

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: WELL-BEING			
Date of Meeting:	26th November 2001		
Public			
Key Decision:	Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan:	Yes
Inside Policy Framework			

Title: RAFFLES AREA STRATEGY UPDATE

Report of: Director of Housing

Report reference: H106/2001

Summary:

This report highlights the ongoing issues in relation to the Raffles Estate and the Strategy for that estate and highlights a number of issues for further consideration and approval.

Recommendations:

Members are requested **to note:**

- a) The current position in relation to the phased demolition areas of the estate;
- b) A review of the projected sustainability of the area centred around Raffles, Dalton and Creighton Avenues;
- c) The need to seek further expert regeneration advice and consult with a preferred development partner.

and approve:

- d) The demolition of properties in Phase 5 subject to detailed discussions with a preferred developer.
- e) That the Council acquire former Right to Buys within the areas identified for demolition and dispose of houses to those property owners affected by the Council's scheme on final terms to be agreed by the Head of Property Services;
- f) The development of a local lettings policy; and environmental maintenance scheme.

g) The allocation of a sum up to £10,000 to commission/appoint additional resources to further tenant consultation and involvement in regeneration issues.

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H106/01

RAFFLES AREA STRATEGY UPDATE

1. Background Information and Options

1. This report provides an update on progress to date with the Raffles Area Strategy (RAS) since the last report to Committee in June 2001.

2. Background

1. Committee report H123/99 in April 1999 detailed four areas for demolition, three specific and one optional. A map showing the area is attached as an Appendix.
2. The initial two phases plus elements of the fourth optional phase have now been successfully completed so far.
3. Demolition of most properties in Phase 3 is now complete, although some issues are still outstanding in five blocks (20 properties) where five owner occupiers' needs are still to be resolved.
4. Further work has been suspended in Phase 4 pending consultation with a preferred development partner.
5. Basic environmental schemes have been developed on the land sites left following the demolition in Phases 1 & 2 in conjunction with Leisure Services.
6. Where demolition has occurred communities have largely stabilised. However in an area not included for demolition in the 4 phases there has been a marked population loss. This is around the junction of Raffles and Creighton Avenues, with further destabilisation occurring along the entire length of Dalton Avenue.
7. The conclusions drawn from this and from the extensive local consultation undertaken indicated the need for guidance and advice from experts in urban regeneration to consider a marketing approach to lettings on the estate and to strengthen partnerships with community groups and other agencies to meet the needs of the community.

3. The Current Position

1. Successful demolition as detailed has taken place in Phases 1 and 2 on the estate. Both phases have included properties from adjoining parts of Phase 4, the optional phase. In addition phase 2 has included the demolition of the flats in Dobinson Road owned by Impact Housing Association.
2. All environmental schemes have been consulted on and approved by the local communities. The proposals for Phase 1 have been completed and include landscaping, and youth facilities including football and

basketball areas and a youth shelter.

3. The original proposals for Phase 2 where the land adjoining the cleared sites could be incorporated into the park and for the land opposite this to be landscaped with a possible allotment site are presently suspended. These proposals have not been progressed in view of the position regarding LSVT and options for the land assets being resolved, and the recent interest from two specific developers.
4. The demolition of properties in Phase 3, as set out in 2.3, is nearing completion with some outstanding issues to be resolved regarding a small number of owner occupiers. It is, however anticipated that these issues will be resolved shortly.

4. Redevelopment

1. As reported to the Housing Consultative Group on 1st October 2001 in recent months there has been renewed interest from developers regarding the future of the estate. The authority's Head of Property Services is currently evaluating submissions from two interested developers. A report outlining the Council's options will subsequently be tabled at the Development Advisory Group rescheduled for 30th November, 2001 and to the Executive on 17th December 2001.

