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| TITLE: | DURHAM COALFIELD SETTLEMENT STUDY AND STANLEY AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK |
| TO/ON: | EXECUTIVE |
| BY: | DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & ASSET MANAGEMENT |
| PORTFOLIO: | ECONOMY/STRONG COMMUNITIES |
| STATUS: | REPORT |

1. Subject Matter and Purpose of the Report

To present the findings of the Durham Coalfield Settlement Study (undertaken by consultants Jacobs Babtie) and to allow the Council to consider whether it should accept the document. Further to the results of the Jacobs Babtie report, to present the opportunity to develop an Area Development Framework for the wider Stanley area.

2. Background

The report shows the findings of the Durham Coalfields Settlement Study. The Durham Coalfields Partnership commissioned the report in November 2004 with a view to progressing a programme of interventions to address failing housing markets in former coalfield communities. The Partnership and the report recognise that housing market renewal should not be considered in isolation and should be aligned with wider regeneration, sustainability and planning policy. It should aim to tackle the underlying causes of housing market failure.

The document is concerned with strategic change. By definition, strategic change cannot be applied to all settlements, given that resources and capacity are finite. The Document shows a commitment to sub-regional working and will be used as evidence of need for further funding for the regeneration of County Durham.

A report was agreed by Executive, 4th July 2005, asking for a consideration of the recommendations arising from Phase 2 of the Jacobs Babtie report. The report of 4th July also sought agreement to a Memorandum of Understanding between County Durham Local Authorities, English Partnerships and ONE NorthEast. The Memorandum of Understanding forms a commitment to tackle the severe housing problems in County Durham and to collaborative working.

3. The Report

Phase 1

Phase 1 established the planning, sustainability, housing, economic and regeneration context of the former coalfield communities with an emphasis on

emerging spatial policy and existing and emerging intervention strategy. It provides the strategic evidence base to support further appraisal of specific interventions within Durham Coalfield Communities.

Phase 2

Phase 2 assessed the functional relationship between coalfield settlements, main towns, the city regions and key economic areas. It reviewed coalfield settlement prioritisation and set out a rationale for intervention, 'beyond housing needs' in spatial development terms.

The report recognises that Consett town centre has already benefited from significant qualitative and quantitative intervention with an increase in retail, housing and employment provision in the town. It states that Consett should continue to benefit from the implementation of further regeneration initiatives and that Consett should continue to be a focus for self-sustainability rather than strategic change and growth.

The report recognises that Stanley is the subject of a major town centre regeneration scheme, which will improve and increase its function. On-site assessments carried out as part of the study have confirmed the need for both qualitative and quantitative improvements. The aim should be to diversify existing uses and improve existing activity in Stanley, to provide a stronger functional focus to its role and to provide a stimulus for other wider regeneration. **The report identifies Stanley as a strategic focus for intervention.** This should be supported by investment and renewal in the neighbourhoods and surrounding communities which have the potential to support the town's role and which have the potential to provide sustainable regeneration.

The report identifies Stanley as a focus for intervention, to enhance its role as a main town and to support regeneration. This would provide more opportunities for people living within the settlement and surrounding communities and improve the physical environment. As there are strong functional links with the Tyne and Wear City Region, there is the potential for increased self-containment in terms of improving the economic and retail base, whilst also recognising that Stanley acts as commuter town for the City Region and that this is a potential opportunity. Stanley is identified by ODPM as a potential 'low demand' housing hot spot.

The report also states that some settlements (across the County) contain pockets of failing areas but by and large perform reasonably well. These will require locally based area regeneration rather than significant strategic change.

Phase 3

Phase 3 identifies 15 Settlements in County Durham as having the capacity for strategic change, they include Stanley. The report recommends the broad range and type of interventions that will help to create more sustainable communities and identify the aspects of change that would have the greatest

impact on housing markets. This will provide a platform for developing more local and community based intervention, including housing intervention.

In order to identify appropriate interventions in the above settlements, Area Development Frameworks are either planned or are currently underway for the settlements listed above.

4. Stanley

The Jacobs Babbie Report identified Stanley as having the capacity for strategic change. English Partnerships would like to see Area Development Frameworks prepared each of the 15 areas identified and are offering support for major settlement renewal in those areas. The 15 Area Development Frameworks could then be submitted as a package, via English Partnerships, for consideration by The Treasury. English Partnerships will only submit the package if all 15 settlements are included. Indications suggest that a comprehensive package would be viewed favourably and that substantial funding (multi- £millions) may be available. The cost of the development of an Area Development Framework must be borne locally. The deadline for submission of a Stanley Area Development Framework to form part of this package is the end of May 2006.

