



ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Reflection of the past year.....	4
Housing Emergency.....	5
Outcome One - Housing Supply and Place Making.....	6
Housing System Context.....	7
Housing Demand.....	9
Housing Transactions.....	10
Demographic Changes.....	13
Strategic Housing Investment Plan / Increasing Supply.....	14
Empty Homes / Making best use of existing stock.....	20
Outcome One Action Plan Progress.....	22
Outcome Two – Energy Efficiency, Climate Change and Poverty.....	23
Energy Efficiency & Fuel Poverty.....	24
Housing Improvement.....	27
Poverty Maximising Income.....	28
Outcome Two Action Plan Progress.....	29
Outcome Three – Specialist Provision and Independent Living.....	30
Specialist Provision and Particular Needs Indicators.....	31
Health and Social Care.....	32
Gypsy/Travellers.....	34
Equalities Monitoring.....	36
Outcome Three Action Plan Progress.....	37
Outcome Four – Housing Options, Information and Support.....	38
Homelessness.....	39
Housing Support.....	44
Outcome Four Action Plan Progress.....	45

INTRODUCTION

Following publication of the Argyll & Bute Housing Need & Demand Assessment in 2021, the Council’s Local Housing Strategy (LHS) was launched in April 2022, covering the planning period 2022/23 to 2026/27. The LHS sets out a detailed Action Plan and Outcome Template which provides the monitoring and evaluation framework for reporting annual progress on the delivery of our strategic objectives and the new LHS Vision, which is:

**“Everyone in Argyll & Bute has access to a suitable, high quality home
which is affordable and located within a vibrant, sustainable and connected community”**

A baseline summary of progress during the interim year 2022/23 is set out structured around the four LHS Outcomes:

Outcome 1: Housing Supply and Place-making

Outcome 2: House Condition, Energy Efficiency and Poverty

Outcome 3: Specialist Provision and Independent Living

Outcome 4: Housing Options, Information and Support

Table 1: Abbreviations used in this document	
ABC – Argyll & Bute Council	LHEES – Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
ACHA – Argyll Community Housing Association	LIFT – Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers
BAME - Black Asian and Minority Ethnic	MECOPP – Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project
BTS – Below Tolerable Standard	NSSE – New Supply Shared Equity (Affordable housing model/initiative)
CARS – Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme	NRS – National Records of Scotland
CHR – Common Housing Register (HOMEArgyll waiting list)	OMSE – Open Market Shared Equity
CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order	PSHG – Private Sector Housing Grant
CRO – Care & Repair Officer	RGD – Rural Growth Deal
EESSH – Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing	RPA – Resource Planning Assumption
HEEPS – Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland	RSL – Registered Social Landlord (Housing Association)
HES – Home Energy Scotland	SHF – Strategic Housing Fund (Council)
HCS – Housing Contribution Statement	SHIP – Strategic Housing Investment Plan
HNDA – Housing Need & Demand Assessment	SoA – Scheme of Assistance
HSCP – Health & Social Care Partnership	TEC – Technology Enabled Care
LA – Local Authority	THI – Townscape Heritage Initiative
LHS – Local Housing Strategy	WHHA – West Highland Housing Association

REFLECTION OF THE PAST YEAR

Our Local Housing Strategy was launched in April 2022, which was on the back of a period of significant change for our residents, customers, and the housing sector, following the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. There are continual changes to the local housing markets, political environment, and our economy which have had an impact on many of the services, residents and businesses of Argyll and Bute. Most crucially we are experiencing a shortage in supply of housing to meet demand.

We are living and working in times of multiple crises, with many external factors and changes which affect our customers, partners, and overall operating environment. Whilst not an exhaustive list, the infographic highlights some of the biggest impacts that we are experiencing.

The Scottish Governments 'The Cost of Living Crisis in Scotland: An Analytical Report' published in November 2022, highlights that 'All households are now reporting an increase in their cost of living, with low income households and those with particular characteristics likely to be most negatively affected by increases in the cost of living'. The cost of living crisis is also adversely affecting businesses, the third sector, and the delivery of public services. "The cost crisis is facing every business in Scotland. Business costs have significantly risen over the past year due to rising prices for energy and materials alongside rising labour costs'. This presents significant challenges as businesses continue to recover from the pandemic and attempt to ensure the resilience of cash-flow in the face of challenging demand conditions".

As the cost of living crisis unfolds it will be important to take into account all areas that are being affected, while considering the longer term impacts and how changing demands for housing and related services can best be met with limited resources.

(Reference: [The Cost of Living Crisis in Scotland: An Analytical Report \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot))



FIGURE 1 - HOUSING MARKET IMPACTS

'HOUSING EMERGENCY' IN ARGYLL AND BUTE

The pressures on the housing market in Argyll and Bute are recognised both nationally and locally. Whilst we are not the only local authority to be experiencing these pressures, the diverse geography of our area means that we experience a range of impacts that other authorities do not need to take into account, such as the cost, infrastructure, and transport challenges of delivering services in our Island communities.

We are pleased that the new Scottish Government First Minister, has confirmed parliament priorities in the '*Equality, Opportunity and Community – New Leadership Fresh Start*' document published in April 2023 which included affordable housing.

“We will deliver efficient and effective public services, including our emergency services that deliver for the people who use and rely on them. The NHS and social care, schools and childcare, our police force and tackling crime, and delivering affordable housing and transport will be our focus” (Scottish Government, New Leadership Fresh Start, 2023)

However, on the backdrop of real time financial cuts for public services, the pressures from cost of living on our residents, volunteer organisations, and businesses; this means that there are still significant pressures on the local authority and partners to deliver housing services in a cost effective and efficient way.

The delivery of housing and related services remains a high priority for the Council. In June 2023, the Environment, Development & Infrastructure Committee declared a '**housing emergency in Argyll and Bute**'. This is based on the acute shortage of housing across the area which is informed by a range of data detailed throughout this report including high homelessness and waiting list numbers, together with the pressures partners are experiencing trying to secure housing. You will find more detail on how we are seeking to alleviate the housing pressures being experienced by many households and organisations in Argyll and Bute detailed under each of the four outcomes. We will hold a housing summit in the autumn to bring partners together to highlight and discuss the shortage of housing, the cost impacts, and to identify how we can address the challenges by delivering more collaborative, innovative, and affordable housing across the area.

Overall the LHS is striving to minimise the impacts on services for our customers and residents. Our action plan has been re-assessed to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Local Housing Strategy are still relevant to meet identified needs.

As part of our annual review, we have taken into account the changing needs and demands for housing, related services, and support that our residents require and also to attract people to the area and promote Argyll and Bute as a place to live and work. We will continue to undertake research and analysis of the local housing markets and influencing factors during the lifetime of the LHS to ensure that it is as meaningful and makes as much of a positive impact as possible.

LHS OUTCOME ONE: HOUSING SUPPLY AND PLACE-MAKING

LHS strategic aim one is: **To facilitate access to sufficient, suitable and affordable housing across all tenures,** and the associated strategic objectives are to:-



LHS OUTCOME ONE: HOUSING SYSTEM CONTEXT

Argyll & Bute Council Tax Register recorded a total of **48,971 dwellings** in April 2023, an increase of 0.8% on the 2022 total of 48,570. This includes all tenures of housing which are registered as domestic dwellings.

There are approx. **8,799** registered social housing properties across Argyll and Bute; **18%** of all stock. Around **5,697** properties are privately rented; **11.6%** of dwellings which has decreased slightly from 5,724 in 2022.

TABLE 2: ALL PROPERTIES IN ARGYLL AND BUTE ON COUNCIL TAX REGISTER AS AT APRIL 2023

Council Tax records 1st April 2023	Bute	Coll & Tiree	Cowal	H&L	I, J & C	Kintyre	Lorn	Mid Argyll	Mull & Iona	Total
All properties	4,285	702	8,732	12,305	2,219	4,175	8,899	5,714	1,940	48,971

The pressures on the housing system are exacerbated by the high percentage of ‘ineffective stock’ across the area. Approx. **5,225**, over **10%**, of properties on the Council Tax register could be classed as “ineffective” which means they are not being utilised as someone’s main residence. These comprise of long term empty properties; empty & exempt* properties; second/holiday homes and job related or purpose built holiday homes.

TABLE 3: INEFFECTIVE STOCK IN ARGYLL AND BUTE AS AT APRIL 2023

Council Tax April 2023 Number of Properties <u>NOT</u> used as main residence	Bute	Coll & Tiree	Cowal	H&L	I, J & C	Kintyre	Lorn	Mid Argyll	Mull & Iona	Total
Long-term empty	56	2	86	83	19	59	96	54	13	468
200% levy	78	16	147	134	64	94	110	105	47	795
Second/holiday homes	455	186	565	181	254	200	429	406	198	2,874
Job related or Purpose built holiday homes	6	2	145	4	0	3	21	24	2	207
Exempt* & Empty	148	17	162	180	26	119	117	86	26	881
Total	743	223	1105	582	363	475	773	675	286	5,225
% ineffective Stock in the Housing Market Area	17.34%	31.77%	12.65%	4.73%	16.36%	11.38%	8.69%	11.81%	14.74%	10.67%

*Exempt properties i.e. Deceased owner; Living/detained elsewhere; Empty under Statute; Under renovation; Held for demolition etc.

Second Homes data

As highlighted in Table 4, **5.9%** of the total of properties are registered as second homes (2,874). The figures fluctuate between Housing Market Areas and as are low as **1.5%** in Helensburgh & Lomond but rise to **26.5%** of registered properties in Coll & Tiree. Within HMA areas the second home figures for some settlements can be a lot higher.

Across Scotland the areas with the highest proportion of dwellings that are registered as second homes were mainly located in rural and island areas. Argyll and Bute has one the **highest levels** of second homes registered in Scotland, followed by Na h-Eileanan Siar (6%), Orkney Islands (5%) and Highland (3%). NRS – [Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2022, Report \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/households-and-dwellings-in-scotland-2022-report) (as at June 2023)

TABLE 4: SECOND HOMES IN ARGYLL AND BUTE APRIL 2020-2023

Council Tax records 1st April 2023	Bute	Coll & Tiree	Cowal	H&L	I, J & C	Kintyre	Lorn	Mid Argyll	Mull & Iona	Total
Number second/holiday homes	455	186	565	181	254	200	429	406	198	2,874
% of stock registered as second home	10.6%	26.5%	6.5%	1.5%	11.4%	4.8%	4.8%	7.1%	10.2%	5.9%

Short Term Lets

There are also a significant number of properties utilised as short-term lets (commercial) which are not included in Council Tax register figures as these are registered as businesses. Whilst Tourism is an important aspect for the Argyll and Bute economy we need to ensure there is a balance in the local housing market. In many areas, particularly the Islands, holiday accommodation is significantly adding to the pressures for local residents to secure affordable housing. As at March 2023 there was est. **2,341** self-catering properties registered.

