

REPORT TO: Housing Committee – 15 December 2003
REPORT BY: Director of Housing
REPORT ON: St. Mary's Task Group – Environmental Initiative
REPORT NO.: 782-2003

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To present to Committee an outline package of physical measures and additional proposals aimed at improving the quality of the environment of the St. Mary's Estate.

- 1.1. To seek approval for subsequent years funding to finance the proposed physical measures and additional proposals.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 2.1. Committee approves in principle the outline package set out in this report.
2.2. Committee approves the request for finance for the next 3 financial years.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

An allowance of £22,000 has been made in the Housing Department Capital Estimates for 2003/2004.

Approval is sought for subsequent years from the Capital Estimates as follows:

Year 2004/2005 – £150,000
Year 2005/2006 – £100,000
Year 2006/2007 – £100,000

4. **LOCAL AGENDA IMPLICATIONS**

- Local needs are met locally.
- The diversity of nature is valued and protected.
- All sections of the community are empowered to participate in decision making.
- Places, spaces and objects combine meaning and beauty with utility.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None.

6. BACKGROUND

6.1. The St. Mary's Task Group was established in October 2002.

The Task Group has responded by concentrating on 4 areas:

- The sustainability of the tenement flats.
- Environmental initiative.
- Resident involvement and consultation.
- Funding.

6.2. The Tenement Flats

6.2.1. St. Fillans Road

Committee agreed at its meeting on 17 February 2003, the recommendation that the 3 blocks on St. Fillans Road be declared surplus. Rehousing is going well and demolition should be completed during the next financial year.

6.2.2. Sustainability

A monitor is now being maintained of all the tenement stock. This shows a wide variation in the performance of different blocks. In view of the current review of the Housing At Risk Indicators no conclusions have been formed about the long term sustainability of this stock.

Overall tenancy turnover is high and appears to be increasing. St Marys Association of Residents and Tenants (S.M.A.R.T.) have shown concern over the number of properties let to young people who are first time tenants and require adequate support to settle into their tenancies. There is also evidence from the Police and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit that there are frequent clashes of lifestyle between older and younger households. To deal with this issue and in an attempt to reduce turnover a Scottish Executive bid for additional staff funded through the Anti-Social Behaviour Initiative has been submitted.

6.3. Environmental Initiative

In February this year S.M.A.R.T. submitted a report to various Council Departments detailing a range of concerns, most of which relate to the estate environment.

The Task Group has responded by assigning a Lead Officer to develop indicative proposals under the following headings:

- Waste Management

New eurobin installation to be piloted at the tenements in St. Boswells Terrace and steel dog waste and litter bins to be installed by E.C.P.D. at priority locations in consultation with S.M.A.R.T.

- Road Safety

Planning and Transportation has carried out a preliminary survey. Feedback awaited. Any indicative projects would require external funding.

- Safe Routes for Pedestrians

St. Mary's is one of the areas selected for upgrading of unadopted footpaths utilising Quality of Life Funding. A survey has been completed, but the proposed programme for St. Mary's is still to be clarified.

In addition to this Planning and Transportation is compiling a list of desirable footpaths and lighting upgrades on the adopted network. Again, this would require external funding.

- Open Spaces

The demolitions of the St. Fillans Road tenements will necessitate the provision of permanent landscaping of the sites. Frontagers of the St. Fillans Road tenements are to be surveyed regarding this.

The Task Group are willing to discuss the possibility of lottery funding with S.M.A.R.T.

- Security Issues

It is proposed that a security audit of the estate is carried out by Housing and the Police in consultation with S.M.A.R.T. with a view to producing some indicative design proposals.

The key aim of this exercise would be to deal with various vandalism hot-spots and trespass routes.

This issue will fit in well with the Community Planning Environment Theme.

- Community Facilities

The Housing Department has recently agreed to let a flat to One Parent Families Scotland for use as an outreach facility.

7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1. **S.M.A.R.T.**

The Task Group has developed a positive and mature relationship with S.M.A.R.T. S.M.A.R.T. is a well organised democratic and pro-active group.

Committee meetings are open to all residents and are well attended.

There are also 2 sub-groups dealing with community safety and youth issues.

Earlier this year the Task Group and S.M.A.R.T. collaborated on a newsletter for all residents.

The S.M.A.R.T. Officer Bearers are also provided with a regular briefing on progress being made by the Task Group.

ELAINE ZWIRLEIN
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

DECEMBER, 2003