

Cabinet Member for Housing, Meeting 03/02/09

Review of Action Plan Jan-April 2009: Interim Comments

Background

The Action Plan, which was reported to the July 2008 meeting, is currently being reviewed by members of the council's Housing Carbon Challenge Group with the assistance of sustainability specialists, Impetus.

This review will take about 3 months, with the main objectives to:

1. Ensure the Action Plan includes and responds to latest developments and thinking on housing sustainability.
2. Review the overall purpose and the key areas of the Action Plan and examine targets, clarity of purpose, priorities for action etc.
3. Establish clear relationships with other key strategies, especially the corporate sustainability strategy, LSP housing and climate change strategies and the Local Development Framework.
4. Support housing and planning policy development
5. Develop and implement (subject to time) proposals for "buy-in" from partners, including developers and the community, related to housing sustainability.
6. Develop a better practical information resource for residents and developers regarding housing sustainability.
7. Identify possible sources of funding for future work and develop proposals, if feasible in the timescale.
8. Take a selection of those tasks identified for further examination in the Action Plan to the next stage, for development into practical initiatives or recommendations for policy development.
9. Highlight resource issues and propose ways for filling any gaps.

Interim comments

At the moment all the relevant documentation is being reviewed. The following selection of comments, which may be revised as the work progresses, indicate the direction of current thinking.

a) Scope and structure

The plan brings together many good actions across a wide range of sectors and initiatives. The overarching objectives, main tasks and priorities should be clarified and summarised again. To encourage buy-in, now that key council staff are working together on housing sustainability issues, this could be done with internal and external partners over the coming months.

b) Outputs and targets

- Many relatively quick practical initiatives, which are identified in the Plan, are being developed. These should continue, along with the development of other short- term outputs. Need to avoid too much future emphasis being placed on gathering data, tracking policies and targets rather than achieving practical outcomes.
- Set targets by inputting to overall targets for Portsmouth and working back from these for housing targets, in order to reinforce a Portsmouth low carbon strategy, as well as working with national housing and other targets.

c) Information and advice

- Prioritise the creation of a housing low energy “hub” for information, support and inspiration, including web-pages, model house types and promotion of current work.
- Need to look at training needs of key housing and other staff.

d) Proposed actions against a selection of specific tasks identified in plan (for detailed list of tasks see copy of approved plan attached to July 08 report)

- Need to develop an integrated work plan to raise the average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating for social and private sector housing, prioritising poorest performing housing.
- Develop partnering with a number of local organisations to improve the energy efficiency of housing in the area, including health professionals, Primary Care Trust, Police, Fire and RSL's.
- Identify suitable large- scale renewable energy projects that could generate energy for homes and the wider community, as well as looking at small-scale projects as part of the review.
- Develop a specific programme for promoting sustainable low energy housing to minority communities as part of the review.
- Integrate work with Health Improvement and Development Service on relevant areas of Action Plan, including home energy and local food.
- Look into resident parking incentives for cleaner vehicles as well as car pools.
- Need now to send clear message to the community about council intentions regarding housing sustainability and capitalise on work started through “Green and Keen” training.
- New funding streams may be suitable for the zero carbon streets proposal. Need to do more work on feasibility for this work as part of review.

A further report on progress will be brought forward following the completion of the review.

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