TABLE 5: SELF-CATERING LETS MARCH 2023

Self Catering Lets March 2023	Bute	Coll & Tiree	Cowal	H&L	I, J & C	Kintyre	Lorn	Mid Argyll	Mull & Iona	Total
Self-Catering Lets	117	88	361	196	274	131	543	277	354	2,341

Airbnb

There are over **1,000+** properties in Argyll and Bute registered on the Airbnb [website](https://www.airbnb.com), although the number is anticipated to be a lot higher due to the range of property types. Due to the variation of ways that properties can be registered, some of these properties will already be accounted for in Council Tax and Short-term let figures above. As the regulation and licensing of short-term lets progresses, it is anticipated that this will provide a clearer indication of the number of holiday properties in Argyll and Bute. Further information on the licence process is available here - [Short term lets licence | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/short-term-lets-licence)

LHS OUTCOME ONE: HOUSING DEMAND

The current supply of housing in Argyll and Bute does not meet the demand

HOMEArgyll Waiting List and Annual Lets

There were **3,289** social housing applications across Argyll & Bute in April 2023, an increase of **10%** on the previous year of 2,994 and a **25%** increase from 2,634 in 2021 signifying the continual rise in demand for affordable social housing.

Over **811** households were allocated permanent social rented tenancies via HOMEArgyll in 2022/23, an increase of **11%** on the number of HOMEArgyll RSL lets in 2021/22, although this is still below the annual 860 target. This equates to **4** applicants on the waiting list for each available let.

Mid Market Rent

374 households on the HOMEArgyll waiting list have expressed an interest in Mid-Market rental properties. Whilst there are no new proposed mid-market RSL developments – there is demand and therefore opportunity to encourage the private development of affordable homes for rent to meet the demand.

Shared Equity

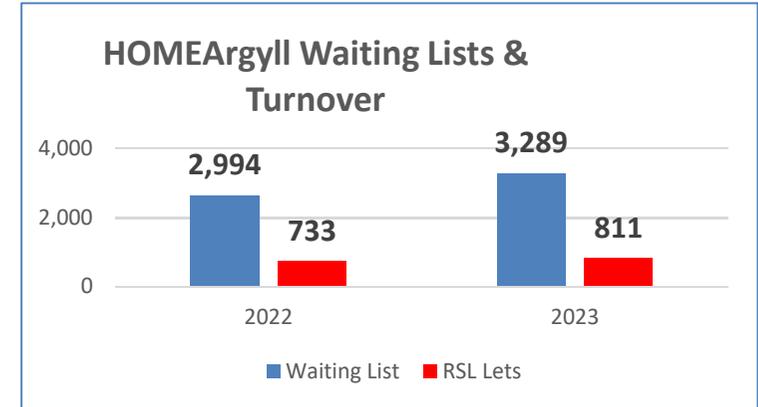
The 'New Supply Shared Equity Scheme (NSSE)' aims to help households on low to moderate incomes to buy an affordable new build home. During 2022/23 there were **26** NSSE properties completed in Argyll and Bute. As at April 2023 there were **570** households interested in the NSSE scheme.

Similarly the 'Open Market Shared Equity (OMSE)' helps people buy a home within certain price thresholds for sale on the open market including the Low-cost Initiative for First Time Buyers (LIFT). **470** households on the social housing register expressed an interest in the LIFT. There is clear evidence of demand for more 'shared equity' development models and these will be encouraged where possible.

Private Sector Demand / Estate Agents

There is no register that records the level of demand for private housing for either rental, or open market purchase. Therefore it can be difficult to quantify the needs of those looking for private sector housing.

The Housing Services team undertook a survey of all registered Estate Agents in the area during July/August 2023. Only three responses were received and of these, only one Estate Agent held list for those interested in acquiring properties and none were able to confirm the number of residential transactions they were involved in over the previous few years.



GRAPH 1 - HOMEARGYLL WAITING LIST AND TURNOVER

LHS OUTCOME ONE: HOUSING TRANSACTIONS

The local housing market has seen average house price sales steadily increasing over the last few years as detailed in table 6 below. The *Registers of Scotland Annual Market report 2023* supporting tables records that 2022/23 has seen the **biggest increase** in recent time, with the average sale price in Argyll and Bute exceeding the Scottish average for the first time since 2009/10. This is despite the volume of sales reducing by 237 in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22. Whilst not conclusive, combined with local knowledge this could be indicative of large number of sales to people from outside the area with higher incomes and financial resources who are attracted to rural locations, potentially as holiday homes.

Market Affordability - To meet the average house price in 2022/23, at the standard affordable ratio (4 x HOUSEHOLD income), would require an annual income of **£54,811**, an increase of **£6,213** from 2021/22.

TABLE 6: AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICES, 2019/20 – 2022/23 (FINANCIAL YEARS DATA)

Average House Prices	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	% change 21/22 22/23	Based on average mean household income levels of £41,265 ONLY 25% of local households would be able to afford the average house price in Argyll & Bute (Income Source: CACI, 2022)
Argyll & Bute (All sales)	£173,432	£184,316	£194,918	£219,245	+11.2% (+26% 19/20-22/23)	
Scotland (All sales)	£182,075	£194,342	£202,024	£216,337	7.1%	

TABLE 7: SALES ACTIVITY AND VALUE: ALL TRANSACTIONS AND NEW BUILD TRANSACTIONS, 2019/20 – 2022/23

ARGYLL & BUTE	2019 20	2020 21	2021 22	2022 23
Volume of All Sales	1,883	1,819	2,059	1,822
Value of All Sales (£m)	£325m	£335m	£400m	£399m
Volume New Build Sales	117	85	61	79
Value New Build sales	£28.5m	£20.9m	£15.3m	£23.8m
Average Price New Build sales	£243,961	£246,235	£251,265	£300,643

TABLE 8: VOLUME OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SALES BY FUNDING STATUS 2022-23

Volume of residential property sales transactions by funding status	Cash sale	Sale with mortgage	Total - cash sale and sale with mortgage	Cash sales as percentage of total	Argyll and Bute had the highest proportion of cash sales of all local authority areas in 2022-23
Argyll and Bute	987	835	1,822	54.2%	
Scotland	34,930	66,125	101,055	34.6%	

The diverse geography of Argyll and Bute can see prices vary between Urban and Rural areas. There can be number of factors for variation in prices, such as market supply, size, quality, type, and location of properties. “Urban” areas make up only 0.3% of Argyll & Bute geography but account for nearly half of all house sales. The average rural house price in the area is 24% higher than the average urban price.

TABLE 9: REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND - LAND AREA IN SCOTLAND REPRESENTED BY URBAN AND RURAL AREAS BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local authority code	Local authority	Urban areas	Rural areas	Total land area
S12000035	Argyll and Bute	2,312	688,635	690,947

TABLE 10: HOUSING MARKET BY SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT URBAN/RURAL CLASSIFICATION, 2021-23 AVERAGE

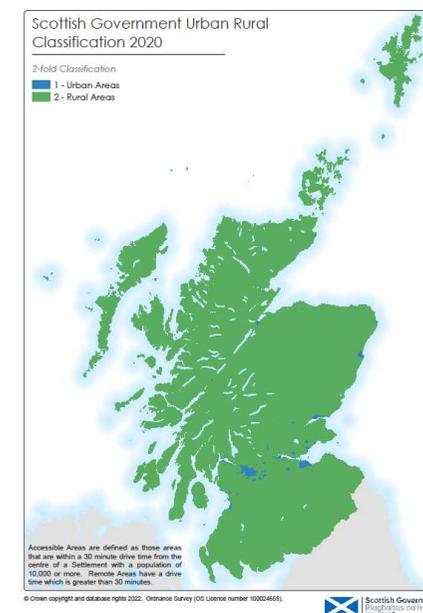
Argyll and Bute	Urban areas	Rural areas	Total
Volume of residential property sales	1,914 (49%)	1,969 (51%)	3,883
Total land area (hectares)	2,312	688,635	690,947
Average house price by area	£178,292	£234,771	

The Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020, is consistent with their core definition of rurality which defines Settlements of less than 3,000 people to be rural. It also classifies areas as remote based on drive times from Settlements of 10,000 or more people. Settlements can be grouped into the following categories:

- (1) Large Urban Areas - populations of 125,000 or more
- (2) Other Urban Areas - populations of 10,000 to 124,999
- (3) Small Towns - populations of 3,000 to 9,999
- (4) Rural Areas - populations less than 3,000

Further information on Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification - [*Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020 \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

[Supporting documents - Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)



PICTURE 1: URBAN RURAL CLASSIFICATION

LHS OUTCOME ONE – NEW BUILD PROPERTY SALES

There are low numbers of private new development in Argyll and Bute despite high housing demand across all tenures in the area.

This is evidenced by the Registers of Scotland Annual Market report 2023 which records the number of new build residential transactions and average sale prices across all local authority areas. The following tables show the numbers for Argyll and Bute since 2019-20 and for comparison includes figures for Highland and Na h-Eileanan Siar local authority areas and the figures for Scotland as a whole.

TABLE 11: AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICES, 2019/20 – 2022/23 (FINANCIAL YEARS DATA)

Volume of new build residential property sales 2018-19 to 2022-23				
AREA	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Argyll and Bute	117	85	61	79
Highland	497	383	486	566
Na h-Eileanan Siar	4	5	0	0
Scotland	12,245	9,061	11,530	12,356

TABLE 12: AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICES, 2019/20 – 2022/23 (FINANCIAL YEARS DATA)

Average residential property price for new builds 2018-19 to 2022-23				
AREA	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Argyll and Bute	£243,961	£246,235	£251,264	£300,643
Highland	£232,914	£237,719	£248,957	£261,177
Na h-Eileanan Siar	£91,525	£77,742	£0	£0
Scotland	£258,496	£268,059	£285,283	£308,158

LHS OUTCOME ONE: HOUSING SYSTEM CONTEXT – DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Due to a delay in the National Records of Scotland (NRS) publication of the 2022 Population Estimates and the Local Area Migration statistics we have been unable to take these into account as part of our annual update and have used the latest Argyll and Bute statistics available.

The NRS Household estimates 2022 show that there are an additional **280** households in Argyll and Bute compared to 42,384 in 2021, this is an increase of 0.7% which is comparative to the 0.8% increase seen across Scotland.

TABLE 13: NRS HOUSEHOLD ESTIMATES 2019 - 2022

NRS Household Estimates 2022					
AREA	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change 2021-22
Argyll and Bute	41,789	41,839	42,384	42,664	0.70%
Scotland	2,495,623	2,507,625	2,528,823	2,549,797	0.80%

TABLE 14: NRS POPULATION ESTIMATES 2019-2021

NRS - Total population, Argyll and Bute, 2019-2021	
Year	Population
2019	85,870
2020	85,430
2021	86,220

Reference: [Argyll and Bute Council Area Profile \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)

TABLE 15: NRS MIGRATION ESTIMATES 2020-2021

INDICATORS	2020	2021	Change (no's)
TOTAL IN-MIGRATION	3,430	5,280	1,850
TOTAL OUT-MIGRATION	3,530	4,070	540
TOTAL NET MIGRATION	-90	1,220	1,310

As reported last year, overall, NET MIGRATION in Argyll and Bute saw growth from 2020-2021, with IN-MIGRATION increasing by **54%**, while OUT-MIGRATION increased by **15%**. Based on the NRS Mid-Year Estimates for 2020-2021, when population changes due to births and deaths are factored into the migration changes, Argyll & Bute experienced the sixth highest net increase of all Scottish local authorities, with growth of 0.9%. This positive variance exceeds the demographic aspirations underpinning the Council's LHS (of 0.5% annual growth); and supports our ambitious Housing Supply Targets. Trends will continue to be monitored and reported through the annual update.

