

# 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 to evaluate the issues around overcrowding and under-occupancy in Oldham.

There is currently little evidence available to understand the true levels of overcrowding and under-occupancy across Oldham's housing stock and its impacts. Primary research, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods will attempt to discover the impact that the current use of Oldham's housing stock is having on its residents. Secondary research will evaluate the current usage of Oldham's housing stock to inform the development of appropriate policy responses alongside the primary research findings.

The project will be overseen by a steering group, comprising representatives from the Housing Strategy Service, The Housing Market Renewal Team, The Corporate Research Team and The Commissioning Unit.

The outcomes of the research will work towards the provision of information for the following LAA indicators and targets for the Housing Block:

Ref	LAA Indicator	LAA Target	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
1	% Of properties added to the stock which have 3+ bedrooms in the HMR Area	70% (2007-8)	It is anticipated that data collected from this project will provide support for the need for larger family homes within the Borough of Oldham in particular HRA and NHAP funding as well as homes provided under S106 agreements by private developments
2	The number of empty dwellings that are returned into occupation.	35 (2007-8)	By assessing levels of overcrowding in particular may provide further substance to the argument for further resources to be provided for the implementation of the Empty Homes Strategy.
3	Reduce the % disparity between the proportion of council tenants and minority groups within the borough.	To be confirmed	By understanding the current position of under-occupancy and overcrowding particularly amongst council tenants it may be possible to promote an argument for the development of more suitable properties for minority groups.
4	Proportion of affordable homes available to buy/rent	To be confirmed	The project will assess to what extent affordability is a factor in terms of inappropriate housing. The results of this can feed in to any case for providing more affordable housing
5	Reduced homelessness acceptances	700 (stretch target for 2007/8)	By gaining an understanding of the levels of overcrowding and under- occupancy would provide an insight into possible numbers of individuals/families who may be subject to future to homelessness referrals. This may then contribute towards arguments for the improved use of stock.

Ref	LAA Indicator	LAA Target	Contribution towards the achievement of the LAA target
6	Reduce numbers of Households placed in B&B	60 (2007-8)	By gaining an understanding of the levels of overcrowding and under- occupancy would provide an insight into possible numbers of individuals/families who may be subject to future to homelessness referrals. This may then contribute towards arguments for the improved use of stock and in turn reduced referrals to B&B
7	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	62% (2007-8)	It is intended to consult with tenants around their opinions around the best use of Oldham's housing stock and its best use.
8	The percentage of repeat victims within the overall domestic violence incidents	47% (2007-8)	The Communities and Local Government discussion on tackling overcrowding in England (2006) highlights overcrowding as being associated with family breakdown including incidents of domestic violence. By tackling issues of overcrowding in Oldham it may have a positive impact of this target.
9	The total number of private sector properties in the Borough which were non-decent at the beginning of the year	45% (2007-8)	Overcrowding is part of the decent homes and fit for purpose criteria of Private sector property. By understanding levels of overcrowding mechanisms may be able to be put into place to help deal with the problem.
10	Reducing Worklessness Amongst the working aged Population (aged 16-59) of Oldham	To be confirmed	By tackling the issue of overcrowding in Oldham, this may have a positive impact on reducing Worklessness through creating stable homes in which an individual can study and/or prepare for work.
11	Half days missed through authorised and unauthorised Absence: • Primary • Secondary	5.3% 7.55% [2007-08]	Evidence provided suggests that overcrowding as an adverse affect on both health and an individuals ability to study.

**Proposals are invited to:**

- Manage the project
- Develop research methodology alongside the steering group
- Conduct primary and secondary research to respond to the research objectives
- 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

Expressions of interest should be submitted on the template provided and addressed as below to arrive no later than **3pm on Friday, 6 July 2007**.

Private and Confidential

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## Programme Specification

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Private Rented Sector Tenants Survey</b>
Objectives	<p>The Research Objectives fall under four headings as follows:</p> <p><i>Housing Management</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To evaluate levels of overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham;</li><li>• To evaluate the effective use of housing stock across social, private rented housing and owner-occupier tenures;</li><li>• To evaluate the role of housing providers with regard to overcrowding and under-occupancy.</li></ul> <p><i>Making the best use of Oldham’s Housing Stock: Housing Provider Perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand the opinions, experiences and thoughts of Housing providers (including social housing providers and private landlords) regarding overcrowding and under occupancy;</li><li>• To understand the barriers to providers in tackling overcrowding and under-occupancy.</li></ul> <p><i>Making the best use of Oldham’s Housing Stock: Residents Perspective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand the opinions, experiences and thoughts of tenants and residents regarding overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham;</li><li>• To explore the possible reasons for overcrowding and under occupancy in Oldham.</li><li>• To understand the impact of overcrowding and under-occupancy on education and health.</li></ul> <p><i>Strategy and Policy Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To evaluate existing Housing Policy with regard to overcrowding and under-occupancy;</li><li>• It is anticipated that the research findings will inform the development of an overarching Overcrowding Policy.</li></ul>

Target groups/ Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social housing providers and private landlords</li> <li>• Housing tenants/residents across all tenure groups (i.e. social housing, private rented housing and owner-occupier tenures)</li> <li>• Housing providers and tenants of overcrowded/ under-occupied accommodation.</li> <li>• Cross section of tenants/ residents across key demographic groupings (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, property type/size)</li> </ul>
Interventions	N/A
Number of beneficiaries	N/A
Duration of programme	All research must be completed and final report available by 31 March 2008. Final invoice must be paid by 31 March 2008.
Funding available	Up to £20k
Additional requirements	<p>Agencies/consultants are invited to make proposals as to the methodologies to be used to meet the objectives of the research.</p> <p>Agencies/consultants are invited to submit proposals for this and any of the other projects also funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund listed for tender on the Oldham Partnership website.</p> <p>The successful agency/consultant will be expected to liaise and share information with any other agencies/consultants also selected for the other projects listed on the Oldham Partnership website also funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.</p> <p>If submitting proposals for more than one of the projects listed, please also submit an additional paper proposing how you are able to provide added value by running two or more of the projects side by side.</p> <p>If you require any further details about this project please contact <a href="mailto:bronwen.holloway@oldham.gov.uk">bronwen.holloway@oldham.gov.uk</a> or 0161 770 8165.</p>