

1. Salford in context

The city of Salford is 37 square miles in area. The city, on the western side of the Greater Manchester conurbation, stretches from the very heart of the Regional Centre to its rural periphery. It is at the hub of the region's motorway and rail network. The city lies on the northern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal and is bisected by the Bridgewater Canal, which have both been important factors in the city's and the region's growth.

After many decades of decline, Salford's economy is going through a major revival as the core of the conurbation successfully attracts new investment. This is beginning to change some of the other long term trends, most notably reversing many years of population and employment decline. Strong economic and employment growth is forecast to continue over the next fifteen years, presenting an opportunity to address many long term social and economic issues.



2. OUR CURRENT HOUSING OPTION SERVICE

For number of years, Salford has delivered it's homelessness and housing advice through our Housing Advice and Support Services (HASS) team. Since Housing Connections Partnership was launched in July 2007 as common services provider we have provided and inherited a number of services such as HASS we have remodelled this service into an integrated housing options and prevention based service. This service provides support and interventions around homelessness, client support, and housing advice and information packages. Integrated with the HASS team is our Choice Based Lettings scheme 'Salford Home Search'. This provides a comprehensive and integrated package of support to a range of vulnerable people in need of support or accommodation to sustain a home and enhance their individual quality of life. Some development of a common housing options service has already taken place, with the merging at management level of the HASS service and Salford Home Search. This reflects good practice at national level and has assisted in delivering cost savings.

Further re-focussing of homelessness and housing options services has been in progress as a priority through the recommendations of the Hills Review which proposes to adopt a more 'options-based' approach to services for vulnerable people, primarily around issues of worklessness, education, training and poverty.

We have redesigned the range of prevention options offered to clients to make them more relevant to the current economic downturn. Specific prevention activity is focussed on developing private sector options and options for young people such as mediation. This has resulted in significant successes such as reduction in acceptances & the use of temporary accommodation and an increase in prevention cases.

3. WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE WITH OUR CLG ENHANCED HOUSING OPTIONS FUNDING

This CLG Enhance Housing Options bid has provided us with an opportunity to further enhance our current housing options and related services into a 'Salford Housing Option Point - SHOP' model.

'SHOP' will offer advice and assistance in resolving housing issues for all clients in both the social housing and private sector. The service will include assessing the need for re-housing as well as giving advice on available re-housing options, allocating a range of affordable permanent housing, training and employment opportunities, welfare debt and much more.

The SHOP aims to streamline service access and put an end to customers having to visit different council offices for different housing enquiries. It aims to respond to the needs of customers in a single convenient location. Housing Connections Partnership recognises that SHOP has a crucial role to play in addressing the housing need in Salford; however housing advice should not just be for people in the most acute need. So therefore there is an important requirement to making positive interventions and offering advice to people before they reach crisis point.

The recently re-orientated Housing Advice and Support Service involves a standardised procedure whereby all new housing applicants participate in an initial interview to review their housing circumstances and prospects. The aim is to discuss, in detail, the feasibility of securing the applicant's existing accommodation, or failing that, to examine the full range of possible routes to accessing new accommodation. Essentially the SHOP interviews are the forum for the provision of housing options advice.

In accordance with current legislative requirements, where the Housing Options Officer (Prevention) has reason to believe that an applicant may be homeless or threatened with homeless; a formal Housing Act 1996 Part VII assessment is initiated. Under our this approach, the procedure for households likely to be eligible and in priority need for homeless assistance is now therefore operated as a two stage process, with options and prevention considered first but with safeguards in place where a person requires assistance within the homeless legislation framework. Where a Part VII assessment is triggered through a SHOP interview, all possible measures to prevent actual homelessness would be undertaken in parallel with this.

These interviews can be a useful way of focusing attention in the first instance on practical steps which can be taken to avert homelessness. They are also a crucial element in the re-oriented approach to homelessness prevention. In line with the government's wider commitment to customer choice, the SHOP approach recognises the limited scale of social housing. It avoids initial assumption that a social rented tenancy is necessarily the most appropriate solution for the household concerned.

Under 'SHOP' the interview process will become more than just a homeless interview but a 'holistic housing and worklessness advice' interview which will include an expanded role to help clients realise their long term housing aspirations, training and employment (back into work benefits) opportunities and how they can access other services such as education and health through this 'one' SHOP process.

This will rebalance the existing customer base away from one which is dominated by customers in housing need but a service which also attracts new customer groups and encourages existing ones to seek advice at an earlier stage in their housing and employment problems.

