

**PROPOSED CRAVEN AND PATERSON STREETS HMRI IMPROVEMENT SCHEME,
BIRKENHEAD**

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to:

- prepare an improvement scheme for Craven and Paterson Streets as part of the Housing Market Renewal Programme 2008/11, subject to the securing of financial resources for 2008/11 from the Newheartlands HMRI Pathfinder
- appoint Maritime Housing as the agent/project manager for Phase 1 of the scheme
- appoint Ainsley Gommon as the architect for Phase 1 of the scheme
- bring a further report to Cabinet at a later date containing scheme details and procurement information, prior to works commencing.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Since 2003 Wirral has delivered a programme of housing market renewal utilising over £43million of HMRI funding across eastern neighbourhoods of the Borough. The investment has had two purposes: 1) the targeted acquisition and clearance of low demand homes to create sites for new housing to be built; 2) refurbishment of properties where there are significant prospects for sustainability. Since 2003, £11million from the HMRI fund, the Council's own resources or from private homeowner contributions has been invested in major renovation works. This has centred around two areas. Firstly, the Triangles area of North Birkenhead where a Group Repair scheme covering four Phases and involving over 450 houses is two-thirds completed. Phase 4 will form part of the 2008/11 HMRI Programme. Secondly, the Seymour Street area of Tranmere where a renovation scheme is underway involving up to 60 houses. Both of these two schemes are due for completion in 2008/09 and their success, merits the continued inclusion of refurbishment as an important part of HMRI in Wirral.

2.2 Officers are currently preparing the next HMRI Business Plan to be submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in November 2007. This Business Plan will set out a programme of Housing Market Renewal investment for three years (2008/11) and was approved by Cabinet on 4 October 2007.

3.0 IMPROVING CRAVEN AND PATERSON STREETS

3.1 The area lies on the edge of Birkenhead Town Centre. Generally, there is strong demand for accommodation close to amenities such as public transport, Birkenhead Park and the shopping centre. Part of the housing market renewal programme, seeks to increase opportunities for people to live close to the town centre in decent, affordable housing. There is currently investment taking place in the area as a result of stock transfer, private and RSL new build and the Council's Empty Property Strategy. This investment and the future sustainability of the area would be enhanced by improving housing conditions in Craven and Paterson Streets.

- 3.2 Craven and Paterson Streets are located in the Birkenhead HMRI area which is one of three areas (along with Fiveways and Church Road) that the Council has prioritised for intervention action because of the housing market conditions.
- 3.3 Although close to Birkenhead Town Centre, the housing market in Craven and Paterson Streets has showed signs of decline and stress for many years and this has been evidenced by low demand, abandonment of properties and anti-social behaviour. However, its fortunes appear to be changing as house prices are rising, investor confidence is growing, vacancy rates are reducing and owner-occupation rates are increasing. It is a housing market which is appropriate for a larger-scale renovation programme to build on its improving fortunes. A comprehensive property and residents survey in 2006 provides a solid evidence base to propose a renovation scheme for the area and indicates strong local support. The HMRI Programme for 2008/11 offers the opportunity to deliver this project. It is proposed that a three-tier improvement scheme is introduced in the area from 2008/09 comprising:
- replacement/repair of front boundary treatments and frontages
 - repairs/upgrading to properties
 - improvements to the streetscape
- 3.4 The proposal to renovate the properties in the area has been shared with the local residents association and local ward members. The response has been strong support.
- 3.5 Delivering this programme to the 235 properties in Craven and Paterson Streets (as shown on the plan in Appendix I) would take three years and the scheme aims to be complete in 2011.
- 3.6 It is intended that the scheme would be delivered over three Phases and services and works would be procured separately for each Phase when appropriate. The scope of the works and the method of financial assistance to be offered is still to be finalised but it is likely to be similar to the Triangles Group Repair Scheme in North Birkenhead. The detail of the financial assistance to be made available will be included in the Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy which will be submitted to Cabinet in October 2007.
- 3.7 To carry out essential preparatory work for a scheme to begin in mid-2008, requires the appointment of an agent/project manager and architect for Phase 1 and this is the reason why approval is now being sought.
- 4.0 **APPOINTING MARITIME HOUSING AS AGENT/PROJECT MANAGER**
- 4.1 Maritime Housing are the largest RSL partner in Craven and Paterson Streets and are willing to act as agent/project manager for the scheme. Maritime has a successful track record of managing improvement schemes on behalf of the Council having managed Wirral's first Group Repair scheme at Holt Hill, Tranmere in 2000. The appointment of Maritime as the largest RSL in the area would be in line with the use of Wirral Methodist Housing Association as the agent/project manager for the Triangles Group Repair Scheme.
- 4.2 Duties identified would be those requested of Wirral Methodist Housing Association (as set out in Appendix II) and Maritime has agreed to carry out this role at the same fee charged by Wirral Methodist Housing Association, i.e. 4% of the total cost of the works involved. On this basis and in line with paragraph 5.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet is asked to appoint Maritime Housing as agent/project manager for the Craven and Paterson Street scheme. The total cost of fees to be paid to

