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Report of the Chief Regeneration Officer

Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods)

Date: 15th October 2009

Subject: EASEL Working Group - update on programme and consultation

Electoral Wards Affected:

Temple Newsam
Killingbeck and Seacroft
Gipton and Harehills
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. This report provides the Members of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) with an update on the EASEL regeneration programme.
2. The report summarizes the methods currently used to engage with local communities and sets out the future use of community consultation as part of a neighbourhood planning process. The report explains the impact the recession has had on plans for the EASEL programme and the resultant delays in the neighbourhood planning process.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 To update scrutiny Members on the current position in the EASEL programme and the approach to community consultation and engagement as part of the EASEL programme. The report responds to the agreed terms of reference topic on consultation and therefore provides details of consultations carried out with the people living in the EASEL area and opportunities available for improving communications with key stakeholders, including the public, in future.

2.0 Main Issues

2.1 Programme Update

- 2.2 Over the summer the Homes and Communities Agency announced a number of measures which aim to support the construction of new housing during the economic downturn. The Council and its partners have successfully bid for financial support to continue developing the EASEL phase 1 sites and the outcome of the remaining "Kickstart" bid is expected on or around 13th October.

- 2.3 The table below shows the current position in terms of the phase 1 sites:

			HCA funding	Status	
Council purchases	20	£2m		Purchase almost complete	2009/10
Kickstart	100	£7m	£7m	Awaiting bid announcement	2009/10 - 2010/11
EASEL Affordable Housing (Chevin)	60	£1.4m	£1.4m	Approved	2009/10 - 2010/11
LA New Build (Phase 1)	63	£7.0m	£3.5m	Approved	2010/11

Additional sites in Harehills and Halton Moor have attracted HCA funds to develop another 60 new houses. Together these will deliver a mix of tenure which uphold the principle of mixed communities which underpins the project.

2.4 Consultation and neighbourhood planning

- 2.5 As the August report outlined, a range of consultation methods were and are being used in connection with the EASEL regeneration programme. They include:

- organised community consultation events contributing to the selection of preferred EASEL partner
- reports and attendance at Area Committees and their forums;
- regular attendance at a variety of residents groups;
- liaison and attendance at board meetings for East North East Homes Ltd;
- consultation by East North East Homes Ltd on their housing management and declared clearance areas;

- exhibitions and surveys at community events such as galas;
- a community newsletter for EASEL residents;
- a website providing background information on the programme.

- 2.6 As part of the ongoing development of the Area Action Plan (as part of the Local Development Framework), Members will be aware that City Development have recently conducted consultation on changes to the AAP since the preferred options consultation in 2007. The AAP will set the spatial plan for the EASEL area providing the broad brush approach to change in the area. One of its key functions is to identify areas of change and make allocations of land for types of development for future planning applications.
- 2.7 The intention is that the detailed decisions on what changes should be made in specific smaller areas within the EASEL area will be made following the development of neighbourhood plans.
- 2.8 The council remains committed to ensure that there is adequate and effective community involvement in shaping the regeneration plans in neighbourhoods in the EASEL area. The process will be led from an urban design perspective taking account of planning policies and good design criteria. The exercise will test options for implementing changes to the design and layout of specific development sites so that they assist in the delivery of the key objectives for the EASEL area which are:
- to create sustainable mixed use communities in the EASEL area;
 - to make the EASEL area a place that people want to live and work and to tackle existing deprivation and overcome the negative perceptions of the EASEL Area; and
 - to secure the economic social and environmental well-being of the EASEL area.
- 2.9 The recession, particularly its effect on the housing market has required a review of the overall approach to delivering investment in the city and means that the council has to review the way in which this neighbourhood planning process will be conducted. As funding sources for development have been squeezed developers across the board are reassessing their investment strategies.
- 2.10 An initial discussion has taken place with Ward Members on a revised approach to neighbourhood planning and views on consultation in the light of current economic conditions would be welcomed.

3.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 3.1 There are no direct implications for council policy or governance from the delay in consultation. As plans for future consultation are developed, the policy and governance arrangements will be assessed.

4.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 4.1 Resources will need to be identified to undertake neighbourhood planning and consultation.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The recession has forced the council to radically rethink its plans for bringing investment into the EASEL area and this has delayed planned community consultation. A revised exercise focusing on cleared and key strategic sites is being developed.
- 5.2 Community consultation continues to be an important part in the EASEL programme and will be used to determine how investment is brought into neighbourhoods.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board (Environment and Neighbourhoods) are asked to note and comment on the contents of this report.