

Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods

Report to Executive Board

Date: 15th February 2013

Subject: 16500/BEI/000 - Sustainable Communities Investment Programme –Cross Green and Nevilles

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Are specific electoral Wards affected? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Temple Newsam | | |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-In? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number: | | |

Summary of main issues

This report outlines a programme of investment for the Cross Green and Nevilles neighbourhoods to build on the existing strength of these areas to ensure their sustainability in the long term.

Proposed investment includes energy efficiency works to homes and environmental improvements to be funded through the approved Economic Initiatives Capital Programme. The proposed works will also be supported by investment through existing highways maintenance and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets as well as external sources, including Green Deal, Energy Company Obligations and private home-owners.

The projects detailed in this report include highways and open space improvements, energy efficiency improvements to homes, environmental improvements to the public realm and a small community fund for environmental and energy efficiency projects. There is also potential for further site assembly for new housing development, subject to a detailed options appraisal.

The focused investment proposed offers a significant regeneration opportunity for Cross Green and the Nevilles with the potential to have a major positive impact on local and residential amenity.

Moreover, investment will uplift the area and assist in any future proposals to market the Copperfields site, as well as the wider Aire Valley. The Council's investment in these neighbourhoods demonstrates commitment to improving these areas and ensuring long term sustainability alongside the delivery of key strategic sites in the Aire Valley.

Recommendations:

Executive Board is recommended to note the contents of the report and:

- (i) Agree the programme and project proposals for the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme for the Cross Green and the Nevilles neighbourhoods;
- (ii) Agree the investment of £5million from the Economic Initiatives Capital Programme for the delivery of projects outlined in this report;
- (iii) Delegate programme management to the director of Environment & Neighbourhoods and to receive further details on major projects in due course.

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 This report provides details on the proposal for a programme to deliver energy efficiency works to homes and environmental improvements in the neighbourhoods of Cross Green and the Nevilles. It sets out the rationale for delivery in these neighbourhoods, the proposed projects, outline costs, and timescales for delivery.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Cross Green and the Nevilles (plan at appendix 1) are located in areas that have long standing regeneration needs related to high levels of multiple deprivation. Unemployment is high; skills levels are below the city average. There are also a number of underlying health issues in both areas leading to lower than average life expectancy.
- 2.2 Both neighbourhoods are located adjacent to the Aire Valley Leeds employment area and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone. While this provides opportunities for access to training and jobs for local people, investment is also needed to ensure the physical fabric of each area is improved to support their longer term sustainability as attractive and healthy places to live, alongside an area of significant commercial development.
- 2.3 During ongoing consultations residents in both areas have expressed concerns over the absence of investment in their neighbourhoods. In both areas there is a strong and confident sense of community and good demand for homes. There is an opportunity to use these attributes as a sound basis for focused investment to address some of the problems associated with deprivation.
- 2.4 Aire Valley has the potential to be an exemplar scheme promoting the principles of sustainability in both housing and commercial development, with aims to encourage high energy efficiency and environmental standards, focusing on energy generation and savings, green transport and connections, green industry and economic growth and energy efficient homes and communities. The aspiration for an 'Urban Eco Settlement' has been described as part of the Aire Valley Leeds programme, with Cross Green located within the proposed area and the Nevilles immediately adjacent.
- 2.5 **Cross Green** (Burmantofts & Richmond Hill ward) is an area of 450 homes, comprising mixed tenure traditional terraced and back-to-back houses. Over 80% of properties are listed as Council Tax band A and B. It is dominated by private accommodation (appropriately 80% of properties) of which the majority are private rented, with some social and affordable rented (approximately 20%) properties. These properties are generally in poor condition with a high incidence of damp and poor levels of thermal comfort.
- 2.6 There is evidence to suggest that there is higher risk of excess winter deaths and cold related illness for people living in cold homes¹
- 2.7 Hospital admission rates for respiratory and cardiac conditions are higher in this

¹ In 'The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty' report, the Marmot review team estimated the excess winter deaths in the coldest quarter of housing are almost three times as high as in the warmest quarter. This is supported by the Department of Health Report 'Winter Kills' (2010), which outlines the effect of poor housing stock on health and wellbeing.

area than the average for Leeds, both conditions being associated with living in cold, damp housing. Underlying health issues also reflect high deprivation rates in the area (with the MSOA in worst 10% nationally). Prevalence of coronary heart disease (CHD) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is linked to higher smoking rates; obesity rates and admissions for alcohol related conditions are significantly higher than for Leeds as a whole. The average life expectancy for the area is 74 years compared to a city average of 80 years.

