

RAILWAY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

POLICY STATEMENT

DEVELOPMENT

1. Statement of Intent

The Association will provide new homes to meet the housing needs of current and future residents and to ensure that the Association's properties remain viable and desirable within the wider context of supply, demand, neighbourhood planning and stock condition.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, development is defined as new build, rehabilitation, re-modelling, conversion or demolition linked to our Asset Management Strategy.

Rehabilitation is the restoration of an existing dwelling to a sound condition that meets modern standards.

Re-modelling or conversion is the reconstruction of an existing building or alteration to a different use.

3. Implementation

3.1 Meeting Housing Needs

The Association will work in partnership with local authorities and development partners to address priority housing needs. The feasibility study of any new build or re-development scheme will include an assessment of housing need to ensure that there is evidence of a demand for the proposed development. We will look to the Local Authority for assurance that the scheme will be sustainable in the medium to long term.

We aim to provide housing of a suitable design, size and location for older people. In accordance with the conclusions of extensive independent research into the housing needs and preferences of older people, we will primarily develop two bedroom bungalows and apartments.

Development plans will be clearly linked to our Asset Management Strategy. We will seek to replace any homes that are lost through the rationalisation of our stock.

3.2 Preferred Areas for Development

The Association will develop in areas where we already have significant stock and /or a management base. New developments will be undertaken where these will contribute to a sustainable community. We will link our existing stock holding, management and investment issues to an agenda of working with neighbourhoods.

Policy Statement Development

3.3 Design Standards

All developments will be in accordance with the Homes & Community Agency's Design and Quality Standards and the Association's Design Brief. We will also endeavour to meet a minimum of sixteen of the twenty Building for Life criteria.

New developments will be built to meet the requirements of Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

We will aim to provide: -

- A secure home in a safe neighbourhood
- Self contained housing
- Two bedrooms
- Simple to operate features
- Landscaped gardens
- Energy efficiency and sustainability measures

3.4 Resident Involvement

The design of developments will take into consideration the views and aspirations of current and future residents. Current residents will be consulted prior to any rehabilitation, remodelling, conversion or demolition of their home. We will listen to residents' views and try to tailor the design and completion of the work to best suit their needs.

Where applicable and practical a choice of colour and design of the following items will be offered to residents: -

- Kitchen unit doors and handles
- Kitchen worktops
- Kitchen flooring
- Bathroom flooring
- Shower panel
- Living room fire

Accommodation will be designed to provide for the diverse needs of the elderly. In particular the design, layout, future needs for adaptations and the use of technology to assist those with visual impairment or physical disability will be incorporated.

The Association will strive to understand the housing needs of older residents from Black & Minority Ethnic groups and ensure that our homes are more accessible to people from these communities.

A Home User Guide will be issued and explained to each resident of a newly built property.

Policy Statement Development

3.5 Funding

The Association will seek funding from the Homes & Communities Agency and utilise our reserves and asset base to finance development.

The Association will allocate 12.5% of rental income to fund development work.

3.6 Number of Units

The Association aims to develop approximately sixty units of accommodation over the next five years (2009-2014). This figure includes conversion, rehabilitation or re-modelling of existing properties as well as new build.

3.7 Post Development Evaluation

Each development scheme will be evaluated on completion. A survey will be carried out to gauge residents' satisfaction levels and the performance of all parties involved in the scheme will be assessed.

The results of the evaluation will be used to identify and where possible address any dissatisfaction; improve the design and completions of future schemes; and monitor the performance of the Association, contractors and consultants.

4. Responsibility

The Development Manager is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy.

5. Review

This policy will be reviewed biennially, in consultation with residents.

May 2009

**This policy can be made available on request in other languages, large type,
Braille or in audio format**