

Information Report

Scrutiny



Part 1

Date: 14th March 2023

Subject Registered Social Landlords

Purpose To provide a briefing to Scrutiny Committee (People) on the role of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) in providing accommodation.

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Ward City wide

Summary RSLs work with the council to provide affordable and specialist accommodation in the city. This paper summaries their role, funding regime allocations policy and provides a case study demonstrating how the council works with RSLs to develop housing for people with learning disabilities.

Proposal **This paper is provided as information only**

This report was prepared after consultation with:

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Background:

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) provide a range of housing across the city including social housing, accommodation for older people, low-cost home ownership and supported housing. Some RSLs also provide floating support to people who require housing related support to sustain their tenancies or to prevent homelessness.

As Newport does not own its housing stock, we work in partnership with RSLs to develop and deliver social housing as well as a range of other services in the city. Linc Cymru, Melin, Newport City Homes and Pobl actively develop new accommodation in the city as well as owning and managing their own stock. Aelwyd Housing Association, Elim Housing Association, Hafod Housing Association and United Welsh Housing Association also own and manage social housing in Newport.

Funding for RSLs:

Newport City Council's Housing Strategy Team commissions new social housing through our Welsh Government funded Social Housing Grant. The level of Social Housing Grant has increased in recent years and Newport has been successful in using slippage where other local authority areas have been unable to utilise their grant. In 2023-24 our total allocation will be c.£18 million. We also work with RSLs to utilise other capital funds to develop specialist accommodation including move-on housing and supported housing.

The following table provides a breakdown of Social Housing Grant spend

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 (Indicative)
Total SHG	£8,844,070	£7,225,751	£12,497,052
Schemes supported	13	12	17
No. of units delivered	318	305	368

The council undertakes a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) every 5 years. This is a detailed analysis of the local housing market and housing demand. Based upon the LHMA, an annual Prospectus is developed and shared with RSLs. This sets the high-level delivery priorities in the city by ward, applications for Social Housing Grant are assessed against these priorities alongside a range of criteria. Newport currently has 696 homes in the SHG Planned Development Program (1519 in broader pipeline). This is a mixture of social housing, homes for older people, adapted housing and shared ownership.

Allocations:

Most allocations to RSL properties are made through Newport Home Options. All applications are assessed by the Housing Advice team in line with legislation and the Newport Housing Options policy. Once assessed applications are awarded points and placed into priority bands. Applicants can then express an interest in available properties which are advertised on a weekly basis. Demand for social housing is currently at unprecedented levels and outstrips supply. There are currently over 9000 people registered on the Common Housing Register.

Social Hos Lettings in 21-22		
Band A	140	20.62%
Band B	206	30.34%
Band C	252	37.11%
Band D	81	11.93%
Total	679	

Allocations for supported accommodation managed by RSLs are made via the Housing Support Gateway. Applications for the Housing Support Gateway are thoroughly assessed by the council's Housing Support team and people are allocated to services which will support them with their assessed needs.

Case study:

Bank House is a redevelopment by the Pobl Group of a disused brownfield site, alongside the River Usk. When complete, the site will provide over 200 homes that are a mix of sizes and tenures. The development includes a tree-lined river walk that connects to a nearby park and is well connected to local amenities. Through the joint working arrangements established by the Independent Living Strategy, officers from the Strategic Housing and Social Services Commissioning teams identified this as a site where accommodation for adults with a learning disability would be appropriate, particularly as there was a pressing need to find alternative accommodation for one specific individual.

This person was living alone in a property that was larger than they needed with 24-hour support. They displayed challenging behaviours and were unwilling to share staff or live with others, resulting in a high-cost care package. Pobl's Care and Support Team, along with the individual's social worker worked in partnership to prepare them for a move to Bank House where they would be living in their own flat, alongside other adults with a learning disability. The preparatory work took into account the specific needs of the individual and the challenges that a move would present to them.

The individual requiring more suitable accommodation is now settled in their new home. They had previously been living quite an isolated life but in their new home they are interacting socially with other residents and the local community. They are noticeably happier, are allowing staff into their flat and are joining in group activities with staff and other residents, which includes eating meals together. People who have known this individual for a long time have commented on how positive the move has been for them. They are no longer displaying challenging behaviours. This has reduced the cost of their care package and it is anticipated that this will continue to reduce as they continue to settle even more into their new home.

