

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDING SYSTEM :
REFERENCE NUMBER :

CABINET

18TH DECEMBER 2003

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

OLDHAM & ROCHDALE HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROSPECTUS

“TRANSFORMATION AND COHESION”

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the completion of the Oldham & Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Prospectus and seek approval for the submission of the Prospectus to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). The Prospectus Executive Summary is attached at Appendix A.

A full copy of the Prospectus is available to Members on request.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to approve the submission of the Prospectus to the ODPM.

- 2.2 It is recommended that this report be exempt from call in due to the need to meet the Prospectus submission deadline of the 19th December 2003.

2.3 It is also recommended that this item is treated as urgent business. This is because the Housing Market Renewal Executive did not meet until 15 December 2003 to approve the final draft Prospectus.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As Cabinet is aware, Oldham and Rochdale were selected as one of the nine Pathfinder areas for Housing Market Renewal.
- 3.2 Over the past year, work has been ongoing with Rochdale MBC to develop the Prospectus, detailing our proposals for housing Market Renewal. Members have been involved with the HMR Executive and through workshops, the Area Planning process and engaged in consultation and master planning at the neighbourhood level. The culmination of this work has resulted in the completion of the Prospectus, which Members are asked to approve.
- 3.3 It is proposed, subject to Cabinet approval, that the Prospectus is submitted to the ODPM on the 19th December 2003. Following the submission there will be a detailed assessment carried out by the ODPM and Audit Commission. The negotiation period with the ODPM will begin in earnest in January 2004, with an initial meeting being scheduled with the ODPM on the 9th January 2004.

4. OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES

- 4.1 These have been fully considered during the preparation of the Prospectus as explained in the document.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The HMR process has involved both Boroughwide and neighbourhood consultation and the involvement of a very wide range of stakeholders.

6. CORPORATE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMENTS

- 6.1 To be the subject of future reports.

7. IT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Improving environmental conditions and the environmental performance of the housing stock is a major feature of the Prospectus.

9. COMMUNITY COHESION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Promoting community cohesion is as the very heart of the Prospectus hence its title "Transformation and Cohesion". Consideration of the prime importance of this issue has informed every aspect of the Prospectus.
- 9.2 Community Safety is the subject of a specific Strategic Programme within the Prospectus.

10. TREASURER'S COMMENTS

The costings are still being refined but will be fixed for the Report going to the HMR Executive on 15th December and will therefore be available for this meeting. The latest headline figures are:

	Years 1 and 2 (2004/05 and 2005/06) £M	Years 1 to 15 (2004/05 to 2018/19) £M
HMR – only	56	877
Total (incl NWDA, EP and Private)	126	2609

This is a substantial sum of money and will require the relevant departments to "staff-up" in advance of the 1st April 2004 if the expenditure targets are to be hit. This will have to come from the department's own budgets as there is no staffing budget in the "early wins" money already received. The costs after 1/4/04 will be met from HMR assuming the Prospectus is approved by the ODPM.

As the Accountable body the Council will have to bear considerable financial risk. Discussions are currently planned as to how those risks might be minimised through the commissioning process that will facilitate delivery of the programme. Also, a risk analysis of the programme as a whole has been completed and the management of those risks by the HMR team will enable them to give some measure of comfort to the Council.

11. LEGAL COMMENTS

Oldham MBC is the Accountable Body but there will be an agreement to share the funding risks with Rochdale MBC. It is proposed that the HMR Executive will continue but with new terms of reference, and with overall responsibility for the delivery and direction of the Housing Market Renewal Programme. The Executive will commission delivery through a series of contracts. Contractual arrangements will need to be formalised through the respective Councils. (AMJ)

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The Oldham & Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Prospectus sets out our approach to dealing with the issues of housing market failure. The Prospectus is underpinned by its emphasis on “transformation” and “cohesion”, which are crucial to the sustainable regeneration of the borough. There are significant opportunities through Housing Market Renewal, to make a huge contribution to the process of regenerating the Borough. The Prospectus is commended to the Cabinet.

Work is, of course, ongoing in relation to more detailed planning programming and delivery issues and further reports will be brought before Cabinet.

13. FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE

- 13.1 DEC 03-62

14. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 14.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the submission of the Prospectus to the Office of the Deputy Prime minister.
- 14.2 That this report be exempt from call-in due to the need to meet the Prospectus submission deadline of the 19th December 2003.

The following is a list of the background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100D(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information, as defined by that Act.

Nil.

