



Fuel Poverty & Climate Change

A research paper to inform the development of
the North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2017-
2022

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یہ دستاویز دیگر شکلوں میں بھی دستیاب ہے، جیسے آڈیو ٹیپ، سی ڈی، بریل اور بڑے حروف کی
چھپائی میں۔ درخواست کرنے پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں بھی مہیا کی جا سکتی ہے۔

該文件還有其他形式，如語音磁帶、CD、盲文版本及大字體版本。如有需求，還提供
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Ten dokument jest do uzyskania w różnych formatach: na taśmie dźwiękowej, płycie
CD, brajlem i dużym drukiem. Na żądanie, można go także otrzymać w innych
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Contents

Introduction	2
Legislative Drivers	4
National Strategic Drivers	4
Local Strategic Drivers	6
Equality Statement	8
Research	9
Consultation	10
Profile of North Ayrshire	13
Understanding and Defining Fuel Poverty	20
Factors That Influence Fuel Poverty	21
Tackling Fuel Poverty	22
Interventions	25
Scottish Government Funding and Programmes	25
Other Schemes	27
Conclusion	28
Outcome Plan	29
References	35
Appendix	37
Feedback Form	45

Introduction

1. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a duty on local authorities to develop Local Housing Strategies, consulted by its local partners and informed by a Housing Need and Demand Assessment.
2. The Scottish Government is committed to eradicating fuel poverty in Scotland, as far as is reasonably practicable, and prioritises this within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. November 2016 was set within the Scottish Fuel Poverty Statement 2002 for achieving this objective. It has been accepted that this target has not been met. An updated target has not been set but is welcomed. North Ayrshire Council remain committed to the eradication of fuel poverty and aims to achieve this by improving the energy efficiency of homes throughout North Ayrshire, raising the awareness of assistance and maximising income.
3. Fuel poverty affects the most vulnerable residents in our communities and can have adverse impacts on their well-being. North Ayrshire Council's Single Outcome Agreement vision is to create "North Ayrshire - A Better Life" and shows our dedication to improving the lives of North Ayrshire residents. This includes tackling fuel poverty and related climate change issues.
4. Fuel poverty is not a static issue and many factors will determine if a household will fall into fuel poverty or indeed extreme fuel poverty. Rising fuel prices, low household incomes and energy inefficient properties all have an adverse effect on fuel poverty levels. This strategy aims to support the Local Housing Strategy, by outlining the current fuel poverty levels within North Ayrshire. As well as identify how the Council and its partners intend to minimise the impacts of fuel poverty for North Ayrshire residents.
5. Fuel Poverty is one of a number of topic-specific papers that together form the North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, and these strands are summarised in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: TOPIC PAPERS OF THE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022



6. Following final consultation, the strategic interventions identified through the development of this topic paper will be included within the North Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022. The full consultation process is presented within the Consultation topic paper.

Legislative Drivers

7. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is the principal legislative driver for the Local Housing Strategy. It places a statutory requirement on local authorities in Scotland to produce a Local Housing Strategy which sets out its strategy, priorities and plans for the delivery of housing and related services.
8. Other legislative influences which relate to fuel poverty & climate change include:
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
 - Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
 - Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
 - Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016

National Strategic Drivers

9. The Scottish Government states its purpose is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. It has set 16 National Outcomes which, if met, should achieve the Government's purpose (Scottish Government, 2016a).
10. Housing makes a vital contribution to a number of these national outcomes. Four of the National Outcomes are of particular relevance to the North Ayrshire's rural communities:
 - We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
 - We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
 - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.

- Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it (Scottish Government, 2016a).

11. This topic paper contributes to achieving the National Outcomes.

Homes fit for the 21st century: The Scottish Government's Strategy and Action Plan for Housing in the next decade: 2011-2020 (Scottish Government, 2011)

12. The Scottish Government's sets two overarching objectives for housing this decade:

- To build new, high quality, affordable homes (including social housing) to meet current need and demand arising from our growing and ageing population.
- To maximise the sustainable housing options available across all tenures, including for people living on lower incomes, and to significantly improve the quality of the existing housing stock and the places we create (Scottish Government, 2011a).

13. Increasing supply and improving housing choice and equity have been at the heart of the Scottish Government's housing policies since the publication of Homes Fit for the 21st Century.

14. The national strategy expires in 2020 but the new Local Housing Strategy covers the period 2017- 2022. Any national strategic policy updates which may influence the delivery of the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 outcomes should be noted.

Local Housing Strategy Guidance 2014

15. Local Housing Strategy guidance outlines that The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on Scottish Ministers to ensure that nobody is living in fuel poverty by November 2016. The act requires local authorities to produce a Local Housing Strategy which ensures that as far as practicable nobody lives in fuel poverty across all housing tenures;

Addressing Climate change and fuel poverty are key priorities for Scottish Ministers. Local authorities, through both their strategic role and wealth of local knowledge and action, have a significant part to play in ensuring that people live in warm, dry, energy efficient, low carbon homes which they can afford to heat (Scottish Government, 2014).

16. The Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 seeks to address fuel poverty and to ensure this target is achieved within North Ayrshire.

Local Strategic Drivers

North Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement

17. The North Ayrshire Single Outcome Agreement between the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership and the Scottish Government sets the priority outcomes for North Ayrshire. The Agreement details how the Community Planning Partnership will work towards achieving these priorities, and how they contribute to the delivery of national priorities.

18. There are three outcomes within the Single Outcome Agreement that are supported by this strategy:

- A working North Ayrshire.
- A healthy and active North Ayrshire.
- A safe and secure North Ayrshire.

Council Plan 2015 - 2020

19. The Council Plan 2015-2020 sets five key priorities for North Ayrshire:

- Priority 1: Growing our economy, increasing employment and regenerating towns.
- Priority 2: Working together to develop stronger communities.
- Priority 3: Ensuring people have the right skills for learning, life and work.
- Priority 4: Supporting all of our people to stay safe, healthy and active.
- Priority 5: Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations.