5. Regeneration

1. Previous updating reports have detailed officers' concerns about the increasing and high levels of empty properties in Raffles Avenue/Dalton Avenue/Creighton Avenue.
2. The above situation requires a view to be taken on the medium and long term strategic prospects for the sustainability of the area, whilst at the same time considering the living environment of all residents in the area.
3. Many of the vacant properties are already beyond economical repair and as indicated in report H49/2001, further demolition was seen as one possible option. Such an approach needs to be balanced with a view to the future impact of the medium to longer-term strategy for the estate which should include predictions for sustainable demand both locally and district-wide.
4. The actions necessary to address this decline are set out in the proposed Phase 5 and 6 below (see attached map).

Phase 5 (Proposed)

Following detailed consultation with local residents it is the view of the Director of Housing that this area cannot be returned to sustainable letting in the foreseeable future and that further investment in these properties cannot be justified.

Raffles Avenue No's

65-79

114-176

Creighton Avenue No's	1-15
	2-32
Brookside No's	<u>77-83</u>
Total	68 Properties
Of these:	
Owner Occupiers	3 (4.5%)
Tenanted	3 (4.5%)
Empty	62 (91%)

The majority of properties set out above are subject to persistent vandalism and are predominantly well beyond economic repair, consequently demolition is strongly recommended.

In addition 4 properties on Brookside Nos. 77-85 (all empty) have been targeted by vandals and are suffering from severe disrepair and it is recommended that these properties are included for demolition in this phase.

However with the renewed interest of external developers, approval is sought for demolition only in principle (for completion in 2002/03), subject to consultation with the preferred developer when/if approved by the Executive.

Phase 6 (For Consultation)

The properties identified in this phase present some difficulties for the authority which will require further detailed consultation with local residents before specific recommendations can be presented. The properties include:

Creighton Avenue No's	17-47
	34-48
Dalton Avenue No's	37-131
	38-112
	—
Total No Properties	110

Of these:

Owner Occupiers	7 (6%)
Tenants	38 (35%)
Empty	65 (59%)

The decline in this area is of particular concern, with a slightly higher number of owner occupiers in residence, severe structural vandalism of empty units and a low economic asset value deterring future investment in these properties.

All vacant properties are to be firmly secured through the bricking up of all apertures and a physical inspection carried out as frequently as possible, subject to resource availability.

The scattered location of the affected properties in Dalton Avenue present a particular dilemma, with medium to long term priorities needing to be worked up as soon as possible. These proposals will be influenced by the responses from detailed consultation with remaining residents in the Phase 6 and any action would be subject to the views of any selected preferred developer.

4. With regard to the operational detail concerning the acquisition and disposal of individual R.T.B. properties it is proposed that authority is delegated to the Head of Property Services for the Council to acquire former Right to Buys within areas identified for demolition and dispose of houses to those property owners affected by the Council's scheme on final terms to be agreed by the Head of Property Services.
5. In consideration of these issues and the pending LSVT, the views of the potential preferred developer needs to be sought as a matter of some urgency, following a decision of the Executive in December 2001, prior to detailed decisions on demolition being made.

5. Local Lettings Scheme

1. At a previous meeting of Housing & Care Services Committee approval was sought to develop and introduce a marketing lettings strategy to revitalise the are and attract new tenants to the estate.
2. Currently discussions are taking place with residents on the Raffles and Botcherby estates to identify appropriate options for consideration. On completion a detailed report will be presented to the Executive for adoption.

6. Environmental Maintenance

1. As part of the regeneration of the estate, a key element is the

improvement of the environment. Current discussions with partners have concluded in the establishment of an Environmental Task Force to assist in:

- a. general estate maintenance
- b. minor repairs
- c. assisting vulnerable tenants
- d. assist in the potential extension of Heysham Park
- e. General communal land including shrubbery, trees, road verges etc.
 1. A steering group has been established to progress this initiative including Housing, Carlisle Works, Leisure, Riverside and Raffles SRB. Initial costings indicate that including staff and materials the annual budget would be in the region of £140,000 to be met from existing housing budget provision in the Raffles are Strategy budget.

