

REVIEW OF REGISTERED PROVIDERS 2023/24

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report is to inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the 2023/24 Registered Providers (RP) Review. The purpose of the review meetings is to build good working relationships with our RP partners, to monitor the performance and work together to resolve any problems. It also provides an opportunity to explore how RPs can support the council in the delivery of its corporate themes set out in the Business Plan.
- 1.2 The report gives an overview of the scrutiny process for each of the RP's reviewed and identifies; what is working well, causes for concern and any issues to follow up.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny RP Review sub-group for 2023/24

Members	Officers
Councillor Diane Bedford Councillor Mike Smith Councillor Keith Dibble Councillor Sophie Porter Councillor Stephen Masterson	Zoë Paine Sarah Clark

- 2.2 Registered Providers: Meetings held 2023/24

Registered Provider	Meeting date
A2 Dominion	18 th October 2023
Vivid Homes	22 nd November 2023
Riverside Group	20 th March 2024

3. THE SCRUTINY PROCESS:

- 3.1 Each RP provides financial and performance information, its policies, and strategies in advance of the meeting giving the group the opportunity to consider the information in advance.

4. KEY DISCUSSIONS IN THE REVIEW PROCESS:

- Housing management for all tenures
- Maintenance of property and neighbourhoods
- Customer service and compliance with the Housing Regulators Customer Standards
- Risk management: fire, gas, and electrical safety
- Financial and performance information
- Assisting residents with welfare issues including cost of living pressures and damp and mould awareness
- Development opportunities
- Working together on climate change
- Tackling deprivation and housing/ health inequality
- Ward Members experience of working with RPs

5. SUMMARY OF REVIEW GROUP FINDINGS

A2 Dominion
<p>Total homes in Rushmoor 368</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 183 Affordable Rent• 80 Freehold• 31 Leasehold• 74 Shared ownership
<p>Members questioned the representative on volume of complaints reported to the Housing Ombudsman, the reasons for this and the plans in place to decrease this volume.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that there has been an increase in the number of complaints coming through the Ombudsman, some will historic due to the backlog at the Housing Ombudsman.</p> <p>Increases in the number of complaints are due to increased awareness, especially with issues such as damp and mould and damp. Members asked about A2's policy on the management of damp and mould. All maintenance enquiries from the past three years that mention damp and</p>

mould have been reviewed with residents contacted (phone, text, letter) to see if the problem still exists, what type of damp/mould is visible and if the household has any respiratory issues to allow prioritisation. Case Managers deal with complex causes. Decants will be arranged if necessary while the repairs are being carried out.

Overcrowding can be a cause of damp and mould issues and housing supply can mean this is not an easily resolved cause, however A2 work with residents to find a solution. There is a dedicated damp and mould team that can be contacted via dampandmould@a2dominion.co.uk and there have been videos and leaflets made available to residents.

A complaints task team has been set up to assess performance and a new responsive repairs contract started 01/10/23 with more robust performance indicators than had previously been in place. A2 acknowledge that record keeping and keeping residents updated are areas for improvement.

Members raised issues at Concept House. A site visit was arranged after the meeting.

Vivid Homes

Total homes in Rushmoor 5608

- 4308 General needs rented
- 325 Housing for older people
- 20 Intermediate rent
- 295 Shared ownership
- 563 100% Social Leased
- 66 Non-Social Leased Housing
- 31 Supported Housing

Members asked how support for residents is communicated. Vivid issue an E- Newsletter to residents monthly with links to further information on their website. The work of the Neighbourhood and Income Officers assists in identifying where tenants may need additional support. The presence of Neighbourhood Managers has been increased.

Members reported that contact with Neighbourhood Managers can often be piecemeal with examples given. This was acknowledged, Vivid is aiming to introduce internal cultural change, so staff take ownership of issue resolution and have a greater degree of accountability to residents.

Reassurance was given that the councillor email inbox would be retained.

In 2024/25 Vivid will take on 18 affordable section 106 units at Union Yard and commence work on the final phase of North Town. They are keen to develop land led rather than section 106 schemes in the borough going forward.

Vivid secured funding from the Decarbonisation Fund. Properties in Fernhill Ward will have £10m invested in a retro fit programme to improve energy efficiency. Vivid aim to have all properties at EPC C by 2030, and Carbon Neutral by 2050.

Riverside Group

In Rushmoor Riverside manage Mike Jackson House Supported Accommodation for Armed Forces Veterans which accommodates 25 people.

Members raised issues related to some complaints that Cllr Nadia Martin had been dealing with in respect of the management and support provided to residents. This was acknowledged, steps have already been taken to improve the service which includes more stable staffing levels. Additional funding has been secured from OpFortitude which will allow more personalised support to be provided; from dealing with anti-social behaviour between residents to preparing the residents for moving onto independent accommodation and securing work.

The council does not have an exclusive Nomination Agreement for Mike Jackson House; referrals can come from RBC but also through Veteran pathways and self-referral. There are sometimes referrals made for veterans from other areas of the country, although a local connection is taken into consideration.

Riverside are keen to develop a better working relationship with the council and requested details for the Cabinet Champion for Military.

Vivo/Pinnacle who manage army accommodation in the borough did not respond to invitations to take part in the review. This has been escalated to senior managers at the Aldershot Barracks for response.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The RP Review process continues to play an important role in developing good working relationships with housing providers operating in the borough. The meetings enable members and officers to improve their

understanding of the condition and management of affordable homes in the borough and provides an appropriate platform to address any concerns.

6.2 Conversations have been largely operational in nature, however, can be used as the forum to hold a strategic dialogue with RPs.

6.3 It is proposed that a further programme of review is carried out in 2024/2025.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

1. Endorse the programme of work carried out in 2023/24.
2. Authorise the Review Group to prepare a programme of reviews for 2024/25
3. Seek the wider views of OSC on the opportunity to develop the RP Review Group to develop a more strategic relationship with RP partners taking into account the views of Cabinet.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Minutes of the review meetings
- Supporting documents supplied by RPs.

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