **House Condition across the Tenures**
- **Sustainable Housing – Fuel Poverty and Climate Change**
- **Sustainable Communities**

Good quality housing and strong communities are essential elements of living a healthy and positive life. Conversely, poor quality housing and neighbourhoods have links to a wide range of issues, including social exclusion, financial difficulties, poor educational outcomes and poverty. As such, improving the quality of our housing and neighbourhoods – regardless of whether people own or rent - is one of our key goals for the next five years.

Housing Quality

What have we achieved in the last 5 years?

Since the last Local Housing Strategy, we have:

- Carried out a full review of our Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan.
- Made sure all stock meets the SHQS, and put plans in place for those in abeyance or exempt.
- Commenced a full review of our Scheme of Assistance.
- Introduced monitoring for SOA activities.
- Supported 3 major projects through Missing Shares.
- Improved our advice and information for landlords.
- 64 long-term empty properties brought back into use through our Empty Homes Strategy.
- Made successful applications for HEEPS: ABS funding resulting in improvements to more than 1,000 homes over the last four years

What do we want to achieve in the next 5 years?

Giving consideration to the findings of the HNDA, the views of service users and our progress against the previous LHS, the Housing Quality and Neighbourhoods steering group set the following overarching outcome relating to housing quality and property condition:

People across South Ayrshire live in well-maintained, energy efficient homes and are proud of their neighbourhoods.

In order to achieve this overarching priority, we have established a number of key supporting outcomes that we and our partners wish to deliver over the next five years.

- South Ayrshire's social housing stock continues to meet local and national property condition standards.
- Properties in the private rented sector meet the Repairing Standard.
- Home-owners, landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are supported to uphold them.
- Advice is available to help households reduce the risk of experiencing fuel poverty, and people across South Ayrshire are aware of how to access assistance.

How do we currently help to improve Housing Quality?

Property Condition in the Private Sector

Scheme of Assistance

The Scheme of Assistance is a strategy for improving the condition of private sector houses through a combination of grant funding and advice and information. Through the Scheme of Assistance the Council provides the following:



Below Tolerable Standard Housing

- Provision of a discretionary 50% grant funding to owners of properties which fall Below the Tolerable Standard (BTS). These properties are considered to be in the worst state of disrepair, for example are structurally unstable or lacking essential amenities.

Mixed Tenure Communal Repairs

- Grant funding is available to support essential communal repairs and maintenance in mixed tenure blocks.

Missing Shares

- Funding to enable essential communal repairs to progress to prevent further deterioration, when owners are unable or unwilling to pay their share of the cost (reclaimed from owner).

Advice and Support

South Ayrshire Council offers good quality advice and information to the owners of properties in the private sector. This information is provided by a variety of departments and external partners, including the Housing Policy and Strategy team, Environmental Health, South Ayrshire Care and Repair and Building Standards.

An advice pack (“Homeowners’ Guide to Repairing, Improving and Adapting Property”) has been produced, with each pack containing seven accessible leaflets covering the following subjects:



- Organising Repairs to your Building
- Organising Common Repairs
- Checking your building
- Identifying and Preventing Damp and Condensation
- Building Maintenance for the Home You Own
- Paying for Building Repairs and Maintenance
- Aids and Adaptations

Owner Engagement

The Council’s Housing service has created an Owner Engagement Officer who works with owners in mixed tenure blocks to help them contribute to the cost of communal repair and improvement works.

Private Sector Landlord Registration and Enforcement

South Ayrshire Council pro-actively monitors PRS activity in the local authority area in order to ensure landlords and agents comply with landlord registration. Our most recent statistics show that South Ayrshire continues to ensure that applications are approved within appropriate timescales and above the Scottish average.

Landlord Registration Approvals as at May 2016³³

Local Authority	Approved Registration	Approved Property	Awaiting Registration	Awaiting Property	Total Applications	Total Properties	Percentage Approved Registrations
South Ayrshire	5,058	6,370	56	97	5,114	6,467	98.9%
Scotland	259,346	349,538	6,028	7,066	265,374	356,604	97.7%

³³ Scottish Government return statistics May 2016

When ensuring that registrations meet the necessary criteria to be admitted onto the register, if information is brought to our attention that could question that applicant's status as a fit and proper person that application will be referred to the Council's Regulatory Panel for a decision on whether to accept or refuse the application.

A dedicated Landlord Enforcement Officer is in post to offer advice and assistance to landlords and tenants to promote compliance with the Repairing Standard for private rented properties. The Officer responds to enquiries from tenants, investigates alleged breaches of the Standard, and works with landlords to help them remedy any faults, with the ultimate aim of resolving issues and maintaining tenancies.

- For financial year 2015/16 the Enforcement Officer was involved in 72 cases and to date in this current year has been involved in 26 cases.
- Resolutions have been achieved in the vast majority of these cases with a small number currently on-going.

HMO (Houses in Multiple-Occupancy) Licensing

The Council also acts to ensure all landlords across South Ayrshire comply with HMO Licensing arrangements. The Housing service works with Environmental Health, Building Standards, Police Scotland and Fire Scotland to ensure that HMO applications are administered effectively within appropriate timescales and licences are provided as per legal requirements.

Housing Renewal Areas

South Ayrshire has identified some areas in Ayr Town Centre where designating a Housing Renewal Area may be appropriate in the future. If the local authority decides to proceed on this basis, our housing policy, planning and environmental health teams will work closely together to progress this.

In the first instance, however, we will continue to highlight the options available to communities to take action to improve their area without leading to HRA status. We see the advice and information offered by our Scheme of Assistance as critical in ensuring owners take responsibility for their properties and are appropriately supported to make improvements. In addition, through our Empty Homes Strategy we will encourage the owners of long-term empty properties to make improvements to their properties.

