

**HOUSING INVESTMENT PROPOSAL FOR PROPERTIES TO THE REAR OF
BASKET ROAD, KELLS**

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor George Clements, Deputy Leader,
Promoting Prosperity
LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford – Head of Regeneration
REPORT AUTHOR: Chris Pickles – Community Renewal Officer

Summary: To seek Members approval to support a proposal using Housing Investment Programme (HIP) funding to deliver a scheme affecting properties to the rear of Basket Road, Kells. The scheme would be delivered and implemented by Copeland Homes who are part of the Home Group organisation.

Recommendation:

That Copeland Borough Council support and finance (using funding from the Housing Investment Programme) a Back Lane Improvement Scheme for Basket Road, Kells, to improve the utility of these homes during the financial year 2007/8..

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Housing Investment Programme (HIP) is funding allocated from Central Government to Local Authorities to be spent on Capital Investment Schemes in housing and housing related projects. Copeland Borough Council received £938,800 from HIP for Furness and West Cumbria Housing Market Partnership (F&WCHMP) which is the residential and housing arm of the Wider Cumbria Master Plan for works during 2006-2008. The Kells area in Whitehaven is one of three communities, along with Greenbank and Woodhouse that make up the South Whitehaven element of F&WCHMP. This scheme will complement the works currently proposed for this area as part of the £1.65m Coastal Fringe project within the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme. (Appendix 1 illustrates the geographical location of the two projects)
- 1.2 No funding has been allocated to the Kells area from the HIP Programme during 2007-8. The need for a report reviewing current HIP spend and other housing related improvement schemes during 2006-7 has been acknowledged and will be undertaken in the near future
- 1.3 Copeland Borough Council has supported an application to West Lakes Renaissance for funding to undertake a formal design study for a Back Lane Improvement Scheme for Basket Road, Kells.

- 1.4 Copeland Borough Council support in principle the introduction in 2008-9 of an area based programme of property improvements for Old Kells (The Rows) to improve the quality and long term utility of these properties as low cost owner private housing for the Kells area.
- 1.5 The proposed scheme for Back Lane Improvements Works to Basket Road is to make significant improvements to an unmade track providing access to the rear of 42 homes. Approximately 75% of these properties are owner occupied with the remainder (approx 9) being owned by Home Group. The scheme will provide options for all of the residents to have off street secure in-curtilage parking, reducing the congestion and street clutter of Basket Road. Improvements would also provide a consistent approach to aspects of the properties such as the garden walls. At present there is a range of high quality brick walls to no cartilage treatment at all. The lack of hard surface means that access in winter is difficult. The result is, when viewed from the rugby field adjacent to the properties the area can look unsightly and unappealing.
- 1.6 The total cost of the scheme has been estimated at £385,355 although there could feasibly be extra costs for the inclusion of drainage as there is no existing drainage network to tap into for the road. It is envisaged that £361,853 HIP could be carried over from 2006/7. The contribution from Home Group into this HIP scheme is estimated at £18,187.
- 1.7 The ownership of the land is currently believed to rest with Copeland Borough Council.
- 1.8 It is clear that the area would clearly benefit from an improvement programme to provide a far better, more formal and more easily maintained area to encourage use of rear gardens for off-street parking, provide a clear boundary to the rugby area and perhaps most importantly to improve the aesthetic experience enjoyed by visitors.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 This scheme will complement the works currently proposed for this area as part of the £1.65m Coastal Fringe project within the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme. Within the Coastal Fringe project a programme of works to the rugby pitch and access route to the mining museum are planned.
- 2.2 It may not be possible to continue to carry HIP funding over year on year. It is also possible that there may be a decrease in HIP funding if it continues to be carried over.

