

## **Notes from initial GWSF meeting on issues around older stock, 11/1/18**

### ***Nature of the problem***

- The crux of the issue is mixed tenure blocks. Owners either unable or unwilling to fund their share: many resident owners simply don't have the resources to do so whilst others - especially non-resident owners - have no interest in doing so (non-resident owners can make up two-thirds or more of owners in some blocks) and we can't ask tenants to fund owners' costs
- The issue extends from pre-1919 tenements, through to inter-war stock and in some cases to new build which may now be 30-40 years old; CCHAs' SHQS and EESSH obligations are significantly affected (although SHQS is arguably not that robust when it comes to some structural issues)
- Major works (including stonework, re-roofing, chimneys) are needed in respect of the oldest stock, which can be as expensive to renovate as it is to do new build, and a lot of cyclical maintenance now required (e.g. ground works/rendering/common areas) in relation to the more recent stock
- The poor quality of 'patch-up' work of the 70s and 80s is becoming more evident
- These issues are accumulating, and in areas such as Glasgow are a ticking-time bomb
- Often these problems are 'hidden' (related to the fabric of the buildings) and therefore tenants and owners are not really aware of them, therefore more difficult to get them on board with a campaign around tackling the problems (tenants generally more interested in the 'aspirational' renovations like new kitchens/bathrooms etc.)
- Issues around technologies are important, and how more recent research is informing solutions, barriers etc.. e.g. advice not to insulate from the inside in such a way as to stop the building breathing as it was designed to (a recurring issue with meeting EESSH)

### ***Challenges with our own stock***

- Even where blocks are fully owned by the HA, there are big challenges, and we know we can't ask for external funding for this. Members believe some HAs may themselves not know, or not want to know, the scale of the problems, and will find the issue to be bigger than they had realised
- In now dealing with the consequences of the patch and repair approach of early 70s/80s rehab; some HAs are finding major issues, e.g. where stonework is, literally, crumbling; there's the suggestion from some members that their major repairs provision won't be sufficient to meet future costs
- Additional challenges include the unique characteristics of some properties, such as very small flats in Govanhill which are being remodelled into larger flats.

### ***Mixed tenure and fully private stock***

- Councils such as Glasgow don't have coherent strategies on dealing with mixed tenure and private stock, probably not because they're not aware of the problem, but because they can't contemplate the resource implications of dealing with the scale of the issue
- Lack of understanding around the mixed tenure issue is widespread. As evidenced by a recent case, even the Homeowner Housing Panel is suggesting HAs can subsidise owners
- CCHAs can see a marked difference between the quality of their own stock and the quality of some PRS stock in their communities: poor private housing can have a significant adverse effect on HAs' communities
- Poor factoring or a lack of factoring is an issue in some private blocks

### ***Local authority issues/role***

- We need to do what we can to ensure the issue is covered in Local Housing Strategies
- What do LAs actually know about the condition of the stock? We think GCC is planning to do a stock condition survey, building on one done around 10 years ago
- Preservation/heritage issues likely to resonate with councillors so worth emphasising

### ***Current legislation/focus of Scottish Government***

- We need to make the case for an overall strategy for tackling the mixed tenure problem and for resources to take this forward
- Scottish Government needs to consider this issue 'in the round' – too ready to pass the buck to cash-strapped LAs
- We need to develop a clearer view on what legislative changes are needed, which needs us not to confuse lack of powers with unwillingness to use existing powers because of the resource implications
- We should argue for some adjustment in the balance between investment in new homes as against investment in existing stock: some form of the previous major repairs HAG, but for use in covering owners' costs, would be one option to consider
- The gradual, not sudden, nature of stock deterioration makes it easy for any one administration to ignore
- The sector needs to lobby SG as a collective and be honest to Government and to SHR about the scale of the problem with regard to existing stock

### ***Focus/role of the group going forward***

- The Forum will gather evidence from members on the scale of the problem across all existing stock and across all LA areas which our members operate in
- Use this data, along with case studies (ACHA/Glasgow West already offered these) to build an evidence base
- Produce a publication which will act as a foundation for lobbying SG (also LAs where appropriate)