APPENDIX A

Important note: This version of the draft Executive Summary of the Prospectus does not include all the key figures and costs because these are still being finalised. Further information to fill in the gaps will be available at the meeting.

Transformation and Cohesion:

Prospectus for the
Oldham & Rochdale
Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

December 2003

Foreword

The Oldham and Rochdale Housing Marketing Renewal Pathfinder Project was set up to find ways to improve demand for homes in some of the least popular neighbourhoods in our two boroughs.

It is overseen by our two boroughs' Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), representing a wide range of local organisations and the local community.

The two LSPs have agreed to work together as *Partners in Action*, both on housing market renewal and on other important issues relating to both boroughs. For example, we have a Joint Vision for Regeneration (see facing page), and we have worked in partnership on Masterplanning the physical development of our boroughs.

This document is a summary of proposals for transforming some of the least popular neighbourhoods of our two boroughs into places where people have choices about the kind of home they live in, and where the quality of life is high.

The proposals have been developed in consultation with many people from our local communities.

Our Prospectus for improving local neighbourhoods is a bid for a share of the many millions of pounds that have been made available by the Government as part of its *Communities Plan* for creating sustainable communities throughout the country.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to make a significant improvement to our boroughs over the next 15 years, providing benefits to local people that will last for generations.

This Executive Summary gives a flavour of our full Prospectus – hundreds of pages of facts and figures, maps and photographs, making our case for investment in Oldham and Rochdale – which was sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister this month (December 2003).

By the end of March, we expect to have completed negotiations on how much funding will be made available to us.

Then in April 2004 – building on work already underway - we will step up the pace of changes to local neighbourhoods that will bring about the transformation they so urgently need.

John McGuire

John McGuire,
Chair of the Oldham and Rochdale
Housing Market Renewal
Pathfinder Executive.

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(Photos of members of the Executive to be included on this page.)

Members of the Executive (see inside back cover for details).

From the left, Councillor Peter Dean, Councillor John Anchor, Councillor Peter Roberts, Councillor Barbara Todd, Bernard Gallagher, Gail Richards, Mohammed Naeem, Chief Supt. David Baines, Keith Reeve, and Bill Skilkil.

What we mean by transformation

Oldham and Rochdale were chosen as a Pathfinder area for housing market renewal because both boroughs include neighbourhoods where demand for homes is poor and could collapse if no action is taken.

In other areas of the country where the housing market HAS collapsed, owners have been unable to sell their homes and many properties have been abandoned, leading to further decline.

The challenge for Pathfinders is to match the supply of homes to the needs of local people now and in the future. At the same time, we need to improve the quality of life in local neighbourhoods to make them places where people choose to live and stay, rather than having no other option.

Our aim is that in addition to high quality housing and living conditions, local people will have access, for example, to high quality jobs, to the education and training that will enable them to get the jobs, and to high quality healthcare and leisure opportunities.

Everything we do needs to be aimed at bringing communities together, building on what unites people and breaking down barriers between them. That's why our main aim is "to deliver a transformation in the housing markets in our area that will create sustainable communities and lead to greater community cohesion."

We believe that a strength of our project – which will enable us to bring about these wide-ranging changes – is that it is being run by the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) for Oldham and Rochdale, working together as *Partners in Action* and representing the whole community, rather than solely including organisations concerned with housing.

Our proposals are based on careful research and consideration of local information. They have been produced in partnership with the communities whose lives they will change. They fit in with other local, regional and national strategies for improving communities. And our track record of partnership for regeneration shows we can achieve our aims.

We have demonstrated our ability to improve our boroughs by using the more than £6 million already made available to us to start acquiring sites, to involve the community in the development process, and to bring about practical improvements to the environment and to the security of empty homes.

The scale of change we are proposing is huge. For example, over the next 15 years we will clear some 6,000 homes and replace them with 7,000 modern new homes.

Achieving this major transformation will require a huge amount of investment, not only of Housing Market Renewal funds but also of funding from other public agencies and from the private sector, much of it prompted by the catalyst of Housing Market Renewal action.

Our Prospectus sets out our bid for £xx million in Housing Market Renewal funding in the first two years (2004-2006) and a total of £xxx million over the 15-year life of the Pathfinder project.

These are huge sums. But this substantial proposed investment of Housing Market Renewal funding forms part of a much larger total investment in the regeneration of HMR neighbourhoods in our two boroughs, estimated to amount to £x,xxx million over 15 years.

And the total sum being invested in the whole of our boroughs will be several times greater still.