Following discussions with other stakeholders across the County, it has been suggested that the best way forward would be for local authorities to appoint the same consultants to develop Area Development Frameworks, where possible. This would ensure the same quality/format of work county-wide. This course of action is supported by English Partnerships.

Consultants Llewellyn Davies were engaged to undertake work in Craghead and it is proposed that Derwentside District Council should negotiate to retain them as an existing service provider to develop an ADF for the wider Stanley area. Llewellyn Davies were originally appointed on the basis that they are specialists in their field and that they were undertaking similar work in Sedgefield (see report agreed by Executive 15th August 2005). They have subsequently been appointed to prepare a number of additional Area Development Frameworks across the County. The Craghead Area Development Framework is now almost complete and would form part of a wider Stanley Area Development Framework.

Area Development Frameworks are a relatively new concept and Llewellyn Davies have shown a strong commitment to working with Derwentside District Council, other local authorities in the County and English Partnerships to ensure that the end product meets the requirements of all interested parties. The work they have produced in Craghead is capable of being used at various levels to both influence and effect sustainable change in that community.

Llewellyn Davies have built up significant expertise and knowledge of the area. Other District Councils in the County are seeking to/have already engaged Llewellyn Davies to do this work for their identified settlements, this

will help to ensure a co-ordinated approach and minimise costs as the contractor has already built up a good local knowledge base. The work undertaken as part of the development of the Craghead Area Development Framework, their experience in the area, the work they are undertaking with other County Durham Authorities, and their relationship with English Partnerships mean that they meet the criteria to allow Derwentside District Council to retain them as a service provider.

If this report is agreed, a detailed brief will be prepared for the work to be undertaken, this will form the basis on any contract with the consultants. Performance will be measured against progress in meeting the stages of the brief. It is estimated that the development of an Area Development Framework for Stanley will cost approximately £150,000. This could be met from existing Single Housing Investment Pot resources

5. Relevant Material Consideration/Options

5.1 Jacobs Babbie Report

5.1.1 Accept the findings of the Jacobs Babbie Report

Advantages – To formally identify Stanley as a strategic focus for intervention. To provide a platform for the development of more local and community based intervention, including housing intervention, in Stanley. To open Stanley to further, significant, funding opportunities.

Disadvantages – To acknowledge that Consett should continue to be a focus for self-sustainability rather than strategic change and growth.

5.1.2 Do not accept the findings of the Jacobs Babbie Report

Advantages – Not to acknowledge that Consett should continue to be a focus for self-sustainability rather than strategic change and growth.

Disadvantages – Not to identify Stanley as a strategic focus for intervention. To reduce potential funding opportunities for Stanley.

5.2 Development of An ADF for Stanley

5.1 Do Not develop an ADF

Advantages - SHIP funding could be used for other renewal activity.

Disadvantages - An ADF would not be developed, therefore losing the opportunity to plan a programme of improvements to improve the function of Stanley. The opportunity to attract substantial investment into Stanley to undertake an agreed programme of renewal would be lost.

5.2 Engage Llewellyn Davies, as proposed, to develop an ADF

Advantages - the opportunity to develop an in-depth programme of measures to improve the function and sustainability of Stanley. An investment in the preparation of an ADF now may lead to substantial returns. English Partnerships, as the potential funder, support this course of action. It would allow us to meet the English Partnerships'

deadline of the end of May 2006. Other consultants may be more expensive as they would not have undertaken the work already completed in Craghead.

Disadvantages - SHIP money could be spent on renewal activity.

5.3 Begin a new tendering process to develop an ADF

Advantages - the opportunity to develop an in-depth programme of measures to improve the function and sustainability of Stanley. An investment in the preparation of an ADF now may lead to substantial returns.

Disadvantages - SHIP money could be spent on renewal activity. This course of action may not provide enough time to prepare an ADF for English Partnerships' deadline of the end of May. Other consultants may be more expensive as they would not have undertaken the work already completed in Craghead.

5. Conclusions

The Jacobs Babbie report recognises that Consett has already benefited from significant strategic intervention and that it will continue to benefit from the implementation of further regeneration initiatives.

The Jacobs Babbie report has identified Stanley as a strategic focus for intervention. The development of an Area Development Framework for Stanley may present opportunities to facilitate the regeneration of Stanley, leading to (significant) additional external resources. This is in accordance with decisions already made by Derwentside District Council and Derwentside Partnership to prioritise Stanley while recognising the need for further investment in Consett.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that the contents of the Jacobs Babbie report are noted and accepted.

It is also recommended that the Council retain the existing service provider, Llewellyn Davies, via negotiation, to develop an ADF for the wider Stanley area.