



**Queens
Cross
Housing
Association**

ITEM 4
Appendix 1

Development Strategy

2021-2025

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FOREWORD

Welcome to Queens Cross Housing Association's Development Strategy.
This Strategy has been approved by the Board....

Development of new homes and bringing improvement to the existing local environment has been a key role for the Association since its inception in 1976 and this strategy seeks to confirm the Association's commitment to Development in delivering our vision of 'excellent housing in vibrant communities'. Queens Cross has prepared an ambitious Business Plan for the next 5 years and many of its key aims and commitments place Development at the heart of this.

These aims and commitments are much more than just the delivery of much-needed quality new homes, as events over the past 2 years, as well as the ongoing social climate, show that much more than that is required to provide the quality of life needed in today's world.

We want to deliver, not just new homes, but new neighbourhoods, which adhere to the principles of good place-making to create areas where people want to live. It is not just the quantity on new homes which is important, but the quality of their design and the housing need which is being addressed

We want to create an attractive green and open environment which provides the opportunity for residents to enjoy the outdoors without having to travel too far from their homes, and when they do want to travel, active travel routes are available to link into existing networks

We want to sustain our existing properties and neighbourhoods, by ensuring redundant buildings are re-modelled to support new uses and to maintain the local townscape.

We want to address climate change and the Association must seek to do this by providing energy efficient housing working towards a zero-carbon solution. This can be by the design and specification of our new homes, or how these new houses are constructed.

This strategy is a clear statement of the commitment of Queens Cross to Development as a central pillar to our Business Plan. Many of the identified objectives are challenging to deliver and we remain subject to the ongoing restrictions of the construction market. However, we believe that these objectives are necessary, not just to deliver our Business Plan, not just to contribute to the Scottish Governments 'Housing to 2040' strategy, but to provide for the communities of Queens Cross, in the present and in the future.

Board

OUR VISION, VALUES & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our Vision

Excellent housing in vibrant communities.

Our Values

Respect

We see the positive in everyone, especially our tenants. We treat everyone fairly, regardless of age, race, gender or background. We ask for opinions even if we know we might not like what we hear. And we address people's concerns in any way we realistically can.

Integrity

What we say in public is the same as what we say behind the scenes. If we say we'll do something, we mean it. Our tenants can count on us to solve their problems and make sound decisions.

Aspiration

We want the best for all our current and future tenants. We're not afraid to strive for things that won't be easy – or try things that haven't been done before. We seek out opportunities and welcome change. If it doesn't turn out as planned, we learn and improve and then we try again.

Our Strategic Aims

- A) Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods
- B) Creating and supporting greater life opportunities for all
- C) Developing greener spaces and community wellbeing
- D) Being a dynamic and listening community partner
- E) Treating people equally and with respect

Who we are

Queens Cross Housing Association was formed as part of the local community's desire to improve housing conditions and regenerate the area. Today, the Association is one of the largest community-controlled Registered Social Landlords in Glasgow, with a total of 4300 units within its ownership and generally operating in the areas of North Kelvinside, Firhill, Woodside, Dundasvale, Hamiltonhill and Westercommon within North-West Glasgow. It is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator and has registered charitable status.

As a community-based organisation, the Association's development activity has always been targeted within defined boundaries, with its historic programme primarily located along the Maryhill Road corridor between St George's Cross and Queen Margaret Drive. In recent years, this focus has widened as opportunities for growth have been identified outwith the traditional Queens Cross/Firhill area, particularly north of the Forth & Clyde Canal into Possilpark.

The main driver for the Association, as with all community-based Housing Associations in Glasgow, has always been the regeneration of the area and the re-building of the community. Development activity initially focussed on the retention and improvement of the existing tenements in the 1970s, before eventually expanding in the 1980s to developing new build housing in infill gap sites. To date the Association has improved almost 1400 traditional tenement flats and developed 1100 new build homes.

From the mid-1990's, the Association's growth strategy was augmented by the promotion of small-scale stock transfers from both Scottish Homes and the City Council. With more recent, larger transfers from the GHA, nearly 60% of the Association's stock, in a range of build types, has derived from these transfers.

The Development programme has also been in the forefront of innovation, either through ground-breaking procurement initiatives or by being the first to promote greener specifications such as a moss-sedum roof, PV cells or solar panels in our developments.

Since 2017, the Association has been in a partnership agreement with Maryhill HA to work together to achieve our joint development aspirations under the banner of North West Partners Development Hub. This arrangement has allowed the organisations to benefit from an increased expertise and has created the capacity for training and to offer development services. This arrangement allows Queens Cross to promote its services to other local developing RSLs and to retain the ability to lead in collaborative arrangements.

