

Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston Housing Needs Survey

**Research Report by Rural Housing Scotland
commissioned by Fort Augustus & Glenmoriston Community Company**

November 2018



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1.0 Background

The housing needs survey targeted people living in Fort Augustus with housing needs, who need alternative housing or who wish to move to work in the area but lack of affordable housing restricts their ability to do so.

The survey was available online through Survey Monkey and promoted through social media, local newspapers, and as flyers on noticeboards. Flyers with the code and hard copies of the survey were also available at key locations, such as the school, service point, local shops and local hotels.

Two housing surgeries/ drop in sessions were held; one at the community hall in the evening and one late morning in the High School.

Individuals with known housing needs were informed of the survey through the Community Company, local employers and other key local agents to ensure the survey was targeted at people in housing need.

Interviews were also held with local employers to gather evidence of the impact the local housing market has had on their ability to recruit and retain staff and potential benefit to their development plans of the development of more affordable housing.

The survey took place between 23rd October 2018 and 14th November 2018; with housing surgeries and employer interviews taking place on 1st and 2nd November 2018.

2.0. Respondents

There were 45 respondent to the survey. This is 16% of all households in the village of Fort Augustus - an excellent response rate for a targeted and voluntary survey.

2.1. Household Type (All Respondents)

Respondent households consisted:

- 6 single people
- 13 families with resident dependent children
- 7 families with resident non dependent children
- 11 couples
- 5 sharing households - all living in staff accommodation
- 2 multi generation households - both single parent living in parental home

2.2. Tenure (All Respondents)

- 5 owner occupiers

- 19 private tenants - including 4 in staff accommodation
- 10 living with family/friends - including one in staff accommodation
- 1 living in tied housing
- 8 social renting tenants

2 did not complete this question.

2.3. Sharing Facilities

10 households are sharing facilities with an unrelated household - 6 private tenants and 4 in staff accommodation.

2.4. Waiting List

34¹ households state that they are not on the Highland Housing Register - these comprise:

- 12 households with resident dependent children - three are private tenants, two live with family and friends, two own their own homes, three rent from Albyn HS and two are Highland tenants;
- 7 couples
- 6 households with resident non dependent children
- 4 single people
- 4 shared households

10 households are on the waiting list including 4 couples, 3 households with resident dependent children, 1 household with resident non dependent children, 1 single person and 1 sharing household.

3.0. Housing in Fort Augustus

The Community Action Plan states that "there are 678 houses in the Community Council area of which 503 are occupied, 24 are empty, and 151 are second home/holiday homes".

The CAP suggests that there are lower levels of owner occupation in Fort Augustus compared with the Scottish average - in the village itself there is a slightly lower level 2.8% below the national average of 62%. In the landward areas and Glenmoriston there are few alternatives to home ownership with 88% of all homes owner occupied.

The CAP also suggests that there are higher levels of social housing in the village - however the 2011 census suggests that the level of social rented housing in Fort Augustus is slightly lower than the Scottish Average - 23.6% compared with 24.3%. In the landward areas there are just 3% social rented homes.

¹ Not all numbers will tally throughout the report as respondents skipped questions

The village has significantly higher levels of private rented and tied housing with 13.7% of households in private rented housing and 3.5% living in rent free accommodation. The Scottish average is 12.4% in private rent and 1.3% rent free - whilst in Highland Council area the private rent level is lower at 11.6% with 2.3% living rent free. In the landward area there are fewer private rented opportunities with just 6% of homes and perhaps surprisingly just 2% in tied housing.

Fort Augustus also has four times the national and Highland level of households in a shared dwelling 0.4% compared with 0.1% elsewhere. The village also has nearly double the rate of households living in a caravan or mobile home at 0.7% compared with the Highland level of 0.4%

3.1. Social Housing in Fort Augustus

The Highland Housing Register Demand and Supply tool provides a guide to the likelihood of an applicant securing a house in a particular area by setting out the number of people on the register looking for each size of property, the number of social rented houses of each size in the area and the number of times each size of property as been let in the last financial year.