Overall residents of Salford would benefit from broader advice which includes matter such as prospects for training or employment alongside advice about housing options which would help contribute towards a more sustainable housing future.

The current frontline staff will be restructured to include 9 Housing Options Officers (Prevention) and 3 Housing Options Officers (Assessments) . The CLG EHO resources will complement our current investment into housing options and enable our 'SHOP' (Salford Housing Options Point) to meet the following outcomes as follows:-

1) Provide a holistic range of housing options that clients may not be familiar with or have knowledge of. These would include:-

- promotion of our Landlord Accreditation Scheme and private landlords in general;
- an enhanced Salford Home Search;
- information on Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme;
- accommodation opportunities within Housing Associations stock;
- Homebuy, shared ownership and low cost home ownership schemes including those within our Housing Market Renewal scheme;
- Providing advice on purchasing a home and dealing with estate agents;

2) Provide advice and assistance to use stock more effectively;

- Advice on equity release and grants assistance;
- modular built extensions for overcrowded families;
- encourage trade downs;
- use existing Salford Disabled Housing Register to match clients with properties;
- bringing empty properties back into use;
- introduce loft conversion grants;

3) Implement projects such as STEPS and recruitment of Employment and Training Advisor to tackle worklessness;

- establish partnership working with Salford University and college to increase take up of courses/training;
- establish link with Manchester & Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder to establish training and local labour opportunities within construction programmes;
- STEPS project will help reduce worklessness levels by empowering clients to seek help and make a step change in their lives;

4) In order to improve customer service outcomes:

- Services will be tailored to meet customer requirements through individual support plans;
- Through an accessible, transparent and interactive service which will be monitored through a performance management framework and a customer charter, customer satisfaction will be increased

How the funding will be split over the 2 years:

	2009/10 £k	2010/11 £k
Feasibility study for Co-location / 'How to Guide'	5	
Feasibility study for modular build and overcrowding	3	
Develop interactive website and shared database		10
Install plasma screens in existing locations		9
Marketing and printing	2	8
Install Free phone number	10	
Staffing: 3 x Engagement Officers @ scale 6	78 (inc)	
1x Home Ownership Co-ordinator @ PO1		29 (inc)
1x Social Exclusion Officer @ scale 6		26 (inc)
Deliver the STEPS programme and training:		
Training Co-ordinator @ PO1	29 (inc)	
Project Assistant @ Scale 3	16 (inc)	
Contingency	7	8
Total	150	90

The current Housing Options Manager will take up the role of Project Manager supported by the Senior Manager – Housing Choice and Support Services. Our Housing Options staff currently cost £703k per annum and the above would enable us to enhance our staffing structure to deliver SHOP. Our partners which include the Council's housing ALMO Salix, City West Housing Trust, Housing Associations, Council's Economic Development Unit, Customer Services, Neighbourhood Teams, Job centre Plus, Welfare Rights and others, will invest staffing resources to deliver SHOP which has not been included in the above budget.

6. OUR EXIT STRATEGY

The 'SHOP' model has already started to be embraced by a number of the Council's sections and accepted as the future model for delivering a wide range of housing services. The enhancements we have proposed in our bid will be developed and delivered with partners who hold the ultimate responsibility. Therefore we are confident that these will be mainstreamed into 'SHOP' as the frontline deliver service. At the end of the 2 years we propose to continue the successful enhancements within our own resources.

LEAD OFFICER KEY: (MW) Mike Wright = Senior User (ZA) Zahid Amin = Senior Supplier (JA) Jane Anderson = Project Manager SHOP = Salford Housing Options Point SCC = Salford City Council

PROGRESS KEY: 😊 = on going or completed 😐 = not started 😞 = behind schedule or not completed

UPDATED: 31st March 2009 by MW

EHO PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: LAA NI 117 NI 141 NI 151 NI 153 NI 156

EHO TOTAL BUDGET: £240K (including £15k contingency pot)

