

Report Title: **Protocol for RSL Preferred Partners**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable):

Report of: **Director of Urban Environment**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The EAB of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007 asked to be provided with details of the protocol that is to be agreed between the Council and its six preferred RSL partners. This report sets it out in appendix 1.

### **2. Introduction by Executive Member**

- 2.1 This is the final stage of a lengthy process, including extensive consultation with RSLs, the Housing Corporation, members and officers from various council departments.
- 2.2 The protocol will be the main instrument regulating the partnership arrangements approved at the last Executive meeting and it will form the basis for the proposed annual reviews. It is designed to reflect the concerns of residents and members, and to maximise the influence of the council, as a strategic authority, over developments and practices in this growing sector, as well as the synergies between the sectors to the benefit of the residents of the borough.
- 2.3 The new partnership arrangements complement parallel initiatives involving the proposed Integrated Housing Board under the Haringey Strategic Partnership and further work in creating joint consultative mechanisms for tenants and leaseholders across the various sectors.
- 2.4 Members will also be aware that there is an ongoing government instigated review of the future regulation of social housing (the Cave Review) which may eventually have some bearing on the arrangements in the future. The proposals are also designed to enable us to easily adjust to any changes that the government may bring in in future years as a result of this review.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the Board agrees the protocol.

Report Authorised by: **Niall Bolger, Director of Urban Environment**

Contact Officer: Rupert Brandon (ext 4890)

#### **4. Executive Summary**

- 4.1 A full report on RSL Preferred Partnering was submitted to Board on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007. In approving the recommendation to agree the suggested six preferred partners EAB requested that the protocol between the Council and them be submitted for their information.
- 4.2 The protocol, attached at appendix 1 sets out the objectives of preferred partnering and the roles of the parties. In addition it lists the evaluation criteria used in selecting the preferred partners and sets out the approach to performance review.
- 4.3 Preferred partners will sign this protocol for the launch of the agreement on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

#### **5 Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)**

- 5.1 Refer to earlier report on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

#### **6 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- 6.1 [List background documents]
- 6.2 [Also list reasons for \*exemption or confidentiality (if applicable)]

#### **7 Background**

- 7.1 The Haringey Preferred Partnership Protocol 2007 is the document that sets out the agreement between the Council and its six RSL preferred partners. It provides the basis for how the Council will work with the partners in the provision and management of affordable housing.
- 7.2 The protocol although not a legal document sets out the responsibilities and expectations of the Council and its partners including the following areas:
- The promotion of social inclusion and community development
  - Resident involvement
  - Anti-social behaviour
  - Property development standards
  - Arrangements to work with BME and specialist RSLs

In addition the objectives and roles require partners to work on joint strategies to meet identified housing needs and to work towards improving existing homes and management services to tenants.

- 7.3 The protocol has been agreed by all parties and will come into use at the launch of the agreement on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. It will be the base document for setting joint objectives and for monitoring of performance.
- 7.4 Monitoring of the protocol will be on-going throughout the year and it is proposed that Members are updated on progress of this via a quarterly report to the Lead Member for Housing, which includes information on the housing development programme.

## **8 Consultation**

- 8.1 This has included the six preferred partners, the Housing Corporation and council officers from Planning, Neighbourhoods, Environment and Anti-social Behaviour Team as well as Lead Member for Housing and The Leader.
- 8.2 In drawing the protocol up care has been taken to ensure that there is a balance of responsibility between the Council and the preferred RSLs. The arrangement is one of partnership and the expectations while challenging have to be acceptable to the group as a whole. Consultation has therefore been a genuine exercise in reaching consensus for the practical delivery of the partnership.
- 8.3 The protocol will be subject to an annual review to ensure that it remains relevant and challenging and meets the needs of tenants and other service users.

## **9 Summary and Conclusions**

- 9.1 The launch of preferred partnering will contribute to closer strategic working and an improvement in understanding between the Council and key RSLs in the provision of improved services. In order that our shared aims and objectives are monitored and reviewed the development of a protocol has set these down. The attached protocol will form the basis for forthcoming preferred partnering arrangement and will be subject to review. It is hoped that in the future the protocol will form the basis for wider improvements in services for all RSL residents in the borough.
- 9.2 The protocol will be reviewed annually to ensure that it keeps pace with changing needs and challenges. The protocol also describes how RSLs will be assessed in terms of maintaining or losing their preferred partner status.