Size	Number Registered	Stock	Lets
1 bed bungalow	51	14	1
1 bed ground flat	29	2	0
1 bed upper flat	23	1	0
2 bed bungalow	15	8	0
2 bed ground flat	7	1	0
2 bed house	13	13	1
2 bed upper flat	4	1	0
3 bed house	13	25	0
4 bed house	9	3	0

The results for Fort Augustus show that across all houses sizes there were just two homes let from April 2017 - March 2018; a 1 bed bungalow and a 2 bed house.

There is substantial demand for housing in the village particularly for smaller homes with 51 households registered for 1 bed bungalow homes almost 4 times the level of stock available. Those looking for 1 bed flats also considerably outstrips stock numbers with 29 households registered for the 2 one bed ground floor flats and 23 households registered for the 1 one bed flat available. There was little turnover within this limited supply with just one let of a 1 bed property in the village in the last year. Without further development of housing of this size those on the register will be waiting for a long time for housing in Fort Augustus. This perhaps accounts for the survey finding (below) of a high number of households who have not registered with Highland Housing Register.

Demand for two bed property also outstrips supply with double the number of applicants for each 2 bed bungalow. There are fewer looking for 2 bed houses but there is still an applicant for each 2 bed house. In the last year just one 2 bed house was let.

There are fewer applicants for 3 bed homes despite this being the largest single type of housing available in the village. There is however substantial demand for 4 bed homes with 9 on the register for the three homes in the village. There were no lets of 3 or 4 bedroom properties in the last year and perhaps this low turnover suppresses the level of applicants.

Analysis of the data from the Highland Housing Register alone would suggest that there is a considerable need within the village for the development of 1 bed homes - particularly those with ground level access; substantial need for two bed homes and for bed homes, and some demand for three bed properties.

4.0. Housing Need Survey

4.1. Housing Need

27 of the 45 households responding to the survey state that they or someone in their household needs alternative housing:

- 15 households state it is the whole household who needs alternative housing
- 11 state that a young adult in their home needs their own home
- 1 states that an older resident needs alternative housing

4.1.1. Housing Need - All Household (15)

The 15 households with housing need were split between:

8 couples - all households under 44 - 7 private tenants - 5 who want to rent and who currently share facilities in their home but want to rent their own two bedroom house (3) or 1 bed home (2).

One couple who rent from Highland Council need alternative housing due to mobility issues and need a house on one level with two bedrooms

5 families with dependent children - three are private tenants and two Albyn tenants (1 Albyn tenant in Drumnadrochit is looking for a move back to a 2/3 bedroom home and 1 Albyn tenant state they are overcrowded - not statutorily). Of the 3 private tenants one household has four children in a three bedroom home and needs a 4 bedroom home: one has two children and needs a smaller home 2/3 bedroom; and one has 2 children and states they need a 4 bed home (statutorily they need a 2 bed). All private tenants say that they have an insecure tenancy and their home is expensive to rent and heat.

1 single household - is a private tenant - their home is being sold - they need a 1/2 bed home

1 family with non dependent children - in tied housing need a two bedroom home

4.1.2 Housing Need - Young Adult Household (11)

The 11 households with housing need were split between:

- 2 families - lone young parent with young child living c/o family

Just one of these households is registered with Highland Housing Register.

Both households would like to live independently and suggest their housing need is due to overcrowding of three generations in one property; one suggests that they are threatened with homelessness and would also like to be closer to employment

- 2 couples - one living c/o family and one renting privately

Neither household is registered with Highland Housing Register.

One household is living with family and friends and would like to live independently; the other household is renting privately which they consider too expensive and they would like to buy their own home.

- 7 young single people living c/o families

Just one of the 7 young single households are registered with Highland Housing Register.

Six households are living with family and friends, and one is living in staff accommodation all state that they would like to live independently; three would like to move closer to their employment and one states that they would like to move to buy their own home.

