Registered Social Landlords and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Improving Engagement
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Introduction

1. This guidance note is aimed at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and Registered Social Landlords (often known as housing associations and referred to in this document as RSLs) in England. It focuses on the change in status of RSLs within the membership structure of CDRPs in England, which took place on 31 July 2007 and was designed to help create better engagement and co-operation between RSLs and partnerships.

2. These changes occur at the same time as the Home Office’s wider CDRP Reform Programme. This offers an opportunity for RSLs to become more involved in their local CDRPs at a time when many will be reconsidering their business processes.

3. Further details on aspects of the reform programme, including new ‘Hallmarks of Effective Practice’ for partnerships, can be found within the Home Office publication ‘Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working’. Copies of this publication can be obtained from the partnership mini-site on the Crime Reduction website (www.crimereduction.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm).

Background

4. The Government’s expectations of social landlords in tackling anti-social behaviour continue to be cross-sectoral. The Respect Standard for Housing Management applies to both local authorities and RSLs and over the last few years, both have been given broadly the same enforcement powers with which to take action.

5. There are many RSLs that have well-developed support teams and anti-social behaviour units, while others are still working hard to better evaluate and improve the range and quality of the services they offer.

6. If RSLs are to play a larger part in delivering interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour and helping create a culture of respect, it is essential that they work closely with CDRPs and understand more clearly what partnership working has to offer. CDRPs stand to benefit from having RSLs on-board in helping to develop and deliver strategic approaches to continue to address crime and anti-social behaviour in the communities they represent.

7. Until now, engagement between CDRPs and RSLs has been variable. In some areas RSLs play a key role in these partnerships as both sides have realised the benefits of a close working relationship. However, in other areas contact is sporadic or has never been established.
CDRP Reform Programme

Background

8. The Home Office has a programme of reforms underway to improve the effectiveness of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)/Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in England and Wales. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced a new requirement for the police, local authorities and other key agencies to work together to tackle crime and disorder.

9. The Act and its provisions have been recognised as producing a step change in the contribution of other (non-police) agencies on community safety. However, the landscape in which CDRPs in England and CSPs in Wales deliver has changed considerably since legislation was first introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. To continue to support partnerships as the most effective vehicles for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour a review of the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was conducted between 2004 and 2005. The findings of the report were published in 2006 and the improvements suggested by the review contributed to a change in the legislation affecting partnerships. They were reflected in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in subsequent regulations, which came into force on 1 August 2007.

10. The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced the following changes:

- Widen the remit of CDRPs to include anti-social behaviour and the misuse of alcohol and other substances in addition to drugs
- The introduction of minimum standards for CDRPs, by way of secondary legislation
- The introduction of new provisions to strengthen information sharing between partners

Minimum Standards and Hallmarks

11. The new framework of minimum standards and Hallmarks for Effective Partnerships for CDRPs were introduced in August 2007. New statutory requirements (known as national standards or minimum standards) describe the core processes and practices that partnerships must have in place to deliver effectively to all communities. These are framed around six ‘Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships’, which have been developed by the Home Office in consultation with practitioners and other stakeholders. These are:

- Empowered and Effective Leadership
- Intelligence-led Business Processes
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures
- Engaged Communities
- Visible and Constructive Accountability
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge
12. In essence, the new statutory frameworks means that CDRPs will be required to:

- Ensure clear strategic leadership from senior representatives within the responsible authorities;
- Have robust information sharing protocols and processes for sharing both personal data and depersonalised information;
- Produce an annual strategic assessment to identify their priorities for the coming year;
- In two-tier areas, produce a county-level community safety agreement to identify county-wide priorities, optimise cross-border working and feed into the Local Area Agreement;
- Produce a three-year plan and refresh it annually in line with the strategic assessment, to demonstrate how their priorities will be delivered;
- Engage with diverse sectors of their communities in order to gather information for the strategic assessment, inform communities of the partnership’s business;
- It is important that RSLs understand the key changes for they are of importance as they will inform the scope and nature of partnership working. The Reform Programme presents real opportunities to support partnerships in improving performance and can assist in shaping a more effective relationship between partnerships and RSLs.

13. The legislation that brings in the new minimum standards and guidance on the Hallmarks can be found on the Crime Reduction website www.crimereduction.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm.