20. Under each of these priorities is a set of outcomes which the Council will seek to achieve by 2020. Housing has a role to play in achieving a number of these outcomes:

- To have towns that are more vibrant with a wider choice of quality housing as well as retail and leisure facilities (Priority 1).
- To have sustainable island communities (places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life) (Priority 1).
- There to be a supply of high-quality, affordable housing that meets the changing needs of our communities (Priority 4).
- To prevent homelessness and make sure that people who have been made homeless have access to permanent housing (Priority 4).
- Less antisocial behaviour in North Ayrshire (Priority 4).
- Buildings, homes and our work to be energy efficient, fit for purpose and high quality (Priority 5).

Equality Statement

21. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all North Ayrshire residents and to addressing any form of discrimination on the grounds of:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Religion or Belief;
- Gender;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Sexual Orientation; and
- Maternity or Pregnancy.

22. We will eliminate discrimination and harassment from the services we are responsible for and we will take appropriate action to achieve this, including legal and non-legal remedies.

23. This topic paper has been subject to an equality impact assessment which is included in Appendix A.

Research

North Ayrshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment

24. The updated Housing Need and Demand Assessment offers an analysis of North Ayrshire at a sub-housing market area level. A housing market area can be defined as the area within which people will search for housing and within which they are willing to move, greatly influenced by factors affecting mobility (Scottish Government, 2003). This paper is informed by the findings of the North Ayrshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment and supplementary research.

Localities

25. The North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is committed to Locality Planning in order to develop strong local partnerships that focus on engaging with people and local communities. In 2012 the Council and its Community Planning Partners adopted a Locality Planning approach, establishing six commonly agreed localities (based around existing geographic neighbourhoods). A bespoke approach is taken to planning services in each of these areas.

26. There are 6 Locality Partnerships in North Ayrshire, and with one exception, these mirror Sub Housing Market Areas identified in the Housing Need & Demand Assessment.

Sub Housing Market Area	Locality
Arran	Arran
North Coast (including Cumbrae)	North Coast & Cumbraes
Garnock Valley	Garnock Valley
Three Towns	Three Towns
Irvine (including Springside, Dreghorn & Drybridge)/Kilwinning	Irvine (including Springside, Dreghorn & Drybridge)
	Kilwinning

Consultation

27. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires Local Authorities to consult on their Local Housing Strategy. This process necessitates the involvement of a wide range of local residents. Local Housing Strategy guidance directs that early engagement with partners and stakeholders is essential in identifying priorities and determining how to deal with them.
28. Consultation should be conducted through a range of different media to ensure that engagement is representative of the residents of the region and the local population is accurately reflected within the Local Housing Strategy. Many individuals may not readily be reflected within traditional engagement methods and the consultation process should account for this (Scottish Government, 2014).
29. Therefore, as part of the development of the North Ayrshire Council Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, it is important to seek input from as varied and broad a section of North Ayrshire society as possible. The development of the fuel poverty topic paper was informed by several consultation events with key stakeholders. This included workshops and surveys.

Local Housing Strategy Surveys

30. As part of the consultation process to inform North Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, residents from across North Ayrshire were invited to share their views and opinions on housing by completing a series of surveys. Surveys were advertised and made available through the North Ayrshire Council website and Facebook page (North Ayrshire Council, 2016).
31. One of the clearest findings to emerge from resident surveys is the lack of awareness and understanding that residents have of energy efficiency. Less than half (49%) of social rented tenants who responded stated that their property has insulation. This is despite social landlords in North Ayrshire reporting almost complete compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standards, which require that properties are insulated.
32. 63% of owner-occupiers and 41% of private renters state that they have insulation. In contrast with these self-reported figures, the Scottish House

Condition Survey (Scottish Government, 2014b) estimates that 9% of North Ayrshire homes do not have loft insulation.

33. On a positive note, only 10% of respondents stated they would not be interested in installing renewable energy or energy efficient items. In contrast, 63% stated that financial incentives would encourage them to do so. This suggests that there is fairly widespread interest from residents in improving the energy efficiency of their homes.

Building Solutions – Local Housing Strategy 2017 – 2022 Workshop

34. To conclude the consultation process of the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 a workshop entitled 'Building Solutions' was held at the Ardeer Centre in Stevenston.

35. The purpose of this workshop was to consult with residents, key strategic stakeholders and community groups on strategic outcomes and actions.

36. Respondents were asked to consider the key housing issues faced by North Ayrshire residents with regards to fuel poverty. The key emerging themes from the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 workshop was better education on fuel poverty, awareness of services and the associated issues of rising fuel costs, particularly to the elderly and vulnerable.

37. Consultation responses are detailed in table 1. Further details on consultation methodology, responses and findings can be located within the Consultation topic paper.

TABLE 1: FUEL POVERTY CONSULTATION RESPONSES (SOURCE: BUILDING SOLUTIONS WORKSHOP)

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
<p>Make sure info is available to let everyone know grants that are available. Government grants available but not enough</p> <p>Roadshows to educate people about fuel poverty and grant availability</p>	<p>Education needed for people on how to be more energy efficient to stay warm and save money -Advertise agencies who can support people</p> <p>Not all properties suitable for cavity wall insulation or external cladding</p>	<p>Develop info leaflet giving people advice/hints/tips on how to conserve energy.</p>
<p>Need for education (targeted at most fuel poor areas. Educating young people – cost of fuel, moving into houses.</p>	<p>Consider district heating systems, increase use of renewable technologies</p>	<p>Scottish government previously had adverts giving advice on how to reduce bills – could the council do something similar?</p> <p>Energy prices are a problem – shopping around can reduce bills, but this can be confusing</p>
<p>Look at district heating systems for new builds to ensure high efficiency</p>	<p>Payback term in schemes is too long for older people</p>	<p>Make landlords meet the same standards as social landlords – need to be stricter on private sector housing</p>
<p>Lack of awareness of switching services etc. energy-efficient products.</p>	<p>People do not always understand pre-payment meters + standing charges and tariffs</p>	<p>Encourage homeowners and actively support them to heat home/make home more energy efficient</p>
<p>Fuel Poverty leads to a poverty trap – homelessness vicious cycle – potential for homelessness</p>	<p>Older people do not always put the heating on so they can other essentials which can lead to health issues.</p>	<p>Tenants sometimes refuse entry to allow new heating to be put in as they do not want the disruption</p>
<p>Smart meters are way forward: ability to check current status of accounts</p>	<p>Difficulties in retrofitting energy efficiency measures</p>	<p>Can have a ripple impact on other services e.g. social services/health care</p>
<p>Difficulty affording new heating systems for people on</p>	<p>Scottish Government proposals for a common</p>	

moderate /above breadline income.	energy standard may cause difficulties	
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Profile of North Ayrshire

