

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	25 August 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Shaping Middlefield – Triangle Site
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/164
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek support for redeveloping the 'Triangle Site' at Middlefield. The triangle site comprises 112 properties, with 108 Council housing tenancies and 4 owned properties. These properties are located on Logie Avenue and North Anderson Drive.

Approval is sought to offer existing tenants alternative accommodation with suitable priority and compensation; and that officers may negotiate with home owners to purchase their properties. With a favourable decision to support redevelopment of the site, officers shall undertake an extensive programme of community engagement activity to develop and agree a plan for the triangle site to support the on-going regeneration of Middlefield.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Communities, Housing and Infrastructure committee is recommended to:

- a) Approve that the Triangle Site comprising 112 properties on Logie Avenue and North Anderson Drive is redeveloped to support community regeneration.
- b) Request Council officers ensure vacation of all properties, including non-Council owned properties by 31 December 2017.
- c) Approve a priority status for current tenants in the site to be rehoused in alternative housing with the following provisions:
 - i) Approve the provision of payments equivalent to a Home Loss Payment and Disturbance Payments to tenants whose homes are required for the 'Triangle Site Redevelopment' when they move with immediate effect;

- ii) Approve that in order to alleviate the issues around mixing of sexes and further rehousing that where mixing of sexes occurs, the Council would offer the household larger accommodation if the eldest child had reached the age of 5;
 - iii) Grant delegated powers in the first instance to the Director of Communities, Housing and Infrastructure and the Head of Communities and Housing to provide tenants whose homes are required for the 'Triangle Site Redevelopment' an appropriate level of priority within the housing lists and flexibility in terms of areas of choice, house sizes and number of offers;
 - iv) Note that with immediate effect, all void properties across the city will initially be considered for offer to appropriate tenants whose homes are being acquired for the Triangle Site Redevelopment;
 - v) Note that all affected applicants will be placed on the Urgent List and provided with the highest priority and further prioritised by the length of their current tenancy.
- d) Approves Council officers to negotiate with home owners in the Triangle Site to purchase their properties.
 - e) Instructs Council Officers to engage with the community and relevant stakeholders to develop plans for the future use of the Triangle Site which should support the Council's community regeneration and community empowerment objectives and report back with detailed proposals at the January 2017 cycle.
 - f) Instructs the Council Leader to continue dialogue with Scottish Government Ministers requesting appropriate assistance, including financial support, to support redevelopment of the triangle site in support of regenerating Middlefield.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Financial implications of this report are;

- The Council has 30 year HRA business plan. Financial modelling confirms the costs for the proposals contained within this report can be contained within the plan based on current assumptions and within 2016/17 budget.
- That the HRA account managed by the Council will lose potential income from rents during the period of rehousing of tenants until such times as it concludes any future development opportunities whether residential or otherwise.
- That the HRA account managed by the Council will incur costs associated with home loss and disturbance payments for all tenants.

Each tenancy shall be entitled to a home loss payment - £1,500 and disturbance payment £3,000.

- That the HRA capital account managed by the Council will incur costs through potential purchasing of home owners properties in the site (4 in total).
- That officers will work with the Scottish Government officials to seek financial support towards project costs including future regeneration plans.
- That officers will work to minimise any costs incurred by the HRA by realising a future income stream through development opportunities on the site.
- Financial assessment and impact on the HRA business plan will be key considerations in developing future proposals for the site.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Advice and support shall be required from legal services and asset management to secure vacant possession of all properties.

The Housing Service currently employs a Housing Officer on a fixed term post to support tenants and co-ordinate re-housing for tenants of properties already set for demolition for the new road at Haudagain. This officer shall provide similar support to residents within the Triangle Site. The Communities and Partnerships Project Management Officer shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining a project management approach for this work post-committee.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Middlefield Regeneration

Aberdeen City Council and Community Planning Aberdeen have designated Middlefield as a priority neighbourhood for regeneration.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) ranks levels of social deprivation in Scotland. The most recent assessment in 2012 finds that Middlefield is ranked within the 10% most socially deprived communities in the country, with part of Middlefield ranking within the 5% most deprived. Community Planning Aberdeen's strategic assessment 2015 presents further evidence of relatively poor outcomes in Middlefield, in particular relating to poverty and families, in comparison with many other neighbourhoods in Aberdeen.

However, the Council continues to invest significantly in Middlefield, working with the Middlefield community and partners, to regenerate the neighbourhood. Current major infrastructure projects include:

- The Council is delivering 179 new build affordable homes at Manor Park and on the site of the former Smithfield School.
- Smithfield Court now provides accommodation to attract 'key workers' to the city.
- The city's first Community Hub, along with new modern games area, will open in Middlefield December 2016.
- The new museum collection centre will open later in 2016.
- Play park upgrades.

There are indications that progress is being made in improving socio-economic outcomes in Middlefield. Evidence recently presented by the Improvement Service indicates that outcomes are improving in Middlefield. Community Planning Outcome Profiles recently produced by the Improvement Service are intended to assess if the lives of communities are improving over time. The Improvement Service has identified neighbourhoods in Scotland with similar characteristics to Middlefield, finding that while Middlefield is amongst the most vulnerable, it is the second most improved neighbourhood compared with its peers.

