

**Meeting:** Integrated Housing Board

**Date:** 21 September 2009

**Report Title:** Registered Providers Partnership

**Report of:** Paul Dowling, Principal Housing Strategy Officer

### **Purpose**

To report the findings of the consultation with Registered Providers (RPs) on the formation of a new partnership and associated protocol.

To recommend the new partnership and associated protocol to the IHB subject to discussion on the consultation feedback.

### **Summary**

This report presents the responses to the recent partner consultation on the proposed Partnership Protocol for Registered Providers for discussion.

### **Legal/Financial Implications**

None identified.

### **Recommendations**

That feedback from the consultation and possible amendments to the protocol are discussed and a final draft protocol is produced for sign off by the Chair of the Integrated Housing Board.

### **For more information contact:**

Name: Paul Dowling  
Title: Principal Housing Strategy Officer  
Tel: 020 8489 4301  
Email address: [paul.dowling@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:paul.dowling@haringey.gov.uk)

### **Background**

The recommendation to create a new partnership structure comprising all Registered Providers willing to commit to a revised partnership protocol was agreed by the IHB on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009.

A draft protocol was drawn up in consultation with Members and Council

departments and subsequently circulated to Registered Providers for comment.

The draft protocol was sent to 37 Housing Associations with stock or management responsibilities in Haringey and subsequently 8 consultation responses were received from the following providers:

Newlon  
Shian Housing Association  
Arhag Housing Association  
Innisfree Housing Association  
Circle 33 Housing Trust  
Family Mosaic  
Metropolitan Housing Trust  
Servite Houses

### **Consultation responses**

In general, comments received as part of the consultation were positive and demonstrate a significant commitment by Registered Providers to work in partnership with the Council. The consultation responses have been amalgamated and summarised and are appended to this report; this summary has been broken down by section of the draft protocol for ease of reference.

Some of the comments received were common to the majority of the respondents; these are outlined below

#### **Quotas for Lettings**

The partnership protocol proposes that nomination rights for subsequent 'true-void' lets are set at 90%. The general feeling amongst the respondents was that this requirement would be too onerous and would adversely affect the ability of providers to offer transfers within their own stock

#### **The Nominations Procedure**

It was felt that the Council could do more to commit to sharing information about nominees that would allow providers to make informed judgements about accepting clients. It was suggested that this should include information on past arrears and also information that could allow providers to better manage risks (e.g. information relating to potentially violent clients). A position on Local Lettings Policies was also requested

The number of re-marketing cycles proposed was viewed as being excessive by the providers as it would adversely affect void turnaround time

#### **Development & Marketing**

Although providers were all willing to consider raising development standards in terms of environmental sustainability and the Building for Life Standard, it was felt that this should not be a requirement unless the same standards could be applied to the private sector.

**Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

All respondents were in agreement that there needs to be a greater emphasis on a partnership approach to safeguarding and requested that there should be a single point of contact within the Council for this and that cross-organisational training opportunities be identified.

**Appendices**

Summary of consultation responses –Appendix 1.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Registered Protocol Consultation – Summary**

#### **Part I – Partnership Agreement**

##### 3. Roles & Expectations

Commitment from Haringey to work with RSLs to agree realistic timescales for providing input to the development of strategies and policies and provision of data

##### 5. Anti-social behaviour

As this is a partnership agreement it would be beneficial to outline what the Council will be doing in relation to ASB

The use of management transfers should be linked in with 'reciprocal arrangements' section (part II, section 14)

Data requirements should be agreed as far in advance as possible to allow RSLs to ensure that software systems are capable of providing information efficiently.

##### 6. Existing stock

It is not always appropriate for RSLs to reinvest income from property sales within the same borough

#### **Part II – Nominations Agreement**

##### 10. Quotas for RSL lettings

90% nomination rights to subsequent 'true void' lets is onerous and should be reduced to the current level of 75% - All respondents

##### 11. The nominations procedure

BME organisations who have a commitment to housing members of the BME community should be allowed to fulfil that commitment

Please clarify how often the waiting list will be reviewed

Council should require applicants to permit information to be disclosed which may relate to a subsequent tenancy

There should be a local lettings policy caveat

An information sharing definition and commitment should be included to manage risks in terms of both staff and residents (e.g. potentially violent, sex offenders etc).

## 12. Home Connections

Should the Council confirm when a property has been advertised?

What verification process are the RSLs expected to undertake?

If Council verification was undertaken before viewing the process could be completed more efficiently.

Three re-marketing cycles is excessive, suggest that one is more appropriate or a maximum timescale

More realistic to expect submission of NP1 within 24hrs

## 13. RSL grounds for refusal

This section is too restrictive unless RSLs have full access to the Council assessment (conflicts with RSL policies on e.g. historic ASB)

A clause should be included for rejection of nominations where insufficient information is provided

## 14. Reciprocal arrangements

There maybe other reasons that an RSL may want to move a tenant – there should not be restrictive red tape put around this

These should be explicitly detailed as non-true voids

## 15. Council appeal procedure

The Council should consider releasing the property to the next set of nominees whilst applicants are going through the appeal process

## **Part III – Management & Repairs**

## 20. Waste, Recycling & Cleansing

Will funding be made available for designing out crime on existing estates?

Council advice on storage needs to be circulated at agreed at early planning stages. Inclusion of recycling space for existing stock would need to be subject to a cost review

A statement of commitment from the Council is needed - to work with RSLs on utilising the Council's powers against residents in terms of nuisance, pest infestations and satellite dishes

The frequency of estate cleaning should be agreed between provider and tenant – this would have a direct affect on service charges

#### 21. Sustainability of existing stock

Will the Council make funding streams available for taking into account environmental sustainability when refurbishing existing stock and in new developments?

Why is a detailed programme of works required for RSL empty properties?

### **Part IV – Development & Marketing**

#### 26. Development Standards

The HCA minimum standard for Building for Life is 12, we will where possible exceed this

25% local labour is not always possible - perhaps setting up links with CONEL would be a good approach that Haringey could spearhead – 20% would be more realistic

A commitment from O/Ts on timescales would be a welcome addition to the W/C accessible section

W/C properties should be pre-allocated so that specification can be tailored

Adopted standards should be consistent with those required of the private sector. Higher standards could be negotiated around individual developments.

#### 27. Partnership Working & Information sharing

The Council may expect overage payments to reflect any increase in value but there is no allowance if the opposite is true

New sites – cannot always divulge information about new sites due to confidentiality arrangements with developers

#### 28. Low cost Home Ownership

Clause relating to Haringey People should be removed

### **Part V – Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults**

It would be beneficial if training could be rolled out for RSL staff

The Council's roles and responsibilities in terms of re-housing should be included

Section should open with - safeguarding adults and children is the responsibility of all

There should be an identified point of contact within the Council for safeguarding

More emphasis is needed in this section on the development of a joint working protocol between the Borough and RSLs and development of an approach that includes training and clarification of roles

**General comments –**

Clarification and additional information is needed in respect of...

Aids and adaptations

Administration of Housing Benefit

Liaison with RSLs by EHO officers

Remove 'RSL' from the document and replace with 'Housing Association'

A mailing list with partner details would be useful