Population

38. The National Records of Scotland notes that in 2015 there were 136,130 residents in North Ayrshire accounting for 2.5% of Scotland’s population. This is a local population decrease of 0.3% from 2014 (National Records of Scotland, 2016). Figure 2 illustrates population projections for North Ayrshire and Figure 3 presents the projected percentage change in population by age structure for North Ayrshire between 2014 and 2039.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY NUMBER OF RESIDENTS FOR NORTH AYRSHIRE 2014-2039 (SOURCE: NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND)

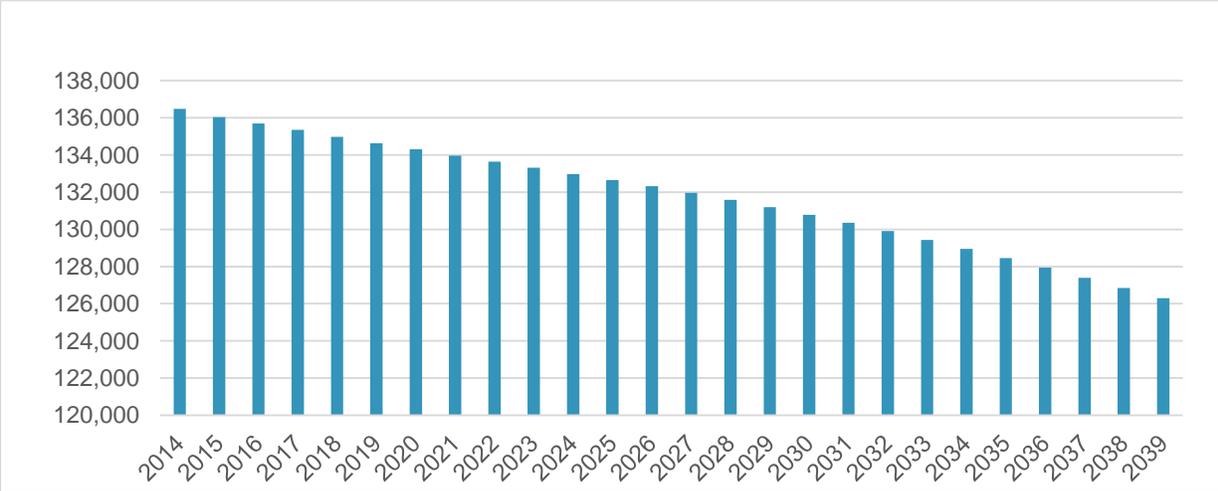
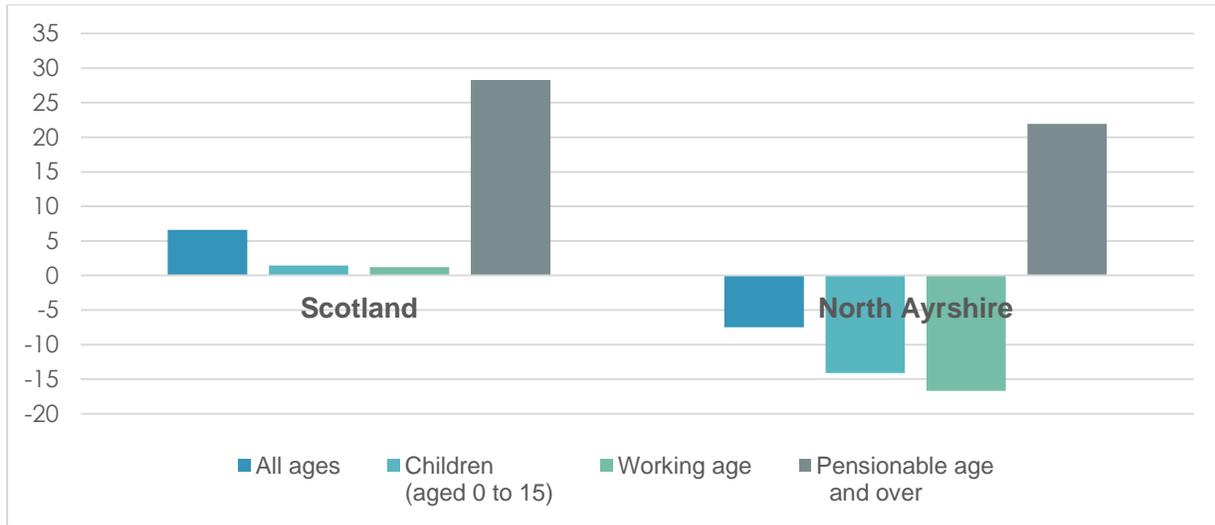


