

**RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN – ANNUAL UPDATE**

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**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Council approved a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RTTP) in November 2018 which was then submitted to the Scottish Government on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.
- 1.2 The RRTP sets out a 5 year transition plan to deliver:
- Settled mainstream housing for homeless people “as quickly as possible.”
  - A new model of temporary homeless accommodation utilising mainstream furnished housing within communities.
  - A “Housing First” and “Wraparound Care” model for complex homeless cases with multiple needs.
- 1.3 The Scottish Government has allocated £24m from the Ending Homeless Together fund to support local authorities in their transition to Rapid Rehousing and Housing First.
- 1.4 The report itself has to provide information on the following;
- Local Housing Market and Homelessness Context
  - Baseline of Temporary Accommodation Supply
  - Vision for Temporary Accommodation Supply
  - Identify Support Needs to Enable Rapid Rehousing
  - Provide a Rapid Rehousing Plan
  - Provide a Rapid Rehousing Resource Plan
- 1.5 The Plan is owned by the Council and reviewed by the Scottish Government on an annual basis.
- 1.6 It is recommended that Committee:
- a) Note the RRTP activity which took place in 2019/20;
  - b) Agree to the RRTP annual update which sets out activity for 2020/21;
  - c) Agree to the Housing First model proposed within the RRTP which will see the Council discharge statutory homeless duties through a different model.

## RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report details activity in relation to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019 – 2024 for Argyll and Bute which was agreed by the Council in November 2018.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that Committee:

- a) Note the RRTP activity which took place in 2019/20;
- b) Agree to the RRTP annual update which sets out activity for 2020/21;
- c) Agree to the Housing First model proposed within the RRTP which will see the Council discharge statutory homeless duties through a different model.

### 4.0 DETAIL

4.1 Housing First is an approach that offers **permanent, affordable housing** as quickly as possible for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

4.2 Over and above that definition **Housing First**, is a secure tenancy as the first option for complex and/or chaotic homeless cases and Wraparound Support. The support and care provided as part of Housing First are both integral parts of the proposed new homeless model.

4.3 The main aims of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is that by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2024

- The number of homeless applicants will reduce from 517 per annum (2017/18) to 300 (2023/24). **460 homeless applications were taken in 2018/19.**
- Units of temporary accommodation are accordingly reduced from 140 to 100 (2023/24). **Due to COVID-19 the Council has increased the**

**number of temporary accommodation units to 188 in the short term.**

- Support for those homeless or threatened with homelessness is integrated between tenancy, mental health and addiction services. **Mental Health Practitioner currently out to advert.**
- People spend as little time as possible in temporary tenancies before finding permanent re-housing and no more than 26 weeks without good reason reducing to 20 weeks by 2024. **In 2018/19 households spent an average of 160 days in temporary accommodation.**
- People sustain permanent tenancies with a reduction in repeat homelessness. **5.7% of households were repeat homeless cases in 2018/19.**

4.4 The RRTP which was approved by Council in November 2018 contained a funding request to the Scottish Government of £3.124m over the 5 year period. In Year one (2019/20) the request was for £374,495. This funding request was based on the Scottish Government asking Council's what they would need to deliver Rapid Rehousing. The Government had a limited budget and the requests from local authorities far exceeded that budget and no local authorities were awarded the amount they had requested. The Council received £95,000 core funding which was paid to the Council in September 2019. In addition £30,000 was carried forward from the previous year in relation to enabling funding to assist with preparing the initial Plan. The Council has **not** been able to progress the following aspects of the RRTP which were proposed in November 2018:-

- The appointment of a Project Manager and Research Assistant for Rapid Rehousing
- The appointment of 8 Homeless Prevention/ Housing First Officers
- The establishment of Peer Support groups across Argyll and Bute

The above proposals will now be removed from the RRTP. The actions within the proposed Plan reflects the reduced level of funding. The fact that the 3 work streams referred to above will not be taken forward will impact on the ability of the Council to achieve a whole system change of culture in the way homelessness is tackled in Argyll and Bute.

### **Progress in 2019/20**

4.5 Council Housing Services have taken forward 6 key work strands within the original RRTP and have spent £53,979 in 2019/20:-

- **Rent arrears prevention fund** – this fund assists households who are at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears. Claims are assessed based on the household's entitlement to housing benefit over the previous 12 months. If there was a good reason for the household not to have claimed their entitlement e.g mental health issues then the fund will pay the entitlement. This payment will be made directly to the landlord to prevent eviction action. Appropriate support will be put in place to enable the household to sustain their tenancy. Exceptional cases will also be

considered where the fund may be required to pay more than the 12 months entitlement to prevent eviction. As at 31st March 2020 the rent arrears prevention fund has spent £39,157 assisting 27 households to remain in their accommodation. 234 housing support hours per month have been assigned to these households to assist them to sustain their accommodation. This equates to £4,270 per month which is funded through existing Council housing support budgets. The fund will be reviewed in June 2020 with the Housing Associations to ensure best value for the public money involved in this process.

- **Decoration Project** – as at 31st March 2020 the decoration project has assisted 7 households at a cost of £6,405. Many homeless households are on low incomes and although the Scottish Welfare Fund assists in the provision of some essential household items household often cannot afford to decorate their properties or bring them up to a standard where they take ownership of their house and see it as their home. The decoration project aims to assist households to make a house a home and have a greater chance of sustaining that home.
- **Flexible Emergency Fund** - as at 31st March 2020 £4,250 has been paid to contracted housing support providers. The flexible emergency fund principle was established in the 4 main cities across Scotland in 2018. The aim is to empower front line workers to assist households at the point of crisis. This would then enable the support provider to assist the households to access mainstream services. Blue Triangle HA were awarded £750, the HELP project were awarded £1,000 and Carr Gomm were awarded £2,500.
- **Mental Health / Addictions Practitioner** – as at 31st March 2020 no money has been spent on this work strand. The Council continues to work in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) on this project. A job description and line management process for the post has been agreed and the post is currently out to advert. It is anticipated that the salary and employer on costs will be circa £60,000 per annum.
- **Housing First** – as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 £1,580 has been spent on Housing First related training. An event took place in Inveraray on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019 which brought Housing Services, Housing Associations and Housing Support Providers together to discuss how to implement Housing First in Argyll and Bute. The event was hosted by Turning Point Scotland, an organisation with vast experience of delivering Housing First in Scotland. The Housing Support contracts will be renewed in September 2020 so the proposal is that Housing First is implemented in October 2020.
- **RRTP Training** – as at 31st March 2020 £2,586 has been spent on RRTP related training. There has been mental health awareness and awareness of hoarding training delivered to partners in 2019/20.

