

ASSET MANAGEMENT IN THE SOCIAL RENTED SECTOR

Asset Management in the Social Rented Sector

Policy and Practice in Europe and Australia

Edited by

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	xi
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Scope and Aims of the Book	1
1.2 Asset Management in the Social Rented Sector: Definition and Activities	4
1.3 A Typology of Approaches Towards Asset Management ..	6
1.4 Landlords' Practice and Their National Context: a Hypothetical Model	12
1.5 Classifications of Housing Systems and Asset Management	14
1.6 Methodology and Outline of the Book	16
2 AUSTRALIA	19
2.1 Social Landlords in Australia	19
2.2 National Context for Asset Management	21
2.2.1 Regulations	22
2.2.2 Supervision	22
2.2.3 Financial Support	23
2.2.4 Housing Market	23
2.3 Asset Management Practice	24
2.3.1 Rent Setting	25
2.3.2 Allocations	26
2.3.3 Sales	27
2.3.4 Maintenance and Renewal	29
2.3.5 Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	30
2.4 Conclusion	35
3 AUSTRIA	39
3.1 Social Landlords in Austria	39
3.2 National Context for Asset Management	42
3.2.1 Regulations	42
3.2.2 Supervision	48

3.2.3	Financial Support	48
3.2.4	Housing Market	50
3.3	Asset Management Practice	51
3.3.1	Rent Setting	51
3.3.2	Allocations	52
3.3.3	Sales	53
3.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	54
3.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	55
3.4	Conclusion	57
4	BELGIUM-FLANDERS	61
4.1	Social Landlords in Flanders	61
4.2	The National (Flemish) Context for Asset Management	63
4.2.1	Regulations	63
4.2.2	Supervision	66
4.2.3	Financial Support	68
4.2.4	Housing Market	69
4.3	Asset Management Practice	69
4.3.1	Rent Setting	69
4.3.2	Allocations	70
4.3.3	Sales	71
4.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	71
4.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	71
4.4	Conclusion	75
5	DENMARK	79
5.1	Social Landlords in Denmark	79
5.2	National Context for Asset Management	81
5.2.1	Regulations	81
5.2.2	Supervision	83
5.2.3	Financial Support	83
5.2.4	Housing Market	86
5.3	Asset Management Practice	87
5.3.1	Rent Setting	87
5.3.2	Allocations	88
5.3.3	Sales	88
5.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	89

5.3.5	Decision Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	90
5.4	Conclusion	92
6	ENGLAND	97
6.1	Social Landlords in England	97
6.2	National Context for Asset Management	98
6.2.1	Regulations	101
6.2.2	Supervision	104
6.2.3	Financial Support	105
6.2.4	Housing Market	106
6.3	Asset Management Practice	108
6.3.1	Rent Setting	108
6.3.2	Allocations	109
6.3.3	Sales	111
6.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	111
6.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	112
6.4	Conclusion	116
7	FRANCE	119
7.1	Social Landlords in France	119
7.2	National Context for Asset Management	121
7.2.1	Regulations	121
7.2.2	Supervision	124
7.2.3	Financial Support	124
7.2.4	Housing Market	126
7.3	Asset Management Practice	127
7.3.1	Rent Setting	127
7.3.2	Allocations	128
7.3.3	Sales	129
7.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	130
7.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	132
7.4	Conclusion	138
8	GERMANY	141
8.1	Social Landlords Germany	141
8.2	National Context for Asset Management	144
8.2.1	Regulations	144

8.2.2	Supervision	147
8.2.3	Financial Support	147
8.2.4	Housing Market	149
8.3	Asset Management Practice	149
8.3.1	Rent Setting	149
8.3.2	Allocation	150
8.3.3	Sales	151
8.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	152
8.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	154
8.4	Conclusion	157
9	LATVIA	161
9.1	Social Landlords in Latvia	161
9.2	National Context for Asset Management	163
9.2.1	Regulations	163
9.2.2	Supervision	167
9.2.3	Financial Support	168
9.2.4	Housing Market	169
9.3	Asset Management Practice	170
9.3.1	Rent Setting	170
9.3.2	Allocations	172
9.3.3	Sales	173
9.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	175
9.3.5	Decision-Making Process: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	176
9.4	Conclusion	181
10	THE NETHERLANDS	185
10.1	Social Landlords in the Netherlands	185
10.2	National Context for Asset Management	185
10.2.1	Regulations	186
10.2.2	Supervision	188
10.2.3	Financial Support	189
10.2.4	Housing Market	190
10.3	Asset Management Practice	191
10.3.1	Rent Setting	191
10.3.2	Allocations	192
10.3.3	Sales	194
10.3.4	Maintenance and Renewal	195

10.3.5	Decision-Making: Considerations, Methods and Strategies	197
10.4	Conclusion	205
11	CONCLUSION	209
11.1	Introduction	209
11.2	Comparative Summary	209
11.2.1	Social Landlords	209
11.2.2	National Context for Asset Management	210
11.2.3	Asset Management Practice	213
11.3	Relations between Asset Management Context and Practice	216
11.4	Creating the Right Conditions for Strategic Asset Management	221
	APPENDIX A: FORMAT FOR COUNTRY MONOGRAPHS	227
	APPENDIX B: LIST OF AUTHORS AND THEIR AFFILIATIONS	231

PREFACE

The idea to start an international investigation into asset management in the social rented sector was triggered by developments that we observed in our own country—the Netherlands. During the nineties, the Dutch government reduced its regulation as well as its financial support of social landlords. Furthermore, the market share of social rented housing was under threat due to the booming economy and a growing preference for owner-occupation. These developments lead to a widespread interest among Dutch social landlords in the adaptation of more professional, business-like approaches towards the management of their housing stock. Since similar developments had taken place in other countries as well, we felt it would be interesting to see if these developments had a similar impact on the social landlords, and if there are opportunities for international exchange of experiences. However, a literature review quickly revealed us that little had been published about this topic—most comparative housing research being focused on national housing policies and systems, often placed in the wider context of the analysis of welfare regimes. So we had two options. The first was to conduct an investigation into the asset management in various countries ourselves. This would have meant a lot of nice travels, but also a lot of time, money and the risk of not being able to paint a reliable picture because of our unawareness of specific characteristics of the social housing system, policy and landlords in other countries. Therefore we chose the second option, which was to gather a group of people who would be willing to write about their own country in answer to our research questions. To meet potential contributors we attended the conferences of the European Network for Housing Research (ENHR) in 2001 and 2002. At the latter conference we organised a workshop on asset management in the social rented sector during which we met the majority of the authors of this book. At the ENHR conference in 2003 we held a focused follow-up workshop to discuss the draft chapters and now, in 2004, the final result lies before you. So, there have been four years, three conferences and uncountable emails between the initial idea and the resulting book, but we feel it has certainly been worth while. The book fills a gap in international comparative housing research, gives means to place one's own national policy and practice in a wider context, is a useful starting point for a more structural international exchange of

experiences and is a basis for further theoretical and practical development of asset management in the social rented sector.

This project is a part of Delft University of Technology's research programme on Sustainable Urban Areas and has been conducted within the ENHR Working Group on Housing Management. Of course, the book would not have been possible without the contributions from all the authors—many thanks for your cooperation! Furthermore, we are very grateful to the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment for its financial support. Finally we would like to thank our colleagues within our university for their support of the book.

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