

# Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers

## 1. Introduction

Registered Providers (RPs), also referred to as Housing Associations, manage more than 7000 homes in Barnet and are responsible for the delivery of the majority of new affordable homes in the borough. As such, RPs are important partners in helping the Council to achieve its strategic housing objectives, in particular increasing the housing supply, delivery of homes that people can afford, tackling homelessness and delivery of high quality services.

This report provides an overview of the role that RPs play in the delivery of new affordable homes, supporting residents affected by welfare reform, providing support for training and employment initiatives and neighbourhood management.

RPs will also be affected by housing reforms that are due to be implemented through the forthcoming Housing Bill and an overview of these is provided.

The report also provides an overview of how the Council currently engages with RPs both at a local and regional level and information on how RPs are regulated.

Finally, the report includes the outcome of an annual performance review of the larger RPs in the borough, which is included in full as Appendix 2.

## 2. Overview of Registered Providers in Barnet

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. In addition to this, Barnet Homes as an Arms-Length Management Organisation (ALMO) manages 14,000 tenanted and leasehold homes on behalf of the Council.

Registered Provider	Number of rented homes in Barnet
Genesis	1,283
Notting Hill Housing	797
Family Mosaic	754
Home Group	680
Metropolitan	664
Network Stadium	275
Catalyst	219
Origin	98
One Housing Group	96
Barnet Homes	10,200

In addition to the RPs listed above, there are a number of smaller RPs providing housing and services for particular groups of residents in the borough. These include Agudas Israel Housing Association providing homes for orthodox Jewish families, Older Women Cohousing providing homes for women aged over 50 (in

## Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers

partnership with Hanover Housing Association) and Birnbeck Housing Association providing housing and support for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Other RPs operating in the borough include Christian Action, Asra, Paradigm and IDS. The chief executive of Christian Action is the chair of Barnet Housing Association Liaison Group.

### 3. Delivery of new affordable homes

Registered Providers are the main providers of new affordable homes in the borough, having built 1,042 affordable homes since April 2012, including 523 for social rent, 268 for affordable rent and 248 for shared ownership/low-cost home ownership.

As shown in the table below there are currently five large regeneration schemes operating in the borough and in each case the Council is working in partnership with an RP to deliver new affordable homes, both for rent and shared ownership/low-cost homeownership.

Regeneration scheme	Registered provider	Affordable homes provision
Brent Cross/Cricklewood	TBC	1,300 homes by 2026/27
Dollis Valley	L&Q	250 homes 2019/20
Grahame Park	Genesis	1,439 homes by 2026/17
Stonegrove & Spur Road	Family Mosaic	389 homes by 2017/18
West Hendon	Metropolitan	543 homes by 2026/27

In addition to the regeneration schemes, there are major developments in Millbrook Park providing 324 affordable homes by 2026/27 and in Colindale providing 1,797 new homes by 2020/21. The major developments in Colindale are Beaufort Park, Peel Centre and the British Library Site.

A standard nomination agreement is in place for all social rent and affordable rented housing in which all providers are expected to give at least 50% of lettings for the local authority to allocate to (non-family sized accommodation) and 75% for family sized accommodation (2 bedroom or above). Higher levels of nominations have been and will continue to be negotiated on individual schemes either built on Council land or funded through S106 agreements, typically these will be 100% nominations of all lettings.

RPs are an important source of accommodation for the Council to use to meet its housing duties. In 2014/15 the Council received 780 opportunities to let from RPs which Barnet Homes was able to allocate to housing applicants. This compares with 271 council secure lettings and 300 private rented sector lettings.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) has set an affordable homes programme for 2015/18 which includes 680 affordable homes in Barnet, to be built by RPs.

For affordable rented homes built by RPs and funded through the GLA programme, 5% of homes will be let on a pan-London basis and 10% on larger

## **Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers**

strategic sites (over 150 units). In addition, 10% of the homes built will be retained for nominations by the RP.

The Council works effectively with RPs on the delivery of affordable homes, particularly on the regeneration schemes and where formal Section 106 agreements are in place.

### **4. Welfare Reform**

RPs have an important role to play in terms of Welfare Reform. The main focus of Welfare Reform is to assist people into work and RPs and local authorities have an important role to play in working with their tenants to increase their skills and opportunities in the workplace.

Barnet's Welfare Reform Task Force is a joint team which includes Housing Officers and Welfare Benefits Advisors from Barnet Homes, Job Centre Plus Advisors, Housing Benefit Advisors and coaches from Future Path. Genesis Housing Association was on the steering group that set up the Task Force. Since 2013, the Task Force has helped 1,400 Barnet residents affected by Welfare Reform, of this amount 7% are tenants of RPs. The Task Force have assisted in finding work, moving into more affordable homes and advice on benefits and support.

RPs have been working with their tenants affected by welfare reform to help them moving into more affordable housing that meets their needs or alternatively assisting them in seeking employment and training. The Benefit Cap will be reduced to £23,000 in London from autumn 2016. The lower cap may mean that more tenants of RPs will see their benefits capped. The Task Force will continue to work with RPs to assist affected households to find work or secure more affordable accommodation, including 18 to 21 year olds affected by the new housing benefit restrictions.

Universal Credit commenced in Barnet in March 2015 for new single applicants. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has held training/partnership sessions with Registered Providers. Further information on how RPs are assisting their tenants in preparing for Universal Credit, including financial inclusion and digital inclusion, can be seen in the Performance Review, Appendix 2.

### **5. Training and employment**

Given the fact that the Benefit Cap is intended to encourage people to get into work, most RPs now have dedicated employment and training teams in place to provide training for employment, job brokerage and apprentice services for tenants. However some providers do not provide locally based skills and employment training to their tenants in Barnet but offer support run from other locations for example in central London.

