

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: Health & Well-Being			
Date of Meeting:	15 th April 2002		
Public			
Key Decision:	Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan:	No
Inside Policy Framework			

Title: RAFFLES AREA STRATEGY

Report of: Director of Housing

Report reference: H030/02

Summary:

This report further details the proposals outlined in the Raffles Area Strategy report to the Executive on 26th November 2001.

Proposals include issues in relation to:

- a. A proposed phase 6 of regeneration (including selective demolition).
- b. A Local Lettings Initiative Scheme.
- c. An Environmental Response Team

Recommendations:

Members are requested **to note**:

- a) The current position in relation to the phased demolition areas of the estate;

and approve:

- b) A Phase 6 Regeneration (including selective demolition)

- c) That the Council 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.

d) The development of a local lettings policy, and environmental maintenance scheme as detailed.

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H030/02

**To the Chairman and Members
of the Executive**

Raffles Area Strategy

1. Introduction

The Raffles Area Strategy report to the Executive of 26th November 2001 outlined a number of proposals subject to a further report.

These proposals are in respect of:

- a. A phase 6 of regeneration (including selective demolition).
- b. A Local Lettings Incentive Scheme.
- c. An Environmental Response Team.

1.1 As part of the consultation process, views of partners in the RAS (Riverside & Lovell Ltd.) have been sought and are included in the body of the report.

1. Phase 6

The Raffles Area Strategy report of 26th November 2001 outlined a proposed Phase 6 regeneration on the estate subject to consultation with residents and the prospective developer.

1. The properties proposed for inclusion in Phase 6 are 1-47 and 34-48 Creighton Avenue, and 37-131 and 38-112 Dalton Avenue, a total of 118 properties.
2. Consultation with residents was completed in January and February of this year, through questionnaires, door to door visits and a general meeting. The question that was put forward in the consultation was whether there was a need for further demolition and if so should this be in small individual areas or in one large defined area?
3. At the time of the consultation of the 118 properties, 38 were tenanted and 7 privately owned, and 73 were empty. 26 responses were received during this

consultation. Of these 7 were in favour of demolition of small areas within the whole, 19 were in favour of the defined area as a whole.

4. The outcome of this consultation was split largely on the lines of owner-occupiers, in favour of retaining individual blocks, and tenants in favour of demolition of the whole.
5. The prospective developer for the estate has likewise been contacted and their advice supports the demolition of phase 6 (appendix 1).
Previously, Nomad Housing had been contacted and their response again was similar to the above.
6. Since this consultation there have been constant requests to transfer because of the area's decline and the number of residents has fallen by 8 to 30 tenants and 7 owner-occupiers, and 81 empty.
7. The recommendation is therefore to declare Phase 6 as a whole as a regeneration area with a phased process of selective demolition.
It needs to be acknowledged that there is strong opposition to this proposal from a number of owner-occupiers and tenants. The demolition area in question would, given present proposals, be simply grass seeded. Given that the residents opposing are in the majority elderly and potentially vulnerable, it is recommended that although Phase 6 is declared as a redevelopment area, residents are given the option to move now and that this remains open until such times as development plans are approved.
8. In view of the issues set out above, the Executive are requested to consent to the acquisition of owner / occupied property in the Raffles Redevelopment Area Phase 6, on terms agreed by the Head of Property Services, or an exchange of properties on such terms that are agreed by him.

2. Local Lettings Incentive Scheme

1. During the decanting of residents for phases of the Raffles demolition two factors were noted:
 - The extreme difficulty in letting an individual house in a block fully empty;
 - That tenants who were given an element of choice not only in the property they chose but also in furnishings etc, developed a strong commitment to that property.
1. This proposal builds therefore upon these two recognised factors. 18 houses have been identified to be included in these proposals. The properties, an empty four block, will be repaired collectively. Local residents will be asked for their opinion as to what types of applicants the properties should be let to.
2. These properties will then be advertised as ready to let. The advertisement for each of the properties will specify the family group the property would be best suited for i.e. couples, single people. All interested parties will be required to complete an application form and be accepted onto the Carlisle City Council's Waiting/Transfer list.
3. A package to support this initiative to encourage applicants onto the estate will amount to a maximum of £350 /property to suit the requirement of the new tenant.
4. The expenditures for the above will be redeemed after approximately 8

weeks from the rental received from an otherwise empty property with projected long-term nil rental revenue.

