

Helensburgh Community Council (HCC)



**"Helensburgh - Be Better : Be Excellent"**

[www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk](http://www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk)

**Argyll & Bute Council - Local Development Plan**

**HCC - MAIN ISSUES REPORT**

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## **5 : MAIN ISSUES - HCC SUMMARY**

### **1. HOUSING**

- **There is no foreseen need for large scale housing development in Helensburgh. Existing allocations, sites and infill development will suffice.**
- **There is no foreseen need for housing in the Green Belt**
- **New house building in the town should focus on affordable/social housing, preferably in or near the town centre.**

### **2. LOCAL RETAILING**

- **Argyll & Bute Council must step up "to the plate" and take on a key role in supporting local businesses through a specific and tailored programme of public realm improvement**

### **3. TOURISM**

- **Tourism in Helensburgh to focus on its 3 key opportunities of heritage, green/eco tourism and day visitors**
- **The central issue is the lack of confidence, foresight and investment in tourism, the town's key industry, which presents a damaging air of neglect and decay. There needs to be an overarching body to carry out the co-ordination, development and marketing work needed if the local tourist industry is to realise its full potential.**
- **Argyll & Bute Council has to take a leadership role in the development of Helensburgh's tourist industry using all available mechanisms including the planning system and the targeting of external funding sources**

### **4. FLOODING**

- **The emerging Local Development Plan has to recognise the increasing risk of flooding and to commit itself to a long term programme of mitigating measures to ensure the future well being of Helensburgh**

### **5. ENERGY**

- **All new building development to include energy efficient systems and which also anticipate Scottish government requirements**

- A specific renewable energy programme which delivers significant environmental, financial and other benefits for the local community. For example, a Community Wind Farm for Helensburgh.

## 6. LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- As it has no pool of unemployed labour Helensburgh does not need to attract a large employer. What it does need is space to allow local firms to expand.

NOTE : This could well be amended as HCC discussion on this issue is not yet complete

## 7. REPLACEMENT COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- There is a clear demonstrated need for replacement and additional community facilities in the town; including those for young people

## 8. THE "HELENSBURGH CORRIDOR" AS A SEPARATE PLANNING AREA

- The "Helensburgh Corridor" of Cardross, Helensburgh, Rhu and Shandon be treated a separate planning area within the Local Development Plan.

## 9. TOWN CENTRE EAST

- Town Centre East be designated as a single Area For Action (AFA) in the forthcoming Local Development Plan. Within this a Masterplan be developed through extensive community engagement and then adopted by Argyll & Bute Council as supplementary planning guidance.

**Q3 : What do you think are the most important things in making your area an attractive place to live and/or work?**

**1. LOCATION & LANDSCAPE**

Helensburgh is a pleasant town much enjoyed by residents. It is south facing with wonderful views over the Clyde Estuary and towards the Arrocher "Alps" and the hills of the Cowal Peninsular

**1.1 The Local Landscape**

Helensburgh is one of Scotland's most attractive and desirable towns. It has two Conservation Areas with wide tree lined streets often in a distinctive grid pattern. Many older residential buildings are set in a park like landscape, many with gate posts, stone walls to the north with hedges and shrubs along the other three sides. There are many open spaces in the town ranging from flower beds in Colquhoun Square to the potentially magnificent Hermitage Park.

Helensburgh faces onto the Clyde Estuary, with its western esplanade from the Pier to Kidston Park helping to define the town for residents and visitors alike. There is also a fine smaller eastern esplanade.

**2. KEY ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES (KEFs)**

It is the responsibility of the HCC to set the KEFs for Helensburgh. Basically these are of two kinds - physical and viewpoint. E.G. :

- a. Physical* - *Helensburgh's waterfront from East Bay to Kidston Park*
- b. Viewpoint* - *Ben Bouie from the east*

They are listed in detail on the HCC Helensburgh Landscape Statement at [www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk](http://www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk).

