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Iain Phillips      Chief Executive

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20<sup>th</sup> February 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

### AGENDA

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. To consider the Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2006 as a true record.	Copies previously circulated
3. To consider the progression of Durham Coalfield Housing Market renewal programme.	1 - 11
4. To consider environmental improvements to Woodhouse Close estate.	12 - 14
5. To consider a regrading request.*	15 - 16
6. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.	

\*It is likely that item 5 will be taken in the closed part of the meeting in accordance with paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Bailey, Mrs Burn. Mrs Douthwaite, Ferguson, Gale, Harrison, Mrs Jones\*, Kay, McKellar, Murphy\*, Mrs Pinkney, Mrs Seabury, J. Shuttleworth, Sinclair, Stonehouse, Strongman and Mrs Todd.

\*Ex-officio, non-voting capacity

Chair: Councillor Gale

Deputy Chair: Councillor Sinclair

TO: All other Members of the Council for information  
Management Team

## HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

28 FEBRUARY 2007

Report Of The Strategic Director For The Community

### **PROGRESSION OF DURHAM COALFIELD HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME**

#### **purpose of the report**

To provide an update on progress made to date regarding the Durham Coalfield Programme and outline the next stages in the process and required actions.

#### **background**

1. The Durham Coalfields Partnership was established in 2002 in response to the establishment of the National Coalfields Programme. The group is working alongside English Partnerships who runs this £365.5 million national programme. It comprises of all local authorities (with the exception of Teesdale DC) in County Durham, some Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), English Partnerships, Government Office North East (GONE) and the Housing Corporation. It is a vehicle to intervene in local housing markets suffering decline through a programme of strategic investment generated through capital receipts from land sales, and supported through additional funding from English Partnerships National Coalfields Programme. This process mirrors the process of the Housing Pathfinder Programme.
2. Initially priority settlements needed to be identified and a case built to justify funding approval from the Treasury for monies from the Programme. Therefore at an early stage in the process the Council identified Coundon as being a priority area that should be targeted by the programme, being a former coalfield settlement subject to significant in decline. Tow Law was identified as a second such priority for focus in a second phase of intervention. This decision was evidenced through an assessment of economic, social and environmental need, the Housing Stock Condition Survey and district wide Sustainability Appraisal.

#### **progress so far**

3. The strategic context and background to the County Durham programme was provided in the report by Jacobs Babbie. As a result of the validation report the Durham Coalfield Partnership agreed that selected settlements should be looked at more comprehensively and that "Durham Coalfield Communities Partnership Sustainable Settlement Validation" commissioned by English Partnerships. This was endorsed by Council in August 2005. Area Development Frameworks (ADF) should be completed to examine the need for and the opportunities available for the implementation of regeneration schemes in a number of settlements in the County, initially including Coundon and Leeholme. This step in the process was aimed at determining 'priority' settlements within the County that would benefit from intervention and Market Renewal monies and to justify such intervention. In February 2006 English Partnerships subsequently requested this be broadened out to include

second phase settlements that had been identified within the County, which from a Wear Valley perspective includes Tow Law.

4. From a Wear Valley District's perspective Llewelyn Davis Yeang consultancy (LDY) was subsequently commissioned by the Council to prepare ADFs for Coundon and Tow Law. The resulting ADF for Coundon was informed by public consultation which was carried out through the Coundon and Leeholme Community Partnership. With respect to the Tow Law ADF involvement of representatives of Tow Law Town Council and Tow Law Community Partnership was secured. The resulting ADFs seek to identify justify and address housing market renewal needs and potential in these two former coalfield settlements.
5. In August 2006 the Area Development Frameworks for both Coundon and Tow Law were completed. A number of influencing factors together with the strengths and weaknesses of both settlements have been identified through this process. These factors have a large influence on any proposals. This analysis is attached as Annex A. The proposals contained within the Coundon and Tow Law ADFs is summarised later in this report.
6. To promote joint working and to increase the strategic capacity and voice of County Durham, it was agreed by the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership to establish an operational team to take a number of ADF schemes forward and to devise the sub regional Housing Strategy. David Siddle from the Housing Development section within Government Office for the North East (GONE) has been seconded as Director of this group for a period of 6 months. The principal remit of his team is to actively progress the Durham Coalfield Programme. This team will be at the heart of the project and the infrastructure is established to enable such direction and progression of the programme to implementation. This will include;
  - Building upon the vision and associated strategic plans to identify and implement sustainable interventions in the housing markets
  - Developing a comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement.
  - Developing appropriate and innovative delivery mechanisms
  - Ensuring that the Programme is linked to other strategic investments that impact upon the housing market and economic vitality of the County.
  - Project managing the Programme.
7. Internally a working group of officers from the Environment & Regeneration and Strategic Communities Departments has been set up to progress the requirements of the programme from a Wear Valley District Council perspective. The outputs of this group will be fed back to the wider partnership.

