

## Strategic Housing – Registered Social Landlords Review Environment and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Panel

### Reason for review

The role of the Local Authority in the direct provision of housing has massively decreased since the 1970s. However, the council retains a community leadership and strategic housing role for the area. Therefore, understanding the experience of residents in their journey through the lettings process, home management and their overall experience of place, will help inform the council's strategic housing enabling role and help the council in its influencing of RSLs to meet resident's needs by understanding the customer journey.

### Objectives/scope

There are several Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) which operate within the Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) area. Their roles should go beyond simply providing dormitory placements, to fostering community, place shaping and contributing to the health and wellbeing of the area. Therefore, this review will be focused on speaking to the RSLs (including those providing shared ownerships), in terms of understanding how RSLs in the borough approach this and to speaking to RSLs' residents (including those in shared ownership).

The review is looking to deliver:

- assuredness of service provision for residents of RSLs or enhanced provision if necessary.
- identification of potential opportunities for RSL providers to foster community wellbeing and assist in individual health and wellbeing outcomes within BFC.

This review will do this by:

- Mapping the provision for social housing in the borough.
- Creating a set of case studies that gives insight to the lives of residents in the borough, whose landlord is an RSL. This will help the council in its influencing of, and partnership work with, RSLs to meet residents' needs.
- Auditing the application of RSL allocation systems through use of spot checks.
- Reviewing procedures for escalating complaints leading to enforcement.
- Reviewing current use of enforcement available to the council and individuals against poor landlords.

At the conclusion of this work the Panel will produce a report highlighting its findings and proposing recommendations on the role and scope for RSL providers in improving residents' lives through their vital place shaping and community development role.

**Delivery methods:** Spot check audit; focus groups of residents and RSL providers, data analysis, site observations

**Council theme:** Communities

**Council team:** Early Help

**Review due:** January 2021

**Proposed by:** Cllr Porter, Chair  
Environment and Culture Overview and

**Equality Impact Assessment**

Government data<sup>1</sup> published on 4 February 2020 showed that between 2016-2108 17% of households (3.9 million) lived in social housing in England. White British households most likely to rent from Registered Social Landlords householders were under the age of 45. Households with higher rates of renting social housing were from the Black African (44%), Mixed White and Black African (41%) and Black Caribbean (40%) ethnic groups. Therefore, the review will aim to ensure a similar mix of backgrounds when selecting residents to be part of a focus group and talk about their experiences of living in a RSL. The review will endeavour to assess if this is the position for Bracknell Forest.

**Financial and legal implications**

There are potentially legal and financial implications of any recommendations arising from this review which will be fully addressed in the review report.

**Climate change implications**

Research commissioned by Sustainable Homes in 2019 'Housing 2050: How UK social housing can meet the challenge of climate change' found that the UK's social housing stock would miss CO2 emission targets set for 2050 unless landlords change their business plans. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for good quality social housing which fits with the local areas' place shaping approach. During this review the Panel will reflect upon these factors and use their findings to inform the O&S Commission's Climate Change review work and ensure any recommendations reflect the national and local agendas on climate change. The review will endeavour to assess if this is the position for Bracknell Forest.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/social-housing/renting-from-a-local-authority-or-housing-association-social-housing/latest>