

**Proposed Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Examination**  
**Council's submission and Reporter's Conclusions and Recommendations on**  
**ISS 106: Housing Allocations-Blairvadach**

<b>Development Plan reference:</b>	<b>H-AL 3/6-Shandon-Blairvadach</b> <b>H2006-Shandon, Blairvadach House</b>	<b>Reporter:</b> <b>David Russell</b>
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*The Council's submission to the Reporter is in four parts and starts on page 135 of the report.*

1. *Planning authority's summary of representations*
2. *Modifications sought by those making representations*
3. *Summary of Responses by planning authority*
4. *Conclusions by Planning*

*It is followed by the Reporters Conclusions and Recommendations pages 142 and 143 of report.*

**Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue including reference number:**

Patricia Low (01795) Bryan Wight (01737) James McLatchie (01741) Michael L Gladden (01757) Stuart Gibson (01824) Jonathon McLatchie (01844) John Skrastin (01861) Ian Chatten (01866) Linda Skrastin (01884) Brian Aitken (01942) Brian Cook (00701) Jean Cook (01966) James Duncan (01978) Linda Duncan (01979)	James S Johnstone (02009) Pat Pollok-Morris (00276) M A Walker (01305) Keith Whaley (02097) David Whitham (02098) Nicola Skrastin (02111) Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260) Jennifer Skrastin (02110) Elizabeth Gladden (01853) Violet McLatchie (01891) Fiona Baker (01895) A Wyllie Robertson (02116) Jack Rudram (02117)
<b>Provision of the development plan to which the issue relates:</b>	Local Development Plan Schedules and Proposals Maps

**1. Planning authority's summary of the representation(s):**

Patricia Low (01795); Bryan Wight (01737); James McLatchie (01741); Michael L Gladden(01757); John Skrastin (01861); Ian Chatten (01866); Linda Skrastin (01884); Brian Cook(00701); Linda Duncan (01979); James S Johnstone (02009); Pat Pollok-Morris (00276); M A Walker (01305); David Whitham (02098); Nicola Skrastin (02111); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Jennifer Skrastin (02110); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Fiona Baker (01895); A Wyllie Robertson (02116); Jack Rudram (02117) –

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1) Object to the increase in number of units on allocation H-AL 3/6 and the density on proposed allocation H2006.

Bryan Wight (01737); Jonathon McLatchie (01844); John Skrastin (01861); Ian Chatten (01866); Linda Skrastin (01884); Brian Aitken (01942); James S Johnstone (02009); M A Walker (01305); Nicola Skrastin (02111); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Jennifer Skrastin (02110); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Fiona Baker (01895); A Wyllie Robertson (02116); Jack Rudram (02117)

2) The scale of housing proposed is out of character with the surrounding development.

Bryan Wight (01737); James McLatchie (01741); Michael L Gladden (01757); John Skrastin (01861); Linda Skrastin (01884); Brian Cook (00701); David Whitham (02098); Nicola Skrastin (02111); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Jennifer Skrastin (02110); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Violet McLatchie (01891); A Wyllie Robertson (02116)

3) Concern over the loss of trees and wildlife as a result of development contrary to Paras 146, 147 and 148 of SPP.

Bryan Wight (01737); James McLatchie (01741); Ian Chatten (01866); Brian Cook (00701); Jean Cook (01966); M A Walker (01305); Keith Whaley (02097); Rhu and Shandon Community Council (01260)

4) Removal of trees and vegetation will increase runoff and give rise to flooding.

Patricia Low (01795); Bryan Wight (01737); Ian Chatten (01866); Brian Cook (00701); Jean Cook (01966); James Duncan (01978); Linda Duncan (01979); James S Johnstone (02009); Pat Pollok-Morris (00276); M A Walker (01305); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Violet McLatchie (01891); Jack Rudram (02117)

5) The proposed development would result in an increase in traffic, with the main road through Rhu village is inadequate to cope with additional traffic.