6. Raffles Community Forum

1. As previously indicated there is a clear recognition of all the agencies on the estate, including, SRB, Positively Raffles, Living Well Trust, The Police, The Schools and local people that only by working together can the needs of the community be met.
2. To achieve this the Raffles Community Forum has been identified as the focal point to develop initiatives, in which Housing will play a key role and through which Housing will consult on its policy for the estate.
3. The Forum will have a key role in 'Action' on the estate and is currently considering a range of initiatives, including:
 - a. Property security (empty and occupied);
 - b. Community Wardens;
 - c. General Handyman Schemes;
 - d. Employment Projects;
 - e. Litter Campaigns
 - f. A One-Stop Advice and Information Service.
 1. It is intended that Housing consult through this Group on its policy on the Estate ie. Local Lettings and each of the partners are recognised as equal and active participants in this process.
 2. The first task of the group will be to identify a scheme outlining an approach to incorporate the issues set out in sections 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8.3 above. Details of the scheme will be reported to a future cycle of the Executive.

6. Tenant Consultation

1. To support the process of engaging local people in the Raffles Area Strategy authority is sought to commission/appoint additional resources to facilitate the development of an estate Action plan and the effective

involvement of tenants in the regeneration proposals for the estate.

2. It is estimated that up to a maximum of £10,000 be set aside to fund this process, being charged to the fees and services budget of the Raffles Area Strategy under Contract S.O. 4(2)(a) for work of a specialised nature.

NB. Publicity/information costs are included in this estimate.

7. Financial Implications

1. Within the body of this report, Sections 1.5 to 1.9 in particular indicate actions with financial implications.
2. Whilst the Raffles Estate Strategy budget is a cash limited budget, officers estimate that this budget should be flexible enough to incorporate most or all of these actions in this and subsequent years, subject to detailed costings.

The current financial position indicates an uncommitted element of £275k within 2001/02 resources and projected funds of £496k for 2002/03, totalling £771k. Indicative costs are set out for information

Projected Estimates

Section 1.5.4 Phase 5 & 6 Demolition and disconnections 400k
(including estimated home loss payments etc)

Section 1.7 Environmental Maintenance 140k

Section 1.8.3

- a) Property Security 30k
- b) Community Wardens 80k
- c) General Handyman Schemes 40k
- d) Employment Project 30k
- e) Litter Campaigns 10k
- f) One Stop Shop 20k

Section 1.9 Tenant Consultation 10k

760k

3. It is intended that the initial costs associated with these actions will be firmed up and presented with proposals to the Executive once the detailed proposals are established.

1. Consultation to Date

1. Throughout the development of these proposals consultation has been continuous through a range of mechanisms including open meetings, newsletters, questionnaires, fun days, individual visits, focus groups and the Community Forum.

2. Despite this there is a recognition that there is still a large group of residents whose views remain untapped. An initiative has therefore been agreed through the partnership to advertise and appoint street representatives.

2. Staffing/Resources Comments

There are not direct implications in this report, however details will be provided for each initiative in future reports.

3. City Treasurer's Comments

1. The City Treasurer's comments have been incorporated in the body of the report

4. Legal Comments

The issues regarding 'property exchanges' and the advantages of retaining some residents on the estate to sustain the community was outlined in H049/01 and approved by Members.

5. Corporate Comments

Raffles Area Strategy has been previously agreed as a corporate priority.

6. Risk Management Assessment

A full risk assessment matrix will be completed for each of the initiatives set out in this report.

7. Recommendations

1. Members are requested **to note**:
 - a) The current position in relation to the phased demolition areas of the estate;
 - b) A review of the projected sustainability of the area centred around Raffles/Dalton and Creighton Avenues;
 - c) The need to seek further expert regeneration advice and consult with a preferred development partner.

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scheme.

g) The allocation of a sum up to £10,000 to commission/appoint additional resources to further tenant consultation and involvement in regeneration issues.

8. Reasons for Recommendations

To support the continuation of the Raffles Area Strategy with the aim of regenerating the area.

T. Bramley

Director of Housing

RAFFLES ESTATE

Potential Additional areas for Clearance – Subject to Outcome of Developer Submissions:

Phase 5 – Recommended [68 units]

Phase 6 – For Consultation [110 Units]

Date **16/11/01**

Scale 1:4000

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