

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

**Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee:
2 February 2011**

Subject: Housing Regeneration Masterplans - Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides an update on the progress of the first phase of housing regeneration masterplanning and feasibility studies, and seeks approval to postpone those proposed for the second phase.

2. Background

- 2.1** In late 2008 and early 2009 a short term Housing and Regeneration Housing Group met to consider how best to take forward the agenda for the priority regeneration areas.
- 2.2** Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 9 February 2009 agreed the recommendations of the Housing Regeneration Working Group of 5 January 2009 relating to Local Steering Groups, priority areas for masterplans and the key objectives of the masterplans. The masterplan and feasibility study areas were agreed as follows:

Master Plans

Bellsmyre
Clydebank East
Central/Radnor Park
Castlehill and Westcliff

Feasibility Studies

Haldane
Central Alexandria
North Mountblow
Brucehill
South Drumry
Whitecrook

The Council and the Scottish Government agreed to commit £150,000 each to the studies, with the Council leading on the commissioning of the masterplans and the SG managing the Feasibility studies through RSLs.

Due to resource limitations for both the Council and the Scottish Government it was agreed that the work on the studies would be carried out in two phases.

The agreed phasing was as follows:

Phase 1:

Masterplans: Bellsmyre
Castlehill/Westcliff
Feasibility Studies: North Mountblow
Brucehill
Haldane
Central Alexandria

Phase 2:

Masterplans: Clydebank East
Central/Radnor Park
Feasibility Studies: South Drumry
Whitecrook

Works have now been completed on Phase 1 and summaries of the findings are attached in Appendix 1: Masterplans/Feasibility Studies Update Report.

- 2.3** The second phase studies were due to commence on completion of those in the first phase. These are now expected to be available by the end of February 2011. A draft revised masterplan brief has been prepared in respect of the two remaining masterplan areas, Central/Radnor Park and Clydebank East.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Since the decision was made to carry out these studies on the priority regeneration areas, important developments have taken place which suggest it would be advisable to reappraise the value of continuing with the Phase 2 study work at this time.

- 3.2** In particular, the following should be noted:

- The Scottish Government's Affordable Housing Investment Programme (AHIP), the principal source of funding for works identified through the studies, has been significantly reduced for at least two successive years, (2010/11, 2011/12). There is little prospect of new funding being identified for these areas for the foreseeable future.
- It was recognised that the areas in Clydebank identified for masterplanning do not have active tenant and resident groups and that some capacity building work will be needed before representative steering groups can be established. It has proved difficult to generate interest in this regard despite the best efforts of the Council's tenant participation officer.

- Consultations with Scottish Government Housing Investment Division (SG HID) have prompted the development of a scoring matrix for the prioritisation of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) projects to aid the assessment of proposals and demonstrate the transparency of the process. While the matrix will not be fully developed until the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) and Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) have been produced, use of this tool may result in different priorities from those agreed two years ago.
 - The SG is seeking innovative approaches to maximising new affordable and social housing finance. Financial innovation will be the focus of the new housing bill due early this year, and significant changes to the Housing Association Grant regime are forecast.
- 3.3** The SHIP submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of November 2010 was based on a 40% reduction in the AHIP for the plan period (2011/12 - 2013/14). Due to diminishing resources and the need to honour existing commitments, the SHIP contains no funding for Phase 2 areas for the next 3 years.
- 3.4** Work has commenced in preparing the LHS 2011 - 2016 for submission in September 2011. This will provide the opportunity to re-evaluate the strategic housing objectives for West Dunbartonshire in the light of the changing financial situation.
- 3.5** Given the lack of funding, it is considered that embarking on studies at this time may only serve to raise false expectations in discussions with communities. SG HID has indicated that, while it continues to see the value of the studies in providing a setting for housing investment, it would prefer to have these studies delayed until there is more of a prospect of funding being available through the AHIP programme and to have an updated reassessment made of their relative priority.
- 3.6** As noted in 3.5 above, above, no detailed discussions have yet taken place with the communities scheduled to become involved in the second stage work. However it is likely that there will be a degree of anticipation that the regeneration process will be commencing soon. Dialogue will be required with all the communities which may be disappointed by the revised programming assumptions, including those in Phase 1 where delays will also occur because of budget reductions.

- 3.7** Discussions with SG HID have suggested that consideration could fruitfully be given to looking at alternative ways to carry out the study work including by doing it in-house. Significant savings to the Council may be achievable if the outstanding work is not outsourced. Currently the Council has committed spending approximately £30,000 from the agreed budget of £150,000 on the masterplans.
- 3.8** A risk assessment needs to be made of what risks may exist in varying the timing of the remaining studies and whether there would be any equality impact issues. Similarly a value for money analysis should be carried out before proceeding with further studies.
- 3.9** Should studies be undertaken in-house, further work will be required on how the process would be resourced. It is recognised that Housing and Community Safety and Forward Planning have resource intensive tasks scheduled for this year in preparing the Local Development Plan and Local Housing Strategy.
- 4. People Implications**
- 4.1** There are no direct personnel issues although see 3.9 above.
- 5. Financial Implications**
- 5.1** If a decision is made not to proceed with the Phase 2 work, savings of up to £120,000 from the HRA Capital budget may be achievable. These savings have already been included in the HRA Capital probable outturn report that was reported to Council on 15 December 2010 therefore there may be some resource implications at a later date if it is decided to carry out the works in-house.
- 6. Risk Analysis**
- 6.1** There is a small risk that the case for investment may be weakened if no masterplan is in place. However, the forthcoming LHS preparation may provide an equally valid prioritisation process.
- 7. Equalities Impact**
- 7.1** No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.
- 8. Conclusions and Recommendations**
- 8.1** The investment funding position has considerably worsened since the decision was taken to carry out the two phases of Masterplans/Feasibility Studies including a reduction in the AHIP of 40%.

