

Woodside Homezone: Update and Progress Report, April 2004

Opportunities and Amendments

The original aim in submitting a bid for challenge funding was to implement a Highway scheme that would have associated social benefits for the residents of Woodside. In the months following the submission there were a number of positive developments in regeneration, including the appointment of a new Head of Service for Regeneration in the Borough and the designation of the Woodside Estate as a Corporate priority. These developments have led to a change of emphasis from a Highway-based Homezone project to a Regeneration Project that incorporates Homezone principles.

Experience from other Local Authorities within the Challenge project indicates that developing a highway-based Homezone is a lengthy and complicated process. Both length and complexity appear to be multiplied once the regeneration issues are incorporated in the project. For this reason the Woodside Homezone has taken a long time to reach the final consultation stage. However, the measures that are about to be implemented for Woodside residents are far superior to those contained in our original bid for a number of reasons.

The £1.5 million Challenge Funding has acted as pump priming for the regeneration project and over the ten year project it is estimated that £60million of public sector funding will be invested in the regeneration of Woodside. Solutions now include treatments within the property boundaries as well as the realignment of those boundaries. This will affect the ways in which the properties interact with the public realm, enabling a better quality Homezone to be developed.

Through necessity the project area has had to be reduced. Regeneration work and the Homezone are interlinked and it would not be practical to implement them on separate timetables. It would have been impossible to deal with all the regeneration issues within the original Homezone area within the grant period and the Council submitted a revised project outline request to the DfT and Baktie on the basis of the added value that could be brought to the scheme by concentrating all the regeneration work, including the Homezone, into a smaller area initially. The Council has made a commitment that the Homezone principles will be rolled out throughout the whole estate as an integral part of Woodside's regeneration.

Progress and Plans

Mott McDonald and EEA (urban architects) have been working on feasibility and design and will be overseeing the implementation side of the project. Design workshops for residents were used to formulate the basis for the final designs that were taken to public consultation in February. They are involved in the detailed consultation that is currently being undertaken with individual residents.

A planning application is to be submitted for the regeneration works as a whole. This is being steered by the Borough Planning Team and is scheduled to be submitted for approval during May/June 2004.

An OJEU notice has been published in order to engage a contractor for all the works in the project. Pre qualification questionnaires have been returned and 4 contractors have been shortlisted. Tender documents were sent out during the week commencing 26th April and tenders will be evaluated during the week commencing 24th May. Prospective contractors will be interviewed during the week commencing 31st May. The successful contractor is scheduled to start on site in July 2004

enabling the road leading to the school (Westbourne) to be treated during the school holidays. This is on schedule at present.

Implementation of all the works within the tight timescales is going to be a challenge, but we are confident of meeting our targets so that all eligible works will be completed within the Challenge period. However, the regeneration that has been started with the Homezone funding will continue for many years to come.