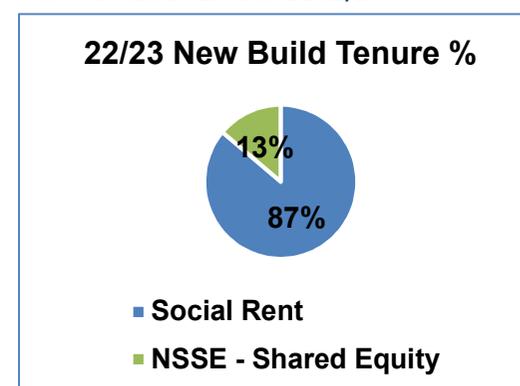
LHS OUTCOME ONE – THE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN PROGRAMME 2022/23

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the new build affordable housing supply programme for Argyll and Bute. During 2022/23, our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners successfully completed **180** new affordable housing units across Argyll and Bute. This included **156** units for social rent and **24** properties for New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE). Whilst below our annual target of **215** units it's a **51%** increase in completions compared to **119** in 2021/22. The map shows the spread of the new developments across our housing market areas.

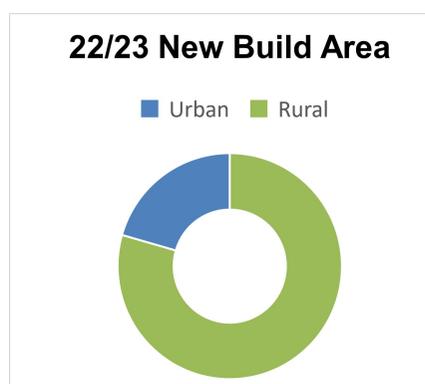
TABLE 16 - STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN COMPLETIONS 2022/23

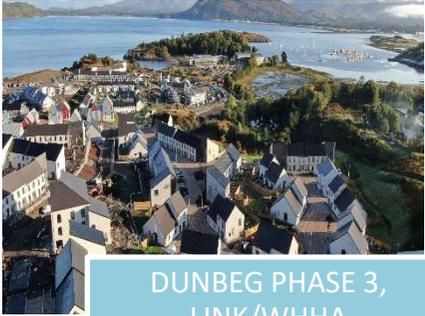
Project	HMA	Developer	Tenure	Type of provision	Number units
Sawmill Field, Helensburgh	H&L	LORETTO	Social rent	32 x General 4 x Amenity	36
Jura	Islay, Jura & Colonsay	WHHA	Social rent	8 x Amenity, 2 x General	10
Milknowe, Campbeltown	Kintyre	ACHA	Social rent	1 x wheelchair	1
Dunbeg Phase 3	Lorn	LINK/ WHHA	Social rent x 95 NSSE x 24	102 x General 11 x Wheelchair 6 x Amenity	119
Oakhill, Tarbert	Mid-Argyll	ACHA	Social rent	4 x General	4
Inveraray	Mid-Argyll	ACHA	Social rent	6 x General, 2 x wheelchair 2 x specialist	10
TOTAL					180

GRAPH 2 - NEW BUILD TENURE 2022/23



GRAPH 3- NEW BUILD AREA 2022/23





DUNBEG PHASE 3,
LINK/WHHA



JURA
WHHA



OAKHILL, TARBERT
ACHA

FIGURE 2 - NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY MAP



CHALLENGES OF NEW BUILD INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The Scottish Government's Resource Planning Allocation (RPA) budget in 2022/23 was **£18m** for Argyll and Bute projects. Despite an ambitious development programme set out in the SHIP, the expenditure of RPA for the last financial year was **£14m** which is the third consecutive year of underspend. The SHIP is produced with our strategic development partners and sets out an ambitious new build programme for delivery of affordable new housing across Argyll and Bute. Despite a number of sites being identified for new development in the current and future years, the acute shortage of housing in the area means that we are still not developing enough new housing to meet current demand and therefore there is an 'urgent' need to try and accelerate the programme to achieve higher outputs and make housing available as early as possible through innovative and collaborative projects.

Challenges for developing new housing

A number of key challenges facing the development of new housing contribute to the underspend of RPA as highlighted above. These challenges exist at a range of levels from national and often international factors to issues at a community level that can be geographical, physical and even intra-community constraints. Taken together they form a complex combination of challenges which often require both short-term and longer term solutions and which currently work together to create real and perceived barriers to housing development within Argyll and Bute.

Geography

Getting to Argyll and Bute from central Scotland will involve a long road journey, or a commitment to travel by ferry or air. Additionally the geography within Argyll and Bute is such that communities, and therefore often development opportunities, are widespread and often isolated. Journeys between communities can be long and challenging. Longer road journeys contribute to supply costs and transportation costs for contractors and developers and also impact on the carbon footprint associated with developments. Extreme weather events can exacerbate this challenge as is evidenced by the repeated closures of the A83 at the Rest and Be Thankful.

Construction sector capacity

A lack of large scale construction companies within Argyll and Bute presents a challenge to new build housing. Additionally, the relative isolation of some settlements creates a natural limitation on local labour markets. As a combination, this presents contractors with the challenge of locating temporary accommodation for their teams, this further exacerbating the availability of housing for the workers necessary to sustain the local economy.

Additionally the construction sector nationally faces challenges in recruiting young people, and further challenges in retaining them. In their 2023 outlook, BCIS state that "chronic shortages of both skilled and unskilled labour – likely to be exacerbated by the prevalence of an aging construction workforce – will create additional pressures" ([Outlook for the Construction Industry 2023 | BCIS](#)). This therefore impacts on the local labour markets and skills sector.

Skills/ labour market

In a 2022 Skills Audit for the Argyll and Bute area, Historic Environment Scotland (HES), identified a number of concerns regarding skills within the construction industry. While most trades were identified to differing degrees as being difficult to source, a consistent theme was the difficulty in bringing young people into the construction industry and, critically, retaining them. Responses from HES consultees suggested that promotion of the construction industry as a positive career choice to school pupils was needed, as was partnerships with local organisations such as the Construction, Engineering and Renewables Centre run by UHI in Lochgilphead. Such an approach would bring medium to long term benefits by improving the skill set within local communities, breaking the issue of ageing workforce in the construction sector and thus somewhat mitigating the current challenge of finding local skilled labour markets.

Availability of land supply

The availability of suitable sites to allow new housing developments can be a challenge within a rural local authority such as Argyll and Bute. The proposed Argyll and Bute Council LDP2 and the Local Housing Strategy are policy documents that exist in tandem with a high degree of cross-referencing. Thus there is a suitable level of housing supply land within LDP2 to meet the needs expressed to date in the LHS, although some of the identified sites may not be in the locations with highest demand for housing. Further, the LHS is informed by a Housing Needs Demand Assessment, and the integration of these three documents therefore helps to ensure that land available for housing supply meets an identified local need. Finally, guidance within both LDP2 and the LHS will help ensure that, to as large an extent as possible, planning and building control regulations are adhered to and do not become a barrier in themselves.

Development costs

The costs of developing new housing has increased significantly over the last few years. In 2021 to 2022, BICS data suggested an increase in construction costs of 22%. More recently, Scottish Government statistics show that materials and supply costs remain high ([Scottish Housing Market Review: Q2 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-housing-market-review-2023-2024/pages/10-to-14-materials-and-supply-costs.aspx)). The cost of site acquisition and private financing to fund development costs is also significant factor due to the high interest and inflation rates.

Additionally for Argyll and Bute, these increased costs are further exacerbated for island and remote communities and this is reflected in the recent Declaring a Housing Emergency committee report.

Site conditions and constraints.

Despite adequate provision being made within LDP2, individual site conditions and constraints can be a significant factor when trying to develop new housing. Many of the easier 'shovel ready' sites have already been developed which means identifying sites that can be delivered quickly is becoming more of a challenge, and those sites available potentially have greater development costs associated with, among other things, accessibility, infrastructure and services.

Infrastructure and services

Infrastructure and services can present a number of challenges for the delivery of new housing. Formation of site access, roads, water & sewage supplies, SSE capacity, transport, and connectivity are some of the key elements which can not only add to development costs but can restrict or prohibit the development of some sites due to constraints or excessive costs to take forward. Partners will continue to work closely via SHIP Group to find solutions to mitigate these constraints and reduce the timescales for new developments.

Placemaking

Fundamental to new developments is the concept of placemaking and creating a sense of place. This concept is explicit in the Argyll and Bute Council LDP2 and will help to ensure that developments contribute to sustainable, attractive communities that attract and retain residents. For a developer it can place a greater challenge on the site design stage of a new development and can impact on overall development costs. Partnership working within the SHIP programme and innovative approaches to funding supplementary developments to improve the sense of place can help overcome these barriers, for example the use of Rural Growth Deal funding to help adjacent infrastructure improvements to development sites.

Perception

Many of the challenges highlighted above also contribute to a perceived difficulty of housing development in Argyll and Bute and other rural parts of Scotland. It is important to challenge such perceptions and to work together to offer solutions and enhancements that can alleviate any concerns and mitigate any challenges. Resources dedicated to the mitigation of perceived and real issues are available and contribute to the SHIP programme.

INCREASING HOUSING SUPPLY VIA OTHER INITIATIVES



Rural Growth Deal - £3m Housing Investment

Progress is being made to take forward innovative housing projects via Rural Growth Deal focused on attracting Economic Growth by Building Our Island Communities and Accommodating Workers. Proposed project on Mull will deliver housing for workers whilst our Islay project will deliver market value housing for sale with title burden to ensure these remain as principal homes.



Worker Accommodation

The Council are exploring opportunities to increase supply of worker accommodation to support businesses and the local economy. Including new Empty Homes Officer post in conjunction with Shelter and Health and Social Care Partnership, and worker accommodation provision in Fionnphort in partnership with Mull and Iona Community Trust.



Buy Back

The Council have created a scheme to promote the option for 'buy back' of properties to increase the supply of affordable housing. There are restrictions on the types of properties that can be purchased and it must not lead to current occupant being left with no alternative housing options. In addition, the Council are exploring the possibility of buying properties on the open market for resale with title burdens which require primary occupancy.



Community Housing Network / Projects

Our Community Housing Network established in 2021, has gained momentum and there is focus on partnership support to enable delivery of community housing projects.



Off the shelf purchases

Our Registered Social Landlords continually explore the possibility for off the shelf purchase of new build properties from contractors across the area to increase the supply of affordable housing. This is restricted due to the lack of speculative new build development in Argyll and Bute and we are looking at ways to encourage more private developments.



Renovation / conversion of existing buildings

The Council and partners are exploring ways to make best use of existing stock to increase the supply of housing by converting or renovating existing buildings.

