

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2693

Updated partnership working with Registered Providers

Decision maker/s	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council Cllr Tim Ball, Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning
The Issue	The current West of England Housing Delivery Panel (WoE HDP), a contractual partnership with Registered Providers ¹ (RPs), will come to an end in March 2015. If the benefits of partnership working are to be maintained, and potentially enhanced, new partnership arrangements will need to be put in place.
Decision Date	20 September 2014
The decision	The replacement arrangements, known as “HomesWest – Bath & North East Somerset” and detailed within this report, are approved; and That the Head of Housing is delegated to appoint RP partners to the new partnership in accordance with the standards detailed within the report.
Rationale for decision	The proposals behind selecting a new partnership of Registered Providers are the culmination of 6 month’s work reviewing and assessing current working arrangements. This has been done against the needs of the 4 enabling authorities to deliver both a challenging trajectory of new affordable homes whilst meeting specific local housing priorities. It is believed that the recommendations in the report will provide a new focus to delivery of housing that meets both challenges and allows for differences in priorities within each UA. Discussions and consultation at all levels both within and outside the 4 UAs show significant support for the new approach to partnership.
Financial and budget implications	The administrative cost of selecting partners for HomesWest Bath & North East Somerset will be met within existing Housing Services budgets and staffing resources. The specific costs associated with the running of the strategic level partnership, such as the annual meeting or other events, will be met by a £500 joining fee payable by the partner RPs. One key requirement of partners will be a commitment to continue the current practice of paying an Enabling Fee of £530 (increased annually by RPI) per affordable home delivered. This funding stream is used to part fund the Enabling & Development Team within Housing Services.

	<p>There will be a positive impact on staffing resources for the Housing Enabling & Development Team by a streamlining of the existing partnership, including removing one tier of partnership meetings and reducing the current cumbersome monitoring requirements associated with the WoE HDP.</p> <p>Whilst the new HomesWest B&NES partnership scheme will not have any direct effect on the way the Council manages its capital funding streams, the benefits should be demonstrable by the increased supply of affordable housing and increased innovation in delivery.</p>
Issues considered	Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Corporate; Legal Considerations, Partnership working including at WoE strategic level.
Consultation undertaken	Verbal update to Housing & Major Projects Scrutiny, WoE Planning, Homes & Communities Board, West of England Housing Development Panel,
How consultation was carried out	Proposals have been developed jointly by the 4 West of England authorities in close discussion with the current WoE RP partners. Consultation has focussed on both verbal discussion and written response – a full summary of consultation responses is available as an appendix to the report.
Other options considered	<p><u>Retender West of England Housing Delivery Panel arrangements current (a Framework Agreement procured via OJEU).</u> Whilst there have been some positives around joint working and competitiveness through existing arrangements, the HDP is inflexible and restrictive, and the level of resource required to manage it is not justified by the outputs. Most affordable homes are delivered outside the HDP commissioning arrangements.</p> <p><u>Return to the previous two-tier framework (smaller strategic WoE partnership plus a local tier partnership at LA level).</u> This is not supported as there will be restricted engagement at strategic level and the capacity of LA-tier partners will not be maximised for large scale delivery. Any benefits of procuring a two-tier partnership may be outweighed by the additional management and support required. Whilst this approach will re-focus development to a local level it is not considered the most efficient way to achieve the UAs' local or WoE Strategic objectives.</p> <p><u>Select partnerships solely at local authority level and abandon a West of England approach.</u> This approach is not supported as it provides for no strategic engagement at WoE level or guaranteed consistency of approach. There is potential for duplication across the WoE. This does not fit with the Homes and Communities Agency's 'minimum geography' and would result in the loss of potential strategic dialogue between the RPs and HCA at our sub-regional level.</p> <p><u>Abandon all partnership arrangements</u> - This will not provide any strategic engagement at WoE or local level or guaranteed consistency of approach. Will not demonstrate a strategic approach to partnership working or guarantee enabling fee income. Great</p>

	potential for duplication at both WoE and local levels.
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Signatures of Decision Makers	
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Date of Signature	
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Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision