Dear Sir

EAST AYRSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2017-2022

Thank you for your letter dated 31 May 2017. I have set out the requested information below with regard to the East Ayrshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2017-2022.

The East Ayrshire Housing Asset Management Framework

The Council has developed the East Ayrshire Housing Asset Management Framework (HAMF), as approved by Cabinet in February 2016. It provides a strategic framework for managing the Council’s property assets so as to ensure they contribute efficiently and effectively to the achievement of the Council’s strategic priorities, both now and in the future, whilst ensuring the Council sustains and develops vibrant communities with good quality homes.

Through the implementation of the HAMF, those areas that elicited a high concentration of properties that have been identified as ‘requiring consideration’ with regard to sustainability have informed the adoption of a place-based approach to the delivery of affordable housing across East Ayrshire. Having categorised the housing stock against an approved viability matrix to consider overall performance, a number of priority areas have been identified for site clearance and proposed new build work via the SHIP process. The HAMF framework has taken a range of criteria into consideration in determining where investment is to be prioritised in town centre locations across East Ayrshire. This is in line with East Ayrshire’s strategic priority to encourage town centre living.

The outcome of this assessment has therefore determined where new homes will be delivered in response to identified need utilising the Scottish Government’s Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) targets and grant subsidies, taking cognisance of Waiting List demand; existing homes in high demand areas require to be modernised to help sustain our communities, or community facilities and spaces are to be created in support of the East Ayrshire Transformation Strategy, thereby making a more efficient use of public resources.

The East Ayrshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan SHIP 2017-2022

Key to the success of the East Ayrshire new build affordable housing programme, as set out in the SHIP 2017-2022, has been the provision of homes of the right size and type, so as to meet the needs of our residents throughout their life experiences. In order to assist people to live safely at home, our properties must be fit for purpose. The data arising from the delivery of the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) exercise, the ongoing HAMF process and the Waiting List is used to inform
the provision of affordable housing within town centre locations across East Ayrshire on an ongoing basis, thereby supporting the Council’s strategic aim of town centre regeneration.

Housing Mix

As Strategic Housing Authority, the Council’s approach to ensuring there are vibrant, sustainable communities takes into consideration the provision of environmentally-friendly new homes, as well as physical and social condition and the stability of neighbourhoods. This is reflected in the Council’s approach to community regeneration by utilising the outcome of the HAMF to fully inform the Council’s strategic approach towards both the delivery of the SHIP 2017-2022, which sets out how resources are proposed to be used to deliver the Council’s affordable housing supply priorities, and the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) 2017/18-2021/22.

To ensure the proposed programmes for new and improved housing are robust and that the property types and sizes being delivered are appropriate, the HAMF assessment will be updated annually, and will be informed by the findings of the HNDA which is currently being undertaken by consultants on behalf of the Council. In turn, the HNDA and Waiting List data will provide updated data to assist in developing the new Local Housing Strategy (LHS), East Ayrshire Local Development Plan and the ongoing SHIP programme.

Housing Tenure

The new HNDA is currently being undertaken by Anna Evans Consultants for submission to the Scottish Government’s Centre for Housing Market Analysis in advance of the new Local Housing Strategy being available in 2019. Across sales in East Ayrshire between 2014 and 2015, the Assessment records the median new build property price was around £167,600, and the lower quartile new build price was £135,000. Entry level new build is therefore only likely to be affordable to households with a gross household income of more than £30,000, whilst the market for entry level new build properties is small, since median incomes are around £22,600. The data being prepared notes that incomes are lower than average across East Ayrshire. The Assessment does not offer evidence to support the delivery of homes for sale, even at entry level, in light of prevailing income levels. The SHIP 2017-2022 therefore allows for the provision of 604 houses for social rent across the Council and partner Registered Social Landlords to respond to Waiting List demand which, at 31 March 2017, was 4,339.

The Council previously tried to promote the uptake of mixed tenure developments through the provision of social rented and low cost housing for sale in Kilmarnock in 2009/2010. Unfortunately, despite the best endeavours of one of our developing Registered Social Landlord partners to market the homes identified for sale, the development was unsuccessful in achieving any sales. The Association had to apply to the Scottish Government to convert all of the properties from for sale to social rent.
Community Care Needs

More specifically, across each new build site, the Council allows for a mix of housing to be developed across general and community care needs so as to reflect broader demographic trends, Waiting List demand, and any specific requirements identified by colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership. In this way, communities of interest are developed which may be integrated within existing neighbourhoods.

The SHIP 2017-2022 allows for the development of three potential assisted living developments to be delivered in town centres across East Ayrshire, building on the success of the award-winning model that has been delivered by the Council at Lillyhill Gardens in Kilmarnock. It provides 14 flats; 6 that are fully wheelchair accessible, 7 that are general needs, and a staff base that allows for a 24 hour on-site presence by a dedicated Care Provider. The building benefits from the provision of wet rooms, accessible kitchens, a fully enclosed private garden, solar panels, a sprinkler system and assistive technologies. The facility has been developed in response to a need identified by the Health and Care Partnership, and supports residents to live as independently as is possible, whilst having on-site care available, as and when necessary. This model of care not only enables residents to thrive within their communities, it also allows for a more efficient use of resources to be allocated in caring for people with complex physical and learning disabilities.

