

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: HOUSING COMMITTEE	Subject: OLD MONKLAND - ESTATE REGENERATION	
From: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING		
Date: 26 August 1996	Ref:GSW/EM/AF/7	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the problems associated with the Old Monkland Estate, Coatbridge and to indicate some of the options for recovery currently being investigated.

2. Background

- 2.1 Old Monkland ward consists of a total of 1500 houses of which almost 400 have been sold to sitting tenants under the right to buy regulations. The remaining 1100 properties are managed by the Coatbridge South Area Office who are facing increasing problems associated with a dense, poorly designed estate which is difficult to let and subject to growing concerns about vandalism. The focus of the problem is associated with the 600 flats which are mostly 5 point maisonettes and 4 storey flats laid out in close proximity to one another and offering restricted vehicle access. The flats are predominately 3 and 4 apartment family houses but offer shared access and no private garden space. In contrast to the high proportion of house sales among the low rise properties, only 5 maisonette / flats have been sold.

- 2.2 Despite concentrated estate management efforts the following situation prevails.

- poor external fabric including defective roughcast
- unsightly pram / bin stores now disused by tenants for fear of losing their possessions through burglary, vandalism or fire.
- security doors vandalised and in some cases removed altogether. A survey conducted in July 1996 found that of 72 security doors only 22% (16) were working. This is despite a heavy commitment to repair which totalled 824 repair orders between April 1992 - September 1995.

- Back courts strewn with broken glass, old furniture and rubbish despite efforts to maintain a clean and tidy environment.
- Communal entrances dirty, unkept and in some cases covered in graffiti. The problems are not eased by the high numbers of people using one access door and by the fact that entrances to doorways are not overseen by anyone.
- Wooden fencing around drying areas removed or partially removed to often be used for bonfires.
- poor environmental conditions caused by poor amenity and inaccessibility of routes to some blocks resulting, in grassed areas being used for short cuts or kick about parks.
- high number of shuttered houses which further deters any prospective tenants

2.3 These conditions have reduced demand to the extent that at July 1996 there were 77 empty properties.

2.4 The Estates problems cannot be attributed solely to the housing conditions and it is not surprising that Old Monkland has been identified by the Council as a Priority Partnership Area. The 1991 census showed that Old Monkland has a higher unemployment rate than both the former Monklands area and the Scottish average and that in relation to household composition, it also has a higher Lone Parent with child(ren) rate and 3+ dependant children.

2.5 £100,000 has been identified within the current year's capital programme, but this would only scratch the surface of the investment requirements which it is estimated could be in the region of £12m.

3. Options for Recovery

3.1 A range of options for the future regeneration of the area are currently being investigated and will be reported to Committee in detail as they are developed. It is however anticipated that any proposals for regeneration will include the following principles.

- multi - agency approach
- commitment of local people
- focus on security
- change in tenure mix
- shift away from flats to "own doors" where possible
- provision for special needs.

3.2 With these principles in mind, 5 options are currently being pursued with the appropriate agencies to establish viability, estimated cost and timescale.

3.3 The involvement and commitment from the local people is recognised and it is proposed to discuss potential options with them at an early stage but not until more detailed information is available.

Option 1. - Remodelling and selective demolition.
Construction Services Department are currently preparing proposals and estimated costs.

Option 2. - Selective demolition and sale of ground to developers for low cost home ownership.
Feasibility currently being discussed with Planning and Development department.

Option 3. - Stock transfer.
Discussions underway with Scottish Homes but indications are that within limited resources, transfer to a Housing Association could not be anticipated for at least 4-5 years.

Option 4 - combination of options 1,2, and 3.

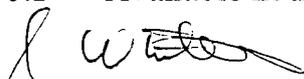
Option 5 - Local Housing Company in conjunction with a Private Finance Initiative.
Preliminary discussions are underway with the Development Department and Private Finance Executive Panel at the Scottish Office.

4. Recommendation.

4.1 It is recommended that committee notes the content of this report meantime on the understanding that further reports on the recommended strategies will be submitted as soon as possible following consultation with the community and the other agencies who could be involved.

5. Background Information

5.1 Available in the department.



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Director of Housing