

Homelessness in Helensburgh and Lomond

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the issue of homelessness in Helensburgh and Lomond.
- 1.2 A report was submitted to Committee in June 2018 detailing the number of homeless applications made to the local authority over the last 3 years with a particular focus on Helensburgh and Lomond. The report will provide an update on activity and trends in the last 6 months.
- 1.3 Members are asked to consider the content of the report.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

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3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to consider the content of the report.

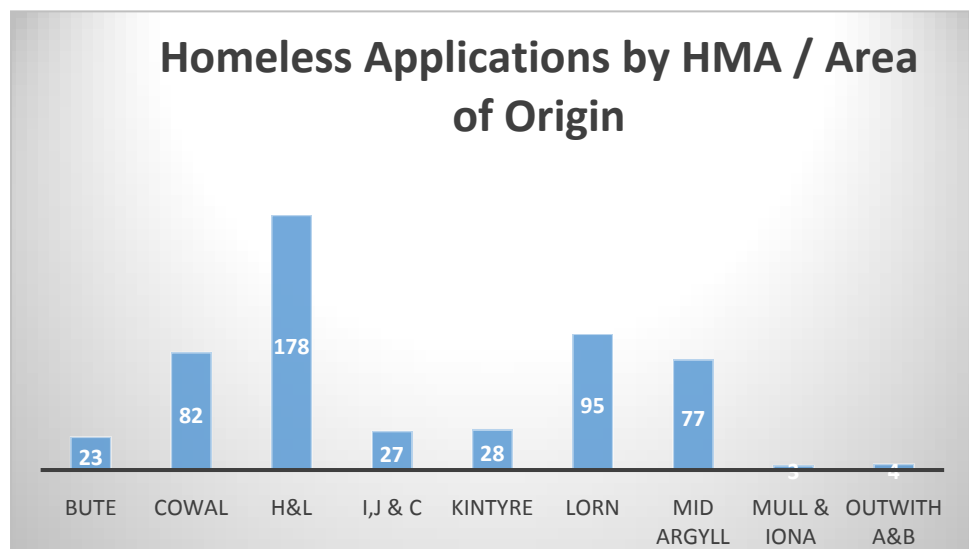
4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to take and assess homeless applications and provide temporary accommodation for households who are homeless under Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The local authority also has a statutory duty to assess support requirements for homeless households, providing housing support when required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- 4.2 Housing Services received 517 homeless applications in 2017/18. During the first half of 2018/19 there were 208 homeless applications recorded being a reduction of 50 cases (20%) in the same period in the previous year.
 - 4.2.1 There has been a significant decrease in homeless applications in Helensburgh and Lomond which saw a reduction of 14 cases (17%) over the first half of 2018/19. This is a reduction from 83 to 69 homeless applications.

Annual Homeless Applications, Argyll & Bute, 2009/10 – 2017/18



Homeless Applications by Housing Market Area (HMA)/Area of Origin, 2017/18



4.2.2 So far in 2018/19 the majority of closed cases (82%) achieved positive outcomes, with 96 receiving a Scottish Secure Tenancy, 22 returning to/retaining their previous accommodation, and 15 receiving a Private Rented Tenancy. There were no cases resulting in B&B or hostel accommodation, and no cases breached the Homeless Persons unsuitable accommodation

order in 2017 or the first six months of 2018/19.

- 4.2.3 In terms of homeless trends so far in 2018/19, single persons continue to make up the vast majority of applicants (66% of the total, which is up by 7%, on the previous year), followed by single parents who made up 16% of the applications.
- 4.2.4 The total number of applications from single parents and couples with children dropped from 86 in the first half of 2017/18 (33% of that period's total) to 49 in 2018/19 (24%).
- 4.2.5 The majority of applicants were occupying a parental/family or relative's home (23%) or had a tenancy in the private rented sector (25%); while another 13% were living with friends or partners. Just over 3% owned or were buying their own property.
- 4.2.6 The main reasons for presenting as homeless during the first half of 2018/19, were being "Asked to leave" (39 applicants, 19% of total) or "Dispute within household / relationship breakdown: non-violent" (40 applicants, 20%). Between 2016/17 and 2017/18 there appears to be a further increase in the number of cases of persons unable to retain their home because of financial issues such as debt or unemployment; as well as a rise in cases due to mental health conditions.
- 4.2.7 Termination of tenancy due to mortgage arrears or default on payments has reduced from 22 cases over the same period to 12 cases.
- 4.2.8 The main reasons for failing to maintain accommodation are listed below (selected reasons only):-