CASE STUDY: LANDLORD ENFORCEMENT

David Rae has been South Ayrshire Council's Private Sector Enforcement Officer for the last year. David's role is about making sure landlords meet their responsibilities, particularly around the condition of their property.

Properties in the PRS are required by law to meet the Repairing Standard and David is tasked with enforcing this in South Ayrshire. Common issues include a lack of smoke detection, water ingress and the presence of other forms of disrepair.



Other issues David commonly deals with include landlords who have failed to meet their legal obligations, such as:

- Registering themselves and their properties on the Landlord Registration system.
- Providing tenants with appropriate information at tenancy sign-up.
- Displaying and providing to tenants certification, such as Gas Safety Certificates or Electrical Installation Condition Reports.

Where landlords are failing to meet these obligations, David is responsible for engaging with them and encouraging them to act. This is mainly achieved through imparting knowledge, providing assistance and information and threatening enforcement action. At the present time additional powers in relation to the PRS, such as Enhanced Enforcement Areas and Third Party Reporting have not been utilised.

David is also responsible for the day-to-day operation of our Private Sector Leasing and Bulk Leasing Schemes, responding to issues as they arise, liaising with landlords and taking new properties onto the scheme when these are required.

Partnership Working

Many of the visits carried out by the Private Sector Enforcement Officer are carried out in partnership with colleagues from Environmental Health. We also successfully operate an Information Sharing Protocol with Police Scotland, which helps us to identify and resolve issues more effectively. We are currently in the process of developing closer links with colleagues in Anti-Social Behaviour in order to ensure we achieve a holistic and effective approach to the kind of issues common with PRS tenancies.

Funding

Our Private Rented Sector regulation and enforcement activities – including Landlord Registration, enforcement as well as training and information provision – are funded by fees collected from Landlord Registration. The cost of introducing actions highlighted in the Local Housing Strategy in relation to the PRS – including the production of a Tenants' Newsletter, an annual landlords newsletter, the introduction of training events, a Landlords' Conference and a more proactive approach to enforcement - will also be funded from these payments.

Property Condition in the Social Rented Sector

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)

The SHQS requires all social rented properties to achieve a minimum level of housing quality. The standard is made up of the following broad quality criteria:

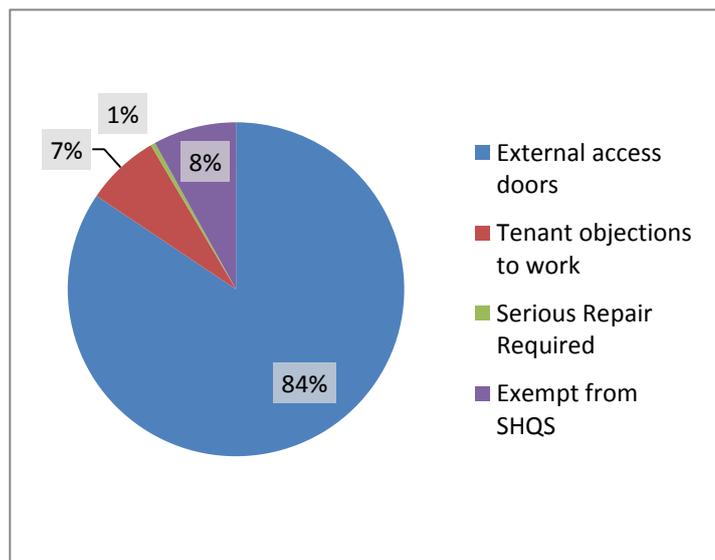
- Structural stability
- Rising damp and penetrating damp
- Heating, lighting and ventilation
- Wholesome water supply
- Standard amenities
- Foul and surface water drainage
- Access to external doors and outbuildings
- Electrical installations
- Thermal insulations

As at 31 March 2016, 7,856 housing units – representing more than 97% of the 8,081 self-contained housing units owned by South Ayrshire Council - met the SHQS³⁴.

- 18 units were awarded an exemption by Ministers given the disproportionate and prohibitive costs associated with bringing these properties up to an SHQS standard.
- The remaining 207 units are held in abeyance with plans in place to bring these up to the required standard.



**Reasons for SHQS Abeyances and Exemptions
as at June 2016**



³⁴ South Ayrshire Council Annual Return on the Charter, 2015-16

- Robust monitoring arrangements are in place, and it is anticipated that the majority of these will be brought up to standard in 2016/17, with a projected 68 units expected to be left in abeyance by the end of financial year 2016/17.

Capital Programme Planning

The Housing Service developed a robust Housing Capital and Planned Maintenance programme to ensure, as far as possible, that all council owned houses achieved the standard by 31st March 2015, and maintains it going forward. As at the 31st March 2016, 97% of all council housing units met the SHQS. The Housing service has established a dedicated Housing Capital Programme team with responsibility for programming planned maintenance to ensure housing standards are achieved. The team monitors the impact of capital works and allocates budgets accordingly to support the continuous improvement in the quality of council housing.

It is estimated that in 2017/18, the Housing Capital Programme budget will invest around £18.7 million in the planned maintenance of existing stock and environmental works in our communities. This includes energy efficiency works, full and partial modernisations, central heating replacement works, maintenance of the fabric of our homes and void property repairs.

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)

The EESH was launched by the Scottish Government in March 2014 and is intended to improve the energy efficiency of social housing stock in Scotland. The standard sets single minimum energy efficiency rating (EER) that varies depending on the dwelling and heating type.



The standard recognises that some property types will be more difficult and costly to treat than others, whilst continuing to support. As at the 31st March 2016 7,620 units - representing 94.3% of the Council's housing stock - met this standard. It is anticipated that South Ayrshire Council will bring a further 91 properties up to EESH standard in 2016/17, and will continue to progress towards fully achieving this target.

What is the current condition of our housing?

