

Discussion Paper for the North Sighthill Regeneration Project: Progress update and proposals for community engagement

South West Neighbourhood Partnership

20 March 2008

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform the South West Neighbourhood Partnership of the aims and progress of the North Sighthill regeneration project.
- 1.2 To agree mechanisms for engaging with both the community and the Neighbourhood Partnership during the masterplanning and redevelopment of the estate.
- 1.3 To propose reporting mechanisms between the South West Neighbourhood Partnership and any relevant groups formed to contribute to the regeneration of North Sighthill.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The re-housing stage of the regeneration project in North Sighthill has been very successful to date, exceeding the projected timescales for providing residents with alternative accommodation. If the current pace of re-housing continues and the housing supply allows, there may be scope to further accelerate the timetable.
- 2.2 Broomview House is scheduled for demolition during the summer of 2008.
- 2.3 The masterplanning and redevelopment stages will require maximum engagement with as many members of the community as possible, including hard to reach groups such as the elderly and the young unemployed. It is proposed that a 'North Sighthill Development Group' is set up to achieve this, as a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Partnership. The proposed 'Development Group' should have a significant role in influencing the masterplanning process, development options and outcomes. A progress report will be submitted to the Neighbourhood Partnership on an annual basis.

3 Main report

Context

- 3.1 In November 2006, the City of Edinburgh Council identified 5 areas for demolition affecting a total of 1,746 homes across the city in Pennywell, North Sighthill, Gracemount High Flats, Leith Fort and Royston/Wardieburn. Initially, 367 of the properties identified for demolition were in North Sighthill, comprising Hermiston Court, Weir Court and Glenalmond Court. A further 82 low-rise flats were included in the demolition programme in October 2007 by the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, after consultation with residents in these blocks.
- 3.2 The Council has two strategic objectives: to address the city's shortage of good quality, affordable housing and to bring all Council houses up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, a national government requirement, by 2015.
- 3.3 North Sighthill is the largest regeneration site (4.4 hectares) owned by the Council within the South West Neighbourhood Partnership Area.

Programme

- 3.4 The aim of the regeneration project is to redevelop the North Sighthill estate into a sustainable, mixed community situated within the wider mixed use North Sighthill neighbourhood. The estate consists of 451 flats, (4 high rise blocks and 7 low rise blocks), a community centre, library, 4 shop units and areas of public realm. Redevelopment of the site will contribute to the provision of good quality affordable housing for Edinburgh.
- 3.5 The current project approved by the Council for North Sighthill has 3 goals:
- To re-house the residents of the high and low rise blocks by 2010/11 (see Table 1);
 - To demolish the high and low rise residential blocks and clear the site by 2015/16;
 - To masterplan the redevelopment of the site during 2008/09, taking account of and building on the previous masterplanning work undertaken for the area.
- Annual monitoring reports are submitted for approval to the Council's Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, with a full review in 2008/09.
- 3.6 A 'Draft Development Brief' for the wider area of Napier University, Stevenson College and the North Sighthill estate was approved for consultation purposes by the Council's Planning Committee (October 2007). The consultation period ended on 11th January 2008. The responses to the proposals of the development brief are presently being considered by the Head of Planning & Strategy prior to presenting a finalised development brief to the Planning Committee later in the year.
- 3.7 In the meantime, discussions are continuing with relevant parties about the regeneration of the community centre, library, shops and public realm areas in line with the Council's draft development brief proposals for the wider North Sighthill area. Agreeing a preferred option for re-provision of community facilities and shops is an important consideration for the development brief.
- 3.8 If the current pace of re-housing continues the Council may consider further consultation with residents on bringing forward the re-housing and demolition programme of the other high rise blocks (Weir Court and Glenalmond Court).