The Council has a Skills and Development team creating opportunities for RPs to meet local businesses and provide opportunities for local residents to be employed. A Construction Business event attended by RPs was held to

## **Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers**

understand the employment and training requirements of regeneration developments in the borough and to work together to ensure that local residents are best equipped to maximise on the employment opportunities that will become available.

An example of this is Workfinder where job brokerage and advice is available. This has been successful in NW9 and is to be developed in High Barnet and Edgware. Promotion of this will be through the Housing Association Liaison Group.

The Council has been working with RPs in delivering the Construction Training Initiative through offering on-site training on construction sites. This initiative offers training opportunities on all significant new developments where there is affordable housing. The initiative is administered by Notting Hill Housing Trust who have established links with local colleges and covers several boroughs in North West London to allow the trainees to move between sites.

### **6. Neighbourhood management**

The Housing and Community Agency Neighbourhood and Community Standard require Registered Providers to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They should work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.

One example is where there have been several RPs managing housing schemes in locations adjoining each other. To facilitate community cohesion, fun days for the residents and joint neighbourhood management meetings have taken place to facilitate partnership working.

The Council also assist with linking RPs and other agencies such as Victim Support providing local Neighbourhood Justice Panels to reduce rates of re-offending.

### **7. Forthcoming housing reforms**

The Government has made a number of announcements on further housing reforms and changes to rent policy that will have an impact on RPs. Social housing rents will reduce by 1% a year for four years from April 2016. This will apply to both social and affordable rented homes but not apply to shared ownership homes. It is projected that this would result in a 12% real terms reduction in average rents by 2020/21 and help to reduce the overall housing benefit bill. The projected loss in rental income will be significant as many RPs will not be able to charge the rents they had made provision for in their business and development plans; therefore, this will impact on their ability for some RPs to deliver new developments.

Registered Providers have reached agreement with the Government on a voluntary scheme to extend the Right to Buy for housing association tenants.

## Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers

The Council will work with RPs and developers to understand the likely implications of this change and others in the forthcoming Housing Bill as more details become available.

### 8. How the Council Engages with Registered Providers

The following table shows how the Council and Re currently engage with and manage the performance of RPs.

<b>Current Engagement/ Monitoring</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>What's Involved</b>	<b>Engagement/ Performance</b>
<b>Annual Performance Review</b>	Annually	Standard review issued to each larger/ developing registered provider. Included in this review is a meeting with various staff to talk through issues in Barnet.	Engagement and performance
<b>Barnet Housing Association Liaison Group meeting</b>	Twice a year and ad hoc if required	All RP's in Barnet are invited, chaired by CEO of local RP. Agenda includes briefing from GLA, Welfare Reform and any other relevant items.	Engagement
<b>Development Meetings</b>	Minimum once per year	Individual meetings between larger developing RP's and Re to discuss current developments and future development plans in Barnet.	Engagement
<b>Barnet Housing Association Nomination Group</b>	Minimum once per year	Lettings staff from all RP's in Barnet invited, Barnet Homes and Re. Agenda items are varied but include up to date issues/ concerns regarding lettings/nominations.	Engagement
<b>Nominations Newsletter</b>	Quarterly	Newsletter written by Re and Barnet Homes.	Engagement
<b>General meetings/ Visits</b>	Ad hoc	Ad hoc meetings and visits to RP's on areas of mutual concern and information sharing i.e. Welfare Reform, Universal Credit, Rents	Engagement
<b>Housing Forum</b>	Ad hoc	LBB, Re and RP's and other stakeholders to discuss housing policy issues such as Housing Strategy.	Engagement
<b>Consultation on changes in Policy and</b>	Ad hoc	LBB consult with RP's on various policies and strategies this can be done via liaison	Engagement

## Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers

<b>Strategies</b>		groups, forums and email consultation.	
<b>Monitoring of lettings returns.</b>	Collected quarterly and recorded as an annual PI.	RP's provide details of lettings for each quarter to confirm that RP's have met nomination agreements. Results are verified.	Monitoring.
<b>Development Data</b>	Throughout the year	Re is in regular contact with each developing RP to discuss start on site dates, completion dates and monitoring the S106 affordable housing elements. Completion statistics are recorded as monthly KPI.	Engagement and performance.

### 9. Regulation of Registered Providers

From April 2012 the HCA has been responsible for maintaining the register of Registered Providers, and for setting out the regulatory framework within which they must operate. The Regulatory Framework includes both the regulatory standards which providers must meet, and the way in which the Regulator carries out its functions in assessing these.

The Council offers tenants of RPs general advice on how to address any concerns they have regarding their landlord. This includes taking up the issue direct with the provider and advice on the Housing Ombudsman.

In order to assist councillors in addressing concerns raised direct to them by residents, a contact list is available which provides contact details of each Registered Provider operating in Barnet. This is currently being updated.

### 10. Regional Engagement

The Council engages with RPs on a regional basis through quarterly meetings with the GLA. This is largely focused around housing development and related issues. This gives both parties the opportunity to raise concerns with about individual Registered Providers.

More informal engagement with RPs is through informal networks at conferences and housing events, Sub Regional Meetings and London Councils.

### 11. Conclusion

RPs 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, RPs also have a key part to play in assisting tenants affected by welfare reforms, providing

## **Appendix 1: Review of Strategic Engagement with Registered Providers**

training and employment opportunities, and providing effective neighbourhood management.

In order to continue to work effectively and strategically with RPs, the Council will do more to communicate on housing delivery on sites identified by the providers and also build more partnership working on training and employment.