- 4.6 As the funding for the RRTP was not received by the Council until 6 months into 2019/20 the budget of £125,000 has not therefore been fully spent. The remaining money will be carried forward as this grant funding is specifically to deliver Rapid Rehousing. £71,021 of the £125,000 will be carried forward to 2020/21.

### **RRTP Proposed Activity for 2020/21**

- 4.7 The Council's original funding request for 2020/21 was £731,053. The Council has been allocated £105,000 by the Scottish Government in addition to the £71,021 carried forward from previous years. It is proposed that we continue with the 6 areas of activity detailed in 4.5 with the funding allocation as follows:-
- Rent arrears prevention fund - £50,000
  - Decoration project - £35,000
  - Flexible Emergency Fund - £11,000
  - Mental Health /Addictions Practitioner - £50,000 (part year)
  - Housing First / RRTP training - £5,000
  - Establish a Housing First model - £25 000 (creation of 10 tenancies)

### **The Proposed Housing First Model**

- 4.8 Housing First is delivered within the overall RRTP and aims to give the most chaotic and vulnerable homeless households housing as the first step to recovery. Appropriate support will be provided to the households to give them the maximum chance of sustaining their permanent accommodation.
- 4.9 Taking and assessing homeless applications is one of the statutory housing functions carried out by the local authority. In order to qualify for Housing First the household must have been taken on as statutory homeless by the local authority.
- 4.10 It is anticipated that around 10 households per annum will be accommodated through the Housing First route in Argyll and Bute.
- 4.11 The Council currently discharges the duty to provide permanent housing to statutory homeless households through the HOMEArgyll partners – Argyll Community Housing Association, Dunbritton Housing Association, Fyne Homes and West Highland Association. In 2018/19 the Housing Associations allocated 25% of all new tenancies to statutory homeless households.
- 4.12 When a household is accepted as statutory homeless and the local authority has a duty to secure permanent housing for them then they are placed on a list within HOMEArgyll in date order with all the other statutory homeless households awaiting permanent accommodation. It is proposed that if partners (Council Housing Services, Housing Associations and Housing Support Providers) agree that a homeless household should be a Housing First case then the household will be allocated the next available house which meets their needs by the Housing Association.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The RRTP submitted and approved by the Council in November 2018 detailed a proposed redesign of housing and support services for those people homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Plan also identified the resources required both to transition to any new model and also to implement the new arrangements. The Plan was ambitious but achievable but only if adequately resourced by the Scottish Government. Unfortunately the Council has only received a fraction of the resources to implement the initial Plan. The proposals contained within this report will be delivered within the funding provided and with effective partnership working will result in a move to a model of Rapid Rehousing in Argyll and Bute.
- 5.2 It is important to note that given the reduced levels of resources provided by the Scottish Government in comparison to the original request, the significant impact the current Covid 19 pandemic has and is having on the activities of the Housing Service (increased demand for temporary accommodation and potential increase in the number of homeless applications), and the uncertainty in predicting how both of these will develop in the short and medium term, there is a need to treat with some caution the targets identified in paragraph 4.3. Housing Services will closely monitor progress, and as the RRTP Plan is reviewed annually, the Council can revise these targets if they prove inappropriate given changing circumstances.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy: Housing First requires a change to the way the Council discharges statutory duty to statutory homeless households.
- 6.2 Financial: The Plan has been refined to maximize the use of the additional resources to implement the plan are sought from the Scottish Government.
- 6.3 Legal: There are no legislative changes.
- 6.4 HR: There is no impact on HR
- 6.5 Equalities: **Fairer Scotland Duty.** Overall the proposals under rapid rehousing will reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage frequently evidenced in homeless cases. However for as long as housing is a scarce resource impact will be positive for the individual/household allocated but negative for all others remaining on the waiting lists.
- 6.6 Risk: Insufficient resourcing from the Scottish government will impact the Council's ability to deliver under the plan. There is the risk that if the public perceive the actions under rapid rehousing to be a fast track route to getting an RSL house, homeless presentations will increase. The implications of Covid 19 will have to be constantly monitored with adjustment made to targets as

necessary.

6.7 Customer Service: Opportunity to improve outcomes for people found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness.

**Interim Executive Director with Responsibility for Housing  
Kirsty Flanagan**

**Policy Lead Councillor Robin Currie**  
18<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**For further information contact:**

Iona MacPhail – Team Lead Housing Operations

[iona.macphail@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:iona.macphail@argyll-bute.gov.uk) 01631 700 050

Douglas Whyte – Team Lead Housing Strategy

[Douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:Douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk) 01546 604 785



**ARGYLL & BUTE  
RAPID REHOUSING  
PLAN  
2019/20 - 2023/24**

*June 2020*





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## 1. Executive Summary

The basic premise of this Rapid Rehousing Transition plan is to move from a primarily reactive, crisis intervention homeless service to a pro-active, early intervention preventative service.

Simple as this sounds it will require time and resources to implement and require change from the Council's Housing Service as well as our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and Health & Social Care (H&SCP) partners.

Prevention is the key to a successful Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. This will minimize the number of households presenting as homeless and enable all partners to work together to ensure that permanent housing secured has the best possible chance of being sustained. The following activities are key to delivering a successful Rapid Rehousing model in Argyll and Bute:-

- Closer integration between support for tenancy, mental health and addictions whether the case is simple but multi-dimensional or complex.
  - Central to the support model is the appointment of health and housing coordinators to assess and ensure the right support is provided by the most appropriate service for the duration of the transitional period.
- Establishing an arrears grant fund to incentivise household budgeting through early intervention.
- Ensuring a "homeless dividend" from the Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP).
- Ensuring protocols are in place to ensure nobody is discharged from a public service into homelessness.
- Greater use of the private rented sector to maximise an all tenure approach to housing provision, building on the increased security provided by Private Residential Tenancies and the First Tier Tribunal.
- Establish a decoration grant to ensure homes are psychologically informed and give the greatest opportunity for tenancy sustainment.
- Establish a Flexible Emergency Fund to enable front line housing support workers to assist households in crisis.
- Reduce time spent in temporary tenancies.
- Establish a rural Housing First model that works for Argyll and Bute.

This plan is written from the perspective that the Council and its RSL partners will continue to build and sustain diverse, mixed communities giving reasonable preference for homeless people but providing opportunities for all.