Progress

- 3.9 The Council's South West Local Office has now progressed successfully into the second phase of re-housing. Residents of Broomview House, and around half of the residents from Hermiston Court, have already been moved into new homes. The first phase of re-housing involved moving all tenants from the 84 properties in Broomview House, with the majority accepting council tenancies in West Edinburgh (see Appendix 1). Former residents of Broomview House have reported high levels of satisfaction with their new homes.
- 3.10 SafeDem Ltd has been appointed as the contractor for the demolition of Broomview House. They are currently soft-stripping the building and seeking to maximise the recycling of fittings and materials. Demolition is scheduled for summer 2008.
- 3.11 Residents in Weir Court and Glenalmond Court have been advised of the Council decision to change the order of re-housing for the high rise blocks, so that Weir will begin in 2009 and Glenalmond in 2010. Consultation was carried out with the residents of the low-rise blocks, resulting in the decision to bring the re-housing of the low-rise blocks forward, to commence in 2010. Residents were advised of this decision in December 2007. Progress with re-housing will be reviewed later this year and the rate of re-housing will inform the final programme.

Table 1: Current schedule for re-housing and demolition:

| Block | Re-housing begins | Demolition scheduled |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Broomview House | 2006 | 2008/9 |
| Hermiston Court | 2007 | 2012/13 |
| Weir Court | 2009 | 2012/13 |
| Glenalmond Court | 2010 | 2012/13 |
| Low-rise | 2010 | 2015/16 |

- 3.12 Drop-in sessions to give information and advice about the re-housing process were held for the residents of Broomview House and Hermiston Court during 2006 and 2007. These ended in December 2007 as attendance had started to decline. Staff from the South West Local Office are currently conducting one-to-one interviews with all tenants due to be re-housed, to ensure their personal details are up to date.
- 3.13 Property owners in all blocks have been invited to make an appointment with the Council's Regeneration Team to discuss their housing options and the purchase and valuation process which the Council would follow to buy their property. Approximately three quarters of the owners in the area have already had meetings with regeneration staff. Owners in Hermiston Court have also had valuations carried out by the Council's Asset Management Team which is the first step to begin the process of purchasing their properties.

Partnership working and community engagement

- 3.14 The Regeneration Team is consulting with internal representatives from Children & Families, Culture & Leisure, Libraries, Planning & Strategy and Parks to ensure that a broad view is taken of the development of the whole area and its facilities.
- 3.15 The Council will continue to seek the participation of members of the community in the regeneration project, both within the North Sighthill estate and adjacent areas. Agencies representing the interests of different groups within the area will also have opportunities to contribute.
- 3.16 Discussions and consultation with the community have already taken place through the North Sighthill Liaison Group (NSLG) and with the local shop owners. These have been primarily about the re-housing and demolition processes and management matters. A consultation event was also held in November 2007 to seek views on the Council's 'Draft Development Brief', the demolition programme for Broomview House and the re-provisioning of community facilities on the site. Feedback was given to residents of North Sighthill after the consultation event and this will continue throughout the programme for any further events held.
- 3.17 As the Council is now progressing to the masterplanning and redevelopment of the area, a more structured engagement with the whole community is proposed. Ideas about how to do this effectively have been explored with the North Sighthill Residents Association (NSRA) and the Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF).
- 3.18 It is proposed to set up a 'North Sighthill Development Group' with representatives drawn from the local estate (NSRA, library, community centre and shops); adjacent neighbours (health centre, fire station, Napier University, Stevenson College and Parks) and the wider community (Community Councils, police, schools and interested stakeholders). Representation from the South-West Local Office and the Regeneration Team would also be included on the group. This group would meet regularly with the developer that is eventually selected to undertake the regeneration of the site.
- 3.19 The remit of the Development Group will be:
- To encourage and facilitate consultation and participation from a broad community base;
 - To contribute to the masterplanning process, development options and outcomes;
 - To submit progress reports to the Neighbourhood Partnership.
- The group will act in an advisory capacity to the Neighbourhood Partnership and the Council.
- 3.20 It is envisaged that the 'Development Group' will exist for the duration of the masterplanning process. Any further goals and tasks will be identified and considered as required.
- 3.21 The Regeneration Team will continue to produce regular newsletters for residents of North Sighthill, staff and users of the library, shops and community centre to ensure information channels are kept open.

