



**Report of: DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS AND HOUSING**

**Report to: SCRUTINY BOARD**

**Date: 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2006**

**Subject: EASEL REGENERATION AREA - UPDATE**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

Killingbeck and Seacroft  
Gipton and Harehills  
Temple Newsam  
Burmantofts and Richmond Hill  
City & Hunslet

**Specific Implications For:**

Ethnic minorities	<input type="checkbox"/> N
Women	<input type="checkbox"/> N
Disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/> N
Narrowing the Gap	<input type="checkbox"/> Y

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In 2004 the Council with its ALMO partners set out to attract a development partner or partners to assist in producing and delivering a strategic vision for East and South East Leeds that would bring about transformational and beneficial change to this part of the city and help address a number of deep –seated social –economic and environmental problems. Housing market renewal is being used as a central platform to help drive this change with a view to creating mixed sustainable communities.
- A competitive procurement process has been undertaken and detailed negotiations are ongoing with Bellway plc who have been appointed as Preferred Bidder. Since the procurement process has not yet ended there are limitations on what information can be released and shared at this point in time.

- If all goes well with the negotiations with Bellway over the next 2 -3 months the expectation is that during 2007 a start will be made on the initial housing sites in Gipton and Seacroft and the joint venture will be set up and become operational.
- As part of the process of setting up the joint venture a Regeneration Investment Plan will need to be prepared. This will set out what the Council and Bellway will be particularly committed to delivering within the EASEL regeneration area over the first 5 years.

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Board members what the EASEL regeneration initiative is trying to achieve, what we should be concentrating on, where we have got to, what next and issues that need to be considered by the Council

## **2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The project has been underway since Executive Board gave approval to procure a partner to regenerate this area of the city in January 2004. Following a competitive process Bellway plc were granted Preferred Bidder status by the Council in December 2005. Since January of this year a period of detailed clarifications and negotiations with Bellway have taken place. The procurement process has not yet finished.
- 2.2 The project has been designed in two interconnected phases and the procurement process has been designed and executed in evaluating proposals for the project as a whole. Phase 1 of the project consists of 8 sites (Gipton and Seacroft) that would be contracted through a Strategic Development Agreement with the private sector partner with subsequent phases (85% of the project) subject to a commercial agreement as part of setting up a joint venture between the Council and the private sector partner. The outcome of the Phase 1 Strategic Development Agreement negotiations with Bellway plc were reported to Executive Board in July 2006.

## What are we trying to achieve?

2.3 The key objectives of the EASEL regeneration project is to create sustainable mixed communities with all that this entails including mixed tenure and people with mixed incomes. It is also about increasing aspirations and choice for people who already live in the area as well as attracting new people to live, work and invest in the area. A central theme of what the project is seeking to achieve is uplifting quality for example in housing and the public realm as well as the design of buildings and spaces. A fundamental aim is to create identity and distinctiveness – place making which helps to build a strong and positive image of the area.

## What should we be concentrating on?

2.4 It is essential that we concentrate on just a few but absolutely critical elements that will not only produce tangible and lasting benefits but also help underpin and contribute to achieving the key regeneration objectives for the area such as creating a new and sustainable housing market

2.5 The aspects in particular to focus upon are – **Education** - attainment and provision of new schools; **Employment** - training and skills – construction jobs and other job opportunities – supporting (social) enterprises and entrepreneurs – providing access and links to jobs being created as part of the regeneration of Aire Valley Leeds; **Environment** – improving the quality of the public realm including Greenspace – enhancing the Wykebeck Valley.

## Where have we got to in finding a suitable private sector partner?

2.6 In September 2006 Executive Board granted an Additional Negotiation Period of 16 weeks (end of February 2007) to deal with matters that remain outstanding from the Preferred Bidder letter – conclude negotiations on the Strategic Development Agreement regarding the 8no. Phase 1 sites and conclude negotiations on the Joint Venture in terms of financial and legal matters.

## What next?

2.6 Work now needs to progress on producing a Regeneration Investment Plan. This will set out in broad terms what commitments the Council intends to make (which will include financial implications) in terms of supporting and helping to achieve its

regeneration programme aims and objectives for the EASEL area initially for the first 5 years and more generally in the longer term.

This will be subject to a report to Executive Board in January 2007 which will seek approval to the Plan.

### **3.0 ISSUES FOR THE COUNCIL**

3.1 There are some immediate issues that the Council faces. These are:

- Finalising the negotiations which is an intense and extremely demanding phase of the procurement process;
- The preparation of the Regeneration Investment Plan from across the Council;
- Ensuring that local communities are given an adequate opportunity to influence and shape the regeneration initiative
- Raising awareness of the project and actively promoting it at a local, regional and national level and also developing good communication throughout the authority regarding the challenges and unique opportunities presented by this innovative initiative.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Members of the Board are asked to note the contents of the report.