**3. TOWN ARCHITECTURE**

The Victorian and Edwardian architecture of the Conservation Areas enjoys a worldwide reputation - Rennie Mackintosh, Leiper, A.N. Patterson and many others. Many buildings are of an individual, innovative design displaying a great variety of architectural styles. There are distinctive buildings in other parts of the town but, unfortunately those of a modern design are few and far between. The HCC strongly promotes good design in new buildings as can be seen in both its Design and Landscape Statements ([www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk](http://www.helensburghcommunitycouncil.co.uk)).

#### 4. LOCAL RETAILING & SERVICES

Helensburgh has a compact town centre enjoying an almost unparalleled range of local shops for a town of its size and close proximity to major Scottish retailing centres including Glasgow - No 2 after London. . They include quality dress shops, gift shops, butchers, a fishmonger, a fresh fruit shop and an outstanding delicatessen. And many more. The town enjoys a wide range of restaurants and cafes, ranging from an award winning fish and chips shop to one of the top thirty restaurants in Scotland.

In addition Helensburgh provides a full range of services both for the town and for much of Helensburgh & Lomond, e.g. tradesmen, garages, builders, lawyers, architects and many more.

#### 5. PART OF THE GREATER GLASGOW CONURBATION

The growth of Helensburgh accelerated through the nineteenth century when rail services to/from Glasgow were inaugurated. Although now administratively in Argyll & Bute Helensburgh has long been very much part of the Greater Glasgow Conurbation :

- *A large number of people travel to work there - and in the reverse direction*
- *Good road & rail links exist that offer easy access to two main line rail stations and an international airport*
- *Glasgow is the UK's main shopping centre outside London*
- *Close proximity to large supermarkets & retail chains in Dumbarton & Braehead*
- *Major centres of higher/further education + Schools of Art, Education, Dance*
- *Hospitals and policing are based there*
- *A wide range of sport & leisure facilities*
- *It is within reach of major hospitals, a wide range of sport & leisure facilities, museums, theatres, art galleries and cinemas*

Collectively these help make Helensburgh one of the most attractive and desirable small towns in Scotland. However it is a town which, from experience, can be so easily damaged equally by individual developments as by unnecessary growth and sprawl.

#### 6. HELENSBURGH GREEN BELT

Green Belts are an essential part of Scottish Government planning policy (SPP 2010) which states that the purposes of Green Belts are to :

- *Direct planned growth - housing etc - to the most appropriate locations*
- *Protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities*
- *Give access to open space in and around these towns and cities*

As a result much of what makes Helensburgh what it is today is down to its *Green Belt* and has not suffered from unrestricted and unwarranted developer led housing. . While substantially part of the *Greater Glasgow Conurbation*, Helensburgh is a separate town in terms of its quality, character, landscape setting and identity.

Since the Helensburgh *Green Belt* came into existence the town has been vigilant in its defence and to the avoidance of any unjustified intrusion. However there have been a few small adjustments in the past when there has been an overriding need for the long term benefit of the town. E.G. the new *Hermitage Academy* was built on former *Green Belt* land. When viewed over a 20 year period further small adjustments may be justified to "direct growth to the most appropriate location". However any such adjustments must be crucial to the long term success of the town and NOT simply to meet any short term expediencies.

**Q5 : Please select what you consider are the TOP 5 issues in your Area**

**1. HOUSING**

**1.1 POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS**

The General Register Office for Scotland has recently issued its projections for population and households by local authority area for the period 2008 to 2031. Extrapolating from these. Based on 2008 they show :

<b>Projection</b>	<b>% Change up to 2021</b>	<b>% Change up to 2031</b>
Population - Scotland	+4.7%	+7%
Argyll & Bute	-3.3%	-4.9%
Households - Scotland	+12.6%	+19.2%
Argyll & Bute	+7.3%	+9.8%
Average Household Size		
Argyll & Bute	-9.1%	-14%
<b>ADDITIONAL HOMES REQUIRED</b>		
Argyll & Bute	+2.6K	+3.9K
Helensburgh	+0.4K	+0.7K