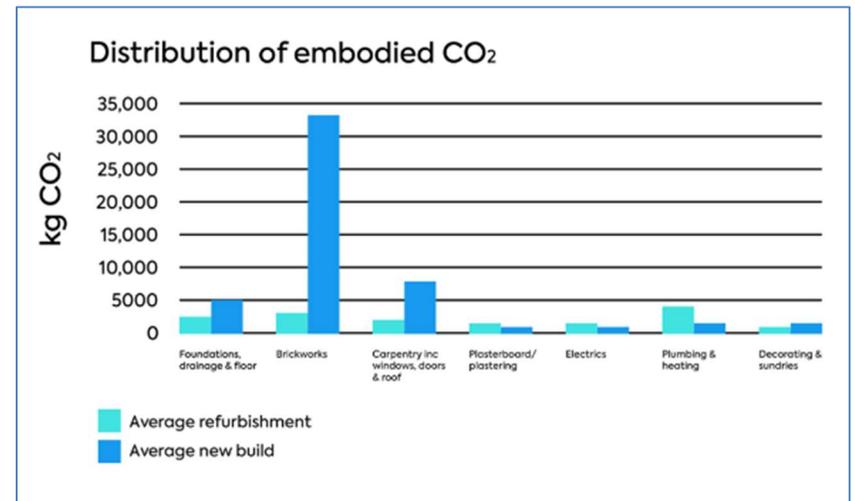
LHS OUTCOME ONE – EMPTY HOMES / MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING STOCK

Properties which are empty do not contribute to meeting housing need and often cause blight in their communities with negative impacts for the owner, neighbours, community, and local services. As highlighted in the housing supply figures there are a significant number of empty homes in Argyll and Bute. There are many strategic, environmental, and local benefits by making the best use of existing stock and bringing empty homes back into use. This can not only increase the supply of housing; improving the condition and outlook of properties but contributes towards the sustainability of our communities and supporting local services. Bringing empty homes and existing buildings back into use will be a continued priority for the Scottish Government, the Council and its partners.

A range of assistance is available to support owners to address their empty properties to bring them back into use. The Empty Homes Officer provided advice, support, and assistance to **41** owners during 2022/23 to bring their empty properties back into use. There also a number of community projects looking at increasing the supply of housing by bringing empty homes/ buildings back into use.

The **environmental benefits** of bringing empty homes and buildings back into use can make a significant contribution to the **climate emergency**. The [CITU Group Ltd](#) report that it takes over 50 tonnes CO₂ to build an average house in the UK, this can be higher for apartments due to the larger amounts of concrete and steel used which can be ten times more CO₂ than refurbishing an existing building. At the time they published findings, the average person in UK had a carbon footprint of 5 tonnes of CO₂ per year – so building one new home uses as much CO₂ of the average person living average lifestyle for over a decade. The graphic shows embodied CO₂ emissions in new buildings compared to refurbishment of existing buildings from a 2009 study

FIGURE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF EMBODIED CO₂



Reference: [Citu - What is the carbon footprint of a house? - Citu / accessed 190623](#)

LHS OUTCOME ONE – EMPTY HOMES / MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING STOCK

Innovative New Empty Homes Project for Argyll and Bute

We are delighted that the Empty Homes service will be expanded in 2022/23 with an innovative new project. Following a successful funding bid to Shelter Scotland and A&B Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), a new Empty Homes Officer post will be created in 2022/23 who will specifically work with partners to bring empty homes back into use for HSCP staff. This will help to address the acute shortage of housing which is hindering recruitment of key health and social care staff, and to support local service delivery.

Private Owner Case Study - Cowal

The annual Scottish Empty Homes Conference was held on 1st March 2023 and this year's theme was 'Repair, Reuse, Revitalise'. Argyll and Bute were delighted to have a local renovation project shortlisted as a finalist which won the 'Best Retrofit of an Empty Home' category. The building had been empty for over 20 years and was causing concern and blight in the local community. This property is a fantastic example of where a derelict property that was facing demolition can be rescued and brought back into use. The owners have a large social media following and participated in BBC Programme 'Accidental Renovators', a short video was also made in conjunction with Shelter Scotland which can be viewed at - <https://vimeo.com/805053713>



Before



After

Community Case Study – Isle of Mull

Glengorm Farming Partnership secured Rural & Islands Housing funding to convert disused farm buildings into five affordable rental housing units. Mull and Iona Community Trust (MICT) supported Glengorm in securing the grant funding, carrying out community consultation work to evidence the housing need, and advising on the required allocation policy. Glengorm is the first private landowner in Argyll and Bute to have been awarded Rural & Islands Housing Fund grant, and it is hoped that this will encourage others to look at opportunities to increasing the number of affordable homes in our most rural communities by bringing empty buildings back into use as housing.



Before



After

LHS OUTCOME ONE – PROGRESS MADE AGAINST KEY ACTIONS AND OUTPUT TARGETS IN 2022/23

Relevant Indicators	Baseline Historic Trend	2022/23	Annual target (& 5 Year Targets)	Assessment / Comment
Number of new house building completions (all tenure)	2020/21: 228 2021/22: 275	340	290 per annum (1,450)	ABC Planning estimates (includes 3 x units from National Park)
Number of new private market homes completed	2020/21: 172 2021/22: 156	152	75 per annum (375)	ABC Planning estimates (includes 3 x units from National Park)
Number of new affordable homes completed (RSL/ Social) ("Baseline/ Historic Trend" data sourced from Scottish Government Housing Statistics & Planning estimates; "2021/22" figure sourced from Council Planning records & Housing Services SHIP monitoring data)	2020/21: 56 2021/22: 119 (N.B. 146 – ABC Housing Stats)	180	215 per annum (1,075)	51% above last year's figure, however still short of the ambitious 215 target. (Council / SHIP figures vary due to differences in reporting systems)
Total Investment in completed SHIP projects (value of projects completed in year NOT actual spend in that year for ongoing work)	2020/21: £6.767m 2021/22: £4.522m (+c.£24m for partial Dunbeg units)	£6.173m	Maximise RPA, SHF, & RSL funding above baseline	Estimated investment to deliver 180 units
5 year effective housing land supply (unit capacity)	2021: 2,889 2022: 2,684	2,591	(1,885)	Additional capacity also available within National Park area of Argyll & Bute of 441 units which is currently under review due to NPF4.
Number of alternative/intermediate tenure homes completed via the SHIP (% of total completions)	2020/21: 4 (8%) 2021/22: 2 (1%)	24 (13%)	(10-15% of total completions)	Target met with 24 New Supply Shared Equity (NSSE) properties developed
Number of households housed through Common Housing Register (CHR) / RSL tenancies created	2020/21: 631 2021/22: 733	811 (951)	860 per annum (4,300)	LINK, TRUST & other specialist RSLs' Lets would raise total to over 951 last year which is above target. (Trust-8, Link-132)
Nos. of empty homes brought back into use (all cases involving Empty Homes Officer)	2020/21: 29 2021/22: 38	41	30 per annum (150)	Target exceeded by 37%.

LHS OUTCOME TWO: ENERGY EFFICIENCY, CLIMATE CHANGE & POVERTY

LHS strategic aim two is: To regenerate communities by improving the quality, condition and energy efficiency of housing and by tackling poverty, including Fuel Poverty and Child Poverty, and ensuring that Housing contributes to addressing the wider Climate Change agenda. The associated strategic objectives are:-

2.1 Improved property condition and energy efficiency across all tenures

2.2 Compliance with all statutory property standards

2.3 Holistic advice and assistance for owners, landlords and tenants

2.4 Fuel Poverty and Child Poverty reduced

2.5 Council's Scheme of Assistance reviewed and revised

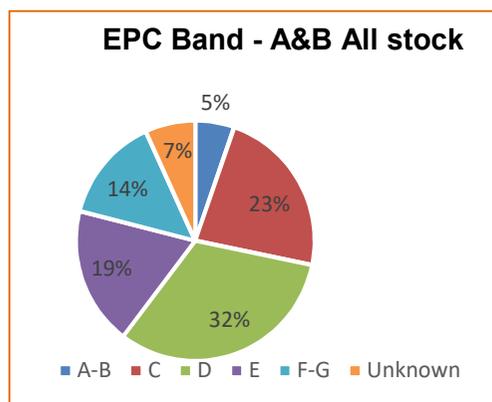
2.6 A net zero carbon approach to housing

2.7 A Housing Sector that supports regeneration and sustainability of town centres and rural and island settlements

LHS OUTCOME TWO: HOUSING SYSTEM CONTEXT – ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY INDICATORS

Improving the quality, condition, and energy efficiency of properties can have positive outcomes for the household in terms of the outlook of homes; energy costs; health and well-being; and also contribute to the climate emergency by reducing use of carbon. Addressing the impacts of Fuel and Child Poverty are key areas of concern for partners and identified as a priority for the LHS. The levels of poverty across Argyll and Bute are relatively high and some of the reasons for this may include: age and types of buildings; income levels; limited choice of fuel types; high cost of heating properties and how energy is used in the home. With approx. **53%** of properties in Argyll and Bute being off gas grid, there is large reliance on alternative heating sources for properties.

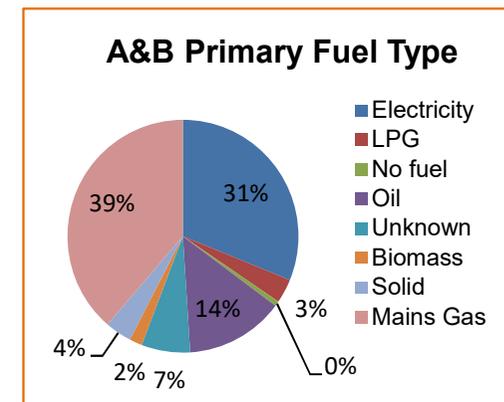
There is not a single measure that determines the energy efficiency of all dwellings and the level of fuel poverty being experienced by households. The Home Analytics database used to report levels of ‘fuel poverty’ in Argyll and Bute is derived from a number of trusted sources and therefore some of the data is extrapolated to determine overall approximate numbers. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are the primary data source. However, as approximately 45% of the residential buildings in Scotland do not have an EPC, they have developed a series of models to predict values for properties with missing data. Figures reported are estimated and subject to change.



GRAPH 4 - EPC BAND - A&B ALL STOCK

TABLE 17: ARGYLL AND BUTE FUEL POVERTY LEVELS – HOME ANALYTICS

A&B AVERAGE FUEL POVERTY PROBABILITY LEVELS	Estimated % of Properties
Fuel Poverty = Fuel bill > 10% income after housing costs	30%
Extreme Fuel Poverty = Fuel bill > 20% income after housing costs	25%
Excess cold = Risk property exacerbating health inequalities	9%



GRAPH 5 - A&B PRIMARY FUEL SOURCE

The cost of living and energy price increases during 2022, saw significant rise in fuel bills for householders which also has a detrimental impact on fuel poverty levels. Before the energy price increases the average annual fuel bill in Argyll and Bute was estimated to be **£1,274** which is **30%** higher than the Scottish estimate of £937. To improve the energy efficiency of buildings, eradicate fuel poverty, and help reduce greenhouse gases, the Scottish Government have a strong focus on regulations for minimum EPC requirements, with an aspiration that all residential properties will have at least equivalent to EPC C rating by 2033. This will be a challenge for many of the residential properties in Argyll and Bute. Current estimates are that only **28%** of properties currently meet EPC C rating or above.

LHS OUTCOME TWO: HOUSING SYSTEM CONTEXT – ENERGY EFFICIENCY & FUEL POVERTY

Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES: ABS) 2022/23

The Energy Efficiency Scotland programme allows homeowners and private rented tenants to access grant funding to help undertake fabric improvements to properties that will help improve the fabric of building, reduce their energy bills, and reduce energy consumption contributing to a reduction in climate change. The Team work closely with other departments within the Council, for example signposting to the Welfare Rights Service for those households that would benefit from an income review. Pro-active work is also being undertaken to promote the scheme including attending public events to advise of the grants available for insulation measures across Argyll and Bute.



