



REPORT OF: Director of Neighbourhoods & Housing
MEETING: Neighbourhoods and Housing Scrutiny Board
DATE : 8th November 2006

SUBJECT : Housing Based Regeneration in Beeston and Holbeck – partnership infrastructure and funding issues

Electoral Wards Affected :	Specific Implications For :
Beeston & Holbeck City & Hunslet	Women <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled People <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of Scrutiny Board with further information, which supplements the tour of Beeston Hill and Holbeck that was undertaken and the initial report that was presented to the Board’s September meeting.
- 1.2 This report specifically picks up on the following topics from the Board’s agreed terms of reference for this investigation:-
 - Partnership infrastructure
 - Funding and resources

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Members of Scrutiny received an initial report at their September meeting. This outlined, amongst other things, statistical information on the area; gave a historical perspective to the area; provided information on recent major developments, housing investment and raised the difficulties with the scale of back-to back housing in the area.
- 2.2 As part of the Board’s agreed terms of reference for this topic, four outstanding issues remain to be considered, these being partnership infrastructure; funding and resources; complementary improvements to service and environmental factors; and the role of the private rented and private development sectors. It is proposed to

consider the first two of these issues in this report and the final two in a report to a future meeting.

3.0 Partnership Infrastructure

- 3.1 Partnership working in Beeston Hill and Holbeck goes back a long way – in the early 1990s there was a lot of effort to put together a City Challenge bid, which, though unsuccessful, showed the value of agencies and residents working together to seek to secure valuable resources. Later in that decade a bid to the Government for funding through the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Round 4 brought in over £7 million to be spent between 1998 and 2005 and as part of the allocation of that funding projects needed to evidence how they were working with other agencies to tackle particular issues. Various theme based groups were set up which helped agencies and groups not only access the funding but also witness the value of genuine partnership and complementary working. The SRB4 Programme has recently had an official evaluation published and this highlighted, under a “lessons learnt” section, the value of this approach :-

“The success.....demonstrates the importance of regular partnership group meetings. In addition to all key agencies being kept informed of progress of the regeneration programme, they provide opportunities for key developments in different work areas to be discussed and encourage cross-agency working. This is useful for many reasons, not least of which because it means that schemes funded through particular programmes are not working in isolation.”

(SRB Round 4 End of Programme and Evaluation Report)

- 3.2 Linked to, but outside the SRB4 Programme, two separate strategic partnership groups had been established. One was a group of housing partners to take forward the housing strategy and early projects and the other was a neighbourhood renewal board to work on improving service delivery to meet floor targets, given the area’s designation under the City’s Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. In November 2004 these groups merged to form the Beeston Hill and Holbeck Regeneration Partnership Board and this has been the local strategic body that has helped encourage agencies to prioritise attention on the area and bring together partners to agree how both the physical and service delivery side of the regeneration work should progress. This Partnership Board links to other networks such as the Residents’ Forum for the area, to the South Leeds District Partnership, and sends a representative to the Holbeck Urban Village Board to ensure that connections are in place at a strategic level with the developments in an important neighbouring locality.
- 3.3 A further vital aspect of the partnership infrastructure has been the network of residents’ forums and other groups that have existed in the Beeston Hill and Holbeck area. There are six neighbourhood based forums which meet and cover the majority of the area and an overarching residents’ group that takes a wider view across the whole area and which in turn sends representatives to the Partnership Board referred to at 3.2. Some of these forums were established through the regeneration work but others are of longstanding and were established in the 1990s in response to some of the issues residents were facing. In total around 500 people are contacted through these networks on a regular basis and attendance at forum meetings averages between 30 and 40 people at most meetings. In addition there are many other voluntary and community groups that meet in the area on a theme or issue basis and

it is relatively easy to make contact with these to promote events or share information. The Area Regeneration Team currently has 67 such groups on its database.