## **10 Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Board approves the protocol as set out in appendix 1.

## **11 Housing Finance Implications**

- 11.1 This document sets out a protocol of working arrangements between the London Borough of Haringey and the selected RSLs. Full financial implications on the

proposals have been provided in the report submitted to EAB on the 8<sup>th</sup> February. There are no new financial implications contained in this report.

## **12 Comments of Head of Legal Services**

- 12.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted and notes that the protocol is not a legal document (paragraph 7.2). However, there are legal powers available relating to co-operation if it is found in the light of experience that a more formal document is desirable either overall or for different elements. The only specific comment the Head of Legal Services wishes to add is that there is a proposed North London Sub-Region Nomination Agreement being prepared by the London Borough of Camden and when finalised this will affect the documents in Appendix B of the Protocol

## **13. Corporate Finance Implications**

## **14 Equalities Implications**

## **15 Use of Appendices / Tables / Photographs**

- 15.1 Appendix 1 sets out the protocol in full.

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## **HARINGEY PREFERRED PARTNERSHIP PROTOCOL - 2007**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this Agreement is to set out the basis on which the London Borough of Haringey (the “Council”) will work with its preferred Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners in the provision and management of affordable housing in the Borough.

1.2 This will involve partnership working between the Council, the Housing Corporation and RSLs. The broad purpose is to ensure a strategic and integrated approach based upon best value for the provision and management of affordable housing in the Borough and the development of sustainable communities.

1.3 This Agreement is not intended to be legally binding document. It is a statement of intent to be adhered to by parties, who undertake to use all reasonable endeavours to put this partnership into effect through a partnership approach.

### **2. The Parties**

2.1 The parties to this Agreement are:

- London Borough of Haringey
- Circle Anglia Housing Group
- Family Mosaic
- London & Quadrant Housing Group
- Metropolitan Housing Trust
- Presentation Housing Association
- Servite Houses

### **3. Objectives**

3.1 The main objectives of this Preferred Partners Agreement are:

- to maximise the extent and quality of affordable housing in the Borough
- to maximise and make the most effective use of the resources available from public and private funding;

- to work together with other agencies and local residents to develop and support wider regeneration initiatives that will create sustainable communities and achieve community priorities.

3.2 The scope of this Agreement will therefore include a number of related facets:

- joint development of strategies to meet identified housing needs;
- linkage with other strategies on economic and community regeneration, crime prevention, health, environmental improvements, supporting people programmes and the development of Local Strategic partnerships;
- greater integration between the Council, Housing Corporation and other public investment to help implement those strategies;
- longer term forward planning of this investment to maximise effective delivery of the programme, provided that RSLs perform effectively as outlined in this Agreement;
- partnership arrangements with specialist RSLs to provide housing for special needs and BME groups
- agreement on overall parameters such as rent levels, development standards and management performance to be achieved by the RSL partners;
- promotion of active participation by tenants and residents in the management of their homes and in activities that develop and sustain local communities;
- development of best practice in the ways in which the partners operate and work with each other.

#### **4. Duration and review of the Agreement**

4.1 This Agreement will come into effect on 1 April 2007, subject to annual review.

4.2 This Agreement is intended to operate for a period of 3 years, (subject to an annual review), with an option for the Council to extend this by Agreement, to 5 years.

4.3 The parties will meet quarterly to review progress, receive reports on the performance of the Council and RSL partners and consider any difficulties in implementing this Agreement. The parties will review the wording of this Agreement 1 year after the Agreement has been signed by all parties.

#### **5. Summary of Roles**

5.1 The London Borough of Haringey will:

- be the lead agency in identifying local housing needs and developing overall housing and regeneration strategies including working sub-regionally;
- work closely with sub-regional partners to co-ordinate the strategic direction for the North London sub-group related to the Affordable Housing Investment framework;
- support the forward planning of development programmes and sustain a rolling development programme of affordable housing, including intermediate housing
- seek to deliver the Communities Plan of ensuring decent homes for all;
- ensure that partners are appropriately involved at all key stages of strategy development and implementation;

- provide partners, where possible, with development opportunities through the disposal of land and buildings
- publicise its list of preferred partners in planning and other documentation to private developers and others, and seek to involve at the earliest opportunity the Housing Corporation and preferred partners in effectively negotiating Section 106 agreements;
- endeavour to identify revenue funding for supported housing where capital funding is sought from the Housing Corporation;
- facilitate partnership meetings, disseminate information and improve relations with strategic bodies;
- carry out an annual review of the performance of partner RSLs and the effectiveness of the partnering arrangement;
- secure relevant and timely consultation with residents and local communities;
- consider the engagement of one or more of the preferred RSLs as agent on behalf of the Council or Homes for Haringey in providing or operating local services.

