Local Government and Communities Committee

Strategic Housing Investment Plans

Response from Renfrewshire Council

Dear Mr Doris

Strategic Housing Investment Plans (SHIPs)

I refer to your letter of 31 May 2017 and apologise for the late response but hope that the comments made are of assistance to the Committee.

House type, size and tenure

In Renfrewshire, specific numbers are agreed with partners on a project-by-project basis taking account of the broad policy context set out in Renfrewshire’s Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021. Where a new project is being developed by a housing association, officers from the Council will discuss the proposed house mix with the association taking account of the policy context in the LHS and any other available relevant local information. This also applies to the determination of house mix with respect to the Council’s own newbuild projects.

Section 3 of Renfrewshire’s Local Housing Strategy sets out key issues in relation to population and housing market trends. It indicates that alongside a small growth in the overall population, a significant growth (of almost 50%) is expected in the number of older people aged 75 years and over in the period to 2029.

Actions to address this are set out under LHS Outcome 6 (‘People are able to live independently for as long as possible in their own home’) and projects are being brought forward with partners as part of the SHIP pipeline programme. Renfrewshire’s current SHIP, approved by Renfrewshire Council in November 2016, includes provision to expand provision for older people (an extra care housing development in Paisley and reprovisioning of existing sheltered housing in Erskine). Both these projects are being developed with Housing Association partners.

Recently completed projects in Renfrewshire include a pilot project in Paisley town centre, developed in partnership with Link Housing and with Scottish Government support, to deliver low cost home ownership opportunities for older people in Renfrewshire. This project was developed to address identified gaps in provision for older owners on lower incomes and older owner-occupiers with limited equity and living in homes which do not meet their long term needs. This was identified as an action in the previous LHS (2011-2016) and addressed through Renfrewshire’s SHIP.

Section 3 of the current LHS highlights differences in housing stock type by tenure and geographic areas across Renfrewshire. In particular, it notes that only 21% of the Council’s dwellings are ‘houses’ compared with 79% which are flats. At a sub-area level, North Renfrewshire and West Renfrewshire have a higher proportion of
houses than Paisley & Linwood and Johnstone, where tenement flats are more common.

While there is a slightly better mix of house types within the housing association sector (32% of dwellings are house and 68% are flats), the LHS highlights the need to address this imbalance in the social rented sector and to meet the aspirations of low income households who want to live in houses with gardens rather than flatted accommodation.

Outcome 2 of the LHS (‘Through targeted investment and regeneration activity, Renfrewshire has attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods and well-functioning town centres’) therefore includes action to improve the house type profile in the social rented sector through newbuild programmes.

The LHS points to a rate of household growth which is faster than population growth because people are increasingly living in smaller sized households. While it is important to plan for housing which meets the needs of older people and other small/single-person households, the LHS also highlights the importance of ensuring there are a sufficient number of affordable family homes in Renfrewshire to help support population and household growth in line with Renfrewshire’s Community Plan ambitions.

Renfrewshire’s LHS sets out supply targets for the five year period 2016 to 2021 – 500 new private properties and 200 affordable homes. Taking account of need and demand information, the LHS highlights the importance of not only building the right number of new houses but also making sure that the right type, tenure and size of houses are built in the right places - to better achieve mixed and sustainable communities.

Housing need and demand research which informed the LHS confirms the need for improved tenure mix and a better range and choice of options for households in Renfrewshire. It also identified a substantial group of people currently living in unaffordable private housing could not afford market housing but could afford an intermediate housing option.

This is being addressed through the provision of newbuild shared ownership opportunities by housing associations in Renfrewshire, and more recently, a mid-market rent development.

The LHS (page 28) sets outs key priorities for the SHIP programme, to make sure that grant funding is targeted to help achieve LHS outcomes:

- Support local housing regeneration programmes
- Replace obsolete social rented housing (where major improvements to existing stock would not be cost effective and/or sustainable) and where there is continued need
- Address mismatch between the supply of social rented housing and the type of housing people need and want to live in, taking account of type, size, quality and location
• Address shortfall in the areas where there is pressure on the supply of affordable housing
• Support the development of a graduated housing market in areas of pressure and in areas where there is a requirement for affordable options
• Support the development of sustainable mixed communities by including affordable housing in Community Growth areas and other larger housing developments
• Expand the supply of housing for people with particular needs
• Complete the comprehensive tenement improvement programme for strategically important locations (Orchard St, Paisley)
• Support town centre residential development and regeneration

For each new development, the size and type of houses to be delivered is considered within this broad strategic framework along with any more detailed local information where this is available and relevant.


Monitoring SHIP projects
Officers from Renfrewshire Council regularly meet with colleagues in each of the housing associations with development programmes in Renfrewshire and with officers from the Scottish Government to manage delivery of the SHIP programme. Project completions are reported in the annual SHIP updates to the Council’s Policy Board. An annual LHS Updates is also reported to the Council’s Policy Board which includes a review of achievements against the LHS action plan, including new housebuilding projects.

Yours faithfully,

Fraser Carlin
Head of Planning and Housing