### **overview of adf proposals**

8. The ADF's have now been finalised and highlight how the future sustainability on Coundon and Tow Law can be secured. With reference to Coundon a vision has been encapsulated, this is;

*'Rationalisation of the existing housing stock and provision for future housing growth through strengthening the settlement core and enhancements to the existing public and private sector stock.'*

10. The main proposals set out in this ADF are summarised below;
- Proposed demolition of a total of 92 dwellings within Coundon and replacement with 93 three and four bedroom homes within the boundaries of the settlement to provide a wider mix of housing types;
  - Environmental improvements to central Coundon, including Collingwood Street;
  - Group repair works to the retained terraced stock at Howlish, Cleveland View, Church Street and Frederick Street;
  - Reconfiguration of the Tottenham and Grays estates to make better use of public and private space and improve connectivity to the rest of the settlement, including Leeholme;
  - Improved access into and through the industrial estate and environmental improvements to act as a catalyst for further investment;
  - Opportunities for further housing development in the longer term on settlement fringes.
11. The investment required for the proposals at Coundon and Leeholme are in the order of £22.5 million.
12. With regard to Tow Law a vision has also been capsulated;
- 'Making the High Street the lively, vibrant, and attractive heart of a small town which offers better services, jobs and leisure opportunities to its residents and appeals to visitors travelling through the area.'*
13. As with Coundon a number of key proposals were identified for Tow Law to meet the needs of the village, these are;
- Creation of a new Village Square at the heart of the High Street creating a focal point for residents and visitors. New surfacing along the key nodes will give greater definition to demonstrate that the High Street is an active shared and thus breaking up the dominance of the traffic;
  - The creation of new pedestrian and cycle routes from the High Street along the north western edge of the village and from the industrial estate towards Inkerman enhancing permeability across the settlement;
  - Environmental improvements, resurfacing, parking and planting to existing terraced areas at Harrison Street, Campbell Street, and Ridley Terrace to create more attractive neighbourhoods;
  - Proposed remodelling of Alpine Way estate (net gain of 1 dwelling) creating a newly designed neighbourhood that benefits from attractive frontages, more defined private spaces and improved active public routes into the High Street;
  - Opportunities for small infill housing in the longer term at Harrison Street, Ridley Terrace and Campbell Street (range of 24 new family/affordable properties);
  - Improvements to the environment, access and layout of industrial estate offers the potential to provide local employment opportunities to encourage a more varied economic base away from manufacturing industries of which Tow Law is highly dependant on;
  - A new gateway feature is proposed with improved road, car parking and siting of a new small kiosk which will perform a small scale tourism facility for visitors and a catalyst for further tourism related investment in the future at Inkerman;
  - Improvements to existing sports centre with a new multi-use pitch and additional gym facilities.

14. The investment required for the Tow Law proposals is in the order of £20.8 million.

### **next steps**

15. At the Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2007 it was agreed that each local authority should carry out a number of tasks to take the scheme forward. These are detailed below;

- **Prioritisation of settlements.**

At a strategic level there is a need for the Partnership to agree the settlements that have sufficient projects to be implemented in years 1 to 3 that should be prioritised for intervention within that period.

In view of this there is a need for the Council to identify and prioritise those projects, within Coundon and Tow Law that could be advanced in the first three years of a programme starting in 2008/09. This work needs to be completed by late February 2007 in order that it may be fed back to the Partnership for agreement in time for its inclusion as part of the Single Housing Investment Pot 3 (SHIP3) process in the draft Co. Durham Sub Regional Housing Strategy by the end of March 2007.

Coundon and Tow Law are still considered to be the priority settlements for focus within the District. Having had regard to the respective ADFs the projects that offer the potential to be delivered over the first 3 years of the programme are set out in Annex B of this report. Whilst a 3 year programme has been identified this is still to be the subject of an economic appraisal as detailed below.

