

	<h2>Housing Committee</h2> <h3>19 October 2015</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers (RPs)</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Strategic Lead, Housing</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Key Decision</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix 1- Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers Appendix 2- Barnet Annual Performance Review 2014/15</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>Registered Providers are key partners for the Council in delivering on the Housing Strategy objectives to increase the housing supply, including affordable housing. As the providers of accommodation for 7,000 households in the borough, Registered Providers also have a key part to play in assisting tenants affected by welfare reforms, providing training and employment opportunities, and providing effective neighbourhood management. In addition to this, the Council has completed an annual performance review of the major Registered Providers operating in the borough.</p>

<h2>Recommendations</h2>
<p>1. That the Committee note the report attached at Appendix 1.</p>

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 At the meeting of 27 April 2015, the Housing Committee resolved that a report be prepared for consideration by the Committee, with a view to a more strategic engagement with Registered Providers.
- 1.2 There are 55 Registered Providers managing over 7,000 homes in the borough, of which 18 have more than 100 units each. The main Registered Providers in Barnet providing over 65% of the 7,000 homes are Family Mosaic, Genesis, Home Group, Metropolitan Housing, Network Stadium and Notting Hill Housing Trust.
- 1.3 The report on the review of strategic engagement with Registered Providers is contained in **Appendix 1**. Registered Providers are important partners to the Council in the delivery of the Housing Strategy objectives to “increase the housing supply” and “delivery of homes that people can afford”. In addition to this, Registered Providers can assist tenants affected by welfare reforms, provide training and employment opportunities and provide effective neighbourhood management.
- 1.4 Also contained in **Appendix 2** is an annual performance report for 2014/15. The review presents an analysis of the performance of nine Registered Providers over housing management and housing development activities.

2 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The attached reports highlight that the Council generally works effectively and strategically with Registered Providers in the borough.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The Communities and Local Government Committee is holding an inquiry into the viability and sustainability of housing associations. This inquiry will look at the proposed extension of Right to Buy and how this and a number of other government measures may impact on the ability of housing associations to build and develop. The outcomes of the inquiry will have to be considered by the Council as it continues to develop its work with Registered Providers.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Council will continue to engage with Registered Providers to deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 Registered providers contribute to the strategic objectives in the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2020 in the following ways:

“The Council, working with local, regional and national partners, will strive to ensure that Barnet is a place:

- *“Of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life”*- by working in partnership with the Council on delivering on the Council’s ambitious regeneration programme which provides more affordable homes and improvements to infrastructure.
- *“Where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure”* – by providing housing through nomination agreements for the Council’s applicants for rehousing. A stable, safe and affordable home helps households to be able to regain control in their lives.
- *“Where responsibility is shared, fairly”* – by helping households affected by welfare benefit reforms to access skills and employment opportunities so that they are less reliant on the state.

5.1.2 Barnet’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2015 to 2020 highlights the fact that there is a long term shift in housing tenure towards renting and away from owner occupancy (either outright or with a mortgage) reflecting a sustained reduction in housing affordability and an imbalance between housing demand and supply. Registered Providers are providing more affordable homes to help meet the demand.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 There are no direct resource implications arising out of this report.

5.2.2 Within the Strategic Planning and Regeneration team there is 1 part time (18 hours per week) Housing Association Liaison Officer responsible for liaison and monitoring and benchmarking with Registered Providers which is already being funded.

5.2.3 The reduction of the Overall Benefit Cap (as part of the Government’s reform of welfare) to £23,000 in London from November 2016 means that some households living in housing association, particularly affordable rented properties, may not be able to afford the rents charged. The Council will continue to work with Job Centre Plus and Barnet Homes in the Welfare Reform Taskforce to assist households affected by the cap, including those living in affordable rented properties, either by entering employment or securing more affordable accommodation elsewhere.

5.2.4 Registered Providers are reviewing their development plans following the Government’s decision to reduce social rents including affordable rents by 1% per year until 2019/20.

