

DEVELOPING HOUSING SCHEMES USING PROJECT TEAMS

Experience indicates that the most stress free, cost effective and “owned” schemes are those developed by the Project Management process. This requires a group of people to be identified as soon as capital and revenue are agreed.

The team should include a prospective tenant/service user, (and/or carer) and representative of all parties. Architects Quality Surveyors, M & E Consultants and other associated professionals may also be part of the Team. These team members will remain lead individuals for their agencies throughout the development process to ensure continuity and coherence to the development process. It is the responsibility of this group to ensure that:

- the scheme developed meets the identified need for which it was funded;
- it meets current best practice ideas;
- it delivers on time and within both capital and revenue budget, (albeit that both may change during the development process, changes to be agreed by the funders);
- consultation takes place as and when appropriate during the development with all agencies who have a stake, (eg Fire Officer, Registration, Environmental Health, etc.)
- decisions required during the development process are made swiftly and with the authority of partner agencies;
- representatives of partners act as a conduit between the Team and their respective agency;
- timetables are agreed and work actioned to meet those timetables, (eg legal documents, allocation process purchase of furniture and equipment);
- prospective tenants and operational staff are informed of scheme progress, consulted and engaged throughout;
- review of the scheme takes place at 3, 6 and 12 months post letting which informs future development.

As the Project Team is key to the development of schemes in which there are many stakeholders, it is particularly important that the membership of the team:

- is of sufficient seniority to make decisions, (or get decisions made);
- is conversant with the many and varied elements of supported housing development and service delivery;
- recognises the difficulties of working in partnership;
- in the case of user representatives are enabled to attend and participate in meetings;
- has a sense of humour

Within the development process different elements of the work will require agency representatives to take the lead to complete a discreet part of the whole, (eg. the capital agreement required the funder and recipient to draft a document/ amend a standard document to make it scheme specific). This piece of work will then be agreed by the Project Team and hence gain ownership from all parties.