The Development function has always operated with a fluctuating staff resource, to reflect the risk of development activity and minimise overhead costs in line with the identified programme. The Association has recently increased its staff number to 6 to help cover succession planning, and with a consultancy resource also available to assist with an increasing workload. The section now includes three Clerk of Works posts to ensure quality on site in supervising the Association's projects and also other NWP Hub projects. The Clerks can also provide site supervision for the Investment programme as well as agency services to other RSLs when not fully utilised on Development projects.

Purpose of our Strategy

The Development Strategy seeks to set out the framework which will allow the Association to consider the provision of new housing, within the context of the current funding climate, and ensuring it has the capacity and capability to deliver.

The Association's clear vision as stated in its Business Plan is to have 'Excellent Housing in Vibrant Communities'. As such our Development Strategy is a key strand to its delivery, particularly the strategic aims of 'Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods' and 'Developing Greener spaces and community well-being'.

The Association is considered a major developing RSL within Glasgow and is trusted to deliver its housing investment programme by the City Council as the grant funder. With a continuing focus on the North Gateway and the Glasgow Canal Regeneration Partnership, the Association must ensure it remains well-placed within the strategic housing planning framework to assist the delivery of Council priorities and so justify future development opportunities.

Our Development Strategy requires to be informed by the Strategic Planning Framework, at both a national and local level, and in particular, the Scottish Government's long-term national housing strategy, 'Housing to 2040', target for delivering 110,000 new homes nationally over the next 10 years.

The City Council, as the Strategic Housing Authority in Glasgow, is a key stakeholder for the Association on a number of key development issues. The City Council's support is therefore crucial to the Association's role as a developer and conversely, the Association's programme must align with the Council's priorities for housing in Glasgow, to benefit from grant funding to help deliver the new affordable units.

The Council's current City Development Plan published in 2017, identifies a clear focus in the City Council's priorities for regeneration proposals to be taken forward within the general Glasgow North area, and in the Canal Regeneration Partnership area in particular.

The 6 Key Strategic Objectives of the City Council's Glasgow Housing Strategy 2017-22 match closely with the Association's objectives within its Business Plan:

1. Promote area regeneration and enable investment in new build housing
2. Manage, maintain and improve the existing stock
3. Raise standards in the private rented housing sector
4. Improve access to housing in all tenures
5. Promote health and wellbeing
6. Tackle fuel poverty, energy inefficiency and climate change

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) is the affordable housing investment delivery plan for Glasgow's Housing Strategy. The Council's SHIP 2022-27 identifies the means of achieving the Objectives published under the GHS primarily through 2 main Themes:

- Increasing supply and improving quality of housing available to Glasgow's people
- Improving access to appropriate housing for Glasgow's people

Locally, the Council is currently finalising a Strategic Development Framework for Glasgow North which seeks to see Glasgow North become a healthy and high-quality place in which to live and work, delivered by an agreed Action Programme focussed on providing a Working, Liveable, Connected, Green North.

Where we want to be

Our business plan for 2021-25 sets out our vision for where we want to be in the next five years with an ambitious vision to provide excellent homes in vibrant communities. We will seek to do this by continuing to build affordable new homes that meet the housing needs of our community. These will be modern, well-designed homes, that are easy to manage and maintain, while addressing the climate challenge in their design and construction. We will also contribute to improving health and wellbeing by creating sustainable, high-amenity neighbourhoods, and promoting better life opportunities through the development programme, all while delivering excellent services and value for money.

We have identified six objectives designed to support the business plan in achieving our vision and business objectives:

Objective 1

Develop a New Community in Hamiltonhill

The main priority for the Association under its Development Strategy over the period of the Business Plan remains the successful progression of the Hamiltonhill masterplan. This is an area-wide regeneration proposal, intended to provide over 670 units of affordable mixed tenure housing in a new sustainable high-quality environment over 4 zones, to be built out over a period beyond the current Business Plan.

Advanced works have already been delivered to provide a suitable infrastructure for the main housing proposals. An innovative SuDS design now provides a link to the Canal under the 'Glasgow Smart Canal' strategy to service the majority of the neighbourhood. Ground consolidation works have been completed over 2 of the zones and with the remaining 2 zones due to be completed by Spring 2022. A preferred partner Developer/Contractor has been identified and the first phase of predominately social housing is planned to commence on site in 2022.