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 Social Value is not applicable as this is not a Service Contract.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.4.1 Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, Appendix A – sets out the terms of reference of the Housing Committee which includes:
- Housing Strategy (incorporating Homelessness Strategy)
 - Work with Barnet Homes, RSLs and social housing providers to ensure the optimum provision of housing and associated facilities for those who require social housing
 - Commissioning of Environmental Health
 - Promote the better integration of privately rented properties into the Borough's framework;
 - All matters related to Private sector Housing including Disabled Facility Grants
 - Housing licensing and housing enforcement.
- 5.4.2 Specifically the Housing Committee may submit budget proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee relating to the Committee's budget for the following year in accordance with the budget timetable.
- 5.4.3 Registered Providers are regulated by the Homes and Community Agency (HCA). The performance framework includes "Economic" standards such as governance and financial viability and value for money and "Consumer" standards such as tenant involvement and empowerment.

5.5 Risk Management

- 5.5.1 Registered Providers have a major role to play in accelerating housing development in Barnet and a reduced capacity for them to develop is a key risk that will impact on the Council's ability to provide the new homes to meet the demand from a growing population. The Government's recent announcement on reducing rents by 1% every year until 2019/20 will have an impact on the business plans of providers and their ability to build more affordable homes. Providers have already started to review their plans for future house building to ensure that they are sustainable.
- 5.5.2 A range of options are being considered by providers to extend their capacity to develop, including through cross subsidy from more market oriented projects – involving both properties to rent and for sale. Larger providers are also working in partnership with other associations (including smaller associations who had borrowing capacity) and particularly with local authorities to speed up development and to achieve best value for the resources they were committing.
- 5.5.3 Following Government announcements of proposals to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, Registered Providers are expected to enter into a voluntary agreement with the Government to offer their tenants the Right to Buy.
- 5.5.4 These issues will have an impact across the country and this is one of the reasons why Parliament has announced a review of the role of registered providers in light of the changes highlighted above.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act), The Council has a duty to have ‘due regard” to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act, advancing equality of opportunity between persons with a protected characteristic and those without, and foster good relations between persons with protected characteristics and those without.
- 5.6.2 The protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership but to a limited extent.
- 5.6.3 The HCA requires Registered Providers to meet the tenant involvement and empowerment standard which provides expectations over equalities.
- 5.6.4 Registered providers are key partners in the delivery of the Council’s Housing Strategy 2015 to 2025. A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and the Strategy will have an overall positive impact on all sections of Barnet’s community. For example:
- Action by registered providers to prevent homelessness and assist households affected by the overall Benefits Cap will assist households who are generally more diverse and deprived than the population as a whole. They are more likely to be younger, from a diverse range of backgrounds, and single families with children.
 - Much of the new housing, including the affordable housing to be delivered by the Registered Providers will be in the west of the borough on the regeneration estates where the most deprived and Black and Minority Ethnic communities are overrepresented in comparison to other areas of the borough.
 - Specialist housing will be provided for vulnerable people, for example older people and other adults with long-term conditions to ensure that there is a choice of tenure and support and an ability to plan ahead for the future to avoid expensive care costs where possible.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.7.1 Registered providers are regulated the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who have published a set of standards including one for tenant involvement and empowerment.
- 5.7.2 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard requires registered providers to ensure that their tenants are given a wide range of opportunities to influence and be involved in the management and maintenance of their homes.
- 5.7.3 More information about how local registered providers are performing in relation to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard can be found in section 8 of the performance report attached as **Appendix 2**.

5.8 INSIGHT

5.8.1 Insight data has not been used in this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Relevant previous papers are listed in the table below.

Housing Committee, 27 October 2014	Decision Item 9- Housing Strategy	http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=699&MId=7936&Ver=4
Housing Committee. 27 April 2015	MMembers Item: RESOLVED that a report be prepared for consideration by the Committee, with a view to more strategic engagement with Registered Providers	http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22785/Cllr%20Houston%20-%20Engagement%20with%20Registered%20Providers.pdf
Housing Committee. 27 April 2015	Decision item 10- Summary of Feedback Following Consultation on Draft Housing Strategy	http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=699&MId=7938&Ver=4
Housing Committee 29 June 2015	Decision item 7- Housing Strategy.	http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24071/Housing%20Strategt.pdf