

Report of The Head of Built Environment

HOUSING ASSOCIATION PERFORMANCE

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report advises Members of the stock profile of Housing Associations in the Borough and the level of nominations to Housing Associations.
- 1.2 This report relates to the Council's objectives of delivering efficient and responsive services and enhancing the environment.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 Housing Associations are the main providers of affordable housing in the Borough of Wellingborough. This report advises Members of the stock profile of affordable housing including types, sizes and tenure of units. An analysis of nominations made to Housing Associations has been included with an overview of the numbers of nominations offered, accepted and rejected.

3 Appendices

- 3.1 Appendices are included showing the number, type and tenure of stock owned by Housing Associations in the Borough. The number of nominations made to the Council through the Agreement with Wellingborough Homes and nominations agreements with Housing Associations.

4. Proposed Action:

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note the report.**

5 Background

- 5.1 Housing Associations are the main providers of affordable housing in the Borough and have been active in delivering affordable homes. During 2007-08 116 units of social rented housing and 58 of shared ownership were completed; a total of 174 units (in excess of the 2007/8 target of 160).
- 5.2 During 2008-09 72 affordable units have completed, comprising a total of 39 social rented and 33 shared ownership (a shortfall of 61 units from the 2008/09 target of 133).
- 5.3 Members of the Community Committee receive a quarterly report advising of progress the Council is making with its Housing Association partners to deliver its target of 133 affordable homes per annum. The Council also works closely with

its Housing Association partners to ensure effective and responsive management of local affordable homes. A joint quarterly report to this Committee is made between Wellingborough Homes and the Council advising on management and improvement of the 4618 homes they currently own.

- 5.4 This is a new report which offers initial stock data of all the Housing Associations with stock in the Borough and nominations information between Housing Associations and the Council.
- 5.5 The monitoring of nominations is a requirement of the Transfer Agreement with Wellingborough Homes. The Council also has nominations agreements with all the existing owners of Housing Association stock in the Borough of Wellingborough.
- 5.6 The Council has a statutory requirement to supply Government statistics on housing, (HSSA). This is an annual report which requests information on the housing register, housing capital and the number of new affordable homes. The return in July 2008 required detailed information from Housing Associations on performance, however this has been withdrawn from this year's submission and those for the future. The Government's new Tenant Services Authority (TSA) now has a regulatory remit for Housing Associations and the management of their homes and this detailed information is being requested by the TSA. At the current time this is discretionary but due to become mandatory. This information will be available using the website ENROSH and it is expected that for next year's report a wider analysis of Performance Information will be available, including void levels, customer satisfaction and repairs performance.
- 5.7 At a sub market level the North Northants Local Authorities Housing Strategy Officers work together to deliver new affordable homes, assist in the regeneration of existing housing stock and work with Housing Associations to deliver national, regional and sub regional priorities e.g. mixed tenure sustainable development, prevention of homelessness, support for government grant, etc. A new joint funded post with the Regional Housing Group has the remit to benchmark Housing Association performance. During 2009-10 performance information will be obtained to further inform and enhance this report.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 Examination of table 1 reveals that the largest Housing Association by some margin is Wellingborough Homes owning 77% of the Borough's housing association stock followed by Places for People (North British HA) who own 8.7% of the stock.
- 6.2 The data displayed in chart 1 and table 2 shows that there is a predominance of three and two bedroom homes to rent with few bungalows in the housing stock. Rented flats make up 28% of the total housing stock which continue to be in demand from the information contained within the Council's Housing Register. Shared ownership numbers have increased recently due to national policy to increase the number and level of intermediate affordable housing products however this has slowed down due to economic constraints and lending restrictions and although this is not as much a problem for Wellingborough as

some other areas many shared ownership/intermediate products have remained unsold. Housing Associations have implemented an intermediate market rent product which they are using for the interim period for unsold products. This enables the property to be let at less than market rent for a defined period. The tenant then has the option to buy or move to another property to rent or extend the term.

- 6.3 Table 3 shows the level of stock and how this is apportioned across the Borough. Finedon has the largest level of Housing Association stock for the market towns (over 3,000 but under 10,000 population) and Little Harrowden has the most stock for a rural village (under 3,000 population). Harwick and Sywell have only 2 Housing Association homes in each village.
- 6.4 Appendix B analyses the nominations made to Housing Associations since the date of transfer of the housing stock to Wellingborough Homes. There were 988 nominations made to Housing Associations who have stock in the Borough. Table 4 shows that there was a higher level of refusals than acceptances of nominations by the Housing Associations. Table 5 also shows a high number of nomination refusals by the applicant. This information reveals that the allocation policy of the Council and that of the Housing Associations are differing. For example the Housing Associations will take a differing view on debt, anti social behaviour or pets. Also the applicant is refusing accommodation which is often due to location. The implementation of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme will assist in removing these barriers as the applicant will choose where they want to live and the property they wish to bid for and the policies of the Council and the Housing Associations will become aligned.
- 6.5 Table 6 shows the household formation of the nominations made from the Council's housing register and it reveals that the one and two bed homes have been required for younger and older single people and single parents with one child and the Housing Register shows there continues to be need for these properties.

7 Legal Powers

- 7.1 The Council has powers contained within the Housing Act 1985 and 1996 to assist registered social landlords and make grants or loans to them.

8 Financial and Value For Money Implications

- 8.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report which cannot be met from within the capacity of the existing services. The value for money considerations are the additional finance levered into the borough homes. £6.7m grant has been secured from the Homes and Communities Agency from April 2008. The improvement contracts with Housing Associations, employing local labour, contribute to the economic wealth of the Borough. Wellingborough Homes have a commitment to spend £94.2m on improving the housing stock of the Borough within five years.

9 Risk Analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
Poor management of Housing Association homes.	Investment reduces – economic downturn, standards reduced poor housing, increased management problems	Low risk but could increase to medium risk if RSL residents unhappy with service	Regulatory service from the Tenant Services Authority

10 Implications for Resources

- 10.1 The work this report refers will be undertaken using existing staffing resources within housing strategy and housing needs.

11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

- 11.1 The work this report refers will promote health improvement, community cohesion, and community safety matters under the local area agreement (NI155)

12 Implications for Equalities

- 12.1 The Housing Strategy 2009-12 and work of the service has been screened and an impact assessment undertaken.

13 Author and Contact Officer

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14 Consultees

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Housing Needs Team – Sue Atkins, Charlene Falkenthal
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15 Background Papers

HSSA return 2009, NROSH website <http://www.nrosh.co.uk/>