

From: [Tony Cain](#)
To: Keith.Fernie@gov.scot
Cc: [Finnan, Annette](#); ["John Mills"](#)
Subject: housing post 2021
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Attachments: [Note of ALACHO AGM December 7 18.doc](#)

Good morning Keith

Hope you had a good break. Just following up on the discussion at our AGM. Attached is the note of the meeting including the main points that we picked up in discussion with you.

From our point of view the key issues are still the practical ones around the new supply programme. As you know, the sector is now planning for a declining programme after 2021 though this is driven by the resource planning assumptions and funding uncertainty rather than a reluctance to invest or any idea that housing needs have been “met” through the current programme.

And we will need to return to the issue of standards and grant rates as part of the wider discussion around programme targets. You won't be surprised to hear that we will be making the case for a consistent approach to funding new supply, one that treats council tenants in the same way as RSL tenants and is clear on the balance between general taxation and “taxing” existing social housing tenants to fund new social housing supply.

We do not think that current lower grant rates for councils are “fair” to council tenants and we are not convinced that existing tenants should carry as much of the burden of new investment as they currently do. Apart from anything else pushing up rents to pay for new homes is inconsistent with the objectives set out in the Scottish Government's child poverty action plan.

On the issue of standards ALACHO is supportive of the current move to common, cross tenure, standards and we would like to see this extended to accessibility and adaptability standards for all new build housing. We are unconvinced that a separate fire safety standard for new social housing as currently proposed is justified.

More generally we are interested in the emerging human rights based approach to housing including the recommendations from the First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights. You will be aware that the Advisory Group has included “the right to adequate housing” as part of the proposed legal framework, something we are likely to support.

Though we have to accept that as things stand this right is not being “respected, protected and fulfilled” for tens of thousands of households in Scotland. We will need a programme that addresses this if the current national performance framework is to have any meaning in housing terms, never mind delivering on the proposed new human rights act.

This last point perhaps points to the need for a “well functioning housing system” as the biggest of the challenges included in your discussion document and I don't think we have yet got to a place where anyone has clearly articulated what this means and what would be required from a public policy point of view to achieve it.

This is perhaps the area that we need to spend some time on this year, hopefully we can also

engage our academic colleagues in helping to understand some of the technical issues but the key points will be how we articulate the outcomes we think the system should deliver and how public policy is shaped to support delivery.

As things stand we do need to conclude that our housing system isn't "functioning well" though perhaps it would be nearer the mark to say it isn't functioning well enough to deliver the current national outcome framework, nor are current outcomes demonstrably "fair".

They are also expensive; poor housing and homelessness are significant factors in reoffending, poor health including poor mental health, lower educational attainment for children living in inadequate housing, excess winter deaths, child poverty and fuel poverty to list just a few of the outcomes the current housing system is delivering.

And from an equalities perspective, the current system serves many of those with protected characteristics particularly badly and layers on further levels of disadvantage to those living in rural and island communities.

This conversation has a long way to go and were looking forward to continuing it through the year but we also look forward to the start of a very practical discussion about the issues surrounding the new supply programme sooner rather than later.

It took two years to recover and retool for the current programme after five years of reduced funding and programme cuts imposed by the Scottish Government between 2010 and 2015. If the Scottish Government's intention is to impose another cut on the programme we need to know sooner rather than later. Apart from anything else we owe as much to those working to deliver the Scottish Government's current target.

Hopefully that is of some use at this stage.

cheers

Tony Cain
Policy Manager
ALACHO

Phone 07908460989