

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	10
Date:	16th February 2009	Status	Open
Category:	2. Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Commencement of Shirebrook Regeneration – Byron Street Development.		
Report by:	Housing Strategy Officer		
Other Officers involved:	Environmental Health Residential Manager, Housing Needs Manager, Senior Valuer		
Director	Strategy		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Regeneration		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

COMMUNITY SAFETY – Ensuring that communities are safe and secure
CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services
ENVIRONMENT – Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment
REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities
SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.

All new proposed units will be secure by design and built to high thermal efficiency standards (Code level 3). The bespoke design of the flatted development seeks to “uplift” an area of low visual integrity and thus assist with Regeneration objectives. The scheme also has the ability to assist with rehousing of tenants affected by demolition activity proposed in the Shirebrook Masterplan.

Negotiated floating support packages for young single households will encourage social inclusion through tenancy sustainment. The availability of horticultural garden and support to use that garden, is envisaged to provide health benefits to scheme residents.

TARGETS

Endeavour to deliver affordable housing targets.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The Council will receive £41,250 capital receipt for land at a time when few sites are selling. In return for selling land at an undervalue, the authority receives eight units of social rented accommodation within a scheme worth of £0.9million. The value of the scheme represents investment levered into Shirebrook.

THE REPORT

The report requests approval for the sale to East Midlands Housing Association (EMHA) at an undervalue, in accordance with the Secretary of State's General Disposal Consent 2003, of land at Byron Street Shirebrook, for affordable housing.

The Senior Valuer has valued the open market value of the site at £82,500 with East Midlands Housing offering £41,250. This means that the contribution made to affordable housing under the Council's "Wellbeing" powers will be £41,250

The scheme will look to "kick-start" the regeneration of this part of Shirebrook by delivering bespoke designed accommodation with a strong facade on a prominent corner of the town centre.

The scheme will enable the authority to take up negotiated (YMCA) floating support packages that have hitherto been impossible to implement owing to lack of built facility in the district. To date, 4 units of floating support for Young Persons in Bolsover District have been subsumed into supported housing provision for the equivalent client group in Chesterfield. Lack of provision for proven need amongst vulnerable client groups scores poorly at Inspection.

The scheme will deliver 3x1bed and 5x2bed social rented flatted units, owned and managed by EMHA but with 75% nominations retained by the authority in perpetuity.

Background

The Byron Street project area contained poor quality housing and was affected by anti-social behaviour (see site plan Appendix B). All units within the project area were demolished in 2008 bar units 9 and 11. Minute number 1054/07 gives Council approval for demolition of units 9 and 11 if agreement for refurbishment could not be reached. Agreement has now been reached for external group repair work to occur at circa £25,000 with a contribution of 25% from the owner.

Authority for East Midlands Housing Association (EMHA) to partner the authority in redevelopment of the wider Byron Street site was given at full Council on November 6th 2002. Within the same meeting, approval was given

for transfer of the site for £1 plus nomination rights - however, a capital receipt of £41,250 has now been negotiated.

Since 2002, a considerable amount of effort has gone into delivering this project including the acquisition and demolition of the target properties – excepting units 9 and 11.

The Scheme

The brief to EMHA required a scheme of high design quality that would assist in regenerating not only the site but the surrounding, predominantly residential area. The design process has been a difficult one, seeking as the architect has, to make sense of an area with poor visual integrity:

- a. 1980's suburban mock-tudor family housing, chocolate brick, north of site
- b. 1990's bungalows, yellow brick, west of site
- c. pre-1919 terrace, red brick to the rear and within the site
- d. 1990's utilitarian Housing Association stock adjoining site

One building of architectural note that has influenced the final design is appended at Appendix A. The building is interesting because not only does it properly reflect the town centre location through its' height mass and strong street frontage, but the building is stylistically unusual owing to the way in which it seeks to take advantage of its' corner location – with a three-way façade at an asymmetric angle. The Byron Street redevelopment has been designed to “mimic” this building less than 50 meters away.

Behind the strong street frontage, car parking, bicycle rack, drying green, amenity space and horticultural garden are provided in secure and private surroundings. Planning policy allows for reduced car parking provision:

- in town centre locations
- in locations with good public transport
- where the client group is likely to have low car ownership

This policy has been used to enable a high density scheme and deliver a capital receipt of £5,156 per property (or £41,250 in total) to the authority for this affordable housing scheme.

In order to be eligible to attract Housing Corporation grant, new affordable housing must comply with Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3. This is a higher build quality requirement than the open market standards required by current Building Regulations. Thermal efficiency is heightened and households on low incomes are assisted through lower heating bills.