Approval of our proposals would enable us to transform our two boroughs, bringing benefits that will last for generations.

OUR VISION FOR REGENERATION

Rochdale and Oldham will be thriving, playing a new and dynamic role in the conurbation.

Modern quality housing, bustling town centres, modern leisure facilities and access to the superb countryside that surrounds us, will transform our lifestyles.

We will be better off in all sorts of ways. We will have the skills and the access to a wide range of modern jobs; and our lives will be enriched with our unique culture and diversity.

Oldham & Rochdale townscapes will be exemplars of good urban design.

People will hear about us and think "that sounds like a great place to live".

Nothing less than fundamental change will do.

The challenge of housing market renewal

Oldham and Rochdale are neighbouring boroughs in the north-east of Greater Manchester and are home to more than 400,000 people.

Both boroughs include many areas where demand for homes is strong and communities are settled but they also have many neighbourhoods where the homes available don't meet modern needs and where the quality of life for local people is poor.

Our challenge is to match the supply of homes to the needs of local people now and in the future and at the same time improve the quality of life in local neighbourhoods to make them places where people choose to live and stay.

The Pathfinder area within the two boroughs includes some 70,000 homes – 40,000 in Oldham and 30,000 in Rochdale.

The homes are a mixture of owner-occupied properties (many of them older terraced houses built before 1914), Council homes (some on estates where turnover of tenancies is high), and much smaller numbers of homes rented from housing associations or private landlords.

In some inner urban neighbourhoods close to Oldham and Rochdale town centres there are far too many old, small terraced houses that don't meet modern needs. At the same time and often in the same areas, there is a shortage of affordable larger homes with gardens and parking.

Some of the poorer inner urban areas of both our boroughs are home to people of Asian heritage, including some original immigrants but increasingly comprising people born and raised here.

Demand for homes in these areas is artificially maintained by the wish for communities with a common heritage to stay together. Adding to this pressure is the increase in both the size of this section of the community and the increase in the number of new households being formed.

Often these neighbourhoods are overcrowded and densely-populated, yet nearby are other neighbourhoods with high levels of empty homes. The problem is the lack of the right type and mix of housing in the right places.

One of our greatest challenges is to create opportunities for all our local residents to choose where they live without fear, whatever their background or housing needs.

Other areas of terraced housing are occupied by a growing population of elderly people unable to afford to maintain or improve their homes.

There are also significant numbers of homes where landlords have bought properties at low prices and in some cases don't maintain the properties or manage the tenants properly. This has led to a cycle of decline in some neighbourhoods. Despite low rents, some homes remain empty because demand in these areas is low.

Both boroughs also have social-rented housing estates in outer rings around the main towns. These homes are managed by the two local authorities' arms-length management organisations or by housing associations.

On some of these estates, turnover of tenants is very high (up to 30% a year) because people who move in don't stay for long. Some types of home, such as one-bedroom flats and bedsits, are especially unpopular.

Symptoms and solutions

Symptoms of housing market problems in the Housing Market Renewal areas of the two boroughs include:

- ◆ **Low property prices.** Although prices are still rising, the gap between the average price of a terraced house there and in the region as a whole has increased from £10,000 in 1997 to £23,000 this year.
- ◆ **Empty properties.** There are significantly more empty properties than in the boroughs as a whole – up to 4.8% compared with 2.7%.
- ◆ **Overcrowding.** Some 12% of households are overcrowded, rising to 36% in the worst-affected neighbourhoods.
- ◆ **Deprivation.** The Housing Market Renewal areas include some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the country. For example, three central electoral wards in Oldham are in the most deprived 1% in the country.
- ◆ **Dissatisfaction with neighbourhoods.** A survey of all households in Oldham and Rochdale showed that in the Housing Market Renewal areas only 29% of households expected and wished to stay in their current neighbourhood for the next five years, compared with 46% in other parts of the boroughs. The main reasons for wanting to move were for a bigger home, to buy a home rather than rent, and for a better quality of life (including access to schools and a cleaner or less built-up environment).
- ◆ **Racial segregation.** The population of the Housing Market Renewal areas is 74% white, with 15% Pakistani, 7% Bangladeshi, and 4% other origins. However, members of the Asian heritage communities – many of whom were born and raised here and have never lived anywhere else – are concentrated in a small number of neighbourhoods. Movement between neighbourhoods is restricted by a strong preference for owner-occupation, social and community ties, and fear of harassment in neighbourhoods not traditionally occupied by Asian heritage communities.