The Information Sharing Requirements

14. Information sharing within partnerships has often been sporadic even though it is permitted under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduces a new duty on certain agencies to disclose certain sets of depersonalised information (at least quarterly) in electronic form to the other section 115 relevant authorities. RSLs are affected by this, as they are a section 115 authority.

15. This duty only applies when the authority holds the information so it does not require the collection of any additional information. More details on this can be found on the crime reduction website as above and in the guidance.

1 The Section 115 responsible authorities are: police; police authority; local authority (including district, county, London borough, parish council, community council and county borough council), registered social landlords; local probation board; local health board (in Wales); primary care trust; strategic health authority and fire and rescue authority.
Supporting the relationship between RSLs and CDRPs

Legislative Change

16. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out three defined groups; responsible authorities, co-operating bodies and invitees to participate. The Police Reform Act 2002 gave the Secretary of State the power to alter the composition of each of these groups in order to continue to support partnerships in responding to the needs of their communities. There are currently five responsible authorities (police, local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities and primary care trusts (local health boards in Wales)), who have responsibility for establishing, maintaining and monitoring the audits and strategies established to reduce crime in their communities. Co-operating bodies comprise of agencies that are important in supporting the delivery of the audits and strategies developed. Invitees to participate are drawn from agencies whose knowledge will support CDRP members reduce crime and anti-social behaviour more effectively.

17. In recognition of the expansion of the CDRP remit and the cross government approach to targeting anti-social behaviour the decision was made to alter the status of RSLs from invitees to participate to co-operating bodies. This statutory instrument can be viewed at: www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2007/20071840.htm and the explanatory memorandum can be read at www.uk-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/em2007/uksiem_20071840_en.pdf

18. The inclusion of registered social landlords as co-operating bodies will support partners by offering access to intelligence on issues of anti-social and criminal behaviour that they, as landlords, may hold.

19. The change in status, though important in itself, needs to be viewed within the wider context of CDRP reform and the continued development of RSLs contribution to delivering community safety. While a change in status can help in securing a better and more consistent framework for engagement it is nurturing close and supportive local relationships that stand to make the biggest positive difference.

20. RSLs familiar with the six core commitments of the Respect Standard for Housing Management will recognise many similarities with the content of the Hallmarks for CDRPs. Just as with the Respect Standard, many partnerships will already be complying with the new requirements while for others, they will mean changes for how some partnerships operate.
Guidance on Changed Requirements

21. This guidance sets out the practicalities to the change in status for RSLs (from ‘invitees to participate’ to ‘co-operating bodies’) in the context of the new minimum standards for CDRPs. The main difference between a ‘co-operating body’ and an ‘invitee to participate’ is that ‘co-operating bodies’ have a statutory duty to –

- co-operate fully in the development of the strategic assessment and partnership plan; and
- assist in the development and delivery of objectives that have been set out in the partnership plan.

22. We do not want to be prescriptive in how this change in status occurs in each area but rather allow CDRPs the local flexibility to look at their area and decide what the best way forward is in consultation with RSLs. What is important is that the benefits outlined below are achieved and barriers overcome by using local knowledge.

Benefits and Practicalities

23. The change of status detailed above will bring considerable benefits for both RSLs and the other members of the CDRP.

Benefits

24. The benefits may require a cultural shift for CDRPs and RSLs in the way they engage; however, the benefits are more discernable when broken down.

General

- This change will lead to greater understanding of each other’s (police, social services, RSLs etc) roles and responsibilities.
- Involvement of RSLs in CDRPs creates a culture in which agencies seek to work collectively on issues concerning crime and safety so that they’re both tackled and prevented jointly.
- The extended anti-social behaviour powers RSLs utilise as well as their expanding role in delivering local housing provision mean that they form part of the solution to crime and disorder issues.

Information Sharing

- RSL involvement in CDRPs should reduce overlap of work.
- Being involved in CDRPs will provide a forum in which to develop relationships of trust with other agencies and facilitate both formal and informal information sharing.
- The contribution of important data held on anti-social behaviour by RSLs will increase the knowledge and understanding of all partners and thereby allow quicker and more effective tackling of anti-social behaviour.
**Priority Setting and Planning**

- RSLs will be better placed to influence local target setting and funding priorities through contribution to the annual strategic assessment which may lead to an increased ability to access funding where appropriate.

