

To Whom It May Concern

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TESTIMONIAL ON BEHALF OF TRACY ISBELL

I am pleased to provide a reference for Tracy Isbell, whom I have known for over eight years, from when she first joined the newly formed Weymouth and Portland Housing Company, where I was Chief Executive. Weymouth and Portland Housing was established in March 2000 following Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's decision to transfer its housing stock of over 3,000 homes to the Company, together with some 150 staff.

Tracy was instrumental following transfer, in establishing a comprehensive, professional personnel and training function for WPH. In particular she played an important role in assisting me to develop the Company's first corporate plan and took personal responsibility for the production of what proved to be a very effective HR strategy, a crucial ingredient in taking our corporate strategy forward.

In addition to being a strategic thinker, Tracy has excellent operational skills and has proved adept at introducing good practice initiatives at both WPH and more recently within the enlarged Synergy Housing Group. Evidence of this being: the formulation, development, implementation and monitoring of personnel and employment policies and procedures, reflecting employment legislation and good practice; the creation of a trade union protocol and recognition agreement to facilitate positive employment relations. In this regard, Tracy built very positive relations with union officials through her personal style and the creation of an atmosphere of mutual respect; and the provision of a professional and reliable advisory service on all aspects of personal management to the executive team and senior management. In addition she designed and implemented at WPH [widened out more recently across the Synergy Housing Group] a robust staff development and performance appraisal scheme. This led to the formulation of training and development plans for both staff and board members, the fundamental benefit being to link individual effort to company corporate and operational plans ensuring both staff and board members gain an understanding of the role they play in achieving the company's overall objectives.

Tracy is a skilled project manager and has a realistic but challenging view on what can be sensibly achieved within a given timeframe. She is a starter/ finisher and I can recall numerous

projects which she led personally and which were delivered successfully, on time and to budget. The following examples evidence Tracy's abilities in this area: Tracy successfully managed a well thought through, consultative and inclusive project leading to the harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment between transferred WPBC and WPH staff; introduced new contracts of employment for all staff; achieved IIP status for WPH in 2003 which was a remarkable feat in such a short timescale; the coordination of two major staff surveys, followed by the formulation and delivery of subsequent action plans produced to tackle the issues raised; and project management and implementation of an HR and Management Information System at WPH and since joining the Synergy, taking the lead on merging the two independent HR systems.

Since WPH's entry into the enlarged Synergy Housing Group, Tracy has played an important role in forging strong links between the two HR teams. She has taken a prominent role, supporting the Director of Corporate Services, in ensuring the smooth integration of WPH into the Group and the harmonisation of both policies and procedures. Tracy has taken the lead on operational HR process reviews to make efficiencies and improvements in working methods across a number of operational areas including the creation of a group-wide approach to recruitment, training and staff development and successfully leading a project to merge computerised data between existing HR systems on two sites.

An important ingredient in management today is having a good understanding of finance and possessing sound budgetary skills. Within both WPH and the Synergy Housing Group, Tracy has been responsible for the management of both personnel and training budgets, ensuring expenditure is contained within available resources and incurred in accordance with financial regulations. We have a strong culture of financial control and Tracy has always demonstrated a keenness to ensure the highest standards of financial probity across the organisation.

Moving on to Tracy's personal skills and attributes. I have always found Tracy to be a self motivated individual who relates well to people at all levels. She is both intelligent and articulate, has a positive disposition and is good fun, both at work and in a social setting. I have always been impressed with Tracy's ability to prepare reports on complex issues and present them in a straight forward manner where the audience is able to understand the key points being made. Whether she is talking to a group of staff or presenting a paper to Board Members, Tracy is able to engage with her audience and retain their attention.

I have no hesitation in commending Tracy to you, confident in the knowledge she is a consummate HR professional and a thoroughly likeable person.

Yours sincerely



G J STANLEY
Group Chief Executive