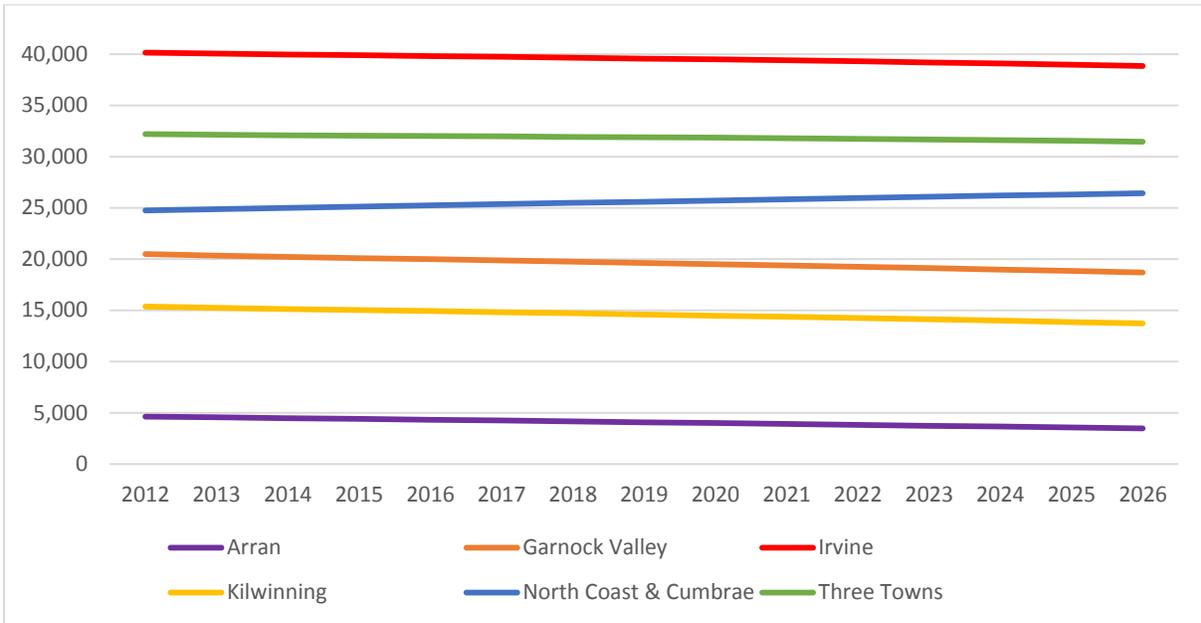
FIGURE 3: PROJECTED PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN POPULATION BY AGE STRUCTURE FOR NORTH AYRSHIRE 2014-2039 (SOURCE: NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND)



39. Nationally, projections indicate a growth in the general population of 6.6% and more significantly within the older population. In contrast, figure 3 illustrates a decline in North Ayrshire’s population of 7.5%. Notably, the population of those of pensionable age and over is to increase by 22% in line with the national trend.

40. The National Records of Scotland have forecast how population change will affect each locality up to 2026 illustrated in figure 4.

FIGURE 4: POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR NORTH AYRSHIRE 2012-2026 BY LOCALITY (SOURCE: NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND, 2014)



41. The North Ayrshire Housing Need and Demand Assessment indicates that there is a total of 62,498 households (North Ayrshire Council, 2016). The Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) estimates that 40%, approx. 25,000 of these households are in fuel poverty, with 9% (approx. 6,000) of these properties, experiencing extreme poverty (Scottish Government, 2014b). The challenge facing local authorities is to determine where these households are and how best to assist them.

Income

42. Low household income is closely linked to an increased risk of falling into fuel poverty. North Ayrshire has felt a significant impact from the economic downturn. With both income levels, employment levels and job security lower than that of the Scottish average (North Ayrshire, 2013).

43. North Ayrshire Council is working hard to improve this situation and has seen an increase of those of working age in employment rise by 8.3% between 2012/13 to 2014/15. There has also been a steady rise in Median earnings for North Ayrshire’s workforce, from £443.30 per week in 2013 to £506 in 2015. Both indicators exceeding targets set out in North Ayrshire’s Single Outcome Agreements.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

44. The Scottish Government published the latest version of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) on the 31st August 2016. The SIMD uses a range of socio-economic data to calculate deprivation across small areas known as data zones. There are 6,976 data zones across Scotland each with a population of between 250 and 3,500 people. Table 1 illustrates historically the number of North Ayrshire data zones, by locality, in the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DATA ZONES IN 15% MOST DEPRIVED IN SCOTLAND BY NORTH AYRSHIRE LOCALITY AREA - 2004-2016 (SOURCE: WWW.NORTH-AYRSHIRE.GOV.UK / SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION, 2016)

Most deprived 15%	2004	2006	2009	2012	2016	Change 04-12	Change 12-16
Irvine	10	10	14	16	19	6	9
Kilwinning	6	4	6	5	6	-1	1
Three Towns	15	16	19	19	18	4	-1
Garnock Valley	2	3	4	6	7	4	1
North Coast	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Arran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Ayrshire	33	33	43	46	51	13	5

45. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) provides us with valuable information which helps improve the understanding of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. Current SIMD figures (2016) identifies that 51 of North Ayrshire’s 179 datazones are currently within the 15% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

46. Looking specifically within the income domain this rises to 52 datazones. Table 2 shows at SIMD datazone level, thirteen datazones that fall within the 5% most

income deprived areas in Scotland. Areas of Ardrossan, Irvine, Saltcoats, Stevenston and Kilwinning are within the top 5% income deprived

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF NORTH AYRSHIRE DATA ZONES IN TOP 5% MOST INCOME DEPRIVED IN SCOTLAND (SOURCE: SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION, 2016)

Datazone	Data Zone name	SIMD16 Income Domain Rank	SIMD16_Rank	SIMD16_Decile
S01011218	Irvine Castlepark South - 02	229	345	1
S01011229	Irvine Fullarton - 01	211	214	1
S01011230	Irvine Fullarton - 02	49	40	1
S01011235	Stevenston Ardeer - 03	112	185	1
S01011238	Saltcoats Central - 02	153	189	1
S01011240	Saltcoats Central - 04	70	45	1
S01011243	Ardrossan Central - 02	15	17	1
S01011244	Ardrossan Central - 03	181	150	1
S01011292	Kilwinning West and Blacklands - 04	259	260	1
S01011294	Kilwinning Central and North - 01	311	330	1
S01011216	Irvine Castlepark North - 05	176	376	1
S01011217	Irvine Castlepark South - 01	307	459	1
S01011285	Kilwinning Pennyburn - 01	325	695	1

Rural Properties

47. Proportionally more households in rural areas are in fuel poverty than the national average. Additional disadvantages, remote communities face include; older property types, climatic conditions, lack of mains gas, the reluctance of contractors to carry out works for remote residents as well as increased costs due to the transportation of workers and materials.

48. North Ayrshire has approximately 6,500 people living within its rural communities, which include the islands of Cumbrae and Arran. The two island communities equating to 5% of the overall population of North Ayrshire. Both islands have a significantly older demographic than either the North Ayrshire or Scottish average. Furthermore, 50% of homes on Arran and 46% on Cumbrae are owned

outright. Factors which may exacerbate the asset rich, income poor scenario which has strong links with fuel poverty.

