

Adult Social Care & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 25

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: *Registered Social Landlord Owned Social Housing Stock in the City*

Date of Meeting: *04 September 2008*

Report of: *Director of Adult Social Care & Housing*

Contact Officer: Name: *Martin Reid* Tel: *29-3321*
E-mail:

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This paper examines and explores multiple Registered Social Landlord (RSL) ownership of social housing in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) Members of ASCHOSC note the housing market and planning policy context;
- (2) Members consider an ad hoc Panel looking at some aspects of this issue in greater depth

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The Brighton & Hove Context

There are currently 15 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) who between them manage 3649 units of general needs rented stock in the City. This is slightly under average compared to comparable sized areas.

RSLs range from English Churches who own 6 properties, to the largest, Southern Housing who manage 830 properties. All the RSLs who manage general needs stock in the City are large, national organisations. A full list of RSLs and stock in the City is attached in Appendix 1.

The RSL sector is a large and valued provider of affordable housing and manages around 23% of all social housing stock in the City.

RSLs are the major providers of new, affordable permanent housing in Brighton & Hove, both for rent and low cost homeownership. They deliver an average of 230 units a year.

RSLs provide a variety of different types of housing in the City including built, mixed tenure small estates, converted street properties and sheltered properties for the elderly. The stock tends to be scattered throughout the City.

3.2 Stock consolidation – current position

In the past 12 months we have seen sector consolidation through mergers and collaborations. As a result the sector has reduced in size from 21 to 15 RSLs in Brighton & Hove.

We are expecting to see further consolidation in this sector through increasing merger activity, driven by internal and external competition

The merger between English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation, which will happen in 2009, is also expected to assist these trends, as stricter criteria come into play under which RSLs might attain investment partner status, which they will require in order to develop in the City.

3.3 Multiple RSL ownership of social housing: possible problems

There is evidence (Rationalisation of Housing Stock: CIH 2006) to show that areas with remote and disengaged landlords, often without a critical mass of houses in the area, can present significant problems. These include

- Not being actively engaged with the community
- Not being actively engaged with the local authority
- Not being proactive in solving local problems
- Not being responsive to local issues
- Not engaging in regeneration programs
- Being less likely to involve tenants
- Being less likely to provide a high quality service

In Brighton & Hove, there is no evidence to suggest that our RSL landlords are not performing as good landlords: all the RSLs with over 50 units in the City are fully engaged, have local area offices, and regularly attend the City Social Landlords' Forum.

All the major RSLs in the City are in the process of signing up to a protocol agreement with the City Council and the Housing Corporation which details how we work together to meet housing needs, secure thriving neighbourhoods and promote greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The Social Landlords' Forum is also in the process of benchmarking performance, to highlight any areas for concern.

The five small RSLs: English Churches, Worthing Homes, Raglan, Dominion and Home Group are less engaged. They have very small amounts of stock, often just one block of flats in the City, although all of them have larger stock outside the City Boundaries, and are actively engaged on a sub-regional basis

4. CONSULTATION

Informal consultation undertaken with the City Social Landlords Forum, the BHCC Housing Strategy Team, and the Development Team.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications: *None*

5.2 Legal Implications: *None: Local authorities do not have a regulatory role over RSLs.*

5.3 Equalities Implications: none

5.4 Sustainability Implications: working with our RSL partners helps towards achieving *Sustainable Communities* - using engagement and partnership to reduce poverty and environmental degradation.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications: none

5.6 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications: none

5.7 Corporate / Citywide Implications: none

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S): none considered

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The City Council currently has no difficulties in working with a number of RSL partners in the City.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Registered Social Landlords Operating in Brighton & Hove

REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS OPERATING IN BRIGHTON & HOVE JULY 2008

1.	Affinity Sutton: (includes Downland Housing who manage Brighton Housing Trust and William Sutton)	570
2.	Amicus Horizon Group: (includes Southern Horizon)	58
3.	Dominion Housing Group: (includes Kelsey)	9
4.	The Guinness Trust	535
5.	Home Group (includes Warden Housing)	18
6.	Hyde-Martlet Housing Association (now includes all Chichester Diocesan Housing Association and Hyde)	715
7.	Moat Housing Group (includes Bourne Housing)	170
8.	Orbit Group	205
10.	Places for People Group	70
11.	Raglan	36
12.	Sanctuary Housing (includes Shaftsbury Housing)	416
13.	Southern Housing (includes James Butcher)	830
14.	English Churches	6
15.	Worthing Homes	11
Total		3649

