The purpose of this Annual Assurance Statement is to reassure the Scottish Housing Regulator, our tenants and other service users that Inverclyde Council complies with its regulatory and statutory obligations as set out in section 3 of the regulatory requirements. In areas where there is no (or part) material compliance we have indicated how we are planning to improve in those areas and the timeframe for improvement.

Homelessness Services

Inverclyde Council can confirm we continue to meet our statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation and homelessness assistance.

As a stock transfer authority Inverclyde is wholly reliant on the Section 5 referral process and a Local Lettings Initiative is in place to increase lets to homeless households to between 25%-30% of total lets in a close strategic partnership with the four main local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). There remains a focus on reducing the number of 'non-compliance' responses to Section 5 referrals.

The ability to meet our statutory duties in relation to homelessness, provide effective housing support, and facilitate access to settled accommodation is fundamental to our work. Through a trauma-informed approach, we seek to promote equality, uphold human rights, and ensure the safety and wellbeing of tenants and residents. People using our service have a direct relationship with a designated Officer, who provides initial support, direction, case management and assistance in accessing local Choice Based Lettings systems. Where additional support is required, a specialist Support Worker is also allocated to promote tenancy sustainment either in their current tenancy, in temporary accommodation or in the persons new tenancy.

We can confirm that Inverclyde Council achieves standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter relevant for tenants in a stock transfer authority i.e. people who are homeless and others who use our services.

The Housing Options, Homelessness & Community Integration Service completed a significant programme of change in the last Quarter of 2025/26, which included closure of hostel-style accommodation, a move to wholly community based temporary accommodation and a restructure of the staffing model which included the integration of the former New To Scots and Rapid Rehousing Support Teams to create a new Community Integration Team.

Work continues with statutory agencies to ensure a focus on prevention activity and to prepare for the introduction on 'Ask & Act'. Where people have complex needs, the Community Integration Team deliver our duty to provide support. This element of our service is regulated by the Care Inspectorate. Tenancy support is delivered in partnership with local RSLs, Third Sector organisations and integrated services within the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to increase successful outcomes in tenancy sustainment. Prevention remains our focus and we have seen a 14% reduction from 2024/25 in the number of households re-assessed as homeless within one year.

The total number of applications in 2025/26 reduced by 3% from the previous year, however, the % of those applicants subsequently being assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness in that period is 94%. This is higher than the national average and indicates that a higher proportion of people presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness in Inverclyde require a Service.

We continue to meet our duty to assess homelessness within 28 days and provide temporary accommodation for households where homelessness cannot be prevented. In the reporting year covered by this Annual Assurance Statement the average time from application to assessment in Inverclyde was 10 days.

Our temporary accommodation is now wholly community based, with 100 units leased from the local housing associations. In 2025/26 the number of refusals of temporary accommodation fell 77% from 195 in 2024/25 to 45. This is believed to be as a direct result of the closure of our hostel-style accommodation and improvement in the standard of temporary accommodation offered, which better meets needs. This decrease, whilst welcome, has placed an unexpected pressure on the 100 temporary accommodation units currently held as temporary accommodation stock and across Quarter 2 of 2025/26 Unacceptable Accommodation, in the form of hotel accommodation, had to be utilised to meet our duty to provide temporary accommodation.

Housing Stock

Last year it was reported that Inverclyde Council had eight houses, three of which did not fall within the scope of the Scottish Housing Regulator as one was vacant and, on the market, and the other two are not on Scottish Secure Tenancies. The house which was previously on the market has now sold. The council therefore currently has seven houses in total, two of which fall outwith the scope of the Regulator.

All of Inverclyde Council's housing stock had condition surveys carried out in March 2022 by external agents, Brown & Wallace Building Surveyors. The report highlighted several repairs and upgrades required to the houses to ensure they met current SHQS and EESSH standards. The council is currently in the final stages of transferring the ownership of these five houses to Sanctuary Homes. The Council has continued to address routine maintenance, compliance activity and emergency repairs to the houses over the past year.

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS Scotland) were appointed to act as the independent tenant advisor and meetings were carried out with the tenants, officers from Sanctuary Homes, a council officer and the TPAS representative. Sanctuary also completed further condition surveys of the five houses and discussions regarding upgrading all houses to current SHQS and EESSH standards, plus additional works as considered necessary, were concluded with the agreed scope reflected in the transfer promises as part of the stage 2 notices issued to tenants. All tenants had previously been engaged through the first formal Notice which contained the incentives on offer, including a two-year rent freeze as well as upgrades to each house.

Following a ballot there was a majority vote in favour of the transfer with the process currently underway to conclude the transfer of ownership to Sanctury Scotland. The Council agreed works are progressing towards completion with all works contained within the final formal notice to be completed by Sanctuary Homes within the first year of transfer.

Currently three of the five houses pass both the SHQS and the EESSH, these are St Francis former schoolhouse, St Patrick's former schoolhouse and Ardgowan former schoolhouse. In terms of future energy efficiency upgrades St Francis and St Patrick's are both timber framed houses which are unsuitable for cavity wall insulation, and Ardgowan former schoolhouse is of solid construction and so has no cavity to insulate. The remaining two houses fail the SHQS as they require insulation improvements, these houses are Moorfoot former schoolhouse and Whinhill former schoolhouse. Of the two houses failing the SHQS, one also fails the EESSH. It is noted that Moorfoot former schoolhouse would require the permission of an adjacent owner before insulation improvements could be considered.

The Council will retain the two houses which are located within parks; however, these are not on Scottish Secure Tenancies and are therefore not affected by the legislation.

We confirm that we have utilised and considered appropriate evidence to give us this assurance. This Assurance Statement was formally approved by the Council's Environment & Regeneration Committee on 29th October 2026.

Cllr Michael McCormick
Convenor
Environment & Regeneration Committee
Inverclyde Council