

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive - 16 June 2010

Proposed Regeneration of part of the Halcon Estate

(namely Moorland Road, Valley Road, Beadon Road and part of Creechbarrow Road)

Report of the Housing Enabling Lead

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mrs Jean Court-Stenning)

1. Executive Summary.

This is a factual report to advise Members of the current position with regard to proposals to regenerate part of the Halcon Estate. Members are asked to carefully consider the proposals to demolish the current housing and replace it with a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures. The vision is that Halcon becomes a place where people want to live and would not be disadvantaged economically, socially or in their health, by the area in which they live. The ultimate goal is that people are asking to live in the area. This report sets the background to the proposal and recommends that the scheme is taken forward as a formal Council project.

2. Background

Halcon North as the area is known stands on 7.25 hectares of housing land. There are 192 houses and flats, which are mostly semi-detached brick houses, with a further 31 properties in private ownership. The mix of family homes is heavily weighted towards two bedroom accommodation. There are 96 x 2 bed houses and 28 x 2 bed flats. Very few 4 or 5 bed houses with a third sold under the Right to Buy. There are 30 x 3 bed houses for rent and 10 sold. The huge percentage of two bed houses contributes significantly to over crowding and this has an adverse social impact on the children and their health. The majority of the properties have very large gardens.

For several decades Taunton Deane Borough Council has committed significant funding for maintenance and improvement to the fabric of the houses. These works are ongoing but the age of the buildings requires ever increasing funding in order to keep pace with the rate of decline. With the delivery of Affordable Housing through developers and Section 106 sites on the decline and funding through the Homes and Communities

Agency at significant risk, the writer of this report met with Senior Officers to look for a way forward. The regeneration of Halcon has always been a vision, to make it a place that people want to live where residents are no longer disadvantaged economically, socially or in their health, because of where they live.

In the summer of 2009 an architect was asked to look at the area of Moorland, Valley, Beadon and part of Creech barrow Road as a blank canvas with the possibility of creating a new community. The community should include a mix of all tenures including local authority and housing association social rent, open market, discounted housing, shared ownership and to also include new build homebuy and rent to buy. Also a church with a new community hall, allotments, green open space available for all to use and over look. The construction should include for apprenticeships, and build and train opportunities. Amongst our aspirational list was an Anaerobic Digester which will provide all the heat and power for the community from their own waste products and waste food.

This aspirational list was put together by officers and not as a result of discussions with the residents. It is hoped that future consultations will improve and increase this list.

The architect produced a CONCEPT. The CONCEPT was not a designed plan it was what we asked for, a good indication of what could realistically fit onto the cleared site.

The Concept was used to confidentially demonstrate the possibilities of the proposals to all the political groups who unanimously supported the proposals. Later we gave a presentation to the Halcon Multi Agency Group who also vigorously supported the proposals. Soon after, two consultations were arranged for the tenants and residents of Moorland, Valley, Beadon and part of Creechbarrow Road to 'go public' with the proposals but because of 'purdah' these had to be postponed until after the General Election.

Eventually a consultation was arranged for the 12th May and held at Halcon Primary School for the tenants and residents closely affected by the proposals. Tenants and residents of every household in Moorland, Valley, Beadon and the flats in Creechbarrow Road received a personal letter of invitation (by 1st class post) to attend the consultation. This was followed up by a hand delivered 'flyer' two days before the event.

The consultation on the 12 May 2010 was very well attended by almost 120 tenants and owner occupiers. Taunton Deane officers and Two Ward Councillors also attended. After officers and members had set the scene there was a very lively question and answer session. Most of the people who expressed their feelings and asked lots of questions came to the front afterwards to discuss their particular circumstances and to show approval of the scheme. Appendix one (list of questions from the floor) There

were a couple of owner occupiers who made it quite clear that they would not move.

During the evening all those attending were encouraged to take away a 'preference of choice for future rehousing and comments sheet'. Some completed them and handed back after the meeting. Since the consultation many have been returned and their details are listed on the attached appendix Two and Three.

Further more the writer of this report has received many phone calls, mostly from people complaining that they were unable to make their views known and also were unable to ask questions themselves due to a vociferous minority. These phone calls are recorded on the attached appendix Four. The vast majority of the phone calls were supportive of the proposals and many of the callers requested an appointment either at the office or alternatively in their own home to enable them to discuss their individual situation in more detail. In fact one lady who requested an appointment in the office arrived with five of her neighbours.