- Through representation on and access to CDRPs, RSLs can influence the formulation and implementation of partnership plans.

- CDRP engagement should encourage a commitment to action – about “doing not talking”, ensuring the resources are available, both human and financial, and that front line officers have the knowledge and skills to do their jobs effectively.

- Active involvement in CDRPs will enable RSLs to gain recognition for their considerable successes and raise their profile with statutory agencies.

- This kind of engagement also allows for skill sharing – joint training, information sharing, briefing notes.

**Community Engagement**

- Knowing that the RSL is involved in partnership approaches should increase public confidence to report problems.

**Practicalities**

25. For the benefits to be realised locally, it is essential that CDRPs and RSLs in their area have a mature two way discussion about the role of the sector in the partnership. The Home Office and Communities and Local Government are aware that RSLs are an extremely diverse sector and so what the change means to the sector needs clarification. The practicalities listed below may be useful to consider within the context of these local discussions.

26. To achieve the benefits, practicalities need to be considered. The key practicalities are set out below.

27. While we might legitimately expect a large RSL which owns and manages large estates in an area to regularly attend CDRP meetings we are aware that we could not always expect the same of smaller landlords. Also, many larger RSLs hold stock in a number of local authority areas and could not be expected to engage fully in every partnership without placing an unworkable strain on their resources.

28. Furthermore, in some areas there maybe in excess of 50 RSLs in operation, making it unrealistic for each to take a seat around the table.

**How can these practical issues be overcome?**

29. The change in status will allow local areas to look at the best way to engage with RSLs without being overly prescriptive on the manner in which it is done. In the rest of the document we look at the ways in which these practicalities have been overcome and how to get the best of this joint working.
30. One possible solution which when deployed has often proven successful is for RSLs to form local consortia with the lead feeding into partnership structures. We are keen to promote this approach but it will take time to develop and nurture, especially in areas where there is little close co-operation at present. The case studies below look specifically at areas where this approach has proved successful and we would hope that the good practice highlighted here could be replicated by RSLs within other locations.

**Case studies on consortia**

31. **Coventry Consortium of Social Landlords** – the pioneer of RSL CDRP forums, they have a membership that spans all of the housing associations that manage general needs stock across Coventry. The purpose of the Consortium is to allow members to engage efficiently and effectively with the Coventry Community Safety Partnership and to allow access for all of its members to the full range of interventions available to tackle ASB.

32. An evaluation report detailing how the project was set up and its successes can be found at: 
www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/documents/policy-documents/anti-social-behaviour-findings.pdf (Provided by Whitefriars Housing Group)

33. **Newham RSL Forum** – The Newham Forum was set up to encourage a seamless approach to tackling ASB in the borough. They enjoy excellent attendance levels at their meetings and have recently had speakers from the Housing Corporation, Audit Commission and Communities and Local Government address their members. The Newham Forum has a representative who sits on the board of the local CDRP and they also provide representatives on various sub-groups that look at issues including Race Equality and Substance Misuse. The Forum have developed an action plan that is in line with the overarching CDRP strategy and are proud of the way they have been able to work with and influence the local CDRP. (Provided by East Homes).

34. **Kent and Medway Social Landlords ASB Group** – Local housing associations and Kent police set up a Social Landlords Group to work jointly on local initiatives and access the local CDRP. The group meets twice a year and members share best practice and discuss current problems in the area. As a group they are currently focusing on the commitments in the Respect Standard for Housing Management and see themselves as not only a regional support forum for landlords but also as a group raising the profile of housing with the local CDRP. (Provided by Hyde Housing Association).
Setting up a Consortium

35. The following bullets set out the suggested steps to setting up a consortium.

- Inform the CDRP as to your plans to set up a group and ask for their help and involvement.
- Agree with the CDRP how the consortium can access the partnership meetings – often this is through a Consortium representative attending the main CDRP meeting.
- Try and involve as many housing associations that operate in the area as you can.
- Set the meetings at regular intervals but ensure they are not too frequent (so that there is too little to discuss each time) or too infrequent (to not maintain momentum).
- Set clear agendas for the meetings. You could invite guest speakers from the Police or local authority, or get members of the consortium to speak about their approach. Be clear about what will and won’t be discussed e.g. what will your stance be on individual ASB cases?
- Be clear about how it will be funded.