We aim to improve the local housing market by:

- ◆ **Improving property values.** We will, for example, increase the land available for housing, increase developers' confidence in neighbourhoods through subsidies, improve local people's incomes, promote high design and building standards, and increase the proportion of privately-owned properties.
- ◆ **Reducing turnover.** We will demolish unwanted properties, and improve the range of homes and the mix of homes to buy or rent to match modern needs.
- ◆ **Improving satisfaction with neighbourhoods.** We will build new homes and improve retained properties, reduce crime, improve the environment, and manage services more effectively.
- ◆ **Reducing segregation.** We will provide support for communities to move into new areas, develop new high quality housing in central locations that will attract potential purchasers from a wider social background, and continue to work with social landlords to create opportunities for ethnic minority communities to move into social rented housing, which had previously been unpopular.

Action to improve the quality of life in the Housing Market Renewal areas will be aimed at ensuring that local people have access to:

- ◆ **High quality jobs** (such as those expected to be created in Manchester city centre, at Kingsway Business Park in Rochdale, at other economic development sites in both boroughs), and in our town centres,

- ◆ **Education and training** that will enable them to get the jobs (including access to higher education locally through our proposals for university colleges in each borough),
- ◆ **High quality services**, including healthcare and leisure opportunities.

Achieving transformation and cohesion

In order to achieve our main aim “*to deliver a transformation in the housing markets in our area that will create sustainable communities and lead to greater community cohesion*” we need to take action to improve the quality of life as well as improving housing conditions.

Work on Housing Market Renewal is also taking place in the context of the Joint Vision for Regeneration of our two boroughs and the work being done jointly on Masterplanning development of the built and natural environment. Examples of how the partners are already working together on joint initiatives include:

- ◆ **HERO (Higher Education Rochdale and Oldham)**. The Local Learning Partnerships in both boroughs are working with key universities, including the University of Huddersfield, to establish a University College in Oldham and a University College in Rochdale.
- ◆ **Energy Efficiency Partnership - Concerto**. Rochdale and Oldham, through the Pathfinder, have made a bid to the European Union *Concerto* initiative to fund some demonstration projects that will show that energy sustainability can be cost-effectively built into standard homes.
- ◆ **Rochdale Canal Strategy**. Improvements to the Canal Corridor running through Rochdale and Oldham have recently been completed. This provides major opportunities for recreation, tourism and waterside developments.

In addition to Masterplanning work at the level of the two boroughs together and the individual boroughs, we have also prepared Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) at Township level in Rochdale and at Area Committee level in Oldham.

These provide a localised context for regeneration by mapping out existing initiatives, presenting key issues, and setting priorities for regeneration. In particular they provide the strategic context for Neighbourhood Plans and seek to prioritise investment through Housing Market Renewal and other sources. The ADFs have been prepared utilising local expertise and with the involvement of the Township Areas Partnerships and Area Committees.

We have produced detailed Neighbourhood Plans for the first four neighbourhoods for major physical intervention and Neighbourhood Profiles setting out the challenges and opportunities in the other neighbourhoods for later intervention.

Our objectives

In order to achieve our overall aim of transformation and cohesion, we have agreed five objectives for the Pathfinder project, along with ways of measuring our success.

Two of our objectives cover things that the Pathfinder project can achieve through its own activities:

- ◆ *To transform the housing choices to meet current and future demand, providing modern attractive homes, through clearance, remodelling and redevelopment.*
- ◆ *To achieve and sustain an excellent standard for existing retained housing focussing especially on priority neighbourhoods.*

Two objectives are things that the Pathfinder project can *influence* but whose *achievement* depend on the activities of the *Partners in Action* and others:

- ◆ *To improve the image, safety and attractiveness of neighbourhoods so people will be proud to live there and choose to invest.*
- ◆ *To improve substantially the quality of life of local people by increasing employment and leisure opportunities, and transforming their educational attainment and health.*

And a further objective underpins everything the Pathfinder will do to improve local communities:

- ◆ *In all that we do, we will work together to achieve community cohesion, creating places where a range of people can live happily together.*

Neighbourhood analysis

The Pathfinder area is made up of 31 local neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct character and issues.