The Plan is ambitious but has been tailored to be delivered within the level of funding that the Scottish Government has given the Council to deliver the Plan. The Council and its partners have the expertise, commitment and desire to ensure the plan's success.

## 2. Introduction

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action group (HARSAG) published *Scotland's transition to rapid rehousing – market area analysis, legislative and culture review* along with *Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTP)* in June 2018.

The guidance required that the local authority and partners (Housing Associations, Health and Social Care Partnership etc.) prepare a 5 year transformational plan for homeless services recognising that *“A safe and secure home is the best base to build and live our lives. Reducing the time people spend homeless and in temporary accommodation also reduces the damage to people's health and wellbeing that homeless causes.*

The guidance states; *“Where homelessness cannot be prevented rapid rehousing means;*

- *A settled, mainstream housing outcome as quickly as possible;*
- *Time spent in any form of temporary accommodation reduced to a minimum, with the fewer transitions the better;*
- *When temporary accommodation is needed, the optimum type is mainstream, furnished and within a community.”*

The action group further recognised that some people need more than just a house and have multiple complex needs that must be addressed alongside their homelessness and proposed the Housing First model.

- Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs.
- It recognises a safe and secure home as the best base for recovery and offers personalised, open ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address wider needs.

The RRTP is a new planning framework for local authorities and their partners to transition to a Rapid Rehousing and Housing First approach. The local authority developed collaborative and costed plans and submitted them to the Scottish Government before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. The RRTP will thereafter be reviewed annually as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) process.

Argyll and Bute Council welcomes the opportunity to review its homeless service in line with the principles of Rapid Rehousing and Housing First. However to deliver the transformation change required for our remote and rural communities will require short term investment to change the homeless “system” to transform to the new model. Together with our partners in housing associations and the health and social care partnership we can deliver an early intervention service that, as far as is reasonably practicable, prevents homelessness arising and eliminates or vastly reduces the trauma homelessness causes for people.

Rapid Rehousing is an ambitious proposal which should be delivered in the context of creating and sustaining mixed and diverse communities across the whole of Argyll and Bute. There are particular and competing demands on the affordable housing stock, for homeless people, for our aging population and to house the workers essential for our future economic prosperity, as well as for the general needs of those who simply want to live here.

Balancing these competing demands has been a major consideration in creating our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

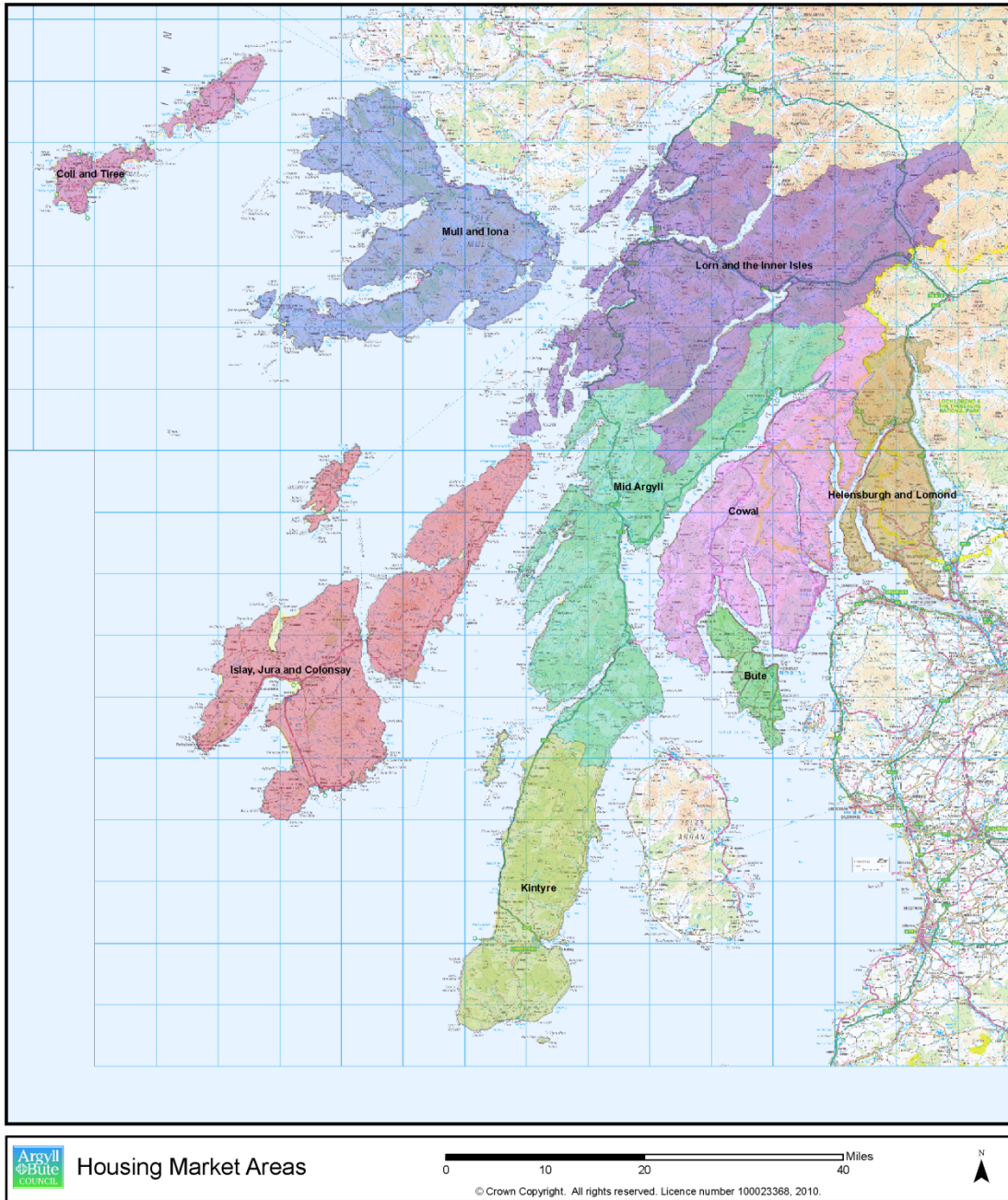
### **3. Local Housing Market and Homelessness Context**

#### **i. Local Housing Market**

Argyll and Bute is the second largest local authority area in Scotland covering an area of 691,000 hectares. The area is home to approximately 88,000 people, just 1.6% of Scotland's population, and with an average of only 13 persons per square kilometer, this is the third sparsest population density of the 32 Scottish local authority areas: and as the main population settlements tend to be at the extremity of the mainland area the population is also highly dispersed.

