

REPORT OF: **HOUSING, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES MANAGER**

TO: **EXECUTIVE**

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WHITEFIELD HOUSE SALES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on progress with the sale of properties in Whitefield.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) To note progress with the sales.
- (2) To receive a further update report in 6 months.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To keep the Executive informed of progress with disposals

ISSUE

1. We are now reaching completion of the heritage-led regeneration of the area of Whitefield known as Phase1. This is the area approximately bounded by Manchester Road, Macleod Street, the Leeds Liverpool Canal and Stanley Street which was originally intended for clearance. Prior to this we carried out external Group Repair to approaching 200 houses in the adjoining area around St. Mary's Church.
2. The regeneration work in the Phase 1 area has included refurbishment of the existing terraced housing, conversion of the old water board offices into an Enterprise Haven and selective demolition for new housing, the new Whitefield Infant and Nursery School and public realm improvements. The final work in the area is the re-opening of Every Street and associated traffic calming, which will begin in June 2015. The work to the Phase 1

area and the earlier work around St. Mary's has made a massive improvement to the housing stock and the attractiveness of the Whitefield area.

3. Under the Council's Improvement for Sale programme in the Phase 1 area almost 100 properties that had been bought in by the Council have been refurbished inside and out, including 30 that have been converted into larger 2-into-1 properties. A further block of seven properties on Every Street were refurbished by Adactus Housing Association. Where residents wished to remain in their properties and not sell them to the Council these were fully refurbished externally.
4. In addition, Great Places Housing Association have developed new affordable housing on the former Printworks site, on Albert Street and on the Presbytery site.
5. The refurbishment work to empty properties and the new housing developments have resulted in 46 properties for sale, 48 for affordable rent and 4 for shared ownership ranging in size from 1 bedroom to 6 bedroom properties. Whitefield Ward previously had a lack of affordable housing so this regeneration programme has helped to provide a more balanced housing market.
6. The Improvement for Sale project has been jointly funded by the former Housing Market Renewal programme and from separate funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). HCA agreed that receipts from refurbishment of earlier blocks could be rolled forward to fund refurbishment of future blocks. When all properties have been sold they expect a proportion of the receipts to be returned to them. We are working with HCA to see how they can support us in the marketing of the properties.
7. There are 23 properties still to sell. Properties have not all been put up for sale as soon as they have been completed so that we don't 'flood the market'. There are currently 10 on the market with 4 of those being under offer. There have been 5 sales in the current financial year, 4 to Great Places and 1 to a private owner. Additional properties will be marketed over the Summer.
8. During 2014/15 the market was slow, but this may well have been due to the ongoing building work in the area which was putting people off from buying until that was complete.
9. The properties are being jointly marketed by Liberata and Entwistle Green. A showhome was fitted out on Mosley Street and there have been 4 Open Days. Attendance at the open days has been varied but no sales have directly resulted from viewings on those days. The level of interest appears to have increased in the last few months now that the school has opened and the Presbytery site is complete. A number of buyers have taken up the Deposit Assistance scheme that we offer (for people who only have a small deposit) and we have started to offer additional incentives such as carpets and contribution to legal costs. As the market appears to be picking up it is felt that the prices of the properties are reasonable at this stage. We have monthly meetings with Liberata to discuss progress and the position on sales will continue to be monitored and reported back to Executive in 6 months.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None directly arising from this report

Financial: When all the Improvement for Sale properties have been sold 41.7% of the receipts will need to be returned to HCA, in line with the original proportion of funding that they put into the project.

Legal: None directly arising from this report

Risk Management: None directly arising from this report

Health and Safety: None directly arising from this report

Sustainability: None directly arising from this report

Community Safety: None directly arising from this report

Equality and Diversity: None directly arising from this report

APPENDICES

None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None