- 2.3 Implementing the project would allow Copeland Borough Council to draw down and spend some of the 2007/8 allocation (subject to a review of previous spending)
- 2.4 If the project is recommended to proceed a significant amount of the physical works will be implemented within the short period before March 2008.
- 2.5 If the project is recommended to proceed it would be implemented in conjunction with contractual works at the same time as the Coastal Fringe project and therefore the disruption to residents would be minimised

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Use HIP funding allocated for 2007/8 along with the contribution from funding from Home Housing to implement the Back Lane Improvement Scheme for Basket Road, Kells.
- 3.2 Support the project as part of an area based programme of property improvements for Old Kells scheduled for 2008/9, thereby carrying the 2007/8 HIP funding allocation over

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The recommendation that HIP funding is drawn down and contributes to this Basket Lane scheme is the preferred option (subject to a review of previous years funding). This option will have a number of benefits and allow Copeland to draw down funding in this financial year (2007/8) in addition to delivering a project that will improve the housing opportunities available in Whitehaven and is an integral part of West Cumbria Master Plan's approach to economic development
- 4.2 If the project is recommended to proceed it would be implemented in conjunction with contractual works as part of the Coastal Fringe project and therefore the disruption to residents would be minimised
- 4.3 Should this proposal not be agreed there are no other projects lined up to spend HIP funding and deliver tangible outcomes in this financial year, thereby HIP funding would be required to be carried over.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 It is estimated that the preferred option (3.1) would require at least £385,355 of HIP funding. There could be the inclusion of extra costs (£50k) for the inclusion of any works to the drainage network on the back lane if required.
- 5.2 The contribution from Home Group into this HIP scheme is estimated at £18,187.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 As Accountable Body, the Council is responsible for the allocation and monitoring of spend for the HIP Programme. Any lack of spend in this financial year may have detrimental effects of future allocations to HIP funding in years to come.
- 6.2 Projects such as this require time for consultation with all relevant parties and to secure an agreement on issues such as future ownership, maintenance liabilities and possible adoption. These issues require to be addressed within the timescales of the project (March 08).
- 6.3 If such a formal road were to be created, then as a consequence what are currently believed to be de facto rights of way that currently exist may become de jure with attendant implications. The Highways Authority does not in general adopt roads which are cul de sacs – this is because the obligation on them to provide access to the homes on Basket Road is served adequately by Basket Road itself. If the Highways Authority did not adopt the road, then future maintenance would rest with the current land owner although there would be no obligation on Copeland Council to maintain the road other than essential work to manage its health and safety risks. If the road did not have in place a long term maintenance strategy, then over time it would revert to its current un-kept state.
- 6.4 For the County Council to be in a position to consider making an exception to its general rule about adopting a cul de sac, the road itself would need to be constructed to an adoptable standard, including due to its length passing places or a dual lane road layout and to have a full turning area at its northern most end. There may also be a need to alter the layout of the T junction with Solway Road. All of this would add considerably to the cost of the works. Moreover, the County Council would need to see the benefits to the wider community, for example access to tourist and leisure facilities, of adopting such a road being robustly justified to allow for an exception to its rule to be supported.

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 The Housing Investment Proposal for the properties to the rear of Basket Road, Kells meets a number of Corporate Plan objectives, primarily under 2.2, Regenerating Copeland.
- 7.2 The Kells area is also one of the agreed focal areas for the Whitehaven Regeneration Partnership
- 7.3 The proposed scheme also has an impact on the following Corporate Plan objectives:
- 3.3 - Quality living environment
 - 3.4 - Sustainability
 - 3.5 - Quality housing

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - A map illustrating positioning of Haig/Coastal Fringe site in relation to properties at the rear of Basket Road

List of Background Documents:

- Briefing Paper: Whitehaven Regeneration Partnership Housing Investment Proposals for Kells
- Coastal Fringe Documentation/Design Documents

List of Consultees:

Head of Regeneration
Portfolio Holder - Cllr George Clements,
Cllr Tim Knowles
Deputy Leader
Corporate Team