Argyll and Bute Council was awarded funding of **£2,371,323** for the year 2022/23 which has helped **288** households by installing **438** measures. We have received an in principle funding award of £1,979,827 for the 2023/24 Area Based Scheme (ABS 11). The Council's Scheme Proposal has been submitted to the Scottish Government for approval and includes particular emphasis on reducing high levels of fuel poverty associated with island and remote rural areas.

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) Warm Homes Project 2022/23

The Council continues to work in conjunction with ACHA to insulate mixed tenure blocks of properties in Argyll and Bute. Funding of **£2.2m** was awarded by the Scottish Government in December 2022 to support insulation projects in Lorn, Tarbert, Bute and Cowal. Total spend at 30/06/23 was £721,617. Due to the project's short timeframe (December 2022 to June 2023), a number of private owners failing to engage and other private owners being ineligible for the scheme this has resulted in a lower than anticipated level of spend.

Home Energy Scotland

Ensuring that households can access holistic energy efficiency advice is critical to address fuel and child poverty, and also to encourage fabric improvements to make homes more energy efficient. Home Energy Scotland are key partners for the Council in delivery of HEEPs, energy efficiency advice, and funding checks for local residents. During 2022/23 they interacted with **4,266 households** compared to 3,268 in the same period last year an increase of **31%** which highlights the importance of the services they deliver to our communities.

AlIenergy

AlIenergy works across Argyll and Bute to promote sustainable energy use and renewable energy generation, to address fuel poverty, and reduce carbon emissions. During 2022/23 they received **1,246** enquiries (249 of which were returning customers), delivered 2,858 advice sessions, and 1,130 referrals were made to partners and/or funds. The Affordable Warmth Team secured £180,582 in client gains from crisis intervention support through energy vouchers, alleviation of fuel debt, help with energy bills and white goods. In addition to the support from Home Energy Scotland, these statistics demonstrate the demand for services which improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)



The Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out the Scottish Government's aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within buildings in Scotland by 2045. Local authorities need to develop a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) to realise these aims and objectives. The Argyll and Bute LHEES will be a locally led, tailored approach to transitioning to climate-friendly heating sources and ensuring local domestic and non-domestic buildings are more energy-efficient.

The Council and key stakeholders will take a strategic approach to shape heating transition, with the strategy covering the authority's entire administrative area. Argyll and Bute's LHEES will reflect the local context and will aim to identify the most suitable decarbonisation and energy efficiency solution for the area. The LHEES is currently being produced and will be published in 2024 and will:

- Reflect local priorities, policies and strategies.
- Identify any potential Heat Networks.
- Set out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to reach net zero and develop a variety of pathways to decarbonise the building stock.
- Identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones.
- Sets out the principal measures for reducing building emissions within each zone.
- Prioritise areas where heat decarbonisation action will be undertaken.
- Provide a strategic plan which can be used to target government funding and private investment for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency investment.

Accompanying the LHEES will be a Delivery Plan, which will clarify roles and responsibilities in achieving the objectives and actions outlined in the strategy, as well as developing a mechanism to deliver activities. The first iteration of LHEES will largely be focused on delivery within the scope of the current and near-future funding, regulatory and policy landscape. For example, we are prioritising the delivery of programmes which we have resources to implement such as the Area Based Scheme while providing a pathway to meeting medium to long-term targets and objectives outlined in the strategy.

LHS OUTCOME TWO: HOUSING SYSTEM CONTEXT – HOUSING IMPROVEMENT

The Council's Housing Improvement Officers work closely with private sector home owners and wider project teams to deliver housing improvement works via Scheme of Assistance. During 2022/23 Officers supported works to **28** properties in **8** tenements across Argyll and Bute contributing **£400,671** of Private Sector Housing grant funding to works.

TABLE 18: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT – HOUSING REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT GRANTS 2022/23

Home Repair & Improvement Works Supported via Council			
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT (PSHG)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Tenements Repaired	7	6	8
Individual Units Retained	43	19	22
Feasibility Grants	5	6	3
Amenity Grants	2	5	6
PSHG Investment (* excludes funding for private sector adaptations)	£89,515	£48,614	£400,671

The Housing Service also works closely with colleagues in Economic Development to support the delivery of the Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS) and Town Heritage Initiative (THI) projects. Funding of over **£500k** has been committed from PSHG for projects in Lochgilphead, Dunoon, Rothesay and Helensburgh during 2022/23. This will support improvement works to 12 tenements with 49 properties.

TABLE 19: PSHG FUNDING FOR CARS / THI PROJECTS - 2022/23

PSHG funding for CARS/THI projects 2022/23	
Project	PSHG Contribution
Lochgilphead	£186,220
Dunoon	£105,000
Rothesay	£39,784
Helensburgh	£172,900
Total committed	£503,904

LHS OUTCOME TWO: POVERTY - MAXIMISING INCOME

The council and partners are working closely to support households affected by the cost of living crisis to help mitigate the impacts and to sustain our communities.

Welfare Rights Service

The Welfare Rights Service is dedicated to helping clients who have money worries and to providing advice and assistance on welfare benefits with a key focus on maximising client income and reducing poverty. During 2022/23 the team assisted residents to claim **£4.3m** in additional benefits. This “client gain” is not just a figure, the support provided by Welfare Rights can make a significant impact on individual’s lives. For example, it may mean being able to put heating on, keep a car running or replace a broken appliance. **99%** of customers would recommend the Welfare Rights service to others. It is anticipated the number of people accessing the service will continue to increase due to energy costs and the impact of the cost of living crisis on families and individuals.



Case study - An elderly client was assisted with an application for Attendance Allowance (AA), they were awarded High Rate AA at £101.75 per week. This also meant an increase to their pension credit of £76.40 per week as the Severe Disability Premium was included. As well as the ongoing increase of £178.15 to their weekly income the client also received backdated AA and Pension Credit totalling £1068.90

Flexible Food Fund

Funded by the Scottish Government, the project enables the Council’s Welfare Benefit team to work with third sector partners including Bute Advice Centre, Allenergy and foodbanks, to support people who are struggling for money to cover food and fuel costs. The Fund provides a one-off cash payment to families on low incomes to help with food and fuel. Claimants are offered a second cash payment if they have engaged with support agencies in financial management. Over **96%** of people receiving the first grant payment engage, get the support they need and receive a second payment. With an average financial gain of **£1,385** per household.

Scottish Welfare Fund –Community Care and Crisis Grants

The Scottish Welfare Fund is there to provide a safety net to vulnerable people on low incomes through the provision of Community Care and Crisis Grants. These are available for residents of Argyll and Bute on a low income, to help with daily living expenses such as food and bills, fuel or heating costs, emergency travel expenses, and for anyone fleeing domestic violence or facing exceptional pressures caused by loss of income or employment. During 2022/23 – **854** Crisis grants were awarded with total value of **£77,395** and **454** Community Care Grants with total value of **£582,417**.

Community Care Grants are provided to help a qualifying individual to establish or maintain a settled home. They can also be used to support families facing exceptional pressure. A qualifying individual is someone who, without assistance may be in prison, hospital, a residential care establishment or other institution; or homeless or otherwise living an unsettled life. **Crisis Grants** can be awarded in a crisis to meet expenses that have arisen as a result of an emergency or disaster in order to avoid an immediate threat to health or safety of an individual or family.

LHS OUTCOME TWO – PROGRESS MADE AGAINST KEY ACTIONS AND OUTPUT TARGETS IN 2022/23

Relevant Indicators	Baseline Historic Trend	2022/23	Annual target (& 5 Year Targets)	Assessment / Comment
Number of properties improved with energy efficiency measures & total grant investment via the Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (Scheme operates on July-June timeframe)	2020/21: 237 & £1.496m 2021/22: 105 & £560,511	288 & £2.312M	280 homes pa (1,400 homes & at least £4.875m)	Works to 288 properties with 438 measures installed to value of £2,312,059.
Nos of households receiving advice & assistance on house condition/ energy improvement and/or home safety works	2020/21: 2,901 (HES) 2021/22: 2,120 (HES)	2,554 referrals	2,000 cases completed pa (10,000 closed cases by 2027)	HES – 4,266 household interactions; 2,554 referrals to range of schemes/partners; 524 Warmer Homes measures installed; Allenergy – 1,246 clients registered in year.
Annual Household Income Generated by Council's Welfare Rights Service	2020/21: £3.364m 2021/22: £2.736m	£4.3m	£2.75m (£13.75m)	Effective support services continued to be delivered; resulting in successful generation of income/benefits for vulnerable households, which was 56% more than target of £2.75m.
Progress on approving & implementing the Scheme of Assistance (SoA), incorporating strategy for homes failing Below Tolerable Standard (BTS) & policy on Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs)	Previous SoA approved 2016 Review started 2022	New SoA to be produced in 2023/24	SoA to be approved & implemented in 2023/24	Scheme of Assistance incorporating policy on CPO and BTS under review in 2022 with a view to completing revised update in 2023, pending outcome of national policy review on adaptations.
% of RSL properties achieving Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) compliance	2020/21: 88% 2021/22: 87.6% (ESSH1)	92.4%	Compliance by 2032 for ESSH2 target.	92.4% (for ACHA, DHA, FH, WHHA & Trust); no return for Link, Bield, Key, Cairn or Blackwood to date)
Nos of private properties improved with PSHG aid, or assistance from ABC Housing Improvement Officers	2020/21: 43 - £89,515 2021/22: 19 - £48,614	22 – £400,671	(400 properties & grant spend of £2m)	8 tenements & 22 individual homes received repair & improvement works

LHS OUTCOME THREE: SPECIALIST PROVISION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

LHS strategic aim three is: To enable people to live well, with dignity and independently for as long as possible. The associated strategic objectives are to:-

3.1: Deliver the vision and objectives set out in the Argyll & Bute Housing Contribution Statement; and fully implement the joint Housing and HSCP Action Plan through improved coordination and closer partnership working with Health & Social Care partners, RSLs and the Council

3.2: Ensure the effective provision of aids and adaptations to meet identified needs across all tenures

3.3: Maximise the use of assistive technology to allow people to continue to live independently in their own communities; and work with partners to deliver the TEC charter (Technology Enabled Care in the Home)

3.4: Deliver SHIP targets for specialist housing provision including wheelchair housing targets, ensuring early engagement in the design process

3.5: Work with the Gypsy/Traveller community and partners to ensure accommodation and support needs are met, including national standards for existing sites

3.6: Continue to monitor and review strategic interventions and outcomes for all equalities groups, including BAME, gender, age, and sexual orientation; and wheelchair users, people with autism, dementia, the frail elderly and other particular needs groups

LHS OUTCOME THREE: SPECIALIST PROVISION & PARTICULAR NEEDS: CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS

In 2022/23, the HOMEArgyll partnership of local housing associations rehoused **79** households in specialist accommodation, amounting to just under 10% of the total HOMEArgyll lets that year. This included:

- 32 lets - Amenity Housing
- 30 lets - Sheltered Housing
- 11 lets - Medium dependency
- 3 lets - Wheelchair Housing
- 2 lets - Ambulant disabled
- 1 let - Amenity disabled

In addition, the national specialist associations operating in Argyll & Bute, such as Link and Trust, accommodated over **30** households and individuals in housing for particular needs.

The demand for specialist provision and accommodation for particular needs is evidenced by households on the HOMEArgyll list who require distinct property types. As at April 2023 over **19%*** of those on the list required some form of specialist housing including: wheelchair suitable housing; housing with support; amenity/elderly housing; and sheltered housing.