Interface with Neighbourhood Partnership

- 3.22 It is proposed that the 'Development Group' will be formed as a sub-group of the South-West Neighbourhood Partnership. The group will submit progress reports to the Neighbourhood Partnership on an annual basis, to:
- Inform the partnership of progress on the regeneration of the North Sighthill estate;
 - Receive feedback from the Partnership.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 Re-housing at North Sighthill is progressing well and Broomview House is scheduled for demolition during the summer of 2008. As we progress towards the development of a masterplan for the estate, it is proposed to establish a 'Development Group' later this year to facilitate that process. It is also proposed that the 'Development Group' will be a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Partnership and will submit an annual progress report to the Partnership.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Partnership:
- a) Notes the regeneration project's aims and the progress made to date.
 - b) Supports the formation of a sub-group of the Neighbourhood Partnership to focus initially on masterplanning and involving existing community groups and other members of the community in this process.
 - c) Notes that the sub-group will submit a progress report to the Neighbourhood Partnership annually.
 - d) Agrees that the structure and functions of the sub-group will be reviewed on an annual basis.



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5/3/08

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| Appendices | Appendix 1 –Broomview House – Re-housing Statistics |
| Contact/tel | Sam Verner, Senior Project Manager 0131 529 3432 |
| Wards affected | Ward 7 – Sighthill/Gorgie |
| Background Papers | Report by Director of Services for Communities, The City of Edinburgh Council, 23 rd November 2006: Progressing the City Housing Strategy – Feedback on the Demolition Consultation Report by Director of City Development, Planning Committee, 4 th October 2007: North Sighthill Development Brief Report by Director of Services for Communities, Health, Social Care & Housing Committee, 9 th October 2007: Neighbourhood Regeneration – Feedback on the Demolition Consultations at North Sighthill and Pennywell Report by Director of Services for Communities, Health, Social Care & Housing Committee, 11 th December 2007: Neighbourhood Regeneration: Update on the Re-housing and Demolition Programme |

Appendix 1

RE-HOUSING STATISTICS

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| 1. Broomview House | Number | % |
| Total number of units | 84 | 100% |
| Units void or tenants re-housed | 84 | 100% |

Table 1: Re-housing Analysis of Broomview House

| | | Number Re-housed |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| CEC Tenancies by area | West | 49 |
| | North | 2 |
| | Central | 6 |
| | East | 1 |
| Other tenancies | Out-with Edinburgh | 1 |
| | Housing Association | 4 |
| | PSL | 1 |
| Other | No forwarding address | 4 |
| | Void prior to 23rd Nov. 06 | 8 |
| | Returned from Temporary Accommodation | 5 |
| | Returned from Napier University | 1 |
| | Moved due to flood | 2 |
| Total | | 84 |

Right to Return

There are currently 17 notes of interest to return at present.

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------|
| 2. Hermiston Court | Number | % |
| Total number of units | 95 | 100% |
| Units void or tenants re-housed | 45 | 47% |
| Tenants currently under offer | 11 | 12% |
| Units used by CEC temp Accom. | 9 | 9% |
| Special Lets | 1 | 1% |

Table 2: Re-housing Analysis of Hermiston Court

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| CEC Tenancies by area | South West | 18 |
| | West | 2 |
| | North | 1 |
| | Central | 2 |
| | East | 4 |
| | South | 1 |
| Other tenancies | Housing Association | 1 |
| | PSL | 2 |
| Other | No-forwarding address | 8 |
| | Evictions (rent arrears) | 3 |
| | RSVP's (abandonments) | 3 |
| Total | | 45 |