- 3.4 For some years it has been clear that many of the deep-rooted social, economic and physical issues in the area will only be addressed comprehensively by transformational change which values the contribution of local residents who are committed to the area, but also seeks to introduce major change that will bring benefits. One of the key areas of work has been to start to establish what physical developments and land use developments should be encouraged and facilitated and so in July 2003 a group of officers was established to take forward the development of a land use framework, subsequently approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance. This team of officers still meets and now comprises:-

Neighbourhoods and Housing Department – Regeneration; Environmental Health; PFI team

Development Department– Renaissance Unit; Planning; Highways

Re’new

Leeds South Homes

It has gone on to oversee consultancy studies that have advised further proposals; provide support for the Round 5 Housing PFI bid; bring forward neighbourhood action plans; co-ordinate consultation work; and keep track of key sites and developments, raising issues with the relevant agencies where there have been problems or delays.

- 3.5 A separate Housing sub-group is convened by the re’new organisation and includes representatives from Neighbourhoods and Housing Department, Leeds South Homes ALMO, Leeds Federated Housing Association and Firebird JVC (the joint venture company which is the development arm for both Leeds Federated and Unity Housing Associations). It meets every six to eight weeks to coordinate activity by the main social landlords specifically in Beeston Hill and Holbeck, to ensure sharing of information and experience, and to plan forward strategy for housing in the area (including work on public sector funding bids). It also offers a link to the broader physical regeneration activity mentioned at 3.4 so that housing plans in the area are integrated with wider regeneration proposals.
- 3.6 Whilst housing is a key area of work that requires co-ordination and progress, simply regenerating the housing stock will not bring about comprehensive change and issues such as crime, community cohesion, educational attainment, health, jobs and skills and environmental improvements all need uplifting at the same time. To assist with this a co-ordination group has been recently re-established which brings together service providers from a variety of statutory and voluntary sector backgrounds. These meetings help to keep people up to speed with physical regeneration proposals, allow information exchange and networking and provide the opportunity for innovative thinking around how to tackle issues through actively working with partners.
- 3.7 There are various time limited partnership networks that have been established to look at specific issues in the Beeston Hill and Holbeck area. Of these, one example is a stakeholders’ group that has been considering improvements in the Parkside area, which is within the regeneration area and encompasses the new facilities in and around the John Charles Centre for Sport and has focused on access and environmental issues in particular between there and Dewsbury Road, which is an industrial area. The group has brought together different officers from a variety of disciplines to work on resolving some of the issues within that locality and seek to

maximise co-ordination and resources. A further example is the group that meets to co-ordinate work on Intensive Neighbourhood Management, which, for example, has led to improved delivery of environmental services on the ground in Beeston Hill and Holbeck.

- 3.8 Particular mention should be made of the contribution of re'new leads to the work in Beeston Hill and Holbeck. The organisation has been committed to the area for a number of years and currently is involved in convening the Housing Sub Group, providing a secretarial function for the Regeneration Partnership Board, offering an input to the work of various other groups and networks, and working with Planning colleagues on longer term proposals for aspects of physical regeneration in the area. Re'new recently offered funding support to ensure a full-time planning resource for the area.
- 3.9 As the focus of part of this report is partnership working it was felt appropriate that Members of Scrutiny Board should have the opportunity to meet and discuss this issue with one of the key partner organisations in the work in Beeston Hill and Holbeck and therefore Steve Williamson, Chief Executive of re'new, has been invited to attend. Steve chaired the Regeneration Partnership Board in its initial year and is currently vice-chair, as well of course as having a citywide partnership perspective through his support for and work with the Leeds Initiative. Steve is also the area's link on the Holbeck Urban Village Board.
- 3.10 The partnership infrastructure referred to above specifically addresses issues within the defined Beeston Hill and Holbeck priority regeneration area, but of course the area is a priority and gets raised in wider partnership structures and networks and it is important to recognise this and to register some of the key forums in South Leeds where this happens, mainly through District Partnership structures, and what the impact of these are.
- 3.11 South Leeds has sought to take an inclusive approach to its District Partnership structure. The Partnership comprises of a Board made up of representatives from the statutory sector (40%), Voluntary , Community and Faith sectors(40%) and the Private sector (20%). In addition to the main board, the Partnership has a smaller officer core group, who essentially act as the engine room for the partnership. There are also a number of other local partnership groups which send reports to the District Partnership or work on the detail of agreed partnership priorities. In 2005 the Partnership produced its action plan which recognises the need to prioritise particular neighbourhoods; Beeston Hill and Holbeck is central to this. One of the key issues the Partnership has been involved in is the Intensive Neighbourhood Management programme, which seeks to improve crime and grime issues within the most problematical Super Output Areas in the city, of which 7 are within Beeston Hill and Holbeck. The most relevant sub-groups are:
- The District Housing Partnership is a partnership of key housing providers across South Leeds who consider strategic issues for the area and who liaise on approaches to addressing common problems. This group specifically worked on co-ordinating the bids that were eventually put forward to the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership.
 - The Education, Employment and Training Group is working on how to narrow the gap in respect of these issues. The group is undertaking a series of actions including seeking to develop two tightly focused action plans for Beeston Hill and Holbeck, and Middleton, Belle Isle and Hunslet which, with the assistance of funding provided by

