

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

To: The Executive Board

Date: 21st April 2008

Item No:

Title of Report : CANAcT and anti social behaviour work for Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) out of the County



Purpose of report: To seek approval for a proposal to extend CANAcT's work

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Executive Member for Community Safety and Crime Reduction.

Scrutiny Responsibility: Community



Ward(s) affected: None



Report Approved by:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Altaf-Khan



Head of Community Housing and Community Development;

Lindsay Cane, Legal and Democratic Services;

Andy Collett, Finance



Policy Framework:



Recommendation(s): Executive Board is recommended to extend

CANAcT's contractual work for Registered Social Landlords ("RSLs") to out of County housing stock owned by RSLs already contracting with CANAcT, subject to a suitable business case being presented and agreed by the relevant Service Director each time this arises. (The Portfolio Holder stresses the need to ensure this proposal is delivered subject to no diminution of the existing service to the citizens of Oxford.)



1. Why this need has arisen

1.1 CANAcT has provided a contractual service for RSLs throughout Oxfordshire for nearly 4 years now, following a decision made by Executive Board in 2004, and reaffirmed the following year. This work has consisted of employing 1.5 officers directly from monies received under the contracts, to carry out anti social behaviour investigation services. It has proved very effective, and the RSL's are very happy with the service provided.

1.2 At present, CANAcT's work for RSL's is limited by the Executive Board decision of 2004 to the County of Oxfordshire. This has proved beneficial, as this has been a good literal and geographical boundary to its work up to now.

1.3 However, there have now been two requests for CANAcT to work outside the County from contracting RSL's, via the CANAcT/RSL Advisory Group, as the RSLs form into larger units through mergers, and take on additional properties.

1.4 It should perhaps be stressed at this point that none of the current contracts CANAcT has are under threat from any of the mergers up to now; on the contrary, other newly merged RSLs have started to express interest in our work, and one has recently engaged contractual terms with us.

1.5 The present proposal is based upon an RSL (Sovereign/Vale) having 20 units of accommodation in Brackley, Northants and another (Dominion/Cherwell Housing Trust) having 6 in Milton Keynes, 63 in Reading, and a small number of properties in Slough and in Swindon in development. This is considered to be very small beer, as major Anti Social Behaviour cases tend to occur in the proportion of approximately 1 to 1,000 properties.

1.6 The present proposal is to limit the scope of operations to existing contractors, and it is suggested a geographical limit could be set to the counties of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire (as was), Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Warwickshire (i.e. those with common borders with Oxfordshire).

2. Implications for existing service

2.1 It is critical that CANAcT's work with Oxford City Homes, Environmental Health, other Business Units and the Police remains absolutely sacrosanct. There is no question that any contractual arrangements will compromise this, and this is explained explicitly in the contracts themselves, whereby CANAcT, as a General-Funded Unit having primary duty to the Council tax paying citizens of Oxford city, will

deal first and foremost with issues affecting those citizens.

2.2 This work is actually enhanced by the RSL contracts. For instance, in Northfield Brook, where there is no OCH stock but the RSL's have a major holding, without these contracts in place it is arguable that CANAcT would not be able to work effectively, and would therefore be providing a poorer service to those residents of areas that are traditionally more prone to ASB activity. Intelligence that CANAcT can gather throughout the County can also bring in information to this city-based unit that informs its work there.

2.3 The Portfolio Holder stresses the need to ensure this proposal is delivered subject to no diminution of the existing service to the citizens of Oxford.

3. Viability

3.1 Whilst the capacity of CANAcT is tight, it can deliver its services very efficiently, and this has been demonstrated. Any additional funds levered in through these modest proposals to increase service provision will bring proportionally larger economies of scale, and actually help increase capacity – as long as the income levered in is sufficient to employ additional staff.

3.2 At this point it should be noted that no other members of staff than those outlined above are involved in delivering this service to RSL's, with the exception of line management for those individuals. Specifically, legal services are not provided to RSL's, and they access their own legal support.

4. Implications for the future

4.1 One parameter that appears throughout this report is the idea of limiting any expansion to organisations already contracted with. This is one option, but there needs to be recognition that ASB is still a growing field, and with the increase in RSL housing development and developers in the city, there is a commensurate increase in ASB cases within that sector.

4.2 There are clearly implications for CANAcT's income here, but these are positive, as there are economies of scale to be derived, which can only benefit the efficiency of the service.

4.3 In the future, this must open up the possibility of extending the service and further recruitment in the future.

5. Costs

5.1 Income from this proposal at present would necessarily be limited by the small size of the proposal. It is only envisaged that c £1,000 pa could be raised from the proposals above, but the scope provided by specifying

the Counties mentioned provides potential for significantly increased sums over time.

5.2 The Portfolio Holder has stressed the need to ensure the proposal is delivered at no additional cost to this organisation.

Executive Board is recommended to extend CANACT's contractual work for Registered Social Landlords ("RSLs") to out of County housing stock owned by RSLs already contracting with CANACT, subject to a suitable business case being presented and agreed by the relevant Service Director each time this arises.

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Background papers: None

