

Meeting Community Needs through Local Lettings

*Helen Barton - Housing and Community
Services Director*

and

*Donald Lockhart – Development Services
Director*

Albyn Housing Society Ltd

Aim of the Workshop

- How do our local lettings schemes work?
- What can Local Lettings Initiatives do?
- What don't Local Lettings Initiatives do?
- What have they achieved?
- What issues are being raised through Evaluation
- Where we might go next with Local Lettings
- Sharing experiences with other areas

Introducing Workshop Participants

- Who's here from where?
- What is the particular interest in LLIs to your organisation?

What are they?

- A joint Housing / Development production
- Albyn Housing Society has an agreed strategy to develop LLI projects where;
 - Where land has been released or development funding has been directed to enable a specific local need to be met
 - Where the community have identified a specific local need that cannot be met through our normal allocation process
 - To create balanced and stable communities
 - To strengthen and empower communities

Why Albyn has developed LLIs

- Gives us a template for consistency in different areas
- Meets specific local needs in a specific geographical area
- Addresses particular local community needs that a needs based open waiting list can not
- Provides a written agreement between Albyn and the community

What can't they do

- LLI's don't replace the existing allocations policy
 - Runs alongside our current allocation policy – a filter, not a replacement
 - Applicants are housed on the basis of need
 - Highland Council still refers nominations and Homeless referrals

What else they can't do

- LLI's don't over-ride the law
 - Can not consider how long an applicant has been resident in the area
 - Some instances where we can not consider residency in an area
 - Homeless referrals to an RSL can not be refused without good reason
- Can't guarantee a household to be in or out

Our Evaluation Process

- Robert Gordon University (Prof. Spicker) commissioned to evaluate what we have done so far
 - Assessment against legislative requirements and best practice
 - Impact assessment of the allocations made
 - How our general allocations policy adds or detracts from our objectives in LLI areas
 - Identifying future risks and opportunities

Some Early Challenges

- Structure of our housing list & broader understanding of housing needs
- Agreeing local market areas with statutory partners
- Developing community engagement separate from LLI development
- Developing community needs analysis including operation of housing market, economic & demographic issues

Allocations Issues

- Workload issues – complexity of the process
- Reviewing LLIs within our allocation process

Potential Conflict Areas

- Community Boundaries v Open Access
- Locally identified needs v other housing pressures
- Individual & community expectations
- Local accountability
- Deciding how we identify housing and community needs before the LLI is developed

Isn't it just a lot of work then?

- Yes ...but
 - land has been released or development funding has been directed to enable specific local needs to be met
 - communities have identified specific local needs that would probably not have been met through our normal allocation process
 - we have strengthened and empowered communities
 - We are creating balanced and stable communities
- Our profile has been greatly increased in small communities as an organisation to work with that can deliver

Our Contact Details

- **Helen Barton**
Housing and Community Services Director
helen.barton@albynhousing.org.uk
Tel: 01349-855970
- **Donald Lockhart**
Development Services Director
donald.lockhart@albynhousing.org.uk
Tel: 01349-855955
- www.albynhousing.org.uk