Key Action 2009 – 10	What we are going to do	Resources	CLG Budget	Complete by	Milestones / Baseline	Target/Outcome	Progress	Lead Officer
Implement Staffing Structure	1. Appoint Principal and Senior Officers	SCC	Nil	Jan 2009	2 staff appointed	Improved management capacity	😊	ZA/JA
Update Website about understanding the Credit Crunch /economic downturn	1. Provide web pages for advice and signposting for mortgage, financial and general advice	SCC	Nil	Jan 2009	Updated web page	Customers now have access to important advice and assistance	😊	ZA/SHOP Staff
Provide Advice Surgery	1. Provide SHOP advice surgeries at new Gateway Centres	SCC	Nil	ongoing	1 staff providing 1 session per week – baseline is nil	Better customer service and accessibility. 2 surgeries per month delivered	😊	JA
Develop closer links with Welfare Debt Advice	1. Meet with Debt Advisors to explain about SHOP and how Debt Advice can play a role in SHOP 2. use additional CLG funding to recruit a Debt/Financial Adviser based within SHOP	SCC	Nil	Jan 2009	Meetings convened and actions agreed. Baseline is nil	Debt advice linked to Housing Options -	😊	ZA
Produce Housing Options Menu / Pack to include information mortgage rescue, HomeBuy, ISMI and other options during the current economic downturn, including Sub-regional CBL and supported housing projects, with a strong focus on homelessness prevention	1. Identify current housing options introduced by Government 2. Develop detailed range of products and clearly understand them and their place in the market 3. Produce draft matrix within an overall Housing Options Menu 4. Circulate to partners for comments	SCC/CLG	See below	Feb 2009	Detailed information available for staff and clients Increase customer satisfaction - Baseline 08/09 40% satisfied and 59% very satisfied Promotion of sub-regional Pinpoint system	Comprehensive housing options guide Increase levels of satisfied and very satisfied customers by 10% Increase sub-regional bidding by 15% year-on-year	😊	ZA/JA
Partnership and Performance Management Framework development	1. Follow up meetings with various partners including Economic Development, Salix, CWHT, and Pendleton College to agree SHOP process.	SCC	Nil	March 2009	Partners contribution to SHOP	Worklessness, financial inclusion, education and health agenda's are linked into SHOP. Governance arrangements agreed. Link to LAA and Regional Homelessness Strategy aims.	😊	MW/ZA
Economic downturn initiatives	1. Provide advice surgeries from key locations such as supermarkets. 2. Launch 'loan shark' publicity campaign 3. Provide personal financial assessments for all service users	SCC	Nil	ongoing	Publicise options to manage credit crunch and raise awareness - Baseline nil	2 surgeries per month,	😊	JA/ SHOP Staff
Recruitment of additional EHO Staff:	1. Finalise Job Descriptions and Person Specifications where required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Time CLG / SCC 	178K	April 2009	New staff to added to existing SHOP to	Capacity and capability of SHOP staff enhanced.	😊	ZA/JA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 x Engagement Officers • 1x Home Ownership Co-ordinator • 1 x Social Exclusion Officer • 1 x Training Co-ordinator • 1x Project Assistant 	2. Complete HR forms and obtain Cabinet Approval 3. Advertise posts in local press 4. Short-list applicants and appoint				deliver EHO	Social Exclusion Officer to lead on maintaining numbers of rough sleepers at zero.		
Launch SHOP	1. Publicise and promote service through local media e.g. Salford City Radio	SCC	Nil	April 2009	Press release. Baseline nil	Everyone in Salford is aware of SHOP. Increased number of customers access a wider range of services from one place.	😊	MW/ZA/JA/SHOP
*Maximise new housing development opportunities	1. Develop innovative project to link up distressed stock and clients seeking alternative housing options 2. Continue to develop arrangements with private landlords and builders to utilise vacant new developments	SCC	Nil	April 2009	More affordable units	Housing options are further enhanced. Help to achieve 2010 TA target. Assist in maintaining zero rough sleeping performance.	😊	ZA/PM/SHOP
SHOP Pack	1. Finalise draft 2. Seek approval 3. Develop marketing plan 4. Deliver raising awareness sessions and scripts for front-line staff	SCC / CLG	10K	April 2009	Information booklet for clients	Customers have comprehensive directory of SHOP services	😊	ZA/JA/SHOP
Develop SLA with money advice agency	1. Hold discussions with Salford Moneyline and agree SLA	SCC	Nil	April 2009	Advice framework developed to link with SHOP	Customers offered financial advice.	😊	MW/ZA
Co-location of Staff	1. Identify suitable location within Pendleton 2. Develop and agree SHOP staffing structure to accommodate SHOP in key locations of Salford 3. Transfer staff	SCC	5k	April 2009	SHOP services offered as under 1 roof	SHOP staff co-located	😊	JA/ZA
* Implement STEP project	1. Develop relevant literature and presentation materials 2. Circulate for comments 3. Agree with partners date, venue and deliver sessions	SCC	Staffing costs	3 courses in 2009/10	45 people received training	Sessions to inspire and motivate those with low aspirations to seek training and employment opportunities. Help to reduce worklessness and prevent homelessness. Meets LAA priorities in Salford and supports the regional homelessness strategy.	😊	JA
* Deliver Community Outreach sessions	1. Working with the Neighbourhood Teams agree and deliver sessions to staff teams and community 2. Identify Community Champions	CLG	Nil	Monthly	Take housing options to the community to improve access. Baseline is nil.	SHOP is embedded into the neighbourhood management agenda within city of Salford. Deliver minimum of 10 outreach sessions.	😊	JA

