

REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING 3RD FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT BY: ALAN CUFLEY HEAD OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

WRITTEN BY: HAZEL HINE CORPORATE INITIATIVES MANAGER

SUBJECT: HOUSING CARBON CHALLENGE GROUP ACTION PLAN UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is to update the Cabinet Member for Housing on progress with the Action Plan since the report made on 18th July 2008 and in particular to highlight resource issues.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Housing

- 1) notes the update, including the current review of the Housing Carbon Challenge Group Action Plan, and
- 2) notes that the resourcing issues are yet to be finalised for the satisfactory development and implementation of the HCCG Action Plan and that a further report will be made at a later decision meeting of the Cabinet Member for Housing.

3. Background:

- a) Previous reports have explained the background to housing sustainability and the strategic role of Community Housing in ensuring an effective housing contribution is made to creating sustainable communities.
- b) They also set out information regarding the interdepartmental Housing Carbon Challenge Group, co-ordinated up by the Corporate Initiatives Manager. This Group addresses housing sustainability issues across the Council. It seeks to ensure both that government requirements regarding housing sustainability are met and that the council is developing appropriate initiatives to respond to the sustainability agenda for housing.
- c) A constructive approach to housing sustainability, in its widest sense, policies formed now and actions taken now will help create the framework for the future sustainable development of the city.

4. Progress:

Since the last report, in July 2008 there has been some progress in taking work forward with the development of both policy and initiatives. For example:

- a) Initial input to a government review of the Code for Sustainable Homes (on the basis of which a national review is being undertaken this year).

- b) Completion of some site studies into the likely effectiveness of wind generation on buildings maintained through the HRA, in the inner city and at Paulsgrove. Although the studies will be examined in more detail, initial assessments are that, with current technology and energy prices, building energy efficiency measures are likely to be more cost-effective in the immediate future.
- c) Participation by “Green and Keen” learners (residents who have participated in the accredited housing sustainability training course) in discussions about sustainability with senior civil servants visiting Portsmouth.
- d) Day event focused on sustainable transport under the banner of the national “Big Draw” campaign, when residents participated in a range of activities including cycling round the city and making digital and more conventional drawings.
- e) Continuing discussions with Housing Associations regarding developing exemplar sites in Portsmouth. For example, Drum Housing Association has submitted an Expression of Interest to develop an exemplar scheme on Council land in Portsmouth.
- f) Discussions with LSP Strategic Housing Partnership on housing sustainability issues
- g) Establishment of a network of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) assessors based in area housing offices to assess local authority housing stock. They will also undertake EPC assessments of the area offices themselves, using more stringent criteria than required, and will be responsible for area office energy improvements.
- h) Impact of sustainability policy in draft Core Strategy of Local Development Framework is being considered. This has the potential to implement higher sustainability standards across the housing market.

5. Work priorities

- a) **Review of Action Plan**, e.g. with introduction of targets generally, with clear linkages to corporate and LSP policies and targets on carbon reduction and climate change, with more work on policy areas, with clarified relationships with health and well-being issues e.g. fuel poverty, local food and housing. A summary of some key points from an interim assessment is attached at Appendix 1.
- b) **Continuation of successful pilot work**
 - i) “Green and Keen”: support to “Green and Keen” learners to spread their knowledge and participate in planning future work; extension of “Green and Keen” scheme to all residents
 - ii) “Greener Offices”: support for offices to continue work and absorb it into their working practices

- iii) “Green access plans” for housing: ensuring continuation of work, for example by working with Housing Associations, and developing other sustainable transport work.
- c) **Developing an information hub** for housing sustainability issues including through the website.
- d) **Working on external funding opportunities.**

6. Resource implications

- a) There is an understanding of the need to “mainstream” housing sustainability as far as possible into the business and strategies of the relevant services of the council. For housing, the issues are wide-ranging and complex and relate to national and regional requirements as well as the corporate sustainability strategy.
- b) There is a very high level of co-operation from staff across the council in supporting housing sustainability work.
- c) Resources put into housing sustainability now will lay the foundations for the future development of the city and have an impact on economic prosperity.
- d) Pulling together and trialling practical housing sustainability initiatives, which are likely to be of benefit to residents, require considerable co-ordination.

Example: Green access plans pilot for 2 housing areas:

- Development, coordination and management: Corporate Initiatives
- Specialist advice: Sustainable travel team.
- Financial and other contributions: Capital and revenue budgets administered by CH Corporate Initiatives, CH Housing Enabling, LAHM Technical Section, Landport and Buckland Neighbourhood and Management.

Example: “Big Draw” green travel day:

- Development, coordination and management: Corporate Initiatives
 - Specialist advice: Sustainable travel team
 - Financial and other contributions: Capital and revenue budgets administered by CH Corporate Initiatives, CH Housing Enabling, LAHM Technical Section, Landport and Buckland Neighbourhood Management, Sustainable Travel team, Health Improvement and Development Service, John Pounds Community Trust staff.
- e) There is currently no specific funding for this co-ordination and development work, which has been added to the existing workloads of staff.

7. Way Forward

- a) **Action Plan review.** A review is currently being undertaken and the initial work should be complete by April. It will include further work with partner organisations and an assessment of resourcing needs. A report will be brought back to a future meeting.
- b) **Pilot work continuation.** At present there is no specific resource allocation for this work. It is anticipated that it will be partly resourced from the budget for sustainable communities 09/10 onwards identified in the Housing Investment Programme.
- c) **Information hub:** work is being undertaken as part of the current Action Plan review
- d) **External funding opportunities.** A small amount of Corporate Initiatives section staff resource has been allocated to investigating opportunities and making grant applications. The current Action Plan review may also highlight opportunities.

8. CITY SOLICITORS COMMENTS / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The City Solicitor is satisfied that it is within the Cabinet Member's powers to approve the recommendations as set out.

A full Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as this is a review of existing charges and does not constitute a new service or policy.

9. SIGNING OFF THE REPORT

Signed.....
Alan Cufley - Head of Community Housing

Dated.....

10. APPROVAL TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

The recommendations set out above was approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected by the Cabinet Member for Housing,
on.....

Signed

**Councillor Steve Wylie
Cabinet Member - Housing**