The writer of this report considers that the number of residents who were motivated to attend this consultation and the resulting level of positivity, shown by residents of the area, clearly demonstrates that the proposals are something which many of the residents welcome and embrace.

A further consultation was held on the 25 May 2010 for residents of the wider area of Halcon. Posters advertised this event for residents of Inner and Outer Circle and York Road area. This again was a lively and well attended evening with the majority of attendees coming from Inner and Outer Circle. Officers, two Ward Members and the Executive Member for Housing also attended the consultation. Most of the observations and comments were centred around the effects of dust, owner occupiers not wanting to sell their homes and the affects a development might have on children with Asthma.

There were also tenants and residents from Moorland, Valley, Beadon and part of Creechbarrow Road some of whom attended for a second time in the hope of being able to gain more information or to ask questions.

3. Full details of the Report

3.01 The Vision is that Halcon becomes a place that people want to live where residents are no longer disadvantaged economically, socially or in their health by where they live.

3.02 The Project is to regenerate the areas of Valley Road, Beadon Road and Moorland Road and part of Creech barrow Road by demolishing the current housing provision and replacing it with a mix of housing types. Built to high sustainability standards, Code level 5, and provide access to work places, green spaces, meeting facilities, health

facilities and other community facilities. There would be a significant increase in the number of homes provided on the space.

However, this is not just a physical regeneration project, so alongside this, the physical improvements will provide support and access to learning, job skills and healthier living standards.

3.03 The Rationale

This part of Halcon features in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in the country. Although good work has been going on for many years from a range of agencies, the deprivation indices show no improvement. Housing is deemed to be a significant issue, not because of its fabric but due to the high level of small two bedroom accommodation, which is resulting in overcrowding, leading in turn to other social problems. The majority of housing is in the Council's ownership. However, it is difficult for the Council to let vacancies in this area as people, generally, simply do not wish to go there. Once there, it is the ambition of many residents to 'get out' as soon as possible. This leads to issues of transience for example within the local primary school.

Indices of deprivation in the Halcon area show:

- Halcon's teenage pregnancy rate is the highest in the borough.
- Annual household incomes are lower than the average of the Borough.
- Halcon has a higher proportion of part time workers than the Borough as a whole.
- The proportion of households in Halcon with dependant children but no working adult is 15% higher than the Borough average (12.5%).
- Halcon North falls within the most deprived 15% of wards nationally in terms of income and employment.
- Halcon has high levels of residents with no qualifications (34.4%) compared to the Borough (25.4%)
- Halcon has twice the Borough average of fixed term temporary exclusions from school, and the second highest level of Special Education needs pupils in the Borough.
- Halcon North falls within the worse 10% of wards nationally in terms of education, skills and training.
- Incidents of criminal damage are the third highest in the Borough and residents make almost twice the average number of complaints about noise.
- Halcon has the highest level of domestic violence in the Borough.
- Halcon has the highest level of Social Services referrals in the Borough.
- Halcon has a lower proportion of owner occupiers, higher levels of Council tenants and low levels of private landlord tenants

compared to the Borough.
(source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007)

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This rationale clearly demonstrates that this is the right time to deliver improvements, not only physically but for the well being of present and future residents and will go a long way towards eliminating the current deprivation of the area.

Project Structure

This is not something that Taunton Deane can deliver on its own. It requires a Multi Agency approach and full involvement of the community. However, there is recognition that there will be different stages of the project and not every partner needs to be involved in all stages. It will also require some expertise that we do not currently have available within our own organisation which we will need to bring in – such as financial appraisal skills to advise the council on the financial impacts that this project might have.

4. Finance Comments

The success of this scheme will depend largely on the right level of funding. A cocktail of funding will be required. It will be necessary to investigate different ways to deliver the scheme this could be through RSLs, private developers, private funders or a mixture of these, ensuring at all times the Taunton Deane Borough Council is in the driving seat and retains control to drive the scheme forward.

It will be necessary for TDBC to cover the costs of Consultants fees for any necessary financial viability study. It is suggested that this can initially be found from within current budgets though at a later stage a bid may be required for a small amount of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

5. Legal Comments

None at this stage

6. Links to Corporate Aims

The proposals are linked to all four Corporate Aims which were approved in February 2010.

