

Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee

Briefing Note: Securing Amenity Improvements through the use of (Section 215) Planning Powers – Annual Update

7 January 2019

Report of the Planning Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee on progress made through the Amenity Improvements Scheme.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That Members note the report and the progress that continues to be made in terms of addressing the issue of untidy buildings.**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the seventh annual update on the initiative which is known as the Amenity Improvements Scheme, which seeks to improve the appearance of untidy properties that are located predominantly in town and city centres. The update is accompanied by 'Before' and 'After' images that are appended to this report. Full colour images of these examples will be displayed to Members at the Committee.
- 1.2 The initiative differs from most existing planning enforcement investigations because it is proactive, rather than reactive. Officers identify properties that are in such a poor condition that they warrant intervention under Section 215 (S215) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. But rather than pursuing formal action, Officers work to encourage building owners to voluntarily improve the condition of their properties. It is only if these efforts fail that the Service will have recourse to the use of powers under S215 of the Act.
- 1.3 In previous years, Officers have taken a systematic 'block by block' approach to surveying and identifying properties in need of attention. This ensures an approach that is transparent and equitable, but which constrains the ability to target properties in notably poor condition within identified blocks. Whilst this approach still applies, added attention is now being placed on prominent standalone properties that have fallen into disrepair affecting investment in the vicinity.

2.0 Progress to Date

- 2.1 This year's work has focused on properties within the Townscape Heritage Initiative 2 area; (i.e. Edward Street, Marine Road Central, Northumberland Street, Skipton Street and Victoria Street, Morecambe) and progressing with existing cases elsewhere in Lancaster and Morecambe.
- 2.3 More recently, Officers have re-focused on edge-of-centre properties in Lancaster including North Road, and have also initiated a first phase of activity in the West End.

3.0 Next Steps – 2019

- 3.1 Following on from the ongoing success of the Chatsworth Gardens project, the Team will upscale efforts in the West End of Morecambe to persuade property owners in the immediate surrounding areas to respond on a voluntary basis to improving their properties, and only resort to formal action when absolutely necessary.
- 3.2 In Lancaster, Officers will continue to target problem properties particularly along North Road and St Leonard's Gate.

4.0 Statistical Analysis

- 4.1 Table (i) below provides data for the volume of cases being managed by Officers between April-December 2018.

LOCATION	On-going Cases Carried Forward	New Informal Cases	New Formal Cases	Completed Cases	Works in Default Cases
Morecambe	46	12	9	16	2
Lancaster	17	3	2	4	-
District Wide	1	1	-	-	-
TOTALS	64	16	11	20	2

Table (i): Volume and Stage of Casework – Amenity Improvements Scheme

- 4.2 Table (ii) below provides an estimate of the cost of the works undertaken to date, since the Amenity Improvements Scheme commenced.

Estimated Costs of Works Completed (Investment)	2011 - April 2018	April 2018 - Present
Morecambe	£213,350	£430,480
Lancaster	£106,265	£17,795
Non City/Town Centre Areas	£6,334	£0 to date
TOTALS	£325,949	£448,275

*Table (ii): Estimated Costs of Works Completed – Amenity Improvements Scheme
(Note: Based on average cost per property of £2,076 for 2011-2018;
In terms of April 2018 onwards, and discounting unique cost of £400k for the King's Arms in Morecambe, the average cost per property is £2,540)*

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The initiative continues to prove very successful with significant outcomes and leverage of private investment for relatively low inputs in Officer time and resources. The work is able to support and complement wider regeneration initiatives being carried out in the district and is an excellent example of proactive planning powers being put to good use to improve the existing built environment.
- 5.2 The work is essential in supporting the district's growth agenda, particularly the ambitions to help sustain and promote Lancaster as a vibrant historic and commercial centre, and promote further regeneration and economic activity within Central Morecambe and the West End.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None identified.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

None identified.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments to make.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See Appendix to the Report for Before and After photographs. Colour versions will be displayed to Members of the Committee.

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APPENDIX – CASE EXAMPLE PHOTOGRAPHS (BEFORE AND AFTER INTERVENTION)

ADDRESS: 248-252 Marine Rd, Central, M/c	NOTES: Action taken after Formal Notice served.
 <p>A photograph of a three-story stone building with multiple dormer windows. The sign 'THE KINGS ARMS' is visible on the second floor. In front of the building, there are green patio umbrellas and a white van with '4seconds' and 'TEL: 07801 475 534' written on it. A date stamp '04/08/2017' is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.</p>	 <p>A photograph of the same building, now with a more uniform stone facade and illuminated windows. The sign 'THE KINGS ARMS' is still present. A red patio umbrella is visible in front of the building. A date stamp '22/11/2018' is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.</p>
BEFORE	AFTER

ADDRESS: 248-252 Marine Rd, Central, M/c – Cont.

NOTES: None



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 248-252 Marine Rd, Central, M/c – Cont.

NOTES: None.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 31 Edward Street, M/c

NOTES: Action taken after Formal Notice served BUT works completed prior to commencement of the official notice period.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 31 Edward Street, M/c (continued)

NOTES: None.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 5-11 Brock Street, L/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning. Original Planning approval had expired and works were requested prior to a new application being made. Building made weather-tight and temporary improvements to elevations as a consequence.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 8 Raglan Road, M/c

NOTES: Following the failure of two Informal Notice AND a Formal Notice, Works In Default were carried out.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 8 Raglan Road, M/c (continued)

NOTES:



BEFORE

AFTER

ADDRESS: 4 Morecambe Street, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 16 Clark Street, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 1st Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 24 Euston Rd (Holland & Barrett), M/c

NOTES: Action after Formal Notice served.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: Cable St (Sainsbury), L/c

NOTES: Action taken following 1st Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 42-46 Euston Rd, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 28 Clark Street, Morecambe

NOTES: Action taken following 1st Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 82-84 Euston Road, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: Springville House, RLI (off South Rd), L/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 15-21 West St, M/c

NOTES: Action after Formal Notice served.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 100 Euston Rd, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 2nd Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 88 Euston Road, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 1st Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 16 Victoria St, M/c

NOTES: Action taken following 1st Informal Warning.



BEFORE



AFTER

ADDRESS: 56 Lord Street, M/c

NOTES: Action after Formal Notice served.



BEFORE



AFTER