We have analysed the following issues at neighbourhood level:

- ◆ **Needs** – how much attention the neighbourhood needs to make it attractive and sustainable.
- ◆ **Risk of market failure** – the extent to which demand for homes (owner-occupied and rented) is in danger of collapse.
- ◆ **MORI survey findings** – the views of residents about their neighbourhood and particularly their intentions to stay or leave (as indicated from responses to a questionnaire sent to every household in both boroughs).
- ◆ **Cohesion** – the extent to which people of different backgrounds (e.g. age, income, tenure, ethnicity) live together in harmony.
- ◆ **Geography** – for instance, how close the neighbourhood is to other areas with potential market failure, and to one of the town centres or the countryside,
- ◆ **Opportunity/Deliverability** – the scope for making improvements to the neighbourhood, the capacity of the Pathfinder to bring them about, and the capacity of the community to be involved in decision-making about its neighbourhood.

Staged programme of action

This process enabled us to identify a staged approach to our action to improve the neighbourhoods.

- **Early actions** – these are already underway (e.g. the security patrols keeping an eye on empty properties, which has reduced burglaries considerably in the areas where it operates).
- **Physical intervention in neighbourhoods** that need help, phased over 15 years.
 - ❖ Four neighbourhoods for action in the first wave of activity have already been chosen and will benefit from action starting in April 2004 (subject to approval of the Pathfinder's bid for funding). See later for details.
 - ❖ Six neighbourhoods for action in the second wave have been identified, and neighbourhood planning work will start in 2004.
 - ❖ The sequence in which action will be taken in the further neighbourhoods will be determined through the neighbourhood planning process.

- **Strategic Programmes** aimed at improving the quality of life, based on seven themes:
 - ❖ Community Involvement – including cohesion and culture
 - ❖ Neighbourhood Management
 - ❖ Environmental Improvement and Maintenance – including high quality and cohesive design
 - ❖ Community Safety
 - ❖ Private Sector Housing Support
 - ❖ Economy and Employment
 - ❖ Education

Work specifically funded through Housing Market Renewal will complement other activity by the *Partners in Action* and other agencies, co-ordinated through development of comprehensive Neighbourhood Plans, based on Neighbourhood Profiles and other research and consultation.

We understand the potential for action in one neighbourhood to affect the housing market in other neighbourhoods nearby so we will monitor and take account of such changes in our future planning. We have also taken into account the potential interaction between actions in our Pathfinder area and the neighbouring Pathfinders of Manchester/Salford and East Lancashire.

Community involvement in renewal

The process of developing our proposals for action to improve the housing market in our neighbourhoods has involved wide consultation with local residents and other stakeholders through a variety of processes integrated with other regeneration initiatives.

Formal decisions on what action to take have been made by the Pathfinder Executive, made up of representatives of the Oldham and Rochdale Local Strategic Partnerships, taking into account the outcome of this extensive public involvement.

Examples of how the community has contributed to the process include:

- Every household in the two boroughs was given the opportunity, through a MORI survey, to feed their views and wishes into the process. The information gathered through that process will be used not only to help with decision-making on Housing Market Renewal but also to help local organisations make decisions on other spending.
- Local people in the first four neighbourhoods for action have been involved in extensive consultation. Their views have been taken into account in developing proposals for action. Consultation events and 'planning for real' type exercises, using maps and simple three-dimensional models, have been held in places where communities already meet and feel at ease, including mosques, schools, shops and pubs.
- Specific work on helping local people take part in the process included training 15 community volunteers in basic urban design principles so that they could play a fuller part in working with professional consultants to draw up plans for the future shape of the Werneth/Freehold neighbourhood in Oldham.
- Computer technology has been used to show how a neighbourhood could change for the better. For example, a virtual reality tour of the Wardleworth/Hamer neighbourhood in Rochdale included examples of how

outdated terraced homes to be demolished could be replaced with modern homes in a variety of possible layouts.

- Local people have been on visits to other areas to see successful schemes (e.g. for housing, traffic management etc) that might be applicable locally.
- Local councillors have contributed to the development of the proposals, representing the views of the community.

We are committed to involving local people in its work throughout the lifetime of the project through effective consultation.

Proposals for transformation

Using the process of research, analysis and consultation already described, the first four neighbourhoods for physical intervention were agreed to be Wardleworth/Hamer and Langley in Rochdale borough and Werneth/Freehold and Derker in Oldham.

The following information summarises the problem in each of these neighbourhoods and our proposals action to bring about improvements.

Wardleworth and Hamer

The Wardleworth and Hamer HMR neighbourhood includes the distinct neighbourhoods of Wardleworth, Hamer, Mayfield, Cloverhall and Bellshill.

It forms part of the electoral ward of Smallbridge and Wardleworth, which in terms of deprivation is the 3rd worst in the Rochdale borough and the 100th worst ward (out of 8,414) in England and Wales.