Further analysis of the HOMEArgyll list highlights a number of key indicators for the requirement of particular housing and support services to meet varying needs.

- 37% state their medical condition is affected by current housing circumstances
- 33% of primary household members declared some form of disability
- 12% require support or assistance living in their home
- 7% have severe health issues
- 5.5% need to move home to access specialist support services
- 10% of primary applicants are aged 65-74
- 6% primary applications are aged 75 or over

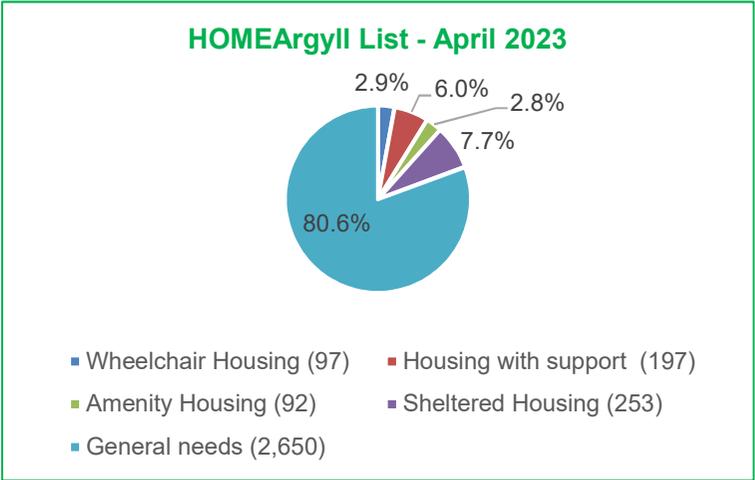


CHART 1 - HOMEARGYLL LIST - APRIL 2023

* Applicants can select multiple housing options including General Needs/ Mainstream housing, therefore there may be a small element of double-counting across the figures if applicants have selected more than one housing option.

LHS OUTCOME THREE: SPECIALIST PROVISION & PARTICULAR NEEDS: HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The third **Argyll & Bute Housing Contribution Statement** was updated in 2022 following a comprehensive revision for inclusion in the Health Social Care Partnership's (HSCP) Joint Strategic Plan for 2022/25. The LHS vision and outcomes support the overarching objectives of both the HSCP Strategic Plan and the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan, as well as helping to address the national housing, health and well-being outcomes for Scotland. The housing sector, has an important and direct contribution to make to these national health and well-being outcomes as well as the local service priorities identified in the HSCP Strategic Plan.

Partnership working and investment will help to increase the provision of affordable housing and aids and adaptations across all tenures; improve the condition and energy efficiency performance of homes; and deliver support, advice and assistance on a range of housing options, as well as tackling poverty, improving health and well-being, and generating additional income / benefits for vulnerable households. It is estimated that Housing's potential financial contribution available over the lifecycle of Joint Strategic Plan, 2022/25, could be in the region of **£111m**. For every £1 of housing spend the added value and preventative savings to the HSCP are likely to be significantly higher.

Shaping Places - Place and Wellbeing Assessment Report

The Improvement Service facilitated a Place and Wellbeing Assessment in April 2023 to review the Argyll and Bute HSCP Joint Strategic Plan and Joint Commissioning Strategy. The process applied was a place-based approach considering the consequences of actions on creating a place that has a positive impact for those who live, work, and relax there. Housing was discussed in detail and participants were asked to use their knowledge and expertise to consider how the plans are likely to impact on creating a place that enables wellbeing. Overall there were positive outcomes identified, and recommendations from the review will be incorporated into future joint working, which include:

- Strengthen the role of prevention, specifically opportunities to link with Council plans for housing developments and employability initiatives
- Include more detail on housing needs to support workforce development and sustainability
- Include reference to the benefits of sharing data relevant to housing and links with Council housing plans, including locations of new developments, mix, density and tenure of housing.
- Include more emphasis in the plans on the role of housing in the prevention of poverty, particularly in relation to child poverty and links to mental health
- Investigate how the proposed statutory duty for preventing homelessness is to be included and identify how it can link up with duties for other statutory organisations
- Include references within the plans to good housing models that promote wellbeing and the benefits to preventative healthcare



LHS OUTCOME THREE: SPECIALIST PROVISION & PARTICULAR NEEDS: HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Equipment & Adaptations - Scheme of Assistance

The provision of equipment and adaptations are an essential component of an integrated health & social care service to support individuals to live in their own homes as independently for as long as possible. The type of adaptations that can be undertaken to properties varies from minor to major and can include items such as: installation of safety rails; non-slip/tactile surfaces; alterations to doors, electrics, or plumbing; external paths, steps, paving; door access; stair lifts/hoists; and accessible showers/baths. This helps facilitate improved quality of life and can have positive impacts on mental health and well-being, as well as being a cost effective model of housing intervention.

The Scottish Government published revised guidance for the provision of equipment and adaptations in March 2022. The key principles and aims of the new guidance, which includes, among others: Early intervention with full exploration of rehousing opportunities; Better planning for the delivery of barrier-free housing and an inclusive design / living approach; and Equity in the system, applying a “tenure neutral” approach (as far as practicable). A working group has been established to review and update our Scheme of Assistance taking into account the new guidance to facilitate improvements for those who require home adaptations to live as independently as possible.

Private Adaptations

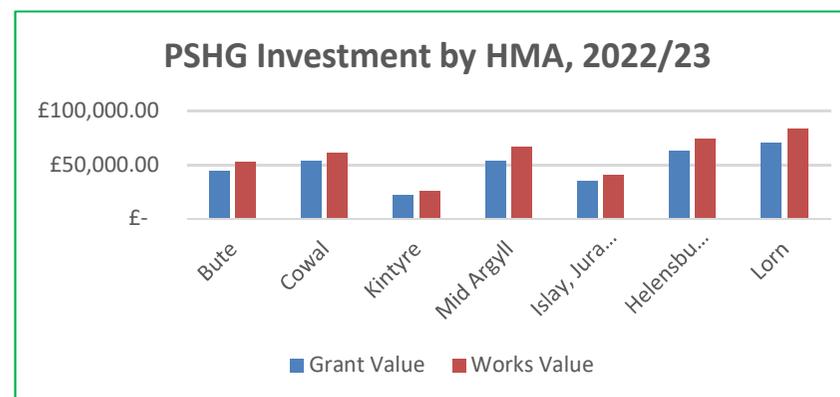
During 2022/23 the Council’s Scheme of Assistance supported **62** private owners to undertake 69 adaptations to their homes with support of **£342k** Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG). The graph details expenditure on adaptations across the Argyll and Bute area.

Care & Repair supported all 62 private owners with the adaptation process.

RSL Adaptations

Our Registered Social Landlord partners undertook approx. **346** adaptations to **243** of their properties in 2022/23 with **£583k** of Stage 3 grant funding from Scottish Government to support independent living.

GRAPH 5 - PSHG ADAPTATIONS INVESTMENT BY HMA 2022/23



LHS OUTCOME THREE: SPECIALIST PROVISION & PARTICULAR NEEDS - GYPSY/TRAVELLERS

Gypsy/ Traveller Sites

There two official Gypsy/Traveller sites in Argyll and Bute which are owned and managed by ACHA – Duncholgan, Lochgilphead and Bayview, Ledaig. ACHA are the only Registered Social Landlord in Scotland operating sites; whilst the Council have the strategic obligation to take into account the Housing needs and Demands of Gypsy/Travellers.



PICTURE 2- BAYVIEW NEW SIGNAGE

Duncholgan – Following reduction in capacity, there are **7** pitches currently available. At the end of financial year 2022/23 all 7 pitches were occupied. Three of these tenancies were created during the year, with four being longer-term households resident for over five years.

Bayview – Following reduction in capacity, there are **4** pitches currently available. At the end of financial year 2022/23 all 4 pitches were occupied. Two of these tenancies were created during the year, with two being longer-term households resident for over two years.



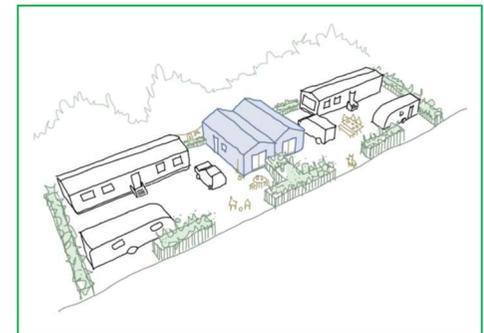
PICTURE 3 - DUNCHOLGAN NEW SIGNAGE

Gypsy/ Traveller Site Improvement Works

During 2021-23 ACHA completed *interim* improvement works to both sites, utilising the £108k of funding secured from the Scottish Government's £2m Capital Investment Fund for Improving Gypsy/Traveller Sites.

To inform *longer-term* improvements, ACHA have engaged Architects to work with the community to look at design proposals for improving the accommodation, facilities, and layouts of both the sites. There has been positive feedback on the concept design works undertaken so far and the consultation with the community in developing these. Further engagement events will be held with the community during September 2023 to take forward stage 2 of design proposals.

Significant investment will be required by ACHA to take forward the finalised design plans. The Scottish Government's £20m Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Fund in 2021 was oversubscribed with only 7 out of 22 local authority areas with sites successful in getting funding. It is anticipated that there won't be a further round of funding until at least 2024. ACHA will continue to engage with the community and keep them updated with a view to be project ready to apply for funding at earliest opportunity to enable the longer-term improvement works required to sites to be taken forward.



PICTURE 4 – INCH ARCHITECTURE DRAFT DRAWING

Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project (MECOPP)

MECOPP continue to support Gypsy/Travellers in Argyll and Bute and help facilitate on-going engagement. This dedicated resource has encouraged and improved partnership working with the community, as well as offering bespoke support to meet local needs.

Gypsy/Traveller Working Group

In 2019 the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) launched the ‘Improving the Lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers’ strategy - the Strategy has been extended whilst the next national Strategy/Action Plan is drafted. One of the key aims of the strategy is for the Gypsy/Travellers community to *‘have a seat at the table, are listened to, and have a say in the decisions that affect their lives’*.

A Gypsy/Traveller Working Group (GTWG) was established in 2022 as the forum which aims to make this happen in Argyll and Bute. The core membership includes representation from the key strategic partners involved in delivering accommodation, health, education, advocacy, and community safety, as well as community representation which is central to the effectiveness of the group. Initial priorities to be taken forward by the GTWG were identified by the community and include: Engagement; Awareness; Education; and Accommodation. The community priorities raised fit well with the five key aims of the “Improving the Lives of Scotland’s Gypsy/Travellers Action Plan” which are: 1. Provide more and better accommodation; 2. Improve access to public services; 3. Better incomes in and out of work; 4. Tackle racism and discrimination; and 5. Improve gypsy/traveller representation – strengthen community development and engagement.

Whilst relatively newly established the GTWG has successfully brought together key partners to collectively engage with the community and work with them to deliver community priorities and improvements. A good example of this is the community event in November 2022 which was organised and hosted by MECOPP in Oban. There was really positive feedback from both the community and GTWG representatives. The day was a fun event including face painting and burger van, but incorporated two key purposes: “Raise awareness of the services and support that MECOPP can provide”; and “to undertake consultation on the financial impact that COVID has with food and fuel costs so we could identify and understand how to support the community with LACER funding”.

