

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL (HMR) UPDATE

The confirmed allocation for the Borough for 2010 – 11 is £8,349,651 million. Residents living within the HMR areas will continue to see an ongoing programme of refurbishments, acquisitions and clearance projects as well as some community and environmental initiatives during the year.

PROGRAMME UPDATE 2010-11

To the end of September we have spent and claimed around £4.7m of HMR grant on some of the following projects.

Refurbishments Inner North West – Refurbishment schemes on Sandon Street, Bombay Street, Hardman Street and Norman Street in the Griffin area continue to progress well.

Refurbishments Inner South East – The Accrington Road “gateway” scheme (phase 1) from Audley Range junction to Bank Lane is on site and a traffic management system is in place whilst work is underway. The scheme is progressing well. Phase 2 of the Accrington Road scheme between Bank Lane and Shadsworth Road started on site during September. Refurbishments to one side of Hall Street in the Infirmary area will be completed in October and the block on the opposite side is on site.

Refurbishments Darwen – A number of properties in the St Peter’s Church conservation area are being refurbished through the Council’s main programme. The scheme on Victoria Street is progressing well and scheduled to finish in October. This will complete the housing regeneration of the area with all identified (eligible) properties having been refurbished.

Griffin Regeneration – Acquisitions in the Griffin area are progressing well with 29 acquisitions completed this year. We have now completed purchase of 86 of the 166 properties that we intend to buy in the red zone. Demolitions in the area have begun with five properties demolished on Coleridge Street. Further demolitions are planned to take place in November.

Queen Street Regeneration – A scheme has been developed to build around 95 new homes of mixed tenure and type on the Council’s clearance site and TVH’s Woodvale site. The planning application will be presented at the November planning committee.

Infirmary Area Regeneration – The development of Lock 54 is due to be completed at the end of October. The Infirmary Street development is on site and progressing well.

Community Confidence Project – The project has started carrying out safety initiatives on properties in identified streets across the three Housing regeneration areas.

SECURE BY DESIGN

After a major refurbishment, funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the council, Highfield Park in the Infirmary area of Blackburn has been granted the Police's accredited 'Secured by Design' award. Highfield Park is the first park in the Borough to receive this prestigious award and will compliment the exemplar housing regeneration carried out in the Infirmary Waterside area.

Secured by Design which is strongly advocated by the housing regeneration team has also been granted to a number of other new housing developments across the Borough, these are:

- The Valley Lane, Livesey Green and Dunoon Drive housing developments by Twin Valley Homes.
- The Mosley Street and Audley Range developments by Great Places
- Brandyhouse Brow development by Guinness Northern Counties

For further information please enter the following address in your internet browser

<http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.53879>

We continue to work with developers to ensure that standards and specifications of new developments are of the highest quality across the Borough

For further information contact: Subhan Ali on (01254) 585768.

HOUSING STRATEGY

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY

A new strategy has been drafted in response to the changed housing market conditions we face and the reductions in government funding. Since the beginning of the programme in 2003/2004, massive progress has been made in Housing Market Renewal. Whilst challenges remain, particularly in the Griffin Area, the pace at which we can address them will be reduced because of reduced government funding. At the same time the Borough still has a massive problem of older terraced housing in poor condition, and the new Strategy seeks to address this in new ways.

The worst conditions are found in the private rented sector. We will address through selective licensing, and accreditation of private landlords to improve both housing conditions and management standards.

We will offer practical advice and assistance to all home owners, with the vulnerable having access to extra support through our new Decent and Safe Homes Scheme. This new service will provide a one stop shop for home improvement, repair and adaptations.

There will be no return to the widespread use of renovation grants, as the primary responsibility for upkeep of properties lies with owners. Instead the Strategy will develop a range of low cost and equity loan products to support renovation of properties.

Throughout the Strategy home energy efficiency, including use of modern technology and design, is a priority, with the vulnerable receiving extra support through affordable warmth schemes.

The range of housing interventions in the Strategy will support the health and independence of households, meeting their needs in personalised and holistic ways.