James McLatchie (01741); Michael L Gladden (01757); John Skrastin (01861); Linda Skrastin (01884); Nicola Skrastin (02111); Jennifer Skrastin (02110); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Fiona Baker (01895); A Wyllie Robertson (02116)

6) The Schedule of land ownership shows that the Council owns the area covered by HAL3/6 and H2006. The Council's ownership of this land gives rise to a conflict of interest and as such the Council should followed due process in accord with PAN 82.

Michael L Gladden (01757); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Elizabeth Gladden (01853)

7) Concern at loss of obstacle course and outdoor recreational opportunities which the woodland and openspace currently provide.

Stuart Gibson (01824); Elizabeth Gladden (01853)

8) Need to ensure development does not compromise neighbouring care facility users.

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Nicola Skrastin (02111); Jennifer Skrastin (02110)

9) The proposal is not consistent with Para,78, 79, 80 and 82 of SPP

Patricia Low (01795); Ian Chatten (01866); Brian Cook (00701); James S Johnstone (02009)

10) Shandon has no facilities, there are only limited facilities in Rhu. There are limited employment opportunities in Helensburgh. Lack of facilities, poor public transport, and high travel to work costs means that affordable housing risks isolation and deprivation for the elderly, disabled and lower paid.

Ian Chatten (01866); Brian Aitken (01942); Pat Pollok-Morris (00276); Rhu and Shandon Community Council (01260); Violet McLatchie (01891); Fiona Baker (01895); Jack Rudram (02117)

11) There is no need for additional housing, the area has a falling and ageing population and over 200 houses for sale locally. There are regeneration opportunities in the Naval Estates in Helensburgh and Rhu which should be taken up before green field sites are developed.

Linda Skrastin (01884); Brian Aitken (01942)

12) Planning permission has previously been refused for a house at Broomfield Gardens based on a series of policy contraventions.

Patricia Low (01795); Brian Aitken (01942); Brian Cook (00701); Jean Cook (01966); Linda Duncan (01979); Pat Pollok-Morris (00276); M A Walker (01305); Keith Whaley (02097); David Whitham (02098); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260); Elizabeth Gladden (01853); Jack Rudram (02117)

13) The local school is at capacity and cannot be expanded.

James Duncan (01978); Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260)

14) The Main Issues Report did not include H2006 as a site. Given that A&BC were already marketing the site for housing it should have been highlighted in the MIR. In the absence of earlier consultation the inclusion of H2006 is questioned.

Rhu and Shandon Community Council (01260); Elizabeth Gladden (01853)

15) The proposals will have an adverse effect on the setting of Blairvadach House a category B listed building

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**2. Modifications sought by those submitting representations:**

Patricia Low (01795) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - Not to build any houses - leave the land open and don't destroy the wood.

Bryan Wight (01737) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - Reduction in the number of houses to reflect the present housing density

Michael L Gladden (01757) - H-AL 3/6; Linda Skrastin (01884) - H-AL 3/6 – Amend Allocation H-AL 3/6 to reduce the housing unit density to match the existing area.

Michael L Gladden (01757) - H2006; Elizabeth Gladden (01853) - H2006; John Skrastin (01861) - H2006; Linda Skrastin (01884) - H2006; Jennifer Skrastin (02110) - H2006 Include Blairvadach House and its associated parking lot in H-AL 3/6 and rezone the rest as a protected woodland area.

Stuart Gibson (01824) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - A statement in the plan indicating that we will be consulted in the design stage.

Jonathon McLatchie (01844) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6; Violet McLatchie (01891) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - Only small scale development with sensitivity to the countryside and tree population

John Skrastin (01861) - H-AL 3/6; Linda Skrastin (01884) - H-AL 3/6; Nicola Skrastin (02111) - H-AL 3/6; Jennifer Skrastin (02110) - H-AL 3/6 - Amend allocation H-AL3/6 by reducing housing density so that it is sympathetic and in character with surrounding locale and recent developments. Also ensure that any development on allocation H-AL3/6 does not impinge unnecessarily on any elevation /vista of the listed building. Ensure mature trees are protected.