- 267 BTS dwellings as at March 2016, 46% owner occupied, 33% in the Private Rented Sector and 31% tenure unknown, with majority in Ayr, Rural North and Rural South.
- Estimated that 37% of owner-occupied housing has some 'urgent' disrepair.
- 190 council houses were held in abeyance from achieving the SHQS, due largely to the difficulty progressing communal work to replace or install door entry systems.
- The number of people becoming homeless as a result of poor property condition is very low, at 4 presentations in 2015/16.
- One private landlord de-registered to date as a result of poor property condition.
- Of the 72 cases dealt with by the private landlord enforcement officer in 2015/16, 58 of these related to disrepair.
- The Ayr Housing Aid Centre received 165 referrals relating to disrepair in 2015/16. 62% of these cases were in the Private Rented Sector.

Location of PRS properties by Local Plan area, as at June 2016

Local Plan Area	Total
Ayr	3,112
Troon	963
Prestwick	802
Rural North	582
Rural South	394
Girvan	382
Maybole	349
Total	6,584

- **This information suggests improvement is required in the local PRS.**

- There are currently 6,584 PRS properties in South Ayrshire, provided by 5,114 registered landlords.
- Almost half of these (47%) are in Ayr.
- Some areas have experienced PRS 'hot spots' where there are considerable numbers of private sector properties clustered in one area.
- In South Ayrshire, although no detailed analysis at this level has yet been carried out, our experience tells us that concentrations of PRS properties tend to correspond with areas experiencing multiple deprivation and where properties have been sold through the Right to Buy.

- 98.9% of private landlord registrations approved as at May 2016.
- South Ayrshire has 37 registered HMOs with one case currently under investigation for possible breach of licence conditions.
- Spend against the Housing Capital Programme has increased from 83% in 2011/12 to 93% in 2015/16.

The following outcomes detail how we intend to address issues relating to the PRS locally and are supported by relevant actions.

- Service Improvement and development in the Private Rented Sector is supported and the sector is regulated appropriately.
- Properties in the Private Rented Sector meet the Repairing Standard.
- Home owners, landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to property condition and are supported to uphold them.

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

<p><i>“The condition of properties being offered to people should be improved and more checks should be carried out to make sure the letting standard is being met consistently.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will carry out tenant-led inspections of a variety of processes, including our void management standards and procedures.
<p><i>“More proactive regulation of private sector landlords to ensure their properties are in a good condition.”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure landlords are appropriately supported in meeting their responsibilities”.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will establish enhanced training for private landlords in partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland to support them in meeting their obligations.• We will review our enforcement arrangements to ensure these meet the challenges of an expanded sector subject to increasing regulation.
<p><i>“Make sure home-owners and private landlords meet their responsibilities around property condition, particularly in mixed-tenure blocks.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will support owners to meet their obligations through our Scheme of Assistance, considering enforcement action where appropriate.• A full review of our Scheme of Assistance is planned to ensure this is used efficiently.

**Achieving our outcomes
– Property Condition**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
Concentrations of low demand council houses in high demand areas.	Develop a strategic asset management and investment plan for all social rented housing stock.
A proportion of council properties cannot meet SHQS due to communal repair issues.	Explore options for providing loans to owners to help progress communal repair works.
General disrepair exists across the private housing sector.	Consider the development of a Council led factoring/maintenance scheme for communal blocks.
	Review the advice and assistance provided to owners through the Council’s Scheme of Assistance, including our website and the leaflets we provide.
A proportion of social rented tenants are not satisfied with the condition of their property.	Review our processes for dealing with queries about private sector disrepair.
	Work with property maintenance to implement work scheduling and repairs improvement plan.
	Review void lettings standards and associated quality assurance procedures in partnership with tenants.
The private rented sector has doubled in size and approximately one third of tenancies are in disrepair.	Develop guidance materials for social housing tenants on how to maintain their properties well.
	Work with Landlord Accreditation Scotland to deliver information events and training programme for private landlords.
There are concentrations of privately owned housing in poor condition.	Review the private landlord enforcement process to introduce a routine property inspection as part of landlord registration.
	Consider designation of these areas as Housing Renewal Areas and develop a policy to support targeted improvement.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR... PRIVATE LANDLORDS?

Lynn Marshall is one of the two Partners at Toner and McCartney LLP, a local letting agent and property management firm based in Ayr. Lynn and her business partner Julie Parker founded Toner and McCartney in January 2012, and it is one of only a small number of female-led letting agents in the area. The firm manages a wide range of properties in South Ayrshire, ranging from small flats to mansions.



Lynn has been involved in the Private Rented Sector (PRS) locally for more than 15 years, and has represented landlords' interests in a number of different capacities, including as part of South Ayrshire's Landlords Forum and as the former Chair of the South Ayrshire Landlord Association (SALA).

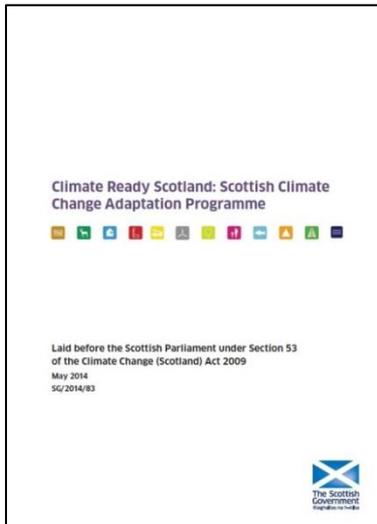
Lynn believes that the recent changes to the regulation of the PRS in Scotland – including electrical safety regulations, the registration of tenancy deposits and enhanced fire safety standards - are broadly positive, but that many landlords are struggling to achieve compliance, or are unaware of their responsibilities; "There is a distinct difference in approach between buy-to-let landlords and those who are 'forced to let' because they can't sell. These recent changes have affected many landlords' incomes significantly, and people are now scrambling to ensure compliance".