The Scheme Client Group

The proposed development comprises 5x2bed and 3x1bed social rented flats. As part of the Shirebrook Masterplan process, the Council are reviewing

the future of the Market Close Flats in Shirebrook since there is potential for the site to be used for the wider regenerative benefits of the town. If demolition of the flats occurs, the intention will be to give priority housing status to current Bolsover Council tenants of the Market Close flats, for the 2bed units.

The 1 bed flats have been requested in order to assist with a lack of young person's accommodation in the District. In April 2008, the authority received a Young Persons Housing Needs Study undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University. The study confirmed that which had been apparent to the Housing Needs Team for some time - an extensive undersupply of accommodation for Young Persons in Bolsover District.

The Value of Floating Support

The Supporting People programme is managed by Derbyshire County Council and offers housing based assistance to a range of vulnerable client groups. The programme is "rigid" in that once housing-based support is no longer deemed necessary, housing based assistance ceases.

The floating support package negotiated by the Housing Needs Manager for the Byron Street flats will commence at a couple of hours per day and diminish as life skills (managing money, paying bills, basic property maintenance, effective shopping and cooking) improve. The YMCA are current floating support providers for young persons in the district.

The availability of a secure, shared horticultural garden within the scheme is designed to assist scheme residents to grow foodstuffs without having to access allotment gardens in peripheral areas. YMCA floating support providers will be required to assist their clients in this endeavour. YMCA activity will be "boosted" if the Groundwork Trust are successful in applying for PCT funding to provide gardening support in Shirebrook.

The 3x1bed young persons units will not be move-on units. The intention is for young persons to successfully manage the Byron Street tenancies until life opportunities persuade them to seek alternative accommodation. As and when young persons units become vacant, the Council will nominate young persons requiring floating support to access the Byron Street scheme.

The purpose of floating support is to teach residents with poor life skills how to sustain a tenancy. Without such skills, repeat homelessness and social exclusion can be an issue.

Timescales

The Byron Street scheme has been submitted to planning with decision expected February. Without planning permission in place for the scheme, any member approval for transfer at an under value, will have to be an "in principle" decision.

If successful through the planning and land transfer process, East Midlands Housing Association expect to be on-site 2009 with completion of the Byron Street scheme 2010. Units will be “in management” summer 2010.

Although the scheduled completion date is early to assist with rehousing of Market Close Flats tenants, it will be useful to refer to the Byron Street Scheme and the availability of units during the consultation process.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Agencies differ in view as to the effectiveness on 1bed accommodation for young households. Some state that it increases the risk of loneliness and poor social skills. Other agencies feel that requiring two young persons to share can lead to management problems and in some cases, bullying behaviours. The availability of support, neighbouring young persons, communal garden and town centre location has led to a decision to enable one bed units in this instance.
- The authority has an annual need of 310 social rented units per annum (Strategic Housing Market Assessment). High deprivation in Shirebrook and the need to deliver balanced housing markets (PPS3) means that social rented housing is not normally targeted for this settlement. However, the rehousing requirement potentially arising from Market Close flats consultation and the acute need for younger persons units, has led to a different approach in this instance. Delivery of the Byron Street scheme will assist with the overall affordable housing target.
- The Authority is in receipt of Working Neighbourhoods Funding. East Midlands Housing Association will be requested to demonstrate on-site training provision for local people during the course on construction

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: New build affordable housing delivered through Registered Social Landlords is eligible for grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. On 8.1.09 East Midlands Housing Association applied for £366,750 funding through this source. The remainder of the build cost (£550,125) will be provided through EMHA own resources. Tellingly, the build cost outweighs the open market value of the proposed Byron Street development. Without land provided at an undervalue by the Local Authority, the scheme is unlikely to go forward and regeneration objectives will not be achieved.

Legal: The scheme is too small to reach the upper limit for Local Authority contributions under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972

Human Resources: Much of the enabling work has been undertaken prior to planning submission.

The human resource requirement for successful delivery of the scheme now includes strategic partners: – EMHA, YMCA and potentially, the Groundwork Trust Monitoring of scheme management, turnover and nominations will be monitored by the Housing Needs Team .

RECOMMENDATION(S) that;

1) Members approve group repair work to be undertaken on units 9 and 11 on the Byron Street site (anticipated cost £25-£35,000 with 25% contribution from the owner),

Subject to planning permission being granted that;

2) land at Byron Street, as identified in this report, be transferred to the East Midlands Housing Association,

3) in order to help the Council to secure the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of the area, and in accordance with the Secretary of State's General Disposal Consent 2003, the land be disposed of at the undervalue of £41,250.00,

4) the disposal be conditional upon the Council receiving the right to make 75% of tenant nominations in perpetuity.

ATTACHMENT: Appendix A – photograph of property providing architectural inspiration for the new scheme

Appendix B – site plan

FILE REFERENCE: ***please complete***

SOURCE DOCUMENT: ***please complete***