- **Economic considerations.**

In order to improve the value for money and reduce the net costs of the programme overall it is necessary for all partners to undertake a review of land values upon which their ADFs are based to establish if they are reasonable and realistic in respect of changing markets as interventions advance.

There is a need to consider whether individual Local Authority land assets identified in the respective ADFs as being suitable for development are capable of generating capital receipts, and that these have been reflected in the net cost figures for the respective ADF area. These assessments will need the input of the District Valuer and will need to be completed as a matter of urgency.

There is also a need for each Council to estimate the level of local authority capital expenditure that can be identified from land receipts and other ADF area related funding, to improve the value for money and reduce the net costs to the public sector. This economic appraisal needs to include confirmation of each Council's financial contributions to the Programme and has to have been completed by May 2007. This work will be compiled into an economic appraisal for the whole Coalfields programme scheduled to be submitted to English Partnerships by the end of July 2007.

16. It is anticipated that the North East Regional Housing Board (NERHB) will make decisions on SHIP3 and the Coalfields Programme Economic Appraisal by early 2008. The recruitment of a programme delivery team, establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle to oversee programme delivery and development work with first

phase communities, namely Coundon and Leeholme from a Wear Valley District perspective, should be underway by Spring 2008. The full programme of expenditure is expected to be committed by Spring 2009.

### **financial Implications**

17. There are financial implications to this scheme. However the funding will be subject of a successful SHIP bid and is part of the overall Durham Coalfield partnership bid. Work will only commence following the success of the joint bid, therefore eliminating any financial risk to Wear Valley District Council.

### **human resource implications**

18. There are no Human Resource Implications to this scheme as there will be a dedicated team derived through SHIP funding, their remit will include the progression of the Durham Coalfield Programme.

### **implications**

19. There are no I.T. Implications.

### **conclusion**

20. It is evident that considerable progress has been made over the past 2 years in developing a comprehensive Coalfield regeneration scheme. This scheme is now at its pinnacle and will rapidly build up momentum over the next 12 months and thereafter. Wear Valley District Council are well positioned in that the ADF's are in place, priority settlements are established and there is one strategic direction of intervention.
21. There is now a need to work towards the 'next steps' outlined above and to ensure these targets and issues are addressed. The thrust of the next phase of work is to ensure that a robust economic appraisal is completed by May 2007.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. Committee approve Coundon and Tow Law as priority settlements.
2. That the Strategic Directors for the Community and Environment & Regeneration submit appropriate bids.

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#### **Officers responsible for the report**

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#### **Authors of the report**