The area is predominantly residential, with a population of approximately 9,500, housed in 2,820 properties. However, there is also a significant proportion of land in industrial/manufacturing use – a legacy of Rochdale's industrial past.

Proposals for transformation include:

- ◆ Clearing xxx outdated homes,
- ◆ Providing xxxx high quality, modern housing for sale and rent,
- ◆ Improving xxx Council properties and refurbishing xxx other homes,
- ◆ Making fundamental changes to the land use patterns in the area, including relocating some industry,
- ◆ Using the River Roch as a feature for more housing development, including the Dale Mill site,
- ◆ Promoting high quality design standards.
- ◆ Linking developments in the neighbourhood to the town centre.
- ◆ Improving the local environment, especially public spaces and the provision for people and vehicles.

Langley

Langley is an estate of some 5,000 homes on the south-western periphery of Rochdale borough in the Middleton township. It was built as an overspill estate by Manchester City Council in the 1950s on garden city principles, with open spaces and trees. Originally all the homes were Council-owned but under the Right To Buy some have transferred to private ownership. In 2002, ownership of the Council homes transferred to Bowlee Park Housing Association. The estate is isolated from the wider borough and the township of Middleton both physically and in the perceptions of many local people.

Langley is in the Middleton West electoral ward, which in terms of deprivation is the 119th worst ward (out of 8,414) in England and Wales and is the second most deprived ward in the borough of Rochdale.

The problems include low house prices and a very high proportion of empty homes, a poor environment, lack of housing choice and quality, an ageing population, high levels of benefit dependency, and negative external perception of the area.

Proposals for transformation include:

- ◆ Clearing xxx housing association and private homes,
- ◆ Building xxxx new high quality, modern homes for sale,
- ◆ Improving xxxx housing association homes,
- ◆ A range of inter-connected measures to raise quality of life, such as environmental and leisure improvements,
- ◆ Improving Langley's connections with the rest of the Rochdale borough.

Derker

Derker lies 1.8km north east of Oldham town centre and is home to 5,450 people. It contains 2,317 homes, 52% of which are owner-occupied, 30% are rented through First Choice Homes Oldham, and 14% are privately rented. Most of the private housing is terraced, much of it over 100 years old.

Derker also contains a significant number of industrial premises, including some that are old and in poor condition. It has a railway station, an award-winning park, and four primary schools. The population includes a high percentage of under 14s. Derker has not previously benefited from any comprehensive regeneration initiatives.

Proposals for transformation include:

- ◆ Clearing xxx outdated homes,
- ◆ Building xxx high quality, modern new homes,
- ◆ Refurbishing xxxx homes,
- ◆ Improving xxx Council homes,
- ◆ Development of new local centre,
- ◆ Improving open spaces, and making better connections to Metrolink stations and adjacent areas.

Werneth/Freehold

The Werneth/Freehold neighbourhood is a tightly-knit area of predominantly terraced housing bounded by Manchester Road to the east and the Oldham to Manchester railway line to the west.

There are 1,883 properties in the area, including 1,300 terraced homes, around 300 Council homes, most of which are flats, and semi detached homes, particularly adjacent to the railway line.

The population of the Freehold/Werneth area is 4,821 and consists of 1,883 households, 47% of which are owner-occupied, 21% are rented through First Choice Homes Oldham, 15% housing associations, and 17% are privately rented. The area has a very diverse ethnic mix of population, with 49% of white and 45% Asian heritage. The area is part of a Single Regeneration Budget programme, which ends in 2006.

Proposals for transformation include:

- ◆ Clearing xxx homes,
- ◆ Building xxx modern new homes,
- ◆ Refurbishing xxx homes,
- ◆ Improving xxx Council homes,
- ◆ Redeveloping Hartford Mill,
- ◆ Improving open space and traffic management,
- ◆ Making better links with the proposed Metrolink station and adjacent areas.

Second Wave Neighbourhoods

Our detailed assessment of each neighbourhood has identified six for major intervention in the second wave of action. They are Clarksfield, Hathershaw, and Hollinwood in Oldham, and Kirkholt, Sparthbottoms, and Spotland and Falinge in Rochdale.

In these second wave neighbourhoods we will:

- Consult and plan in 2004/5.
- Develop intervention programmes and start early action during 2005/6.
 - **Commence major investment in 2006/7.**

The timetabling of further neighbourhood interventions beyond 2006/7 will be decided as part of the first annual review of the programme in 2005.