For Lynn, the training and accreditation schemes being introduced by South Ayrshire Council in this Strategy will have a positive effect on landlords' ability to provide a good service; "There are a considerable amount of Landlords who have a lack of knowledge on their statutory responsibilities. I think training is essential given the legislative changes that have come in or are about to come in. It's about giving people the opportunity to train. If they have the opportunity to train and they don't go it's up to them".

This is all the more important given that tenants are increasingly aware of what to expect in the private sector. Lynn notes; "When I started, many tenants weren't aware of their rights at all. I think the Tenant Information Pack, coupled with prominent stories in the media as well as campaigns by Shelter have made people far more aware of what to expect in a tenancy".

As the PRS will have a critical role to play in meeting housing needs locally over the next five years, it is vital that we have appropriate arrangements in place to support both landlords and tenants. Our plans to introduce a Landlord Accreditation and Training scheme, for instance, will help landlords provide the best service possible, keeping up-to-date with current legislation, and hearing about opportunities to train and learn.

Fuel Poverty and Climate Change



Councils throughout Scotland have a duty to work alongside the Scottish Government to eradicate fuel poverty as far as is reasonably practical³⁵.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 also requires Scottish greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by 42% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels.

What is Fuel Poverty?

“A household is in Fuel Poverty if, in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime, it would be required to spend more than 10% of its income (including Housing Benefit or Income Support for Mortgage Interest) on all household fuel use” (Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement, 2002).

Extreme Fuel Poverty is defined as being present where a household would be required to spend more than 20% of its income on all household fuel use.

Fuel Poverty is caused by a combination of different factors that can interact to make it difficult for households to appropriately heat their homes. The three most significant of these are;

- Low household income
- Fuel costs
- Energy Efficiency.³⁶

In addition to these factors, other housing circumstances – such as poor property condition and underoccupation - can also contribute to causing fuel poverty.

³⁵ Established in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 89(5)(b)

³⁶ Scottish Executive (2002) ‘Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement’

The Effects of Fuel Poverty

- Evidence suggests poor property condition, dampness and low temperatures have a clear link to poor health, including the effects of cold housing on the body's ability to fight diseases and infection³⁷ and the link between poor housing conditions and poor mental health^{38 39}.
- As well as impacts on health, Fuel Poverty has also been demonstrated to have a number of social impacts, including financial and social exclusion⁴⁰.
- The factors causing fuel poverty are not static, and as such the extent to which people are affected can change over time.
- Poor property condition, for example, could be exacerbated by a household's inability to heat their home.

Fuel Poverty in South Ayrshire

- 35% of households in South Ayrshire (or 18,000 households) are estimated to experience Fuel Poverty.
- 9% of all households in South Ayrshire are estimated to be in Extreme Fuel Poverty, accounting for approximately 5,000 households.
- These estimates show improvement from previous years, indicating that targeted efforts to alleviate fuel poverty are working.
- A recent study estimated that fuel poverty in South Ayrshire was most prevalent in;
 - **Older properties:** 50% of households in pre-1945 housing were in fuel poverty compared to 29% of those in properties built after 1945;
 - **Flats:** Flats were more likely to experience fuel poverty to those in houses (43% compared to 33%);
 - **Smaller properties:** 37% of households in 1 or 2 bedrooms were in Fuel Poverty compared to 34% with 3 or more bedrooms.
 - **Owner-occupied houses:** 35% of owner-occupiers were estimated to be in Fuel Poverty compared to 34% in the social rented sector.

³⁷ Environmental Epidemiology Unit (1999)

³⁸ Khanom (2000) cited in Shortt & Rugkasa (2007)

³⁹ Scottish Executive (2002) 'Housing and Mental Health in Scotland'

⁴⁰ Thomson (2011), The Marmot Review (2011)

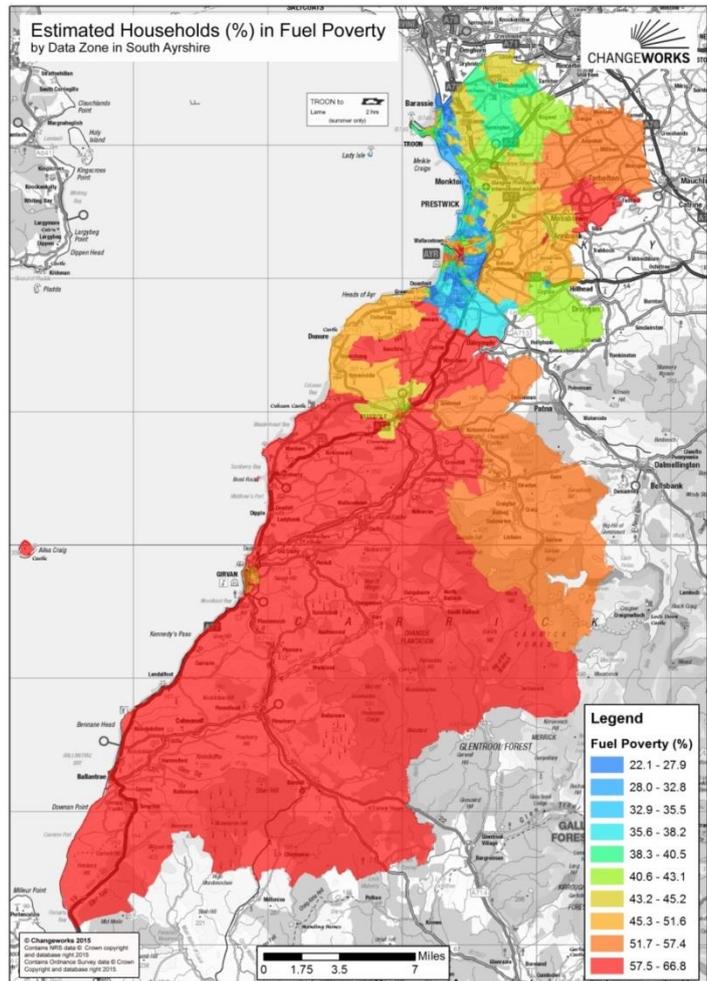
- **More pensioners** were estimated to be in fuel Poverty than families. 44% of pensioners (8,000 households) compared to were in Fuel 23% of families and 36% of adult only households⁴¹.

