

Welsh Government
Housing Directorate – Regulation



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Financial Viability Judgement

Rhondda Housing Association Limited

Registration number: L056

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Welsh Government

Financial Viability Judgement

The Welsh Ministers have powers under the Housing Act 1996 to regulate Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Wales in relation to the provision of housing and matters relating to governance and financial management. Part 1 of the 1996 Act is amended by Part 2 of the Housing (Wales) Measure 2011 (“The Measure”) and provides the Welsh Ministers with enhanced regulatory and intervention powers concerning the provision of housing by registered social landlords and the enforcement action that may be taken against them. The Welsh Ministers are publishing this regulatory assessment report under section 33A of the Housing Act 1996.

The regulatory assessment work undertaken follows the risk-based approach to regulation and seeks to make a judgement relating to the financial viability “Delivery Outcome” (standard of performance). The “Delivery Outcomes” (standards of performance) are set out in the Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales, which is also known as “the regulatory framework”.

This report sets out the Welsh Government’s assessment and is designed to provide the RSL, its tenants, service users and other stakeholders with an understanding of the RSL’s financial viability.

The term ‘association’ has been used throughout the report to refer to registered social landlords, whether they are a single housing association or a group.



Description of the Association

Rhondda Housing Association Limited is a traditional, community based association established around 30 years ago. The Association is registered with the Registry of Friendly Societies and has charitable status.

It provides 1,500 general needs, sheltered and supported accommodation, as well as low cost home ownership and intermediate rent homes, in the Rhondda and Taff Ely areas of Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. It also provides support services to residents across the borough.

The Association has an ongoing development programme of 85 homes over the next two years, with ongoing development thereafter of 15 homes a year. It intends in the medium term to greatly increase its level of development activity using innovative funding methods.

Overall Conclusion

In relation to the Association, our Financial Viability Judgement as at 28 March 2013 is:

Pass

The Association has adequate resources to meet its current and forecasted future business and financial commitments.



Our judgement is explained as follows:

1. The 30 year forecast has been prepared using a reasonable set of assumptions and demonstrates sufficient prudence to remain viable under a variety of different economic scenarios.
2. The Association has adequate private financing in place to fund its forecasted spending on property maintenance and improvements, and it has sufficient income generating ability to service such borrowings. The level of costs included in the forecast appears reasonable in order to deliver the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2013/14.
3. We are content that the Association can operate without breaching the financial covenants to which its borrowing is subject to.
4. The level of committed development included in the forecast is greater than previous levels, but is within our expectations of what the Association can achieve and is sufficiently funded.
5. The Association's financial results to date and its 30 year forecast demonstrates that it does not rely unduly on property sales or commercial activities to fund its operations.
6. The Association has carried out an assessment of the financial impact of welfare benefit reforms and has demonstrated that their 30 year forecast can sustain an adverse impact from 2013/14 onwards. However the Association needs to ensure that it is responding effectively to the impact of forthcoming welfare reforms. This has been identified as an area of regulatory focus during the recent Housing Association Regulatory Assessment.



Sources of information and regulatory activity

The following information is generally received from RSLs and reviewed by the Welsh Government:

- Audited annual accounts, including the internal controls assurance statement;
- External auditors' management letter;
- 30 year financial forecasts;
- Six monthly management accounts;
- Private finance returns;
- 5 year business plans;
- Board papers, as requested;
- Financial and risk management information collected through undertaking housing association regulatory assessments.

In addition we also liaise with the RSL as part of the Financial Viability Judgement assessment process.

Basis of financial viability judgement

This judgement is based on information submitted by the RSL, our accumulated knowledge and experience of the RSL, its management and the RSL sector as a whole.

In preparing this report, the Welsh Ministers have relied on the information supplied by or on behalf of the RSL. The Directors of the RSL remain responsible for the completeness and accuracy of such information.

This report has been prepared for the RSL as a regulatory assessment. It must not be relied upon by any other party or for any other purpose. Any other parties are responsible for making their own investigations or enquiries.

The financial element of the regulatory assessment is undertaken throughout the year and culminates in a financial viability judgement which is issued to each housing association at the end of March each year.

There are three categories of financial viability judgement: **"pass"**, **"pass with closer regulatory monitoring"**, or **"fail"**.

Where a judgement of **"fail"** applies, the Welsh Ministers will have already been working closely with the association to address the underlying issues.

Where the judgement is **"pass with closer regulatory monitoring"**, the Welsh Ministers are of the view that additional work and/or scrutiny, is required to provide stronger assurance on financial viability.