

Leicester
City Council

WARD : NORTH BRAUNSTONE

Cabinet

15th January 2001

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR WEBSTER ROAD/ WELLINGER WAY

Report from the Director of Housing

1. Purpose of Report and Summary

This report seeks approval to consult with local residents on the future of the Webster Road and Wellinger Way area in North Braunstone. Please see the plan attached, the area is shown edged black. The area has suffered from low demand that has led to an increasing number of empty properties, which is blighting the area and affecting adjoining areas.

The Council had planned to install double glazed windows into these properties in January, which has been suspended pending the outcome of consultation. Consultation has been taking place since 12 July with resident representatives and Braunstone Community Association and it is now necessary to formally consult with all residents.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that consultation takes place with local residents on the options for the future of the area, with the outcome reported to March Cabinet.

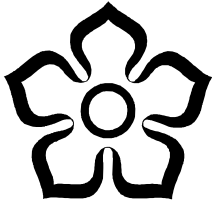
3. Financial & legal implications

During the last few years and over the coming years there are implications for the Housing Revenue Account for the cyclical maintenance that is required, together with the vandalism, damage and repair of these empty properties. The cost of cyclical maintenance and vandalism is **£900k**. The option for demolition would cost approx. **£1.5 million** which includes homeless, disturbance allowance etc, acquiring ex Right to buy properties and demolition of 278 properties. It is estimated that rent loss would be largely offset by income from other void properties being filled by rehoused tenants, and by savings in management costs.

Initial estimates suggest that the cleared site could produce a capital receipt in excess of demolition and relocation costs.

Also, the Subsidy impact of demolishing the 278 properties or transferring to a Housing Association would be :-

- (i) annual revenue savings (via reduced negative subsidy) of £275,000, offset by :-
- (ii) reduced capital resources (via a lower Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) element of Subsidy) of £136,000 per annum



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Leader's Briefing
Cabinet Meeting

18th December 2000
15th January 2001

REPORT ON THE OPTIONS FOR WEBSTER ROAD/ WELLINGER WAY NORTH BRAUNSTONE

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Background

- 1.1 The majority of the housing stock on North Braunstone was modernised as part of the Council's housing capital programme.

The area shown edged black on the attached map did not benefit from the programme due to severe cuts in housing allocation in the 1980's and the early 1990's.

The housing indicated therefore requires urgent work to voids, windows and internal improvements. This has resulted in continual deterioration above that of the rest of the estate, and as the area is less desirable it currently has out of 278 properties, 45 are vacant. If works improve the fabric of the building it does not address the issue of low demand.

- 1.2 There are four shops in the area; two of which have been sold and one of the sold properties is currently being rented out to New Deal. Of the two remaining shops, one is tenanted until October 2001 and the other is currently being considered for purchase by New Deal for community use.
- 1.3 Discussions have taken place with tenants' representatives in the area on possible options. Options include investment in the stock and possible demolition. Demolition would leave the site grassed until the area would be suitable for redevelopment.
- 1.4 The Council has a well established policy of concentrating its capital resources on those properties which have repair costs of less than £10k each and are of a nature and in an area where they can be let. A very similar situation exists in Beaumont Leys where consultation is currently taking place for the option of demolition of 107 properties.

- 1.5 The view of the tenants is paramount in this process and the Council have been working with tenants and New Deal since a public meeting on 12 July and will continue to work with tenants and the Braunstone Community Association (BCA) to improve the area. At present BCA are opposed to the demolition of the stock and that New Deal money can be used for developing these properties unless they are transferred to a Housing Association.
- 1.6 Council officers so far have been unable to find a Housing Association which would be prepared to take on the empty properties in this area, even with financial input from New Deal. It is considered that this is due to the lack of Housing Corporation funding for New Deal areas and low demand. Until demand generally increases in North Braunstone even if these properties could be developed, there are concerns that it would mostly lead to transfers from other parts of Braunstone and thereby transfer the void problem elsewhere. Nevertheless officers of the Council and BCA will continue to look for a Housing Association which might take on these properties and tenants views will be sought on this possibility.
- 1.7 Consultation is now proposed of all the residents in the area subject to Cabinet approval. All residents will be individually interviewed by Housing staff on the key options available that appear feasible. The results of the survey will be reported back to Cabinet in March.

2. Equal Opportunities Implications

Any investment in the area will be required to address anti social behaviour, and provide homes for those in priority need.

3. Sustainable and Environmental Implication

Any improvements to the area will be dovetailed into creating sustainable communities under the New Deal for Communities.

4. Crime and Disorder Implications

The area is subject to some anti-social behaviour and it is anticipated that sustainable investment would alleviate many problems.

5. Details of Consultation

All residents will be surveyed.

6. Aims and Objectives of the Housing Department

This report meets the Committees overall Quality of Life Aim for the Department, a decent home within the reach of every citizen of Leicester, and within that Key Objective 1, to improve the condition of Leicester's housing stock and resolve unfitness in all sectors; and Key Objective 2, to enable all the citizens of Leicester to find a home which suits their needs.

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Background Papers

Files held in the development team.

8. Author of this Report

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