4.1.3 Housing Need - Older Resident Household (1)

1 couple who own their own home have mobility issues which means they need alternative wheelchair housing on one level with two bedrooms. This household currently lives outwith Fort Augustus but would like to return

4.2. Housing Preference

4.2.1 Young Adult Households (11)

2 families - young single parent with young child living c/o family. Both households are working - 1 part time/1 full time.

Both households would like to rent a two bedroom home - **2 x 2 bedroom**.

2 couples - one living c/o family and one renting privately both looking for 2 bedroom homes

Both households are in full time employment. One household would like to buy their own 2 bedroom home and suggest they could afford to pay £130,000. They do not provide salary details so it is difficult to measure the accuracy of this assertion.

One household would like to rent a **2 bed affordable home** and could pay up to £500 per month.

7 young single people living c/o families

4 households are in full time employment; two work part time and one is an apprentice.

Four households are looking to rent a home at an affordable rent - **two state they need a 2 bed home and two a 1 bed house.**

Three households would like to buy their own home and state they could afford to pay £70,000, £90,000 and £100,000. Though the income of two of these households may not be sufficient to pay a mortgage of the size they suggest.

4.2.2 All in Need Households (15)

8 couples - all households under 44 - 7 private tenants

One couple who rent from Highland Council need alternative housing due to mobility issues and need a house on one level with two bedrooms.

Couples housing need - **4 x 2 bed (including one house on one level) and 2 x 1 bed.** Two couples want to buy their own home

5 families with dependent children - three private tenants and two Albyn tenants. Of the 3 private tenants one household has four children in a three bedroom home and needs a 4 bedroom home: one has two children and needs a smaller home 2/3 bedroom; and one has 2 children and states they need a 4 bed home (statutorily they need a 2 bed). All private tenants say that they have an insecure tenancy and their home is expensive to rent and heat.

Families with dependent children housing need - **3 x 3 bedroom and 1 x 4 bedroom.** Both Albyn tenants are not in housing need - though one requires a move to Ft Augustus to be near family and has therefore been included in the numbers above.

1 single household - is a private tenant - their home is being sold. **They need a 1 bed home.**

1 family with non dependent children in tied housing requires **a two bedroom home**

4.2.3. Older Resident (1)

One couple who need a **two bed** wheelchair accessible home - have mobility issues in their current home and would like to return to Fort Augustus.

4.2.4 Total Housing Need

Household Type	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Single Person	3	2		
Couples	3	6*		
Family		3	3	1
Total	6	11	3	1

includes 2 x 2 bedroom homes suitable for wheelchairs

5.0. Employers

Interviews were held with six employers in the village most were tourism related and included hotels, shops, restaurants and bars. In addition an interview was held with a social care provider in the village.

All of the employers in the tourist industry highlighted their difficulty in funding accommodation for staff. Some offered shared staff accommodation in their premises or had bought houses to convert into staff accommodation. The employers highlighted that the nature of the accommodation they could provide limited the type of household who applied for employment with them - most were young single people willing to live in shared housing. Where they had more senior positions or were looking for a more stable workforce the lack of housing options limited their ability to recruit people for the long term.

The location of Fort Augustus - an hour from Inverness and 50 minutes from Fort William - meant that commuting was difficult and meant households - particularly those on low incomes needed to live locally. For the social care employer this was a major reason for their difficult recruiting and retaining staff. As staff couldn't afford to commute and couldn't find affordable housing in Fort Augustus.

6.0. Conclusions

Evidence from the Housing Needs Survey and from the Highland Housing Register suggest there is considerable housing need in Fort Augustus.

Demand for affordable housing comes from young adults seeking to set up home for the first time, from households sharing tourism accommodation, from single parent families living c/o family, from households with mobility issues and from families living in poor quality overcrowded and insecure rented housing.

The proposed development by Fort Augustus Community Company will help to meet some of this housing need but it is clear that there is substantially more than can be accommodated.