- 2.8 During the mid to late 2000s there has been some selected demolition of poor quality and unsustainable housing stock through Regional Housing Board (RHB) funding. This has created a development site, which has been acquired by Chevin Housing Association for the provision of 21 affordable homes to be completed in 2013/14. Alongside this, £2.6m RHB funding has been used to invest in 79 mixed tenure back-to-back properties bringing them up to Decent Homes standards and improving thermal efficiency under a group repair programme.
- 2.9 The Cross Green area is also adjacent to the Council-owned site of the former Copperfields College, which presents a significant future development opportunity, which will help to further regenerate the area. Investment in the existing residential neighbourhood will offer an uplift to the area and assist in any future proposals to market the Copperfields site, which will be subject to separate reporting and approvals.
- 2.10 The **Neville Garth, Approach and Close** area (Temple Newsam ward) is dominated by Council housing. This area has not seen the same level of environmental investment as other parts of the Nevilles located to the east of Osmondthorpe Lane. Some selected demolition of unsustainable Council stock took place in the late 90's/early 2000's which has left a number of vacant grassed areas in the neighbourhood.
- 2.11 East North East Homes has completed decency work on all Council owned properties in the Nevilles, with only 10 properties having previously been sold through Right to Buy. The majority of properties meet Decent Homes standards.
- 2.12 Further work is needed to build on the investment to date in these neighbourhoods, to ensure that they are sustainable in the long term and to provide the local communities – some of the most deprived in the city - with the commitment and confidence that they will be supported through a period of major change around them in the Aire Valley.

3.0 Proposed Investment Programme

- 3.0.1 It is proposed that the Council uses funding from the Economic Initiatives Programme (allocated as part of the capital programme in February 2012) to invest in these neighbourhoods alongside the investment taking place in Aire Valley over the coming years. This will ensure that these neighbourhoods receive the environmental and housing improvements needed to make them sustainable in the long term and to support the residential amenity of residents.
- 3.0.2 The remainder of this report outlines how Council resources and external funding sources, could be channelled into a Sustainable Communities Investment Programme of capital works to meet the following objectives:

Improve the housing conditions and energy efficiency of homes in the Cross Green and Nevilles neighbourhoods
Increase the percentage of people in these neighbourhoods that are

satisfied by the quality of the environment where they live.
Increase the percentage of people who feel their homes have a positive impact on their health

3.0.3 The programme proposes the following projects in each area.

3.1 **Cross Green**

3.1.1 Investment in Cross Green will build on the success of and complement the group repair project that was completed in 2010, and the new build that has recently started on site to deliver 21 new affordable homes.

3.1.2 The proposed projects, shown at **appendix 2**, are as follows:

Retro-fitting & Facelift – To deliver a further round of improvements to approximately 180 mixed tenure properties to improve the energy efficiency of homes through group repair (includes new roofs, doors, windows, and boundary treatments) and ‘facelift plus’ (includes boundary treatments and roof insulation). External wall insulation solutions will also be considered for implementation via Green Deal/ Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding.

St Hilda’s Crescent – The acquisition of properties on this street as part of the RHB funded project has resulted in partial clearance. There is a need to either invest in the remaining properties alongside the group repair improvements and/ or create a formal development site. An options appraisal will be undertaken to determine a solution for this area of Cross Green and reported back to Executive Board during 2013.

Highways improvements & connections – Improvements to the public realm along Cross Green Lane (may include provision of parking bays, speed tables, and footpath and carriageway improvements) and maintenance and improvements to the roads within Cross Green (including resurfacing, removal/ replacement of road closure points, and options for improvements to the footbridges at Fewston Avenue and Glencoe View).

Community fund - A fund for small scale environmental & energy efficiency projects to be determined by the community. Based on previous engagement with the community, projects could include improvements to back Cautley Road/ Cross Green Crescent to clear the area and develop formal garden/ allotment plots and to alley gate to improve security.

3.1.3 These projects will all be subject to community consultation and their own approval process. If required further approvals will be sought from Executive Board on the individual projects within the programme.

