

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

23 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF HEAD OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAIRMEAD REGENERATION- UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress that has been made in relation to a regeneration project for the Fairmead Estate.
- 1.2 To seek approval on the next phase of the Fairmead Regeneration project, which will enable the project to progress to project planning and potential investment.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members note the current progress being made in relation to the Fairmead Regeneration Project.**
- 2.2 **Members approve the next phase of the project, which will be the scheme finalisation project.**
- 2.3 **Members are asked to approve an increase to the HRA Capital Programme of £25k for 2010/11 to fund this next phase funded from HRA capital receipts (paragraph 5.0 refers)**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Fairmead estate in Melton Mowbray was constructed in the 1970's and is of a Radburn Design typical of its time. The Radburn principles of separating vehicles and pedestrians were promoted with the objective of providing peaceful residential environments, with little danger to pedestrians from traffic. However, there are inherent weaknesses with the concept. Public space to the front of houses and parking or garage courts at their rear means that the properties have no private 'face' and residents can feel susceptible to intruders from all sides. Also, there is limited natural surveillance of routes by drivers and this can make pedestrian routes feel lonely and dangerous. Similarly, car owners cannot see the car parks and garage courts and feel that their vehicles are more prone to theft and vandalism. Overall the generic design and inward looking development form of Radburn estates creates a weak sense of place.
- 3.2 There are a number of enclosed communal areas within the Fairmead estate which have become a haven for anti-social activity and the lack of ownership felt for the green spaces has led to neglect. The numerous walkways can feel dangerous and isolated, particularly in the evenings. The estate also does not integrate well with the surrounding spaces and street patterns.
- 3.3 Overall the Radburn layout generates security and maintenance issues that require intensive management to resolve. This project has been conceived to resolve the current design issues surrounding the estate such as adaptation of the layouts to more conventional ones to improve long-term sustainability and desirability.

- 3.4 Significant resources have been and are currently spent within this priority neighbourhood by Melton Borough Council, other Government agencies and partners, yet the overall perception within the local and wider community remains low and the entire estate is not seen as a desirable place to live. Long Term improvement for the residents of this priority neighbourhood will need to include addressing the overall poor design within the estate to make it a more desirable place to live as well as tackling social and economic factors.
- 3.5 CABE The government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space has recognised the design difficulties within Radburn estates *'Radburn is deeply unpopular in many cases and demolition is considered to be the most desirable option. However, often relatively minimal interventions to address the street layout and urban design issues that make Radburn housing problematic have been shown to work and suggest that working with the existing stock can be preferable to comprehensive redevelopment. Recent experience shows that concentrating on public space, maximising or reintroducing connectivity and recreating the street as a meaningful part of a wider neighbourhood, can address some of the problems of this type of housing.'* (Creating Successful Neighbourhoods).
- 3.6 *Many other Local Authorities have recognised the problems associated with Radburn estates and have taken steps to improve the overall layout of their estates, such measures have included;*
- Small to large scale demolition and redevelopment
 - Communal areas incorporated into private gardens
 - Clearly defined frontages and improved fencing to properties
 - Re-orientation of properties
 - Communal car parks altered to form private cul-de-sacs with allocated or off road parking.
 - Removal of unnecessary alley and walk ways
 - Renaming of streets
 - Incorporation of a wider type, sized and tenure of housing to create a more mixed sustainable community.
- 3.7 The concept behind this project is to work towards turning the Fairmead neighbourhood into a *"place that offers everyone a decent home that they can afford in a community in which they want to live (and work), now and in the future"* (Sustainable Communities: Homes for All (2005))
- The object of this project is;
- To Create a decent neighbourhood and place where people want to live
 - To ensure a well-integrated mix of decent homes within the Fairmead Estate
 - Increase the mix of housing available
 - Increase the tenure of housing available
 - Reduce management issues and potential for antisocial behaviour
- 3.8 The first part of the project was to seek the local communities' current concerns and opinions the current layout of the estate and their opinions regarding a change to the design of the estate. A consultation exercise with the Fairmead Community to assess what measures they feel are necessary to improve their lives, this would include social and economic measures as well as options to improve design of the estate. This exercise would feed into the development of the business case for the project.