What we want to do:

- Deliver mixed tenure in partnership with a private sector Developer.
- Complete a first phase of 178 units for social rent together with 30 units for private sale by the end of 2024.
- Progress further phases of mixed tenure developments with the exact scale and programming of all phases subject to negotiations with the preferred Developer.

Outcome: Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods

Objective 2

Create a green neighbourhood in Hamiltonhill

Linked to the new housing development in Hamiltonhill, the Association plans to promote ambitious proposals to create high quality green and open space to provide amenity facilities for the new neighbourhood. Linking to the nearby Claypits environmental improvements led by Scottish Canals, this new Green Infrastructure will also provide opportunities for biodiversity as well as providing a variety of amenity space to cater for all ages within the community.

These proposals have been developed in consultation with the local community and will be funded through land receipts from the housing for sale, together with grant from the Scottish Government's Green Infrastructure Fund and other sources.

What we want to do:

- Deliver a new community park to provide the opportunity for local residents to enjoy formal and informal landscapes and space to organise local community events
- Replace an existing small run-down playpark with a much larger facility which will provide play opportunities to cater for all ages and abilities.
- Develop 2 new open spaces around required sustainable drainage infrastructure, to provide an attractive, pleasant and peaceful environment to residents to utilise for social engagement outdoors and connect with nature on their doorsteps.
- Work with a local community group to create a community garden on a small derelict site, and link this to an existing community hall to create a mixed-use local facility for both new and existing residents.

Outcome: Developing Greener spaces and community well-being

Objective 3

Provide New Build housing to meet people's needs

The Association intends to meet the demand for new social mainstream housing, as well as alternative affordable tenures, in progressing its development programme on the basis of a quality of design and placemaking. Housing for our ageing residents will be a priority but we also require to address other client groups where specialist housing is required.

Prior to any major new development, the Association will endeavour to seek the views of the community through information sessions, to help inform the proposals, even when not required by Planning regulations. We consider it equally important to engage with residents on proposals for small infill sites and remodelling projects as it is on large regeneration plans. This can involve engaging with local resident or community groups where these are identified. The Association will also seek the views of residents of the new homes after completion, to allow the effectiveness of the design to be evaluated and fed back into future design briefs.

While the Association has a long-term programme identified for Hamiltonhill, there is not a large pipeline of other potential future sites identified at this time. The Association requires to seek further opportunities, working with public sector partners as well as looking for private sector opportunities.

What we want to do:

- Clearly identify the need with regard to the size, type and tenure of all new housing to be developed.
- Ensure the opinions of residents are taken into account in all development proposals.
- Seek to identify opportunities for new development in appropriate locations to address perceived housing needs and which are financially viable.
- Provide a development specifically designed for older persons on a Council-owned site in Burnbank Gardens, in conjunction with Glasgow West HA.
- Develop a new purpose-built support centre for young people at an acquired site at Glenfarg Street.
- Provide further specialist housing in all our new developments, based on identified need and site suitability, but which is future-proofed against changing uses.

Outcome: Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods

Objective 4

Remodel our redundant existing stock

A significant issue with the Association's stock at this time is the number of properties which are no longer fit for purpose or where a care provider is no longer able to provide the envisaged service. To bring these properties back into use, they require remodelling to convert into mainstream accommodation or to meet the needs of an alternative care provider. Grant funding can often be identified to help meet the cost of this work.

The Association has previously re-modelled 19/21 Springbank Street for Scottish Autism in 2020, but a number of other supported accommodation properties have also been identified and require attention. These properties do not all easily lend themselves to re-modelling to meet current standards so a strategic approach may require to be considered on an individual basis. These properties are:

- 840 Garscube Road
- 568 Maryhill Road
- 494 Great Western Road
- 171 Wilton Street
- 33-39 Windsor Terrace

Associated with this issue, the traditional sandstone tenements in the Garscube Estate (Garscube Road/Nansen Street) have also been identified as properties where many of the flats do not provide acceptable space standards, resulting in low demand and letting issues. The layouts could be remodelled but with around 100 flats involved, this is a significant challenge for the Association to address. A number of long-term vacant ground floor shop units are also found in these tenements and their improvement or conversion would improve the neighbourhood and its long-term viability.

What we want to do:

- Identify an alternative housing need for vacant stock and remodel or redevelop as appropriate.
- Where no housing need can be identified or provided, seek alternative solutions, such as demolition, disposal or non-housing uses.
- Develop a viable strategy for the improvement of the tenement flats and surrounding environment in the Garscube Estate.
- In conjunction with this strategy, explore options for bringing the existing shop units back into use, either as commercial or residential property.

