

# Commissioning Specification

## Making the Best Use of Oldham's Housing Stock

### Introduction

The Housing Block of the Oldham Partnership has been awarded some Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money and is seeking to commission a piece of research activity to explore the causes, perceptions and impact of overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham.

Census figures from 2001 show that Oldham has the second highest level of overcrowding in Greater Manchester and the fifth highest level of under occupancy. There is however little evidence available on the causes, perceptions and impact of overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham. Primary research will seek to explore these issues and identify stakeholder and resident views on potential solutions. The results of this research will contribute to the development of an Overcrowding and Under Occupancy Policy for Oldham and feed into the development of Oldham's Local Area Agreement and link to the key priorities of the Housing Strategy.

The activity will be steered by a group, comprising representatives from Oldham Council's Housing Strategy Team, Adult and Community Services Information and Research Team, Housing Market Renewal Team and the Commissioning Unit.

The outcomes of the research will contribute to the provision of information to support the following LAA indicators and targets for the Housing Block:

LAA Indicator	LAA Target 2007/8	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
Proportion of affordable homes provided to rent on mixed tenure developments in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMR areas</li> <li>• Non-HMR areas</li> </ul> Proportion of affordable homes provided to buy on mixed tenure developments in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMR areas</li> <li>• Non-HMR areas</li> </ul>	25% 6%  5% Not yet set	By exploring perceptions and causes of overcrowding and under occupancy, the research will explore the impact of affordability on overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham. This will help to inform future policy developments.
Reduce levels of homelessness acceptances	700 (stretch target)	By exploring perceptions, causes and impacts of overcrowding and under occupancy, the research will identify issues associated with homelessness. This will help to inform future policy developments.
Satisfaction of all tenants of council housing with the opportunities for participation in management and decision making in relation to services provided by their landlord	66%	The research will explore the opinions of Council Housing tenants around issues of overcrowding and under occupancy, which will inform policy decisions around making the best use of Oldham's housing stock.

LAA Indicator	LAA Target 2007/8	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
Reducing worklessness amongst the working aged population (aged 16-59) of Oldham	Various	By exploring the perceived impacts of overcrowding/ under occupancy in Oldham, the research will explore the links between overcrowding/ under occupancy and worklessness.
Half days missed through authorised and unauthorised Absence: • Primary • Secondary	5.3% 7.55%	By exploring the perceived impacts of overcrowding/ under occupancy in Oldham, the research will explore the links between overcrowding/ under occupancy and engagement in education.

**Proposals are invited to:**

- Manage the activity
- Develop research methodology alongside the steering group
- Conduct primary research to respond to the research objectives including
  - Sampling
  - Respondent recruitment
  - Fieldwork
- Analyse research findings
- Produce a written report on the research findings

**Interested agencies and consultants must be able to demonstrate expertise in the following areas:**

- Housing research
- Large scale surveys
- Qualitative research methodologies
- Detailed analysis
- Report/presentation writing
- Conducting research within diverse communities

**Expressions of interest** should be submitted on the template provided and addressed as below to arrive no later than **3pm Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2007**.

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## Programme Specification

<b>Title</b>	<b>Making the Best Use of Oldham's Housing Stock</b>
Objectives	<p>The research will explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceptions of overcrowding and under occupancy amongst stakeholders and Oldham residents</li> <li>• Perceived causes of overcrowding and under occupancy amongst stakeholders and Oldham residents</li> <li>• Perceived barriers to tackling overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham</li> <li>• Potential opportunities for tackling overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham</li> <li>• The impact of overcrowding/ under occupancy standards</li> </ul>
Target groups/ sample	<p>The research will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants from areas of Oldham known to have high levels of overcrowding (e.g. Coldhurst, St Mary's and Alexandra)</li> <li>• Participants from areas of Oldham known to have high levels of under occupancy (e.g. Medlock Vale, Alexandra, St Mary's, Saddleworth West &amp; Lees and other areas with pockets of high under occupancy levels)</li> <li>• Participants from all tenure groups regarding overcrowding</li> <li>• A particular focus on the views of social housing tenants regarding under occupancy</li> <li>• Participants from a range of property sizes and types</li> <li>• A representative sample across key demographic groups including age, gender, ethnicity and disability</li> <li>• Participation from key stakeholders</li> </ul>
Interventions	N/A
Number of beneficiaries	N/A
Duration of programme	All research must be completed and final report available by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008. Final invoice must be paid by 31 March 2008.
Funding available	Up to £20k
Additional requirements	<p><b>Suggested Methodologies</b></p> <p>It is envisaged that the research will take a qualitative approach and will incorporate the following methodologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One to one semi-structured interviews</li> <li>• Focus group discussions</li> </ul>

Agencies/ consultants must make proposals as to how these methodologies would be used to meet the objectives of the research. This should include identification of proposed sample sizes to meet the requirements of the activity.

Agencies/ consultants will be expected to submit a detailed proposal for recruiting participants from a range of tenures and demographic groups which is cost effective and meets the objectives and time constraints of the activity.

### **Considerations for Submitted Proposals**

- Alternative methodologies that can work with different budgets
- Suggestions for any additional objectives
- Analysis and report structure taking into consideration how the findings will be used to make comparisons between different variables
- Proposal must show examples of similar work carried out with references
- Suggestion on how the steering group will be kept informed throughout the activity
- Any quantitative data will need to be held in a way which is compatible with MS Excel
- Pricing structure detailed in a way which clearly shows alternatives and prices for the individual aspects of the work
- Costs for briefing and debriefing sessions with presentation of findings including at least 1 progress meeting near the end of the activity and 10 colour reports
- Feedback mechanisms to those consulted

The successful delivery agent will be expected to liaise and share information with any other agencies/consultants also selected for the other commissioned activity listed on the Oldham Partnership website funded through the Local Area Agreement.

If you require any further details about this activity please contact Tania Ellahi at [Tania.Ellahi@oldham.gov.uk](mailto:Tania.Ellahi@oldham.gov.uk) (0161 770 4177).