
REGENERATION OF PARKSIDE 2010/12

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Bill Dixon,
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the proposed details of the Parkside Regeneration Programme following further resident consultation, and, to confirm the level of resources required to deliver the improvements.

Summary

2. On 2 March 2010 a report was presented to Cabinet which outlined some of the improvements proposed for Parkside but also recognised that further consultation was required with residents to agree the detail of the proposed programme. The outcome of the additional consultation is presented later in this report but the fundamental issues were in respect of the proposal to convert up to 66 x 1 bed flats into 33 x 3 bed family homes and the nature of any external improvements. The proposed conversion of 1 bed flats would provide a better mix of available affordable housing to meet specific identified housing need and reduce the concentration of 1 bed flats which are difficult to manage and sustain.
3. Within the Parkside Regeneration Programme it is proposed to provide dropped kerbs and hard standings to reduce incidences of vehicle damage, and provide a safer environment for pedestrians. To compliment these improvements there is also a commitment to examine traffic calming options.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that the proposals to regenerate Parkside are approved and options for traffic calming on Wordsworth Road are explored and agreed locally with ward Members and residents within the scope of the overall budget of £3.3M for the period 2010/12.

Reason

5. The recommendation is supported as Parkside has been identified in accordance with housing stock condition information as in need of intervention to maintain Decent Homes standards, and, to help sustain the estate in the long term through targeted remodelling and improvements.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Background Papers

- (i) Cabinet Report 2 March 2010
- (ii) Tenant Management Board Report 15 September 2010

Alan Glew - 388202

S17 Crime and Disorder	The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is considered that some of the improvement works identified in this report will be beneficial in reducing crime.
Health and Well Being	The Parkside Regeneration Programme will improve the thermal efficiency of homes and provide a safer external environment improving safety and well being.
Sustainability	The long term sustainability of Parkside will be assured through selective conversion of some 1 bed flats to provide a local housing offer which is more in keeping with identified local housing need.
Diversity	The conversion of a selection of 1 bed flats will enable and encourage a more diverse population in Parkside.
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	Council tenants.
Budget and Policy Framework	The Parkside programme is part of the annual Housing Investment Programme 2010/11 which is underpinned by the Medium Term Financial Plan.
Key Decision	Approval for the release of £1.1M for the first phase (2010/11) of the proposed regeneration of Parkside was approved by Cabinet on 2nd March 2010. This is not a key decision because approval within this report is only sought for the detail of the proposed Parkside regeneration programme which affects Park East ward.
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this represents an urgent matter, in order that housing capital expenditure for 2010/11 can be accelerated with immediate effect.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Parkside Regeneration programme contributes to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy through each of the theme areas.
Efficiency	The Parkside Regeneration Programme contributes

	<p>towards the sustainability of the housing stock and reduces revenue costs by “designing out” areas of anti-social behaviour. Improvements also assist tenants to benefit from greater thermal comfort in their homes coupled with reduced energy consumption through insulation works.</p>
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MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. Members agreed the Council's 2010/11 Capital Medium Term Financial Plan on 25 February 2010, including the Housing Capital Investment Programme. Members also agreed the annual Housing Investment Programme 2010/11 on 2 March 2010 which included the first phase of the proposed Parkside Regeneration Programme.
6. A major improvement programme has commenced in Parkside. Following further resident and ward Member engagement and the completion of individual property surveys in October 2010, the proposed details of the programme can now be outlined. Each of the 180 properties included within the improvement area, as shown in **Appendix 1**, will be assessed for replacement kitchens, bathrooms, and heating systems (including rewiring). Environmental works will include boundary treatments such as new fencing, and, work to external pathways where required.
7. In addition tenants will be offered the opportunity to have dropped kerbs and hard standings installed to provide off road parking where this is practical to do so. In localised areas of Parkside where this may not be practical, alternative off road parking arrangements will be provided such as lay-bys. Traffic calming options will be explored with ward Members and residents for Wordsworth Road in conjunction with the Highways department. Up to 66 x 1 bed flats will be converted to provide 33 x 3 bed family homes and the Council will work closely with any displaced tenants and their friends and relatives to ensure that the transition is managed effectively with as little inconvenience as is possible. The intention is to retain a number of 1 bed flats in Parkside as there is still demand for this accommodation

Aims and objectives of the Parkside Regeneration Programme

8. The aims and objectives of the Parkside Regeneration Programme are:
 - (a) To meet the increasing expectations of the Council's tenants.
 - (b) To ensure that Darlington continues to meet an enhanced Decent Homes Standard.
 - (c) To improve the thermal comfort, safety and well being of local authority tenants.
 - (d) Provide a cyclical programme of improvement works.
 - (e) To provide a long term sustainable community for Parkside.

Parkside Regeneration programme Management

9. The programme is managed within the overall annual Housing Investment Programme 2010/11 and will be similarly managed subject to a Cabinet report early in 2011. Due to the nature of improvement works scheduled, there will be some inconvenience and disruption to tenants but this will be minimised through careful planning and individual home visits. There is a considerable financial commitment by the Council in delivering the programme but the commitment has been agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Outcome of Consultation

10. The proposed programme is in line with Housing Business Plan priorities as agreed with tenants during the stock option appraisal process, and is aligned with the priorities for investment that have been identified since that time. A report was agreed and approved by the Tenants Board in respect of the annual Housing Investment Programme 2010/11 on 10 February 2010. The annual housing investment priorities follow a strict cycle of replacement and renewal as agreed with the Tenants Board.
11. An opportunity was taken earlier in the year to pilot a 2 x 1 bed flat conversion when first and ground floor flats became vacant at 50-52 Wordsworth Road through the natural turnover of properties in the Parkside area. When the pilot project was completed creating a new 3 bed family home, residents had the opportunity to visit the property to help inform their views about extending this pilot project to other areas of Parkside. A consultation meeting coordinated in partnership with representatives from the local resident's association and Tenants Board was held at Tennyson Gardens on 1 September 2010. The meeting was held between 4-7pm to allow for any tenants who may be working during the day to attend. In addition, tenants were invited to express their views and ask questions about the proposals outside of the meeting if they wished to do so.
12. Following the conclusion of the meeting, and, analysis of the results, a report was taken to the Tenants Board on 15 September 2010. The Tenants Board wholeheartedly approved the proposed plans to regenerate Parkside and were keen to be engaged in further consultation in respect of traffic calming options for Wordsworth Road. A commitment was given to write to all current tenants occupying 1 bed flats to canvass their views about whether they would wish to be considered for a move and to notify them of the nature of any assistance that we could provide to facilitate a move. Any displaced tenants expressing a wish to move would be entitled to statutory home loss payments and disturbance costs (if they have been resident for a period of 12 months or more) which would cover any costs associated with being relocated elsewhere.