
Argyll Community Housing Association – Annual Update

Summary: The purpose of the report is to provide the Argyll Community Housing Associations (ACHA) Annual Update. The Regeneration Programme, Investment Programme, Welfare Reform, Community Support, Tenant Satisfaction, Rent Harmonisation and The Ending of Right to Buy are covered by the update.

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Helensburgh & Lomond Area Community Planning Group with Argyll Community Housing Associations (ACHA) Annual Update.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Area CPG are asked to note the content of this report.

3. Background

3.1 ACHA have given a commitment to provide an annual update on the work being undertaken by the Association and to attend the local CPG meetings on an annual basis.

4. Detail

Regeneration Programme

4.1 To date, ACHA have built 264 homes throughout the Argyll & Bute area. Within the Helensburgh & Lomond Area ACHA have built 24 homes:

- **Smiddy Court** – 12 properties
- **Duchess Court** – 12 properties
- **New ACHA Offices at Stuckleckie Road**

4.2 Future Interests: We are proposing to build 16 units at the Jutland Court site in Helensburgh. Subject to planning and funding approvals, it is expected the start date would be around October 2016. There is also an option for a Phase 2, which could be a mixed tenure scheme, which

will include units for sale and private rent.

Investment Programme

4.3 The key elements that we are installing in our homes are shown in the table below along with the number of elements we have installed in the Lomond area up to the end of March 2016.

Element	Lomond	Argyll
Windows & Doors	1067	5825
Kitchen & Bathrooms	1857	9278
Heating & Rewire	1233	6485
Roof & Roughcast	323	2021
Total Elements	4,480	23,609
Stock Numbers	997	5150
Total Expenditure (ex VAT)	£21,371,419	£110,009,601

4.4 We are almost complete in terms of our upgrades to kitchens and bathrooms, with only a few left to install.

We have ongoing works in terms of windows and doors and heating and rewiring.

The heating and rewire programme is more difficult as the work is more disruptive and tenants are not as keen to have this type of work carried out.

In terms of the roof and roughcast programme this is certainly very challenging for us. A lot of our flatted and tenemental blocks are in shared ownership and we must have the consent of the owners before we can proceed with this type of work.

ACHA have invested over 21 million in our homes in the Helensburgh & Lomond area.

Welfare Reform

4.5 ACHA welcomed a grant approval by the Scottish Government of £170,000 to support its Welfare Rights Information Service through the People and Communities Fund. The Association has, over the past 6 years, supported a small team of staff to work with tenants on low incomes and who have been vulnerable to welfare reform changes.

4.6 The primary objective of the project has been to assist vulnerable tenants in terms of maximising and stabilising income, and to assist them in maintaining their tenancies. Over the years the project has survived on a variety of grants, assistance from the Scottish Government, Argyll & Bute Council and ACHA. The financial support will allow us to do further outreach work in communities throughout Argyll and Bute to reach those who need help the most.

Community Support

4.7 Kirkmichael Estate, Helensburgh – Following a spate of anti-social behaviour incidents in the Kirkmichael Estate during the summer of last year, ACHA were invited to join a multi-agency group with other Partners. The main objectives of the group are to share intelligence around what support/action each agency is already taking in the area and what additional partnership working is possible. Partners include Argyll & Bute Council, (departments such as Social Work, Criminal Justice and Children and Families), Health Board (Youth Services), Dunbritton Housing Association and the Police. The aim is to also support the newly resurrected Kirkmichael Community Development Group.

4.8 A Community Newsletter was developed by the group and distributed with the February edition of the Community Advertiser. This leaflet provided a lot of information on activities being held in the area, as well as information about the Kirkmichael Community Development Group. ACHA produced an article with the Police entitled “Keeping Communities Safe and Secure”.

4.9 More recently, Youth Project workers have undertaken a Youth Survey and the views of the Community will be considered. The Partners, including the Kirkmichael Development Group had a “Walk Through” the estate to identify areas for improvement. This fostered good links with the Community Payback Team who are active in Kirkmichael. Consideration is also being given to the establishment of a Public Reassurance Area. This is a scheme that is running in West Dunbartonshire, which has been hugely successful in reducing crime and improving community safety.

Tenant Satisfaction

4.10 We carried out a Satisfaction Survey on our tenants during October 2015. The survey questions that we used were based on the Indicators required for the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) for the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). We are pleased to report that there has been an overall improvement on satisfaction levels across all of the ARC indicators that were subject of the survey.

Rent Harmonisation

4.11 We introduced a new rent structure from 1st April 2016 for all new tenants of the association. It was necessary to carry out a harmonisation exercise as ACHA had inherited a range of different rent levels. This allowed us to ensure that our tenants were paying the same amount, based on the size and type of property that they lived in. All ACHA tenants were consulted on the proposed rent re-structure during August last year.

Ending of the Right to Buy

4.12 Tenants right to buy their council or housing association house comes to an end on 31 July 2016. ACHA have produced a “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet and an Information leaflet for our tenants on the ending of the Right to Buy.

5. Conclusions

5.1 ACHA is continuing to meet its targets and priorities within local strategies.

6. SOA Outcomes

6.1 Reference to Outcomes 5 – People Live Active, Healthier and Independent Lives

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Supplementary Papers

- none