

# Public Questions and Statements – Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting Date: 29/08/24

Questions (Committee Remit) None received

## Questions (Published Agenda)

**From: Jane Edwards**

Question:

I'm surprised that a 'Whole Council' approach isn't common practice for major projects such as the Gleadless Valley Masterplan. In this paper, this is one of the recommendations, along with appointing a Head of Project Delivery and establishing a Board and a Delivery Group. Why wasn't this done before? An estimate of c. £662,000 of additional funding is also requested - how much of this is to buy in expertise? Has consideration been given to how the work of the Regeneration Team (annual cost of £740,000) will be assessed?

Response:

The existing governance and delivery arrangements were appropriate for the existing Masterplan, given that the focus of the Masterplan was clearly on refurbishment, remodelling and replacement of council housing using Housing Revenue Account funding.

However, as set out in the report, construction cost inflation means that the current Masterplan proposals are not affordable within the Housing Revenue Account. Other sources of funding will need to be found and that will involve working more intensively with other parts of the Council and with external partners such as housing associations. The recommended changes to governance and delivery arrangements (including the proposed Head of Project Delivery, Regeneration Board and Delivery Group) are designed to enable this new approach by bringing senior staff and members from across the council together with residents, partners and community organisations.

The additional funding is for revenue activity. Most of this activity involves paying for additional expertise - a mixture of council staff time and external support in the form of advice, data analysis, research, design, community engagement, etc.

The Gleadless Valley Regeneration Team will provide the main resource delivering the work of refreshing the Masterplan and developing a delivery plan and their progress in doing so will be closely monitored by the Gleadless Valley Delivery Group.

**From: Maggie Young**

Question:

I welcome the acknowledgement that the existing plans have stalled and it's time for a new approach to the Gleadless Valley Masterplan. However, how will residents who were promised compensation in 2017, as their houses were due to be demolished or remodelled, be compensated?

What assurance can be given that residents who have waited for so long in unsatisfactory housing, will not still be waiting in the same position in another 10 years, given that the first new Housing Developments are not due to come to fruition until 2027?

Response:

On behalf of the Council, I apologise for the delay and for the uncertainty that those residents whose homes were due to be demolished or remodelled have experienced.

The Council has established a Gleadless Valley Repairs Project Team which is initially targeting the backlog of repairs to those residents whose homes were due to be demolished or remodelled. This should address any immediate issues.

The purpose of the proposed new approach is to get new housing built as quickly as possible, but this will involve looking again at the plans so that we have something that is affordable and deliverable. If the refreshed proposals no longer involve demolition or remodelling of these homes, we fully intend that they will be included in the scope of refurbishment works instead.

Residents who are still required to move home will be provided with home loss compensation which is intended to cover the costs of moving home.

I am genuinely sorry for the delays that residents have experienced, and I don't underestimate how difficult and frustrating this must be. The report that I hope the Committee will approve today is the first step in a new approach. I hope that this will give residents reassurance that this project will now move forward with a commitment that we will develop the refreshed masterplan in the next 12 months. I accept that we have a lot of work to do to build trust with the local community after the delays that they have experienced.

**From: Sally Pedley**

Question:

1. What steps have been taken to seek compensation and recover the costs paid to Turner and Townsend cost consultants in underestimating the cost of the master plan by half? Regardless of the impact of Covid.
2. How was the proposed membership of the new GV Regeneration Board decided? Who decides the membership of the board?
3. Why are GV ward councillors not included on the board as they are local stakeholders, who represent Gleadless Valley Tenants & Residents. Why are the chairs of Strategy and Resources and the South LAC, who have little to no connection to the area included?
4. How are you deciding who an "Independent Chair" is and why should the chair of the new GV Regeneration Board be independent and unconnected to the area?
5. Why after the years people have been waiting for this to start is it now being reset, with no clear communication to tenants living in properties that were told would be demolished.