the Learning and Skills Council, will enable individuals in those areas who are presently without work to be assisted to identify and resource their training needs. The group is also working on a programme of vocational training for young people aged 14-16 designed to motivate and enable young people to access employment in Leeds' growth industries once they leave school.

- The Health and Well Being partnership is also seeking to take a targeted approach to tackle key issues, in particular with regards to alcohol and smoking related problems, which are prevalent in Beeston Hill and Holbeck.
- The Divisional Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is the sub group of the District Partnership that addresses issues of crime reduction. It manages the South wide Community Safety Action Plan, that covers the priority issues identified by the Safer Leeds Strategy and the Area Committee's Plan. The CSP is also responsible for overseeing and guiding the work of four Tasking Groups across the wedge. The Tasking Groups are action focused and involve representatives from the key agencies involved in addressing crime in each area. The Tasking Group for Beeston, Holbeck and Hunslet includes actions to address ASB and criminal damage in the Beeston Hill and Holbeck area. Recent actions have included environmental audits and subsequent removal of bricks and rubble in order to improve the appearance of the area and to reduce incidences of criminal damage.
- Children Leeds South – officers with knowledge of Beeston Hill and Holbeck attend both full partnership and sub-group meetings. This helps in information exchange with the Interagency group for South Leeds High School; the Beeston Hill and Holbeck Children, Young People and Families Group; and the Middleton Youth Work Network. One of the officers is now chair of the Play and Leisure sub-group that will allocate the Lottery Play Fund against the Play strategy now agreed by the Partnership.

4.0 Funding and Resources

- 4.1 A study of the issue of funding and resources for a significantly deprived area like Beeston Hill and Holbeck is one that reveals massive investment needs – even if the PFI bid for nearly £90 million of credits is successful. Comments were made at the last Scrutiny Board about the need to improve facilities in the area and this is in the context of a period of five or six years when there has been funding available through a variety of sources to help with this. The previous report to Members in September underlined a specific example:-

“For truly transformational housing regeneration to occur, significant levels of investment will continue to be required for at least the next 15 years and possibly longer. As an example, financial option modelling as part of the PFI bid has indicated that £60 million will be required to regenerate the older terraced housing stock within Holbeck. This will involve selective demolition and rebuild and renovation of the remaining stock to transform the area and link to other proposals for the Matthew Murray School site and for the tower blocks. Regeneration of the area is a long term project that will need continual financial support and resources to make a difference to one of the poorest areas of the city.”

- 4.2 Public sector funding streams, however useful and necessary in kickstarting a process of change and giving both the local residents and investors confidence, will never be of sufficient levels to cover all the costs, not only of the housing, but of other infrastructure requirements such as greenspace, highways etc. There is therefore

strong consideration being given to the involvement of the private sector. A report to Executive Board in April obtained approval for sites to be included within a development agreement to establish a complementary Public Private Partnership as part of the PFI scheme. A future report will be drafted giving further details once the outcome of the PFI bid is known.

4.3 Regarding the PFI, in March 2006 the Council submitted an Expression of Interest (Eoi) proposal in response to the Government's invitation for bids to be included on the Housing PFI Round 5 programme. The Council was seeking in the order of £90m PFI credits to help fund the Eoi scheme to be supplemented by a contribution of appx. £3.1m from the proceeds of a number of development sites within the area which are owned by the Council. One of the bidding conditions was that the Council needed to demonstrate what level of capital contribution it was prepared to commit towards the scheme to offset its request for PFI credits. The above was covered in detail in a report to Executive Board on 19th April 2006. A Ministerial decision from the DCLG regarding which schemes are to be placed on the programme is still awaited. The original expectation was that a decision would be made in late July (i.e. before the summer recess).