## 5.2 The RSLs will:

- seek to maximise the input to housing investment in the Borough from private finance and other funding sources;
- pursue a multi-tenure housing strategy aimed at promoting balanced and sustainable communities including housing for rent, low cost home ownership and supported housing;
- build new homes and improve existing homes to high standards, maximising value for money in the design, procurement, development and standards of new homes;
- contribute to regeneration strategies through support for housing projects linked to social, economic and community initiatives;
- sign up to the new Respect Standard for Housing Management by 1 April 2007 and act positively at all times to meet the requirements of that Standard;
- operate within the target and service charge framework set out by the Housing Corporation;
- promote tenant and resident participation in decision-making regarding the provision and management of affordable housing and in wider community based regeneration initiatives;
- work with the Council to ensure effective implementation of Choice Based Lettings and include all stock in the borough into this process;
- support the Council in providing temporary accommodation or alternatives to temporary accommodation
- be pro-active in dealing with anti-social behaviour, supporting the victim and pursuing action vigorously against perpetrators of such behaviour
- consider the engagement of the Council or Homes for Haringey as agent in providing or operating local services.
- Actively engage with the Haringey Strategic Partnership via the Integrated Housing Board

## 6. Development Standards

6.1 It is agreed that RSLs undertaking developments under this Agreement will meet or exceed the Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards and the Council's planning policies and guidance for example, those relating to sustainable development, use of renewable or recyclable products, energy efficiency and affordable warmth. Each new development will meet or exceed the Mayor of London's standards on renewable energy and other design standards. As good practice this will also include being active members of the Council's Design Panel and consistently operate an Early Warning system on initial planning proposals. At all times RSLs will involve the community in proposed and evolving schemes for example in local, meaningful consultation.

6.2 Taking into account the individual circumstances and implications for example on land values, the Council reserves the right to propose additional development or planning standards and to seek the agreement of the RSL partners to implement them.

6.3 The Council aims to meet the target of 100% Lifetime Homes Standards as set by the GLA's London Plan for all affordable housing schemes in the Borough and expects all the RSL partners to co-operate in the achievement of this target

6.4 The RSL partners will acknowledge and use reasonable endeavours to operate and ensure its contractors operate a scheme to encourage training and employment of local people and shall in any event use reasonable endeavours to ensure that at least 25% of the workforce carrying out the development live within the London Borough of Haringey. This might involve pooling and sharing of information sub regionally by the RSL partners to facilitate the process.

6.5 All the parties to this Agreement will provide project timetable and regular updates on progress of development schemes.

*(Proposed addition)*

*6.6 All partners undertake to ensure that in any new developments during the construction phase there will be suitable signage on sites indicating the RSLs involved in the development and an appropriate contact person and details.*

## **7. Rent and service charge levels**

7.1 The parties to this Agreement acknowledge the importance of achieving and maintaining rent levels which are affordable to tenants on low incomes and which do not form a barrier to employment.

7.2 RSL partners will be expected to operate within the target rent and service charge framework set out by the Housing Corporation for new and existing homes. Rents should be set using a process that is easily understood and accountable to residents.

## **8. Lettings and Low cost home ownership / Intermediate Rent**

8.1 The lettings of homes on a sub-regional basis will be carried out in



accordance with the Nominations Agreements and Protocol agreed by the Housing Corporation, Local Authorities in the North London sub-regions and *London Councils*.

8.2 The parties to this Agreement are expected to work together in line with the North London Affordable Housing Investment Framework to actively promote sub - regional nominations across the North Region.

8.3 The marketing and allocation of homes developed for Low Cost Home Ownership or intermediate rent will be carried out in conjunction with the Council's Low Cost Home / Intermediate Rent and Zone Agent for the North London Region.

8.4 The RSL partners will support and give access to the Council to all records relating to nominations and shared ownership reasonably required by the Council for the provision of monitoring.

8.5 The parties will be mindful of the need to create mixed communities in affordable housing developments. Through *Home Connections*, RSL partners will be expected to work with the Council to ensure effective implementation of choice based lettings, to address a variety of needs, to seek to promote social inclusion and build mixed and sustainable communities.