Over half the population (52%) live in settlements of fewer than 3,000 people or outwith settlements altogether; and 17% of the population live on the 23 inhabited islands. This large and diverse area context is important when considering homelessness services as multiple service solutions are required to deliver on the Scottish Social Housing Charter requirement that homelessness duties are performed so that *homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice*. Helensburgh is the largest settlement with a population of 15,610 while at the opposite end of the scale Tighnabruaich has just 520. In addition on the basis that six dwellings together is the minimum number of units to comprise a 'minor settlement' there are some 215 to 220 settlements within the local authority area.

Within this large area 9 distinct Housing Market Areas (HMAs) have been identified for strategic planning purposes although in reality several smaller HMAs exist.



Failures of the housing system differ in each HMA. High demand outstripping supply is an issue in Oban and Lorn, including an acute shortage of 1 bed accommodation which impacts particularly on rehousing opportunities for homeless people. In Kintyre and Bute there is a general over supply and issues of poor quality in the private rented sector. Affordability is a concern in all 9 HMAs.

There was an estimated 48,014 dwellings in Argyll and Bute in 2018 with 9% deemed ineffective i.e. unavailable to meet local needs; comprising second/holiday homes or long term vacant properties. Owner occupation is the predominant tenure at approximately 61% and only 18% in the social rented sector.

Argyll and Bute is a stock transfer authority. The Council is a full partner of HOMEArgyll which

operates the Common Housing Register and Common Allocations Policy. Members of the public can register for social housing online and complete one application for all four Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), (ACHA, Fyne Homes, Dunbritton and West Highland Housing Association). As part of this process applicants are required to complete an online housing options assessment with appropriate advice arising from that.

As of August 2018 there were 2,440 active applicants on the HOMEArgyll waiting list: 1,646 on the general list; 630 on the transfer list; and 164 on the Homeless list (i.e. 7% of the total). The average length of time on the waiting list for open homeless applicants was 61 weeks (but this varied considerably for individual cases).

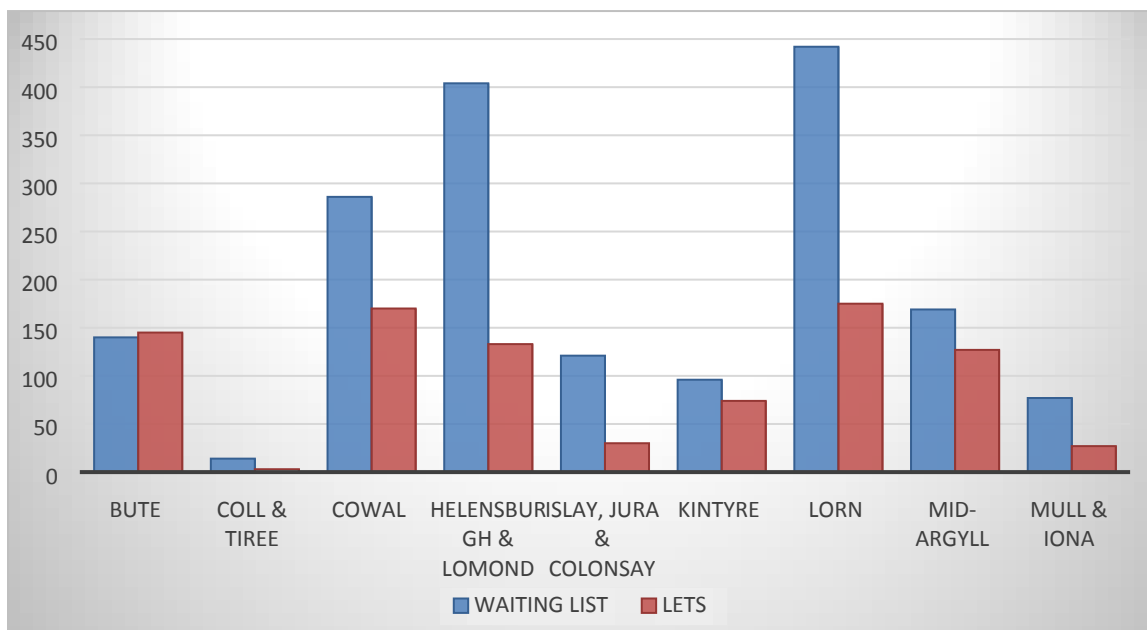
Comparing waiting list demand for social housing with available lets (pressure ratios) provides a provisional indication of potential imbalances in supply and demand and can highlight areas experiencing housing pressures. Overall, there are around 2 applicants per available let in Argyll and Bute, i.e. a pressure ratio of 2:1 however this varies considerably by HMA as the following table illustrates. Based solely on these figures, the most pressurised areas would appear to be Coll & Tiree (5:1) and Islay, Jura & Colonsay (4:1).

#### Pressure Ratios by HMA, 2017/18

HOUSING MARKET AREA	WAITING LIST (excluding transfer list)	LETS	PRESSURE RATIO (APPS :LETS)
Bute	140	145	1:1
Coll & Tiree	14	3	5:1
Cowal	286	170	2:1
Helensburgh & Lomond	404	133	3:1
Islay, Jura & Colonsay	121	30	4:1
Kintyre	96	74	1:1
Lorn	442	175	3:1
Mid-Argyll	169	127	1:1
Mull & Iona	77	27	3:1
<b>Total for A&amp;B</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>2:1</b>

Source: Annual RSL Returns/HOMEArgyll Waiting list 2018

The following chart gives a graphic indication that in terms of numerical supply and demand, Lorn still exhibits one of the most significant imbalances within Argyll & Bute, followed by Helensburgh & Lomond. Apart from Bute and Kintyre, there appears to be at least some degree of unmet need throughout the authority area.



Arising from this the Housing Supply Targets from the 2018/19 – 2022/23 Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) are as follows;

<b>Argyll &amp; Bute</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>5 Year Total</b>	<b>10 Year total</b>
<b>Total HST</b>	<b>240 - 300</b>	<b>1,200 -1,500</b>	<b>2,400 - 3,000</b>
Affordable Housing	110-130	550-650	1,100-1,300
Private Market Housing	130-170	650-850	1,300-1,700

Source; Argyll & Bute Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2018/19 – 2022/23

The SHIP indicates target completions for the RSL core programme at 765 units up to 2021 with the potential for at least a further 189 in active consideration for later years.