Ian Chatten (01866) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6 - Development proposals for brown field sites in Helensburgh area. Regeneration of underutilised Naval Estates in Helensburgh area. Significant reduction of at least 50% of the housing allocation on the site. Or use of the site for facilities for the benefit of the local population.

Brian Cook (00701) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - The proposed development must be considerably reduced in scale or, perhaps, totally abandoned.

Jean Cook (01966) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6; Linda Duncan (01979) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6; Keith Whaley (02097) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6; Pat Pollok-Morris (00276) - H-AL 3/6; David Whitham (02098) - H-AL 3/6; Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260) - H-AL 3/6; Jack Rudram (02117) - H-AL 3/6 - Reduce the number of houses back to the number proposed in the 2009 LDP.

James S Johnstone (02009) - H2006 and H-AL 3/6 - Reduction in the total number of housing units from 124 to 24

Pat Pollok-Morris (00276) - H2006 - Amend the allocation to flats in the house only

David Whitham (02098) - H2006 - Do not develop area H2006

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Rhu & Shandon Community Council (01260) - H2006; Jack Rudram (02117) - H2006 -The allocation for H2006 should be reduced in scale and density to accord with the adjacent areas. This would imply low density housing at an indicative 6 units/ha, or 10 units/ha maximum. Allowing for the nature of the site referred to in point 8 above this would imply not more than 25 units with 25% affordable.

Elizabeth Gladden (01853) - H-AL 3/6 - Decrease the density of houses and incorporate Blairvadach house and car park into H –AL 3/6. Minimise the loss of mature trees.

Fiona Baker (01895) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - Reduce housing allocations at Blairvadach (H-AL3/6 and H2006) to low density – much smaller number of houses.

A Wyllie Robertson (02116) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006; James McLatchie (01741) - H-AL 3/6 and H2006 - No modification suggested

**3. Summary of responses (including reasons) by planning authority:**

- 1) Object to the increase in number of units on allocation H-AL 3/6 and the density on proposed allocation H2006.

The issue of increasing housing densities was outlined in the Main Issues Report, (See Core Doc Ref. CD013) both to promote more efficient use of resources, help reduce carbon emissions, provide greater economies of scale, and promote the provision of more varied house sizes and types, more accurately reflecting needs of smaller households. The Housing Need and Demand Assessment identifying a continuing decline in the size of households fuelled by the growth of single persons and single parent households, and suggests that future housing development profiles focus on the provision of smaller units. (see core document CD008 para 12.4).

- 2) The scale of housing proposed is out of character with the surrounding development; Concern over the loss of trees and wildlife as a result of development contrary to Paras 146, 147 and 148 of SPP.

The Council considers that the Housing Need and Demand Assessment shows that the majority of both need and demand comes from smaller households. The site presents both the redevelopment of a valued listed building that will become vacant by the summer of 2015 and brownfield opportunities. These opportunities are considered suitable for flatted development and smaller housing units The Council further considers that provided that these are taken forward with appropriate design and siting the development of this site need not necessarily be out of character with the surrounding area. In relation to the woodland, this has not been identified on the inventory of ancient semi natural woodland, and as such para 146 would not apply. The provisions of paras 147 and 148 would be applicable, were the woodland to be affected. In identifying the area for the proposed allocations, it was not the intention that the woodland to be clear felled, but rather that the woodland edges of the site be retained, incorporated into the open space requirements of the site and managed appropriately. Important individual trees within the site area will also be retained and incorporated within the layout of any development. In addition, the sites have no wildlife designations.

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- 3) Removal of trees and vegetation will increase runoff and give rise to flooding.

