

Report to:	Housing and Technical Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	12 October 2011
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	Upgrade Programme for Amenity Housing
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1 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ set out proposals to improve the quality and supply of housing suitable for older people in South Lanarkshire, through an upgrading and expansion programme for amenity housing

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the successful bid to the Change Fund be noted
- (2) that additional works are carried out to 278 properties that are already categorised as amenity housing to bring them up to full amenity design standard
- (3) that works be carried out to convert identified 'general needs' housing stock to amenity standard when these become vacant

3. Background

3.1 South Lanarkshire's Draft Local Housing Strategy 2012-2017 highlights the scale of the challenge in ensuring an adequate supply of suitable housing to meet the increasing demands from older people households. A key objective of the Strategy is to progress the Scottish Government's policy priority to support people to stay in their own home for as long as possible rather than in hospital or care home settings.

3.2 While it will be important to continue to increase the number of properties suitable for older people through new housing supply, future funding for this will be limited. It is, therefore, important to make best use of existing housing, which will play a significant role in meeting future needs. Work continues on an ongoing basis to identify potential funding routes to support this objective.

3.3 In taking forward its 'Reshaping Care for Older People Programme'¹, the Scottish Government has established a Change Fund to provide bridging finance to help local Health and Care Partnerships lever changes in the balance of care. The Change Fund is initially available in 2011/2012, however, it is intended, subject to parliamentary approval, that the Fund will continue until 2014/2015. The South Lanarkshire Health and Care Partnership was awarded £4.02 million for 2011/2012 which will support major investments and redesign of services for older people. It is anticipated that the Change Fund will significantly reduce the reliance on hospital

¹ Reshaping Care for Older People, Scottish Government, COSLA and NHS Scotland (2009)

and residential beds and the funding released when these are no longer required will support the community based services that have been developed. The Health and Care Partnership requires to develop a detailed Local Transformation Plan, setting out how the changes in the balance of care will be achieved.

- 3.4 The provision of appropriate housing and related services to enable older people, many of whom will have mobility and support needs, to stay safe and well in their own homes is recognised as playing an important role in delivering the South Lanarkshire Local Transformation Plan. A bid was submitted by Housing and Technical Resources to the Change Fund for funding to increase the supply and quality of housing suitable for older people in South Lanarkshire.
- 3.5 The bid has been successful in achieving an award of £300,000 for 2011/2012 to support an upgrade and expansion programme for amenity housing. The introduction of additional amenity housing will play a key role in ensuring the housing stock meets the needs of older people in the community both now and in the future.

4. Supply and demand for housing for older people

- 4.1 During the period 2008 to 2025 South Lanarkshire's population is set to rise by 8%, with the number of people of pensionable age expected to increase by 15.5%. There is an even more pressing challenge regarding the projected increase in older people aged 75 years and over, which is expected to rise by 61.1%².
- 4.2 The Council presently has 1462 units of specialist housing for older people, comprising 1184 sheltered properties and 278 units of amenity housing. The demand for housing from people aged 60 years and over is summarised below:
- ◆ 3894 (20.7%) applicants on the housing register are aged 60 and above (August 2011). In contrast, only 5.8% of the Council's stock provides specialist accommodation for older people.
 - ◆ The background work to support the development of the Local Housing Strategy identified particularly high pressure in East Kilbride, where 29% of applicants are aged 60 years or over. This is even more significant in the 75+ age group, which accounts for 15.6% of applicants in East Kilbride, almost twice the proportion of applicants in this age group at a South Lanarkshire level.
 - ◆ Over a third (35%) of applicants aged 60 years or over have an assessed medical priority for housing. In effect, 1354 of these applicants are living in housing that is unsuitable to meet their needs.
 - ◆ At 31 March 2011, there were 2036 applicants on the housing waiting list for sheltered and amenity housing, with demand outweighing supply in all housing areas. 155 sheltered and amenity properties became available for let across South Lanarkshire in 2010/11, which means there were 13 applicants for each property that became available.
- 4.3 Meeting the needs of an increasing older population will not only place increasing pressure on housing supply but also on related support services such as adaptations and community alarms to help people continue to live at home. The provision of suitably designed housing will also help reduce the impact of this.

