

Registered Provider Framework - Lancaster City Council

Introduction

Lancaster City Council has a well-established Registered Provider Strategic Partnership which has been operating very successfully for many years. Homes England records show that there are currently 35 Registered Providers with stock in Lancaster district. This includes smaller Registered Providers who have previously delivered specialist supported housing (such as group homes for people with learning disabilities) through commissioning arrangements with Lancashire County Council. The existing membership, however, primarily includes the 11 developing Registered Providers in Lancaster district.

The council is very committed to strengthening the partnership with continued attendance at regular meetings, the opportunity for RP's to be appraised of and shape local policy and practice, forthcoming consultations, development opportunities, participation in discussion on challenges and approaches, and opportunities to engage directly with Homes England on local-specific updates and briefings.

The council is proposing to introduce a more structured process to evaluate the suitability of new entrants wishing to join the Framework and to ensure that existing Partners continue to engage positively underpinned by shared values and shared objectives. **The Framework will initially be limited to Registered Providers seeking to provide general needs accommodation, older people's housing and/or supported housing for homeless households for which Lancaster City Council is the lead commissioner.**

Lancaster City Council reserves the right to determine the suitability of new entrants along with the optimum number of Registered Providers who form part of the Framework in order to maintain a level playing field and avoid unnecessary and unhelpful competition between Partners but crucially to ensure there is a sufficient number of developing RP's to ensure the council can meet its housing priorities, statutory duties, planning policy requirements and provide a wide mix of tenures to meet the diverse housing needs across Lancaster district.

Initial Engagement

The city council expects that all interested parties will initially make contact and discuss with the Principal Housing Strategy Officer of their desire to join the partnership ahead of becoming operational in Lancaster district and well in advance of taking schemes forward allowing the council to provide an initial steer on next steps and appropriate timing for an application to be submitted for consideration. Where an RP is seeking to deliver a scheme which is a direct fit and will meet an acute need or key housing priority, they may be signposted to make an immediate application.

Consultation and Implementation

All existing Partners have been invited to comment on the Framework ahead of its implementation. Following adoption, the Framework will be subject to monitoring and periodic review. The Framework will be approved in the form of an Individual Cabinet Member Decision for final sign off by the Cabinet Member for Housing.

Going forward, the membership of the Framework will continue to consider its scope and purpose, for example, whether the Framework should include Fixed Transfer Values for the acquisition of affordable housing delivered through Section 106 negotiations as well as a formal allocation process for this.

Evaluation of Applications and reviews

Applications to join the Framework will be open to all RPs. Existing Partners will be invited to join.

A selection panel of senior officers from the council's Housing Strategy and Housing Options Team will jointly assess the applications. The duration of the Framework will run for **two years** initially unless it is deemed necessary to review it sooner and new RP's will normally only be invited to join during the review period.

If the council takes the decision to reject an application for inclusion on the Framework, the Registered provider can appeal the decision by submitting a written request for review, which needs to be submitted within 28 days of the original written notification along with any further information in support of the application.

An officer who was not involved in the original decision will conduct the review and take account of any subsequent information presented and will notify the applicant of the outcome of the review within 28 days of the request for review being received by the council.

Stage 1 – assessment

APPLICANTS MUST SUBMIT WRITTEN RESPONSE TO EACH QUESTION IN STAGE 1

- a. Demonstrate your commitment to align to Lancaster City Council's identified housing, regeneration and homelessness priorities (for Registered Providers with an existing portfolio in Lancaster district, your existing or most recent performance will be of particular relevance). New partners can submit supporting evidence of other existing LA partnerships which demonstrate their commitment to this (please tell us your lead contact should further references be required). **NO MORE THAN 500 WORDS.**
- b. Is already signed up or willing to sign up to the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme Ideal Choice Homes, enter into a nomination agreement which prescribes a minimum of 50% nomination rights for stock in Lancaster district and provide nomination results and lettings returns within agreed timescales. Failure to sign up would otherwise lead to removal from the Framework.

YES/NO

- c. A commitment to full engagement and regular attendance at the Strategic Partnership meetings.

YES/NO

- d. Will have regard to or adheres to planning policy requirements and evidence base set out in the council's Local Plan Development Management DPD, Meeting Housing Need SPDs and Strategic Housing Market Assessment which set out the required dwelling type of affordable housing as well as the council's adopted Tenancy Strategy.

YES/NO

- e. The applicant is Registered Provider with Homes England and has Investment Partner Status (either in their own right or as part of a consortia).

YES/NO

- f. Provide evidence or confirmation that the organisation is sufficiently engaged or undertakes to engage with the relevant commissioning lead for the provision of existing and proposed supported and specialist housing in advance of any scheme being taken forward, and will adhere to local and national standards, now and in the future, in relation to the provision and management of supported housing. NO MORE THAN 500 WORDS.

Please Note: Stage 1 Scoring– A Pass/Fail will be awarded against the overall responses and evidence provided.

Stage 2 - assessment

APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED WITHOUT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION BEING SUBMITTED WITH YOUR RESPONSE.

Existing Partners

Please submit the following:-

1. Lettings returns for your stock in Lancaster district for the last three years to evidence full compliance with nomination requirements.
2. Detailed breakdown of all stock in Lancaster district by address, property type and tenure.
3. The adopted Tenancy Policy.

New Entrants

Please submit the following: -

1. Proof of Registration as an RP.
2. Details of your existing stock profile including location, types and tenures.
3. Your organisation and operational management structure along with details of how stock in Lancaster would be managed.

Your organisation's current operational management policies including allocation policies, rent setting and income management and tenancy enforcement.

Questions for both Existing Partners and New Entrants

Development Expertise/Climate Change

1. How have you decarbonised existing stock and what are your milestones for further decarbonisation? When will you be able to deliver zero carbon homes?

Performance

- 2a Please set out how your organisation achieves its own identified performance targets in all aspects of neighbourhood management and housing development and how these are currently measured/reviewed?

2b What management arrangements are currently in place to manage your stock in Lancaster district and in what circumstances would you engage in multi-agency working to tackle issues around: -

- anti-social behaviour
- income maximisation

2c What rating has your organisation been most recently awarded by the RSH and when?

2d Has your organisation ever been subject to any regulatory intervention, judgements, been de-registered or been found guilty of severe maladministration by the Housing Ombudsman? What action have you taken to rectify any issues raised? If you have been subject to regulatory intervention, whether you have tackled issues identified as part of the intervention?

Yes/No (if yes please provide details).

Increasing Affordable Housing Supply

3 Whilst recognising that most developing RP's have a strong preference for new build schemes, given the unprecedented demand for social housing at the present time, we are particularly keen to work with partners who are willing to bring forward purchase and repair schemes. Is your organisation willing to explore and deliver this?

Yes/No

Please provide some further detail to explain your response

Housing First (for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping)

4. Is your organisation willing to support the city council in delivering a Housing First scheme in Lancaster district? (The proposed scheme will require 6 x one-bedroom self-contained properties to be earmarked each year across the partnership and will include a contribution from the city council.

Yes/No

Please provide some further detail to explain your response

Please Note: Stage 2 Scoring– A Pass/Fail will be awarded against the overall responses and evidence provided.

- A **Pass** will be given where the performance and suitability of the Registered Provider in relation to ownership, management and maintenance of their stock is considered from responses and evidence provided to be satisfactory and either meets or exceeds the council's requirements in making a valuable contribution to meeting housing need.
- A **Fail** will be given where the performance and suitability of the Registered Provider falls below satisfactory, on consideration of the responses given and evidence provided, and the submission/evidence causes concern about their ability to effectively manage and maintain stock and/or make a valuable contribution towards meeting housing need.

Please Note: In order to make an application to join the Registered Provider Framework your written response should be provided on letter headed paper and contact information provided for the lead Officer making the application. The deadline for responses is Monday

18 December 2023 and must be submitted by email to: housingstrategy@lancaster.gov.uk
You must include the supporting documentation and evidence required in order for your application to be considered.