(Detailed calculations are in the Annex to this paper)

Recent history has shown that developers see Helensburgh as a popular housing destination, particularly for up market, executive style homes. On the other hand national planning policy lays down that forecasts for housing provision are to be based on population projections both in terms of numbers of people and household sizes. The above figures show the population of Argyll & Bute and much of Greater Glasgow slowly falling up to 2031 while the number of households will rise. Taken together they show a latent demand for a modest increase in housing stock up to 2031. It is not unreasonable to assume Helensburgh following a similar pattern.

What the figures also show is that there is NO requirement for housing development in the Green Belt.

However the number of additional homes required will be influenced by external factors such as unused allocations from the current structure/Local Plans and the need for/availability of MOD homes in the town.

## 1.2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Recent housing studies have shown consistently that to meet housing demand in Helensburgh the real need is for affordable homes, not executive type housing. There will be a growing number of single elderly people along with a growing number of people choosing to live alone. Their requirement is for flats and other small properties and these are best sited as close to the town centre as possible..

## 1.3 HELENSBURGH'S HOUSING MARKET AREA

In its 2001 & 2002 reports Communities Scotland defined Helensburgh's Housing Market Area as Rhu - Dumbarton - Balloch, which has a containment rate of over 80%. Although much of this lies outside Argyll & Bute full advantage has to be taken of the availability of housing stock there, especially affordable housing. This HMA was endorsed at a meeting between the HCC and the Scottish Executive and Argyll & Bute Council in 2007. In its housing report Consultants Arneil Johnson conceded that at a "self containment rate" of 59% the Helensburgh and Lomond Area cannot be described as self contained inn terms of housing.

## 1.4 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The 2002 A&B Council Structure plan allowed for 50 affordable homes to be built in the Green Belt surrounding Helensburgh. In addition the August 2009 A&B Council Local Plan made the following housing allocations for Helensburgh :

- *162 homes on the site of the old Hermitage Academy - 25% affordable*
- *30 homes in Kirkmichael - largely affordable*
- *16 homes in Ardencaple*
- *homes at Blairvadoch and Rhu Marina*

In addition, the recently agreed Master Plan for the Helensburgh Pier Car Park site provides for a substantial number of flats (and retail units). However then formal HCC position on development of the Pier Site is for Leisure, Recreation and Tourism only.

Advantage must also be taken of other sites in Helensburgh as they become available. E.G. :

- *There is now the possibility of sites becoming available in Town Centre East (see below) some of which could be used for affordable housing*
- *"Broken teeth" sites, e.g. above the old Quorum Carpet showroom in James Street plus any windfall sites. Such developments in the town centre should be largely affordable/social housing for the elderly and young families who would benefit most from a central location and easy access to shops, private/public services, transport and employment.*



#### 1.4 POSSIBLE CONSTRAINTS TO HOUSING GROWTH

It has to be recognised that Helensburgh faces a number of constraints which could well limit any significant housing growth. It is our understanding that Scottish water's sewage system is incapable of serving many more properties. Also : will our medical facilities be able to cope with a significantly greater population, particularly the very young and the elderly where growth in numbers is forecast.

#### MAIN ISSUES

1. **There is no foreseen need for large scale housing development in Helensburgh. Existing allocations, sites and infill development will suffice.**
2. **There is no foreseen need for housing in the Green Belt**
3. **New house building in the town should focus on affordable/social housing, preferably in or near the town centre.**

## 2. LOCAL RETAILING

2.1 A successful Helensburgh retailing sector depends largely on the drive and ambition of its local retailers and their collective voice, the Helensburgh Chamber of Commerce. However Argyll & Bute Council too has an important role in supporting the sector and making it healthy and prosperous. On capital it has already committed large sums to major projects in the town centre which will have a positive impact on local retailing :

