

**SPECIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**3 AUGUST 2005**

**CALL-IN:**

**BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN  
INNER MIDDLESBROUGH**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. To allow members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) the opportunity to review a decision made at the Executive meeting on 20 July 2005, in accordance with the Authority's Call-In Procedure.

**EXECUTIVE DECISION – 20 July 2005**

2. At the Executive meeting held on 20 July 2005, consideration was given to a report titled 'Building Sustainable Communities in Inner Middlesbrough – The Way Forward'.
3. At this meeting, the report (**Appendix A**) sets out the vision for Middlesbrough's older housing areas for the next 15 years. The vision is based on the work carried out during the past 15 months by the Council's Consultants and modified in the light of recent consultation.
4. In doing so, the Executive ordered that:
  - i. The proposed Final Vision, as outlined in paragraph 44 of the submitted report, as a basis of a strategy for the future of Middlesbrough's Older Housing Areas, be adopted.
  - ii. That the proposed Final Vision be used as the basis for bidding for funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and other sources.
  - iii. That approval be given to the preparation of detailed proposals for a number of related activities including:
    - preparation of Area Development Frameworks for the first phase of the redevelopment.

- development of a consultation strategy
- preparation of a business plan
- compulsory landlord registration scheme
- review of primary education provision across the area
- development of a range of support mechanisms, and
- development partner procurement

This may include the appointment of specific consultants to work in depth with Council officers and local communities.

- iv. That a review of the financial assistance available, such as MiddRAS, with a view to bringing forward a scheme of financial support for those affected by the proposals in the proposed Final Vision, be approved.
- v. That the development of a delivery strategy, including the establishment of a dedicated team of officers and support workers to provide a high level of assistance to local communities, be approved. The precise make-up of such a team would need to be determined after further consideration.
- vi. That consideration of a further report detailing the introduction of a neighbourhood management project for part or all of the areas, be approved.
- vii. That the principle of advance voluntary acquisition of appropriate property, if funds became available prior to April 2006, be approved.
- viii. That an investigation of the development of an appropriate regeneration vehicle to act as an agent for the project and to bring forward an appropriate proposal for consideration, be approved.
- ix. That a separate consultation exercise with the owners and occupiers of the houses in Wilton Street, be approved, before deciding the future course of action with respect to those houses.
- x. It be noted that a further report on partnership, consultation and engagement will be presented to the Executive by October 2005.
- xi. That market value would be given to all house owners.
- xii. That a residents' liaison group be established, on which Father Holland will be a member.
- xiii. That a residents' charter be produced.
- xiv. That the ongoing processes ensure that there was a focus on owner-occupiers and the elderly, who were at all times treated with dignity.
- xv. That officers ensure that all people affected by the proposals, receive individual interviews.
- xvi. That the proposals be subject to a further urgent report on progress made with the funding bid.

5. The decisions were supported by the reasons set out in paragraph 116 of the report at Appendix 1 which are detailed as follows:

- i. To give a clear lead in establishing a long term strategy for the older housing areas, giving investment confidence both in stable areas, and also in redevelopment areas where investment capital will increase.
- ii. Only by demonstrating a clear and achievable strategy will the Council be able to access additional ODPM and other funding.
- iii. There will be an ongoing need to develop, in consultation with local communities, a clear programme of action to allow change to take place. This action will embrace a number of different activities and each must be given proper and appropriate consideration. In some cases, additional support will be needed, both to contribute specialist knowledge, but also to ensure that project targets are met.

- iv. Financial tools will be an important component. Existing policies must be reviewed prior to establishing an appropriate policy for use in the future.
  - v. To support local communities throughout periods of change.
  - vi. To provide a mechanism whereby all the varying elements of service provision can be co-ordinated in a clear and beneficial way.
  - vii. During the next few months, the Council may begin negotiation for property acquisition. It may be important for owners to be able to conclude negotiations within certain timescales, therefore the early use of available funds will facilitate the process.
  - viii. To ensure the most beneficial delivery mechanism is put into place.
6. In accordance with the Constitution, such decision would of come into effect on 1 August, five clear working days after publication of the decision, should it not have been subject to the Call-In Procedure.