We recognise that more needs to be done to reduce social inequality in Middlefield. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on the Council and its partners to develop and deliver plans to improve outcomes for communities experiencing relatively poor socio-economic outcomes. Community Planning Aberdeen has determined that Middlefield is a priority neighbourhood, and working with the community and relevant stakeholders has committed to producing an improvement plan by 31 March 2017.

Shaping Middlefield

As stated earlier, Middlefield is a Council priority neighbourhood for regeneration and significant community engagement activity has taken place recently to help understand community priorities, aspirations for their community and to help progress collaborative approaches. During February and March 2015 we undertook a Spaces and Places survey engaging 163 Middlefield residents and provided feedback on results in March 2015. We also held a 'Planning for Real' exercise in August 2015 providing a further opportunity to collect community priorities. The following summaries the main priorities expressed by the community through engagement activity:

- Less speeding traffic and motorcycle misuse
- Improved neighbourhood relationships
- Better housing
- More play places that are child friendly
- More shops
- Improve cleanliness and general environment - less litter, dog fouling and graffiti
- Addressing misuse of drugs
- Improved community facilities and activities

These priorities expressed by the community must be key considerations in developing our future plans for Middlefield, including considerations to the development of the Triangle site.

Haudagain Improvement Scheme

Members will be highly aware of the plans to create a new connection between the A90 at the North Anderson drive to the A96 at Auchmill Road to reduce traffic congestion at the existing Haudagain roundabout. The proposals will see a new dual carriage-way section through the Logie area and re-alignment of Manor Avenue. Work is due to start in Winter 2017/18 on completion of the Western Peripheral Route.

Work is currently on-going by the Council to provide suitable re-housing and support for residents affected by these changes. Good progress has been made with only 14 currently waiting for rehousing.

The final design of the new road lay-out, presented by Transport Scotland in July 2015, will create a triangle of land bounded by the major new and existing roads. The triangle site comprises 112 properties, with 108 Council housing tenancies and 4 owned properties. These properties are located on Logie Avenue, Logie Gardens, Logie Place and North Anderson Drive. Appendix 1 further details properties and their size and type.

Transport Scotland has currently designed its road proposals in the understanding that the Council is going to retain its housing stock within the triangle site. It has designed an ancillary road into and within the triangle site accordingly.

To assist with its programming, Transport Scotland has requested clarity on what the Council ultimately proposes for the site. Given the options for the site set out below, it is unlikely that we shall be certain on the exact detail of the future use and design on the site in the near future.

Transport Scotland has indicated that it could potentially alter the access road design. However, amending the road Orders would add additional risks to the road scheme. One major concern is that a legal challenge or judicial review could be mounted if the scope of work in the Orders are different to the final scope of work, particularly by owners or tenants from the triangle area who feel aggrieved by the changes and would have objected to them if they had known at the time of Order publication. If court proceedings were required it is likely that this would significantly delay the programmes. Another concern is the bus turning provision that is included at the end of access road. Any alterations to this could leave the scheme open to challenge. Any changes to design would also have to be considered in the Environmental Statement, in terms of the provision of replacement open space and noise barriers, and if re-assessment was necessary it would also delay the programme.

Another consideration is that all tenants and homeowners in the triangle would require to be vacated by at least early-2017 to provide the necessary certainty for Transport Scotland to conclude a tender competition. If any tenants or owners remain within the triangle it is likely that the access road will require to be constructed and all the services (power, water etc) would require to be maintained. Given that 79 properties within the Triangle Site are occupied it is highly unlikely that we could achieve this timescale.

While Transport Scotland is receptive to considering our proposals road design, it should be anticipated that it would decide not to expose the project to the risks of challenge and delays that would result. The Council should also wish to avoid such risk too.

Further, transport planning colleagues assess that the current design is likely to be broadly suitable for the types of development considered for the site having previously undertaken traffic sensitivity testing for a re-developed site. Any future applications to vary access points onto this link road, for example should a redevelopment of the triangle area indicate an alternative, would be a matter for Aberdeen City Council as Planning and Roads Authority to determine usual processes.

In consideration of the above it is strongly recommended that no request is made to Transport Scotland to vary the design of the access road, bus turning circle, replacement open space or environmental noise barriers. Officers shall continue to engage with Transport Scotland to secure relevant support and assistance with roads planning, as the Council's proposals for the site develop.

Community Concerns

There has been uncertainty about the future of the properties within the triangle site since 2007/8. It is apparent from feedback from residents that this has created a degree of distress from residents over this pro-longed period. And it is now imperative that a decision is made now to remove this uncertainty for residents and alleviate the stress that many have experienced.

There are 79 residents within the Council properties. Currently 19 properties are void. 10 properties are temporary lets which shall end through natural turnover within the proposed timescale for vacation.

Concerns about the situation have been repeatedly raised by the community group, Middlefield Area Regeneration & Action Group (MARAG). These concerns have included:

- People are really frustrated with this as the houses are deteriorating all the time and they want to know what was going to happen to them.
- There is concern being raised around the safety of families especially children with the demolition and the road work.