As part of the proposals for any development the developers will be required, through Supplementary Guidance (SG) associated with the plan, to submit a drainage impact assessment, and include designs for a sustainable urban drainage scheme which will ensure that there will be no increase in run off and consequent risk of flooding as a result of any development. The Council intends to minimise the loss of mature trees by taking full account of SG LDP – Development Impact on Trees/Woodland as part of any development of the sites.

- 4) The proposed development would result in an increase in traffic, with the main road through Rhu village is inadequate to cope with additional traffic.

The Council's area road engineer has raised no concerns in relation to additional traffic with regard to this site. The redevelopment of Blairvadach will only take place once the Council vacates the offices with a consequent reduction of traffic movements from 70 employees. Residential development of the site is likely to result in less peaky flows of traffic and in the context of traffic flows along this main road generally will have minimal affect.

- 5) The Schedule of land ownership shows that the Council owns the area covered by HAL 3/6 and H2006. The Council's ownership of this land gives rise to a conflict of interest and as such the Council should followed due process in accord with PAN 82.

The Council has declared its interest in the site as part of the procedures associated with the LDP process and PAN 82. The objectors have submitted no evidence to the contrary and the Council does not accept that it has any conflict of interest here.

- 6) Concern at loss of obstacle course and outdoor recreational opportunities which the woodland and open space currently provide.

The land leased by Glasgow City Council for the obstacle course associated with its outdoor centre on the shore side of the road, is located within the riverine woodland which runs alongside the burn on the south eastern boundaries of the allocation H- AL 3/ 6. (See production PD138). The lower portion of this obstacle course is outwith the proposed allocation boundaries, although the proposed boundaries of the allocation encroach on parts of the upper area. Given the wooded and steeply sloping nature of the area leased for the obstacle course, it is considered that this area would not form part of the developable area of the proposed allocation, but would remain as part of a retained landscape area between the proposed development and the surrounding area. Accordingly if the Reporters were minded the proposals map boundaries for this small area could be adjusted to exclude this area, without material compromise to the purpose or expected capacity of the allocation.

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- 7) Need to ensure development does not compromise neighbouring care facility users.

Whilst there is currently a disagreement between the two Councils as to the legal basis for current occupancy of this facility, in land use terms Class 8 – Residential Institutions and Class 9 Houses would be considered compatible. The Council therefore considers that there is no potential conflict regarding the potential co-existence with these two uses.

- 8) The proposal is not consistent with Para, 78, 79, 80 and 82 of SPP.

In identifying the proposed allocations the planning authority has had regard to SPP, all development would be expected to comply with the Councils Sustainable Design Guides, thereby ensuring successful place and quality residential environments, as advocated by Para 78. In terms of Para 79 the site is immediately adjacent to a dedicated cycle route, thereby facilitating active travel, and is also on a frequent bus service route with bus stops adjacent to the entrance to the site. Para 80 of SPP states “ Planning authorities should promote the efficient use of land and buildings, directing development towards sites within existing settlements where possible to make effective use of existing infrastructure and service capacity and to reduce energy consumption. Redevelopment of urban and rural brownfield sites is preferred to development on greenfield sites. The allocations at Blairvadach do exactly that with the proposed re-use of a soon to be vacant (2015) valued listed building and associated area of brownfield land. Para 82 of SPP refers to infill development, as the sites have been identified as allocations this paragraph is not considered applicable.

- 9) Shandon has no facilities, there are only limited facilities in Rhu. There are limited employment opportunities in Helensburgh. Lack of facilities, poor public transport, and high travel to work costs means that affordable housing risks isolation and deprivation for the elderly, disabled and lower paid.