² Glasgow Clyde Valley Housing Needs Demand Assessment 2010

5. Amenity upgrade and expansion programme

- 5.1 Housing and Technical Resources Committee approved an amendment to the Housing Allocation Policy at its meeting of 18 May 2011, which confirms that applicants for amenity housing must normally be 60 years or over, or have appropriate needs. This amendment confirms the role of amenity housing as specialist housing for older people.
- 5.2 Amenity housing shares the same design features as sheltered housing, except there is no Sheltered Housing Officer (warden) and a community alarm may or may not be fitted. Special modifications include bathroom handrails, non-slip flooring and repositioned electrical and lighting sockets. The Scottish Government's full design standards for amenity housing are set out in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 There are currently 278 properties designated as amenity across South Lanarkshire. A survey of these properties has confirmed that, while a large proportion have many of the attributes, not all properties meet the current Scottish Government design standards. Details of the survey are set out in Appendix 2.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the existing amenity stock is upgraded to ensure all properties meet the full Scottish Government specification. As stated above, the majority of properties already have many of the design features and most of the work would be of a minor nature, involving minimal disruption to tenants. Work would be undertaken with the agreement of tenants and a decoration allowance paid where appropriate. The cost of the work to be carried out in phase one has been estimated at £307,566 and would be carried out between October 2011 and March 2012.
- 5.5 In addition to the programme to upgrade the existing amenity properties, it is proposed that the supply of specialist housing be increased by converting some of the general needs stock. Over 600 mainstream properties (primarily terraced and semi-detached bungalows) have been identified across South Lanarkshire as being accessible housing. Following upgrade to the full amenity standard these properties would be deemed suitable for older people and allocated on that basis.
- 5.6 A programme will be developed to convert selected general needs properties to amenity at the point they become vacant. Based upon recent turnover rates, it is projected that approximately 50 properties would become available to convert each year.
- 5.7 As amenity housing is already exempt from the 'Right to Buy', there would be no impact for existing tenants of properties already designated as amenity. In relation to the expansion programme, when conversion work has been completed on a general needs property during the void period, this would subsequently be let as an amenity property with the new tenant having no right to buy.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The estimated costs of the planned works of Phase 1 is £307,566 and will be funded from a £300,000 allocation from South Lanarkshire's Change Fund with the balance being provided from the 2011/2012 Housing Revenue Account. It is proposed that in the future, upgrades (Phase 2) are funded from future Capital Programmes and approval sought through the normal Capital Programme approval process.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 General needs properties converted to amenity standard will no longer be eligible for the 'Right to Buy' in accordance with the exemption criteria set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 8.2 If the action highlighted in the report is not carried out then the risk to the Council is that the situation will get worse as the population rises.
- 8.3 There are no implications for sustainability within this report.

9. Equalities impact assessment and consultation

- 9.1 An equality impact assessment has been carried out on the recommendations contained in this report and, where issues were identified, remedial action has been taken. The assessment is that the proposals do not have any adverse impact on any part of the community covered by equalities legislation, or on community relations, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council website.
- 9.2 A wide range of consultation has taken place with appropriate staff within the Resource and key partners in Social Work and Health in preparing the bid for funding to the Change Fund.
- 9.3 The Scottish Government has also consulted with a wide range of stakeholders in taking forward the Reshaping Care Programme. This has included consultation with older people at both a national and local level.

Lindsay Freeland

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

16 September 2011

Link(s) to Council Values/Improvement Themes/Objectives

- ◆ Improve the quality, access and availability of housing
- ◆ Develop services for older people

Previous References

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee, 18 May 2011

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Reshaping Care for Older People - Wider Planning for an Ageing Population, Final Report to Ministerial Strategic Group on Health and Community Care, March 2010
- ◆ Better Homes: Thriving Communities, South Lanarkshire Draft Local Housing Strategy 2012-17

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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Appendix 1: Amenity Housing - Scottish Government S1B definition

The design is based on the standards for general needs housing with the addition of the following features:

No. Design Feature

- 1 the housing should be provided at ground or first floor level, or in blocks over 2 storeys high served by at least one lift
- 2 space standards should be the same as for one or two person general needs houses
- 3 handrails should be provided on both sides of all common access stairs, and on at least one side of all common access areas and passages
- 4 bathroom doors should be either sliding or capable of opening outwards, and fitted with locks operable from the outside
- 5 bathroom floors should have a non-slip finish
- 6 handrails should be fitted beside the WC and bath/shower
- 7 a space heating system must be provided which is capable of maintaining a temperature of 21C when the outside temperature is -1C in the following parts of the house: living area, sleeping area, kitchen, bathroom, hallway
- 8 light switches arranged to line horizontally with door handles
- 9 socket outlets fixed at a height of at least 500mm above the floor

A community alarm may or may not be fitted.

Appendix 2 – Outcome of surveys of 278 amenity properties

278 Properties Surveyed			One Handrail Required	Not Required - No Steps	Total
	Yes	No			
Is there a handrail on both sides of all common access stairs, and on at least one side of all common access areas and passages	122	49		107	278
Is bathroom door either sliding or capable of opening outwards, and fitted with locks operable from the outside	120	158			278
Does bathroom floor have a non-slip finish	231	47			278
Is there a handrail fitted beside the WC and bath/shower	107	89	82		278
Are light switches arranged to line horizontally with door handles	190	88			278
Are socket outlets fixed at a height of at least 500mm above the floor	261	17			278