- *The £6.7M Chord Project to upgrade the town centre and waterfront*
- *The Pier Car Park Site Master Plan allows for significant retail development to bring back the 70% of Helensburgh's retail spend (£100M+) spent outwith the town. This could have a positive impact on local retailers from increased resident spending and from an increased visitor numbers. (NB : The formal HCC position remains that development on the pier site be restricted to leisure and recreation)*
- *The proposed new Swimming Pool - "while the kids go for a swim the parents go for a gander round the shops".*
- *The new Council Offices in the old E. Clyde Street Centre will bring more "spenders" into the town for e.g. lunches, car servicing, casual shopping*

2.2 Helensburgh Town Centre is seen by many as somewhat run down, having a negative impact on residents and visitors alike. Local retailers are discouraged from investing for the future. To help turn this around the Council can also energise local retailing viability through high quality public realm and excellent service delivery. E.G.

- *Upgrading the whole esplanade*
- *Providing adequate clean, modern public toilets, e.g. at the Pier & Kidston Park*
- *Using the A&BC Sustainable Design Guide to help and encourage shopkeepers to make their shop fronts well designed and welcoming*
- *Secure seed corn/matching funding to raise the standard of commercial premises, e.g. frontages*
- *Well maintained pavements for the elderly, the disabled, mothers with children/prams*
- *A car parking regime which is competitive with nearby retail centres*

Although not strictly planning matters the following are also important :

- *Good street lighting*
- *Keeping the town centre clean at all times : clean beaches in the summer*
- *Getting to grips with dog fouling*
- *Adequate policing of car parking regulations.*

### MAIN ISSUE

**Argyll & Bute Council must step up "to the plate" and take on a key role in supporting local businesses centre through a specific and tailored programme of public realm improvement.**

### 3. TOURISM

#### 4.1 Why Tourism is Important to Helensburgh?

Failure to make new investment and build on existing strengths causes for decline, stagnation and decay. Tourism, on the other hand improves the town. It brings trade to accommodation providers, local retailers, restaurants, cafes and other local businesses. It does not challenge the town's essential character and brings money directly to the town. Tourism touches many facets of the economy creating jobs at all levels. It enriches the town.

#### 4.2 Strengths

- On the edge of the Scotland's largest conurbation Helensburgh offers a ready source of day visitors, and with Glasgow International Airport only 25 minutes away, Helensburgh is well placed to receive visitors from further away.
- Proximity to the National Park is a major strength and Helensburgh is well placed to exploit Green/Active Tourism which are recognised growth sectors.
- Established attractions include the town's countryside setting, the seafront, the Hill House (a potential World Heritage Site), a uniquely green and leafy townscape and renowned architecture. The outstanding Glenarn Gardens in Rhu enjoy national status
- The town centre is well known for its wide range of high quality local shops - a range almost unique for a town of its size and next to the UK's second largest retail centre.
- Basic infrastructure includes the large pier car park, the pier itself, an upgraded swimming pool and the esplanade. There are 4 hotels between Helensburgh and Rhu plus around 12 good B&Bs. There is a varied and quality restaurant offering and a large selection of coffee shops. The Commodore Hotel has a sizeable functions suite and the Victoria Halls is a useful if somewhat dated asset. .
- There is an enviable network of local paths giving 14 miles of walking and safe cycling. The Three Lochs Way long distance route linking Helensburgh with the National Park is being launched in 2010.
- The planned afforestation at Camis Eskin has the potential to enhance Helensburgh's recreational offering including an improved connection to the Three Lochs Way plus extending the town's local paths network.