Scottish Planning Policy (Paragraph 88 Core Document CD007) encourages Local Development Plans to seek the integration of affordable housing in all new housing developments wherever such a need has been demonstrated. The benchmark figure being that each site should contribute 25% of the total number of housing units as affordable housing. The need for affordable housing in Helensburgh and Lomond as established in the Housing Need and Demand Assessment is significant. There is therefore an expectation in the LDP that all developments of 8 or more housing units should make provision for affordable housing at a rate of 25%. Such provision will help to overcome the deprivation and promote social integration of those groups of people referred to by the objectors. While it is accepted that there are limited facilities in Shandon its self, there are bus stops with frequent public transport services on the main road immediately adjacent to the site, as is a dedicated cycle route. Blairvadach is situated between Helensburgh (the largest town in Argyll and Bute) and Faslane (the largest single employment site in the west of Scotland) and accordingly opportunities for local employment and consequently travel to work costs are not considered to be disproportionately high, and are likely to be considerably less than more rural parts of Argyll

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where public transport services are considerably reduced, there are fewer options for active travel, and greater distances to travel to work.

- 10) There is no need for additional housing, the area has a falling and ageing population and over 200 houses for sale locally. There are regeneration opportunities in the Naval Estates in Helensburgh and Rhu which should be taken up before green field sites are developed.

The Council considers that the projected decline in total population is a real threat to the viability of the area (including Helensburgh and Lomond) with a potential to adversely impact on the economy/wealth creation, workforce availability and efficient service delivery. The overall objective of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement/Community Plan (SOA) (Core Doc Ref. CD011) that has been approved by the Scottish Government for the 10 years to 2023 is "Argyll and Bute's economic success is built on a growing population." (See page 12 of the SOA). This outcome is in turn entirely supportive of the 6 national policy priorities set out in the national guidance on community planning and will also see Argyll and Bute contribute to the national outcomes for Scotland. The LDP can assist this overall outcome in a number of ways including providing for a generous supply of land for new housing sites in places where people want to live.

Helensburgh and its neighbouring communities have real potential for growth to assist in meeting the overall objective of the SOA. The lack of available land to allow the building of new housing at a larger scale has been a significant factor in the current population decline and this LDP proposes to tackle this by having sufficient housing allocations to meet our housing needs including affordable and contribute to retaining and growing our population.

The need for housing in the Helensburgh and Lomond area has been established in the Argyll and Bute Housing Need and Demand Assessment which has been approved as robust and credible by the Scottish Governments Centre for Housing Market Analysis (see core document CD008).

The objectors have provided no evidence to demonstrate the availability of Naval Estate housing to help meet the approved Housing Need and Demand Assessment. There is therefore no certainty regarding their availability, particularly as the MoD have advised that their land at Rhu which was formerly identified as a housing allocation is no longer available due to the presence of a gas main that traverses part of the site, and has accordingly been removed from the schedule of allocations for the Proposed LDP.

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11) Planning permission has previously been refused for a house at Broomfield Gardens based on a series of policy contraventions.

Planning permission was refused because of the effect that the proposed house at the entrance to Blairvadach would have on views of it and the removal of significant mature trees from its park like grounds when viewed from the public road. (see production PD140). The proposed allocations are not directly comparable and are considered to be capable of development in a manner which is consistent with both the current Local Plan or Proposed LDP policy and associated SG.

12) The local school is at capacity and cannot be expanded.

Rhu primary school is 1.5 miles from Blairvadach. The school roll as at September 2012 was 165 and the capacity 229. The Council therefore considers that there is sufficient capacity at this school, alternatively Garelochhead primary school is 4.5 miles away and has a capacity of 363 and a school role of 100.

13) The Main Issues Report did not include H2006 as a site. Given that A&BC were already marketing the site for housing it should have been highlighted in the MIR. In the absence of earlier consultation the inclusion of H2006 is questioned.

The Council was not marketing the site for housing at the time of the Main Issues Report as confirmation on the construction of the new offices at East Clyde Street was not finalised at that time, making the site non-effective and unable to be included as a possible MIR site. That said, proposed Allocation H2006 has always been included as part of the settlement area at Shandon. The site has in the past been marketed for development which could have included residential development as well as the re use of the existing offices. Its identification as an Allocation in the Proposed LDP helps to provide greater certainty and has allowed more consultation regarding the proposed uses than is required.