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<p><b>Coundon Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Low house prices compared to the wider District and Region;</li> <li>◆ Limited housing mix with low levels of detached and semi detached properties with associated low turnover levels;</li> <li>◆ An over-dominance of terraced housing, demonstrated by low house prices and clusters of private rented stock suffering from low levels of investment and voids;</li> <li>◆ Vulnerability of much of the terraced stock to market trends;</li> <li>◆ Danger of an increase in private rented terraced properties if prices remain at the same level or decline, thus further eroding the quality of this stock;</li> <li>◆ Significant proportion of local authority housing suffering form operational problems such as poor connectivity and access. With the exception of flatted units this stock is largely occupied, although many residents have been moved from outside of the area;</li> <li>◆ Limited private sector development interest within existing settlements including areas of cleared terraces;</li> <li>◆ Fragmented village centre at Coundon and poor connectivity between the settlements;</li> <li>◆ Areas of environmental degradation including the public sector rented areas and open spaces.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coundon Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Coundon's proximity to Bishop Auckland, and its strategic location within the 'South and Eastern Bishop Auckland' corridor, presents the opportunity to provide competitively priced housing to serve employees within the economic corridor and build on existing travel to work patterns;</li> <li>◆ Good levels of connectivity to Bishop Auckland and nearby Spennymoor by road and public transport;</li> <li>◆ Existing service centre at Coundon offering health services, education, library, post office and Sainsbury's store with potential to improve existing retail offer;</li> <li>◆ Good recreational facilities at Leeholme with recent Groundwork improvements to open space at Coundon;</li> <li>◆ The historic layout of Coundon presents an attractive village layout that could be strengthened and enhanced through further residential development in the centre;</li> <li>◆ Proximity to the open countryside and attractive views out of the settlements;</li> <li>◆ Allocated housing sites available for development with evidence of market interest at the edge of settlements;</li> <li>◆ Existing industrial estate at Coundon with potential for more intensive development and new accommodation for business start-ups;</li> <li>◆ Existing community initiatives offering support, training and activities to the local community with a history of successful delivery of regeneration projects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tow Law Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The under-performing local housing market; despite the price increases that have occurred over the last 4 years, prices are still low compared to the district and region;</li> <li>◆ Lack of housing mix, choice and quality within the first time buyers market;</li> <li>◆ High proportion of Housing Association Stock (RSL) within Tow Law in comparison to the rest of Wear Valley;</li> <li>◆ Some weaknesses in the current housing stock including environmental degradation;</li> <li>◆ Wider environmental problems such as poor quality of built environment and public realm;</li> <li>◆ Service provision and shops are diluted over a predominantly linear settlement with poor connections and axis across the town to the fringe areas; and</li> <li>◆ Concerns over the high dependency on manufacturing industry with a high proportion of residents employed within a narrow economic base; and</li> <li>◆ Prevailing high unemployment rates within the town and a distinct lack of diversification within the local economy.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tow Law Opportunity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Attractive surrounding open countryside and its prime location on the A68;</li> <li>◆ Tow Law could conceivably become a small visitor/stop over location – connecting up to more established tourist centres in the district;</li> <li>◆ The settlement is served well by open space and community/recreational facilities notably the community centre and Tow Law Town Football Club;</li> <li>◆ Potential to improve on existing local services;</li> <li>◆ Decent mix of housing stock and quality although terraced predominantly;</li> <li>◆ Small "infill" private housing developments will create more choice and quality within the settlement;</li> <li>◆ Existing industrial estate at Tow Law with potential to encourage small entrepreneurial indigenous business to help diversify the local economic base; and</li> <li>◆ Existing community initiatives offering support, training and activities to the local community and a strong community partnership which is committed to contributing to the continued regeneration of the settlement.</li> </ul>

### Priority Projects – Coundon & Leehome

Table 1 below identifies the projects identified in the ADF which could be brought forward in the first 3 years of the programme.

**Table 1.**

Project/Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Short Term Spend	Short Term Income
<b>Central Coundon</b>				£6.63m	£8.28m
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Greys and Tottenham</b>				£5.3m	£4.35m
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Howlish and Cleveland View</b>				£4.21m	
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Frederick Street &amp; Church Street</b>				£2.73m	
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Industrial Estate</b>					
Acquisition					
Works					

Table 2 below provides justification for priority projects listed in table 1 and potential issues which may impact upon their delivery.

**Table 2**

	<b>Why is it a priority</b>	<b>Issues for Delivery</b>
<b>The Central Area</b>	The central are of Coundon includes the historic settlement structure. The potential exists to build upon this layout to strengthen the settlement core through infill development of larger properties to diversity the housing offer and create an attractive environment to the benefit of the wider settlement.	Interventions require negotiation with a number of owners and private sector landlords and may require the use of CPO powers.
<b>The Tottenham Estate</b>	The public sector housing stock suffers from problems of connectivity and poor usage of public spaces. It currently acts as a barrier to wider movement through the settlement.	The land is predominantly within public sector ownership that should facilitate delivery of the proposed interventions.
<b>The Grays Estate</b>	The area suffers from the same issues as the Tottenham Estate. Its proximity to the edge of the settlement offers the opportunity for improved connectivity to any new residential development on its fringes to link the settlement together.	Development proposals for land to the south of the Grays Estate are well progressed and there may be limited opportunity for intervention.
<b>Howlish and Cleveland View</b>	There is evidence of a relatively high proportion of private rented properties and voids that contributes to a poor quality environment.	The properties are in private sector ownership so interventions will require significant financial input in the early stages. Some of this cost be recouped at a later date once replacement housing is provided. Will require joint venture arrangements.
<b>Frederick Street and Church Street</b>	This area experiences the same issues as Howlish and Cleveland View in terms of private sector rental properties and poor environment at a prominent location at the entrance to the settlement.	Again, joint venture arrangement required with significant financial input a the early stage.