Maritime in delivering Phase 1 of this project is below the threshold for requiring procurement via EU rules.

5.0 APPOINTING AINSLEY GOMMON AS ARCHITECT

5.1 The preparation for this scheme, and also its delivery, requires the services of an architect. Ainsley Gommon has a track record of working with Council and RSL partners in delivering improvement programmes. Ainsley Gommon was successfully appointed as the architect for the Triangles scheme following a competitive tendering exercise and Cabinet approval is sought to continue this appointment and widen its scope to cover the Craven and Paterson Streets project.

5.2 Ainsley Gommon has agreed to act as architect for the Craven and Paterson Streets project at the same fee charged in the Triangles, i.e. 2.73% of the total cost of the works involved. Ainsley Gommon has agreed to carry out the duties (set out in Appendix II) which mirrors its role in the Triangles. On this basis and in line with paragraph 5.1.2 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Cabinet is asked to appoint Ainsley Gommon as architect for the Craven and Paterson Streets Scheme. The total cost of fees to be paid to Ainsley Gommon in delivering Phase 1 of this project is below the threshold for requiring procurement via EU rules.

5.2 Neither the individual or collective appointments of Maritime Housing nor Ainsley Gommon exceed 15% of the total cost of the works and therefore special consent from the Council is not required.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The delivery of this project is reliant upon a successful HMRI settlement for 2008/11. This outcome will be known early in 2008. The programme would be part funded by HMRI, the Council, RSLs and property owners. The full scheme costs are to be finalised but in total, over 3 Phases, may amount to £5million.

6.2 The scheme will be delivered via 3 Phases and services and works will be procured accordingly at a likely maximum of £2million for any phase. Initial assumptions which have been made allow for £1.8million contribution from the Council's Regeneration Capital Programme, £1.5million HMRI funds, £1.2million from RSL investment and £0.5million contributions from private sector property owners. Further detail will be reported to Members for approval once the scheme is finalised, prior to commencement of works.

6.3 The costs of the preparatory work for the project prior to the settlement of the 2008/11 HMRI Programme will be met from the existing HMRI programme funded by Newheartlands. Costs for this project after April 2008 will be met from the HMRI settlement for 2008/11.

7.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The project will be managed by the Home Improvement Section within the HMRI Delivery Team. This section has successfully managed the Triangles Group Repair Scheme. The section has reduced in size recently due to retirement and as improvements may feature more prominently in future HMRI Programmes and because the changing financial assistance policy may affect roles, it is likely that the staffing of the section will need to be reviewed once the 2008/11 HMRI settlement becomes known.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Scheme will involve properties occupied by vulnerable people, especially older people and the Home Improvement Team will ensure that the needs of these residents are met during the course of the scheme.

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The scheme will include measures which will enhance safety and security in the area.

