

LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY WORKSHOP
SUPPLY OF HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2017– SALUTATION HOTEL, PERTH



Background

As part of our Local Housing Strategy (LHS) Update, a series of workshops were organised for each of our four LHS themes. Stakeholders with a professional involvement in each of the themes were invited to attend workshops on Tuesday 5 September 2017, in Perth, with a view to:

1. Reviewing the key priorities and challenges of each LHS theme;
2. Acknowledging best practice examples and considering whether there was scope for us to be doing anything better; and
3. Reviewing the existing Action Plan and identifying whether any changes were required.

Event Summary

A total of 21 stakeholders attended this workshop (list of attendees can be found in Appendix 1).

Lorna Cameron (Interim Director - Housing and Community Safety) welcomed all delegates to the morning session before delegates were split into workshop groups to discuss their particular workshop theme.

Each workshop session consisted of a few short presentations on the theme to prompt discussion on the key priorities and challenges before best practice examples were discussed and finally the Action Plan for the theme was reviewed.

At the end of all discussions, delegates from both workshops gathered back together and Eileen McMullan (Planning & Commissioning Manager) provided a summary of the key pieces of information from each workshop and explained that the information from the day would now be written up and taken to Housing and Communities Committee in November 2017.

Delegates were then given the opportunity to provide feedback on the event or any topics they would like to see covered at future LHS events by noting this down on post-it notes contained within their packs.

Presentations

Electronic versions of the PowerPoint Presentation by Norma Robson will be circulated along with the workshop summary.

Key Discussion Points

Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities Priorities and Challenges

- Increased need for smaller properties until 2037 – one and two bedroom properties - have to be flexible to meet future needs.
- Increasing ageing population in Perth & Kinross of 75+ age group. This is expected to increase by 82% (2012 – 2037) - adaptations in Perth & Kinross currently sit around 250+ per year.
- Building sustainable places – design around people, good access to services, (increase in those using local facilities is a priority), the role of housing for fragile communities is important (rural areas) and focus is required on self/custom build.
- Town Centre Regeneration - helping ‘disadvantaged’ communities. Town centres are now seeing a change in market conditions with many empty properties. Good working relationships with owners/private sector through Empty Homes Partnership.
- High levels of housing need identified.
- Range of housing needs over diverse areas and able to meet specific housing needs (suitable for special needs, care arrangements, support etc.).
- Regeneration of empty properties as a way of addressing future needs and supply.
- Focus on investment required in areas of deprivation (e.g. Muirton Regeneration Project is major success).
- Increased levels of funding by Scottish Government each financial year from 17/18 to 20/21 which will help focus on delivering affordable housing (estimated 2017/18 completion statistics for P&K Council show higher numbers of affordable housing completions (197) than the target set of 150).
- Buybacks going great in terms of meeting the targets set.
- CHA provided a brief of the regeneration of Muirton, Perth. 203 properties in final phase of which 102 will be affordable housing. Handover around November time. Shared Equity on site and sales have been excellent. Went really well for 2 bed properties. It's been a positive turnaround within the estate. They have had a great link and working relationship with Urban Union. Great scheme and good partner to be involved with.
- Scottish Government has a higher priority on funding, should we be reviewing our numbers? Discussion took place as to the whether we should be building more 1 bedroomed properties - however this wouldn't be sustainable. Thoughts were that a high number of elderly people are looking to downsize.

- Discussed future proofing stock and making better use of rooms such as a 1 bed flat with a separate dining/study area that could meet needs in the future (expanding families) and changes into a 2 bedroom. However noted that you can't have a yo-yo effect, changing sizes all the time, possibly an issue with Council Tax.
- Opportunity now to have a design guide in place. Everyone around the table thought it would be a good idea and something to take forward as a priority. Would be good if all RSLs shared design guides, then we could all work together perhaps attaining standardisation.
- Flexibility in our housing stock is important.
- Regular conversations and weekly updates and sharing of information with Partners (RSL's/Scottish Government/Developers) – no real issues. Discussed potential to develop Partnership further, e.g., joint marketing of LCHO.
- CHA again reiterated that the Shared Equity model at Muirton was excellent. For some reason thought MMR doesn't work for them but would be good to discuss this for future projects.
- Discussed having regular Housing Forum meetings. Need to re-establish this. Norma to look into this and start up (Highland do weekly meetings but this was seen by the group as excessive). Re-evaluation of previous forum aims required.
- Value for money and consistency are important and important that RSLs and Councils work together.
- Homes for Scotland approach works well.....RSL and Developer. P&K should try something similar.
- Land is an issue in P&K. In future all development will be developer led.
- Scottish Government keen on the HUB approach.
- Highland Council HUB is weekly (all day) and is useful meeting. (Scottish Water/Scottish Government attends).
- CCG advised it is important to get everyone round the table at the earliest stage.
- Partnership working is essential. The 5 year target is essential. Should we have a target for on-site starts? It was agreed by the group that it would be useful. SG advised that the completion target is the critical statistic for politicians, especially until March 2021.
- PKC need a better idea of what we are seeking to deliver i.e. costs, design and quality standards as well as aims such as building communities, sustainable options, targets for empty homes.
- Where does the target for P&K and tenure mix sit? To build sustainable communities we need a mix of housing tenures.
- Discussion took place regarding MMR. It doesn't work, however Hillcrest have had great success with this in Dundee and Edinburgh through Northern Housing. However, market rates are similar to LHA rates in Perth and Kinross. Hillcrest advised that the MMR model is difficult to do but in Edinburgh it's no problem. Getting it to work is the difficult part but it's all about the quality of the product. Flexibility is required when setting rents. Scottish Government is to look at this.
- Dundee City Council is not looking to review their targets. They also have various sites in Dundee where MMR works. The target each year is for 95