	<b>Why is it a priority</b>	<b>Issues for Delivery</b>
<b>Leeholme</b>	Leeholme suffers from poor connectivity to essential services in Coundon and fragmented settlement structure due to demolition works.	Improved connectivity can be easily resolved subject to agreement by private landowners. Infill housing development is likely to be a longer term priority once housing market renewal has been addressed in Coundon, subject to restrictions on housing numbers.
<b>The Industrial Estate</b>	Whilst current evidence of empty and underutilised sites and experiencing poor means of access into and through the estate it offers the potential to provide local employment opportunities.	Provision of an improved access will require negotiation with a number of owners and may require CPO as ownership details unknown. Public sector funding is, however, available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for further employment related development.
<b>Future Residential Opportunities</b>	The potential exists to develop further sites on the edge of the settlements in the longer term, once the priority sites within the settlement have been addressed. These sites could serve those employed within the economic corridor to the west	Release of further housing sites may be restricted by regional policy on housing numbers.

## Priority Projects – Tow law

Table 3 below identifies the projects identified in the ADF which could be brought forward in the first 3 years of the programme.

**Table 3**

Project/Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Short Term Spend	Short Term Income
<b>New Village Square / High Street Improvements</b>				<b>£2.1</b>	
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>The Industrial Estate</b>				<b>£0.15m</b>	
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Alpine Way Estate</b>				<b>£10.1m</b>	
Acquisition					
Works					
<b>Inkerman Gateway feature</b>				<b>£0.15m</b>	
Acquisition					
Works					

Table 4 below provides justification for priority projects listed in table 3 and potential issues which may impact upon their delivery.

**Table 4**

	Why is it a priority	Issues for Delivery
<b>New Village Square / High Street Improvements</b>	The A68 presently dominates Tow Law. The opportunity to create a new large centre “village square” style of central public realm exists. This will form the heart of the settlement and provide a high quality area of public space within the centre of Tow Law, thus creating a focal point for existing residents and potential visitors to enjoy. The new square is located where	Proposals would cause some disruptions within the short term to the High Street and traffic along the A68. The square may be restricted to original proposals unless agreement can be made with the developer or the Mart site to amend consent and allow some houses on the edge of the High Street to be built further back, thus allowing a larger area of new realm to be

	<p>the High Street intersects Church Lane, leading into Dan's Castle. New surfacing along key nodes will give greater definition to demonstrate that the High Street is an active shared use and thus break up the dominance of the traffic.</p>	<p>achieved.</p>
<p><b>The Industrial Estate</b></p>	<p>The existing estate is underutilised and does not foster future business development. Improvements to be environment, access and layout offers the potential to provide improved employment opportunities to encourage a more varied economic base away from the manufacturing industries of which Tow Law is highly dependant on.</p>	<p>Provision of an improved access will require negotiation with a number of owners. There are concerns over the existence of underground cables in close proximity to the estate. Further investigation work may have to be undertaken to ensure ground conditions are conducive to the proposed improvements.</p>
<p><b>Alpine Way Estate</b></p>	<p>This area suffers from a highly dysfunctional layout typical of the Radburn design. The proposed interventions will create a newly designed neighbourhood that benefits from active frontages, more define private spaces and improved active public routes into the High Street thus creating improved vista's into the town centre. This high level option ultimately creates new streets and permeable networks both within the new neighbourhood and into the settlement core.</p>	<p>Interventions require negation with a number of owners and private sector landlords and may require the use of CPO powers.</p>
<p><b>Inkerman Gateway feature</b></p>	<p>At the Inkerman site, a new gateway feature is proposed with improved road and car parking and siting of a new small kiosk which will perform small scale tourism facility for visitors and a catalyst for further tourism related investment in the future at Inkerman.</p>	<p>Any future proposals would need to take cognisance of current proposal by HJ Banks for a residential and nursing home at Inkerman.</p>

## HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

28 FEBRUARY 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO WOODHOUSE CLOSE ESTATE**

#### **purpose of the report**

To update Committee of progress on estate improvements and seek Committees approval of exemption of Contract Standing Orders

#### **background**

- 1 As part of the Council's budgetary process, £500,000 was allocated from the capital programme to improve the environment of council owned estates. The programme of improvements links directly to the delivery of decent houses in seeking to create sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 2 Officers within the Community Department have worked with Groundwork Trust West Durham in combining available finances to seek to deliver major projects centred around Woodhouse Close Estate area of Bishop Auckland.
- 3 Groundwork Trust have undertaken detailed discussions with Woodhouse Close residents and groups during design of the works. In addition the involvement of the Police Liaison Officer has enabled crime aspects to be considered at the earliest possible stage.