## **9. Resident involvement**

9.1 All the parties to this Agreement recognise the importance and value of effectively consulting with and involving RSL tenants and leaseholders and other local residents. All parties will seek to promote active tenant participation in decision-making regarding the provision and management of affordable housing and in wider community based regeneration initiatives. RSL partners will ensure that they provide their tenants with a Tenant Compact setting out minimum standards of service. The RSLs will support the creation and development of properly constituted and representative tenant and leaseholder associations.

9.2 All parties will need to ensure that effective consultation procedures are in place and encourage tenant and resident participation in local initiatives and schemes. Effective and early community consultation with tenants and local residents must be considered as a critical part of the development process.

## **10. Social inclusion and community development**

10.1 The parties to this Agreement will seek to ensure that the development, letting and management of affordable housing contributes effectively to the promotion of social inclusion and the development of balanced and sustainable local communities.

10.2 The parties recognise the added value of developing a collaborative approach to developing policies and practices that improve the quality of life of all local residents. They will work with each other and with residents and a range of other partners to this end, paying particular attention to employment, training, life skills and broader community development issues.

10.3 The RSLs will seek to play a constructive role in regeneration strategies and initiatives which develop in Haringey, as well as ensuring that the management of their homes take full account to building sustainable communities.

10.4 The Council will consult the RSLs and the Housing Corporation in drawing up and reviewing its regeneration strategies and proposals for comprehensive local regeneration initiatives.

10.5 The parties will support the development of the role of the Housing Strategic Partnership as part of the Local Strategic Partnership and will participate in the most appropriate and effective way.

10.6 The RSLs will actively seek to maximise the training, work experience and employment opportunities made available to local residents as part of their development, stock improvement, maintenance and other activities.

## **11. Anti –Social Behaviour (ASB)**

RSL Partners will be expected

- to actively tackle ASB within their housing stock
- to sign the Council/Partnership information sharing protocol (ISP)
- to sign up to the Housing Management Respect Standard
- to have in place an ASB Policy, as required by the Home Office
- to provide quarterly data and statistical returns to the Council on ASB activity within stock showing the location, type and nature of ASB as well any enforcement measures taken.
- to be active members and regularly attend the quarterly Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership Board and the Anti-Social Behaviour RSL liaison meetings.

## **12.Supported Housing**

12.1 The Council has adopted a Supported People Strategy and the RSL partners will work together to implement it. They will also work with the Supported Housing Forum and other bodies such as the Local Health Authority and Voluntary Agencies to further develop a comprehensive and multi-agency approach to supported housing provision.

12.2 It is acknowledged that specialist RSLs may be better able to provide or manage homes with support for residents with particular needs. In this case, partnerships between the preferred partners and specialist RSLs are likely to be required.

## **13. Existing Stock**

13.1 The parties recognise the importance of the RSLs maintaining the quality of their existing stock as well as in developing new homes. The achievement of this will be an important factor when assessing the suitability of an RSL as a partner to this Agreement in future.

13.2 It is acknowledged that there will be occasions when it is appropriate for an RSL to dispose of some of its existing stock, for example when it is uneconomic to renovate it to the standards required. It is agreed that the RSL partners will consult the council prior to any disposals within the Borough, and that as far as possible the proceeds of any sales funded through social housing grant will be reinvested into projects within the borough.

13.3 The RSL partners will seek to maximise the input into housing investment through private finance and other funding sources, including taking opportunities to land bank where possible.

## **14. Performance Review**

14.1 The Council will carry out an annual review of the performance of all RSLs operating in the borough. This will be undertaken by officers and will assess:

14.1.1 estate and tenancy management – using the results of customer satisfaction surveys carried out by RSLs for their tenants living in Haringey and random sampling carried out by the Council from time to time

14.1.2 active participation in the Housing Association Forum (HAF) including other RSL partnership groups to discuss issues such as compliance with nomination agreements, repairs performance, sharing of information, discussion of concerns, flagging up of good practice in performance, and development and review of indicators and targets.

14.2 The preferred partners undertake to co-operate fully with this process. They will provide the information required by the Council to enable it to make an informed judgement of their performance in the development and management of their accommodation and their role as a partner in broader regeneration initiatives in the borough.

14.3 The RSLs that are party to this Agreement were selected according to the criteria set out in Appendix A. These criteria will form the main basis of the evaluation of the RSLs' performance in this Agreement.

