


Leigh-Anne Francis | Specialist Housing Consultant

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Accomplished Partnerships Manager with over three decades of multifaceted experience in the social housing sector, adept at spearheading strategic partnerships and stakeholder relations. Excel in fostering relationships with Local Authorities, spearheading negotiations, and facilitating critical legal discussions to secure positive outcomes in alignment with both organisational and stakeholder needs. Bring a track record of enabling company growth by establishing as a prominent Registered Provider, paving the way for the acquisition of strategic sites and approval across numerous Local Authorities. Possess a robust blend of expertise in policy interpretation, project delivery, and cross-departmental collaboration. With a rich history of securing substantial funding and driving city-wide housing initiatives, ready to leverage a well-rounded industry perspective and a passion for problem-solving to excel as a Partnerships Manager.



Contact Info

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Key Skills

(see career timeline on **page 2**)

- Affordable Housing Expertise
- Community & Urban Regeneration
- Legal Frameworks & Discussions
- Funding Acquisition
- Strategic Partnership Development
- Cross-Departmental Collaboration
- Project Management
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Policy Interpretation
- Excellent networks in housing

Highlights

(see career timeline on **page 2**)

- Consultancy services to **Strategic Housing and Planning** functions for local authorities
- Built **from startup** a business which **became largest provider of affordable housing** in the country with approval to work in over a third of Local Authority areas
- Successfully gained approval with over 270 of local authorities across the country for Sage, maintained all relationships thereafter and achieved 100% success in all areas the company desired presence.
- Extensive experience in navigating and guiding on council / local authority policies & strategic development aspirations, and instigating collaboration with developers.
- Tenured in successfully securing funding for housing developments.
- Collaboration with local planners in the creation of sustainable and community-focused housing solutions.

Career Timeline

Head of Partnerships – Sage Homes | London

Mar 2018 – Nov 2023

Drove strategic partnerships and stakeholder engagement as a senior team member in a startup environment, fostering relationships with Local Authorities to support the acquisition of units through S106 agreements and Joint Ventures. Collaborates with Acquisitions, Legal, Operations, and Delivery teams to ensure successful site delivery. Conducted regular meetings with Local Authorities and participate in Registered Providers forums to stay abreast of regional developments and inform the acquisitions program. Utilised extensive knowledge in social housing and negotiation skills to facilitate legal discussions and secure favorable outcomes for the organisation.

- Secured approvals from over 270 Local Authorities, enabling the company to become the largest provider of affordable housing in the country.
- Played a pivotal role in the company's growth to over 17k homes in less than six years, with authorisation to operate in over a third of Local Authority areas.
- Led cross-departmental collaborations to deliver sites effectively, ensuring investor satisfaction and compliance with Local Authorities' expectations.

[Shorter-term & Contract Roles]

Business Development Manager – West Mercia Housing Group Limited

Jul 2017 - Nov 2017

Responsible for delivering affordable housing schemes for the WM Group including sourcing opportunities via Land Agents, Consultants and Local Authorities. Ensuring that viable schemes are progressed through the appraisal process and subsequently that they are delivered on site.

Housing Consultant – South Derbyshire District Council

Nov 2017 - Mar 2018

Updated the Council's Housing Market Assessment to align with current housing trends and legislative changes. Provided expert pre-planning application advice to facilitate informed decision-making by developers, Registered Providers, and other stakeholders. Collaborated with the planning department to refine the Council's affordable housing policy, ensuring compliance with evolving government housing policies. Interpreted complex policy guidelines and advised on their application to support the Council's strategic housing initiatives.

- Conducted comprehensive analysis of legal requirements and housing needs to inform Council's development strategies.
- Offered guidance on affordable housing policy, contributing to creation of equitable housing solutions within the district.
- Played a pivotal role in advising on policy interpretation, enhancing the Council's ability to navigate changes in government housing policy effectively.

Housing Consultant – Chelmsford City Council

Nov 2016 - Mar 2017

Provided expert consultancy to the Housing and Planning enabling team on S106 agreements, playing a critical role in the ongoing Local Plan review. Engaged in collaborative efforts with developers and planning colleagues on a strategic urban extension site, ensuring alignment with community needs and regulatory frameworks. Contributed to the development of housing strategies, ensuring they are both innovative and compliant with current standards.

- Played key role in analysing and informing the Affordable Housing Policy through a comprehensive review of the SHMA.
- Facilitated collaboration between developers and planning colleagues to advance mixed-use urban extension project.
- Provided strategic input to the Local Plan review, contributing to the creation of sustainable and community-focused housing solutions.