Outcome: Building and sustaining popular neighbourhoods

Objective 5

Promote a Zero Carbon agenda

Under the present Glasgow City Planning framework and the Council's 'Glasgow Standard', for grant funded projects, the Association is currently required to design to a high level of energy and environmental performance. The Scottish Government has recently published its 'Heat in Buildings Strategy', to reduce the carbon emissions involved in providing heat to domestic and other properties. As part of this strategy, the Government proposes to bring in new Building Standards that will require all new buildings to use zero emissions heating under any Building Warrant approval from 2024.

The Association will address this requirement by considering alternative options to the individual gas-fired combination boilers currently installed in most new homes. A small variety of alternative options are available, both communal and individual, but all bring levels of risk in installation, ranging from installation costs, management arrangements, maintenance provisions and ultimately efficiency of performance and running costs.

As well as energy performance, the Association will seek to develop within the green agenda through the provision of quality open space and encouraging active travel, which have been seen to be important to communities in the past 2 years.

What we want to do:

- Work with partners to develop a strategy to address the new regulations.
- Identify alternative heating systems for new build housing, dependent on the form of development.
- Be aware of the risks involved, both to the Association and its customers, in providing any new system.
- Develop a viable strategy which complements works to existing properties, to meet the needs of our residents.

Outcome: Put climate change first by reducing our carbon footprint and protecting the environment

Objective 6

Address the national Procurement agenda

The Scottish Government continues to drive a Procurement agenda to promote opportunity but which continues to be onerous for occasional developers such as the Association. In line with our Procurement Strategy, the Association has accessed a number of frameworks over the past few years to try to simplify the process and reduce the risk to itself, whilst ensuring compliance with all regulations. As these frameworks come to an end, the Association requires to consider its way forward.

The Scottish Government is also intent on promoting significant levels of off-site construction, or 'Modern Methods of Construction'. This is seen as providing a higher quality of housing as well as a means of driving down costs, together with a means of attracting new labour into the construction sector. The set-up costs incurred by the industry for this process may require collaborative procurement arrangements between RSLs in order to deliver the economies of scale required to off-set the risk to the construction contractors.

The current volatility in the construction market, and the recent limited review of grant benchmarks by the Scottish Government in response to increasing costs, have made small in-fill gap sites increasingly more challenging to develop. Unfortunately, in our area of operation, most of the available sites will fall into this category. The Association requires to consider best means of ensuring the financial viability of the development opportunities we have.

Under Scottish Procurement Regulations, the Association has a Sustainable Procurement Duty in all its procurement, and this is particularly true of the Development function, given the scope and scale of many of our contracts. The Association will seek to bring social, economic and environmental improvements to our area of operation under our existing Community Benefit framework, with a particular emphasis on employment and training opportunities within the larger works contracts.

What we want to do:

- Identify national or local frameworks, for both consultants and contractors, which allow access to external partners to provide efficiencies in the procurement process.
- Seek to improve the promotion and delivery of community benefits under any procurement route, to the benefit of our residents and the local environment.
- Work with identified partners, both public and private, when required to address any changes to the procurement and construction market.

Outcome: Support our young people and families out of poverty by improving their life skills and opportunities,
Developing Greener spaces and community well-being.

How we will achieve this

The next 5 years could potentially be one of the most challenging time for the Association as a Developer, both in light of the current environment but also emerging agendas. To enable us to deliver on this Strategy, we require a strong framework of Policies and Procedures which will help guide us through the development process to provide a high-quality product at minimum risk both the Association and to its customers.

Sitting under this Strategy, there is a Development Policy which sets out the parameters for identifying and assessing new opportunities as well as the financial guidelines to appraise the viability of any proposals. This is to ensure that there is effective risk management throughout the development process.

In terms of design, the Association has a Sustainable Development Policy, which sits above a Design Guide for new Housing and an Outline Standard Specification, to ensure its new homes are of a quality that people want to live in, and which the Association can manage and maintain efficiently.

The Association already follows standard Project Management procedures, and these may be reinforced with the development of new procedures under EFQM, which the Association is seeking to introduce on an organisation-wide basis.

The Development function works to the Association's Procurement Strategy and Policy, to ensure the Association meets its legal obligations and obtains the best value through its significant procurement exercises.

Underpinning the main Policy documents, there is a raft of Procedures, which are constantly reviewed, to ensure that the Association continues to operate the Development function by means that engage all relevant stakeholders, reduce and manage risk, ensure value for money, and deliver high-quality new homes to the benefit of our customers.

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