49. The population of North Ayrshire is not predicted to increase or decrease from 2008 to 2018. However, the number of people over the age of 65 years living in North Ayrshire is predicted to increase significantly. The Isle of Arran is predicted to increase by 31% by 2031 (North Ayrshire Council, 2016). This along with the requirement to use higher priced fuel, due to the lack of a gas connection, increase the risk of people falling into fuel poverty.

Private Sector

50. The SHCS 2013 estimated that 43% of owned properties would fail the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) due to poor energy efficiency. In 2009, the Council commissioned a Private Sector Condition Survey where private stock was assessed against the SHQS. It found that 70% of private houses in North Ayrshire would fail, primarily due to poor energy efficiency. The survey also suggests that energy efficiency is a concern of many householders in North Ayrshire. The Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum, suggests that support is not always reaching the required householders. Therefore, causing a lack of understanding of their energy efficiency behaviour, new technologies and the associated benefits and potential savings it can bring (Scottish Government, 2014c).
51. The SHCS also indicates that under occupancy is more prevalent in owner-occupied homes. Estimating that 26% of North Ayrshire owned properties are under occupied. This, in turn, may result in owners not heating or partially heating their property in order to reduce fuel bills.

Social Rented Stock

52. The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) is a mandatory standard for Social Landlords which has superseded the SHQS standard for energy from 2015. ESSH brings new challenges to Local Authorities but hopes to encourage the leadership of carbon emission reduction from homes and addressing fuel poverty.
- As of 31st March 2016, 89.3% of the 13,000 Council owned homes comply with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing 2020.

- 161 new Council homes built to Eco Homes 'Very Good' or equivalent standard

Fuel Prices

53. The biggest challenge in the eradication of fuel poverty are rising fuel costs. Councils and indeed, the Scottish Government have little control over the cost of fuel. A slight decrease in prices has been evident this year, an average 2015 electricity bill has decreased by £8 since 2014, to £584. The average 2015 gas bill decreasing by £37 since 2014, to £715 and the average 2015 combined electricity and gas bills falling by £45 to £1,299. Unfortunately, this is not a trend that has been apparent over the past 10 years. As shown in Table 2 fuel prices have risen dramatically since 2005.

TABLE 2: TABLE 2 CHANGES IN ENERGY BILLS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS (SOURCE: QUARTERLY ENERGY PRICES, DECC, DECEMBER 2015)

Year	Average Annual Gas Bill £	Average Annual Electricity Bill £
2005	317	318
2006	387	374
2007	441	415
2008	517	477
2009	582	488
2010	564	474
2011	617	513
2012	686	542
2013	729	577
2014	752	592
2015	715	584

54. It has also become evident that although competition in the energy market may have led to reduced prices for some, for others it has brought tariff confusion and switching apathy which has resulted in higher fuel costs. The market regulator OFGEM has from August 2013 through to June 2014 introduced a range of reforms to make the market “simpler, clearer and fairer”. Insisting on the simplification of energy tariffs (four per fuel type per supplier) and billing statements to suppliers providing customers with fairer treatment, increased consumer protection and removal of expensive ‘dead’ tariffs (Ofgem, 2017).

Mains Gas

55. There remains concerned by the number of fuel poor households who are not connected to the gas grid and are reliant on electricity and other fuels, such as oil, for their primary heating source (Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum, 2016).

56. Areas with no mains gas in North Ayrshire at an increased risk of fuel poverty through the need for more expensive fuels.

- The Isle of Arran
- The Isle of Cumbrae
- Barrmill
- Gateside
- Multi-story dwellings (various locations)

Understanding and Defining Fuel Poverty

Defining Fuel Poverty

57. “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 Government, 2002)”. If more than 20% of household income is spent on household fuel, the household would then be regarded as being in ‘extreme’ fuel poverty.

58. A **'satisfactory heating regime' for a household**, as recommended by the World Health Organisation, requires achieving 21° C in the living room and 18° C in other rooms for a period of 9 hours in every 24 (or 16 in 24 over the weekend); with two hours being in the morning and seven hours in the evening. For elderly and infirm households, this increases to 23° C in the living room and 18° C in other rooms, to be achieved for 16 hours in every 24.

Fuel Poverty Target

59. As a priority within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Section 89 (5) (b), local authorities are required to develop local housing strategies that ensure “so far as reasonably practicable that persons do not live in fuel poverty”¹. North Ayrshire Council’s, Local Housing Strategy 2011-2016, fully supports the eradication of fuel poverty and aims to ensure “that everyone in North Ayrshire has access to a warm dry home, which they can afford to heat and which is well insulated (North Ayrshire Council, 2011).”

60. Through Council led energy efficiency programmes, partnership working and the delivery of Scottish Government programmes, North Ayrshire Council has worked hard to mitigate fuel poverty. Unfortunately, it has been reported that there has been an increase in fuel poverty levels across Scotland, by 12.9% from 2010 to 2014 (Scottish Government, 2014). This is largely due to macro-economic factors driving up energy prices faster than inflation in recent years. North Ayrshire Council remains committed to providing continual action and

support, to achieve the eradication fuel poverty within North Ayrshire and Scotland as a whole.

61. The latest fuel poverty statistics from the SHCS 2014 report (published December 2015) show that:

- Households in Scotland in fuel poverty, 2014 – 845,000 or 34.9%
- Households in Scotland in extreme fuel poverty, 2014 – 229,000 or 9.5%

Fuel Poverty Data

62. Fuel poverty data for Scotland is derived from the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS). This is an annual survey, which involves a Scotland-wide sample of around 3,000 households per year. The data collected from these surveys is processed and weighted with the data collect from the previous two years, thus providing the most accurate estimates available for various indicators including fuel poverty. Figures for this strategy have been taken from the most recent SHCS Local Authority Tables 2012-2014.

Factors That Influence Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty

63. Fuel poverty is a complex issue, with three main factors influencing whether households are in or are close to being in fuel poverty.

- **Low household income** – A low-income household requires to spend a higher proportion of their income on heating their home to a satisfactory level.
- **Fuel prices** – High fuel bills result in more household income being spent on heating homes.
- **Energy efficiency of homes and heating systems** - The thermal efficiency of a building, along with the efficiency and the efficient use of heating systems, determine the amount of fuel that needs to be purchased.