7. Environmental and Community Safety Implications

The proposals are at a very early stage, therefore all Environmental and Community safety implications will be looked at in detail as the proposal progress.

8. Equalities Impact

The proposals are at an early stage, therefore all Equalities issues will be looked at in detail as the proposals progress.

9. Risk Management

The proposals are at an early stage, therefore Risk Management issues will be looked at in details throughout the process.

10. Partnership Implications

Partnership working will be a priority throughout the whole process, this will include working with:

Taunton East Development Trust (working as the Link Partnership)
The Multi Agency Group
Somerset County Council

11. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider the following recommendations:

1. To approve the initiation of this proposal as a formal project of the Council, taking In to account the fact that no final or binding decisions are made without further reports to Scrutiny and Executive.
2. To recognise that further consultations during the next period will be required and an ongoing close working relationship with the tenants and residents will need to be maintained.
3. To allocate financial resources, if required, for Consultancy work subject to a further report to the Executive.
4. That reports to Members are made regularly to keep them informed of progress.
5. Any decisions required are brought to the Executive.

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List of questions from the floor.

The older generation 50+ do not want to move it would cost us money.

We don't want lots of flats

Will we have to pay more?

I think it is a good thing as this estate already has a bad reputation
(CLAPPING)

What benefits will the owners get?

You can have my house now if you can guarantee I can have a new one. I've been on CBL for 2 years and getting fed up.

Why are Beadon, Valley and Moorland always last?

How do Council tenants stand?

Why did you sell us the house in the first place?

How long will it take?

Where will we go?

Who is paying?

If we go for it are we guaranteed a house?

What if we can't afford it?

Need a 4 bed house been bidding but only find ones in Yeovil.

Will houses be boarded up when we all move out or relocate? This will lead to rubbish and more problems.

Will there be plenty of room, garages and gardens, not high rise.

Some will only think of the money aspect, what they get for compensation.
Why not get rid of the ones that cause the trouble in the first place.

Where will we go?

Will maintenance still do the job?

Will we move straight away if we find a new house?
Council has a long list for council houses so will they have to wait longer?

It's the trouble makers and they will be the same people moving back in.

Will the rents go up; this of course doesn't affect the private owners.

Mrs. L. A. Webb
Housing Enabling Lead
15.6.10

Appendix 2

Proposed Regeneration of part of the Halcon Estate

Areas of choice preferences and comments on returned sheets.

Areas of choice for future re-housing

1st choice	2nd choice	Return to new community	Number of bedrooms required	Special requirements
Priorswood, not Wedlands, Lyngford or Stoney Furlong	Monkton Heathfield	Yes if a reasonable size house	5 or 6	Would love a shower with 7 kids
Monkton Heathfield		N/A	3	Large garden with small garden at front with a driveway
Plymouth			2	With garden for animals
Lambrook		Maybe if I could have the house I want	5 or with dining room or 6 th bedroom	3 teenagers 5 toddlers 1 x 10 year old
Moorland Place	Creechbarrow Road	Yes	2	
Lambrook area	Priorswood not Lyngford Square	DO NOT want to return	3	
Ruishton	Would like to discuss	Would like to be able to discuss this first	4	
West Monkton. Not Holway Priorswood Galmington	Or any rural	Depends, yes	2	Garden, shower
Galmington	Holway	No	4	
Holway	Blackbrook		2 (flat)	
Eaton Crescent	Grange Drive	NO	2	Living as close to daughter as poss at Eaton

1st choice	2nd choice	Return to new community	Number of bedrooms required	Special requirements
				Crescent
		Yes	2	Shower needed as husband registered disabled
Glenthorn Ave, or Milford Area Yeovil	Abby Manor area Yeovil	NO	3 - 4	
		Yes	2 bed flat	Need shower as have had a back op
Holway Area	Galmington Area or Monkton Heathfield	NO	3	
Monkton Heathfield	Creech St Michael	NO	4/5	
Halcon		YES	4	
Upper Holway	Norton Fitzwarren	NO	3	Driveway. Secure garden
Holway	Taunton outskirts, Monkton Heathfield etc.	Would think about it if I could see the plans for the house first	4 to 5	Big garden for kids and dogs. Enough bed rooms for all the kids and to be fairly big size rooms
		Will consider	Like 3 current in 2	
Newton Road area	Priorswood	NO	3	
Monkton Heathfield	Priorswood	Maybe	2 or 3	Garden
Staplegrove	Holway		2	Garden to grow own produce

