



Cardiff Council's Scrutiny Committee - Engagement with Housing Associations

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this summary and attend the Scrutiny Committee.

Linc Cymru Housing Association was established in 1977 and works across 10 local authority areas, providing 4500 homes and services to over 9,500 people. We are building 1700 new homes by 2026 and are at the forefront of building through modern methods of construction.

Our Purpose as a business is to 'Create the Right Environment for People to Flourish' and this is supported by our Values that drive our approach everyday: **Passionate Respectful Ambitious**

Relationship with Cardiff Council Housing Allocation and Development Teams.

We are proud to be working in partnership with Cardiff Council and other Housing Association's to help deliver the vision for the City. We have enjoyed a professional and productive working relationship over many years and plan to increase our activity and contribution in the future.

Below I have focused on the two core areas identified.

The letting of homes

Linc's homes in Cardiff are predominately made up of 2 and 3 bed family accommodation.

Homes that Linc own that are let through the common register

General Housing		Intermediate Housing		Independent Over 55's Housing	
1 bed	102	1 bed	46	1 bed	12
2 bed	299	2 bed	43	2 bed	12
3 bed	297	3 bed	4		
4 bed	53	4 bed	1		
5 bed	19				
Total	761 homes	Total	94 homes	Total	24 homes

Homes that Linc own that are let outside the common register.

Extra Care	142	Supported Housing	54
Deferred Shared Ownership	6	Retail	9
Home Buy	50	Shared Properties	63
Market Rent	86	Total	410

Our working relationship with Cardiff's Allocation Team is good and the collaborative meetings held between all partnering associations are beneficial. The collaboration helps to deliver the requirements for Cardiff to meet a variety of housing needs that exist. Linc has a low turnover of homes in Cardiff which has an impact on the number of people that can be assisted from the different target quotas on the Common Housing Register.

The Common Policy was created following considerable consultation with stakeholders and as such it acts a positive mechanism to meet the housing needs presented within Cardiff. Linc supports the Policy and the minor observations placed below should be treated as potential refinements and not as fundamental reconsiderations.

- Quotas exist for aspects of the common register however some housing needs do not fall within the target quotas. Assisting to rehouse an applicant from a group that doesn't fall within the quota, impacts on your ability to meet the main targets. This is particularly evident for Linc as our turnover is low. Examples of housing allocations that don't fall within the main targets include, Calon lettings, Llamau, the Syrian Project, Housing First Project.
- The Common Register provides an audit trail to enable oversight of each party's contribution. The audit trail could extend to include aspects like the Immediate list, where it doesn't record an

unsuccessful attempt to house before bypassing to another list. This would assist to demonstrate the right due process being undertaken.

- It is possible to agree lettings initiatives for specific developments and circumstances. This approach falls outside the Common register quotas which can distort reporting.

Development of New Properties

The basis of development within Wales has changed over recent years with the opportunity for local authorities to deliver new homes to complement the role of private house builders and housing associations. Cardiff Council has a mature approach to partnership development between providers to ensure the financial capability and development experience of long-standing providers are utilised to maximum effect.

We have a strong working relationship with the Housing Strategy Team which allows us to have open discussions in relation to potential sites and development opportunities. We also have regular partnership meetings facilitated by the Housing Strategy Team and attended by other housing associations. This provides an open forum for each partner to run through their development plans promoting collaboration, reducing unnecessary competition and creating greater productivity. The distribution of section 106 opportunities feels equitable.

Development is a dynamic field that often requires amendments and changes at short notice. The approach taken by officers demonstrates their desire to deliver the development programme for Cardiff regardless of the complications that arise. A good example of this relates to the movement of grant from one year to the next.

An expedient Planning process is important to the timely delivery of new homes. Housing Strategy Officers are supportive in their role and help to engender positive discussions and unlock planning considerations. It is also evident that officers hold a positive relationship with key personnel in Welsh Government.

A strategic plan is critical to the delivery of the right homes in the right locations. The recent consultation on the future needs of older people was welcomed and delivered important recommendations that we support. We look forward to receipt of the next draft of the Housing Strategy.

Some areas that would benefit from additional consideration:

- The provision of intermediate rental homes is an important part of the overall supply of housing options however the requirement for the rents to be aligned to the Local Housing Allowance makes it incredibly difficult to make them financially viable. As service costs rise, the core rent must be lowered to retain the overall alignment to the LHA. This means the capital return reduces over time.
- We believe it would be beneficial if RSL's were consulted on the wording within Section 106 agreements. Our experience of the requirements of private funding bodies would be beneficial in their drafting.
- Learning more about Cardiff's strategy for Learning and Physical disabilities would help us to deliver more broadly.
- Some matters are outside the control of the Housing Strategy Team, however ongoing assistance to influence the faster delivery of sectional agreements like highways and drainage would be beneficial to speed up site completions.
- We are keen to work together to implement the outcome of the Affordable Housing Review.
- We are happy to help by undertaking package deals.
- The partnership between Estates and Housing to identify and release land is important to the development of homes.