

Local Government and Communities Committee

Strategic Housing Investment Plans

Response from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Dear Mr Doris,

CONSIDERATION OF STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLANS

Thank you for your letter of 31 May 2017 in connection with the Local Government and Communities Committee's recent discussions about the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) process. I hope the following information will be of interest to the Committee.

I should point out that the SHIP process in the Outer Hebrides is somewhat different to other areas in Scotland, due to the Comhairle being a Stock Transfer council with only one developing Registered Social Landlord in the area (Hebridean Housing Partnership). This position makes the SHIP process easier in terms of its preparation and monitoring.

In general, the Comhairle regards the overall SHIP process to be fairly straightforward, aided by the Guidance produced by the Scottish Government. The Guidance has also been adapted over the years to make the process more effective. In addition, there is readily available support from the Scottish Government's Housing Team in Inverness.

With regard to the two specific questions raised in your letter, I can advise as follows;

The Comhairle considers information from a number of sources when deciding on the make-up of the SHIP in terms of type and tenure. This information includes;

- the amount of grant funding allocated to the area through the Resource Planning Assumptions (as provided by the Scottish Government);
- the availability and suitability of land on which to build (informed by the Comhairle's Housing Land Audit and Development Plan);
- the demand for housing in a particular area or of a particular type – such as adapted housing or Shared Equity - (as informed by HHP's Waiting List); and
- cognisance is also given to the Comhairle's Housing Need and Demand Assessment in terms of overall need and demand in the Outer Hebrides.

The size of the required new units is determined later in the process in partnership with HHP.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the Comhairle's SHIP undergoes a regular review. The review takes account of progress with individual sites, any changes to funding, such as updated Resource Planning Assumptions, and if appropriate, changes to Comhairle strategy or policy. The review of the SHIP is also linked to the regular review of the Comhairle's Local Housing Strategy.

The Comhairle's Housing Services Team also meets with HHP staff on a monthly basis to discuss the affordable housing development process and this helps inform the monitoring and evaluation of the SHIP. Progress updates on the SHIP are also prepared for Members on an annual basis.

I hope this information will be of some assistance; please let me know if any further information is required.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar