

Hightown Housing Association

Local Area Co-operation 2017 to 2020

1.0 Introduction

1.1 One of the specific expectations of the Social Housing Regulator's Neighbourhood and Community Standard on Local Area Co-operation is:

'Registered providers, having taken account of their presence and impact within the areas where they own properties, shall:

- **identify and publish** the roles they are able to play within the areas where they have properties
- co-operate with strategic partnership arrangements and strategic housing functions of local authorities where they are able to assist them in achieving their objectives'

1.2 This paper sets out Hightown's approach to Local Area Co-operation as required under the standard.

2.0 Background

2.1 The current Hightown is the result of the merger and assimilation of a number of housing associations over the past 25 years. The principal parties were Hightown H.A. based in Hemel Hempstead, Praetorian H.A. from St. Albans and St. Albans and District Churches H.A. But a number of other small housing associations and charities from Watford, Berkhamsted, St. Albans, Hemel Hempstead, North Herts and Aylesbury Vale have also joined the merged association over the years.

2.2 For many years, Hightown has set as its area of operations a geographical area defined as within one hours travel of Hemel Hempstead or St. Albans. Considerable development activity has taken place in the last fifteen years in most of Hertfordshire and many parts of Buckinghamshire.

2.3 Consequently, although the bulk of Hightown's housing stock is in the St. Albans and Dacorum local authority areas, Hightown also has stock in all Hertfordshire local authority areas and in four of the five Buckinghamshire local authority areas. Hightown also has stock in Central Beds and is developing new homes in Luton. Finally, the expansion of our Care and Supported housing activities in to Berkshire has led to relationships being developed with Bracknell Forest, Slough and Wokingham local authorities

3.0 Overall Approach to Local Area Cooperation

3.1 Hightown has always seen itself as a local housing association working closely with local authorities within a limited geographical area of operations to identify priority housing and support needs and to then endeavour to meet those needs. The wide range of needs identified in partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders has led to Hightown having a wide and diverse range of housing tenures and service provision. Hightown is a leading provider of care and supported housing in Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

3.2 It would be impossible to provide this wide range of housing and support services without working very closely with staff and members in local councils and County Councils. In addition, Hightown works with

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health authorities, with the Police, with Probation Officers and with other statutory and voluntary bodies and agencies.

3.3 Hightown is committed to building strong and sustainable communities and neighbourhoods. To further this aim, our staff actively participate in a very large number of liaison and partnership meetings across Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Berkshire.

3.4 Hightown is involved in strategic partnership meetings in St. Albans.

4.0 The LIFE Model

4.1 A model for area co-operation was developed in Liverpool and has now been adopted more widely.

4.2 Social housing providers take a distinctive role in each of the Areas of Opportunity - **Lead, Influence, Follow** and **Exit**. This allows them to focus skills and resources on specified activities.

4.3 Lead Associations work closely with the Council and other private and statutory sector partners to implement programmes. They have a long-term commitment to the area.

4.4 The **Influence** role is for those Associations which have a significant interest in part of the neighbourhood or with specialist skills in areas such as supported or sheltered housing.

4.5 Associations which focus on providing high quality services to tenants but are less involved in the regeneration agenda, **Follow** the **Lead** and **Influence** partners.

4.6 Using this model, Appendix One sets out Hightown's role in each of the local authority areas in which it works.

APPENDIX ONE

HIGHTOWN'S ROLE WITHIN RELEVANT LOCAL AUTHORITIES

LOCAL AUTHORITY	LEAD	INFLUENCE	FOLLOW	EXIT
Aylesbury Vale DC		✓		
Bracknell Forest		✓		
Broxbourne BC		✓		
Buckinghamshire C.C.	✓			
Central Beds			✓	
Chiltern DC		✓		
Dacorum BC	✓			
East Herts DC			✓	
Hertfordshire C.C.	✓			
Hertsmere BC		✓		
LB Hillingdon			✓	
Luton		✓		
Milton Keynes Council		✓		
North Herts DC		✓		
St Albans DC	✓			
Slough			✓	
Stevenage BC		✓		
Three Rivers DC		✓		
Watford		✓		
Welwyn Hatfield DC		✓		
Wokingham			✓	
Wycombe DC		✓		