Location

Recent research carried out by Changeworks in 2015⁴² produced estimations of fuel poverty in South Ayrshire at a sub-local authority level by combining data from the Scottish House Condition Survey, and information from the 2011 Scottish Census about factors that might lead to fuel poverty, including employment data, proportions of households headed by a pensioner or where highest earners tend to be long-term sick or disabled.

Using this data, it was estimated that;

- The rural communities of South Ayrshire have a higher incidence of fuel poverty.
- Many areas with the highest proportion of fuel poverty were located in South Carrick, Girvan, North Carrick and Maybole.
- The Coalfield communities in the north of the local authority area were similarly estimated to have a higher proportion of fuel poverty.
- By contrast, most areas within the main population centres of Ayr, Prestwick and Troon were estimated to have relatively low levels of fuel poverty.
- There were, however, estimated to be pockets of concentrated fuel poverty in Dalmilling and Craigue, Alloway and Doonfoot, and Prestwick West⁴³.



⁴¹ Source: SHCS 2012-14, PRS data SHCS 2011-13

⁴² Changeworks (2015)

⁴³ See Changeworks Map (above) for an illustration of this.

Local Factors

A number of specific local factors also impact on fuel poverty locally;

- Approximately 15% of dwellings in South Ayrshire are off the gas grid, and as such are reliant on alternative (and potentially more expensive) heating types such as electric heating, LPG or heating oil boilers, wood burning stoves or coal fires.
- The off-grid locations throughout South Ayrshire tend to be focused in the rural areas to the North and South of the district, and include Annbank, Ballantrae, Barr, Barrhill, Dalrymple, Crosshill, Dailly, Kirkmichael, Pinwherry and Pinmore.
- Access to services has been identified as an issue in some rural areas within South Ayrshire. It is important that information about property condition, housing services and energy efficiency is readily available to communities throughout South Ayrshire.
- Fuel poverty in areas of Multiple Deprivation within the local authority area are also of key concern, and data around this is used to inform our planned investment in energy efficiency measures.
- As a sizeable minority of South Ayrshire's population are accommodated in rural and semi-rural settlements, it is clear that issues of rural poverty – and particularly fuel poverty – will be of critical concern in the years to come.



The recent installation of External Wall Insulation - combined with support from our Missing Shares scheme - improved the energy efficiency of 12 properties in Prestwick.

Climate Change

How does housing affect climate change?

It has been estimated that 25% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions were produced by the residential sector. The greenhouse gas emissions of a household will be determined by;

- Property condition
- Energy Efficiency
- Heating types
- Household behaviours

How could climate change affect housing?

Research undertaken by the Scottish Government indicates that climate change could have a significant impact on buildings and infrastructure throughout Scotland⁴⁴.

These impacts include;

- Property damage and health issues caused by rain penetration and mould;
- Damage to buildings close to areas that are at risk of floods or landslips;
- Damage as a result of wind-driven rain and resultant increases in surface water discharge from buildings;
- Particular damage to historic and listed buildings;
- Damage caused by increasing sea levels and the impacts of coastal erosion.

As much of South Ayrshire is on the coast, there is clearly a need to consider the impacts of climate change on our housing stock across the tenures.

⁴⁴ Scottish Government (2013) 'Climate Ready Scotland: Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme'

How is South Ayrshire Council responding to the challenges of fuel poverty and climate change?

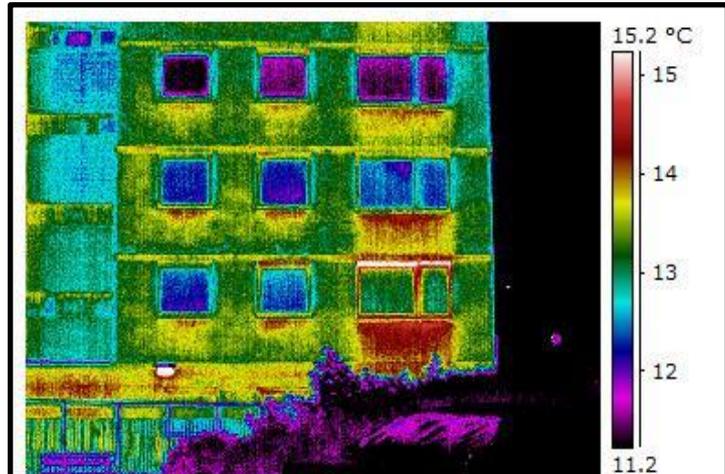
Energy Efficiency

The Council makes use of the Scottish Government's Home Energy Efficiency Programme Area Based Scheme (HEEPS;ABS) to provide energy efficiency measures to properties across all tenures in priority areas.

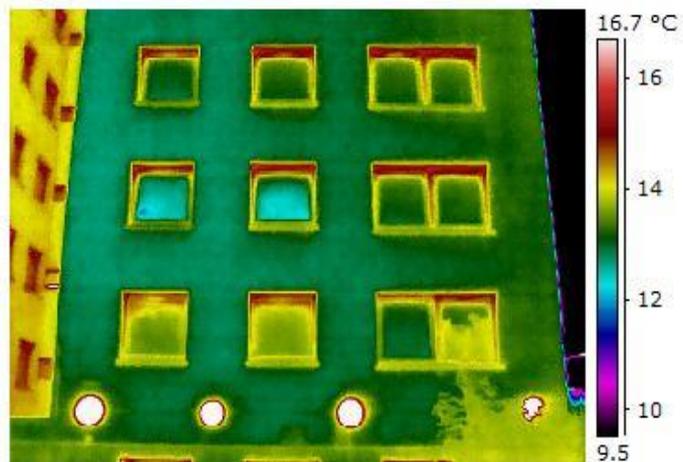
- These measures largely include new cavity wall insulation. The focus of the current scheme is to tackle Hard to Treat (HTT) properties where insulation retrofits are more complex and consequently more costly than for conventional cavity walls.
- South Ayrshire Council appoints the Energy Agency to manage the HEEPS:ABS project on their behalf. The Agency is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the works and impact

of measures. All households receive a post-installation pack and further advice on saving energy in the home.