Response:

Answer: The Turner and Townsend costs were accurate at the time, based on the information available to them. The increase in costs is due to construction cost inflation and the identification of additional costs (such as rehousing costs) that Turner and Townsend were not asked to estimate.

This report is asking this committee to agree the broad parameters of membership of the proposed new Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board. This is an important statement of the importance the Council is attaching to Gleadless Valley and our intention to work in genuine partnership with residents and local community organisations. In line with the boards for other regeneration projects in the city such as Castlegate and Attercliffe, we will ask interested residents and organisations to put themselves forward and the Board will have flexibility to determine its own membership and bring new members in as required.

I look forward to working with other members and officers to agree the details of the Council's representation on the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board. I recognise that local ward councillors are key stakeholders who have deep knowledge of Gleadless Valley and the local community. The report suggests that one ward councillor is represented on the Board but the Board will have flexibility to adjust the membership (for example to have more than one local councillor on the Board) if that is considered appropriate. Local ward councillors will also be involved directly in the workstreams and through regular briefings with council officers.

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As the Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee I welcome the opportunity to sit on the Board which I hope demonstrates my commitment to Gleadless Valley. As the report sets out, we need help from others if we are going to deliver a regeneration programme of this scale in the current financial climate. I will use the influence I have as Leader of the Council to secure senior level support from partners.

The Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board should be a forum to think big about the future of Gleadless Valley and get residents and partners behind an exciting vision for the area. The Chair of the Board will play an important role in leading this process and getting people working together.

The idea of an independent chair for the Board does not appear in the committee report but has been suggested by officers in other forums. The idea behind this is that it might be useful to have someone independent of the Council chairing the Board as a sign of the council's commitment to genuinely working in partnership with others. This would however be for the Board to decide and would be dependent on finding the right person. I believe we would want someone with a strong personal connection and commitment to Gleadless Valley, along with board level experience in business or public life.

Recommendation 6 of the report is that residents living in blocks that are identified in the existing masterplan for demolition or remodelling should be informed that the plans for their blocks are being reviewed and may change. We recognise that it has been very hard for these residents to plan for the future so it is important that we give them as much information as we can, and we will

write to all of these residents shortly. However, it is also important that we don't make promises that we can't keep so I want us to be 100% sure that the revised plans are deliverable before we give residents new timescales for rehousing.

**From: Iren Wadsworth**

Question:

Sheffield City Council's Plan includes making great, welcoming, clean, green and healthy neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home.

Many of us who live in Gleadless Valley are not happy to call our neighbourhood home or welcome people to it because of the Council's failure over a longstanding period to fulfill its statutory obligations. Documented failures regarding the repair and maintenance of housing aside, very little seems to be planned to tackle ongoing issues such as weed covered and unrepaired pathways, steps, communal entranceways and planted areas along with shoddy mowing, unending littering, fly-tipping and so on. A big positive difference to the majority of people who live in Gleadless Valley and to help attract businesses and investors to the area would be to properly solve these issues that make the estate look grotty, unwelcoming, uncared for and hazardous in places.

My question to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee is whether the possibility of Sheffield City Council finding funds to employ people 'on the ground' to tackle these issues is being or will be explored, especially as the preparation of the revised Gleadless Valley Masterplan proposals is being undertaken?

Response:

Answer: I fully recognise that management and maintenance of the public areas around the housing make a big difference to the overall impression of the area and the quality of life for residents.

We need to tackle this as part of the regeneration. The housing refurbishment proposals will look at communal entrances, paths and spaces around the housing. The Green and Blue spaces workstream will look at how these areas could provide better amenity for local residents, for example through planting and play areas, including by supporting resident-led projects.

But there is no point in investing in these areas if they are not going to be well maintained. So developing a management and maintenance strategy for the estate is a key piece of work we need to undertake alongside developing the revised proposals.

In the meantime, we will look for ways to make visible changes quickly, for example by targeting littering hotspots, working with the police to target fly tipping and reviewing existing mowing regimes.