	3. Deliver community outreach sessions from Petrie Court YP Project to focus on youth homelessness							
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	June 2009	Partners contribute	Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.	☹️	JA
* Increase private sector landlord participation	1. Develop options package for LL's through the accreditation scheme	SCC/CLG	Nil	June 2009	50 new landlords join the LAS	More properties are available for clients through CBL, including sub-regional CBL. Help to achieve and maintain TA target.	☹️	JA/ZA
Scope Modular Build Study	Develop brief to explore modular build options Carry out study and produce initial findings report Circulate report for comments Finalise report and seek formal approval	SCC/CLG	3K	May 2009 Sept 2009 Sept 2009 Dec 2009	Report produced for Lead Member	Overcrowded families have another option. Help to achieve TA target. Assist in improving stock quality in the private sector.	☹️	ZA/JA
CLG Advisor Visit	Discuss progress in Salford		Nil	July 2009				MW/ZA/JA
Review Choice Based Lettings and Housing Allocations policy to include SHOP and sub-regional links	1. Involve housing partners and customers in reviewing the allocation policy. 2. Develop web based scheme	SCC	10K	Sept 2009	Amended policy published. Increase number of trade downs. Baseline is 45 in 08/09 Refreshed website	Increased properties advertised as both RSL'S and private landlords. Help to achieve TA target, reduce overcrowding and under occupancy. Trade downs increased by 15 in each year Improve move-on from supported accommodation and maintain zero rough sleeping	☹️	ZA/JA/ SHOP
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	Sept 2009	Partners contribution	Governance / performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.	☹️	JA
CLG Advisor Visit	Discuss progress in Salford		Nil	Oct 2009				MW/ZA/JA
Update Report for Housing Lead Member	Produce report and present to Cabinet	SCC	Nil	Dec 2009	Report presented	Lead Member is upto date with EHO progress	☹️	MW/ZA/JA
Install Housing Options Freephone	1. Procure and obtain costing 2. Install and publicise	CLG	10K	Jan 2010	One number for SHOP	Increased customer satisfaction	☹️	JA
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data		Nil	Jan 2010	Partners contribution	Governance / performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.	☹️	JA
CLG Advisor Visit	Discuss progress in Salford		Nil	Jan 2010				MW/ZA/JA
* Better use of existing stock	Work with Housing Market Support to bring empty properties back into use	SCC	Nil	March 2010	15 properties	Increased accommodation for people on waiting list	☹️	JA/ZA

NOTE: Actions with * will be continued in 2010/11

Key Action 2010 - 11	Tasks	Resources	Budgets (£)	Deadline	Output	Outcome	Comments	Progress	Lead Officer
Installation of Plasma Screens	1. Procure and install screens at key locations	CLG	9K	April 2010	3 screens	Provide upto date information on jobs, homes, training and more		☺	JA
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	April 2010	Partners contribution	Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.		☺	JA
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	June 2010	Partners contribution	Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.		☺	JA
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	Sept 2010	Partners contribution	Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.		☺	JA
Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	Jan 2011	Partners contribution	Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.		☺	JA
Final Report	Draft report and circulate for comments	SCC/CLG	Nil	March 2011	Report published	Highlight successes and failures		☺	MW/ZA/JA
Final Project Board Meeting	1. Arrange and service meetings 2. Provide updates and performance data	SCC	Nil	April 2011		Performance in delivery of project is robustly managed and partners contribute to it.		☺	JA
Project Sign Off and Exit Strategy finalised		SCC/CLG	Nil	April 2011	Exit strategy agreed	EHO to continue to be self sustaining within SHOP delivery		☺	MW/ZA/JA
Produce 'How to ...' guide for CLG	Conduct review for last 2 years and lessons learnt. Produce guide	SCC/CLG	Nil	April 2011	Guide produced	Other LA's can learn from our experience		☺	MW/ZA/JA

[END]