- Over the last 3 years, South Ayrshire Council has received £4.6 million in HEEPS: ABS Funding and has committed a further £1.2 million pounds to improving properties throughout South Ayrshire. During this period more than 1,300 homes were targeted to receive energy efficiency upgrades. including properties in Girvan, Annbank, Ayr, Prestwick, Troon and the Rural South.
- A bid for funding for 2016-17 was successful, targeting properties in Ayr, Prestwick, Troon and Girvan.



Example property – mid floor flat, cavity wall before external insulation installed. EPC-EE rating 63 (image courtesy of IRT Surveys - EESSH website)



Example property – mid floor flat, cavity wall after external insulation installed. EPC-EE rating 76 (image courtesy of IRT Surveys – EESSH website)

- With respect to housing, carbon energy initiatives such as microgeneration, community renewables projects and district heating have been explored in previous years, but no project has yet been committed to. Despite this, our LHS sets out a commitment to continue to explore options around renewable energy for homes and communal areas in the coming years.

Maintaining the Rate of Improvement in the Social Rented Sector

As property condition has the potential to impact on both a household's greenhouse gas emissions and the extent to which they are in fuel poverty, the Scottish Government has placed a high priority on ensuring properties in the social rented sector meet relatively high property condition standards. This includes the requirement for properties to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by 2015 and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020. South Ayrshire Council will continue to work to rectify SHQS abeyances and exemptions, while supporting improvement of energy efficiency measures in its housing stock in the years to come. More details are provided in the previous section on Property Condition.

Accelerating the rate of improvement in the private sector

Improvements in the private sector are broadly supported through the HEEPS: ABS programme, as well as our Scheme of Assistance. These mechanisms support owners to improve the condition and energy efficiency of their properties. As part of our commitment to fuel poverty and reducing emissions the Energy Agency, in partnership with South Ayrshire Council, will continue to make sure people are aware of the opportunities that are open to them with regard to improving the energy efficiency of their home.

Corporate approaches to reducing our carbon footprint

Through our Sustainability Partnership, South Ayrshire Council raises awareness of environmental issues including climate change, and encourages partners to consider ways in which they can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Some specific actions we are undertaking as a Council to achieve these aims are as follows:

- Our Energy Management Team sets out actions, timescales and targets for reducing carbon emissions. The team retain a project list and register showing costs, savings, and emission reductions associated with each. Recent examples include:
 - The street lighting replacement program in 2016/17 installed LED lighting across South Ayrshire Council, generating a saving of 47 tonnes of CO₂e and over £11k annually; a saving that will continue year on year over the 25 year life span of this equipment.
 - Boiler replacements are a vital part of improving South Ayrshire Council building efficiency. Three major replacements have taken place in 2016/17, resulting in 83 tonnes of CO₂e and nearly £20k saved annually; a saving that will continue year on year over the 20 year life span of this equipment
 - Hot water optimisers were fitted to 7 SAC properties, saving 58 tonnes of CO₂e and over £10k annually.
- Work within sustainable travel is progressed through the Sustainable Development Team, the Ayrshire Roads Alliance, and the Ayr Active Travel Hub.
 - In 2016/17 1,500 individual travel plans were delivered to South Ayrshire Council employees, highlighting potential changes in their commute towards a more sustainable method of transport.
 - The Ayr Active Travel Hub opened at Ayr Station, giving advice on active travel and housing a fleet of 10 hire bikes. The team works throughout South Ayrshire Council and with the public, leading walks and cycles, delivering proficiency training, and giving bike maintenance sessions.

- Through its internal sustainability network, South Ayrshire Council has developed a number of behaviour change initiatives to reduce the energy consumption of our buildings and operations.
 - Switch off campaigns have shown an average 10% reduction in energy consumption over holiday periods.
 - School engagement campaigns have shown significant improvements in both recycling and energy efficiency, with one school saving over 10,000kWh and 3.8 tonnes of CO₂e. Others have shown a 50% increase in recycling alongside a 50% decrease in general waste to landfill.
- A draft climate Action Plan has been developed to create an all-encompassing, cross-departmental plan which will deliver actions designed to reduce the Council's fuel consumption in areas like development, procurement and travel.

South Ayrshire Council is nearing completion of the Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy, which will drive delivery of the Council's climate change duties over the next 5 years. These duties are part of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as well as a requirement under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003 to contribute to sustainable development. The SDCC strategy is underpinned with a cross departmental action plan to deliver mitigation and adaptation measures across the Authority area, putting South Ayrshire Council in the forefront of Scotland's push towards a more sustainable future.

How Energy Efficient is our Housing?



- Overall estimates of fuel poverty in South Ayrshire have reduced from 39% in 2011-13 to 35% in 2012-14 – the same as the national average.
- 44% of households in fuel poverty are pensioners compared to 36% adult households and 23% of families.
- Higher incidence of fuel poverty in rural areas in the south of the authority (South Carrick, Girvan, North Carrick and Maybole).
- 94.3% of council houses met the EESSH as at 31st March 2016.
- 9% of all households in South Ayrshire are estimated to be living in extreme fuel poverty, amounting to 5,000 households.
- 31% of households in the Private Rented Sector were estimated to be in fuel poverty.
- The Coalfield communities in the north of the authority are estimated to have a higher proportion of fuel poverty than other areas in the region.
- 15% of dwellings in South Ayrshire are off the gas grid and reliant on alternative heating types such as electric heating, coal fires and wood burning stoves – in Annbank, Ballantrae, Barr, Barrhill, Dalrymple.
- Over the previous 3 years, the Council received £4.6 million in HEEPS;ABS funding, during which 1300 homes have been targeted with new energy efficiency upgrades.

YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

“More information should be provided to help people access assistance to help with energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty. This information should be provided in a variety of ways including adverts, leaflets, at central points of contact and by word of mouth.”

“Older people and people with poor health in particular should be targeted for advice and assistance in accessing energy efficiency measures”.

“People should be supported in maximising their income to ensure they can meet their fuel costs”.

“Social housing tenants should be instructed on how to use their utilities efficiently, particularly where properties are fitted with storage heaters.

- We will ensure promotional materials advertising energy efficiency measures are up-to-date and widely available throughout South Ayrshire.
- We will fight fuel poverty by supporting tenants to switch suppliers and reviewing our procedures around referring clients to Money Advice, credit unions and the Energy Agency.
- We will develop generic guides for using common heating types to support tenants in their efficient use.

Achieving our outcomes – Fuel Poverty and Climate Change

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>Approximately one third of households in the private sector are experiencing fuel poverty.</p>	<p>Ensure promotional materials advertising energy efficiency measures are up to date and widely available and target these across priority areas.</p>
	<p>Continue to access national funding schemes to increase the number of properties receiving energy efficiency upgrades.</p>
	<p>Review procedures for referring households to specialist agencies such as the Energy Agency and Money Advice to maximise income and fuel economy.</p>
<p>Approximately one third of households in the social rented sector experience fuel poverty.</p>	<p>Examine options around supporting tenants to switch fuel suppliers where appropriate, and provide instructions on the best use of common heating systems.</p>
	<p>Explore and pursue options around sustainable energy generation for new social rented properties, including community heating systems and renewables.</p>
<p>Approximately one third of private rented households experience fuel poverty.</p>	<p>Distribute information on energy efficiency to landlords via newsletter, engagement events and training sessions.</p>

Neighbourhoods

South Ayrshire Council has always recognised that good quality housing is about more than bricks and mortar. As such, we are committed to improving our neighbourhoods and ensuring local people have a say in the areas where they live.

What have we achieved in the last 5 years?

Since the last Local Housing Strategy, we have:

- Greatly increased tenant participation, focusing on inclusive, transparent and collaborative approaches to tenant involvement.
- Developed a highly successful annual Communities Fun Day, offering information on housing-related services available within South Ayrshire as well as a wide range of fun activities for people of all ages.
- Established community clean up days in partnership with Community Development, tenants, residents and other agencies.
- Worked with national tenants' organisations to develop mystery shopping procedures.
- Created a Tenant Priority Fund to benefit local Registered Tenants' Organisations and support local projects.
- Introduced local targets for the resolution of anti-social behaviour.

What do we want to achieve in the next 5 years?

Giving consideration to the findings of the HNDA, the views of service users and our progress against the previous LHS, the Housing Quality and Neighbourhoods steering group agreed the following supporting outcomes in relation to sustainable communities:

- People across South Ayrshire live in safe, clean and sustainable neighbourhoods.
- People across South Ayrshire have the opportunity to have their say on issues affecting the communities where they live.

How do we currently support our neighbourhoods?



19 tenants who volunteer and participate within the Housing Service recently received awards for their work at the Voluntary Action South Ayrshire Volunteer Awards 2016.

Tenant and Resident Involvement

South Ayrshire Council prides itself on its approach to Tenant Participation. At the moment we have three tenant participation groups that play a key role in;

- Scrutinising performance, including tenant-led inspections, mystery shopping and the completion of our Social Housing Charter Return
- Improving the ways we communicate with our tenants, including

developing our Tenants' Newsletter and annual Performance Edition, and;

- Considering and influencing new service developments and policies.

Our tenant participation work often takes a co-production approach, with tenants involved throughout all stages of a variety of processes and functions.

In addition, the Housing Service also supports 16 registered Tenant and Resident organisations, and plays an active role in developing and supporting local area-based projects such as community clean ups in partnership with local residents.

Community Engagement

South Ayrshire Council Community Engagement staff and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) are working in partnership to offer assistance and support to communities, groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises, co-operatives, trusts and Community Councils locally free of charge.

Staff also support the administration of community councils through a grants scheme and the supervision of elections. Local planning groups are also supported in 6 local areas covering all of South Ayrshire and in the past year these have helped to administer the allocation of small grants to local groups to support community activity.

Antisocial Behaviour

Antisocial Behaviour happens when people act in a way that causes alarm or distress to others. This can damage a neighbourhood and affect the people who live there. South Ayrshire Council is committed to protecting its residents from this type of nuisance by adopting a multi-agency approach. The council has a dedicated Antisocial Behaviour Team which works in conjunction with Housing Officers, Police Officers, the Fire and Rescue Service, Education and colleagues in Health and Social care to ensure measures are in place to prevent Antisocial Behaviour from causing a problem in any of our neighbourhoods.

When preventative measures have not resolved a situation or when a case has escalated the Antisocial Behaviour Team will use legal powers to request an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) and/or a decree for eviction if the perpetrator is a council tenant.

Estate Management

The management of our estates is operated by our Housing Management Teams. Each team has dedicated Team Leaders, Housing Officers and Housing Assistants who manage void properties, allocate new tenancies, ensure new tenants are settled and inspect properties and gardens to ensure the conditions of the tenancy agreement are being adhered to. Officers have specialised knowledge of the estate and its tenants which is vital to the smooth running of Housing Operations and invaluable to the other agencies and services providing assistance in the area.

How sustainable are our neighbourhoods?