14) The proposals will have an adverse effect on the setting of Blairvadach House a category B listed building.

The Objectors have provided no evidence for this assertion. Detailed proposals are not yet known, both planning and listed building consent will be required for any works which affect the character or setting of Blairvadach and these will be subject to all of the relevant Policies and Supplementary Guidance of the proposed LDP to ensure no such adverse effects. With the removal of council offices from Blairvadach in 2015 the Council is seeking to deliver a positive future for Blairvadach through its identification as part of a housing allocation in the plan, otherwise the future of this valued listed building could be uncertain.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Council therefore, taking all of the above into account, recommends that H-AL 3/6 and H2006 be both retained in the plan, with no amendments in terms of scale, density or area, to allow both sites to contribute to the identified housing needs of the area.

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**Reporter's Conclusions (page 142)**

1. The requirement for additional land to be allocated for housing development in Argyll and Bute is addressed at Issue ISS400, where I have found it to be justified. Therefore with regard to the proposals at Blairvadach, the matter before me is whether the proposal to allocate each of the two areas identified for housing development is appropriate in that context.
2. While Shandon itself has no community facilities for its own residents, it lies very close to the village of Rhu which itself almost adjoins Helensburgh to the south. The primary school at Rhu has spare capacity to accommodate additional pupils. The land at Blairvadach lies immediately to the east of the A814 main coastal road, which has a frequent bus service and an adjacent off-road cycle path, as well as a good vehicular junction. These combine to provide good accessibility for potential future residents. Accordingly I am satisfied that this is an appropriate location for additional housing.
3. *There is a misnumbering here and 3 is missing? Added by JC*
4. The sites at Blairvadach are on relatively steeply sloping land which rises from the coastal road. It offers the opportunity for the occupants of new housing to enjoy very attractive views over the Gare Loch, with a south-westerly aspect. The land comprises a combination of open parkland with prominent mature trees and elements of woodland. These surround Blairvadach House which occupies a prominent elevated position. The house's current use as a council office is due to cease shortly, providing an opportunity for refurbishment and conversion. Areas of office car parking and hardstanding associated with the house would then provide opportunities for what could be defined as brownfield development.
5. The area to the south of the house, which extends up from the coastal road, is already allocated for housing development in the current adopted local plan. There has been no significant change in circumstances drawn to my attention which would justify deleting it now, particularly in the context of the increasing need for new housing which has been identified. I do consider it appropriate, however, that its boundary should be amended to exclude the area of land on its south-eastern edge which is used for an obstacle course in association with the nearby outdoor centre.
6. I agree that the proposed new allocation (H2006) around and to the north of Blairvadach House would provide an appropriate opportunity for additional housing development. No insurmountable technical or infrastructure constraint has been identified, but the presence of the listed building, areas of steeply sloping ground, and the presence of important tall trees will restrict the extent and location of any additional new housing. In these circumstances I consider that a lower density of housing is likely to be appropriate on this site, and accordingly the indicative site capacity should be reduced to 48. This will be subject to the detailed assessment of any specific proposal which is the subject of a planning application.

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7. My findings in relation to the appropriate site allocations in the local development plan are unaffected by the current ownership of the sites, or by the decision on an earlier planning appeal in relation to a proposal for an individual house nearer to the driveway entrance.

**Reporter's Recommendations (p143)**

1. On the proposals maps, amending the boundary of allocation H-AL 3/6, as shown in the map contained in Production No. PD137A (submitted by the council in the course of the examination), to exclude the area of land on its south-eastern edge which is used for an obstacle course in association with the nearby outdoor centre; and
2. In the schedule of housing allocations on page 67, changing the number of units at SiteH2006 to 48.