Participation in the local housing markets is linked to the general economy and housing affordability. In Argyll and Bute the local economy remains predominantly service-based, with over 87% of employee jobs in the authority area being provided in this sector, compared to only 84% in Scotland as a whole. The Public Services Sector (local government, administration, education and health) constitutes the biggest employment sector in Argyll and Bute, with 35% of jobs compared to only 30% in Scotland as a whole, and 28% across Great Britain. This authority also has almost double the proportion of employees in the Accommodation and Food Services (15.7%) than Scotland, with only 7.8%. However, conversely, the local manufacturing sector at 4.3% is almost half the equivalent sector in Scotland (7.4%).

Unemployment rates\* in Argyll and Bute are below the national averages (5.1% compared to 6.5% for both Scotland and the UK), although due to the continuing high levels of seasonal and part-time employment in the area, rates vary according to the time of year and there are significant geographic variations across local Housing Market Areas and communities within the authority. (\*Covid 19 economic impacts are

likely to have a significant impact on unemployment levels at least in the short term with possible medium and longer term negative impacts. This will need careful monitoring as we enter the recovery phase of the pandemic and may mean a significant rise in homeless presentations)

Comparing average house prices to average incomes and using a price to income ratio of 3.5 as affordable, owner occupation is unaffordable in all 9 housing markets. HNDA analysis suggests over 65% of local households cannot afford the average house price and over 32% cannot even afford the lower quartile price (often seen as the entry level point for first time buyers). This unaffordability in purchasing increases pressure on the social rented sector.

Affordability is also critical in the private rented sector. Argyll & Bute Council commissioned research into the Private Rented Sector in 2013 and consider the findings to remain valid in 2018.

Rental values vary across the 9 housing market areas reflecting the differing dynamics of each local housing system, as does the comparison with the Local Housing Allowance rates. The majority of rental values under the LHA rate are in the low demand areas of Bute and Kintyre.

More recent national figures (in the Scottish Government’s official statistics publication “People, Communities and Places: Private Rent Statistics, Scotland, 2010-2017”), suggest that between 2010 and 2017 average rents increased for all property sizes in Argyll and Bute except 1 bedroom shared. In particular, 1 bedroom properties increased by 9.2% over this period. The breakdown of private rent levels by quartile and bedroom size in 2017 are summarised in the following table.

**Broad Rental Market Area Profile: Argyll and Bute, 2017 (£monthly)**

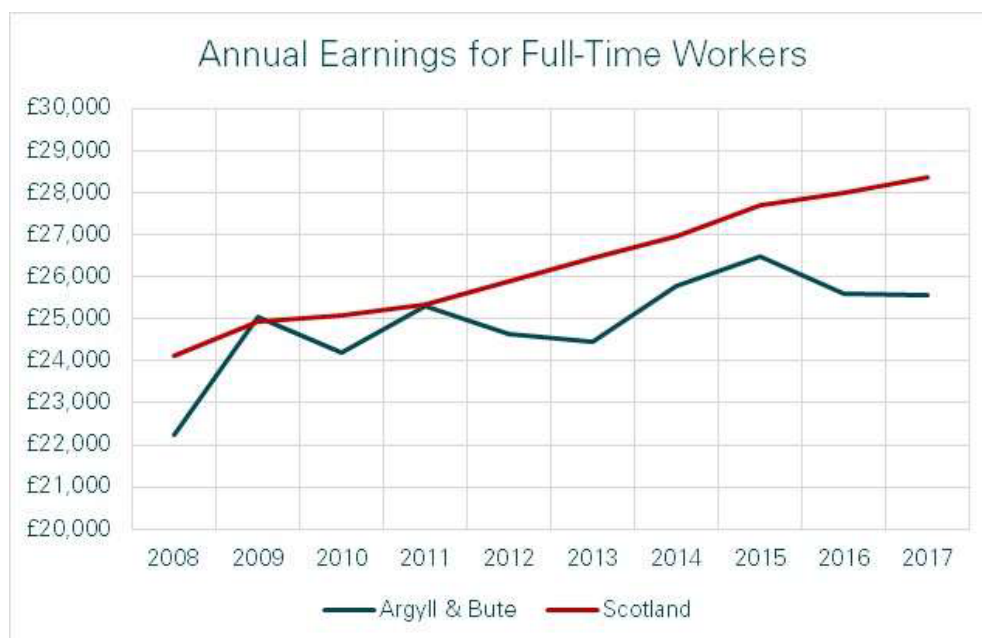
	<b>1 bed</b>	<b>2 bed</b>	<b>3bed</b>	<b>4 bed</b>	<b>1 shared bed</b>
<b>Lower Quartile</b>	£375	£450	£525	£700	£255
<b>Median</b>	£400	£500	£598	£925	£294
<b>Mean</b>	£417	£516	£652	£980	£301
<b>Upper Quartile</b>	£450	£550	£750	£1,250	£345



The Local Housing Allowance levels for Argyll & Bute in 2018 are as follows:

Number of bedrooms	Category	2018/19 LHA Rate (£ per month)
Shared room rate	S1	£264.89
1 bedroom rate	B1	£365.00
2 bedroom rate	C2	£450.02
3 bedroom rate	D3	£521.26
4 or more bedroom rate	E4	£780.00

While the standard affordability assumption is that rental costs should be around 25% of a household's income, the dedicated research carried out by this Council in 2013 found that many local tenants were required to pay anywhere between 30-40% (or higher in some cases) of their income to meet local private rent levels. Our analysis suggests that at the 2017 market rent for a two bedroom property, a household would require an annual income of at least £21,600. Based on the CACI Paycheck income data for 2017, around 38% of households in Argyll and Bute could not afford to sustain this rent level. Pressures in the private rented sector are further evidenced by the fact that almost a quarter (24%) of the active HOMEArgyll applicants as of August 2018 were currently living in that sector and were seeking to move to a social rented tenancy.



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Reflectin  
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presentations in Argyll and Bute has declined significantly from a 1,120 high in 2005/06 to 517 in 2017/18, but this itself was an increase of 8.6% over the previous year. Of these 517 homeless presentations 38 had slept rough, 20 of whom having slept rough the night before presentation. 84 people were aged under 25 having been asked to leave the family home.

The majority of closed cases (81%) achieved positive outcomes, with 230 receiving a Scottish

Secure Tenancy, 73 returning to/retaining their previous accommodation, and 31 receiving a Private Rented Tenancy. There were no cases involving the use of B&B or hostel accommodation.

