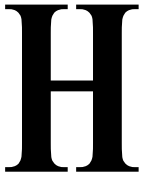


Briefing Note regarding the Council's working arrangements with ACIS Group Ltd



To assist Members in formulating their prospective questions for Officer Representatives from ACIS Group Ltd at their meeting on 1 September 2015.

The Council transferred its housing stock to the Acis Group Ltd in 1999. In the main, this means that Acis are now responsible for the physical housing assets as well as the tenants residing within. Acis are a Registered Provider and their operations and finances are regulated by the Government.

As a result of the transfer the Council still works with Acis across a variety of areas, these are set out below along with key questions that may be appropriate.

The Housing Register (Lincs Homefinder/CBL) – The Council administer the housing register through Lincs Homefinder and then provide nominations to Acis as one of the registered providers within the area. As the stock transfer partner, Acis have the largest share of social rented properties within West Lindsey and as such the majority of households registered for Lincs Homefinder will be nominated to Acis properties. The stock transfer agrees that at least 75% of the properties that become available should be let through Lincs Homefinder.

Acis are an equal partner within the Lincs Homefinder scheme along with West Lindsey, City of Lincoln and North Kesteven. The scheme is used to advertise properties and the Council then nominate households to Acis to fill their properties. Acis will accept homeless accepted households if they have not accrued a large amount of former tenant arrears within one of their own previous tenancies. The stock transfer agreement states they have to assist WLDC in administering their homeless duty.

Member note – we would suggest requesting information in advance to explain what steps Acis are taking to rehouse the more vulnerable members of society. This is in line with the introduction of 4 weeks rent upfront for sign up, changes in welfare reform and changes to support provision within Lincolnshire via Public Health.

Multi Agency Working - Acis contribute to multi agency meetings with the Council such as the Vulnerable Adult Panel, ASBRAC (anti-social behaviour risk assessment conference), MARAC (Domestic Abuse multi agency conference) and ARM (anti-social behaviour reduction meeting) to try and rehouse vulnerable individuals effectively.

Housing Disrepair – the Council liaises with Acis in regards to complaints that are received about the condition of their properties. These do not occur frequently and when they do they are usually resolved through officer liaison. Acis will visit properties at the Councils request and then follow up with the Council to confirm the relevant works have been completed.

Member note – information on any plans that Acis have for improving their housing stock over the coming years may be useful to consider. Acis are actively disposing of housing stock in some areas (e.g. South West Ward).

Affordable Housing – where development of affordable housing schemes take place, the Council works with Acis to ensure that the appropriate units are delivered and then allocated. Like all Registered Providers, Acis liaise directly with the Homes and Communities Agency in terms of any grants that are available. Over the last 2 to 3 years Acis have completed less developments in general, but are still actively pursuing sites.

Member note – information on the future plans that Acis have for developing homes and the type of homes that wish to develop would be helpful to understand their future ambitions for the district. For example, it is not clear whether they still wish to develop schemes in Gainsborough.

Disabled Facilities Grants and Adaptations – the majority of the Councils DFG funding is spent within Acis homes, the Council, under legislation has to pay for this and it equates to around £250k per annum. Over time the Council has attempted to come to some agreement with Acis in regards to a contribution for the works that are completed but this has not been successful. Acis do carry out their own works on aids and adaptations but the level of these are unknown and this is still an area in which improvements are needed in terms of the relationship between the two parties.

Member note – information on the level of investment made in regards to aids and adaptations within homes would provide a good overview of the work that Acis are doing. It would also be useful to obtain their views as to why persons needing adaptations are still being allowed to move into properties that are not suitable for them, which the Council then has to adapt via a DFG.