14.4 If the Council comes to the view that a particular RSL is not performing to a standard consistent with the status of a preferred partner, it will bring this promptly to the attention of the RSL and actively seek agreement to a positive resolution of the matter, involving the Housing Corporation if necessary.

14.5 The Council reserves the right to suspend temporarily or withdraw the preferred status of any individual RSL, in the event that it is not satisfied with the performance of any RSL, and that the RSL, having been advised of the Council's concerns, has not demonstrated sufficient improvement in performance to merit reinstatement as a preferred partner. Similarly, the Council reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the preferred partner status as a consequence of a negative report from the Housing Corporation or Audit Commission regarding the performance of any RSL. At all times

the decision of the Council in such matters will be final. In the event of any RSL being displaced as a preferred partner, the Council may, at its absolute discretion, bring forward one or more replacement RSLs.

## **15. Signatories**

15.1 This Agreement is signed on behalf of the Parties as follows:

The London Borough of Haringey:

Circle Anglia Housing Group:

Family Mosaic :

London & Quadrant Housing Group:

Metropolitan Housing Trust:

Presentation Housing Association:

Servite Houses:

## **Appendix A**

### **Evaluation Criteria for RSL Partners**

Preferred partners have been selected and will continue to be assessed according to their ability to demonstrate:

1. Financial health, strength and innovation;
2. Promotion of active tenant participation in the provision and management of affordable housing;
3. In-depth and high quality management resources (organisational strength), including the provision of culturally sensitive services, effective and responsive housing management performance, including proximity of local management base or ability to demonstrate adequacy of alternative service delivery arrangements, track record of performance against key PIs (arrears, void turnarounds etc);
4. Experience of positive partnership working with BME RSLs.
5. Experience of working with developers through Section 106 agreements.
6. Commitment to Best Value principles and experience of implementing Best Value reviews.

7. Quality of Asset Management strategy and commitment to maintain quality accommodation in Haringey.
8. Evidence of close liaison with Local Authorities over stock disposals.
9. Development performance: track record of achieving targets on time within budgets; commitment to developing high quality homes that people want to live in; experience of innovative funding approaches; demonstration of application of new construction initiatives and partnering practices and constructive working with planners and developers;
10. Experience of contribution to local and regional regeneration strategies that enhance residents' quality of life and contribute to the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods and communities.
11. Experience of Community Development and Social Inclusion initiatives.

2. This evaluation and review process will also take into account:

2.1 Housing Corporation assessments and Audit Commission Inspection Reports relating to performance and other returns and information;

2.2 Information submitted by the partners:

2.3 References obtained as necessary from other local authorities and partner organisations with which the RSLs work.

## **Appendix B**

### Documents referred to in this Agreement

This Agreement refers to a number of documents that relate to aspects of housing provision within Haringey. These are:

- The Nominations Agreement
- North London Affordable Housing Investment Framework
- Haringey Housing Strategy 2006
- Housing Corporation Scheme Development Standards, April 2003 (as amended)
- Statement of the role of key agencies in the delivery of affordable housing ([www.odpm.gov.uk/affordablehousing](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/affordablehousing) )
- Protocol for Selection of Sub-Regional Preferred Development Partners Agreed between ALG, LHF and HC.

Other policies and strategies, not named above, will be produced by the Council from time to time. The RSL preferred partners will be expected to comply with the terms of those documents insofar as they relate to the operation of this protocol.

## APPENDIX 1

## RSL PREFERRED PARTNERS

Name of RSL	Position	Score	Rented stock in Haringey	Housing Corporation Preferred Partner	Corporation Allocation in Haringey 2004/06	Corporation Allocation In Haringey 2006/8
Circleanglia	1	220	1402	yes	yes	yes
Metropolitan	2	210	1507	yes	yes	yes
London +Quadrant	3	197	1484	yes	yes	yes
Presentation	4	189	273	yes	yes	yes
Servite	5	183	27	yes	yes	no
Family Mosaic	6	166	700	yes	yes	yes
Community	7	150	98	yes	no	no
Genesis	8	148	150	yes	Yes*	yes
Sanctuary	9	142	685	no	no	yes
Christian Action	10	129	100	no	no	no
Newlon	11	123	236	yes	yes	yes
Hornsey	12	118	221	no	no	no
Dominion	13	106	13	yes	no	no
Kush	14	102	110	no	no	no
Network	15	93	53	no	yes ~	no
Ujima	16	77	319	yes	yes	yes

Notes: ~ as Stadium  
 \* as PCHA