



**COUNCIL HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL WORKING PARTY**

**30 March 2009**

The Meeting commenced at 6.00p.m and concluded at 7.05p.m.

**Present**

Councillors Trent and Mrs Walton

Mr R Aggett  
Mr B Constance  
Mr L James  
Mr A Khan  
Ms H Ross  
Mr R Saunders

**Officers attending**

Mr D Mullany	Project Manager, Housing & Communities Services
Mr J Springett	Management Support, Housing and Communities Services
Mr J Logan	Chief Executive, PHP Limited
Ms C Brown	Head of Housing Management, PHP Limited
Ms J Thurgood	Strategic Director
Ms T Mitchell	Democratic Services

(This Meeting had directly followed a training session that had focussed upon six key themes relating to the Council Housing Options Appraisal Project. (Copies of the power-point presentations that accompanied the training session are available on request).

**20. WELCOME**

The Vice-Chairman, Helen Ross, welcomed everyone to the second Meeting of this Working Party that had been set up by the Council's Cabinet to oversee the 'Housing Options Appraisal' that would be deciding how best to guarantee sufficient investment in the Housing Stock in the future.

**21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms Atkinson and Brooke.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**



No Declarations of Interest were made.

23. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the previous Meeting of this Working Party held on 9 February 2009 were not available and were to be submitted to the next Working Party Meeting on 11 May 2009.

24. PROGRESS AGAINST PROJECT PLAN, AND FORWARD PLAN

David Mullany, Project Manager, Housing and Communities Services, presented a report and accompanying Project Plan Chart that summarised the latest progress that had been made against the Housing Options Appraisal Outline Project Plan for 2008/09 since the last Meeting of this Working Party. This report also notified the Working Party Members of forthcoming actions and events.

With regard to progress made against the Project Plan since the Working Party's last Meeting of 9 February 2009, it was noted that: -

- Agreement had been reached with the nominated Specialist Adviser over: -
  - (i) Investment requirements for meeting the 'Poole Standard';
  - (ii) The 'Assumptions' that would be used in the financial analysis of options;
- 'Outline' Agreement had been reached with the Specialist Advisor over the financial implications for the Council of any potential transfer of ownership of the stock;
- Between February and March 2009, consultation had taken place with residents at 15 well-attended events;
- A sub-group of the Residents' Panel had been created to act as a link with the Specialist Resident Advisor;
- Following a presentation on the project to the Council's Extended Management Team, discussions had begun with Service Unit Heads over the potential implications of the project;
- Discussions and workshop seminars had taken place at the last PHP Staff Conference;



- Work was well underway towards preparing the next consultation phase that was scheduled to take place between June and September 2009.

With regard to the updated Project Plan Chart, it was noted that it now used different colour coding to indicate the progress that had been made in respect of each agreed action point relating to the five phases of the project and that a 'Comments' column had been added, as requested by the Working Party at its last Meeting.

In response to the Working Party's questions over the information provided in the updated Project Plan Chart, David Mullany, Project Manager, Housing and Communities Services responded as follows: -

### Phase 2 – Collating the data and evidence

- With regard to Action Point 9, concerning the preparation and evaluation of financial projections and the impact upon PHP and the Council, the revised target date needed to be altered to read April 2009, as the necessary information would not be available to achieve this agreed action until that time.
- With regard to Action Point 12 relating to putting in place a Communications Strategy, the Vice-Chairman expressed concern that key stakeholders were still to be confirmed, even though strategies had been agreed during November 2008. In response, it was confirmed that progress over this issue would be reported at the next Meeting of this Working Group, alongside an update regarding Consultation that had taken place with other key stakeholders, (Action Point 15), the latter Action Point having been extended from March 2009. It was also reported that the finalised Communications Strategy was very near completion.
- With regard to Action Point 17, relating to the complete study of sheltered housing, it was noted that the original target of March 2009 had been extended to April 2009 as this theme was now being studied with the rest of the housing stock.
- With regard to Action Point 18, relating to 'obtaining specialist consultancy advice on options, the original target date had been March 2009, but was now expected to be reached by April 2009, when it was anticipated that it would acquire a 'Completed' indicator.



- With regard to Action Point 19, 'obtaining information and views on review of national housing finance system and other relevant policy areas', Officers remained on target to report back to the Working Party at its Meeting on 11 May 2009.
- Phase 3, involving consideration of the evidence and options was expected to commence in line with the original target date of June 2009.
- Phase 4, involving consultation on the options with tenants and other Stakeholders, including staff, was on target to commence in September 2009.

(With regard to the Forward Plan for the Working Party, details are shown under Minute 26 below relating to times and dates of next Meetings).

