

Setting the scene: context and challenges

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Where are we now?

- Unusual social housing system - one big social housing provider and many small ones;
- Little integrated policy/planning around social housing sector overall (targeting);
- Funding models (government) not conducive to growing social housing – real decline, funding the ‘rebate’ gap;
- (Unfair) competition between sectors for funding;
- Limited role of local government.

Some drivers of change

- The ‘sandwich group’ (affordable housing);
- Current wave of interest in community (role of local government);
- Influence of ideas from the UK (housing associations);
- Emphasis on ‘non shelter outcomes’;
- Interest by some private developers in ‘affordable’ housing.

Growing the sector overall

Significant strength in community housing sector:

- Local, responsive, support, voluntary effort, community support, links with local government, can access Rent Assistance.

Overall the sector is still quite small. Why:

- Too dependent on government for \$\$s and properties, project funding, limited ability to attract other funds, variable capacity in terms of skills and expertise, lack of a long term framework for growth.

What do we need to do to achieve growth in the sector?

- Do organisations need to get bigger?
- How would we do this eg amalgamations, partnerships, etc?
- How do we resource/fund growth?
- How do we best work partnerships?
- How do we maintain our core values and our objectives in the face of expansion?

How does size matter?

Size relative to activities:

- Developing projects –feasibility, financing capital;
- Property development and construction;
- Ownership
- Financial management – ongoing viability;
- Asset management;
- Tenancy management;
- Support services.

Deciding whether to grow an organisation

Being clear about objectives:

- Focus on tenancy management and support – small may be best;
- Property development and financing – size (and capacity) are factors;
- On-going financial viability - growth in numbers or in different target groups?

How to grow: going alone, mergers, partnerships, multi-level, other(?)

What is necessary for growth?

- Capacity of community housing organisations –skills and expertise, issues of governance, financial capacity;
- Capacity of government – enabling, facilitating, funding, monitoring, regulation;
- Other sources of financing;
- Partnerships.

Governance

Governance matters a lot:

- Structures that enable legitimacy and broad based accountability;
- Skills based boards/management committees;
- Clear definition of the role of staff/volunteers relative to boards/management committees.
- Clear policies on operational issues such as allocations and good support systems, etc.
- Tenant participation.

Settings that enable growth

- A commitment to resourcing and development of the sector;
- Financing mechanisms that support growth – separate organisational arrangements;
- Separation of responsibility for funding and regulation (clear accountability mechanisms);
- Assessment and management of risk (all parties);
- Clear understanding of the nature of partnerships.

Partnership (guiding principles)

- Not a service contract or commercial joint venture;
- Co-operation between providers, clear and transparent framework, flexibility;
- Underpinned by shared and agreed values;
- Equal participation in decision-making and access to information;
- May be unequal in terms of power and resources but can make equally important contributions to a partnership

Source: Prepared for New Zealand Housing Strategy

Why are we doing this? (the 7.30pm question)

- Core values – what are we here for?
- Who are we trying to assist and how?
- Are we achieving what we set out to do?
- How do these discussions of financing, property issues, legal matters, etc contribute to what we set out to do?
- Are we focusing on what is important (eg how much time do we spend looking at client service)?
- Are we growing for growth's sake or because this will help us to achieve what we set out to do?