- Concerns about living surrounded by busy roads relating to traffic accidents and health being adversely affected by air pollution.
- Damp, condensation, inadequate heating, lack of investment, 'sticking plaster' approach.

In respect of tenants' complaints about the condition of property, a decision was made in 2009 that only essential repairs would be done to Council properties.

Identification of options

In July 2015, officers undertook an exercise to identify potentially viable options for the triangle site which would have the potential to deliver the strategic aims of the Council, be financially viable, deliver a sustainable asset base and meet the needs of key stakeholders. Five options were identified:



Tenant Participation and Engagement

Commitment was given to MARAG at a meeting on 25 January 2016 that the Council would ask the community its view on options for the triangle site and officers consulted residents living within the triangle site during February and March 2016.

Such consultation is necessary to comply with tenant participation requirements within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Scottish Social Housing Charter which in summary require landlords to involve tenants in decisions affecting management of housing and related services.

Based on the options identified by officers, detailed earlier in this report, tenants were presented with 5 options and their preference requested. There are 108 Council houses for rent within the triangle site, 79 of which have Council tenants in them at that time. 82% of these tenants were available for consultation.

The following table sets out the options and percentage of tenants preferring each.

Option		Preference
1	To retain the housing stock and refurbish them to meet SHQS standard	15%
2	To retain the housing stock, refurbish them to meet SHQS standard and develop a comprehensive environmental improvements programme in the triangle to compensate for the new roads structure.	9%
3	To demolish the Housing stock and create a new open space facility	47%
4	To demolish the housing stock and create a new commercial facility	26%
5	To demolish the Housing stock and reconfigure the site in the future for new housing opportunities commensurate with the site as it will become.	3%

The most preferred option was site demolition and creation of open space facility (47%), followed by demolition and creation of new commercial facility (26%). However, most significant to current consideration is that 77% of those surveyed stated preference involving demolition, and 23% that they be retained.

Next steps

With a decision to redevelop the site there will be extensive community engagement and Master Planning activity to establish preferences for the future of the site with the best options and will report back to the January 2017 committee cycle with the detailed proposals.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

Resident's views and the regeneration of the Middlefield are central to considerations and the recommendations made. Implementing the proposals will be consistent with the wishes of the majority of residents currently living within the Triangle site. Advice, compensatory payments and support shall be provided to all residents affected. Tenants shall be offered priority to meet their re-housing preferences.

Improving Staff Experience –

Credibility of staff may reduce in the event that insufficient consideration is given to the community views they have collected. This presents an exciting development opportunity for the community and staff will be at the forefront of engagement works intended to support regeneration of Middlefield.

Improving our use of Resources –

Initial option appraisal and financial impact assessment have been completed to help ensure viability of potential future options for the site.

Corporate –

This proposal has the potential to support all key objectives within ‘Aberdeen – the Smarter City’

- Smarter Governance – Participation
- Smarter Living – Quality of Life
- Smarter People – Social and Human Capital
- Smarter Environment – Natural Resources
- Smarter Economy – Competitiveness
- Smarter Mobility – Transport and ICT

This proposal supports various outcomes in the current Single Outcome Agreement and supports Community Planning Aberdeen’s developing Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Public –

This matter will be of significant public and media interest and in particular the Middlefield community. An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been completed. This identified potential negative impacts in respect of the following protected characteristics - disability, older people, pregnancy and race. The service has a dedicated post to help ensure that all residents affected by the proposals have their needs assessed and suitably supported. A series of actions have been identified to support residents with protected characteristics.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The most significant risk is continuing dissatisfaction and distress for tenants who have experienced uncertainty about the future of their homes since 2007/8. This will be alleviated with a positive decision from the Council to re-develop the site. Officers shall continue to engage and inform residents on the process and decisions.

Delaying a decision and making a decision without proper consideration to tenant and community views creates reputational risks and is likely to discourage and inhibit effective community engagement and community empowerment in the future. We must also involve and take account of tenant’s views in undertaking our duties in respect of tenant participation.

The majority of tenants surveyed expressed preference for demolition, however 23% did not. There is a strong possibility that some tenants will be dissatisfied by a decision to redevelop the site. Further, some tenants and owners may not agree to move voluntarily. A suitable compensation package with support should be offered. Legal action may be required should a tenant or owner refuse to move voluntarily. The housing officer dedicated to the project shall work to support residents secure suitable accommodation that meets their needs aiming to reduce likelihood of legal action, and costs associated with this.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A90(T)/A96(T) Haudagain Junction Improvement to Council 25 June 2008

Delivering Middlefield Regeneration – Haudagain Phase Housing relets report to Housing and Environment Committee 19 November 2009

Haudagain Upgrade – A Way Forward (Middlefield) to Housing & Environment Committee on 14 May 2013

Policy Amendments – Haudagain Improvement Scheme report to Housing and Environment Committee 26 August 2014

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX 1

Logie Avenue – blocks – 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32

North Anderson Drive – 551, 553, 555, 557; blocks – 559, 561, 563

58 x 2 bedroom tenement flats

4 x 3 bedroom 4 in a block

46 x 3 bedroom tenement flats