



Aspire Housing & Newcastle under Lyme Prospectus for Joint Working

Aspire Housing and Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council have a long and successful history of partnership working. Since stock transfer in 2000, we have achieved a great deal together.

We now feel it is time to codify how we intend to work together for the future. Nineteen years after transfer, with a new Leadership at the council and a new Chair at Aspire, we believe much more is achievable by working better together. The areas that we wish to collaborate on or explore in partnership are below:

1. Development and Regeneration

Aspire and Newcastle Borough Council are both significant land owners in the Borough, and each have ambitious development plans:

- Aspire has an ambitious development programme, building and buying new homes inside and outside the Borough, leading on major regeneration schemes in local communities, and investing heavily in new and existing homes for older people. Aspire have recently established an outright sales vehicle 'Inacana' to develop over 100 homes for outright sale within the next 5 years.
- Newcastle Borough Council is keen to release land for development and to address the shortage of housing available to rent and buy. With the Housing Revenue Account caps lifted, NBC is empowered to establish its own sales company to claw back profits from sale and produce a much needed capital receipt for the Council.

Staffs County Council, NBC and Aspire are already collaborating on development and regeneration in the Borough. This needs to progress and momentum maintained in order to tackle blight, and capitalise on the opportunity all parties have to develop homes on sites in our ownership.

Savings could be made and profits shared through "Incana" to kick start schemes in the Borough, without expensive development vehicles needing to be established, as one

already exists. It would be possible to pilot an approach with NBC land and 'Incana' to road test an approach for joint venture collaboration.

2. Housing Advice and Allocations

Currently each party maintains its own waiting list and system for allocating homes. This is a legacy of Aspire not bidding to manage the Homeless and Housing Advice service which was won by Midland Heart.

We are already working well together on this – both Aspire and NBC have endorsed a more joined up approach, including a joint allocations policy, single waiting list and simplified systems. We now need to share the plan more widely and update the group.

We aim to establish a relationship that delivers a mature partnership rather than simply contractual approach and we will aim to achieve this together.

3. Locality Working/LAPs

Both organisations recognise the need to collaborate at a local level to deliver services across the Borough. Aspire are contributing to and supporting the LAP review, and are progressing its own service restructure at a locality level to better join up Aspire services.

This presents an opportunity to review the way both parties deliver services such as street scene and grounds maintenance. Currently, our standards and cutting schedules are unaligned and this mitigates against the creation of beautiful places where people are proud to live.

4. PM Training

Aspire Housing's subsidiary, PM Training is a long standing successful training provider, training nearly 2,500 people each year. PM Training operate a contracting arm, Homeworks, which delivers grounds maintenance services for Stoke City Council, Aspire and others. These contracts also help support people into work through apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship provision and operates as a social enterprise with all profits going to our Charity, Realise.

PM training delivers further apprenticeships through supply chains of anchor institutions, and in the past NBC have worked with their supply chain to establish hundreds of opportunities for apprenticeships.

There is a fantastic opportunity for us to achieve even more together, whether that is through Aspire's Homeworks delivery vehicle, or through further supply chain events and a commitment to support apprenticeships through PM.

5. Future Meetings

In order to progress these actions and opportunities, we commit to meeting quarterly across Executive teams throughout the year and 6 monthly with cabinet. Cabinet and Chair of Aspire will meet again in January 2020 to review progress.