#### 4.3 Weaknesses

- Visitors and residents alike are discouraged by principal shopping streets suffering from traffic congestion, narrow pavements and a lack of shelter from wind and rain

- The seafront is the town's key tourism asset but in some instances it is characterised by unattractive shop fronts presenting a damaging air of neglect and decay
- The local tourist industry is composed of a large number of mainly small operators, often reliant on an environment and infrastructure which they have little control of.
- A poor public realm, e.g. inadequate public toilets, an uninviting beach, poor and inadequate pavements, and uninspired open space

**4.4 Opportunities :** Helensburgh has huge untapped tourist potential. As well as building on its many strengths there are 3 specific tourism opportunities :

**Helensburgh's Heritage :** For a town its size Helensburgh punches above its weight when it comes to its famous sons and daughters. At the end of 2009 almost 50 Helensburgh Heroes had been identified - individuals for ever linked with Helensburgh whose lives influenced and changed the world we now live in and which make the town an ideal centre for telling the story of its unique heritage. In particular its legendary pioneers :

- *Henry Bell* - *Steam navigation*
- *Percy Pilger* - *Aviation*
- *John Logie Baird* - *Television*
- *C.R. MacKintosh* - *Architecture*

**Green/Eco Tourism :** Being next to the National Park, Loch Lomond the Clyde Estuary makes Helensburgh a natural destination for those wishing to :

- access the surrounding hills and countryside
- enjoy active pursuits, e.g. cycling/mountain biking, hill walking/climbing, golf and sailing
- study and enjoy the rich flora and fauna

**Day Visitors :** With the coming of the railways day visitors from Glasgow and beyond have been an essential part of Helensburgh. They love the views south across the Clyde, the stroll along the esplanade, and the local shops, cafes, bars and restaurants.

While some financial pump priming from the Council would assist in these 3 areas Helensburgh is blessed with much local expertise to take them forward at very little cost.

## 5. What is Needed?

### 5.1 Short/Medium Term

- Improved public transport to the National Park
- Renovate the virtually illegible Clyde Sea Lochs Trail interpretation panels on the esplanade
- Interpretative heritage trails - e.g. architectural - throughout the town

- Encouraging shopkeepers to improve their shop frontages
- Proactive public realm improvement
- Make key shopping streets more user friendly by giving priority to pedestrians
- Rational vehicle parking arrangements - metered parking around the town centre with free parking beyond
- Pavement canopies in key shopping areas
- Heritage trails to be incorporated into the planned improvements to the esplanade

## **5.2 Longer Term**

- Replace the existing pier with a modern structure giving access to deeper water and shelter for a town marina
- Building on the pier site masterplan, extend and raise the area for additional car parking and Cadona's fun fair which remains an important component in the town's tourist offering
- Flood prevention measures

### **MAIN ISSUES**

- 1. Tourism in Helensburgh to focus on its 3 key opportunities of heritage : green/eco tourism and day visitors**
- 2. The central issue is the lack of confidence, foresight and investment in tourism, the town's key industry, which presents a damaging air of neglect and decay. There needs to be an overarching body to carry out the co-ordination, development and marketing work needed if the local tourist industry is to realise its full potential.**
- 3. Argyll & Bute Council has to take a leadership role in the development of Helensburgh's tourist industry using all available mechanisms including the planning system and the targeting of external funding sources**

## 4. FLOODING

- 3.1 Global warming is a fact. It comes with an inevitable rise in sea levels, climate and resultant weather changes. Helensburgh's geographical position faces S-W with a long reach from Dunoon. As a result the town is vulnerable to these changes, particularly with the seafront mainly lying below the 5m OD contour.
- 3.2 SEPA's flood risk map presently identifies an area varying up to East and West Princes Street being already at risk from flooding. This will no doubt be updated in future surveys. Evidence already exists that Helensburgh, given the potential storm surge conditions highlighted in the recent supermarket enquiry, can experience tides higher than those recorded in Greenock, the nearest recording point. These bring with them the increasing likelihood of damage to local shops and houses/flats.
- 3.3 According to reports, a lower estimate of a 1.2m rise in sea levels can be expected by 2100 AD - only 90 years away and within the lifespan of some already born. This will have devastating consequences for the lower area of the town. Engineering solutions will be cost prohibitive and so too will be insurance cover (if it is available at all).
- 3.4 A cornerstone of development is sustainability. This requires an integrated scheme combining strengthened sea defences. Longer term may require solutions at present considered prohibitively expensive. E.G. : large holding tanks. Also a new road and prom to seaward to protect existing seafront property thus freeing up the existing road for parking, bicycles, pedestrians and/or shared space use. Included in this has to be an imaginative look to higher ground for Helensburgh's continued development. It is not too early to say that flooding is inevitable and that certain parts of the town may become untenable?

