

How to partner with your local housing association

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The Session

- ▶ Me
- ▶ The sector
- ▶ Issues - It's a changing world
- ▶ How we're responding
- ▶ Working together
- ▶ Questions

Who am I?

RIVERSIDE AND THE SECTOR

Introduction to Riverside

- ▶ Geography
- ▶ General needs, supported and retirement living housing
- ▶ House builder/developer
- ▶ NB Our geography doesn't overlap with Big Local much, so no agenda. . .

Not just bricks and mortar

- ▶ Income maximisation: money advice, affordable warmth, employment and training
- ▶ Long term community partner (outliving politicians!)
- ▶ Keen interest in neighbourhood improvement

Local Housing Associations



ISSUES FACING HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS (and their communities)

It's a changing world. . .

Housing crisis

- Homelessness
- High house prices
- Poor private rented
- Reducing Housing association income v need to develop with little/no grant



There's less money!

- 1% rent reduction per annum
- Bedroom tax
- Local Housing Allowance
- Benefit cap
- Lots of family houses, but not all customers are families, so benefits don't match rents



Tenant income reducing, but rents need to be paid

- Unaffordability, especially for U35's
- Sanctions if not job searching
- Can't pay and won't pay customers
- Firm, but fair
- Supportive



Loss of support for the vulnerable

- Loss of funding for voluntary organisations
- Loss of Council funded support services
- Reduction in social care
- Increasingly finding customers in crisis



Neighbourhood issues

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the slide, creating a modern, layered effect. The text 'Neighbourhood issues' is centered in the white space on the left.

What do we do with neighbourhoods. . .

- That lose us money?
- On the cusp?
- That have had investment but not improved?
- That are declining?
- That have dispersed stock?



How are housing associations responding as a business?

- ▶ Cost reduction measures
- ▶ New ways of borrowing to build new homes
- ▶ Better deals when buying goods and services
- ▶ Re-financing
- ▶ Mergers
- ▶ Re-structures and Target Operating Models

Our social response. . .

- ▶ Increased resources for regions and neighbourhoods
- ▶ More focussed work with tenants
- ▶ Initiatives to support the health agenda
- ▶ Co-ordinated work with orgs with similar agendas

The regeneration debate

- ▶ How do we decide where to invest time and money in neighbourhoods?
- ▶ How do we meet the needs of the current residents and provide for the needs and wants of future residents?
- ▶ What will make people want to move to the area? (i.e. Lee Valley green space)

BIG LOCAL AND HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

- ▶ Create relationships
- ▶ Create relationships
- ▶ Create relationships!

- ▶ Get to know your local housing association and work together creatively

Shared local neighbourhood plans and visions

- Properly assessed needs, using both data and word of mouth
- Broad partnerships
- Each party plays their part
- Accountability



Deal making

- ▶ Joint funding of initiatives where there is a shared priority (co-investment)
- ▶ Deals made as equals, as you have money to spend

No cash partnerships

- ▶ Everyone manages their own money
- ▶ Actions are aligned and can be mutually beneficial
- ▶ No need for contracts and legal agreements
- ▶ Equal partnerships - as no single organisation holds the purse strings

Gaps in services

- ▶ Where there are gaps in services, could your investment and volunteering help meet the need?
- ▶ Could you use time and money to encourage agencies to come to the area and deliver services in it? Could you unblock obstacles?
- ▶ Can you act as a referral body (along with the housing association) to ensure that organisations delivering support contracts get the right numbers of customers? Could you produce a shared, digital directory of support services?

Regeneration - Everything changes

- ▶ You wouldn't be a Big Local group if you didn't think there was a need for change
- ▶ Understand that lots of people and organisations will have different views on best course of action
- ▶ Anything can be challenged and challenges should be considered, but it doesn't mean decisions *have to* change (both for Big Locals and Housing Associations)

Communications



Stories

- Focus positively on and celebrate people and place
- Make organisations and initiatives secondary to them
- Most people can support the first two
- Not as true for the latter two!



Be joined up

- Tell each other's stories (it increases the story's value)
- Understand why each partner's decisions were made and explain
- Share info about support services with each other and signpost



Piggyback!

- Join in on each other's events
- Creates more interest
- Increases numbers
- Increases marketing of event
- Greater community benefit



Identify your 'radio stations'

- Community members
- Faith leaders
- Youth leaders
- Head teachers

- Brief them properly and ASK them to spread the news



CONCLUSION: BUILDING A TRUE PARTNERSHIP

- ▶ Work together around shared issues and opportunities
- ▶ Inform and learn from each other
- ▶ Discuss options and consequences of potential decisions (where possible)

Any questions. . . ?