3.1.4 **Nevilles (Garth, Close, Approach area)**

3.1.5 Investment to focus on environmental improvements to the greenspace, adopted highway and property boundaries. The majority of properties have already benefited from works to meet the Decent Homes standard, including energy efficiency measures such as windows, doors and insulation. However, investment will target properties that have been purchased through right to buy that require energy efficiency measures and any additional energy efficiency measures that can be identified for Council owned properties. This will be undertaken in conjunction with Green Deal and ECO.

3.1.6 Proposed projects are shown at **appendix 3** and are as follows:

Environmental works – Boundary treatments to properties and environmental improvements to green and open space.

Highways works – Potential one way system in the area to create parking bays and reduce parking on verges. This work also to include resurfacing of roads (Neville Garth, Close, Approach, Halton Moor Road and Osmondthorpe Lane).

Energy efficiency – to provide additional energy efficiency measures to properties where needed to both Council and private properties. This will be delivered in conjunction with Green Deal and energy Company Obligations (ECO).

- 3.1.7 These projects will all be subject to community consultation and their own approval process. If required further approvals will be sought from Executive Board on the individual projects within the programme.
 - 3.1.8 For all of the projects outlined above a procurement strategy will be used that maximises the use of local labour and apprenticeships so that local people further benefit from the investment in their area. This approach has been undertaken successfully for previous Group Repair projects.
 - 3.1.9 Alongside the capital investment outlined above, it is also proposed that energy efficiency advice be provided to ensure that people are using their homes efficiently and that people are obtaining the relevant fuel saving measures to reduce fuel poverty.
 - 3.1.10 In 2010 Stockholm Environmental Institute (York University) undertook an Energy Efficiency Behavioural Study in Cross Green as part of the previous group repair capital works. This study indicated that whilst improvements to homes in isolation improved energy efficiency, the benefits increased when energy advice was provided alongside the capital improvements.
 - 3.1.11 Improving the energy efficiency of homes and reducing fuel poverty will have a positive impact on the health of people living in these properties (as outlined in 2.5 above). Work will now be undertaken with colleagues in Public Health to determine whether any complementary measures in these neighbourhoods can help to address health issues associated with poor housing conditions alongside the capital improvements.
- 3.2 Investment requirement**
- 3.2.1 The total investment required from the Economic Initiatives Programme is £5million. The majority of this will be spent on projects in Cross Green with the investment in the Nevilles mainly funded through £1.3million Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
 - 3.2.2 In addition there would be complementary Highways investment of approximately £200,000 for resurfacing works across both neighbourhoods. Some private sector contributions are also anticipated for the Cross Green retrofitting and facelift project.
 - 3.2.3 Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations funds are expected to cover some of the costs for the Cross Green retrofitting and facelift project and the Nevilles energy efficiency project. The exact amount is to be determined once project details are

finalised. However, it is anticipated that this will be approximately £1.1million.

3.2.4 A full breakdown of costs is shown in section 4.4

3.3 Delivery Timescales

3.3.1 Subject to consultation, the investment programme is proposed to run between 2013 -2016. All projects will be completed within this timescale. A draft programme for delivery is shown in the table below:

| Approvals | Timescales |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Executive Board | February 2013 |
| Final sign off for projects, DCRs and authority to spend (delegated to the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods or Executive Board approvals as appropriate) | March – September 2013 |
| Projects | |
| Cross Green retro fitting and facelift sign ups | April – September 2013 |
| Cross Green Highways resurfacing | April 2013 - March 2014 |
| St Hilda's Crescent Solution | April 2013- October 2014 |
| Nevilles environmental works | April 2014 – March 2015 |
| Nevilles energy efficiency works | April – December 2014 |
| Cross Green retro fitting & facelift delivery (including sign up period) | September 2013- September 2015 |
| Nevilles highway works | January 2014 – March 2015 |
| Cross Green highway improvements & connections | April 2015 – March 2016 |
| Community Fund delivery | April 2013- March 2016 |

4.0 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation & Engagement

4.1.1 The Executive Members for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Support Services, Economy & Development, and Environment have been briefed on the proposals for the investment programme and are supportive of the projects presented in this report subject to ward member approval and consultation.

4.1.2 Ward Members for both Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Temple Newsam have been consulted on proposals and are broadly supportive of the investment, subject to further details following consultation.