### MAIN ISSUE

**The emerging Local Development Plan has to recognise the increasing risk of flooding and to commit itself to a long term programme of mitigating measures to ensure the future well being of Helensburgh**

## 5. ENERGY

**5.1 Renewable Energy** : Global warming and ever rising energy costs are now an essential feature of every day life. They bring with them the ever increasing risk of flooding and unstable weather patterns. Argyll & Bute Council is already making a commitment to renewable energy :

- *It has concluded a non - exclusive Concordat with Scottish Power forming a strategic partnership in renewable energy*
- *It will core fund the Argyll, Lomond and the Islands Energy Agency (ALI)*
- *It has a Wind Farm Trust Policy to ensure that the entire community of Argyll & Bute benefits from renewable energy.*

At the local level The UK and Scottish Governments also support local community ownership of wind farms. The aim is for local communities to benefit - both financially and non financially - from the development of renewable energy. E.G. Community Windpower Ltd is an independent UK based company working with local communities to build farms to provide economic, educational and environmental benefits to local schools and communities. One such community wind farm is at Dalry in North Ayrshire. Other possibilities include small scale hydro schemes and tidal power.

Helensburgh needs to be part of, and to benefit from, this growing movement. Unlike some other towns in Argyll & Bute Helensburgh does not have a local source of funds, such as a Common Good Fund, to support local investment in community initiatives to benefit the town. With local government funding for specifically local initiatives /projects likely to fall in future years an independent funding from local renewable energy projects would bring direct benefit to the town.

**5.2 Energy Conservation** : As the local planning authority the Council occupies a pivotal role in driving all new development towards the goal of zero carbon buildings. It has 4 major capital projects on the "stocks" - CHORD, new Council Offices, new Swimming Pool and the Pier Site master Plan. These should be designed not only to incorporate the latest technology and but anticipate practical technologies yet to be laid down. The Council can also show the way through more straightforward measures such as car sharing and the use of low energy vehicles.

## MAIN ISSUES

1. **All new building development to include the latest energy efficient systems and which also anticipate Scottish government requirements.**
2. **A specific renewable energy programme which delivers significant environmental, financial and other benefits for the local community. For example, a Community Wind Farm for Helensburgh**

## 6. LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

### 6.1 Helensburgh is NOT :

- *An industrial town and has never has been*
- *An area of high unemployment. It enjoys one of the lowest rates in Scotland.*

Consequently it does not need to attract inward investment of any significance; unlike its neighbours of Dumbarton Renton and Alexandria. Argyll & Bute Council is the largest employer in the town with Hermitage Academy the biggest single employment site. Helensburgh. Indeed around two thirds of teachers they commute from outwith the town. enjoys one the lowest unemployment rates in Scotland.

6.2 What Helensburgh does have are small scale private employers covering a wide range of Activities, e.g. tradesmen, retailers, professional firms, designers, car showrooms, Hoteliers etc. Most of these are in the town centre. Those wishing to expand often find it difficult to do so because of a shortage of suitable premises. To meet this requirement the 2009 Local Plan allows for a 3.5 HA Business Site in Colgrain, directly opposite the new Hermitage Academy, to allow for development in Use Classes 4 (business), 7(hotels & restaurants) and for car showrooms. Previously the land in question was in the Helensburgh Green Belt. When built the Business Site is to be of the highest design and landscape quality but so far there have been no proposals to develop the site.