PICTURE 5- MECOPP COMMUNITY EVENT - NOVEMBER



Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery fund (LACER) Funding

The Housing Services secured £10k LACER funding for the Gypsy/Traveller community. MECOPP were appointed to engage with the community to undertake research on the impact that the pandemic had, particularly on their fuel and food costs and to identify how the community could be supported to mitigate impacts. The outcome of the consultation and report has enabled a protocol to be formalised with partners for distribution of LACER funding to support the Gypsy/Traveller community with fuel and food costs.

LHS OUTCOME THREE: EQUALITIES MONITORING

As well as a full Equalities and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, the Council has carried out impact assessments for the LHS in respect of Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Island and Rural Communities, as well as a Health Impact Assessment. A copy of these are available on the council website: localhousingstrategy@argyll-bute.gov.uk

The Housing Service ensure that all households approaching the Council for housing advice are treated fairly, with dignity and respect. We have implemented an enhanced equalities monitoring & evaluation framework for our key functions.

The statistics are analysed and if any trends emerge then service improvements will be brought in to ensure that households are provided with the service that meets their needs and that equalities and human rights legislation requirements are being met.

There will be positive impacts on service users through this additional analysis as it will help Housing Services better understand the needs of households. Equalities data monitoring is reported annually to Housing Management Team, the Strategic Housing Forum partnership, the Scottish Government, and Scottish Housing Regulator.

For example, in relation to Homelessness Equalities Monitoring, the Housing Services produce a quarterly report on the following information:-

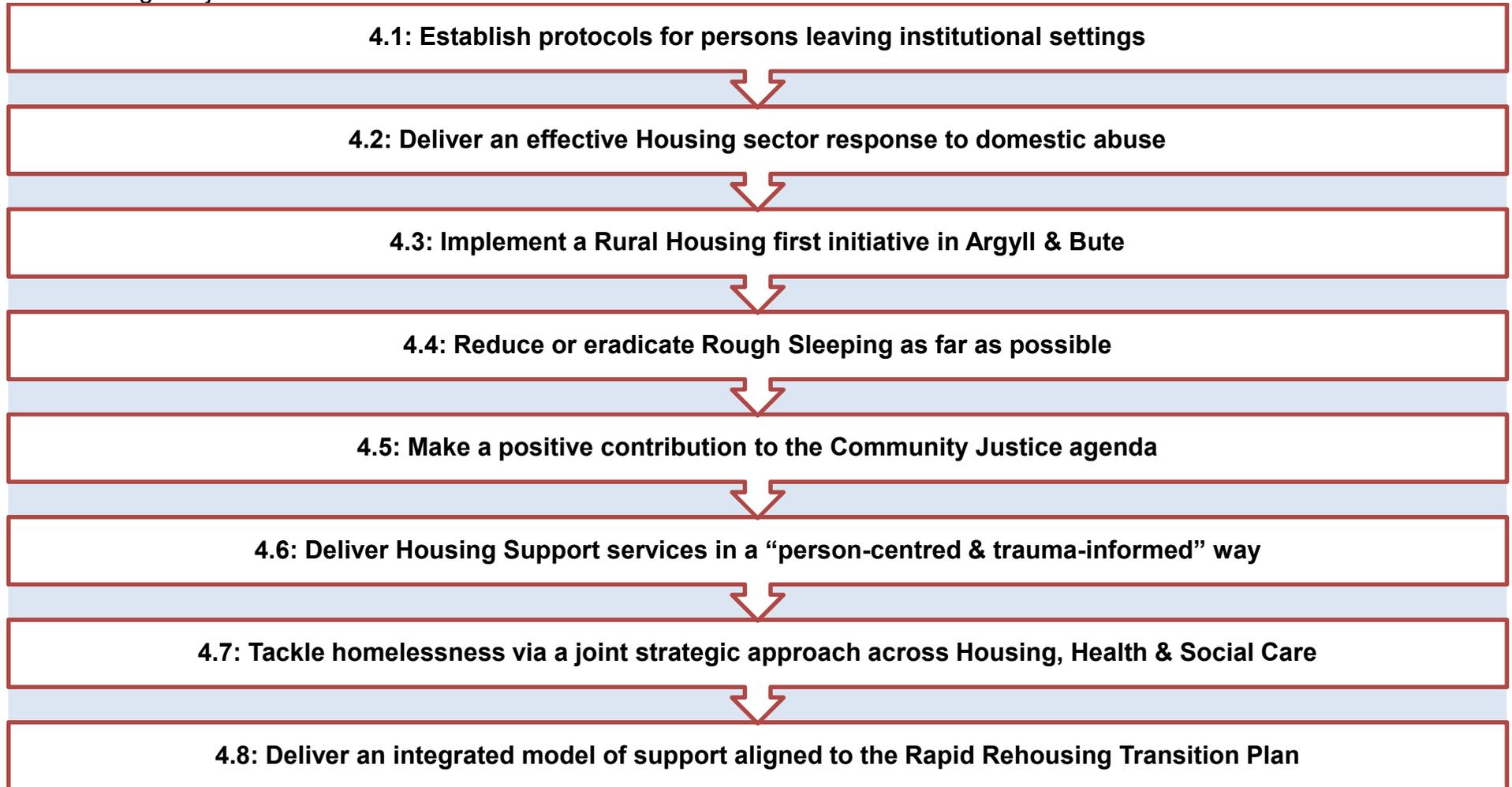
- The number of males presenting as homeless
- The number of females presenting as homeless
- The number of households with children presenting as homeless
- The ethnic origin of all households presenting as homeless
- The number of households presenting as homeless as a result of domestic abuse
- The number of households who stated that they slept rough the night before making a homeless application
- The number of households who stated that they slept rough within three months of making a homeless application
- All households who identified that they had at least one support need when they made a homeless application

LHS OUTCOME THREE – PROGRESS MADE AGAINST KEY ACTIONS AND OUTPUT TARGETS IN 2022/23

Relevant Indicators	Baseline Historic Trend	2022/23	Annual target (& 5 Year Targets)	Assessment / Comment
Housing Contribution Statement (HCS) revised & approved for inclusion in HSCP Strategic Plan; Housing OT post established as permanent and Action Plan reviewed and agreed.	2020/21: OT post piloted 2021/22: OT post made permanent	Housing OT post made permanent; Revised HCS drafted 2022	HCS/OT Action Plan fully delivered by 2027	Housing OT established joint area partnership groups with RSLs; implemented review of waiting lists; improved assessment procedures & data collation/case monitoring; early engagement in new build design and allocations for SHIP projects.
Number of RSL and Private Homes adapted with grant assistance; and Total grant (all tenures)	2020/21: 309 £1.15m 2021/22: 319 £1.146m	305 £925k	c 350 pa (1,750 with £5.5m grant by 2027)	Scottish Government enabled 346 adaptations in 243 RSL properties with £583k Stage 3 grant funding. The Council's PSHG supported 69 adaptations to 62 properties with £342k grant.
Nos of telecare unit installations & total clients in receipt of TEC service at year end.	2021/22: 1,774 installs & 1,994 clients as of March 2022	2,056 clients TBC - installs	By 2027, 4,500 clients to have received 5,700 installs; and over 2,000 active clients.	The total number of clients in receipt of active services at March 2023 is 2,056. Due to change in Social Work case management and reporting system, the number of installations over 2022/23 is not currently available.
Nos & % of specialist subsidised new builds completed via SHIP	2019/20: 7 2020/21: 1 2021/22: 22	36 (19%)	5% of SHIP new builds are wheelchair units & 5% are other specialist accommodation	Increase in number of specialist new build homes delivered. 19% of annual SHIP total, including 14 wheelchair adapted units and 20 amenity/older person units. There were also 2 other suitable specialist units built in Inveraray.
Improvements to official Gypsy/Traveller sites & satisfaction levels	2020/21: No survey 2021/22: No survey	75% residents very or fairly satisfied	100% satisfaction	£108k Interim site improvements completed during 2022/23. Satisfaction surveys in 2022/23 were the first undertaken since the pandemic, with 8 out of 11 households on sites responding.
Enhanced Equalities monitoring & evaluation framework established and annual reports produced	2020/21: HNDA published	Data and indicators reviewed	Annual Report for all Housing functions	Range of LHS Impact Assessments published online. Enhanced Equalities reporting to be implemented 2022/23.

LHS OUTCOME FOUR: HOUSING OPTIONS, INFORMATION & SUPPORT

The LHS strategic aim four is: **To provide effective and timeous information, advice and support to help persons in housing need to make informed choices and decisions on the range of Housing Options available.** The associated strategic objectives are to:-



LHS OUTCOME 4: HOMELESSNESS CONTEXT

The Scottish Government’s vision is for everyone **‘to have a safe, warm and affordable home that meets their needs’**.

The reality is that many households are threatened with or facing homelessness. Shelter Scotland estimate that every **18 minutes** a household becomes homeless in Scotland.

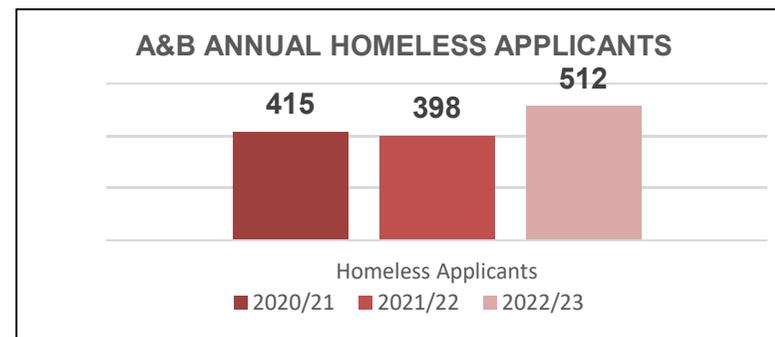
The Homeless Service staff provide vital support, information and advice to households who have nowhere to live, are worried about losing their home, or need advice on their housing options. Our priority is to try and help people stay in their home, and where this is not practically possible staff will assist households to find alternative accommodation including provision of temporary accommodation when required.

During 2022/23 the Housing Service received **512** homeless applications in Argyll and Bute which is a **29% increase** from 398 applications in the previous financial year. As at the end of March 2023, there were **256** statutory homeless households waiting to be permanently housed. With **128** households in temporary accommodation, including **21** households with children. Whilst the average time for homeless applicants to be rehoused has reduced, on average it takes **33 weeks** to be offered permanent accommodation. These statistics highlight the urgent need for more affordable housing across the area.

Homelessness can affect everyone and the type of households requiring assistance during 2022/23 varied. Table 21 shows breakdown of household types. Presentations from single households account for **56%** of cases. Over **24%** of homeless presentations last year involved children.

The main reasons for presenting as Homeless in 2022/23 were due to ‘Non-violent dispute in household/relationship breakdown (29%)’ or being ‘asked to leave current accommodation (17%)’. However there has been significant increases in households presenting following ‘other action by landlord to terminate tenancy’ (**46% increase**), and ‘other reasons for loss of accommodation’ (**156% increase**) compared to 2021/22. Table 22 records the reasons for homelessness over the last three years and highlights the changes in trends.