64. These are in no way exclusive, other factors that may lead or contribute to fuel poverty include:

- The under occupancy of properties
- Elderly or disabled individuals that may require extra warmth
- Lack of mains gas supply (rural properties)
- Household behaviour

Climate Change

65. In the UK, around 25% of all greenhouse gases emissions are derived from energy used in our homes (UK Government, 2010) making the links between fuel poverty and climate change clear. Therefore, measures to improve domestic energy efficiency are crucial to meeting both climate change and fuel poverty objectives.

66. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 created a statutory framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A key objective being, to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, with an interim target set at 42% by 2020.

67. In order to meet these targets, domestic energy use must be addressed. Through increased thermal insulation of homes, renewable heat and electricity and energy awareness. It is essential that this is managed in such a way that the

needs of the fuel poor are addressed right now and that actions taken contribute to reductions in carbon emissions and the overall eradication of fuel poverty.

Tackling Fuel Poverty

68. In order to aid the eradication of fuel poverty within North Ayrshire, five outcomes have been identified.

- Outcome 1: Identification of fuel poor households,
- Outcome 2: Improved access to high-quality information,
- Outcome 3: Income Maximisation,
- Outcome 4: Investment in renewable technologies
- Outcome 5: Increase household energy efficiency across all tenures

These objectives are detailed in our action plan.

Existing Services tackling fuel poverty

Local Energy Advice Forum

69. North Ayrshire's Local Energy Advice Forum was founded in 2009. The forum comprises of a wide range of local and national agencies, from the public, private, voluntary and charitable sectors, with the aim of providing a multiagency approach to tackling all influences of fuel poverty. The partnership provides a single point of access and referral system for the public to help reduce energy costs, promote affordable warmth, increase energy efficiency and maximise income.

70. Partners include, North Ayrshire Citizens Advice Service, Home Energy Scotland (main contact number for LEAF), Housing Associations, Care and Repair, DWP, BeGreen Dalry, Foodbanks, Community Housing Advocacy Project (CHAP) as well as many council departments including, Energy and Sustainability, NAC Libraries, Private Sector Team and Money Matters. The Forum is continually looking for organisations that can help assist the communication of LEAF and the help its members can provide. Partnership with organisations such as the NHS is being investigated.

Private Sector Team

71. The Private Sector advice line offers advice and assistance to all homeowners, private tenants and private landlords in North Ayrshire. Information is given on housing matters including energy efficiency and reaching 'tolerable standard' the minimum level of repair that a house must meet to be acceptable as living accommodation.

Money Matters

72. The North Ayrshire Money Matters Team provides free, impartial and confidential information and advice on benefit related issues. They help inform clients about the best way to manage money and provide expert advice, assistance and representation on debt issues.

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS)

73. Citizens Advice Scotland is Scotland's largest independent advice network, providing assistance on issues such as debt, energy supplier complaints, energy efficiency advice and much more. North Ayrshire Citizens Advice Bureau also runs 'Big Energy Savings Week' which invites local residents to engage with a range of organisations at local events.

Interventions

Scottish Government Funding and Programmes

Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS)

74. HEEPS: ABS follows an area-based approach, providing funding for private properties, with an initial focus on the most deprived areas in Scotland. Schemes draw on a range of data including indices of multiple deprivation, child poverty and the Scottish House Condition Survey.

75. Responsibility for programme delivery falls to local authorities, who are considered best placed through their Local Housing Strategies to understand the nature of housing provision and to co-ordinate a local supply-chain. Measures available are dependent on the schemes developed by each local authority. Over the past 4 years, North Ayrshire Council and local RSL's have successfully delivered programmes of external wall insulation from 2013-2016 over 1,000 households have benefited from this scheme. Energy Company Obligation funding has also been attained in order to minimise owner contributions.

Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP)

76. Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) will help local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency with community groups and businesses, helping reduce costs and improving warmth in homes, schools, hospitals and businesses.

77. Heating and cooling Scotland's homes and business costs £2.6 billion a year and accounts for approximately half of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficiency is fundamental to Scotland meeting its ambitious climate change targets.

78. The projects will build upon and integrate existing domestic energy efficiency programmes, bringing together support from the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP), with the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland (HEEPS): Area Based Scheme.

HEEPS: Loan Scheme

79. The HEEPS: Loan is an interest-free loan of up to £10,000 managed by Home Energy Scotland. Loans are available to owner occupiers who wish to install a variety of measures such as solid wall insulation, double glazing or new boilers. A separate scheme for registered private sector landlords is also open. (Under review)

HEEPS: Warmer Homes Scotland

80. Warmer Homes Scotland is a new national scheme which replaced the Affordable Warmth Scheme and the Energy Assistance Package in September 2015. It is designed to help vulnerable people make their homes warmer and more comfortable by installing a range of energy saving measures. Assistance is available to homeowners and private sector tenants struggling to heat their home, who have lived in their property for at least six months, and who meet the qualifying criteria.

Home Energy Scotland (HES)

81. HES provides free and impartial advice to all households in Scotland, ensuring that they are referred to the most appropriate schemes/support specific to their personal circumstances. HES remit includes Area Based Schemes, Warmer Homes Scotland, income maximisation, renewable technology support and loans and sustainable transport.

82. HES is a valued member of the North Ayrshire's Local Energy Advice Forum (LEAF) and is the main point of contact for residents looking for assistance from LEAF. As a member of LEAF HES is able to refer residents to trusted organisations for support out with their remit.

Winter fuel Payments

83. Winter Fuel Payments were introduced as part of the UK Government's initiative to tackle fuel poverty amongst pensioners. Winter fuel payments aim to give older people reassurance that they can afford to heat their homes in winter. They are paid in a lump sum each winter to ensure that money is available when fuel bills arrive. Older people are targeted because they are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather during the winter months and older people are more likely to be on fixed incomes.

84. Cold Weather Payments - A Cold Weather Payment is intended to help towards extra heating costs during very cold weather. A payment of £25 is paid automatically for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1

November and 31 March. People may eligible for a Cold Weather Payment if they are on certain qualifying benefits.

Energy Company Obligation (ECO)

85. ECO is a government energy efficiency scheme aimed to help reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. The scheme focuses on the installation of insulation and heating measures and supports vulnerable consumer groups. Suppliers are given targets based on their share of the domestic gas and electricity market. The current obligation period, known as ECO2, launched on 1 April 2015. It will run for two years until 31 March 2017. In November 2015, the government announced that from April 2017 the scheme will be replaced with a new supplier obligation to reduce carbon emissions and focus on the fuel poor. This will run for a further five years.