Partnerships

36. As shown earlier these activities are already happening, and are proving to be a good use of time and resources. The following section demonstrates how two organisations (Servite Houses and New Charter Housing) have overcome difficulties.

Helpful tips from Servite Houses

37. ‘A more standardised approach to RSLs across CDRPs will facilitate more effective RSL engagement. Areas that would benefit from more standardised arrangements include information sharing protocols and ASB statistics requirements.’

38. ‘The format of CDRP meetings can also influence the level of RSL engagement. Meetings that cover both neighbourhood/strategic issues and individual case reviews are reported to be most popular with RSLs. Area based information can provide an RSL with vital information on the local circumstances of their tenants (e.g. high rates of burglary) and offer an opportunity to be involved in any CDRP problem solving initiatives.’

39. ‘Representation of Safer Neighbourhood Teams at CDRPs may be at Inspector or Commander level. This gives an opportunity for both SNTs and RSLs to discuss where there are problems of non-engagement at a neighbourhood level.’
Case Studies

40. London Borough of Wandsworth ASB Unit regularly requests from its RSL partners updated lists of relevant staff and properties managed in the borough. LB of Wandsworth is also working with Servite Houses to develop a protocol on how RSLs will consult with the borough’s ASB Unit on proposed Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

41. In East Finchley (LB Barnet) a pattern of dispersing the ASB problems arising from youth congregation was identified. The local Safer Neighbourhood Sergeant organised a meeting with the social landlords (involved in taking ASB intervention action), agencies providing youth activities and local Councillors to discuss the problem. Outcomes from this meeting included the exploration of sharing resources on preventative measures (e.g. neighbourhood wardens) as well as improved co-ordination of local youth engagement activities.

42. The close working relationship with the Vassall SNT (London Borough of Lambeth) and Servite Houses on the Church Manor estate resulted in joint patrols of the estate and successful Crack House Closure (through Servite disclosing the evidence gained through a covert operation). This all served to improve the feelings of safety within the community.

43. On the World’s End Estate (Kensington and Chelsea) representatives from the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams (SNTs) regularly attend the ‘estate surgeries’ along with Housing and ASB staff. This helped forge vital links with the local residents and has resulted in the publication of local crime statistics in the estate newsletters, the SNT attending the Resident Association’s Annual General Meeting and effective action against drug dealing on the estate.

44. ‘The Smallshaw Partnership – This is a Safer Stronger Community Fund (SSCF) area where Tameside MBC have put New Charter Housing’s Regeneration Manager in the key position of Fund manager of this multi-agency group. New Charter Housing sign off the money as work is done, but the Council are still the accountable body. They also facilitate and assist with submissions to the Project and ensure funding is obtained for those that will benefit the area.

45. This has led to projects in other areas as relationships have grown. The community has benefited from positive outcomes. These are reported through the CDRP and include:
46. Denton South SSSF – New Charter Housing is working jointly in partnership in this area with the Council as lead. They are on the management team and have their officers working closely with other partners.

47. New Charter Housing is project managing some environmental schemes for the Council. They also work with young people on diversionary activities. A lot of the partnership work involves Greater Manchester Police and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service with a community safety angle such as “Life Skills” and “Vehicle Care & Maintenance” courses.

48. New Charter Housing has joined forces with a local school and their pupils and the Police & the Council’s Community Safety Team to devise a Reward scheme for improving attendance and behaviour. Pupils have thought up a slogan – and New Charter Housing has secured £10k of SSSF monies to make it work. Good attendance, good behaviour both in school and in the wider community, and taking exams will result in points which can lead the pupils to prizes such as top up phone cards, sports equipment, etc.

49. Effective Partnership with the agencies at the CDRP table has opened up opportunities with both revenue and projects becoming available through these links.

Conclusion
50. The requirement to make RSLs co-operating bodies at the CDRP table has significant benefits. While we recognise that it will not be possible to have all RSLs at the table, practicalities can be worked through by effective dialogue.