Social Rent - over the past 3 years it's been higher. DCC feel it's Important to have Forums. Councillors will have different views on Affordable Housing.

- Mixed tenure schemes are preference in Perth and Kinross. Closer working relationships with developers will help progress this. We need to learn from developers and at how we can change low demand. (Look at East Dunbartonshire model - HfVN)
- Discussed self/custom build – Some developers wary but an option to stimulate development. Several models can be used. Perth and Kinross interested in this.
- Scottish Government to check whether self-build properties would be added to the target figures.
- Local firms used for converting properties and buybacks.
- Hadden has been in discussions regarding the Rural Housing Fund. Seems to be for smaller sites (2-3 units). Scottish Government advised that it's been a slow start to self-build however success can be seen through a development in Blairgowrie (7 units to be let) and 8 units to start in Blair Atholl.
- Norma to organise an event for Rural Housing Fund. This can be a Loan or Grant but scope to use within parts of Perthshire. Angus Council advised they had an issue with this fund mainly due to the classification of 'rural'. It was agreed to relax the classification of areas.

Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities Best Practice

- Scottish Government advised Falkirk's LHS is set out well and the action plan is more explicit than P&K.
- Highland Hub is another good concept but everyone around table thought it would be best if not weekly.
- We are all trying to do the same thing (Build Houses), would be good if we had a working group with various LA's?
- SHBVN is where Councils meet Quarterly and this tends to work well. TAYplan was also good at bringing LA's together.
- MMR Group would also be a good idea so that everyone could share information - Norma to organise.
- Self-Build – Scottish Government Forum agreed to regular meetings and 78% interest from LA's in favour of exploring this model. At last meeting however only a few LA's turned up.
- Private Rented Sector – regulations coming in soon. Isobel is on the Scottish Empty Homes Board to share best practice. Lots of issues to address.
- Glengate Hall model regarding rent and grants. Models are there for developers/owners to still make a profit. Currently loans and grants are used in P&K.

Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities Action Plan

- Need to look at how efficient delivery process is. Focus on starts with planning colleagues in advance. Scottish Government advised tricky questions need to be asked. What percentage to look at would be better?

- Be more specific on targets.
- Rural needs looked at in more detail
- Self-Build should be in action plan. It has to show vision and be realistic. Timeline to take forward.
- MMR – We haven't done a lot in Perthshire. Planning for Thimble Row mixed use development has been approved and has MMR component to be let by HHA.
- Rental Guarantees (Build to rent). Funding for PRS, Build to rent worth looking at. Dundee City Council advised that a possibility they will be doing this in Dundee near the waterfront. Its development led and a few RSLs in discussions.
- An option might be to speak to local letting agents to see if appetite is there for build to rent.

APPENDIX 1

The delegates who attended the workshop on Supply of Housing and Sustainable Communities are listed below:

Name	Organisation	Position
Peter Broad	Caledonia Housing Association	Development Manager
Isobel Butt	Perth & Kinross Council	Vacant Property Development Officer
Lorna Cameron	Perth & Kinross Council	Interim Director – Housing & Community Safety
Campbell Hall	Perth & Kinross Council	Affordable Housing Enabler
Gill Henry	Cruden Homes	Head of Business Development
Gillian Hessett	Springfield Properties	Land Acquisition Surveyor
Rob Hughes	Hillcrest Housing Association	Housing Strategy and Performance Manager
Carmen Hunter	Kingdom Housing Association	Senior Development Services Officer
June McColl	Perth & Kinross Council	Service Manager - Housing
Mark McColl	Perth & Kinross Council	Project Manager
Colin McGarva	Angus Council	Housing Strategy Officer
Eileen McMullan	Perth & Kinross Council	Planning & Commissioning Manager
David Perkins	Scottish Government	Investment and Local Strategies Co-ordinator
David Reid	Hadden Construction	Land and Development Manager
Norma Robson	Perth & Kinross Council	Team Leader - Planning & Policy
Andrew Saum	Perth & Kinross Council	Affordable Housing Enabler
Karen Shaw	CCG (Scotland) Ltd	Business Development Manager
Robin Shields	Dundee City Council	Housing Strategy Officer
Ron Taylor	Perth & Kinross Council	Project Manager
Richard Welch	Perth & Kinross Council	Project Manager
Susan Wilson	Cairn Housing Association	Development Project Manager