4.4 One element of funding that has been made available to the area is through the Regional Housing Board and West Yorkshire Housing Partnership. For the period 2006-08 approximately £8 million is envisaged to be available to the area through this source. The schemes were listed in the previous report in September but in summary include:-

Beverleys, Beeston Hill (acquisition and demolition Phases 1 and 2)

Holbeck (Recreations acquisition and demolition Phase 1; Phase 2 to be agreed)

Beeston Hill Group Repair (Phases 2 and 3)

In addition there is funding through the Housing Corporation for Hird Street, Beeston Hill (7 new build houses replacing 16 to be demolished)

This is a very significant scale of investment:-

The Beverleys scheme involves the acquisition of 132 properties and the aim is to achieve a cleared site in 2007. £7.56m has been allocated from Regional Housing Board (RHB) funds for this specific project. The scheme in the Recreations in Holbeck (which gained Executive Board approval on 18th October, 2006) involves the acquisition of 53 properties and the aim is to achieve a cleared site in 2008. £2.95m has been set aside from RHB funds for this particular project.

There is a need to have the capacity to deliver against our programme commitments if we are to have credibility to support bids in future investment rounds. The Department has established a Programme Board in relation to housing investment funded through Regional Housing Board, to ensure coordination of work and effective delivery performance.

4.5 In addition to the private sector, PFI scheme and Regional Housing Board as potential sources of funding for improvements, there is a potentially important role to be played by organisations such as the Housing Corporation, English Partnerships and Yorkshire Forward. The Housing Corporation could be supportive in terms of

providing resources for registered social landlords to improve their stock in parallel with other regeneration initiatives. English Partnerships are operating in Leeds through the Allerton Bywater regeneration programme and expressed an interest in receiving further information on the Beeston Hill and Holbeck area when more definite proposals had been worked up. Finally, Yorkshire Forward has already funded some work in the area in terms of consultants' studies and other work and it is possible that further shared benefits could be developed, especially given the proximity of some of the area to Holbeck Urban Village.

- 4.6 Another issue that Members will be aware of is the rapidly approaching deadline of 2010 for bringing social rented sector housing up to decency standard. In some areas, and this is the case in some parts of Beeston Hill and Holbeck, the public sector owns enough stock in a particular neighbourhood to be a significant positive factor in potential plans for wider regeneration. Decision time is approaching where public sector housing providers will need to decide what to do with this stock and ultimately options of sale or retention may need to be made. If such social housing is sold then future comprehensive regeneration costs are significantly enhanced and could become unaffordable.
- 4.7 On a separate point, the existing and future commitment of the private rented sector in individual properties at one end of the scale, to major developers committing millions of pounds of private funding at the other, will also be crucial in ensuring that investment continues to be made to assist in the regeneration and revitalisation of the area. It is proposed that Members consider this as one element of a future report and invite a private landlord and private developer to give evidence and be interviewed.
- 4.8 One final issue with regards to funding and resources is that some staff who work on driving forward the regeneration agenda in the area are supported through external funding. It is hoped that future agreements with the private sector will lead to some of these costs being offset through one element of a partnership agreement, but this is some way down the line, so it is important that Members of Scrutiny Board acknowledge the support external funding is giving to the regeneration work and note that if future rounds of funding are not as positive then there will be budget pressures on the Council and other agencies.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This report seeks to summarise details of partnership infrastructure and provide information on funding and resources issues in relation to the Beeston Hill and Holbeck regeneration area. Partnership working has been crucial to the area's progress over recent years and will continue to be so with the work with residents being a key feature of that partnership. Funding and resources issues remain crucial to be able to deliver the level of transformational change that is being proposed for the next 10 – 15 years.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members of the Board are asked to:-

- a) Note and comment on the report in relation to section 3.0, partnership infrastructure in Beeston Hill and Holbeck

- b) Take evidence from and ask questions of Steve Williamson, Chief Executive of re'new leads on this issue
- c) Note and comment on the report in relation to section 4.0, funding and resources
- d) Agree that the focus for the next and final report will be complementary improvements to service and environmental factors and the role of the private rented and private development sectors, hopefully with evidence from two interested parties.