Other Schemes

Help to Heat

86. In Scotland, the Gas Distribution networks (GDN) is Scottish Gas Network (SGN). SGN is committed to helping make homes warmer by offering free or discounted gas connections to low income and vulnerable customers. Through their Help to Heat scheme, they are connecting the most vulnerable households to their network, helping to improve energy efficiency and heat homes for less.

87. Gas is an efficient, economical and flexible fuel and the Help to Heat scheme can help people take advantage of the benefits that switching to gas can bring. There is funding available that will help to reduce the cost of installing a gas supply to homes, and it is available to homeowners or tenants who meet qualifying criteria (SGN, 2016).

Smart Meters

88. The UK government has requested that energy companies install smart meters for their customers, with the roll out programme to be completed by the end of 2020 Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters offering a range of intelligent functions. Through a real time display monitor, it will inform

of your energy use and costs. Through direct communication with the energy supplier, automatic meter readings are sent to the energy supplier at least once a month, increase actual, not estimated billing.

Conclusion

89. Fuel Poverty levels remain very high and the aim of fuel poverty eradication by November 2016 has not been attained. Fuel Poverty is not a static issue and therefore our approach must reflect this.

90. There are many factors that can affect fuel poverty, some such as fuel prices being out with the influence of the Council. Other factors such as increasing the energy efficiency of housing stock regardless of tenure through local and national energy efficiency programmes, the provision of energy advice, partnership working and support of new technologies can be influenced by the Council. North Ayrshire Council is committed to continually working to identify those in fuel poverty and use its influence where possible to achieve its eradication

Outcome Plan

Outcome 1: Identification of fuel poor households					
Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Timescale	Responsible Person	Progress Update
Identification of Fuel Poverty	2012-2014 Fuel poverty 40% (approx. 25,000) Extreme fuel poverty 9% (approx. 6,000)	SHCS		North Ayrshire Council	
		Analysis of tenant satisfaction surveys to households in fuel poverty.	2017	North Ayrshire Council	
		Creation of a fuel poverty map	2019	North Ayrshire Council	

Outcome 2: Improved access to high-quality information					
Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Target/Milestone	Responsible Person	Progress Update
Raise awareness of fuel poverty issues through the distribution of leaflets and engagement with those working with local residents.	445 (2016)	Monitor the number of households receiving information leaflets.	ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	
Provide advice and assistance on energy efficiency, energy efficiency grants and loan schemes.	75 (2015/16)	Monitor the number of resident queries received by the council and number of referrals made.	ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	
Council website for energy efficiency.		Ensure that the council website remains up to date information	ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	
Continued support of North Ayrshire Local Energy Advice forum.	435 visitors (2015)	Monitor success initiatives such as Citizen Advice 'big energy savings week'	ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	
Maximise energy efficiency measures being offered to Island residences.	HEEPS: ABS 2015/16 Millport	Encourage contractors to maximise energy efficiency measures being offered.	ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	
Initiate partnerships with schools to provide Energy lessons	Energy lessons	Monitor number of participating schools and success of lessons	2016/17	North Ayrshire Council	

	to 5 schools				
Provide fuel poverty awareness /energy efficiency materials to private sector landlords	To be established	Monitor the number of households receiving energy efficiency information.	ongoing	Housing	

Outcome 3: Minimise the level of fuel poverty within North Ayrshire through income maximisation.					
Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Target/Milestone	Responsible Person	Progress Update
Explore potential Council Tax Energy Efficiency Discount Schemes.	No scheme in place		ongoing	North Ayrshire Council	No initiative at present.
Explore and capitalise on opportunities for collective purchasing of energy and other community energy schemes		An investigation into social energy tariffs from not-for-profit energy suppliers.	2017	North Ayrshire Council	
Aid energy company obligation to fit smart metering as standard by 2020		Provide support and information to clients.	2020	North Ayrshire Council	

Outcome 4: Minimise fuel poverty through investment in renewable technologies

Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Target/Milestone	Responsible Person	Progress Update
Development of Social House rooftop PV portfolio, subject to financial viability.	Business case completed 2016	Implementation of project	2018	Sustainability	
Development of Irvine district heating scheme	Feasibility study completed 2016	Implementation of project	2020	Sustainability	
Identify and implement where possible, fuel poverty alleviation projects through the University of Glasgow Partnership.	Project brief provided.	Identification of suitable project concepts and development of proposals	2017	Sustainability	

Outcome 5: Increase household energy efficiency across all tenures					
Action	Baseline	Indicator/Measure	Target/Milestone	Responsible Person	Progress Update
Investigation of new funding streams	Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEPS)	Development of proposals.	Annual Funding	Sustainability	
Through the implementation of the EESSH delivery plan, ensure all council properties, where practicable, are compliant by 2020.	31 st March 2016 89.3% compliant	% of Council houses compliant with EESSH	100% by 2020	PMI	
New council homes built to ECO Homes, very good or equivalent	161 (2016)	Number of properties	ongoing	Housing	

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SGN, Help to Heat (2016), accessed at <https://www.sgn.co.uk/helptoheat>

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

This form will assist in carrying out an equality impact assessment of new, revised and existing policies and practices. Guidance on how to complete assessments is given in the Council's **Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit**. The form is mandatory and must be published on the Council website once the policy or practice has been approved.

Section 1 - Details

1.1. **Service** **Section**

1.2. **Name of Policy or Practice being assessed:**

Is it new Existing

1.3. **List of participants in Equality Impact Assessment**

1.4. **Manager responsible for impact assessment**

Name:

Designation:

1.5. **Timetable**

Date assessment started: (dd/mm/yyyy)

Completion date: (dd/mm/yyyy)

Section 2 – Aim and Relevance

2.1. **What is the purpose of the policy or practice?**

2.2. **What are the anticipated notable outcomes (positive and negative)?**

The paper and its corresponding action plan detail a number of outcomes. These are considered to have positive impacts for North Ayrshire residents, particularly those in or at risk of fuel poverty.