The majority of cases (106) arose after being asked to leave the family homes with a further 103 leaving after a household/relationship non-violent breakdown. This makes up just over 40% of presentations. 44 or 8.5% arose due to arrears of rent or mortgage.

Single people made up the vast majority of applicants 59% of the total, (albeit down by 5% from the year before) followed by single parent who made up 22%. The total number of applications involving children rose from 133 in 2016/17 to 171 in 2017/18, 33% of the total.

Tenancy support is delivered by contracted agencies to individuals and families living in temporary accommodation, under threat of homelessness, living in their own home but having difficulties or have recently been looked after by a Local Authority. 316 new support referrals were made in 2017/18 with 309 departures from support in the same period. 78% of these, 241 cases, were planned departures.

In addition to 517 homeless presentation 1,929 prevention cases were recorded for the year 2017/18. Around 60% of these achieved a positive outcome in terms of accessing or remaining in secure permanent accommodation. This however is below our target of 70%.

#### **4. Baseline Position of Temporary Accommodation Supply**

As a stock transfer authority the Council has only a small number of properties available for its own use. Pressure on affordable housing led to private tenancies being leased by the Council and sublet to homeless households as temporary accommodation in order to maximize the use of the RSL stock for permanent accommodation. This model accounts for the majority of the current provision although in lower demand area use is still made of RSL property.

140 units of temporary accommodation were provided in Argyll and Bute as of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018 located in the main population centres of Oban, Lochgilphead & Mid Argyll, Campbeltown, Rothesay, Dunoon and Helensburgh. Provision of a range of temporary accommodation over such a wide area presents particular challenges. Accommodation in any one location does little to meet needs in another, and to replicate across six centers adds considerably to costs.

**Private Sector Properties.** **64 properties.** Primarily furnished and decorated flatted accommodation at various mainstream residential locations the all the main towns noted above. Average length of stay 148 days. Average charge £107.19/week.

**Argyll and Bute Council Property.** **8 properties.** 6 Flats located Helensburgh town centre and 2 houses provided in Lochgilphead. Furnished and decorated. Average length of stay 178 days. Average charge £100.51/week.

**Housing Association Property** **18 properties.**

Primarily flatted accommodation at various locations. Furnished and decorated. Average length of stay 172 days. Average charge £107.19/week.

In the above examples the private and RSL properties are leased by the Council and sublet to homeless households. The owners remain responsible for repair of the structure and fixed components with the Council responsible for furnishing, decoration and damage repair. Tenants may be recharged for deliberate damages. Rents are pegged at LHA rates to ensure affordability.

### **Serviced and Supported Accommodation**

**50 units in 6 properties**

Serviced accommodation is provided in Oban by a specialist RSL and in Helensburgh and Dunoon by private sector providers procured by the Council.

**Oban Solas**            **5** bedrooms with shared amenities and social room. Whole building exclusively for homeless clients. Support provided on site. Average length of stay 78 days. Average charge £221.33/week.

**Oban Shore St**        **15** self-contained flats. Whole building exclusively for homeless people. On site housing management staff providing informal caring support. Average length of stay 339 days. Average charge £252.07/week.

**Oban Lorn Court**    **6** self-contained bedsits with en suite. Shared living/kitchen area. Whole building exclusively for homeless people. Remotely managed. Average length of stay 184 days. Average charge £91.02/week.

**Oban Don Mor**        **6** bedsits with en suite, shared kitchen living area. Remotely managed. Whole building exclusively for homeless people. Average length of stay 296 days. Average charge £151.19/week.

**Helensburgh**        **8** rooms (single, double and family) with en suite, communal lounge and kitchen and communal outdoor area. **2** additional rooms used for emergencies. 3 additional rooms in private use. Management on site with informal caring support. Average length of stay is 105 days. Average charge £90/week

**Dunoon**                **10** rooms - exclusive use for homeless people, bed sits with en-suite, communal kitchen/dining. Management on site with informal caring support. Average length of stay 48 days. Average charge £90/week

The temporary accommodation focus in Argyll and Bute over the past 10 years has been to provide temporary accommodation which is in community settings, of good quality and affordable to our clients. Transitions are kept to a minimum and usually only when moving from an emergency placement to more suitable accommodation. It is our practice to avoid the use of unsuitable accommodation by effective management of the accommodation options available as above.

We do not consider this form of transitional accommodation to be particularly problematic. People presenting as homeless have accommodation in which to live and consider their housing options, time to make choices and take stock after whatever crisis caused their homelessness, thereafter to move on to sustain permanent tenancies.

Exit surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction with the accommodation provided with 84% indicating satisfaction, however one of the early actions in our transition plan will be to execute a more detailed survey of current tenants of their satisfaction with the quality and time spent in our temporary accommodation. To date there is no Housing First capacity in Argyll and Bute.

<b>2017/18 Satisfaction Survey</b>	<b>%</b>
(a) very satisfied	49%
(b) fairly satisfied	25%
(c) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12%
(d) fairly dissatisfied	2%
(e) very dissatisfied	0
(f) don't know/no opinion	0

## **5. Vision for temporary accommodation supply**

We recognise the need, when there is no prospect of keeping an individual in their existing accommodation, or where there is no immediately available permanent accommodation, for people to be able to access high quality fit for purpose transitional accommodation before making choices on permanent accommodation options available to them. We will continue to strive to ensure high quality temporary accommodation is available to all who need it in a form suitable for their choice and needs. Time spent in temporary accommodation should be as short a time as is reasonably practicable taking into account the circumstances of each individual's case

Our vision for temporary tenancies is;

1. To provide shelter as and when required preferably in accommodation where the client will reside until permanently housed.
2. To maintain a variety of good quality temporary accommodation in community settings.
3. To minimise and preferably eliminate, transfer from one temporary tenancy to another (other than from emergency accommodation).
4. That time spent in temporary accommodation is no more than 20 weeks by 2024, (as far as is reasonably practicable).
5. Continue to minimise, and preferably eliminate completely, use of B&B.
6. To implement a rural Housing First project in Argyll & Bute by using more RSL homes as temporary tenancies thereafter changing to Scottish Secure Tenancies (flipping).

## **6. Identifying support needs**

In moving to a system of Rapid Rehousing high quality, fit for purpose support services delivered seamlessly across tenancy, mental health and addictions will be critical to

- Prevent homelessness,

- Rapidly rehouse those found to be homeless and to
- Sustain tenancies in the longer term

The proposals below have been developed in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Health and Social Care Partnership.

