



CABINET REPORT

Report Title	Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Development Procurement Framework
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Cabinet Meeting Date:	25 th November 2009
Key Decision:	Yes
Listed on Forward Plan:	Yes
Within Policy:	No
Policy Document:	Yes
Directorate:	Housing
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Ward(s)	All

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report proposes a new way forward for partnership working with RSL partners and a change to existing policy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree in principle to tender for a new RSL Procurement Framework, to address the future affordable housing requirements.
- 2.2 The final Procurement Framework Agreement to be reconsidered and approved by Cabinet at the end of the process.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 In the summer of 2007, Northampton Borough Council, Daventry District Council and South Northamptonshire Council jointly invited expressions of

interest from RSL's willing to create an affordable housing management partnership.

3.1.2 The agreement was not intended to create a legal relationship between parties. One of the main objectives of this agreement was to assist West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) create a consistent approach to the delivery of affordable housing and the interaction with private developers.

3.1.3 Following the selection criteria used for the Partnership Agreement, Northampton Borough Council selected the following RSL's to be on their Preferred Partnership Agreement:

- East Midlands Housing Association;
- Metropolitan Housing Partnership;
- Guinness Midsummer Housing Association;
- LHA – Asra Housing Association;
- Orbit Heart of England;
- Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association; and
- Home Housing Group
- Servite Houses

3.1.4 The success of the existing Partnership Agreement is highlighted in Appendix 1 to this report. This shows the level of performance that our RSL partners have achieved since April 2008, when the existing agreement was signed. The new Framework approach will certainly want to continue this excellent performance and partnership working, and build on it to ensure Northampton have the best possible opportunity to deliver the homes in the future that households in housing need require.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Looking ahead, the Borough Council have a big housing agenda to deliver, which includes priority areas such as:

- Central Area Action Plan;
- Northampton East PFI Area;
- Dallington Grange and Kings Heath area; and
- Future development opportunities with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

3.2.2 The current Partnership agreement is a management agreement, with the existing 8 RSL partners. What this means, is other non-RSL partners who develop affordable housing in the Borough, have to hand over the management of the homes to one of the 8 existing RSL partners, something which RSL's are reluctant to do. This has caused some tension, as developing RSL's prefer to keep their own homes.

3.2.3 Despite the benefits and success to date of the RSL Partnership Agreement in Northampton, we will need to improve and expand on this, if we are to deliver the fundamental transformational change that is required in some of our communities. We will need to be able to react and respond quickly to funding

opportunities and potential scheme developments when they are brought forward. This will help in the delivery of more affordable homes.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 Do Nothing

This option would mean that the Council remain working with the existing management partnership agreement, which covers the 8 RSL partners identified at the beginning of this report. Despite the improved relationship with RSL partners and the increased performance, this agreement is only a management agreement and lacks any formal monitoring of the success of RSL's on a consistent basis.

3.3.2 Tender for a Framework Agreement

This option would still ensure that there was a management agreement, but development would also be included. The framework would be performance managed better, with targets for RSL partners to achieve over the length of the framework agreement. This option would also provide the flexibility within the procurement process to act fast and bid for external funding at short notice as and when sites became available.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The proposals within this paper fully support the emerging Housing Strategy 2010-2015 and help achieve the following priorities:

- Manage Supply and Growth for the future of Northampton; and
- Deliver well designed, high quality homes, Neighbourhoods and Services

4.1.2 The proposed Framework is a change to existing policy, which is the Management Partnership Agreement, signed in April 2008.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 Existing staffing resources will be used to co-ordinate the tender process, and costs for advertising in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) will come from existing budgets within the Housing Strategy team.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Due to the nature of a proposed Framework approach, and the potential work involved over the next 5 years, the tender will have to be advertised through the OJEU process. Appendix 2 illustrates the timescales involved in working with this procurement route.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 The aim of this report is to put in place a framework, which will improve and hopefully increase the number of quality, affordable housing for those most in need.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 All RSL Partners within the existing Partnership Agreement
Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2 – Housing and Environment
Portfolio Holder for Housing – Councillor Sally Beardsworth
Housing
Legal
Finance
Planning

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Priority 2 – Housing Health and Wellbeing
Priority 4 – Partnerships and Community Engagement

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 None

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2 – Briefing Note – RSL Partnership Working Arrangements 21st October 2009

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