New tenants will be directed to a local furniture recycling scheme and a tenant's handbook will also be part of the package with localised information and a helpful telephone numbers guide.

Although no costs were identified within the report of 26th November 2001, the set-up costs are now estimated at a maximum £10,000 can be accommodated within the existing budget RAS budget.

1. The Environmental Response Team

1. Introduction

The Raffles Area Strategy Report to the Executive of 26.11.01 outlined a number of proposed environmental projects and detailed provisional costings.

Environmental Maintenance £140k
Community Wardens £80k
General Handyperson £40k
Employment Project £30k
£290k

2. Background

Throughout all the consultation on the estate, both in group meetings and door to door surveys a key factor for the estate and residents has featured prominently.

This key element is the need to maintain the estate neat and tidy and improve security, and through this allow the social and community initiatives for the estate to develop.

This viewpoint was strongly confirmed in the recent social needs survey (Appendix 2) undertaken by CN research and commissioned by the Raffles SRB Scheme.

The details of each of these initiatives, including the management and monitoring arrangements is set out in Appendix 3 for Members' consideration.

It is anticipated that the benefits/costs of the integrated environmental project will be well tested in the pilot on the Raffles estate.

Consequently prior to considering "rolling out" the initiative to any other areas - Botcherby and Pettril Bank being the obvious targets, a progress report will be tabled at an Executive meeting 3 months after the commencement of the

pilot on the Raffles estate for Members' consideration, including the question of funding.

3. Exit Strategy

The funding for these proposed projects is via the Raffles Area Strategy budget, a mixed capital/revenue budget which exists in the 2002/03 base budget of the HRA and housing capital programme.

If the stock transfer proceeds part way through the year, the Council's funding streams to these projects would of necessity have to cease and their continuation will then be reliant on the ability of Carlisle Housing Association to support them (see section 4.4 below).

Alternatively if the stock transfer does not proceed a decision will then need to be made by the Council whether to continue to fund the projects beyond the initial 6 month trial period proposed.

The role of the Officer Group will be to specifically identify budgets that may be able to provide this funding. Possible 2002/03 sources of funding for future consideration currently include:

The R & I Security Budget - £70,000
Raffles Void Garden Budget - £20, 330
Raffles Occupied Garden Budget - £11,484
Road Verges & Shrubbery - Unspecified
Fly Tipping - Unspecified
Board Up and Minor Repairs - - Unspecified

Special funding can also be targeted. The Housing Department, or in the event of Stock Transfer, the Riverside Group, can make an application to the Home Office to fund Community Wardens.

If the stock transfer proceeds, Riverside have the option of funding from their proposed Carlisle Community Investment Budget of £400,000 per year and also initiatives can be put forward for match-funding to Riverside Group Community Investment Challenge Fund. Both these funding sources are subject to application and assessment.

Funding could also come via a local service charge on the rent as for example with a similar scheme with North Housing currently costing at 50p per week.

If the projects are successful then both Carlisle Works and Riverside have indicated their willingness to continue with them.

4.4 Comments from the Riverside Group

The Riverside Group has been working jointly with the City Council to develop the

Environmental Task Force and Estate Rangers projects and is committed to assisting in identifying appropriate performance standards and monitoring systems with all partners. Following the initial pilot year of the project and if the decision on the stock transfer is positive, Carlisle Housing Association, as the new local subsidiary of the Riverside Group will review existing budgets, any proven savings from mainstream budgets and assess the likely additional grant funding required for the projects. Carlisle Housing Association will undertake this assessment at an early stage and if the success of the projects can be demonstrated, will seek continuity of the projects through applications for additional funding. Securing grant funding can never be guaranteed although potential sources of funding could include the Home Office New Opportunities Fund and Environmental organisations as well as Carlisle Housing Association's Community Investment Fund and Riverside Group's Community Investment Challenge Fund.

4. 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.

4. Staffing/Resources Comments

1. The staffing implications for each of these initiatives are set out in the explanatory notes in the appendices of this report and will be the responsibility of the contractor employed to manage the scheme (Carlisle Works).

5. City Treasurer's Comments

1. The City treasure has been consulted in the preparation of this report and may wish to comment further at the meeting.

6. Legal Comments

The City Solicitor and Secretary has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no additional comments to make.

