



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Name of Committee	CABINET
Directorate:	People Performance and Regeneration
Corporate Manager:	Christopher Cavanagh
Date:	9th July 2007

Report Title	Housing Management Partnering Arrangements with Housing Associations
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Key Decision	Yes
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1. Recommendations

Cabinet members consider and approve the process of selecting partner RSLs to carry out the housing management and maintenance role for new affordable housing in the Borough.

2. Summary

Currently there are 15 RSLs with stock in the Borough (not including specialist providers) and a further two with stock in development. The Council proposes to restrict the number of RSLs that carry out the housing management and maintenance role of RSL stock. This will promote recognisable and committed identity and involvement in housing and neighbourhood growth in the Borough.

The Housing Corporation and the three Authorities in West Northants are currently discussing a process for selection of a small number of preferred RSLs that will carry out the housing management and maintenance role of RSL stock in their Districts.

Cabinet are requested to approve the proposal to reduce the number of RSLs that manage stock in the Borough and the proposed selection process.

3. Report Background

3.1 Objective 11.2 of the Housing Services Improvement Plan is to develop robust partnering arrangements with RSLs through partnership with the Housing Corporation. The Housing Corporation and the three Local Authorities in West Northants are currently discussing a process to choose preferred partner RSLs to carry out the maintenance and management role for RSL stock. The benefits of restricting the number of RSLs that carry out these functions are :-

- To focus on standards of service for sustainable neighbourhoods
- To improve the standards of service for the community
- To clarify roles in new housing developments
- To promote local RSL identity and commitment, whereby a critical mass ensures investment of resources locally
- To act as a platform for further housing and regeneration initiatives

3.2 The process will be carried out jointly by the three authorities, but the agreements will probably be entered into with a different mix of RSLs for each. The process also has WNDC support and a launch event is planned to take place at WNDC's offices which we anticipate will be attended by all RSLs currently operating in West Northants.

The selection will be carried out by postal submission only, this will take the form of a series of questions to be answered on the management expertise, experience and local commitment of interested RSLs.

The launch is proposed to take place at the end of July with a deadline for submissions from the RSLs in August. This will allow the selection procedure to be completed by the end of August and preferred partners in place in time for the Housing Corporations deadline for grant funding bids which will be in the Autumn.

3.3 The selected RSLs would undertake management and maintenance of all new affordable housing delivered in the future, irrespective of how that housing might be undertaken or procured. Those not selected would still be able to develop in the Borough provided they are partnering associations for Housing Corporation grant funding, but will be expected to transfer stock or enter into a management agreement with a partner RSL to manage the units once built.

3.4 Cabinet approval is sought to proceed with the process outlined above to select preferred partner RSLs to carry out the housing management and maintenance function for new affordable housing in the Borough. This process has recently been carried out in Corby, supported by the Housing Corporation.

4. Options and Evaluation of Options

The available options are as follows:-

1. Not to carry out any selection process, this could result in the numbers of RSLs operating in the Borough continuing to increase. Some RSLs are then likely to have very low levels of stock in the Borough, and little commitment. It is also likely that the units would be managed from a base some distance from Northampton.
2. To carry out the process as outlined above, this is the preferred option because this it encourages local commitment whilst not stifling competition for innovation in design and development. Proposals to increase innovation and design standards are being considered in parallel.
3. To carry out a selection process for development in addition to management and maintenance. This option is not recommended by the Housing Corporation. It is considered that entering into partnership arrangements with RSLs for development stifles competition.

5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)

Officer time to carry out the selection process, already allowed for in budgets.

Selecting preferred partner RSLs will create recognisable and committed RSL identity relating to management of RSL stock and the development of sustainable communities.

6. Risk and Opportunity Issues

If we do not enter into any partnering arrangements with RSLs we risk losing control of nominations to affordable housing in the Borough.

7. Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal	
External	

8. Compliance Issues

A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes

Recovery Plan
Improving the effectiveness of our Housing Service. Improve our work with partner organisations
Corporate Plan
Priority 2 – To deliver an excellent housing service and provide affordable housing for those in need. Priority 3 – To promote equality, social inclusion and improve health Priority 9 – To improve work with partners to deliver better outcomes and services

B: Other Implications

Other Strategies
Housing Strategy 2006-2011 “Enabling and Delivering Housing Choice”




Finance Comments

Legal Comments

9. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source

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