Strategic 'Quality of Life' Programmes

Our actions to improve neighbourhoods through the Neighbourhood Plans will go hand in hand with work through our Strategic Programmes aimed at improving the quality of life for local residents, focussing on the neighbourhood satisfaction issues arising from the MORI survey.

Our strategic programmes fall into seven themes for improving the quality of life for local people:

Community Involvement – including cohesion and culture

For example, we will:

- Increase the percentage of people involved in decision-making,
- Increase the number of households provided with additional support, including elderly people, families with chaotic lives, refugees and asylum seekers, and those who move to areas where they would not traditionally choose to live,

Neighbourhood Management

This includes improving the co-ordination of services and responding better to the needs of disadvantaged communities.

For example, we will:

- Employ Neighbourhood Managers,
- Employ local people as Neighbourhood Wardens/Caretakers

Environmental Improvement and Maintenance – including high quality and cohesive design

This will involve a balanced package of maintenance, enforcement and awareness-raising. Integral to this will be a programme to enable and

encourage local people to take greater responsibility for their local environment.

For example, we will:

- Improve gateways into and corridors through neighbourhoods,
- Improve the cleanliness of streets and open spaces,
- Improve the management of temporary vacant sites.

Community Safety

For example, we will:

- Tackle youth nuisance, gang culture, misuse of vehicles and anti-social behaviour through targeted youth inclusion and drug action projects,
- Use multi-tenure neighbour nuisance teams and other enforcement measures to support these projects, building on the success of the existing teams,
- Use crime prevention techniques including “smart water” property marking, alley-gating, and improved street lighting.

Private Sector Housing Support

For example, we will:

- Work with private landlords to tackle poor management and property conditions,
- Buy empty properties and get them back into use or demolish them,
- Expand our Equity Release Scheme to help low income homeowners to improve or repair their homes,
- Develop our Property Adviser Team to ensure that residents receive good quality advice and support,

Economy and Employment

If we are to improve the value of homes it is equally important for us to improve the economic circumstances of our residents so that they can afford to be owner occupiers.

For example, we will:

- Work with training providers, our contractors and partners to develop local skills and improve access to jobs and training opportunities,
- Jointly sponsor a “School for Regeneration”.
- Develop the successful “Construction Oldham Rochdale” project to help local people benefit from local training and employment opportunities in construction.
- Use Housing Market Renewal to maximise leverage of other resources to fund employment links programmes, job matching services, childcare and community transport projects that help to link people in the HMR neighbourhoods to job opportunities.

Education

The quality of local education is a major factor in housing choice for young families and students, so, for example, we will:

- Closely integrate our Housing Market Renewal strategy with our schools improvement programmes.
- Promote the creation of a University College in each of our boroughs as part of our HERO (Higher Education Rochdale Oldham) initiative.

Integration and Adding Value

The Partners in Action are submitting our proposals to transform Oldham and Rochdale's housing market at a time when the Government is focusing on tackling low demand for housing by providing high quality, well-designed homes and building sustainable communities.

Our housing market renewal plans link in with the Government's national, regional and local policies. We are confident that we can do this because representatives from organisations that develop and implement these policies and will ultimately judge our bid have contributed to our plans from the outset.

Tackling the problem of low demand for homes and abandoned homes in some neighbourhoods is common to many Government policies, and our plans treat this as a priority.

The importance of quality and design is also common to many national and regional strategies, and this issue is at the heart of our proposals.

The boroughs of Oldham and Rochdale include some of the most affluent and most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. The Government is eager to reduce the gap between 'rich' and 'poor' neighbourhoods, and our Housing Market Renewal proposals will help to achieve this.

We will do this by adopting a holistic approach to transforming neighbourhoods. We recognise that providing modern housing alone will not create sustainable communities and so our proposals include plans to work with partner organisations to bring more jobs to the area, to improve health and educational services, and to tackle crime and disorder.

The Partners in Action have an impressive record of delivering large-scale regeneration projects, and have established systems and procedures for working together.

Large-scale investments are already planned or are taking place, such as developing the region's largest business park at Kingsway in Rochdale, extending the Metrolink to Oldham and Rochdale, and investing millions of pounds in the boroughs' schools through the Private Finance Initiative. The two councils' arms length management organisations are also investing £150 million in improving council homes in both boroughs.

The Housing Market Renewal programme presents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build on these projects and transform the boroughs in an integrated way.

