

Step Up – Step Down at the Telford Centre, Fort Augustus

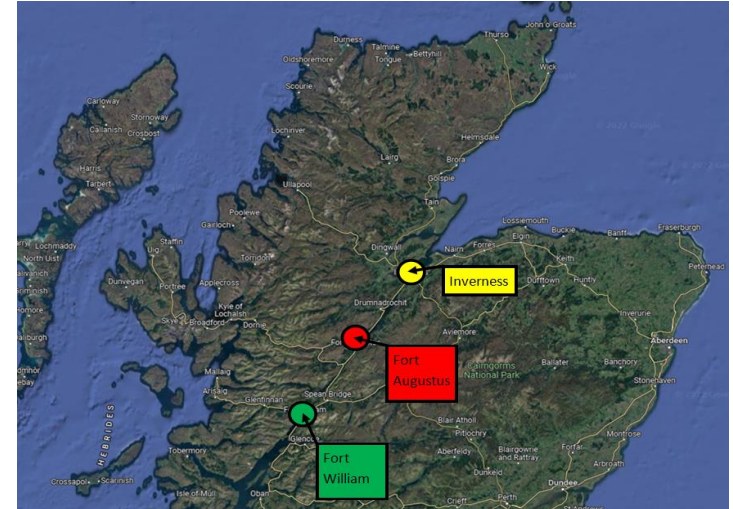


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Where is Fort Augustus?

- Fort Augustus is a rural area which is very popular with Tourists
- Its at the southern end of Loch Ness,
 - halfway between Inverness and Fort William
 - each just over an hour away by car with no other major settlements in between
- The only way to get there is by Road
 - no trains
 - A82 single carriageway
 - notorious for accidents
 - camper vans!!!



Living in Fort Augustus

- Fewer than 430 properties
 - almost a quarter are Holiday Lets
 - Many are former Council houses lost through Right to Buy
- Difficult to build new houses - very limited amount of developable land available;
 - challenging topography, poor ground conditions or are expensive to access
 - Sites sell rarely and when they do they have a “destination” £premium (thanks, Nessie!!)
- Finite number of houses which means
 - younger people seek housing and employment elsewhere,
 - new people are unable to move in
 - increasingly elderly population living in households of 1s and 2s



Community in Fort Augustus

- Community is beginning to stagnate
 - school roll drops and take-up of associated services dwindles
 - Shrinking/redirected budgets
 - Centralisation/redeployment of underused Services
 - Rural communities less well served
 - Recruitment and retention of key workers, particularly in the Caring sector, is increasingly problematic,
 - homecare options reduced for older people.
- There is good news! Fort Augustus' Community is extremely engaged and works hard to develop local service provision and third sector delivery
 - has developed a single voice between its various groups
 - has used Community legislation to its advantage
 - has established a Community Development Company
 - Has accessed considerable funding support, eg windfarm money



Step up Step down

- The Telford Centre project was designed to insert a “step” between living independently and moving prematurely into a formal care home setting
 - cluster (small group) of flexible, adaptable, houses in the grounds
 - affordable to build, economic to run, incorporating Telecare/Telehealth provision to boost their care package.
 - freeing up general need housing and Care Home places
 - resources are maximised - the Council builds the houses - the NHS provides the care.
 - the Centre’s capacity increases as residents can remain at home for longer.
 - mobile Carers travel less and the Centre’s own staff and Telecare provision offers security between visits.
 - this provides the missing step allowing residents to live independently with support without leaving their home community.



Making it work in Fort Augustus

- It's not possible to superimpose something like this onto existing policies and procedures;
 - special letting policy
 - applicants are taken from the Highland Housing Register in the usual way
 - allocations are sensitive to need and location.
- In addition to supporting this project;
 - Community Development Company made a successful bid to develop a nearby site in parallel,
 - affordable housing for families and key workers.
 - build a more sustainable Community
 - securing the future of initiatives like the Telford Centre
 - finessing models we can replicate elsewhere.



How did it work?

- Community conceived this project and took it to local Members
 - Highland Council and NHS staff both corporately and locally
 - Community Development Company
 - Community Consultation hosted by the Telford Centre.
- The Council led on delivery, own, and manage the houses
 - jointly funded with Scottish Government's More Homes programme
 - delivered within Highland's Strategic Housing Investment Plan, (we took handover on 20th September 21)
- NHS manage the Telford Centre
 - creating a "cluster" maximises support from our Care at Home colleagues
 - 6 properties can be served in one visit, rather than having Carers travel between multiple locations.
 - NHS staff based at the home augment that provision.



Drivers

- The project was born in response to residents potentially having to leave the village for a formal care setting.
 - knee-jerk - enlarge the Telford Centre
 - The cost of a Care Home bed vs a tenancy with support demonstrated that we needed to address the wider problems
- Reduce demand from people who don't *need* a formal care setting but,
 - cannot manage entirely independently,
 - cannot snare a suitable care package – care gap due to geography.
- Homes that support independent living with assistance;
 - location more easily serviced by Carers even if they have to travel, by omitting journey time between appointments,
 - properties that make it easier for Carers to deliver care,
 - properties that are within the residents' home Community.



Outcomes

- The project was designed to;
 - reduce hospital admissions
 - reduce extended hospital stays from preventable falls
 - deliver properties with built in flexibility to respond to changing needs, and reduce costly remodelling
 - extend the time before a Care Home is required
- The project has also;
 - brought Fibre to the Centre (to facilitate Telecare/health installs),
 - taken the pressure off the Centre's allocations,
 - released 6 general needs houses for re-allocation.
 - enhanced the Community Company's project to bring family and key worker housing to the village,
 - facilitated site starts for local apprentices via the Council's commitment to employment of local labour on site.



