



The Alliance of Registered Co-operatives  
and Housing Associations, Independent in  
Edinburgh

*“Being better, independently together”*

## Partnership Plan 2019/21 – Draft 3 Final (February 2018)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1** This first Partnership Plan for ARCHIE provides the framework which sets out broad areas of potential activity which the participating Housing Associations and Housing Co-operatives could benefit from working together on. It identifies the specific areas where a partnership approach would be most beneficial and identifies the outcomes which it seeks to achieve.
- 1.2** This covers the interests of 8 Housing Co-operatives and Housing Associations, all having a strong common interest being focussed on maintaining a strong independent and local identity delivering a wide range of services within Edinburgh. These are Muirhouse HA, Prospect HA, West Granton Co-op, Lister Co-op, Hunters Hall Co-op, Manor Estates, Viewpoint HA and Port of Leith HA.
- 1.3** A common feature of this group is that each are, and wish to remain, independent organisations and who are primarily focussed on providing services within Edinburgh.
- 1.4** Collectively this group of organisations own and manage over 7,000 homes in Edinburgh including social and mid-market rented housing, sheltered housing, care homes, and shared ownership housing. They provide a wide range of individual support services, factoring services and undertake wider community activity including employability, cleaning and environmental services. With a combined turnover of approximately £53m pa (as of March 2018), employing over 440 permanent staff to deliver services to over 20,000 people, they are overseen by over 100 voluntary Board/Committee members.
- 1.5** ARCHIE’s mission is *“To combine our skills and experience supporting the diversity of the group to enable each to become better and stronger at what we do”*. (Note: Thanks to Alistair for his contribution on this and open to any further suggestions on this as well before finalising)
- 1.6** In overall, the purpose of the Alliance is to secure benefits to all members and their respective customers/service users, improving the access to and cost effectiveness of services and for required specialisms to provide additional capacity, secure added value, to reduce/mitigate risk, and to improve assurance with regulatory compliance.

## **2. Objectives of ARCHIE**

- 2.1** To be a forum for joint discussion and evaluation of all matters affecting the members;
- 2.2** To discuss, negotiate and collaborate, on behalf of its members, with other organisations and agencies on matters of common interest and/or concern;
- 2.3** To discuss, negotiate, facilitate and collaborate on behalf of its members in connection with matters relevant to the provision of housing and/or community regeneration activities within the operating area, being the Edinburgh City boundary;
- 2.4** To undertake representational and promotional activities on behalf of the members and to act as a co-ordinating body for taking appropriate action to defend and further the interests of the members; and,
- 2.5** To provide and/or procure guidance, information, training, products and services for the members on matters relevant to the strategic and operational activities of the members.

## **3. Governance of ARCHIE**

- 3.1** While ARCHIE is not a separate legal entity, its work is achieved through consensus and the voluntary links between the Housing Co-operatives and Associations. A constitution has been agreed and approved by the governing bodies of each member and was formally signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.
- 3.2** The powers of ARCHIE are set out in the constitution and which are effectively ones that are conferred on it by all members and which in general are conducive to assist the Alliance to achieve its objectives.
- 3.3** One member shall act as the principle contact and “lead” member in respect of each project on the basis of an agreed service sharing arrangement and including cost apportionment.
- 3.4** There shall be one General Meeting held each year to report on the activities of the previous year, receive accounts, and elect two people (primary spokesperson and substitute) from the members to represent the Alliance to external agencies/media, and appoint a Chairperson for the coming year.
- 3.5** There will be ordinary meetings (at least 4) of the Alliance, comprising a nominated senior officer of each member to conduct the business and including agreeing the Activity Plan and monitoring/reviewing its progress and restatement on an annual basis.

## **4. Potential Activities and Benefits**

### **4.1 Activity Plan**

The Plan itself is a useful way for the Associations/Co-operatives to clarify just how, by collaborating, they will work to strengthen the organisation capacity and ability to deliver improved performance and outcomes for their customers and service users. The Activities Plan and Delivery Tracker at Appendix 1 sets out what will be undertaken together to deliver the benefits accruing to individual organisations.

## **4.2 Wider Role**

Many members of ARCHIE have considerable experience of undertaking wider roles within their communities, ranging from tenancy sustainment, individual support and advice (including welfare and energy), employability, environmental improvement and maintenance, cleaning and greening activities, support addressing isolation and improving social cohesion, and providing community spaces for social enterprise and voluntary groups to function. Building on this experience through combining and sharing activity would enable improved economies of scale and extending the benefits of this more widely within our communities.

## **4.3 Procurement Support and Joint Procurement**

A significant opportunity exists through collaborating on procurement activity, both through supporting one another where there is specific expertise in place, and with the potential of jointly procuring selected products and services. All organisations are required to procure both one off and recurring year on year products and services, and which have the potential to be delivered more cost effectively through joint procurement by some or all members of ARCHIE.

## **4.4 New Housing Development**

There is an ongoing high demand for and acute shortage of sub market affordable housing for rent (including with social housing and mid market rented housing in particular) in Edinburgh with both housing associations and the Council committed to using their best endeavours to provide 20,000 new homes over 10 years. The opportunity exists to collaborate in providing development services and supporting the ability of those to build new affordable homes but who do not currently have in house housing development project skills.

## **4.5 Policy Development and Good Practice**

ARCHIE organisations can collaborate to revise and update existing policies and develop new ones. Working within the same operating environment including regulatory framework/standard and delivering to a similar customer and service user base the overall principles of many policies are similar to each. Through sharing policies and procedures the opportunity to learn from and support best practice will be maximised with the need to “re-invent the wheel” being minimised.

## **4.6 Training and Development (for Staff and Board/MC Members) and networking**

The opportunity to develop and deliver tailored learning and development activities provides for upskilling, including both career development for staff in various professional disciplines and strengthening governance capacity by Board/Committee Members. In a constantly changing and complex operating environment Board members and staff can learn together through both informal networking and facilitated discussion, sharing and exchanging experiences in support of promoting best practice in governance and service delivery.

## **4.7 Joint campaigning/lobbying**

All members of ARCHIE work in a highly pressured housing market area where the need for affordable housing and individual support services are very high and which currently

far outstrip the available supply. There will be a need for continued lobbying, and including supporting the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership, to maintain the high profile of the challenges and to advocate solutions to this over the coming years.

#### **4.8 Benchmarking**

While including a diverse group of organisations, ARCHIE provides the opportunity to share key performance information and further benchmarking to support continuous improvement and value for money in service delivery.

#### **4.9 Internal Audit**

Providing assurance of compliance with standards of customer/service user expectation and of regulation is an increasing feature of the governance framework we all work within. ARCHIE provides an opportunity to develop new and consistent approaches to the internal audit of operational systems and processes, and securing better value for money through collaboration on this.

#### **4.10 Sharing Resources**

There will be circumstances and occasions in the future where specific and new expertise will be required for each of the organisations. For example, the emerging requirements of GDPR and likely extension of FoI to all social housing organisation in 2019/20 currently present a challenge to each individually and which has the potential to be addressed more (cost/risk) effectively if done collaboratively.

### **5. Monitoring and Review**

**5.1** The senior officers of ARCHIE will monitor progress delivering the Activities Plan in Appendix 1, having reviewed the Plan in Q4 and to set out a new plan for the forthcoming year.

**5.2** The senior officers of ARCHIE shall ensure proper accounting records are maintained, including annual accounts to present for approval to the General Meeting held each year.

#### **Appendix 1 – Activities Plan and Delivery Tracker - April 2019-March 2021**