For some years now the Council has avoided the use of terms such as “ready for housing” or “tenancy ready” adopting the principle that with the right level of support the vast majority of people could sustain a mainstream tenancy. This policy has created some problems in cases where there is a refusal to accept or engage with support services and this has to be acknowledged in the service moving forward.

Currently tenancy support on the Better Futures model is procured by the Council and delivered by contracted agencies. Cross sector support is delivered quite separately i.e. tenancy, mental health and addictions. Housing Officers report an increasing proportion of clients displaying some level of mental health or addiction issues in addition to homelessness and it is acknowledged in this challenging environment of dealing with increasingly complex and chaotic lifestyles, the current model, across all services, could be improved to achieve better recovery outcomes.

About one third of homeless presentations to the Council have no identified support needs and for whom permanent housing provision ends their housing crisis. A further 18% require only tenancy support provided in both temporary tenancy and when rehoused in permanent accommodation, supported until fully settled.

However an estimated 49%, close to half of all presentation, have some form of underlying mental health and/or addiction condition and the proposal for a new model of support is designed to meet those needs.

It is proposed to transform the working relationship between support commissioners and contractors across the Council and H&SCP. Obviously homeless individuals form only a proportion of the overall client base for mental health and addiction services but for that cohort, a joint and seamless service will be offered with the lead organisation on each case based on client’s needs.

This transformation will be based on 4 elements of work

1. Having the Lead Professionals for mental health and addiction represented on the Housing Support Steering Group.
2. Establishing locality interest groups to ensure operational officers are aware and informed of each service and deliver multi agency support based on the needs of the individual.
3. Appointment of link officers for Mental Health, Addictions and Housing who, along with the existing housing tenancy support coordinator will
  - a. Ensure in- house and contracted providers are adequately trained to deliver support at the right level to suit client needs.
  - b. Assess needs and ensure psychologically informed support interventions.
  - c. Ensure the organisation best suited to meet the highest level of need has ownership of client support with other agencies in a supporting role

- d. Seek to minimise the number of professionals working with each individual thus enhancing the likelihood of positive engagement.

Existing tenancy support contracts will be amended on renewal to deliver Better Futures plus, requiring delivery of low level mental health and addiction support beyond that currently required in the Better Futures framework.

Cases of complex needs involving tenancy, mental health and addiction issues requiring higher levels of intervention and specialist support will be led by the relevant Health and Social Care service.

Finally those cases of intermediate needs will require professional assessment by the proposed Physical Health & Housing and/or Mental Health, Addictions and Housing professionals who will assign responsibility to one specific service to lead on the support.

<b>Levels and type of support required Current Homeless cases</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
No support required	172	33%
Tenancy support only	95	18%
Enhanced tenancy support including low level mental health and/or addiction support	45	9%
Medium level mental health and/or addiction support for complex cases in addition to tenancy support	80	15%
High level mental health and/or addiction support for complex cases in addition to tenancy support	130	25%
<b>Total homeless presentations 2017/18</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>100%</b>

The second

strand of the upgraded support service will be to work in tandem with the Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drug Partnership to establish a Peer Support Network, training people with lived experience through the Reach (Recovery, Empowerment, Aspiration, Choice, Hope) Advocacy Award. Part of this project will include locality client led support groups for all those with current or recent homeless experience.

## 7. Achieving the vision

The Rapid Rehousing Plan for Argyll and Bute will focus on three major elements of work;

1. Prevention
2. Leaving temporary accommodation timeously
3. Sustaining permanent accommodation.

Our aim is for

1. More homelessness to be prevented through assertive outreach.
2. A more integrated support network between housing, physical health, mental health and addiction services to contribute to prevention work and greater tenancy sustainment for those re-housed.
3. Protocols with partners to ensure people leaving public services are not discharged into homelessness.
4. A greater focus on rehousing targets to reduce time spent in temporary accommodation.
5. A greater uptake of first offers of permanent housing by
  - a. better screening of areas of choice,
  - b. transparency in consideration of reasonableness for offers and
  - c. Improving the decorative quality of homes offered
6. Where leaving the current accommodation is necessary or unavoidable, to have high quality, fit for purpose temporary accommodation, available for occupation.
7. Developing an Arrears Alleviation Fund to be developed alongside specific support for household budgeting aimed at a considerable reduction in arrears evictions.
8. Maintaining the current mediation service to reduce homelessness through disputes within families.
9. A greater alignment of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) to the needs of those threatened with or actually homeless.
10. Provision of Rural Housing First
11. Establish a Flexible Emergency Fund to enable front line housing support workers to assist households in crisis.
  
12. Provision of a decoration allowance scheme to ensure homes are pleasant and homely from first occupancy.

The detailed action plan is shown at Appendix ii.

The plan requires considerable development in the early stages of Year 1 and 2. Years 3 and 4 are consolidation years to refine the proposals before, in the final year of the transitional plan, realignment of existing jobs to focus on active prevention and outreach leading to a new way of working. This Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is intended to be a working document for the Council, and our RSL and H&SCP partners. It will be subject to continued evolution and refinement and robust annual reviews over the transitional period up to 2024