- 8.2** The first phase of the studies has been completed and, given the fall in funding, now is an opportune time to reconsider whether we should proceed with second phase of Masterplan/Feasibility studies.
- 8.3** The landscape is changing and the previous social housing funding mechanisms may no longer apply and new models will be required.
- 8.4** It is recommended that the committee:-
- i) Note the changing situation which brings into question the previously agreed course of action in respect of masterplan/ feasibility study work.
 - ii) Agree to put on hold the Phase 2 masterplan/feasibility work until such times as there is a prospect of funding being available through the AHIP and a reassessment of the priorities has been carried out. In the meantime the Council will continue to liaise with the communities in the regeneration areas over the declining budget and on what steps can be taken in mitigation. There will be further opportunities for consultation over priorities during the preparation of the LHS and the LDP.
 - iii) Agree that before further studies are carried out, consideration be given jointly with SG HID to investigating alternative, less costly ways to identify regeneration priorities in consultation with communities.

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Date: 11 January 2011

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Appendix: Appendix 1: Phase 1 Masterplans/Feasibility Study Update Report

Appendix 2: Glossary

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All

Appendix 1:

HEED Committee 02/02/11

Housing Regeneration Masterplan Update Report

1. Bellsmyre Masterplan

The work was carried out by a consultancy team led by Aedas Architects during 2010 and a draft final report was issued in December 2010.

The study was completed with the participation of the Bellsmyre Regeneration Group and public consultation exercises, including a questionnaire, informed the result. The main findings include:

- Identification of a number of small scale housing developments at different locations across the area
- A proposal for a new Bellsmyre Park on the site of where the Multi Storey Flats now stand, providing an access point to the surrounding countryside and including a new community building.

2. Castlehill & Westcliff Masterplan

Again, this work was carried out by a consultancy team led by Aedas Architects during 2010 and a draft final report was issued in December 2010. The study was completed with the participation of the Castlehill and Westcliff Regeneration Group and involved consultation with the local community. The main proposals are:

- New build properties on the cleared Turnberry Place site to allow for the remaining tenants in Carrick Terrace and those above the shops on Hawthornhill Road to be re-provisioned
- Re-locating the shops to a more prominent position off Cardross Main Road to allow for Westcliff to be better served by amenities and give it closer links with Castlehill
- Eventual demolition of Carrick and Kyle Terrace and replacement of the demolished properties with new build properties that are required in line with housing need
- Eventual demolition of Ashton View and replacement with appropriate new build properties.

3. North Mountblow Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study was commissioned in June 09 and completed in October 09. The consultants, FBN Architects, worked closely with the North Mountblow Regeneration Group and Dalmuir Park Housing Association in carrying out the study. In addition to the regular Group meetings, two community “drop – in” events were held to gather feedback from the local community. WDC is in the process of rehousing all tenants from these surplus stock houses and is buying out the owners.

The study recommends:

- that all 112 terraced flats be demolished.
- Constructing 25 new homes on the south side of Melbourne Avenue comprising 13 family houses and 12 cottage flats at a works cost of £2.70M. There may be an option for another small new build housing development on the site but the report notes the sloping nature makes much development difficult/expensive.
- that Mountblow House be retained as it has a structural life of at least another fifteen years.
- that the remainder of the site be the subject of a landscaping project to be developed by West Dunbartonshire Environmental Trust at an estimated cost of £308,000.

4. Brucehill Feasibility Study

Consultants, Smith Findlay, were appointed in June 2009 to carry out the work. A series of meetings with the Brucehill Regeneration Group and a public consultation event have resulted in draft plans being drawn up for the area. The study includes two housing proposals:

- Phase 1 containing 25 units, funded through HAG and programmed for a possible start in 2014/15
- Phase 2 to follow at a later date when investment levels have improved

5. Haldane Feasibility Study

The consultants, MAST, completed their final update of the plan for the Mill of Haldane Regeneration Group in August 2010. The study identifies nine potential sites for new housing development including the site at 1, 3, 5 Miller Road.

6. Central Alexandria Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study carried out by Smith Finlay Architects was completed in December 2010. The Council has agreed to dispose of the Kippen Dairy site to Cordale HA, and Dunbritton HA owns land at Susannah St. The plans include:

- Providing a range of houses and flats of appropriate sizes totalling around 50 that will primarily be used for reprovisioning for those in properties being redeveloped in the town centre area in the coming period.

Glossary

AHIP	Affordable Housing Investment Programme: The principal Scottish Government grant budget funding housing associations' new build development.
HRA	Housing Revenue Account: The self contained account which funds Council housing from its rental stream.
LDP	West Dunbartonshire Local Plan: The statutory land use planning framework for West Dunbartonshire which is currently going through a consultation process. This plan will cover the whole of West Dunbartonshire with the exception of the area within the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. The next version of this plan will be retitled the Local Development Plan.
LHS	Local Housing Strategy
RSL	Registered Social Landlord: A non profit making social housing provider registered with Communities Scotland, generally a Housing Association.
SG	Scottish Government
SG HID	Scottish Government Housing Investment Division: The arm of the Scottish Government responsible for funding for affordable housing.
SHIP	Strategic Housing Investment Plan.