A survey was carried out in October 2007, which showed:

- 40% of you feel dissatisfied (fairly or very) with the estate you live in
- 57% of you were dissatisfied (fairly or very) with the way the estate looks

- 3.9 Stemming on from this consultation exercise a long term strategy is proposed to be developed to deliver improvements for the neighbourhood. This strategy would outline the long term measure the Council would seek to do to improve the design of the estate as well as other social and economic projects.
- 3.10 There are a number of solutions available to address some of the issues we have on the estate, and the meeting of 22nd April 2008, with residents, identified a number of possible solutions them. One of the key areas is to manage expectations, and no guarantee have been given to members and the community of what will be delivered, as some of the solutions will have major financial, operational and logistical issues.
- 3.11 A further meeting of 27 May 2008, with the residents of Fairmead identified the following critical success factors that would need to come out of any regeneration proposal:
- Community engagement and ownership of the scheme
 - For no-one to be disadvantaged by living in Fairmead (eg in terms of health inequalities, educational attainment, employment and access to services)
 - A sense of Pride and Enhanced Community Spirit
 - A positive public image for Fairmead
 - Integration of Fairmead with the surrounding areas
 - Improvements to the quality and security of the local environment, particularly addressing issues around cars and alleyways
 - Enhanced community facilities- particularly for young people, maximising the potential of any open spaces, garages and outbuildings.
 - For the local community centre to be at the heart of the community, raising aspirations and facilitating earlier intervention and access to services.
 - Improvement to Street Scene particularly in the middle of the estate.
- 3.12 This has led to the development of the regeneration brief, which members of this committee approved on 11 June 2008.
- 3.13 Following a tendering exercise Matrix Consultants were appointed to carry out the project, and members of the Policy, Finance & Administrative Committee approved the Fairmead Regeneration Business Case at their meeting of 8 June 2009.
- 3.14 The project was further presented to the Council's programme Board by way of a highlight report on 9th July 2009.
- 3.15 In February 2010, Matrix completed phase 1 and 2 of the projects and produced the 'Fairmead Masterplan development' document, which is attached for members as Appendix A.
- 3.16 Members are asked to note, that this is not solely a 'Housing project' and in addition the regeneration project objectives cover a number of issues i.e. community safety, community cohesion, health and other social & economic issues.
- 3.17 Residents of Fairmead were consulted at a whole day event on 14th April 2010, which was concluded by a presentation in the evening based on the document received in February 2010. The notes from the day are attached in Appendix C.

3.18 Fairmead Neighbourhood Profile

Members are also asked to note that the original project was based on a number of factors that suggested that Fairmead, identified as a priority neighbourhood, suffered from a number of issues which maybe addressed through a more holistic' regeneration 'project. In Appendix B, members will note that although some areas have improved, and indeed this Council leads on a number of initiatives and projects in the area that improve the quality of life on the estate, the overall picture still suggests that issues exist

3.19 Members are asked to also consider that the Council has commissioned a Housing Stock Condition project to build a property database indicating the state of the council's housing stock. This will be accomplished through 500 (internal & external) surveys to develop a 5 and 30 year invest plan. The report when finalised (approx date August 2010), will highlight the key maintenance and improvement areas for all our stock.

3.20 The cost and areas of work that will form the Scheme Finalisation Project are detailed in Appendix D. these include:

- Validation of Proposals Against Survey
- Validation of Property Turn Around
- Council Dialogue and Feedback
- Decisions on Compulsory Purchase
- Brief for Community Park
- Brief for Community/Housing Site
- HCA and Partner Meetings
- Business Plan Review
- 3-D Model and Public Exhibition
- Confirmation/Refinement of Plan
- Masterplan Prospectus
- Council Approval and Adoption

3.21 Officers are seeking member's approval for the above work to be carried out, so that the project can be finalised to the point that it has the potential to secure external grants and discussion with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). The project has been identified in this Council's response to the 'Single Conversation' as a potential project in 2014 to the HCA. However, recent developments have shown a decrease in funding available, which does raise uncertainty around funding for projects of this type.

3.22 This project has the potential to compliment other related projects, which members and officers feel also need some attention, this would include supporting stand alone Housing projects where significant 'decanting' may be needed to 'free up' housing sites for future development. We would look to the Housing Stock Condition Survey report to inform these decisions.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Fairmead is one of the council's priority neighbourhoods and falls within the neighbourhood management model. This means there is a determined effort to:

- Improving the estate in general and quality of life of its residents
 - Improving the image and desirability of the estate
 - Improving the quality and choice of housing available in the area
- Creating a more sustainable community

- 4.2 There are clear links with this project and some of the Council's priorities i.e.
- Reducing Crime and the fear of crime
 - Providing affordable and decent Housing
 - Young People
 - Economic Development

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 To date the capital project for phase 1 and 2 has cost a total of £95,000, as agreed in the business case approved by the Policy, Finance & Admin Committee in June 2009. The Scheme finalisation project would require a budget in the region of £25,000 for this and related works.
- 5.2 The budget for this could be met from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme and unallocated HRA capital receipts and members are asked to approve this and note this change to the HRA Capital Programme for 2010/11.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

- 6.1 No direct legal implications have been identified with the recommendations contained in this report