Appendix 3

Comments taken from returned sheets: (recorded as written)

1. I think it is a good idea to knock these houses down as mine is falling apart anyway.
2. 10 years as a family we have lived at no 25. Not a care or thought to how families would feel. PLEASE if possible, could we have our neighbour and dear friend of 23 to live next door to us again.
3. I wish it was happening now as I need to move back to Plymouth ASAP. Other than that I don't have a problem with any of the proposals.
4. I need a bigger house anyway so I think it would only make the estate better if it is made new.
5. I feel that it is a good idea in principle but with more green space will become drink and drug users paradise. Would need a small garden and for better policing. I am happy with my property but something needs to be done about ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOR. Need to be close to ASDA for work reasons early start and no transport.
6. We need a fair sized garden because we have a fish pond, you can move us out whenever (there are two houses empty in Crossways we would consider these if they are three bed).
7. I would like to discuss comments etc with you personally. As I am under the doctor and Fountain House. As I haven't left my house in 17 months, I have anxiety and depression. THE SOONER WE ARE OUT OF THESE 'HOVELS' THE BETTER.
8. I think it's a good idea this area really needs it.
9. I am very much for the redevelopment scheme.
10. I would like to walk down a street without being scared to walk around.
11. There is a property next door to my daughter at 137 Eaton Crescent which is managed by Sanctuary Housing, the tenant is aware of our interest in the property and will be vacating it at the end of October 2010 this would be perfect for me.
12. We found the meeting very helpful but would benefit from a home visit - We would like to come back to a flat preferably near as we can to our present one, also I have a sister who lives in the next block – we need to be either very near or in the same block when the moves happen as she relies on me as she suffers depression and also when we move back.

13. I believe this would be a great idea for the Halcon area, things need to change for the better of the community.
14. I live at Creechbarrow Road and need assurance that I could move into a block by my sister who also lives in Creechbarrow Road as I suffer severe depression and rely on my sisters support since my husband passed away. I would be lost without her support. If we could we would like to be in the same block.
15. My wife and I are happy to move and let this happen to the area.
16. That is the only area I will go to as my children will be in very important years of Heathfield School. I also have a 87 year old gran there. I do hope this does go ahead as it is a good thing.
17. I myself have lived in Halcon for 17 years I think the plans are a good idea for Halcon and many people will benefit from good changes. I am with the plans as long as promises are kept by the Council (ie compensated and re housed in to new community in writing).
18. I bought this house two and a half years ago, I live with my wife and a 9 years old boy. We chose to come here due to well built and well decorated house. Well fitted working and spacious rooms. Specially the garden is very big. We developed our garden. We have built ponds and keep small poultry for eggs. I was not prepared to hear such a proposal.
19. I would like to go to Holway as my son go's to school there, but he'll also be going to big school next year which is why I put down Monkton Heathfield as that will be where he'll go. Also my partner has 3 girls from a previous marriage who come and stay at weekends and half the school holidays. My 19 year old would also have to be housed as he is currently bidding and has been for a year.
20. I need more information if possible one on one presentation kind thing estate meeting too mixed up.
21. As our house is subsiding and we haven't been able to decorate hall, stairs and landing for years we would be very happy to move. I have been growing my own veg for a few years so would want a garden big enough to continue and for grand children. Thank you.

Appendix 4

Telephone call comments:

1. Request for meeting in office with tenant.
2. Call from local police officer requesting more details of future meetings.
3. Call to discuss details further.
4. Call to discuss owner occupied property.
5. Wanted to know if they do an exchange will they both receive compensation.
6. Requested meeting in office.
7. Requested meeting in office with some neighbours.
8. Rang to talk through proposals.
9. Wanted to know if money available if they move now.
10. Call to discuss further.
11. Call to set up meeting.
12. Call to discuss further.
13. Call to discuss personal circumstances.
14. Call to request map of council accommodation in Taunton.
15. Call to discuss moving with sister.
16. Call for general discussion.
17. Call to discuss personal circumstances.

Lesley Webb
Housing Enabling Lead
15 June 2010