7. Corporate Comments

The implementation of the Raffles Area Strategy has been previously agreed as a corporate priority.

8. Risk Management Assessment

A full risk assessment matrix will be completed for the pilot initiative set out in this report and reported to a future meeting of the Executive.

9. Recommendations

1. Members are requested **to note**:
 - a) The current position in relation to the phased demolition areas of the

estate;

and approve:

- b) A Phase 6 Regeneration (including selective demolition)
- c) That the Council 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.
- d) The development of a local lettings policy, and environmental maintenance scheme as detailed.

10. Reasons for Recommendations

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

T. Bramley

Director of Housing

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Social Needs Survey

Housing Services

Respondents were asked to give a rating of importance to key Housing Activity.

Of those surveyed:

76% rated letting empty houses as very important

74% rated the resolution of neighbour nuisance/problem tenants as very important

72% rated tidying gardens & land as very important

All these received the highest ratings of very important.

Crime and Community Safety

58.5% of respondents wanted increased Police presence.

40.5% of respondents felt very unsafe or would not be alone on the estate, at night.

Environment

Gardens of empty houses were of highest concern, ranked as badly maintained by 69.5%, while litter, graffiti and fly tipping was ranked as badly maintained by 43%.

No environmental feature was ranked as well maintained by more than 18%.

Education and Employment

40% of respondents said that they would be interested in training and learning opportunities offered on the estate.

The projects detailed are to meet this identified social need.

Appendix 3

1. The Environmental Task Force

The purpose of the Environmental Task Force would be to assist in the management of the Raffles Estate through environmental maintenance. This would include:-

Gardens

- Undertaking work to any untidy/overgrown gardens of empty properties.
- Reporting any untidy/overgrown gardens of occupied properties to the Housing Management Section.
- Offering a grass cutting service to owner-occupiers on the estate for a fee.

- Providing a grass cutting service for pensioners and disabled tenants registered on the Housing Department's elderly and disabled persons grass cutting contract.
- Supervising a garden equipment loan scheme and recycling project on the estate

Repairs

- Carrying out minor repairs to the internal and external of occupied and unoccupied properties. This work will be simple and able to be quickly carried out.
- Reporting any other repair works to the Raffles Administration Officer.

Fly Tipping and Rubbish

- Removing any rubbish/fly tipping from void gardens/communal areas as identified.

Environmental Project Work

- Undertaking any regular or project environmental work as directed to
 - Grassed communal areas or land.
 - Trees and bushes in communal areas.
 - Road Verges.
 - Privet hedges throughout the estate.
 - Heysham ParkAll the above potential projects will need to be assessed and prioritised with residents in conjunction with officers from Leisure Services.

Area of Responsibility

It is proposed that for an initial period of two months the above scheme operates on the Raffles Estate. Once there has been significant improvement on this estate it is proposed that this scheme is extended to the other two estates with similar needs, Botcherby and Petteril Bank. Raffles will still remain their primary area of responsibility, 3 days per week and Botcherby and Petteril Bank, 1 day each per week. This ratio will depend upon the needs of the situation and the scheme will need to be flexible in its operation.

Estimated Costs

Costs for this scheme have been provided by Carlisle Works for one chargehand and 3 labourers.

The costs include all overheads and transports, communications and equipment costs.

Two costs have been estimated

A) With New Deal Grant – £73,115

B) Without New Deal Grant – £80,435

The budget for this project is £140,000. The remainder of the budget will be used to fund the environment projects.

Line Management

Direct Line Management, including recruitment, administration and pay will be through Carlisle Works.

However there will be a continued input by all interested parties, Housing, Leisure Services and Residents.

1. Community Wardens (Estate Rangers)

There is a preference given the scope and purpose of these posts that they be termed Estate Ranger rather than Community Warden.

The purpose of this post is to provide an additional, visible presence, to improve security and ensure that problems are identified and acted upon. This includes:-

Observation and Reporting

- Patrolling twice daily including parkland. This would usually be done in a vehicle, sometimes on foot. They would patrol in pairs. Working between 8am – 5pm, 3 days per week, 2pm – 11pm, 2 days per week.
- Identifying and reporting to the Raffles Administration Officer or Repairs and Improvements all fly tipping and untidy void gardens.
- Reporting any untidy/overgrown gardens of occupied properties to the Housing Management Section.