Reason	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/19 (1st April – 30th September)
Financial difficulties/ debt/ unemployment	28	46	56	14
Physical health reasons	15	14	13	5
Mental health reasons	13	24	32	15
Lack of support from friends/ family	18	11	15	5
Drug/ alcohol dependency	9	15	10	9
Criminal/ antisocial behavior	8	9	8	2

- 4.2.9 Rough sleeping constitutes an extreme form of homelessness and housing need, and the LHS sets out a target to ensure that this is maintained at or below baseline levels. In 2016/17 the incidence of applicants sleeping rough within the 3 months preceding their application was 9% (43 of 478 cases). In 2017/18, this number decreased to 38 and proportionately decreased to only 7% of the total applicants.
- 4.2.10 During the first half of 2018/19 the number of applicants who slept rough in the 3 months preceding their homeless application dropped to 15 being 7% of

all homeless applications.

Slept rough in Argyll & Bute	2006/2007	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/19 (1 st April – 30 th September)
Slept rough during the 3 months preceding application	121	44	43	38	15
Slept rough on the night preceding application	59	18	20	26	9
All Applicants	988	401	476	517	208

4.2.11 Argyll and Bute Council continues to operate a homeless out of hours service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Staff provide advice and assistance to households as well as providing emergency accommodation if required.

4.3 Helensburgh and Lomond has seen a reduction in the number of homeless applications in the first 6 months of 2018/19 compared to 2017/18. The table below illustrates the main reasons for homelessness in the area over the last 3 years.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 (1 st April to 30 th September)
<u>No of Homeless Applications</u>	105	142	178	69
<u>Reasons for Homelessness:</u>				
<i>Asked To Leave</i>	44 (42%)	33 (23%)	33 (19%)	11 (16%)
<i>Termination of Tenancy due to rent arrears</i>	6 (6%)	9 (6%)	21 (12%)	4 (6%)
<i>Dispute with Household (Non - violent)</i>	16 (15%)	28 (20%)	29 (16%)	13 (19%)
<i>Dispute with Household (Violent)</i>	3 (3%)	10 (7%)	21 (12%)	3 (4%)
<u>Final Outcome RSL Tenancy</u>	51 (49%)	64 (55%)	75 (42%)	31 (49%)
<u>% of Positive Homeless Prevention Interventions</u>		50%	32%	49%

4.4 Housing support is provided by the local authority through contracts with third sector organisations. In Helensburgh and Lomond Carr Gomm provide housing

support to all households assessed as being at risk with homelessness over the age of 16. As at 30th September 2018 242 households were being supported across Argyll and Bute. 45 of the 242 households (18.5%) live in Helensburgh. 14 of the households are aged 16-24 and 31 of the households are aged 25 and over.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The first 6 months of 2018/19 has seen a reduction of 20 homeless applications in Helensburgh and Lomond compared to the first 6 months of 2017/18. There has been a significant reduction in the number of households presenting as a result of termination of tenancy/mortgage due to rent arrears/default on mortgage payments.

- 5.2 Homelessness is not just a housing issue and requires an effective partnership approach to tackle the root causes of homelessness which are often related to the health issues and low incomes of households. These pressures lead to breakdown in relationships but by taking a proactive approach with health, RSL, welfare rights and mediation colleagues we will minimise the chances of households presenting as homeless to the local authority.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy - none
- 6.2 Financial - none
- 6.3 Legal - none
- 6.4 HR - none
- 6.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty - none
- 6.6 Risk - none
- 6.7 Customer Service - none

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