



Haringey Council

Report for:	Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Panel 3 November 2014	Item Number:	
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Title:	Preferred Partner Agreement
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Report Authorised by:	
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The council is in the process of establishing a Preferred Partner Agreement (the Agreement) that will comprise six organisations chosen for their strategic fit with the council and development capacity.

2. Background

Strategic context

- 2.1 Registered providers have an important and central role to play in tackling the housing challenges that face the borough. In Haringey they currently manage around 13,000 affordable homes for rent and shared ownership and as such represent a major stakeholder in the future success of the borough and its residents. Registered providers have been the sole provider of new affordable housing in Haringey for around 30 years and will continue to provide the majority of new affordable housing in future despite the emerging council new build programme. In addition to their landlord and new build roles, registered providers have an important role to play in the economic growth of the borough by providing much needed affordable housing for the labour market, jobs through and during the construction phase of new developments and community investment initiatives including apprenticeships, training and back to work programmes. These issues and the need to form close and strong partnerships with registered providers will feature strongly in the emerging housing strategy.



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What are registered providers?

2.2 Registered Providers of Social Housing (Registered Providers for short) are private organisations that provide low-cost affordable housing for rent and sale for people in housing need. Registered Providers are commonly referred to as Registered Social Landlords or Housing Associations. The term Registered Provider was introduced by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Any surplus that a registered provider makes is re-invested back into the business to maintain existing housing and help finance new homes. Although independent they are regulated by the Government through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and commonly receive public funding by way of Social Housing Grant. They are the major providers of new affordable housing for rent and sale in England and Wales.

Working with registered providers

2.3 The council introduced a generic partnership agreement for registered providers in 2010 as a way of improving relationships and ensuring consistency. This has gone some way to bringing about improvements, but these have been limited due to the high number of providers operating in the borough and budget reductions that has seen the team that deals with this area of work reduced in size.

2.4 The relationship between the council and its partners was the subject of a Scrutiny Panel report in 2013 which recommended further improvements to develop and improve engagement between the council and local RPs, and support further liaison and partnership and to assist local officials in local scrutiny and performance management of registered providers.

3. Preferred Partnership Agreement

3.1 One way the council is seeking to improve relationships with its partners is to establish a Preferred Partner Framework to bring together the most pro-active organisations to work with the council to deliver and improve housing services in the borough. The Framework will offer our preferred partners the opportunity to engage with the council in an honest, open and transparent way on all matters in relation to housing and will act as monitor of all registered provider activity in the borough.

3.2 The selection process took place between January and July 2014. Registered providers were invited to submit an expression of interest to work with the council as part of its preferred partnership arrangements and a long list was drawn up who were then invited to submit a formal application. Shortlisted organisations were invited to interview with the Lead Member for Regeneration & Housing and the Head of Housing Investment & Sites. The interviews took place during week commencing 28 July 2014 and the following organisations selected as the council's preferred partners: -

- Sanctuary
- Circle



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- Family Mosaic
- Newlon
- London and Quadrant
- Notting Hill

3.3 In terms of their strategic fit, they represent some of the largest and most consistent developers of new housing in the borough, and have a commitment to deliver mixed tenure schemes including affordable housing for rent and sale, large scale managed private rented housing and market sale. They have all committed to focus delivery of affordable housing for sale, private rented and market housing in the east of the borough while concentrating on the central and western parts of the borough to provide new affordable housing for rent. They are all experienced in housing estate renewal and are currently working in and around London in partnership with local councils to deliver growth and regeneration.

3.4 They also represent some of the largest stakeholders in the borough, owning and managing a significant proportion of the current registered provider stock. As such, they are well placed to make a significant difference to the lives of Haringey residents through improvements in the way they manage and invest in their existing stock.

3.5 In seeking to develop an open and transparent partnership, the council has deliberately been non-prescriptive in setting out terms and conditions, preferring instead to work with partners to develop the Framework and Agreement from the bottom up based on a set of guiding principles: -

- All partners will operate in an open, honest and transparent way, including the provision of information normally considered commercially sensitive as part of planning submissions.
- The relationship will exist between all partners and not just between individual providers and the council (note: where commercially sensitive information is provided this will be shared only between the individual provider and the council).
- Partners will work together to improve estate management by sharing information and proactively considering alternative management arrangements where this is considered appropriate.
- Partners will work together to tackle homelessness and reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation.
- Partners will work together to maximise the provision of affordable housing in the borough and will comply fully with the Council's planning policies and aim of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- Partners will work collaboratively with elected members, both in their strategic capacity as policy setters and community advocates for local residents.

3.6 The Agreement will cover three key areas and represents a real opportunity for our preferred partners to make a major contribution to tackling the housing challenges in the borough. The areas will mirror the three key priorities within the emerging housing strategy: -



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- a) development and new build, including estate renewal
- b) homelessness, temporary accommodation and lettings
- c) estate management, including community investment

- 3.7 The section on development and new build, including estate renewal, will seek to promote the provision of more housing through the appropriate use of council land and the use of the Council's retained RTB Receipts to provide grant funding. This will have additional benefits to the council of increasing the Council Tax base.
- 3.8 The section on homelessness, temporary accommodation and lettings, will co-ordinate work to reduce evictions and focus on proactive intervention and prevention measures to ensure residents can sustain their tenancies and contribute to a strong local economy. The Agreement will also promote alternative approaches to the use of temporary accommodation and the role registered providers have to play in this.
- 3.9 The section on estate management, including community investment, will focus on the local environment, condition of the estate and the properties themselves, as well as the opportunities available to tenants to enhance their life changes through access to education, training and work. The aim is to ensure that there is a joined up approach to local management that benefits everyone within a local community regardless of whom their landlord is.
- 3.10 The Preferred Partnership Agreement will also include a section on working with elected members, both at a strategic level to develop local housing policy in the borough and at an operational level to support members in their constituency and advocacy role. It will also include a clear governance and performance monitoring framework to ensure that registered providers, and the council, meet the expectations and outcomes of the agreement.
- 3.11 The inaugural meeting of the Preferred Partner Framework took place on 22 August 2014 to begin work on the Preferred Partner Agreement
- 3.12 As registered providers are private organisations, their involvement in, and adherence to, any agreement with the council is voluntary and therefore calls for an agreement that everyone can sign up to. The majority of the Agreement is about putting in place good practice for partnership working and ensuring that this feeds through to improvements that local residents can see. The provision of grant funding for new build requires detailed criteria which will set out the conditions of grant.