

## THE FUTURE OF HOUSING FORUMS

Report of the Director of Derby Homes

### SUMMARY OF REPORT

1. With the establishment of two Local Housing Boards and the change in 2003 to two Housing Management areas, the City Housing Improvement Plan (CHIP) structure and format needed to be reviewed. Following the 2002/2003 programme various suggestions were made by CHIP representatives and the Shadow Local Housing Boards refined the suggestions to two clear options.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Local Housing Board accept Option A as the preferred method to be adopted from 2003/04 and beyond. This endorses the feedback from the consultation held.

### MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The CHIP programme has become well established as an example of good practice since it was first introduced in 1993. It has been reviewed and amended on many occasions to make sure it offers real opportunities for tenants and leaseholders to participate in the decision making process. Each Community Panel elects two CHIP representatives and preferably a reserve to attend their Housing Forum meeting.
- 3.2 The CHIP programme was created to allow Community Panels to identify and prioritise environmental improvements in their area, and use the CHIP budget to get the work done. The introduction of Local Housing Boards with a responsibility to develop the CHIP strategy and approve the CHIP initiatives has prompted the need to review existing processes.
- 3.3 In 2002/03 each Community Panel received an allocation of £20 for each council owned property in their area. This is known as the small scale allocation and each Panel agreed how their allocation would be spent. At the same time each Housing Forum received a large scale allocation. Each Panel identified ideas which they submitted to their Housing Forum for approval.
- 3.4 **Options for the Future**
  - a) **Community Panels agree allocation of both small and large scale funding**

Each Community Panel is allocated a CHIP budget based on the number

of council properties in their area. They identify their priorities and agree the projects to be funded from their CHIP budget. Each Local Housing Board receives and approves the decisions made by the Panels in their area. This would mean each Panel agrees their own priorities.

A suggested 20% would be top-sliced from the main budget and held by the Local Housing Boards to allocate to projects in their area.

The Local Housing Board could identify a theme at year start such as provision for young people or safety. This would give a focus to each Community Panel.

#### *Disadvantages*

- Limits the potential of a big pot for smaller Panel areas where larger projects could take place

#### *Advantages*

- This would save administration costs and time spent organising Housing Forums
- This would remove the competitive element, as Panels could develop schemes in their area with the confidence of knowing they will make the decision, so there will be no wasted effort
- Panel members are empowered to make decisions affecting their area

The budget allocation prior to top-slicing would look like this:

Housing Management area	Local Housing Office/Panel	Number of properties in LHO area	Total CHIP allocation (£)
North	Mackworth	1519	115,000
North	Brook Street	1275	96,000
North	Spondon	668	50,000
North	Chaddesden Park	1110	84,000
North	Cowsley	1034	78,000
North	Sussex Circus	1597	120,000
TOTAL			543,000
South	Stockbrook Street	1564	118,000
South	Old Sinfen	451	34,000
South	New Sinfen	538	41,000
South	Littleover	560	42,000
South	Osmaston	1068	80,000
South	Allenton	1325	100,000
South	Alvaston	1495	113,000
South	Chellaston	542	41,000
South	Austin	1161	88,000
TOTAL			657,000
<b>North/South</b>			<b>£1.2M</b>

## **b) Two Housing Forums agree allocation of large scale funding**

North and South Housing Forums would be created, working closely with the Local Housing Boards. The membership of the Housing Forum will include the Panel representative who attends the Local Housing Board on behalf of their Panel, plus one other Panel representative and two reserves. The second representative can be a tenant, Leaseholder or co-opted owner. Each Panel is allocated and agrees its small scale work. Each Housing Forum will meet to decide the large scale priorities for their area through a decision day type system.

A suggested 20% would be top-sliced from the main budget and held by the Local Housing Boards to allocate to projects in their area.

The Local Housing Board could identify a theme at year start such as provision for young people or safety. This would give a focus to each Community Panel.

### *Disadvantages*

- Some Panel areas may still get no bids agreed for large scale work
- Extensive work by the Community Panel and Housing Office staff could in fact result in nil allocation

### *Advantages*

- A maximum number of bids per Panel would streamline the Decision Day prioritising process
- Retains the links across the area, which is held by most residents involved in this process as very positive
- Opportunities for sharing good practice are retained
- Allows projects to be assessed based on need and prioritised across the entire Local Housing Board area
- Enables larger projects to take place as the allocation for each of the two areas will be substantial
- Keeps more representatives involved in decision making.

## **CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The recommendations and comments made by the Shadow Local Housing Boards have been circulated to CHIP representatives and the Derby Association of Community Partners for their views. The feedback received from CHIP representatives to date has been overwhelmingly in favour of Option A. Concerns were expressed about the level of top-slicing. Feedback from staff has favoured Option 2 retaining the Forums.

## **FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None resulting directly from this report.

## **LEGAL AND CONFIDENTIALITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None resulting directly from this report.

## **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None resulting directly from this report.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The physical environment of our estates will be greatly enhanced by the targeted improvements put forward in each CHIP.

## **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The CHIP process offers the opportunity to Local Housing Boards to reflect the needs of all members of the community.

### **Contact Officer**

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