2.3. Who is affected by the policy or practice as an internal or external service user?

Internal and external service users will be affected by the implementation of this paper's action plan.

2.4. Please indicate the equality groups likely to be affected by the policy:

Older people are at greater risk of fuel poverty (as they tend to have lower incomes, a greater need for warmth and spend more of the day at home). Reducing fuel poverty should, therefore, have a positive impact on them. The outcomes and corresponding action plan should have a positive impact on all equality groups for the same reason.

2.5 Which aspects of the policy eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

No impact.

2.6 Which aspects of the policy advance equality of opportunity between people which share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

No impact.

2.7 Which aspects of the policy foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?

This policy may have a positive impact, by increasing the disposable income of older people, allowing them to better enjoy community life.

2.8 Have any cross-cutting impacts been identified from other Council Services or Partner Agencies (multiple discrimination or accumulated effects of multiple proposals on a protected characteristic)?

None.

2.9 If Crosscutting issues identified with other Services, what discussion/interaction has taken place to mitigate any potential negative impacts of accumulated proposals?

N/A.

Section 3 – Collecting Information

3.1. What evidence is available about the needs of relevant groups?

Source of Evidence

Demographic data, including Census	Census data and other publicly available information, drawn from the National Records of Scotland.
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Research	The Council has carried out extensive primary research in support of this paper. This includes consultation with residents.
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Consultation & survey reports	A review of key literature was carried out. This included government strategies and other policies.
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Equality Monitoring Data	None.
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Inspection & audit reports	None.
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Service user feedback & complaints	None.
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Ombudsman reports & case law	None.
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Officer knowledge & experience

Officer knowledge and experience framed the research process.

3.2. Are there any gaps in evidence?

None.

Section 4 – Impacts

4.1. Could the proposed policy or practice have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics? (Positive or negative)

Protected Characteristic	Yes	No	Please explain
Age (Older people, children and young people)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The strategy aims to reduce fuel poverty irrespective of age, but as households with older and younger people are more prone to fuel poverty it may be particularly beneficial for these groups.
Disability (Physical and Learning)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategy aims to reduce fuel poverty irrespective of disability.
Gender reassignment (Where a person is living as the opposite gender to their birth)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.
Pregnancy and Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.

Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins (including gypsy/ travellers, refugees and asylum seekers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.
Sex (Women and Men)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.
Sexual Orientation (Lesbian, gay and bisexual people)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.
Other (Poverty, homelessness, ex-offenders, isolated rural communities, carers, part-time workers, or people in a marriage/civil partnership)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There are no 'exceptional' or unique issues related to this equality group, therefore no impact positive or negative will arise from this topic paper.

Section 5 – Assessment

- 5.1. Is there any evidence that the policy:
- may result in less favourable treatment for particular groups?
 - may give rise to direct or indirect discrimination?
 - may give rise to unlawful harassment or victimisation?

Yes No No evidence

If yes, give details

- 5.2. If you have identified a negative impact, how will you modify this?

5.3. **Is the policy or practice intended to promote equality by permitting positive action or action to remove or minimise disadvantage?**

Yes

No

If yes, please give details

Section 6 – Consultation & Recommendations

6.1. **Describe the consultation undertaken with equality groups, including details of the groups involved and the methods used.**

Extensive consultation was carried out in support of this paper.

Local Housing Strategy Surveys.

As part of the consultation process to inform North Ayrshire Councils Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, residents from across North Ayrshire were invited to share their views and opinions on housing by completing a series of surveys. Surveys were advertised and made available through the North Ayrshire Council website and Facebook page

Surveys were also distributed to key service providers and stakeholders to offer widespread accessibility to service users who may not have to be able to gain access to the surveys online. Surveys were also distributed to Garrison House in Millport to offer residents of the Isle of Cumbrae a chance to submit responses, this was at the request of community groups on the island.

There were five surveys in total: Supply and Place Making; People with Disabilities; Housing for Older People; Private Tenant; and Private Landlord. Over a 1,000 people responded to the five surveys.

Housing Live

The 'Housing Live' roadshow event allowed us to take consultation into the heart of our communities. Five roadshows were held in main streets,

supermarkets and shopping centres across mainland North Ayrshire (we took a more focused approach on the islands). Local people were invited to share their views and opinions on any aspect of housing related matters. People also had the opportunity to complete a small survey, or write a comment on the 'talking wall'. Over 500 people responded.

Building Solutions Workshop

Attendees from the islands attended this workshop to agree on strategic outcomes, discuss the topic paper and agree forward actions.

Section 7 – Outcome of Assessment

7.1. Please detail the outcome of the assessment:

No major alterations to policy assessed, EIA shows policy is robust

Adjust the policy to remove barriers or better promote equality

Continue the policy – there are justifications to continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact

Stop and remove the policy as there is actual or potential; unlawful discrimination

7.2. Please detail recommendations, including any action required to address negative impacts identified

None

7.3. Is a more detailed impact assessment needed?

No

Section 8 – Monitoring

8.1. Describe how you will monitor the impact of this policy e.g. performance indicators used, other monitoring arrangements, who will monitor progress, criteria used to measure if outcomes are achieved.

This Topic paper will directly inform the strategic direction of the Local Housing Strategy; although the impact of the LHS will be monitored, this Topic Paper does not require monitoring.

This Topic Paper was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure the equalities agenda and equality of opportunity for all North Ayrshire residents was inherent in the strategic development process as this relates to the Local Housing Strategy.

8.2. Describe how you will publish the results of monitoring arrangements?

This Topic Paper does not require monitoring arrangements as the paper was used to inform the Local Housing Strategy.

8.3. When is the policy or practice due to be reviewed?

The LHS 2017-2022 will be reviewed in full at the end of its plan period (i.e. 2021-2022) in advance of the development of the next LHS.

Furthermore, the LHS will be subject to ongoing review and evaluation.

8.4. Head of Service who has approved impact assessment

Please insert name and title of the Head of Service who has approved this assessment

Name:

Title:

Date:

Section 9 – Publication

9.1 All Equality Impact Assessments must be published on the Council website. Please forward to Andrew Hale (ahale@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Useful Guidance

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Assessing impact and the public sector duty: A guide for public authorities (Scotland) (2012)

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com>