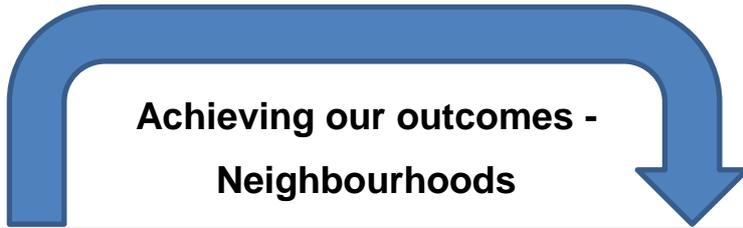
- Since 2011, 164 Notice of Proceedings (NOPs) have been issued for non-rent arrears issues in our communities.
- This includes 58 NOPs for anti-social behaviour, 46 NOPs relating to estate management and 49 NOPs for drug offences.
- 15 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders have been issued against SAC tenants since 2011.
- 280 Antisocial Cases have been opened against tenants of a private landlord since 2011.
- Community Development and Housing have held 9 clean-up days in Ayr, Maybole and Girvan since 2013, involving tenants, residents, staff and other volunteers.
- 175 people attended our most recent Tenant Family Fun and Information Day, with more than 400 people expected to attend this year's event.
- 36 tenants are actively involved in Tenant Participation.
- In 2015/16, we spent £10.25 per tenant on Tenant Participation activities.



YOU SAID...

...WE WILL!

<p><i>“Anti-social behaviour should be dealt with more robustly, with clear consequences for perpetrators. There should be more cooperation between agencies locally”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will review estate management, tenancy management and anti-social behaviour policies to make sure robust policies are in place.
<p><i>“Encourage people to take more responsibility and have pride in their own area. Encourage community action and support existing local initiatives.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will work with communities to create a programme of area-based improvement projects. These projects will focus on a wide range of issues, looking particularly at litter, gardens, public areas, property condition and anti-social behaviour.
<p><i>“Communities should be more actively involved in decision-making and their views should be taken into account when decisions are being made.”</i></p> <p><i>“Consider the barriers to people getting involved in decision-making and think of ways to get over these barriers, including different ways of engaging people”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will review how the housing service and our partners engage with tenants and residents, looking particularly at new ways of getting people involved.
<p><i>“Emphasise the engagement work being carried out and the positive changes made as a result of being involved in decision-making processes.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will continue to ensure tenants are actively involved in decision-making and scrutiny, and ensure we are reporting back on how consultation affects the decisions we take.



**Achieving our outcomes -
Neighbourhoods**

Challenge	Focus of Actions
<p>Tenants and residents told us that more could be done to make our communities better places to live, and that the community should be directly involved in this as far as possible.</p> <p>Tenants and residents are keen to have their say on the services we provide. Local authorities have a duty to involve tenants in decision-making processes.</p>	<p>Review estate management, tenancy management and anti-social behaviour policies and practices.</p> <p>Develop and promote awareness of funding schemes to support the work of local community groups.</p> <p>Develop incentive schemes to promote community involvement and positive actions taken by tenants and residents to improve areas or blocks.</p> <p>Create a programme of area-based improvement projects in partnership with other services, tenants and residents.</p> <p>Introduce information events at completion of new-build developments in partnership with waste management and environmental health.</p> <p>Continue to support tenant involvement in scrutinising performance and decision-making.</p> <p>Explore options to better formalise the ways we report on the outcomes of consultation and involvement throughout the community.</p> <p>Consider alternative approaches to community engagement, including engagement with existing groups and use of online resources.</p> <p>Review procedures for involving young people in community activities and decision-making.</p>

APPENDIX 1 - Strategic Environmental Assessment

As the “Responsible Authority” in the terms of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Council has a duty to determine whether the LHS will have significant environmental effects and therefore whether a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required. To that end, applying the relevant criteria as set out in Schedule 2 of the Act, the Council carried out a pre-screening of the draft LHS under Section 8(1) of the Act.

As the strategy is unlikely to have significant environmental effects, the Scottish Government advises that only a pre-screening notification to the SEA Gateway would be required. This is based on the assumption that decisions and options surrounding the environmental impact of housing development would be assessed through the Local Development Plan. A pre-screening notification was submitted to the SEA Gateway on 24 March 2016 and no concerns were raised by the relevant Consultation Authorities.

APPENDIX 2 – Steering Group Membership

More than 70 individuals representing 37 local organisations and services were involved in the development of our Local Housing Strategy through our Steering Groups. The following groups were represented on the Steering Groups and were consulted throughout the development process;

Aspire2gether	South Ayrshire Council Community Learning and Development
Ayr Housing Aid Centre	
Ayr Renaissance	South Ayrshire Council Community Safety
Ayrshire College	South Ayrshire Council Corporate Policy
Ayrshire Housing	South Ayrshire Council Estates
Blackwood Group	South Ayrshire Council Housing Operations
Blue Triangle Housing Association	
Cruden Homes	South Ayrshire Council Housing Policy and Strategy
Dawn Group	
Energy Agency	South Ayrshire Council Older People's Services
Hanover Housing	South Ayrshire Council Planning
Homes for Scotland	South Ayrshire Council Trading Standards and Environmental Health
LGBT Youth (South Ayrshire)	
Link Housing Association	South Ayrshire Council Waste Management
Persimmon Homes	
Scottish Government Housing Supply Division	South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership
SeAscape	South Ayrshire Women's Aid
South Ayrshire Council Adult Services	TC Stewart Construction
South Ayrshire Council Alcohol and Drug Partnership	Toner and McCartney Letting Agent
South Ayrshire Council Children and Families	Trust Housing Association
	Voluntary Action South Ayrshire
	West of Scotland Housing Association

WORKING WITH PARTNERS
AND COMMUNITIES TO
MAKE LIFE BETTER