### **CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

7. The Call-In Procedure allows Members the opportunity to Call-In a decision for scrutiny by the OSB which was made by:
- (a) The Executive;
  - (b) An individual Member of the Executive;
  - (c) A Committee of the Executive;
  - (d) A key decision made by an officer with delegated authority from the Executive;
  - or
  - (e) Under Joint Arrangements.
8. The Call-In Procedure may only be implemented if so requested by any five Members of the Council and upon receipt of any such request by the Proper Officer before the end of the third working day after the making of that decision.
9. Following the Building Sustainable Communities in Inner Middlesbrough key decision taken by the Executive on 20 July 2005, two requests have been received, supported by the appropriate numbers of Members to Call-In such decision, in accordance with the Call-In Procedure.
10. Throughout this Special Meeting of the OSB, Members will have the opportunity to review such decision. If, having considered the decision the OSB may refer it back to the decision-making body for re-consideration, setting out in writing the nature of their concerns.
11. If the decision is referred, then a further Executive meeting will be held for the Executive to re-consider the decision within ten further working days, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.
12. If the recommendations of the OSB are not accepted in full, then the Executive should notify the OSB and give reasons for not accepting the recommendations.

## REASONS GIVEN FOR THE CALL-IN

13. Summarised below are the reasons given to the Authority's Proper Officer which are considered the key issues that initiated the Call-In Procedure. As two requests were received containing different reasons they are individually presented below:

### Reasons from first request

- (a) The proposal will decimate an entire community within central Middlesbrough. Removing 37 streets and affecting 4000 residents directly and many thousands more indirectly.
- (b) The proposals will destroy the historic character of Central Middlesbrough.
- (c) The consultation process was fundamentally flawed leaving most residents unaware of the demolition proposal until July 2005.
- (d) Lack of individual engagement with affected households to give direct and independent advice on valuation and re-location options.
- (e) As so many residents are opposed to these plans the Council should pursue alternative funding which would enable the renovation of these homes and maintain the heritage of central Middlesbrough.
- (f) To lead a Policy change which reverses the emphasis of demolition of homes in favour of renovation and maintaining the community.

In addition to the reasons presented above a further submission (**Appendix B**) was received to support the case for calling in this decision.

### Reasons from second request

- (g) Smaller demolition zones in more than one of the six areas would be more likely to overcome the mismatch of housing supply and demand in other areas instead of the proposed large scale demolition zone only in Gresham area.
- (h) The Strategy does not ensure that, in each area, selective refurbishment of houses would be carried out before demolition.
- (i) It is not clear that the proposed strategy is financially achievable.
- (j) A detailed analysis of empty houses in each of the six areas be carried out to determine the scale of demolition (if any ) is required to overcome the mismatch in the supply and demand for older terraced housing.

## REVIEW OF THE BUILDING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

14. To assist members of the OSB to review the decision made by the Executive in relation to the provision of Sustainable Communities, the following key witnesses will be in attendance during this Special Meeting:

- (a) Director of Regeneration – (to present the background to the report presented to the Executive Meeting held on 20 July 2005);
- (b) Executive Member for Economic Regeneration and Culture (to present how the decision was reached); and
- (c) The Members who initiated the Call-In requests (to present their views and concerns with regard to decision made by the Executive).

### PROPOSED CALL-IN TIMETABLE

15. To ensure the Call-In Procedure is adhered to, the following Call-In Timetable is as outlined below:

MEETING	DATE/TIME	PURPOSE
Special Meeting - Overview and Scrutiny Board	3 August 2005	To review the decision taken by the Executive on 20 July 2005, in accordance with the Call-In Procedure.
Special Executive Meeting	TBA	To re-consider the decision
Overview and Scrutiny Board	6 Sept 2005	To notify the OSB of the reasons for not accepting the OSB recommendations (if applicable).

### RECOMMENDATION

16. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board consider the content of this report, to enable the Call-In Procedure to be adhered to.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report::

- (a) Middlesbrough Council's Constitution / Call-In Procedure.
- (b) Middlesbrough Council's Scrutiny Handbook 2004/05.

### Contact Officers:

Peter Clark – Senior Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Policy Directorate  
 Jon Ord – Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Policy Directorate  
 Telephone: 01642 729708 / 729707 (direct line)