Repairs

- Carrying out minor repairs to the internal and external properties, per the Environmental Task Force.
- Arranging for the removal of rubbish and usable furniture from all empty properties and its disposal or storage for use in a potential future Furniture Recycling Project.
- Reporting any other repairs works to either the Raffles Administration Officer or the Repairs and Improvements Section.

Security

- Inspecting all void properties for security and taking immediate action to secure if necessary.
- Where requested, fitting net curtains to void properties to maintain a visually occupied appearance.
- Liaising with residents to create a sense of security and provide advice on Crime

Prevention.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Liasing and reporting of incidents of anti-social behaviour witnessed to the Housing Management Section. The role here would be non-confrontational.

Community Initiatives

- Encouraging residents to participate in Community initiatives including Neighbourhood Watch, Tenants and Residents Groups, Litter Collection Campaigns and Youth Activities.
- Liasing and working with other agencies including the Police, Social Services and Community Groups on the Estate.

Area of Responsibility

From the start of this scheme it is intended that the Wardens/Estate Rangers patrol the three estates of Raffles, Botcherby and Petteril Bank. It is proposed that they patrol each of these estates twice a day.

Estimated Costs

It is accepted that the chargehand for the Environmental Response Team will likewise supervise these posts. The cost for the chargehand post is included within the overall costs of the Environmental Response Team.

Again costs have been provided by Carlisle Works and include all overheads and transport, communication and equipment costs.

The costs have been estimated:-

- A) With New Deal Grant – £49,423
- B) Without New Deal Grant – £54,303

The budget for this project is £80,000. The underspend will be held in reserve to cover any additional costs/growth elements for this project.

Line Management

Will again be via Carlisle Works with direct input from other departments and residents.

Base of Work

The base of work for both the Wardens/Rangers will be the ex Area Housing Office on Shadygrove Road.

1. Employment Project

The Employment Project, is proposed as an Administration Officer/Receptionist for the previously detailed projects and the proposed one stop shop in the ex Area Housing Office on the estate.

Environmental Project

- To open the office at detailed times and to take complaints, queries for the Response Team and Wardens/Rangers.
- To take repair complaints both from residents and the Wardens/Rangers and refer to the appropriate department.
- To code and directly order all work related to the Response Team and the Wardens.
- To assist in the analysis in all expenditure.
- To assist in the administration of the Response Team and Wardens as required

Advice Centre

- To act as a Receptionist and either direct residents to the appropriate service or arrange specific appointments.
- To assist in the opening of this service at the agreed hours.
- To assist in advertising this service, by production of leaflets, etc.
- To assist in the administration of this service.

Costings

No specific costings have as yet been detailed for this post, but will be well within the budget of 30k.

This post as with other posts will be advertised to include wording,

‘Applications from residents of the Raffles Estate are positively welcomed’.

1. General Handyman

The principles of this proposal have been included within the Response Team and Wardens/Rangers. The underspend will be used to facilitate possible further demolition.

2. Monitoring

Two groups are proposed:-

Group 1 – An Officer Group to monitor expenditure and to identify financial savings generated by the two teams. This will consequently form the basis of the exit strategy.

To assist in this separate cost codes will be identified:-

- Strategy (Project Work)
- Leisure Services
 - Garden Maintenance for the Elderly
 - Garden Maintenance for void properties
 - Maintenance of Communal Areas
- Rubbish Clearance
 - From void and tenanted gardens
 - From the park, open land and highways
- Security – Board Ups
- Minor Repairs

In addition savings can also be identified on the decrease in criminal damage, staff time, letting and termination rates.

This group requires to meet prior to the start of the projects to agree its parameters and then 2 or 3 monthly.

Group 2

Officers and Residents. Officers represented from Housing, Leisure, Carlisle Works, S.R.B and Residents from Raffles, Botcherby and Petteril Bank.

Initially this group is to meet to set out the performance standards and target response times for the team i.e. rubbish reported to be collected in 24 hours.

The priorities for project work to be undertaken, particularly by the Environmental Task Force, will be agreed through this group.

This group will then meet every three months to monitor the progress of the Response Team and Wardens/Rangers. And propose any amendments to their work practices and review the priority list for the project work.

After six months a further full report will be circulated detailing the outcome of these two groups.