4.1.3 Some of the projects listed above have been suggested by residents during previous consultation. It is proposed that detailed community consultation takes place on the proposals in both areas once Executive Board has approved the investment programme. This consultation will help to determine the details of the projects for delivery and help to target investment where it is needed most. Further information will be presented to Executive Board on the specific project details during 2013.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration has been taken into account at the earliest possible stage and an EDCI screening has been carried out and is attached at Appendix 4

4.2.2 As the programme develops with a clearer scope and agreement on the role of the Council and potential use of resources, the screening will be revisited. Managers of each constituent project will conduct project specific EDCI assessments.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The proposals are in line with priorities set out in the Housing & Regeneration City Priority Plan priorities, in particular focusing on:

Improve housing conditions and energy efficiency - Projects: Cross Green retro fitting & facelift, Nevilles energy efficiency measures

Maximise regeneration investment to increase housing choice and affordability within sustainable neighbourhoods - Projects: St Hilda's Crescent solution

Enable growth of the city whilst protecting the distinctive green character of the city (indicator: increase the percentage of people satisfied with the quality of the environment) – Projects: Back Cautley Road/ Cross Green Crescent improvements, Nevilles environmental works, Cross Green highway improvements & connections, Nevilles highway works

4.3.2 The proposals also support the Council Plan priorities for Environment & Neighbourhoods to improve energy efficiency in public and private sector homes and ensuring local neighbourhoods are clean.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The programme for investment is outlined in section 3 above. The funding requirements from various sources is as follows:

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| LCC Sustainable Communities Investment Fund | £5m |
| LCC Housing Revenue Account | £1.3m |
| LCC Highways maintenance | £0.2m |
| Green Deal / ECO | £1.1m (approximate) |
| Private contributions | £0.3m (approximate) |

TOTAL **£7.9m**

4.4.2 It is proposed that the **£5million** is allocated from the Economic Initiatives Programme (allocated as part of the capital programme in February 2012) for the delivery of the projects outlined in this report. Further reports will be presented to Executive Board in 2013 when the detail of the projects are known.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 Each project within the programme will be subject to individual approvals and any legal implications will be dealt with in this context. However, delivery of this programme of investment is supported by the general power of competence provided for in Sections 1 to 8 of the Localism Act 2011, which gives the Council "the power to do anything that individuals generally may do" subject to acting within the law. Accordingly, the general power of competence supports the establishment and implementation of the programme.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 A multi –disciplinary Programme Team has been formed, reporting directly to the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods. An initial high level risk log has been developed and more detailed risk documentation will be prepared as the programme and projects develop, to be managed via a Programme Board, chaired by the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods.
- 4.6.2 One of the key risks for delivery of the programme is private home owner buy-in and contributions to the scheme. This risk will be managed by early discussions on sign up pre-contract delivery. Additionally, as this is the second phase of delivery for the Cross Green area, homeowners will be able to view the improvements made on the group repair first phase which may encourage further sign up. The Council has an experienced team to manage this process and minimise risk.
- 4.6.2 There is also a risk associated with planning permission for the visual impact of the external wall insulation on older terraced properties, which has not been used extensively to date in Leeds. This risk is to be mitigated through early discussions with the Local Planning Authority on the implementation of this project. These discussions are already underway in seeking a solution to satisfy both planning and energy efficiency criteria.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Cross Green and Nevilles are well located to take advantage of economic opportunities in Leeds over the coming years. The neighbourhoods are popular with well engaged communities that will benefit from investment in their physical environment and homes to enable them to become sustainable places to live in the long term.
- 5.2 The Sustainable Communities Investment Programme would deliver a series of projects that target investment in these small neighbourhoods to ensure intensive intervention makes a big difference to both the physical environment and how people live in their communities. The investment in insulation and energy efficiency measures will reduce cold, making homes more healthy. Investment will have a positive impact on the wellbeing of people in these neighbourhoods who will see significant improvements to their living environment.
- 5.3 Moreover, investment will uplift the area and assist in any future proposals to market the Copperfields site, as well as the wider Aire Valley. The Council's investment in these neighbourhoods demonstrates commitment to improving these areas and ensuring long term sustainability alongside the delivery of key strategic sites in the Aire Valley.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board is asked to note the contents of the report and:
- (i) Agree the programme and project proposals for the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme for the Cross Green and the Nevilles neighbourhoods;
 - (ii) Agree the investment of £5million from the Economic Initiatives Capital Programme for the delivery of projects outlined in this report;
 - (iii) Delegate programme management to the director of Environment & Neighbourhoods and to receive further details on major projects in due course.

7 Background documents²

7.1 N/A

² The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.