

**Subject:** Regeneration Service Briefing Report

**Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny

**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2008

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**Report of:** Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Cabinet Member for Regeneration

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**Key Decision:** No

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report provides an update on progress relating to the following items within the Regeneration Service Business Plan:

- LAAH19 – number of homes being adapted for life changes
- ERS2.14 – Implement the Empty Homes Strategy
- ERSR2 – Establish regeneration delivery team with LCC
- ERSR3 – New location of bus depot
- ERSR4 – LCC funding for development of new interchange
- ERSR5 – Securing external funding

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough (Economy, Housing)
- Keeping Our Borough Clean and Green (Environment)
- Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (Economy)
- Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- All items within the Service Plan are included within the COVALENT Performance Management system which records varying levels of risk against each individual project. Risks are re-assessed through the year and recorded on the system as each project develops.

#### 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The items detailed below were included within the Regeneration Service Business Plan for 2007 – 2008 and are monitored monthly through the Council's COVALENT Performance Monitoring System. Detailed updates on the projects follow.

4.2 **LAAH19 – number of homes being adapted for life changes** – this item relates to the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants Service. This service is provided in partnership with Lancashire County Council Social Services and the Occupational Therapy Service.

Customers make their initial enquiries direct to Social Services who make an initial assessment of the individuals requirements. If it appears that a more substantial adaptation may be required the case is referred to the Occupational Therapy Team who make arrangements for a home visit.

The Occupational Therapist will assess the individuals needs and then consider if there is a requirement to physically adapt the persons home to assist with their requirements using a test of whether it is '**necessary and appropriate**'. If such an adaptation is deemed necessary the case is then referred to the Council's Private Sector Renewal Team who then arrange a home visit to assess whether the adaptation is '**reasonable and practical**'.

Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants is provided directly from the Government through the Specified Capital Grant. The target number for DFG's to be delivered is based on the average cost of £15,000 divided into the grant received. Actual costs for DFG's differ considerably from £5,000 up to the current maximum of £25,000 which can effect the number of actual grants awarded in the year.

By the end of March 2008 97 Disabled Facilities Grants will have been awarded at an overall cost of £462,380

4.3 **ERSH2.14 – Implement the Empty Homes Strategy** – Best Value Indicator 64 requires Local Authorities to provide details on the number of Empty Properties (domestic) which have been brought back into use as a direct result of the Council's intervention. The target for 2007/2008 is 40 and will be achieved.

Records are kept on each re-occupied property achieved to provide the necessary evidence required by the BVPI. General publicity about the re-occupation of empty properties is not counted as a 'direct intervention' under the BVPI.

During 2007/2008 linkages have been made with the Street Scene & Liveability Units NEAT team to ensure that appropriate actions taken under s215 powers can be counted towards the target.

#### 4.4 **ERSHR2 – Establishment of a Joint Rossendale Regeneration Delivery Team –**

- The idea of a joint regeneration delivery team involving Rossendale Borough and Lancashire County Council arose as a result of a special purpose meeting of the Rossendale Regeneration Board in spring 2006.
- The meeting had been convened by the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) to address the difficulties that had been experienced in the delivery of the Rossendale Brownfield Programme which had £4m of funding from the NWDA.
- Following further meetings and funding applications a package of funding for a three year period was secured to increase RBC and LCC staff resources for the joint delivery team as follows:-

NWDA £270,900  
RBC £109,000  
LCC £150,000

- The funding package enabled the appointment of a Regeneration Projects Officer, an Administration Support Officer and a Senior Project Manager who is appointed by LCC's economic development arm, Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL).
- The joint office was established in Room 206 at the Futures Park offices and opened by the Leaders of RBC and LCC on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2007.
- Since that date the Regeneration Projects Officer has worked on the following areas:
  - Bacup Town Centre – Bacup Incubation Zone and the Pennine Squared Public Realm Project.
  - Vocational Training Centre (with Accrington and Rossendale College).
  - Baltic Bridge, Waterfoot, mixed use redevelopment site.
  - East Lancashire Railway.
  - Futures Park –plots one, three and five.
  - Tourism Marketing Contract, with Brighter Business Solutions (BBS).
  - Economic Strategy.
- The Administration Support Officer has worked on a broad range of activities including providing back up to the Head of Service and other members of the team.
- The LCDL Senior Project Manager has concentrated on the Adrenaline Gateway Project,
- At a recent review meeting involving the Deputy Chief Executive, the Head of Regeneration and the Managing Director of LCDL it was agreed that further LCDL staff input would be provided and possibly on the Vocational Training Centre and other projects with in the NWDA funded Rossendale

Sustainable Economic Development Programme, which has replaced the Rossendale Brownfield Programme.