## **8. Resource planning**

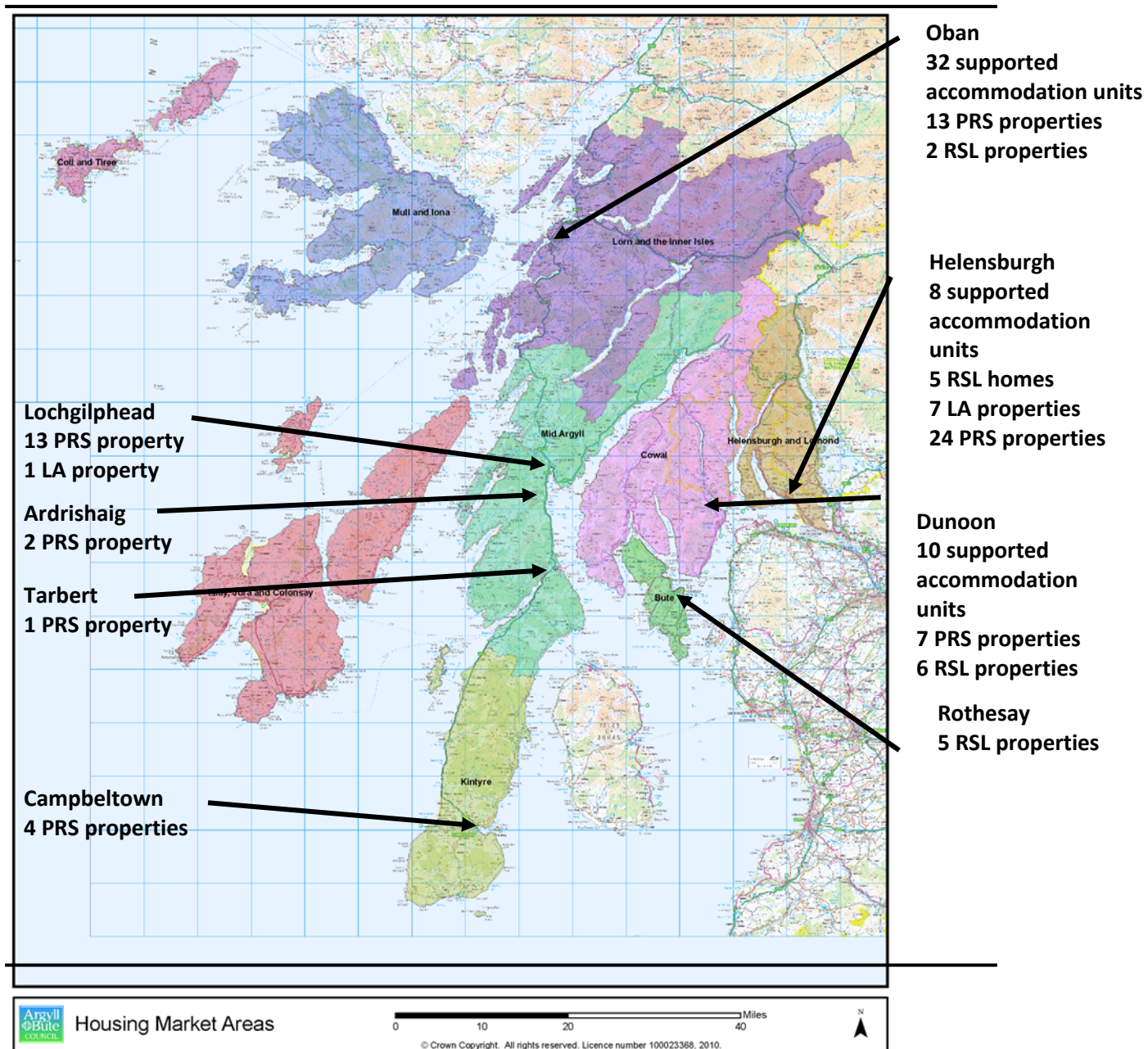
Resourcing the plan is critical to its delivery. Argyll and Bute is a large geographical area and to deliver an assertive outreach programme of prevention and support will require “boots on the ground” across our area. Enhanced support will bring additional cost as will everything from delivering Psychologically Informed Environments, furnishings for “flipped” homes and support for peer group meetings and training.

Elements of the resource plan are commercially sensitive as some services are provided by external contractors and will be subject to re-tendering or negotiation during the course of the transition period. As such the details are excluded from the public plan but have been approved by the Council and submitted to the Scottish Government in full.

The detailed resource plan is shown at Appendix iii.

## Appendix i Temporary Accommodation at March 31<sup>st</sup> 2017

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION LOCATIONS ACROSS ARGYLL & BUTE:





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THIS DOCUMENT  
IS AVAILABLE ON THE COUNCIL WEBSITE AT:

<https://www.>

This document can also be made available in other formats on request.

Contact:  
Housing Services  
Argyll & Bute Council  
Kilmory  
Lochgilphead  
Argyll, PA31 8RT

Telephone:  
01546 604425  
01546 604785

Email:

[iona.macphail@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:iona.macphail@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or  
[douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:douglas.whyte@argyll-bute.gov.uk) or



## Appendix 2

### Resource planning

Resourcing the plan is critical to its delivery. Argyll and Bute is a large geographical area and to deliver an assertive outreach service will take people on the ground across our area. Our experience in delivering homeless services point to failure through non-engagement if the authority does not take the lead in a face to face service. Unfortunately all the technological advances, skype, texting, on-line etc. although worthwhile as secondary contact measures, must be subordinate to face to face.

The initial funding request was for £3.1 million. In 2020/21 this equated to a funding request of £731,053.00. The actual grant awarded was £105 000.

Therefore our resource plan is as follows

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
The Arrears Alleviation Fund will offer small grant for early intervention in arrears cases. We anticipate this initiative could have a significant impact on homeless reduction.					
£15,000.00	£20,000.00	£20,00.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	<b>£75,000.00</b>
Discussion with our H&SCP and Housing partners have identified a need for a Mental health/addictions practitioner from health to work alongside the existing housing support coordinator on physical, mental and addiction health matters. We therefore propose 1 support coordination/link officer to ensure full integration of tenancy, mental health and addiction support.					
£60,000.00	£60,000.00	£60,000.00			<b>£180,000.00</b>
For an enhanced level of tenancy support though renewal of existing contacts, requiring low level mental health and addiction support to be added to the Better Futures model it is anticipated contracting costs will increase. In that scenario better support can be delivered to fewer people on existing budgets or the same enhanced support to the same number or more if greater budget is made available.					
A Crisis Alleviation Fund will be paid directly to housing support providers to enable more reactive housing support to be delivered in crisis situations					
£5000	£5000	£5000			
Decoration project. People in crisis are the least able to undertake a decoration project when given permanent housing. If decoration grants form RSLs are inadequate to pay for works, tenancy sustainment is compromised form day 1. This fund would alleviate that stress. 18 homes per annum.					
£20,000	£20,000	£20,000			<b>£60,000.00</b>
Housing First – to decorate and furnish Housing First tenancies. The success of Housing First will be dependent on providing homes for people that they want to remain in for the longer term. This means a reasonable level of finishings such as floor coverings and basic furnishing – enough to provide comfortable homes. This strand of work will be funded from within budgets from other sections of the RRTP					

Maintaining the mediation service to intervene and support families and reduce homeless due to family breakup and disputes. This funding comes from existing resources					
£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	<b>£25,000.00</b>
Training budget to support staff in council and which RSL, H&SCP and Support organisations throughout the transition period to transform the service and achieve the changes required. This will be paid through existing training budgets which will limit the amount of training available					
£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	<b>£25,000.00</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>					
<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>£110 000</b>	<b>£115,000.00</b>	<b>£115,000.00</b>	<b>£20,000.00</b>	<b>£20,000.00</b>	<b>£380,000.00</b>