6.3 Other business development - still to be finalised.

6.4 Helensburgh has only one petrol filling station whose business levels are way above those forecast. It has run out of fuel on a number of occasions. The town needs a second filling station, which these days includes a mini supermarket. Possible sites include :

- *On the grounds of the old Hermitage Academy*
- *In Town Centre East*
- *At the top of Sinclair Street adjacent to the "Coup" and the new A&BC depot.*

The HCC does NOT agree to a new petrol station/mini market being sited in the proposed business site planned for directly opposite the entrance to new Hermitage Academy.

### MAIN ISSUES

1. **As an area of historic low unemployment Helensburgh does not need to attract large employers. What it does need is space to allow local firms to expand.**
2. **A site be found for a new filling station**



## 7. REPLACEMENT COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 7.1 In 2003 the East Clyde Street Community Education Centre closed down. At the time 43 local groups used it on a regular basis, while 15-20 used it occasionally. Users included sports clubs, art clubs and clubs for toddlers and young people. It was also used by organisations from outside Helensburgh, e.g. Glasgow University ran 10 different classes. It has been sorely missed. It is disappointing that in 2008 Argyll & Bute Council rejected a planning application from the Helensburgh Community Centre Trust for its replacement behind the Victoria Halls. Had this gone through the proposed new Centre was due to open in 2011.
- 7.2 Over recent years Helensburgh has seen a significant increase in available sport facilities - rejuvenated tennis clubs, the new Hermitage Academy and the new Lomond School Sports Pavilion. However the need for replacement community facilities for local groups remains - up-to-date meeting rooms, classrooms, activities space, reception area and storage space. A particular need has been identified for a drop-in type facility for young people.

Hopefully these will be provided for by a number of planned initiatives :

- *The new swimming pool at the S-W corner of the Pier Car Park Site*
  - *Within the planned new Council offices in the old Community Education Centre*
  - *The possible use of the old Co-op Oddfellows Hall off West Princes Street as a Drop In Centre*
- 7.3 Looking ahead the need for new community facilities will become more acute if rationalisation of Church of Scotland places of worship takes place with the closure of two of its churches in the town. This will remove a significant amount of space currently available for use by local groups.

### MAIN ISSUE

**There is a clear demonstrated need for replacement and additional community facilities in the town; including those for young people**

## 8. THE "HELENSBURGH CORRIDOR " AS A SEPARATE PLANNING AREA

- 8.1 In the Structure Plan Argyll & Bute is divided into 15 separate Planning Areas. These range from Colonsay with a population to Helensburgh & Lomond with over 27,000. Almost one third of the Council's total population. Apart from its population being too big Helensburgh & Lomond should not be defined as a single planning area. It can be easily split into 3 areas :
- *Garelohead and the Rosneath Peninsular*
  - *Arrocher & Tarbet*
  - *Cardross, Helensburgh, Rhu & Shandon - the "Helensburgh Corridor" - with a population of 18,400.*
- 8.2 The Helensburgh corridor is fundamentally different from the other two areas. As explained in Q3 essentially it is part of Greater Glasgow - for employment, transport, education etc. It is distinct in character from the rest of Helensburgh & Lomond . Its real Housing Market Area is the Rhu-Dumbarton-Balloch triangle which includes part of West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 8.3 WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? Reputedly, the Council's Local Development Plan will be based on broad, cross cutting themes as well as on the key issues for individual towns and settlements. However it would be unfortunate if these broad brush themes washed over and suffocated the needs of the Helensburgh Corridor which looks east and not west. Many of its key characteristics and the main issues flowing from them are different from those of the rest of Argyll & Bute. E.G. : on housing : transport : forestry & agriculture : renewal energy : tourism ; employment and others. It also contains the Helens burgh Green Belt, the only green belt in Argyll & Bute.