#### 4.5 **ERSHR3 – Relocation of Rossendale Transport’s Bus Depot –**

- Rossendale Transport Ltd (RTL) has for some time been looking to secure more modern and efficient premises to provide bus depot and headquarters facilities for the company.
- Potentially suitable premises have been found at Knowsley Road, Helmshore. Discussions have been ongoing with the current owners regarding purchase by RTL. A change of use planning application has been under preparation together with design and costings regarding adaptations of the building to make it suitable for the intended use.
- A verbal update on progress will be given to the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

#### 4.6 **ERSH4 - Development of new Rawtenstall Bus Interchange**

- For some time the current Rawtenstall bus depot site was the preferred location for a new bus interchange to be developed by LCC. The development would have included the site of current bus stands on Bacup Road, which are owned by RBC.
- However Rossendale Transport Limited has granted an option for LIDL to purchase its bus depot site for the development of a new retail store.
- LIDL has submitted a planning application for its proposal which is due to be considered at planning committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> March (prior to the submission date of this report).
- LIDL has been in discussion with LCC’s highways and traffic engineers regarding a proposal to develop an alternative bus interchange on the site adjacent to the previously intended site for the bus interchange.
- LIDL has proposed that part of the current bus depot site be allocated by RTL for partial site assembly of the possible new bus interchange site. The remainder of the assembled site would include RBC Bacup Road bus stands and the Job Centre. The proposal is at its early stage and no agreement has been reached regarding the Job Centre.
- It should be stressed that no formal consideration or decision has been made by either LCC or RBC regarding the possible new location of the bus interchange. Further work is needed on the viability, practicability, costings and funding of this project before a revised options report can be submitted for consideration.
- A verbal update will be given to the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

#### 4.7 **ERSHR5 – Securing external funding and Programme Approval for the Rossendale Sustainable Economic Development Programme (RSEDP)**

- The RSEDP is the successor programme to the Rossendale Brownfield Programme which was halted due to delivery difficulties outlined in 4.4 above.
- During 2007 discussions and negotiations were ongoing with NWDA regarding a suitable substitute programme, a strategy for its implementation and the composition of projects to include within the programme. During discussions and negotiations with NWDA it was necessary to focus proposals on those types of activities that will help to deliver against the Regional and Sub-Regional Economic Strategies alongside meeting Rossendale priorities rather than being purely a locally influenced programme. This “strategic fit” requirement had a significant influence on the types of projects that NWDA is willing to support.
- On the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 NWDA granted programme level approval for the RSEDP involving £4,263,000 over three financial years commencing in April 2008.
- The funding is time restricted within financial years without allowance for slipping as follows:
  - 2008/9 £1,194,000
  - 2009/10 £2,123,000
  - 2010/11 £946,000
- Funding approval has been secured at programme level only. Each project within the programme must also secure individual project approval and a funding contract from NWDA before investment takes place.
- NWDA also require RBC to submit an annual delivery plan for the programme for approval.
- The projects currently included within the programme are:
  - Rawtenstall Valley Centre and adjacent public realm.
  - Waterfoot Baltic Bridge mixed use redevelopment
  - Haslingden Town Centre public realm.
  - Rossendale Business Village.
  - Rossendale Vocational Training Centre
  - Refurbishment and modernization of vacant commercial property.
  - Redevelopment of brownfield site for employment and mixed uses.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

#### **5. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

5.1 Financial matters have been addressed within the report.

**6. MONITORING OFFICER**

6.1 This is an important report in the context of the Council's priorities.

**7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)**

7.1 No HR implications

**8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 The report provides an update on elements within the Regeneration Service Business Plan and demonstrates a broad range of achievement.

**9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

9.1 That this report is noted.

**10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

10.1

**11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required No

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached No

**12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No

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No background papers