**RESOLVED** that the Working Party notes and is encouraged by the latest progress made towards completing the Housing Options Appraisal Project.

#### **25. REPORT ON PHASE ONE CONSULTATIONS**

Carmelina Brown, Head of Housing Management (PHP), presented a report, that was accompanied by power-point slides which detailed the progress of 'Phase One' consultations that had been taking place with residents over their needs and aspirations for future service delivery, alongside a brief outline of consultation that had also taken place with staff.

In respect of the following themes, it was highlighted that: -

**The methods of data and evidence collection being used to establish Residents Aspirations were: -**

- **The 'Status Survey'**
  - **Listening to residents to understand what is important via: -**
    - **Presentations to established Forums;**
    - **'New' events;**
    - **Telephone.**

**Engaging with 'Hard to Reach' groups was being achieved by liaising with: -**



- The local Disability Forum;
- Gypsy/ Travellers Groups;
- The local Youth Forum;
- International Women's Day
- Tenancy Support lunches;
- Under 30 year olds and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households, via one-to one telephone conversations initiated by Staff.

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The number of people involved to date had been as follows: -

- 1,653 respondents to the 'Status' Survey;
- 350 attendees at two Road Shows;
- 16 groups and 194 residents had been consulted at AGMs, forums and at various consultation events;
- 53 'Hard to Reach' consultations had taken place.

**To date, Residents had identified the following factors as being most important: -**

- **Repairs and maintenance;**
- **Quality of the home;**
- **Being kept informed.**



**Specifically, Residents in General Needs Homes had identified the following priorities: -**

- Safer neighbourhoods & better security;
- Ensuring anti-social behaviour is tackled effectively;
- Adequate facilities for the young.

**Specifically, Residents in Sheltered Homes had identified the following priorities: -**

- **More showers and adaptations;**
- More help with decorating;
- Better garden maintenance;
- Digital TV aerials;
- Restricted parking for non-residents.

That emerging aspirations amongst Residents had included: -

- The building of new homes;
- The installation of video door entry for flats;
- Improving energy efficiency.
- More support for 'Vulnerable' residents
- Improvements in drainage and flood defences

**That methods being used to used to consult with Staff were as follows: -**

- Briefings, bulletins and newsletters;
- Staff meetings and conferences, (including the Council's Extended Management Team);
- The website and the Council's Intranet;
- Liaison with UNISON;
- Involvement of Staff Reps;
- Feedback on potential service improvements.

During discussion, the Working Party explored the following themes: -

(a) The need to consult more with young people

The Working Party agreed that a recent incident of vandalism to the Youth Shelter at Verity Park, Canford Heath, that had, allegedly, involved a group of young people provided a good example as to why engaging more with young people was so important towards changing any such anti-social attitudes. In



addition, the successful 'Dorset Football Team initiative for Poole' was cited as a good example of providing opportunities to engage with young people.

With regard to that specific incident, Jan Thurgood confirmed that under Section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, a six-month Dispersal Order would shortly come into force in the public area directly surrounding the Youth Shelter. In practice, a constable, or police community support officer (PCSO), in uniform, would be able to give a direction to disperse, to leave the relevant locality or to prohibit the subject's return to the relevant locality for a period not exceeding 24 hours, or face arrest and conviction.

(b) The current relationship between the DWA Housing Management Consultants and Council Housing tenants

Joe Logan, Chief Executive, PHP Ltd, acknowledged the difficult role that DWA was fulfilling in its capacity as the Specialist Residents' Advisors during the 'Options Appraisal project', in terms of: -

- A perception existing amongst many of Poole's Council Housing residents that DWA was 'getting in the way of the process',
- Some of these residents having questioned what 'Added Value' DWA was bringing to the consultation phase of the project;
- In summary, he described this relationship as being at the 'Teething' stage.

**RESOLVED** that the Working Party notes the encouraging progress made towards engaging with Residents and staff over the 'Housing Options Appraisal' project.

**26. DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT WORKING PARTY MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** that future Meetings of this Working Party take place, as follows: -

- (a) 22 April 2009 - Training Session, 10.00am to 1.00pm, (Beech House)

On: - Housing subsidy and the review of the National Housing Finance System for local authorities.

# Borough of Poole & Poole Housing Partnership Housing Options' Appraisal



- (b) Monday 11 May 2009 - Working Party Meeting, 4.00pm - 6.30pm, (The Civic Centre)
- (c) Monday 20 July 2009 - Working Party Meeting, 4.000pm to 6.00pm, (The Civic Centre)

**CHAIRMAN**