

# Neighbourhood Improvements



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*Quality Homes In Strong Communities*

## Why does PHP have a neighbourhood improvement policy?

PHP aims to empower and encourage residents to participate in, and shape their neighbourhood to create places where people enjoy living.

We are committed to working with local residents to make the decisions together that affect the environment of their neighbourhood, and contributing to the Borough of Poole's corporate objectives of:

- ★ 'Protecting Poole's Environment' and
- ★ 'Strengthening our Communities'

PHP have a Neighbourhood Improvement policy to ensure that we are consistent about the way in which we carry out neighbourhood improvements, and have clear standards of what residents can expect when an improvement is carried out.

This policy aims to ensure that PHP combine the needs of preserving, protecting and maintaining open and green spaces with providing residents with high quality neighbourhoods.

## What is a neighbourhood improvement?

A neighbourhood improvement is a physical improvement to an area that improves the quality of that area, either visually and/or by solving a problem.

It can be to a piece of land managed by PHP or a communal area in a block managed by PHP. The proposals may mean a new use for an area or could mean an improvement to what is already there. For example:

- ★ Facilities for young people
- ★ Fencing
- ★ A play area
- ★ Street lighting
- ★ Landscaping
- ★ Planting trees/shrubs/flowers etc
- ★ Improving access

Sometimes it is just one type of improvement such as fencing, and sometimes it can be more than one type of improvement such as fencing a piece of land that has a new play area, some landscaping and planting and improved street lighting.

## **What can all residents expect when we carry out a neighbourhood improvement in their area?**

At the start of a neighbourhood improvement in your area, we will:

- ★ Agree with residents in the neighbourhood the style and frequency of consultation and communication throughout the project
- ★ Agree with individual residents who wish to become involved, ways of doing so that suits their circumstances
- ★ Report the outcome of consultation back to the community in a clear and timely manner
- ★ Provide practical support to enable participation throughout the project. For example, transport or access to hearing loops
- ★ Agree with residents any future maintenance that will be required, the frequency and who is responsible

## **How do PHP decide when a neighbourhood improvement is needed?**

Our residents are at the forefront of identifying when a neighbourhood improvement is needed. Ideas for neighbourhood improvements can come from a variety of sources:

- ★ Estate inspections and Community Housing Action Teams (CHAT's) where residents, PHP staff, and Officers from other organisations identify the need for an improvement
- ★ As a response to a particular issue or problem facing a neighbourhood
- ★ From feedback from individual residents

## **Who will PHP consult with when we carry out a Neighbourhood Improvement? How will we do this?**

We will always consult with tenants and leaseholders not only in line with our statutory obligations under the Housing Act 1985 and Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 1985 (amended 2002) respectively, but also because PHP strongly believe our residents have a right to be consulted about any changes to their home or neighbourhood.

Every neighbourhood improvement is different, so who we consult with depends upon the individual improvement. PHP will always consider who will be affected by both the work and the finished improvement.

As well as PHP tenants and leaseholders, this often includes tenants of other landlords and owner occupiers. We actively encourage residents to get involved and help make the decisions that will affect the improvement.

We also consult with the 'Re-Investment Panel' which is a group where residents and PHP staff work together to discuss proposals.

For a small scale improvement, usually only involving one type of improvement, PHP usually write to all residents in the affected area giving them an opportunity to comment on proposals and often offering a choice of options, such as different types of fencing materials, or different locations for fixtures such as benches, or lighting.

For more complex improvements, involving more than one type of improvement, or different options about the best way for an improvement to solve particular problem, PHP will initially write to all residents to tell them about the proposals, and invite residents to a meeting, usually held local to the neighbourhood where the improvement is needed.

Often we will ask residents to elect an appropriate number of resident representatives to liaise with PHP over the development of the improvement.

For the largest scale improvements, a series of meetings is often needed to ensure that all the issues involved are considered before any final decisions are made.

Whatever size the improvement, we will work with the community to develop their skills to maximise the community's ability to be actively involved. This may involve providing training to residents, and sharing knowledge and expertise to enable residents to feel fully involved and able to make decisions about the project.

We also actively seek to involve local Councillors for the area as well as partners and other interested groups in any discussions about improvement proposals.

For example, if the improvement is intended to improve the security of an area we will involve the local Police, or if it is about improving leisure facilities for young people we will involve Leisure and Youth Services from the Borough of Poole.

## What will PHP consider when deciding which neighbourhood improvements to do, and in which order?

Before we begin any neighbourhood improvement we need to fully understand why the request for an improvement has been made. This will help us to make sure that the proposed improvement is the best way to address the issue.

Different projects will need us to think about different information, but some of the information we will consider is:

- ★ The views of local residents
- ★ The views of colleagues, and other partners in other agencies
- ★ The make up of the local community including for example, different age groups, different black and minority ethnic groups, disabled residents
- ★ The nature and scale of any problems the improvement is hoping to alleviate
- ★ The priorities highlighted by residents in the affected neighbourhood by the Annual Satisfaction Survey (sent to all PHP residents every year) and any other consultation
- ★ Any other relevant statistical information
- ★ The needs of residents looking to the future
- ★ The long term sustainability of the proposal

Feedback from our residents through the Annual Satisfaction Surveys tells us that the issues that residents are most concerned about in their neighbourhoods are:

- ★ Secure neighbourhoods
- ★ Having clean and tidy estates, without dog mess, litter and rubbish

- ★ Well maintained 'green' areas including grass, bushes, hedges, and trees
- ★ Reducing vandalism & graffiti
- ★ Reducing anti-social behaviour
- ★ Providing more facilities for children, teenagers and young people
- ★ Reducing car crime
- ★ Improving fencing
- ★ Better parking provisions

Annual Satisfaction Surveys show that residents in different neighbourhoods have different priorities, depending on their local circumstances. For example, PHP residents in one area may be most concerned about improving security, but feel they have adequate play facilities, while residents in another area may not be concerned about security, but feel they have a need for improved play facilities.

To make sure we respond to residents concerns, projects must demonstrate that they address one or more of the issues highlighted by residents, and that they address the issues that are a priority for residents in their neighbourhood.

When deciding which improvements to carry out, and how they can be done, we must also consider the outcome of a site survey, which tells us if the proposals for work are appropriate and can be done within a reasonable cost. A site survey will consider the overall impact on the environment and also the impact on:

- ★ Access to the neighbourhood for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- ★ Any existing features such as slopes or dips in the land, areas of hardstanding or trees
- ★ Any services such as street lighting, drains, or cables

## **How do we make sure all sectors of the community can get involved with, and enjoy neighbourhood improvements?**

In the past, some groups of residents have often not had the opportunity to be involved in developing improvements.

PHP are keen to change this, and make sure that all sectors of the community have the opportunity to get involved in the future.

In particular we will make sure the following groups have the opportunity to get involved in any improvements taking place in their neighbourhood. We will involve:

Children and Young People by:

- ★ Actively encouraging young people in the neighbourhood to become involved
- ★ Making sure young people can become involved in a way that appeals to them, such as fun based activities with consultation, art projects and provision of appropriate training
- ★ Invite any existing groups for young people in the neighbourhood to get involved such as youth clubs
- ★ Working in partnership with other agencies who have expertise in working with young people
- ★ Using our Resident Involvement structures for young people

Residents with physical disabilities and sensory loss, such as blind and deaf residents, by:

- ★ Making sure meetings are accessible, by holding them in buildings with appropriate access and hearing loop facilities
- ★ Considering their needs in the design of any improvements
- ★ Working in partnership with other agencies who have expertise working with people with particular needs,
- ★ Using our Resident Involvement structures, such as the Disability Information Team (DIT).

Residents from different cultural and religious backgrounds by:

- ★ Ensuring any religious or cultural needs are considered when arranging meetings,
- ★ Ensuring a translator attends meetings if required,
- ★ Working in partnership with other agencies who have appropriate expertise working with people from different backgrounds.

In addition, we will make sure that we provide information to all residents throughout the project in a format of their choice. For example, in large print, another language or on tape. Please talk to us about this.

We will make sure we cater for the needs of both individuals and groups, and work with them to make sure that they are able to become fully involved.

We will also carry out an 'Equality Impact Assessment' which is an assessment to make sure that any proposals do not discriminate against sectors of the local community.

PHP will also strive to ensure that our different neighbourhoods across the Borough benefit from improvements.

## **How do PHP make sure we make the best use of your money?**

Once an improvement is completed, PHP will carry out a 'satisfaction survey' with residents in the neighbourhood to make sure that they are happy not only with the work that has been carried out, but also to make sure that residents were happy with the opportunities to get involved and help make the decisions that affected the improvement.

We will also continue to talk to local residents after the scheme is complete to make sure we continue to learn from schemes, to make sure that any lessons can be taken forward and used to improve the way we carry out improvements in the future.

Feedback from residents through our Annual Satisfaction Survey will also be used to make sure we continually improve the way we carry out neighbourhood improvements.

We will also review this policy with residents annually through the Re-investment Panel.