Business Development Manager – Partner Construction

Oct 2015 – Jun 2016

Led strategic business development initiatives for Partner Construction, focusing on promoting design and build contracts and exploring joint venture opportunities in the East/West Midlands. Fostered and leveraged industry contacts to set up successful housing schemes across the region. Spearheaded efforts to position the firm as a preferred contractor, demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the construction sector. Ensured alignment of development projects with organisational goals and industry standards.

- Pioneered exploration of joint venture opportunities, enhancing company's market presence and potential for collaboration.

Bloor Homes Measham Development Manager**Apr 2015 – Jul 2015**

Negotiated S106 agreements and managed legal contract documentation for Affordable Housing projects, ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. Fostered and expanded professional relationships with Housing Associations, Registered Providers, and Local Authorities to secure new development sites and support regional business growth. Coordinated with regional teams to align business expansion with the strategic Business Plan. Analysed contracts for S106 schemes, working with solicitors and Registered Providers to negotiate terms and ensure accurate contract language. Developed strategies to enhance business development and growth across the housing sector.

- Liaised effectively with solicitors and registered providers to negotiate changes in proposed housing types, optimising project outcomes.

Development Manager | Galliford Try Partnerships, Leicester**Dec 2014 – Apr 2015**

Expanded business in the East Midlands by fostering strong relationships with key stakeholders, including Local Authorities and Registered Providers. Identified and capitalised on development opportunities for affordable housing and mixed tenure projects. Engaged with the HCA, Local Agents, and Consultants to maximise regional growth. Developed strategies for securing lucrative sites and advancing the company's market presence. Ensured alignment with long-term business objectives by leveraging industry knowledge and extensive network.

- Secured a significant site in a prestigious Nottingham area, leading to the development of a successful residential mixed-use project.

Strategic Development Manager | Lovell Partnerships, Nottingham**Apr 2013 – Dec 2014**

Managed strategic development initiatives across Planned Maintenance, New Build Contracting, and Mixed Tenure sectors within the Eastern region. Cultivated and sustained productive relationships with key partners to facilitate the successful execution of new build projects.

- Navigated joint venture with Riverside Housing, contributing to significant redevelopment of Castleward in Derby.
- Conducted thorough consultations, aiding in smooth transition of businesses affected by the Castleward redevelopment.
- Fostered vital partnerships, resulting in the acquisition of new development opportunities for the organisation.
- Played an instrumental role in stakeholder meetings, ensuring collaborative progress on the Castleward project.

Housing Development Manager | Derby City Council, Derby**Apr 2007 – Dec 2012**

Managed the expansion of affordable housing provisions in Derby City through strategic S106 planning agreements and successful acquisition of funds from entities like the Homes and Communities Agency. Fostered robust partnerships with key stakeholders such as Housing Associations, house builders, and local authorities to drive housing development projects. Ensured the continuity of housing regeneration amidst market downturns by engaging with current and potential developers to maintain and increase investment in the city.

- Secured over £30 million in funding for housing initiatives in Derby City, contributing to city's development and affordable housing stock.
- Championed the City of Derby to developers, promoting investment and fostering long-term development plans.
- Leveraged extensive industry knowledge to navigate complex housing sectors and drive successful outcomes.
- Utilised comprehensive management and leadership skills to lead diverse teams and projects, aligning with the city's strategic housing goals.

Other Roles Undertaken:

- Housing Development Officer – Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
- Housing Strategy Development Officer

Additional Experience:

- **Estate Manager | Estate Regeneration Officer | Project Development Officer**, Derby Homes
- **Housing Projects Officer | Tenant Services Officer | Customer Services Officer | Area Clerk | YT Trainee**, Derby City Council

Education, Skills & Interests

Professional Accreditation

Corporate member of The Chartered Institute of Housing

Education

Derby University | Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies

De-Montfort University, Leicester | BSc Housing Studies

De-Montfort University, Leicester | BTEC HNC Housing Studies

Basford Hall College, Nottingham | BTEC National Certificate in Housing Studies

GCSE | Including English, Mathematics

Skills

- Strong negotiation and interpersonal skills
- Excellent communication and networking skills
- Strong Managerial and Leadership skills
- Excellent Project Management skills
- Use and application of IT using a variety of software packages
- Full UK driving licence

References

Numerous references & colleague testimonials can be provided upon request.