

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview &Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 20th January, 2011

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WARD(S): Britwell

PART I **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

BRITWELL & HAYMILL REGENERATION – PROJECT UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

To advise the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the latest position regarding the regeneration project and to outline the next steps to achieve the successful regeneration of the area.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Committee is requested to note the progress on delivery of the Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Project.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**
- **Adding years to Life and Life to years**
- **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
- **A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play**
- **Prosperity for All**

The Britwell and Haymill Regeneration Project is the Council's response to the identified needs of the area which suffers from higher levels of deprivation, illness, unemployment and lower educational attainment. The area also contains some of the poorest quality social housing in the borough, the improvement of which is beyond the Government's basic decent homes programme. Accordingly a successful regeneration programme will contribute to each of the above Community Strategy priorities.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications contained within this report and determination of the detailed cost and funding arrangements for the entire project are still some way off however the original provision of £100,000 revenue and £2M capital set aside to develop proposals to outline planning stage has yet to be fully committed. The negotiations with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) continue positively and any funding secured from that agency will accelerate the delivery of the regeneration proposals.

(b) Risk Management

The regeneration of Britwell and Haymill will involve substantial capital and revenue investment from the Council and other third parties. The phase 1 re-provision of around 25 existing commercial units and approximately 75 residential units within a densely populated area will require exceptional project management. Risk management will be embedded within the project plan and where necessary the Council will call upon specialist consultants to ensure that detailed advice and guidance is available.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

As the scheme develops the legal requirements will become clearer but at this stage Members need to be aware that if the development refurbishment are to take place on Council owned land, public procurement procedure will need to be followed. If the land is to be disposed of then the Council's disposal policy will be followed.

(d) Race Relations Amendments Act Implications

The future determination of detailed plans for the regeneration of Britwell and Northborough will be subject to equalities impact assessments and the replacement of commercial and residential units will be required to meet both Planning and Building Control obligations with regard to disabled access. At this stage however there are no direct implications explicit in this report.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Since the last update report in April there has been a widely publicised and major contraction of the Government's commitment to future levels of public expenditure and capital investment. Regrettably this has had a negative effect on the delivery of the regeneration project, not in terms of its long term viability but in the delays brought about as each Government department reviews its priorities and expenditure commitments.
- 5.2 When outline planning consent was granted in March 2010 the project team expected to move immediately into the procurement phase through which preferred development partners would be engaged to deliver both the retail and residential developments highlighted in phase 1. Although the retail development would not have required any funding from the Council and indeed could have resulted in the production of a sizeable capital receipt (ring fenced to fund the improvements sought to the Kennedy Park landscaping and infrastructure) it has not been possible to procure a partner because, quite understandably, no retail developer would be currently interested in the investment potential of the new facility until there was some certainty over the deliverability of the housing regeneration which would bring with it the population to make the shops profitable.
- 5.3 Therefore, progress on the scheme remains dependent upon the funding of the housing development of 71 affordable rent homes on the north-west end of the park. In other circumstances it might have been possible to build the home for market sale rather than for affordable rent however this is not an option in this case as the local, regional and national property market is already depressed and any sales at this stage would be significantly undervalued and would not represent best value in terms of utilising the Council's assets. Secondly the majority of the proposed homes on Kennedy Park are required to be built for affordable rent in order to allow the

decanting of the substandard housing currently existing in Wentworth Avenue and Marunden Green.

- 5.4 Consequently, the scheme remains dependent upon a capital injection of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and for the last six months officer's efforts have been concentrated on discussions with the agency to determine the availability of funding both within this year and successive financial years which are of course affected by the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR10) announced by the Government last October. Discussions have been further complicated by a review of the HCA structure, management and resources by the new Government and this has in turn lead to a hesitancy over not only what funding will be available from April 2011 onwards but also where the HCA will be based and what its functions will have.
- 5.5 Fortunately, in the meantime local representatives of the HCA have confirmed that the project remains the highest priority for investment across the whole South East region (albeit that this region is soon to be subsumed within the South West and Eastern regions) and officers remain confident that some funding will be secured in the current year and this in turn will act as a level for further funding in future years.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The regeneration project remains a corporate priority for the Council and a funding priority for the HCA. Although we have been unable to make much progress in the last six months towards detailed planning of the project, this is due to national and regional issues and no lack of effort on the part of the project team. It is worth reiterating that the delay is due to the restructuring and reorganisation of the HCA and hence the absence of a bidding process to secure funds rather than a negative decision or the lack of funds available.