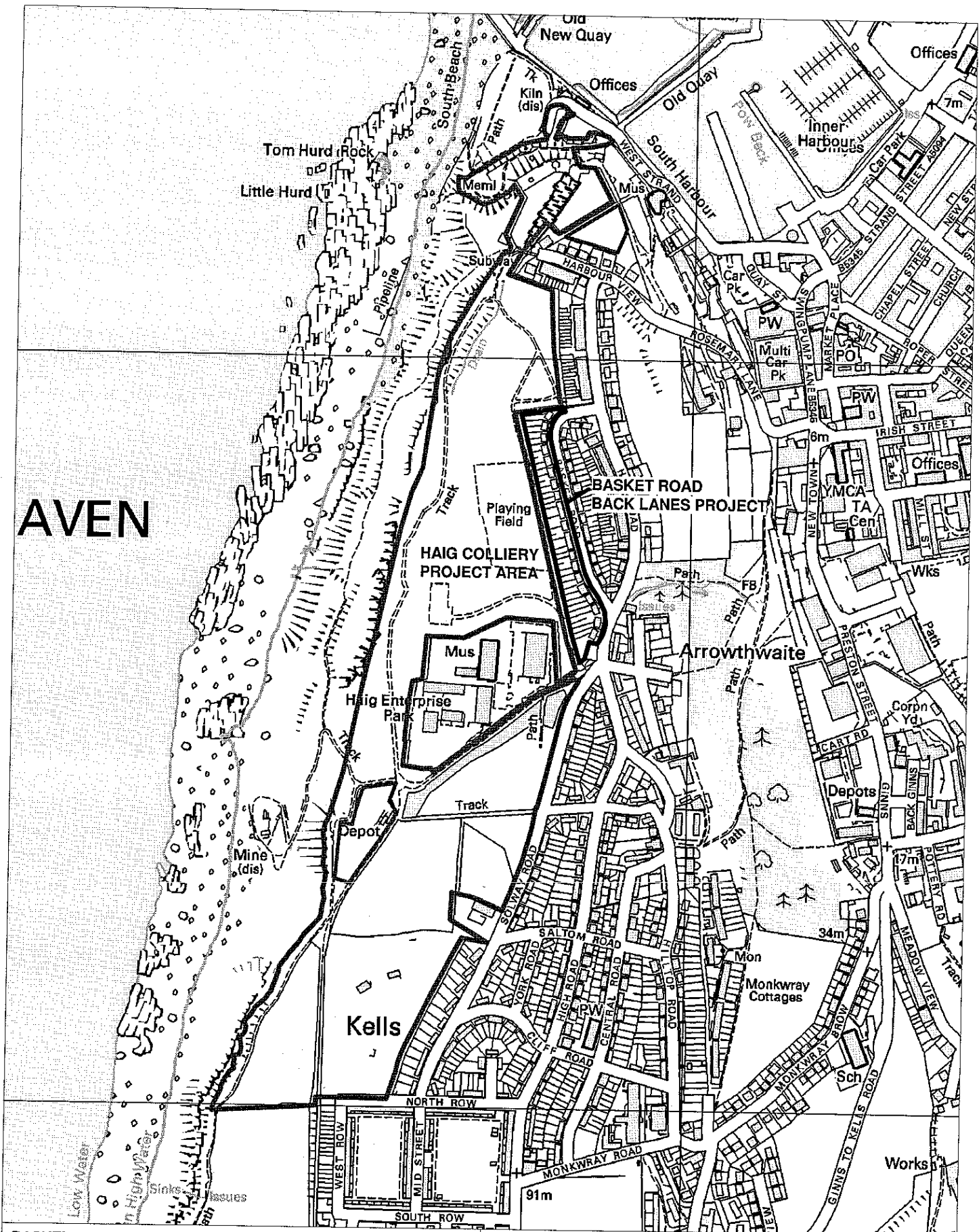
CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Not applicable
Impact on Sustainability	Improving the quality of local housing could attract new people to Kells and

	raise the economic performance of the area
Impact on Rural Proofing	Not applicable
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable
Project and Risk Management	Not applicable
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Not applicable
Children and Young Persons Implications	Not applicable
Human Rights Act Implications	Not applicable

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision YES



BASKET ROAD BACK LANES PROJECT

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 The Council Centre
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Date: 19/09/07

Scale: 1: 4000