10.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Works proposed include double glazing windows, loft insulation, installation of solar water heating where appropriate. In addition, low maintenance materials will be used where possible.

11.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Relevant planning approvals will be sought where they are required. The Craven/Paterson Street area is within a Primarily Residential Area in the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan and residential refurbishment and streetscape improvements are in principle appropriate.

12.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The scheme will involve an element of grant funding to assist property owners and to encourage their involvement in the project.

13.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Alongside the renovation of properties, officers will work closely with residents through the project and where possible will seek to improve inclusion where barriers exist such as employment, health or education.

14.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Craven and Paterson Streets area is located in the Birkenhead & Tranmere Ward.

15.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

15.1 None.

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 On the terms set out in this report Cabinet approves:

- i) the preparation of an improvement scheme for Craven and Paterson Streets as part of the HMRI Programme for 2008/11 subject to the securing of financial resources for 2008/11 from the Newheartlands HMRI Pathfinder;
- ii) the appointment of Maritime Housing as the agent/project manager for Phase 1 of the scheme on the basis and terms set out in this report, pursuant to Rule 5.2 of the Contracts Procedure Rules for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.1 of this report, to be reported to Council;

- iii) the appointment of Ainsley Gommon as the architect for the scheme on the basis and terms set out in this report pursuant to Rule 5.1.2 of the Contract Procedure Rules; and
- iv) a further report be submitted to Cabinet containing scheme details and procurement information prior to works commencing.

Alan Stennard
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Craven and Paterson Streets



CRAVEN & PATERSON STREETS HMRI IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

PROPOSED DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Duties of Wirral Council

- (a) Preparation of a Brief describing the objectives and essential characteristics of the proposed group repair scheme.
- (b) The determination of rates of contribution to the cost of the scheme by participants in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- (c) The appointment of an agent/project manager and architect and payment of their fees.
- (d) Entering into a contract with the building contractor and the payment of sums due to the contractor.
- (e) Receiving regular reports from Maritime Housing on all matters relating to the progress of the scheme and the issuing of instructions to Maritime and the architect and any other agents acting on behalf of the Council in relation to any aspect of the scheme.

2. Duties of Maritime Housing

- (a) Obtaining competitive quotations from architects for the performance of architectural services agreed by the Council in relation to the scheme.
- (b) The appointment of a planning supervisor under the CDM regulations.
- (c) Collecting information from residents to enable the Council to determine rates of contribution to the scheme.
- (d) Liaison with residents and reporting on their views to the Council on matters relating to the scheme.
- (e) Liaison with the architect in drawing up tender documents (to be approved by the Council) for the building contract including the invitations to tender.
- (f) The appointment of a Clerk of Works.
- (g) Appointment of a person to act as Maritime Housing's representative, with authority to act on all matters relating to the scheme.
- (h) Managing the architect, checking the architect's fee claims, decisions and certificates and being the usual channel of communication between the Council and the architect.

- (i) Monitoring the progress of the works and making regular reports to the Council on all material matters affecting the scheme, which should reasonably come to its notice.

3. Duties of Ainsley Gommon Architect

- (a) The preparation of applications for planning consent and building regulations approval.
- (b) The preparation of a specification of the works to be carried out under the Scheme in liaison with Maritime Housing for submission to the Council for its approval.
- (c) The preparation of an estimate of the costs of the scheme.
- (d) Preparation of the tender documents for a building contract and in liaison with Maritime inviting tenders for submission to the Council for acceptance.
- (e) Appraisal tenders received in liaison with Maritime Housing and the Council.
- (f) The preparation of the building contract documentation for execution by the Council.
- (g) The administration of the building contract including (without limitation) issuing of certificates, the granting of extensions of time, the issue of variations to the works (with prior approval of the Council after liaison with Maritime Housing) the calculation of any liquidated damages and the issuing of schedule of defects.
- (h) Any other duties as laid down in the standard form of agreement for the appointment of an architect issued by the Royal Institute of British Architects which are defined by the Council after consultation with Maritime Housing.