Procurement

The Council’s programme of new build development works is being procured through the Scottish Procurement Alliance with CCG acting as Developer. In this way, the Council will deliver its proposed new homes utilising the Off-Site Manufacture process which reduces the construction phase works on site, thereby allowing for a more efficient delivery timescale for new affordable homes in town centres across East Ayrshire in support of the Scottish Government’s target of 50,000 affordable homes by 2021-2022. The Council has adopted this pro-active approach to the delivery of its new homes in light of the increasing pressures being reported by the construction industry in response to the national targets set by the Scottish Government.

This partnering arrangement with CCG allows for a more sustainable approach being developed to the delivery of a broader range of Community Benefits across East Ayrshire communities, drawing on Actions set out in the 17 Community Led Plans, supporting existing initiatives and working with communities to agree areas for development.

Since 2013, Vibrant Communities has facilitated 17 Community Led Action Plans that ultimately provide communities with a way of thinking about and planning their future so as to: generate more involvement and interest in the community from local residents, local organisations and businesses and other stakeholders; strengthen local democracy and foster active citizenship that brings different parts of communities together; and support the development of a final document that enables communities to seek funding for priority projects that have been identified through innovation and co-operation.
Vibrant Communities uses innovative and often life-changing approaches to service development and delivery, empowering members of our communities, young and old, to live happy, healthy, connected and fulfilling lives. Vibrant Communities is responsible for the delivery and facilitation of a wide range of services and interventions locally, all of which have the shared ethos, practice and vision of: Co-production; valuing local people and recognising them as assets; building social networks; promoting reciprocity and inclusion and equality. Vibrant Communities has made extensive progress towards transforming the Council’s relationship with the communities it serves, across all sectors of the community so as to develop sustainable communities and reduce inequalities through prevention and early intervention. The ethos that has been developed is one of working with, and for, local communities, rather than doing to them. The aim is to balance the relationship between those who design and deliver services with the people who ultimately use them.

Vibrant Communities and our strong focus on Community Empowerment and Community Led Place-making is underpinning all of our work in our future homes approach.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

**Post Completion Evaluation**

The Council is in the process of developing a post-completion evaluation template to collate feedback from residents so as to inform future development and delivery.

**Future Homes Board**

The East Ayrshire Future Homes Board meets every three weeks to consider project progress against the programme in terms of both the SHIP 2017-2022 and the Housing Improvement Programme (HIP) 2017/18-2021/22. The group has also informed the development of the HAMF matrix and facilitates the resolution of any barriers to development. Membership of the board is drawn from a range of Services to include Housing, Vibrant Communities, Estates, Legal Services, Housing Asset Services, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Planning, Property and Facilities Management, Outdoor Services, Finance and Procurement from within the Council, along with the Health and Social Care Partnership, CCG as Developer, and CCG’s Architects. The meetings are chaired by the Head of Housing and Communities. Cabinet reports and Members’ briefings are prepared by representatives of the group.

In advance of the SHIP 2017-2022 and the HIP 2017/18-2021/22 proposals being presented to Cabinet for approval, the proposals set out were considered by the East Ayrshire Tenants’ and Residents’ Federation. Following Cabinet approval, a letter and information leaflet was hand-delivered to every resident whose property is located in the communities where works are proposed to be carried out. This person-centred approach adopted by the Council seeks to respond to each resident’s own circumstances so as to offer the best option to each household, based on their individual circumstances. The range of engagement with communities and households has included locally-held community meetings, attendance at area-based Tenant and Resident Association meetings, conversation cafes, individual
home visits, and Council officers across Housing, Vibrant Communities, Estates and Property and Facilities Management attending ongoing Community Association and Community Council meetings to provide updates and receive feedback so as to inform the housing proposals to be delivered within the communities.

Strategic Agreement

The Council submits its approved SHIP programme to the Scottish Government, in accordance with the published guidance, and meets with senior officers from the More Homes Division of the Scottish Government on a regular basis to review progress against the programme. In addition, regular joint officer group meetings are held with the Council, the Scottish Government and partner developing Registered Social Landlords to monitor progress against the agreed programme.

In East Ayrshire, we welcome the opportunity to develop and deliver a comprehensive and community focused Strategic Housing Investment Plan and recognise the real opportunities to bring about exciting regeneration within our communities through this programme.

Should you require any further information in this regard, please contact Deborah Brady, Development and Regeneration Officer.

Yours faithfully

Katie Kelly
Head of Housing and Communities

Cc Chris McAleavey
Fiona Lees