#### **proposals**

- 4 Works will be undertaken to Howard Close and to the central area of Proudfoot Drive and Ford Way.
- 5 Howard Close works will be undertaken by Sones Landscaping Ltd, who were successful in tendering for the works. Changes in the original design, following consultation with stakeholders, have slightly delayed works which are now due to commence early in March. Works will include off street car parking, street furniture, new path layouts, improved access to the backs of properties and soft landscaping.
- 6 The proposed Proudfoot Drive scheme involves three separate projects
  - Highway and adopted footpath works
  - Planting and soft landscaping
  - Provision of a multi use games area (MUGA)
- 7 This proposal allows the separate works to be undertaken by individual specialist contractors, rather than a single 'general' contractor.

- 8 Groundwork Trust are also improving the shop-fronts to those properties on Proudfoot Drive. This small scheme will be undertaken before the end of the current financial year and will seek to improve the built environment on Woodhouse Close.

### **highway works**

- 9 The works to the adopted highways and footpaths are subject to the agreement of the Highways Authority, Durham County Council. Durham County Council are reluctant to allow third party contractors to undertake works to highways as a result of what they perceive as poor quality workmanship, defects and potential for claims that they will subsequently be responsible for. Durham County have indicated that their own 'strategic' partnering contractors are available to undertake the works.
- 10 'Strategic partners' to deliver the county's works programme were selected following a major procurement exercise by the county. However, in order that these contractors may be employed on this contract, it is necessary to suspend Section 3 of the Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts.
- 11 The value of the highways works exceeds the £100,000 threshold where, in accordance with standing orders, formal tenders should be sought.
- 12 Exemptions to the standing orders can be approved "in a report to the appropriate Committee, subject to prior approval by the Strategic Director for Resource Management and Assistant Director for Admin and Legal". This prior approval has been sought from both officers without objection.
- 13 The award of the highways contract to Durham County Council enables early start on site dates to be achieved and completion before the end of the current financial year.

### **planting/soft landscaping of muga provision**

- 14 Planting and soft landscaping works will follow the completion of the road and path improvements and this will be subject to a competitive exercise to ensure value for money is achieved. It is anticipated this element of works will start on site in Spring.

### **the muga**

- 15 The provision of the multi use games area (MUGA) is works of a specialist nature and value for money will be achieved by procuring direct with suppliers. It is proposed that a number of specialist suppliers will compete for the works to supply and install the MUGA and associated fixtures and fittings. Discussions are on going to identify the future maintenance requirements and responsibilities of the MUGA.

### **timescales**

- 16 The programme of works will be ongoing from early March 2007 and will be delivered in conjunction with extensive consultation. Completion is anticipated before the end of the financial year 2007/08, but this is subject to approval of stopping-up orders and road closure agreements

## **crime and disorder implications**

- 17 The works have been designed with the valuable input of the Police Liaison Officer who has advised on planting, furniture layouts and other issues around reduction of crime and disorder.
- 18 The MUGA will provide diversionary activities for the younger residents of Woodhouse Close and, as such, this should lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour problems.

## **finance implications**

- 19 This years works are financed from the councils capital budget for estate improvements, together will additional funding from the Neighbourhood fund and Liveability Fund; as detailed below

• Wear Valley	£340,000
• Liveability Fund	£199,187
• Neighbourhood Fund	£ 80,000
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	£619,187

## **legal implications**

- 20 As highlighted in paragraph 8 of this report it is necessary to suspend Standing Orders for the appointment of Durham County Council. Other works will be procured following the processes in the Standing Orders.

## **conclusion**

- 21 The proposed projects seek to improve the Woodhouse Close environment on a neighbourhood basis, providing safe, green open spaces and diversionary activities. In order to deliver this project on time it is necessary to suspend standing orders.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1 Members note the progress to date and the extent of proposed works.
- 2 Members agree to the actions to suspend paragraph 8.1 of Section 3 of the Standing Orders in Contract Procedure Rules due to the reasons outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8.

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**Officer responsible for the report**  
Michael Laing  
Strategic Director for the Community  
Ext 281

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**Author of the report**  
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AD Policy & Resources  
Ext 379

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