Achieving Community Cohesion

Improving community cohesion is a top priority in our proposals for Housing Market Renewal. Increasing interaction and understanding between people in the boroughs of Oldham and Rochdale is central to our aims.

The boroughs of Oldham and Rochdale are home to people of different ages, abilities, ethnic origin and incomes. Human nature dictates that "we like to live near to people who are like us", whether that means they earn a similar amount of money, they are of the same ethnic origin, or they are around the same age.

However, a lack of interaction between communities can lead to misunderstandings and fear. This has caused problems in the local housing market as some people are

scared to move to new neighbourhoods, and so some areas are overcrowded, whilst others have large numbers of empty properties.

Transforming neighbourhoods offers us the chance to improve relationships between communities. We aim to provide more opportunities - at school, work or in neighbourhoods - for people of different ages, ethnic origins and incomes to interact.

We want to create places with suitable housing and living circumstances for everyone, where people have the opportunity to integrate by choice.

But transforming neighbourhoods will not be achieved by demolishing, renovating and building properties alone. If the building work is *the physics* of the process, then the people issues are *the chemistry*.

Our proposed building work will inevitably disrupt some people's lives in the short term. We are committed to involving all sections of the community in the decision-making process, keeping people well informed of our progress, and minimising the discomfort of those people directly affected. It is vital that we get the chemistry right in order that we achieve long-term benefits for everyone in the boroughs.

An example of how we plan to break down barriers between communities is by improving access to training and jobs for all residents of our boroughs. We will ensure that all sections of the community have access to safe shared spaces, we will support people who want to move, and we will provide a range of sizes, types and prices of home to buy or rent.

Our plans will benefit greatly from the vast experience of the Partners in Action in developing and implementing community cohesion initiatives. For example, Rochdale Council is one of only two councils in the country to receive two commendations for its work on community cohesion in the form of Beacon Council and Pathfinder status.

In short, achieving community cohesion is integral to everything we plan to do to renew the housing market and it should add value to the wide range of strategies that are being implemented in Oldham and Rochdale.

Putting our plans into action

The Local Strategic Partnerships for Oldham and Rochdale, working together as Partners in Action, will oversee the implementation of the Prospectus. Using their authority, much of the decision-making will be done by the Housing Market Renewal Executive.

The future status and membership of the Executive is being reviewed and, at least until that is done, Oldham Council will continue to be the accountable body with legal and financial responsibility for our overall Pathfinder project.

Work on specific parts of the project – at the neighbourhood level and on the strategic programmes – will be commissioned from “delivery agents” by the Executive and supporting Core Pathfinder Team, who will be responsible for strategic direction and overall programme management. A core team of staff already exists and additional staff are now being recruited.

Our delivery agents include housing associations, the private sector, the two Councils and their arms length management organisations, Rochdale Development Agency, and sub-partnerships of the LSPs. They are all robust partners, signed-up to the process for the long-term. They have a strong track record for delivery

These arrangements will be formalised in a series of programme agreements with the Executive. Projects will be rigorously assessed before approval.

The process for achieving the Neighbourhood Plans for the four first wave neighbourhoods will involve a Neighbourhood Programme Manager, whose role will be to oversee a multi-agency team working on rehousing, refurbishment, community engagement and, in some cases, environmental improvement.

The Neighbourhood Programme Manager will chair a small Neighbourhood Executive Board consisting of senior executive members of the key delivery agents.

There will also be a broader Neighbourhood Partnership consisting of representatives of residents' and all of the agents involved. The Neighbourhood Programme Manager will make reports to this body and will take actions in response to concerns and views.

There are established Neighbourhood Partnerships in Langley and in Wardleworth and Hamer; there are embryonic ones in Werneth/Freehold and in Derker, though more formalised terms of reference need to be established.

Our direction and review of the Strategy has been, and will continue to be shaped by our Risk Management Strategy and detailed action plans to mitigate risks.

We will use high quality project management systems. The risks of capacity constraints in the construction and regeneration sector are being identified so that appropriate action can be taken.

Strengthening community involvement and support will be a continuing priority. We will communicate and market our activities and achievements to ensure that the benefits of our investments are reflected in an improved image.

We have a well-developed set of processes for turning our plans into action but there remain areas for development and there are specific issues where the Government could assist us in implementation, particularly in relation to changes to the benefits system and in the regulation of private landlords.

There will be an annual Strategic Review, with an external review in 2005. Detailed monitoring systems have been developed to support the Review.

The outline Implementation Plan will be developed in detail between January and March 2004.