



Partnership Delivery Group

8 January 2019

Review of Platform Housing Group (formerly Waterloo Housing Group)

Report of the Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report will provide Members an opportunity to review the partnership with Platform Housing Group (formerly Waterloo Housing Group), the second largest provider of affordable housing in the borough
- 1.2. Jeff Plant, Assistant Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods will provide a presentation to Members on performance during 2018/19 across key services and outline future plans and initiatives.
- 1.3. Members are requested to comment on performance to date and any areas where the partnership could be strengthened to achieve joint priorities.
- 1.4. The partnership with Platform Housing Group was last scrutinised in January 2018. At the meeting it was agreed that the work of the partnership with Waterloo be endorsed.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Members consider and make comments on the presentation made by Platform Housing Group and endorse the work of the partnership.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1. As part of the Platform Housing Group, Waterloo Housing builds social housing and affordable new homes across the Midlands and Lincolnshire. The Council has worked closely with Waterloo Housing as a key partner of the Trent Valley Partnership in enabling the development of rural affordable housing. The partnership is committed to carrying out further rural housing needs surveys to ascertain whether there is a continued need for affordable housing in rural areas.
- 2.2. Continued partnership working with Platform Housing Group will strengthen the existing partnership and maximise the opportunities available to develop affordable housing in rural locations within the borough in addition to a continued pipeline of affordable housing through more traditional develop led

schemes (Section 106 Agreements) and existing re-lets of social rented properties.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1. Waterloo Housing Group and Fortis Living recently came together to form Platform Housing Group, one of the largest housing associations in the Midlands. The newly created Group will cause no immediate change in day to day activities, with both Waterloo Housing and Fortis Living continuing to operate as part of the Group. Waterloo Housing Group also uses a trading name (Waterloo Homes) for the marketing and management of low cost home ownership properties. Locally, De Montfort Housing Association own and manage properties in Rushcliffe and assist in meeting local housing need through participation in the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- 3.2. One of the main benefits of the partnership is the delivery of rural affordable housing with Waterloo Housing. In particular, there are significant issues of rural housing need around affordability and the inability of local families to access housing in their own communities. Lack of employment opportunities, school closures and poor access to local services are contributing to this problem.
- 3.3. To help address this need, the Council has developed a rural exception site programme in partnership with Midlands Rural Housing and Waterloo Housing, the Trent Valley Partnership (TVP) to identify and meet local housing needs. Since the partnership's inception in 2005, 7 affordable housing sites have been completed delivering in total 53 homes at Aslockton, Cropwell Bishop (phases 1 & 2), East Bridgford (phase 1 & 2), Kinoulton and Tollerton. In total, the completed schemes will have provided 30 rented and 23 shared ownership affordable homes in rural villages attracting over £1.45m Homes England funding and £456,000 Rushcliffe Capital Grant (through s106 monies).
- 3.4. Over the last year, the partnership has been exploring further opportunities for exception site developments. A site has been identified at Gotham and an exhibition promoting the development was recently undertaken to confirm local housing need. A further potential site at Flintham has been identified and agreement reached with the Parish Council to undertake a Housing Needs Survey. It is proposed to review the parishes with the larger settlements where they have the greatest potential to deliver rural exception site developments of sufficient scale within more sustainable settlements.
- 3.5. A presentation on the TVP partnership and the rural exception site programme was provided to the Town and Parish Council in September 2018 to explain the process, successful outcomes, future challenges and links to the draft Local Plan Part 2.
- 3.6. The draft Local Plan Part 2 makes housing allocations in the larger villages of Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth, Radcliffe, Ruddington and also the smaller villages of Cropwell Bishop, East Bridgford, Gotham and Sutton Bonington.

Whilst these sites will include an element of affordable housing to meet borough wide housing needs they will not be restricted to people with a local connection to the village where the site is located.

3.7. Platform Housing Group representatives will provide Members with a presentation covering partnership working and key services across the Group, including:

- Partnership working
- Asset Management
- Sheltered and Supported Housing
- Income recovery & welfare reforms
- Lettings and allocations
- Neighbourhood Investment
- Customer Care Services
- Current challenges and future plans

3.8. Members were asked to submit questions for discussion with Platform Housing Group. In addition to their presentation to Members, Platform Housing Group Housing representatives will take questions on the above areas and any other matters as requested.

4. Risks and Uncertainties

4.1. The future delivery of rural affordable housing where schemes are granted planning permission by exception to meet local housing need will be dependent on the continued support of Parish Councils and the availability of acceptable sites.

4.2. Registered Providers eligibility criteria may result in an increasing number of applicants on the waiting list (including applicants threatened with/or homeless) having restricted access to social rented housing due to previous failed tenancies and/or rent arrears which may result in higher temporary accommodation costs where the Council has a statutory duty to rehouse.

5. Implications

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The current capital programme (£1.146m for 2018/19) has provisions to support the delivery of affordable housing until 2019/20, working in partnership with Registered Housing Providers. Sums are therefore

available for rural exception sites although, in reality, grants required for such schemes tend to be minimal.

5.1.2. Any future delivery of affordable homes will (as per the current scheme) result in additional New Homes Bonus payments. However the future of the New Homes Bonus Scheme is very uncertain and therefore the value and duration of any payments is not guaranteed. Clarification is expected from the pending Local Government Financial Settlement. Additional Council Tax receipts will also accrue from the new properties.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1. There are no direct legal implications, the report the ongoing partnership supports the Council's statutory housing obligations.

5.3. Equalities Implications

5.3.1. This partnership would support young people obtaining homes within the area, as well as enabling elderly and disabled residents to find housing more suitable to their needs, releasing larger properties back into the system for families.

5.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

5.4.1. The Partnership Agreement aims to assist in developing a more strategic approach to delivering against our Section 17 obligations and help in the reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour.

5.5. Other implications

5.5.1. None

6. Link to Corporate Priorities

- **Delivering economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy** – Effective partnership working to increase the supply of affordable housing will meet a range of needs across the borough which in turn will generate economic growth and deliver other significant benefits (New Homes Bonus).
- **Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life** - Strong partnership working will enable residents to have safer, healthier and live longer lives in which they are able to fulfil their aspirations. The continued supply of affordable housing will reduce the instability caused to families and communities by preventing homelessness

7. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Members consider and make comments on the presentation made by Platform Housing Group and endorse the work of the partnership.

For more information contact:	Donna Dwyer Strategic Housing Manager 0115 914 4275 ddwyer@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	None.