The Site



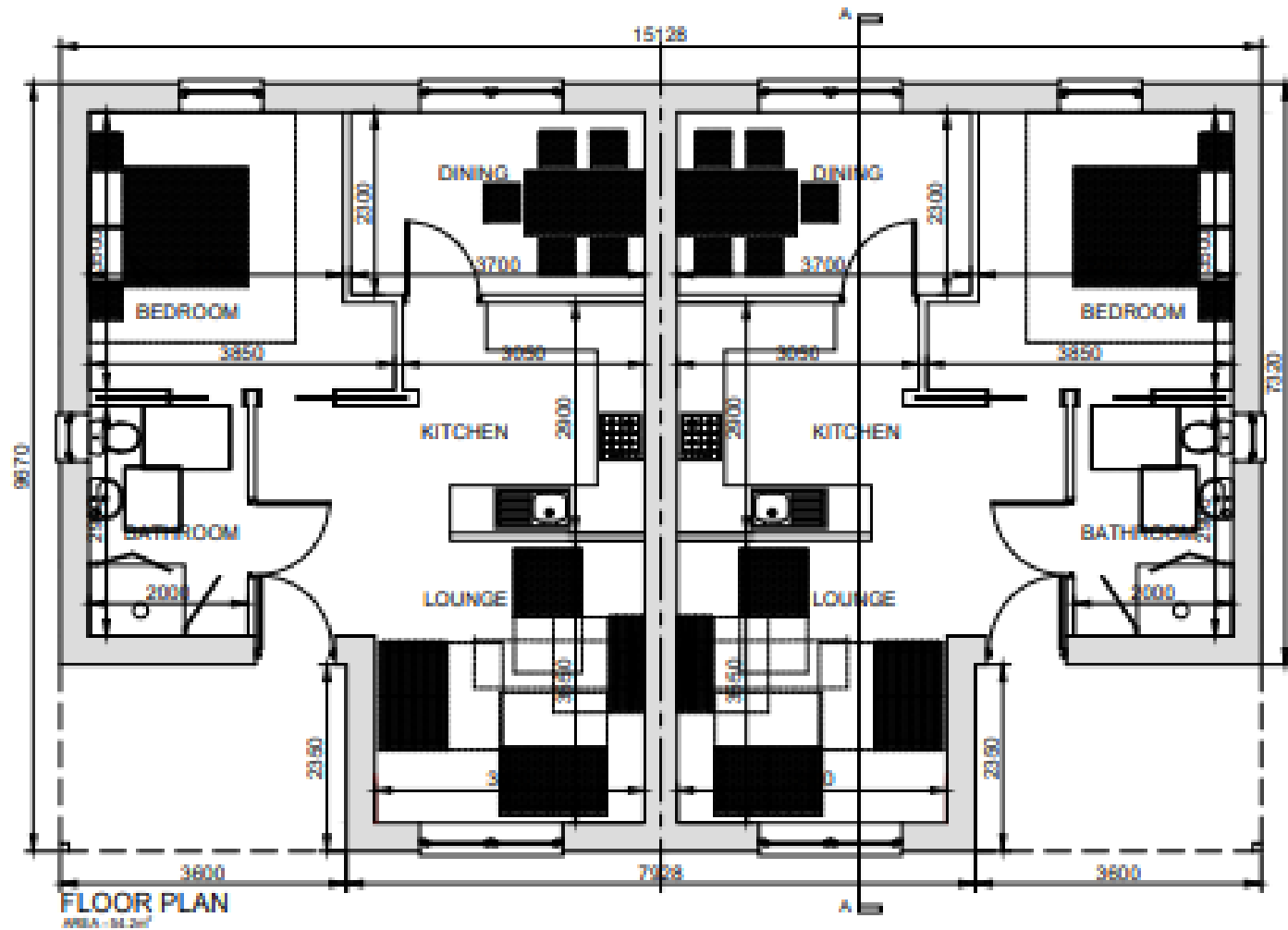
Design

Much consultation was carried out locally. The new houses would need to be;

- Equally as successful as standalone or supported units
- Homes, not holiday chalets
- Share a connection with the Care Home that neither forced nor stalled engagement with a good balance between privacy and “passive surveillance”
- Not look like mini care units but be sensitive to physical and cognitive need
- Allow family and friends to visit/stay over
- Be affordable to run
- HC - Be affordable to build
- HC - Have flexibility built in to make increasing/decreasing level of adaption cost and time efficient - flexi kitchens



The Houses



How did we do?

- The houses are built and tenanted, and to the delight of the local community, have all been taken on by local people
 - Major caveat – motivation was to fix a local gap not increase mainstream
 - A recent new tenant survey has given the houses a glowing report
- A community near Strontian are anxious to emulate the model and have just appointed an architect to Masterplan
 - Community buy-out/ takeover of an empty HC school
 - Combined with wider site create similar Care Home/Step up Step Down provision but within a wider community regeneration package.
 - The pupils have become the masters!!



What could we improve upon?

- Policy-lag - developing a more sustainable Letting model
 - develop potential for NHS/Care Home to sublet to move people in/out directly based on need alone
 - accommodate short absences from permanent tenancies
 - Reduces premature move / delayed move and crisis
- Remembering that we need to consider both sides of the equation
 - effective and deliverable services for older residents
 - economic opportunities for younger people
- Resist the urge to take over;
 - Fort Augustus' strength is its community - current representatives are (with respect) predominantly older people
 - next generation have taken over the new houses; will they take over the Community too?
 - The outcome is sound – the route to it is not set in stone
 - be fluid in approach and deliver something that will survive
- Bad news outwith our control
 - The Big Switch Off September 2023



The End



Thanks for your time!!

Any Questions?



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