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

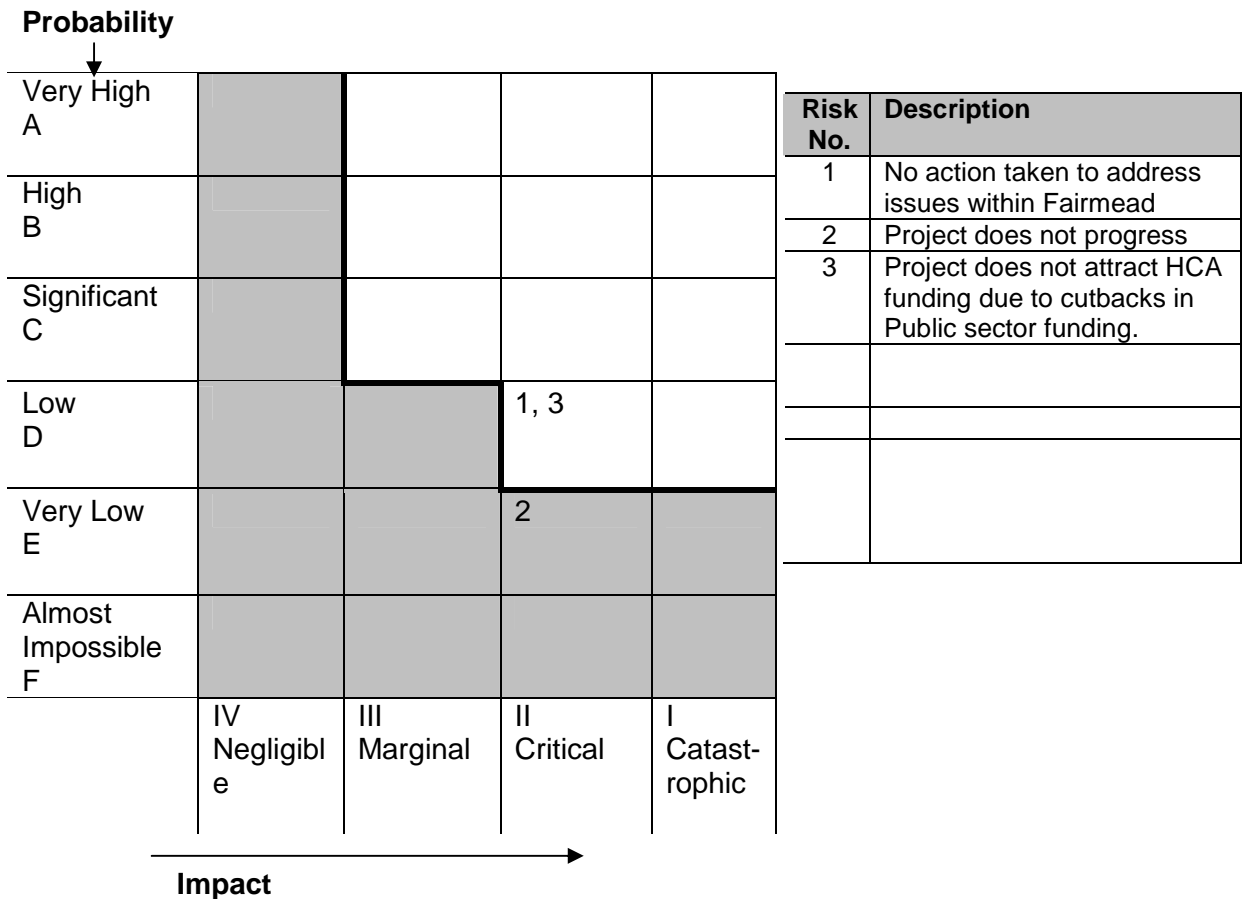
- 7.1 Although not directly relating to the recommendations in the report, the link between community safety and the estate have been made in this report.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

- 8.1 No direct implications have been identified

9.0 **RISKS**

- 9.1 A detailed risk register will be drawn up for this project.



10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 Not directly related to the recommendations, any design will seek to take into account any climate change issues

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Extensive consultation has been carried out with the residents of the Fairmead estate, including surveys and public meetings, for the development of the project so far.

11.2 A full day Resident Consultation Day event took place on 14th April 2010 and the notes from the day are in Appendix C.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 The Sysonby Ward is affected, but potentially other wards could be affected.

Contact Officers H Rai, Head of Social and Economic Development

Date: 7 June 2010

Appendices: Appendix A - Fairmead Regeneration Masterplan Document
Appendix B - Fairmead Neighbourhood Profile
Appendix C - Fairmead Residents Consultation Day notes
Appendix D - Scheme Finalisation Project.

Background Papers:

Reference: X/Committees/CSA/2010-11/Fairmead Regeneration Project