



Borough of Poole

HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1.	Purpose of Strategy
	<p>To make sure all service users and stakeholders receive and have the chance to consider all the necessary information to make an informed choice about the best option (for residents and for the Council) for future investment in the housing stock. Residents in particular should be at the heart of the process. The Council is committed to the process being open and transparent to enable people to make an informed contribution to the debate.</p> <p>The strategy will make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information is communicated in the most appropriate and inclusive way to all residents and other stakeholders • that all service users and stakeholders are given the opportunity to contribute • that as far as possible a balanced view is obtained that is representative of residents and stakeholders, including hard to reach groups <p>The strategy should be read in conjunction with the resident empowerment strategy and the Tenant Compact.</p> <p>The overall Housing Options Appraisal project is overseen by a select committee comprising 5 Councillors, the Chair of PHP, 3 resident/leaseholder reps. Separate terms of reference are available</p>
2.	Background
	<p>The ALMO, PHP, has been in existence for four years and the additional funding for the decent homes programme expires in 2010. From then on the Housing Revenue Account will have insufficient funds to maintain the stock to decent homes standard.</p> <p>A select committee has been established to examine future options</p>
3.	Key Objectives
	<p>The strategy will enable the options appraisal project to reach a preferred option for the future of the housing stock. Further consultation will then take place on the preferred option.</p> <p>The communications strategy will enable service users and stakeholders to understand the current position, why the options appraisal is necessary and the implications of all the options on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the funding of the housing service b) investment in the stock c) future standards of service delivery d) governance arrangements and accountability e) environmental, community safety and regeneration needs

	<p>The strategy will also enable service users and key stakeholders to define their aspirations and priorities for the future of the housing service, match these against the various options and give feedback to the Council on their preferred option.</p> <p>The key objectives are therefore:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maximise awareness of why the options appraisal is necessary and the implications of the status quo 2. Obtain from residents their views on priorities and aspirations 3. Obtain from staff and other key stakeholders their priorities and aspirations 4. Communicate the results of these studies, and the analysis of information on the funding of future investment in the stock, to service users and stakeholders 5. Produce clear information, suitable for each stakeholder group, on the various options and their implications 6. Obtain the views of stakeholder groups on the various options 7. Communicate the outcome of that consultation to all stakeholders <p>There will be a separate strategy the 'Resident Empowerment Strategy' to maximise the effectiveness of resident involvement in the process</p>
4.	Key Audiences
	<p>It is important that communications are geared to different audiences. Residents and some stakeholders have a direct interest; other stakeholders will be less directly affected but may wish to express their views or just need to be kept informed</p> <p>Direct Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users: tenants and leaseholders • Members • Prospective service users • All Staff of PHP • HSP • All TRAs • Leaseholder Panel • CHATS • PHP Working groups • Some key staff in BoP directly affected <p>Indirect Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoP staff • LAA/Strategic partnership • RSLs • Housing advice/voluntary sector/ community organisations in the Borough • Service users-leaseholders of commercial properties on housing land. (?)
5.	Key Messages
	<p>We need to explain the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) key drivers for the project and the implications of the 'status quo' option in terms of finance, stock investment and service delivery

	<p>b) options and opportunities that exist</p> <p>c) implications of each of these</p> <p>A key element though is to obtain from service users and stakeholders their priorities and aspirations for the future</p>
6.	Key Communication Channels
	<p>The Council will work in partnership with the Specialist Residents' Advisor (SRA) to provide an independent and impartial advice service to residents. (more detail in the Resident Empowerment Strategy)</p> <p>The SRA will work with the Council to finalise this Communication Strategy.</p> <p>The Council and the SRA will use the existing resident participation framework but will also create a special resident panel to be the focal point of all communications with residents (see resident empowerment strategy). Wider communication will be through a variety of methods:</p> <p>PHP newsletter (with prepaid reply envelopes) can be used to disseminate information, report progress and seek feedback</p> <p>Special leaflets/factsheets on aspects of the process can be used for residents and other stakeholders</p> <p>Meetings with HSP, TRAs, CHATS</p> <p>Meetings at sheltered housing schemes</p> <p>Advice surgeries?</p> <p>A prospectus or brochure</p> <p>Exhibition?</p> <p>'Poole News</p> <p>Website (BoP and PHP)</p> <p>Special events including 'respectfest' type activities</p> <p>Surveys/focus groups</p> <p>Visits to other organisations</p> <p>Information on notice boards</p> <p>Free phone hotline</p> <p>Door to door visits?</p> <p>Presentations to key forums, audiences</p> <p>Staff newsletters:-PHP and BoP</p> <p>PHP staff consultative forum</p> <p>Quarterly staff meetings at PHP</p> <p>BoP staff meetings?</p> <p>Loop/website bulletins</p> <p>Training sessions on options</p>
7	Equality and Diversity Issues
	<p>Poole is an increasingly diverse Borough and special arrangements will be put in place to make sure all groups are reached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BME/Faith groups :we will offer to translate key documents as required and make contact with existing community groups/organisations to give people the opportunity to be involved • People with disabilities and older people: Large print/Braille audio tape facilities will be offered. Venues for meetings will be carefully selected. Contact will be extended to carers and families where appropriate. Meetings will be organised in sheltered schemes and invitations extended to people in the local community • Young residents: The youth panel will be a key audience

	Where possible events will include crèche facilities for people with young children	
8	Communications Matrix	
	To follow (incorporated in project plan/timetable?)	
9	Budgets	
	<p>To be decided. Possibly in region of: 2008-9 £100k 2009-10 £100k Funded from HRA, these costs <u>exclude</u> specialist advice, the 'Residents' Friend' and project management</p>	
10	Roles and Responsibilities	
	<p>Project Manager-David Mullany Communications Working group lead officer Bill Shaw Communications Officer PHP-Sarah Simpson Claire McKenna Carmelina Brown (lead on resident empowerment) Caroline Williams Specialist Resident Advisor In addition, PHP has a Resident Involvement Officer whose work will link into the strategy and the Borough's Communications department will also be involved</p>	
11	Overall Timescales and Milestones	
	<p>1 Create Project Designed, set up and management arrangements in place</p> <p>2 Collate Evidence gathered. (Including financial modelling, stock condition survey update, service users aspirations, information on national policy review, future housing needs, impact on Local Authority finances, valuations, future service user profiles, land use analysis, identification and analysis of the possible options). (May be affected by timetable of the national review of housing finance)</p> <p>3 Consider Production of document bringing together the evidence and outlining the implications of each of the options</p> <p>4 Consult Complete consultation with service users and stakeholders</p> <p>5 Conclude Report presented to cabinet</p>	<p>September 08</p> <p>April/May 09</p> <p>May/June 09</p> <p>June to August 09</p> <p>October 09</p>
12	Measuring and Monitoring	
	<p>Success measured by: Level of engagement in surveys Attendance at meetings and other events Quality of information/feedback in the final report</p>	
13	Potential risks	Prevention
	<p>Media hostility Resident apathy Lack of comprehension</p>	<p>? Tenant empowerment strategy Plain English advice, invest in good</p>

	Resistance to any change or genuine involvement Budgetary pressures	quality communications Develop change management plan Establish clear budget with contingencies
14	Develop Action Plan –separate plan in place	