

LDC Housing Working Party

To explore relevant research material and best practice in the provision of Affordable Housing amongst District Councils and Housing Associations in England

Report to HWP meeting: 13 October 2008

1. We were asked to explore relevant research material and best practise in the provision of Affordable Housing amongst District Councils and Housing Associations. Information was sought from several Local authorities and Housing Associations.
2. The group(tasks 2/3) were given papers on delivering affordable housing from the following sources:
 - East Hampshire District Council*
 - Basingstoke and Deane Council*
 - South Hams District Council*
 - Drum Housing Association
 - BPHA and Avebury Housing Association
 - Bristol City Council
 - Denbighshire County Council**
 - HARAH (Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing)

*Denotes Council's awarded Beacon Status in Affordable Housing. The reasons for status award include.

- Delivering significantly higher levels of affordable housing than targeted.
- Shared internal and external commitment to delivering affordable housing
- Well developed joint working with a wide range of partners
- Effective generation of significant funding for affordable housing
- Robust and integrated policy framework to secure sustainable development
- Demonstrable outcomes
- Policy framework with challenging affordable housing targets

** Denotes winner of 2007 Providing Housing Choice and Affordability category at the UK Housing Awards. The strategy has been recognised as an example of Good Practice by the Chartered Institute of Housing, Housemark and Welsh Assembly Government.

3. Information provided within the papers included Modern methods of construction and affordable warmth and energy efficiency.
4. East Hampshire District Council has kindly agreed for us to visit and speak with officers, the Head of Housing and their Lead Councillor on their affordable housing policy and how they achieved Beacon Status.
5. Due to other commitments' they are unable to arrange a visit in October and will be forwarding suggested dates for November 2008 by 10 October 2008.

6. Contact has been made with Redditch Co-Operative Homes after representation from eco-op Lewes at the first LDC Housing Working Party meeting. The Manager of Redditch Co-Operative will be happy to attend to share his knowledge on initially setting up a Co-Op, the model used by Redditch and any subsequent issues. Information on Redditch Co-Operative Homes is attached as Appendix 1.
7. The Housing Needs and Strategy Manager wrote in August 08 to the Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) working within the District to invite them to attend a Housing Partnership and Development forum.
8. We have received very positive responses from nine RSL's and we hope to arrange our first meeting in November or the beginning of December 2008.
9. The purpose of the forum is to develop strong partnership working with common strategic objectives around affordable housing with a clear focus on achieving results.
10. Officers have met with Eastbourne, Brighton and Hove and Wealden Councils who are currently reviewing their RSL Partnerships and developing their forums.
11. We are investigating opportunities with these Authorities for joint working and sharing best practice.

Recommendations

- To continue to investigate and research information on meeting the affordable housing challenge.
- To visit East Hampshire District Council
- To invite the Manager of Redditch Co-Operative Homes to the next HWP meeting
- To Support the RSL Housing Partnership and Development Forum
- To support further partnership working with partner authorities to prevent duplicate working. develop strong and common strategic objectives in the development of affordable housing and using innovative solutions

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