**From: Charlie Hill**

Question:

- What does mixed tenure mean? - private housing/renting? Will Landlords be local? Live in Gleadless Valley/Sheffield/South Yorkshire?

- What's the percentage of private/social housing?
- What does 'affordable' housing mean?
- How is the workstream for green and blue spaces going to engage with issues around motorbikes and pedestrians?
- Does it have plans to develop areas in the woods where each group can do their activity?
- What does natural surveillance mean?
- local people are asking for more family /primary age activities/after school care (early intervention in antisocial behaviour?).
- Are there plans for this? - playground in Gleadless, play areas in woods?
- How will the team ensure local people are employed for the construction work ? advertising work in Gleadless Valley?
- 'making the most of the Valley's proximity to the city centre, excellent bus links'
- major bus routes number 1& 11 are discontinued from September 1st - connecting Heeley green ,Newfield Green, Gaunt Road and Herdings - local residents are concerned about how they will move from one end of the valley to other- can the team consider how this will affect local peoples access services & amenities?
- What are the new ways the team will develop community engagement? (the community are 'Fatigued with engagement')

Response:

Answer: In terms of 'mixed tenure', we remain committed to an increase in affordable rent housing in Gleadless Valley so that local tenants can stay in the area and benefit from the regeneration. As well as new affordable rent housing, we believe there is an opportunity to provide other types of housing which will help to meet the wider housing needs of the city and help to support local shops and services. This could include other types of affordable housing such as discounted rent or shared ownership, as well as homes for sale or rent at market prices. The exact mix will need to be determined as part of reviewing the development proposals. We don't know yet who any new landlords will be, but we would expect them to be institutional landlords such as housing associations rather than individuals.

I completely understand the issues you mention about anti-social behaviour. In relation to the issues you raise about the woods, we will work closely with residents and relevant stakeholders to develop proposals that address these issues and make the woods a safe and welcoming place for everyone, including children. We would welcome Heeley Development Trust's involvement in developing the plans. Plans are already being developed for new play facilities at Spotswood which we are aiming to complete by next summer.

In relation to employment and enterprise opportunities for local residents, we will ensure that construction contracts include apprenticeships and other training opportunities, and we will prioritise Gleadless Valley residents for these opportunities. The proposed employment and skills delivery plan will set out more details of how opportunities will be made available to Gleadless Valley residents.

We recognise and share your concerns about changes to bus services serving Gleadless Valley. We will work closely with the South Yorkshire Mayor to review and seek to improve public transport to benefit residents and support the regeneration of the area.

In terms of community engagement, we recognise that local community groups and voluntary organisations have strong roots within the local community, so the intention is to work closely in partnership with those groups to engage local residents in the regeneration. There will be a wide range of ways of getting involved, from responding to formal consultations, through attending events, to sitting on workstream working groups or the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board.

**From: Jenny Fortune**

Question:

We are very pleased to see SCC' s intention to carry out this pilot on the Gleadless Valley estate. How will the team be established and who will it be immediately accountable to regarding:

- 1.Choice and range of typologies
- 2.Standards & monitoring applied to the retrofit pilot, for eg: will it be zero carbon?
- 3.Measurement of community engagement & skills development.

Response:

Answer: Thank you for your questions and for your interest in the proposal for a Deep Retrofit Pilot. We look forward to working with the Gleadless Valley Materials Bank alongside other partners on this element of the Refurbishment and Sustainability workstream.

Council officers envisage identifying and appointing a project manager to lead the project as soon as possible after the committee decision. The project manager will draw together a team of interested stakeholders to define the project further and will lead discussions with potential investors and energy companies to explore potential funding models and what each model might require in terms of typologies and standards. We know from other retrofit projects nationally that good community engagement will be vital to success, so this will form a key part of the project.

Day to day accountability for the project will be via the Workstream Lead - Dean Butterworth, Head of Housing Investment and Maintenance - who will report progress to the Gleadless Valley Delivery Group and the Gleadless Valley Regeneration Board.

**Statements (Committee Remit)** None received

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