GRAPH 6 - ANNUAL NUMBER HOMELESS APPLICATIONS



Homeless Case Durations	20/21	21/22	22/23
Average time to discharge duty (weeks)	40.74	37.78	33

TABLE 20 - AVERAGE TIME TO CLOSE HOMELESS CASE

TABLE 21: HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE 2019/20 – 2022/23

Homeless Presentations by Household Type	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Single Person	295	257	253	303
Single Parent	77	104	66	98
Couple	34	31	37	57
Couple with Children	22	16	32	45
Other	2	6	1	9
Other with Children	4	1	9	0
All	434	415	398	512

TABLE 22: HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS BY AREA 2022/23

Homeless Presentations by Area 2022/23	Number
Bute	37
Coll & Tiree	1
Cowal	114
Helensburgh & Lomond	121
Islay, Jura & Colonsay	25
Kintyre	25
Lorn	116
Mid-Argyll	70
Mull & Iona	1
Out with the area	2
TOTAL	512

TABLE 23: REASONS FOR PRESENTING AS HOMELESS 2019/20 – 2022/23

REASONS FOR PRESENTING AS HOMELESS	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Termination of tenancy / mortgage due to rent arrears / default on payments	25	7	9	12
Other action by landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy	51	32	50	73
Applicant terminated secure accommodation	8	3	2	6
Loss of service / tied accommodation	13	19	14	22
Discharge from prison / hospital / care / other institution	19	15	12	15
Emergency (fire, flood, storm, closing order from Environmental Health etc.)	2	3	0	1
Forced division and sale of matrimonial home	2	6	1	4
Other reason for loss of accommodation	31	26	16	41
Dispute within household: violent or abusive	33	35	25	28
Dispute within household / relationship breakdown: non-violent	110	115	105	150
Fleeing non-domestic violence	13	11	10	17
Harassment	5	13	7	12
Overcrowding	18	19	18	21
Asked to leave	78	83	107	87
Other reason for leaving accommodation / household	26	28	22	23
All	434	415	398	512

TABLE 24: NUMBER OF STATUTORY HOMELESS CASES WAITING FOR PERMANENT HOUSING AS AT 24TH MARCH 2023

Total Number of Statutory Homeless Cases Waiting for Permanent Housing as at 24th March 2023					
Area	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total
Bute	5	1	0	0	6
Cowal	25	17	5	1	48
Kintyre	15	6	1	1	23
Lomond	53	14	9	4	80
Lorn	50	15	2	2	69
Mid Argyll	18	13	2	3	36
TOTAL	166	66	19	11	262

Homeless Prevention and Advice – Prevent 1

All local authorities have a statutory duty under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide advice and assistance on housing options to try and prevent and alleviate homelessness.

The Housing Service had **1,123** 'Prevention and Advice' cases in 2022/23 which decreased slightly from 1,211 in 2021/22. There was an increase in the number of households seeking advice in respect of 'General Housing Advice, from 431 households in 2021/22 to 486 households during 2022/23. Of the 1,123 cases, only **238** went on to make a homeless application which is the lowest since peak of 409 cases in 2017/18, this highlights the pro-active approach to prevent homelessness and the importance of households receiving appropriate advice and assistance at an early stage.

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) / Housing First

RRTP funding was made available for a 5 year period which comes to an end in March 2024. The main projects funded in 2022/23 include:

1. **Mental Health / Addictions Housing Practitioner** - Due to the post being vacant for period of time in 2022/23 only £27,485 was paid from allocation of £53,690
2. **Housing First** – Four new Housing First cases were supported with spend of £2,003 to assist them setting up their home. All Housing First tenancies are being sustained although progress in creating new tenancies has been slower than originally planned. The Housing First Delivery Group are committed to continue creating Housing First permanent tenancies across Argyll and Bute.
3. **Rent Arrears Prevention Project** – Working with RSL partners, 21 households in rent arrears were prevented from becoming homeless. Payments totalling £16,427 were made to RSLs to prevent evictions.
4. **Flexible Emergency Fund** – 211 households have received assistance to prevent them becoming homeless. With £1k paid in 2022/23.
5. **Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) Decoration Project** – 104 households have been assisted through the project to set up their permanent tenancy. One household received support of £201 in 2022/23.



Section 11 Notices

The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 places an obligation on social and private landlords, as well as creditors to inform the local authority where they plan to evict a tenant by raising proceedings for possession of the property, or serve certain notices relating to the standard security. The key purpose of Section 11 Notice is to give local authorities advance notification of households who may be at risk of homelessness so they can engage with the household to try and prevent them from becoming homeless. The number of Section 11 Notices received by Housing Service since 2020/21, has fluctuated and will be impacted by the temporary ban on evictions imposed by Scottish Government during the pandemic which ended in March 2023 (*exceptions in place for serious anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse*). There has been significant increase in number Section 11 Notices being received in recent months which is being monitored, with homeless staff continuing to pro-actively engage with households affected.

TABLE 25: SECTION 11 NOTICES RECEIVED SINCE 2020/21

Section 11 Notices Received	Total	Source of Referral				
		Private Landlord	RSL	Bank	Building Society	Creditors
2020/21	3	3				
2021/22	46	4	16	16	2	8
2022/23	21	4	5	3	3	6
2023/24 (April - July)	45	2	32	1		10

Homelessness Prevention – Housing (Scotland) Bill

The new Housing (Scotland) Bill, scheduled to pass through the Scottish Parliament during 2022/23 will focus on several topics that affect homelessness. A new duty will be applied to a range of public bodies and landlords requiring them to take specific actions to reduce the risk of homelessness, we expect these to include health and social care, children’s services, social landlords, private landlords, and the criminal justice sector. The Bill is expected to set out a framework for the new homelessness prevention duty with further details to be introduced in secondary legislation or regulations/guidance following further consultation.

The Housing Service works closely with partners and will continue to engage as the new Bill develops to ensure that a co-ordinated approach to implementation of duties between partners is achieved.

LHS OUTCOME 4: HOUSING SUPPORT

Tenancy Support

The Council's Housing Service is committed to preventing homelessness, helping people to stay in their own homes, and promoting realistic housing options. Housing support helps vulnerable people or those at risk of losing their homes, with support tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual. The Housing Support Service aims to:

- Assist people to sustain their tenancies, and prevent homelessness
- Support homeless clients to prepare for the allocation of a permanent home
- Provide quality services and work with internal and external partners to ensure Best Value
- Promote independent living

Due to the high demand for support, the 'Prioritisation of Need Framework' is used to prioritise those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness for support. During 2022/23 there were **305** new referrals received.

At the end of March 2023 there were **233** households in receipt of tenancy support. **53** households were statutory homeless (23%) and **180** were being supported to sustain their current accommodation.

There were 236 departures from support during 2022/23 - 153 were planned departures and 83 unplanned departures.

Domestic Abuse / Women's Aid

Argyll and Bute Council are one of over 400 Organisations who have signed up to the 'Make a Stand pledge' which was developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. The pledge was created to encourage housing organisations to make a commitment to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

The Council's Housing staff work closely with Women's Aid who are the lead organisation in Scotland working towards the prevention of domestic abuse. Women's Aid play a vital role coordinating, influencing and campaigning for effective responses to domestic abuse and supporting those subjected to domestic abuse. During 2022/23 Women's Aid received **171** referrals for support in Argyll and Bute.

LHS OUTCOME 4 – PROGRESS MADE AGAINST KEY ACTIONS AND OUTPUT TARGETS IN 2022/23

Relevant Indicators	Baseline Historic Trend	2022/23	Annual target (& 5 Year Targets)	Assessment / Comment
Protocols for persons leaving an institutional setting including hospital discharge, looked-after children, armed forces, prison, or evictions	Looked after Children Protocols in place; Armed Services Covenant.	Existing protocols continue to operate effectively for Looked After Children.	Protocols drafted & consultation carried out by 2023. Protocols agreed & in place by 2024	Review / work on protocols for hospital discharge, those leaving care setting, and evictions. 15 Homeless cases due to “Discharge from prison / hospital / care / other institution” which is slight increase from 12 in previous year; there were no homeless applications from leaving looked after care setting directly and 5 cases where had been “Previously Looked After by LA within last 5 years”
Housing sector enables an effective response to meeting the needs of those experiencing domestic abuse	2020/21: 128 CHR applicants 35 Homeless cases 2021/22: 100 CHR applicants 25 Homeless cases	104 - CHR applicants 28 Homeless cases	Homeless & CHR applicants due to Domestic Abuse reduced below baseline.	The number of CHR applicants “being abused by someone in household” and Homeless cases due to domestic abuse have increased on previous year’s figure.
Rural Housing First Initiative in Argyll and Bute – number of tenancies created	Protocols agreed with RSLs 2021/22 = 1	6 new tenancies	10 tenancies pa (50 by 2027)	The initiative was developed in 2021/22. Seven Housing First tenancies have been created.
Rough Sleeping presenting as Homeless (based on HL1 statistics: as reported at Homeless case interviews)	2020/21: 6% slept rough night before & 10% within previous 3 months 2021/22: 4% slept rough night before & 7% within 3 months	5% slept rough night before presenting & 7% within the last 3 months	Incidence reduced below baseline/ Scottish Average	Based on information provided by households presenting as homeless, 5% of homeless cases slept rough the night before presenting (26 out of 512); while 37 slept rough within 3 months previously (7% of total cases that year)

Relevant Indicators	Baseline Historic Trend	2022/23	Annual target (& 5 Year Targets)	Assessment / Comment
HL1 presentations from Prison securing positive housing outcomes (supporting Community Justice agenda)	2020/21 – 2 of 4 closed cases (50%) 2021/22 – 12 of 16 closed cases (81%)	11 cases – 5 closed (45%)	Levels sustained at or above baseline i.e. >50%	5 out 11 cases closed, 45% which is below the baseline of 50%
% of Housing Support services departures (clients leaving support) which are planned departures per annum	2020/21: 70% 2021/22: 76%	65%	80%	153 of 236 closed cases were planned departures which is decrease in baseline % and below target.
Nos of households supported via Housing First with support of dedicated Mental Health /Addictions Housing Practitioner.	New Initiative 2021/22- Post established – 25 referrals	56 referrals	50 assessments to be completed	Due to staff changes a new Mental Health /Addictions Housing Practitioner is currently being recruited. 81 referrals to date have been made.
Temporary Accommodation provision with protocols to address emergency needs	2021: 108 units 2022: 121 units	122 units	100% applicants in need receive suitable offer of T.A.	Core provision of 122 units (including serviced accommodation) as of March 2023.
Level of Homeless presentations and average time to rehouse homeless applicants in an RSL property.	2020/21: 416 applicants; 39 weeks on average to rehouse 2021/22: 398 applicants; 34 weeks average to rehouse	512 applicants; 33 weeks on average to rehouse	Cases at or below baseline (416). 26 weeks on average to rehouse in RSL sector	Homeless applicants increased 29% on previous year Average time to rehouse homeless cases is 33 weeks which is below previous year, but still 7 weeks longer than target of 26 weeks.
Develop a Housing Communication Plan and social media strategy	Enhanced Housing Options module established	On-going	Plan to be implemented in 2023	Communication Plan and Strategy to be developed in 2023.

This report is available on the Council's website along with the full Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2022/23 – 2026/27; Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) 2021; and the current Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP); as well as a range of other supporting materials. These can be all be found at the following link:

[Local Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment | Argyll and Bute Council \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/local-housing-strategy-and-housing-need-and-demand-assessment)

If you would like:

- Further information or clarification on the content of this report; or
- To comment on the strategy or Housing in Argyll & Bute in general; or
- To obtain this document in another language or format;

Please contact:

Local Housing Strategy team on 01369 800503
or email: localhousingstrategy@argyll-bute.gov.uk