### MAIN ISSUE

**The "Helensburgh Corridor" of Cardross, Helensburgh, Rhu and Shandon be treated a separate planning area within the Local Development Plan.**

## 9. TOWN CENTRE EAST

9.1 Town Centre East is the land between by Maitland Street, East Princes Street, Charlotte Street and East Clyde Street. Currently it an area of very mixed development - social housing : Victorian tenements : 1970s flats : two car showrooms/garages : small Businesses : Job Centre. For the first time in many years a single large site within it could well become available for development. This site is made up of :

- *The Council owned old Drill Hall site*
- *The Council owned Operational services Depot - soon to be relocated to the north of Sinclair Street*
- *The Scottish Gas may no longer require their large gasometer in the town. If that occurs the site in question may become surplus to their requirements.*

The sites have common boundaries.

9.2 For Helensburgh these sites could present an opportunity in a lifetime. Rarely have sites of this size in the town centre become available. Their development should not be one - off to meet short term exigencies. The sites have to be looked at as an integrated whole and developed to enhance the overall vibrancy of both Town Centre East itself and the overall the town centre itself. E.G. :

- *Additional affordable housing*
- *Small business/retail units*
- *A new petrol station*
- *Car parking for both the town centre and the proposed new Council offices*

9.3 There has long been a lot of wasted space in and around Helensburgh Central Station. The development of Town Centre East presents an opportunity to expand the "Co-Op" car park both vertically and horizontally and to link it by an attractive replacement footbridge and walkway to the New Civic Chambers and East Bay.

### MAIN ISSUE

**Town Centre East be designated as a single Area For Action (AFA) in the forthcoming Local Development Plan. Within this Masterplan be developed through extensive community engagement and then adopted by Argyll & Bute Council as supplementary planning guidance.**

**POPULATION : HOUSEHOLDS : AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE : HOMES REQUIRED  
2008 - 2031**

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS(source GROS)

AREA	2008 (K)	2011 (K)	2016 (K)	2021 (K)	2026 (K)	2031 (K)	Overall % Change
Scotland	5.168	5.233	5.324	5.411	5.483	5.532	+ 7%
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>-4.9%</b>
W. Dumbarton	584	90	89	88	87	85	-6.9%
GW City	170	589	593	595.5	596	594	+1.6%
Renfrewshire	81	170	169	167	165	162	-4.8%
Inverclyde		80	77	75	72	68	-15.7%

## HOUSEHOLD PROJECTIONS (source GROS)

AREA	2008 (k)	2011 (k)	2016 (k)	2021 (k)	2026 (k)	2031 (k)	Overall % Change
Scotland	2.291	2.398	2.500	2.580	2.669	2.731	+19
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>+10</b>
W. Dumbarton	41	42	43	44	44	43	+5
GW City	279	292	304	313	319	325	+16
Renfrewshire	78	79	80	80	80	80	+3
Inverclyde	37	37	37	36	36	36	-3

While population and household projections are not available specifically for Helensburgh it is reasonable to assume they will fall reflecting the pattern in Greater Glasgow as well as in Argyll & Bute. These show population falling between 2008 and 2031. On the other hand the number of households will rise largely due to the increase in single households outweighing the decrease in population.

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE PROJECTIONS : Taking the above two tables together this will result in the average household size :

AREA	2008	2011	2016	2021	2026	2031	Overall % Change
<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>-14</b>

REQUIRED HOMES PROJECTIONS : Comparing the average household size projections with those for population the result shows an increase in the size of the projected housing stock :

AREA	2008 (K)	2011 (K)	2016 (K)	2021 (K)	2026 (K)	2031 (K)	Overall % Change
Argyll & Bute	41.4	41.4	42.4	44.0	43.5	45.3	+9.4
<b>Helensburgh</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>+10</b>

(NB : In the above calculation it is assumed that Helensburgh's population is 1/6<sup>th</sup> that of Argyll & Bute)