

WARNING to ALL terraced house dwellers!!! There are three essential things we all need to know about MBC's 'new vision for older housing'; 1. Regardless of where you live your home is not safe; 2. There will be no grants for wholesale interior home improvements; and 3. MBC will pay no one, but NO ONE a fair price for their home.

MBC's claim in the Jan 'New Vision' glossy (issue 6), that: "housing across Middlesbrough is set for major investment after a successful bid for substantial funding", is, we can reveal, **NONSENSE**.

By their own estimation (Executive Report, 20/7/05) the expected cost of demolition *alone* will be between "9-12m per year over 8 years" The report also makes it clear that this figure includes the cost of "property purchase & compensation"

When it costs between 17 and 20k to demolish a single dwelling, then clearly Mr Mallon hadn't done his sums right, when he issued his "guarantee (that) homeowners will be paid full market value for their homes calculated as if no demolition plans existed." (Gazette 11/8/05) But it doesn't appear that they are going to have even this much money.

In an e-mailed reply (23/1/06) to a question from Cllr Walker, the author of above report (MBC's Director of Regeneration) Tim White, gives his estimate of what they expect to get *at best*

"We believe that it could be around £10.9m, but over two years (2006/2008). The allocation for year 1 (he adds) is likely to be somewhat less than for year 2."

In other words they expect to get 50% less than they need over the first two years. Yet despite this MBC intends to plough on regardless, as Tim White proceeds to make clear:

"None of the funding referred to above can be used to support improvements of houses. It is allocated specifically for acquisition and demolition."

So how do they hope to get away with it?

The *Insider* believes that MBC are banking on the housing market collapsing further in other areas of the town, as it began to do in Gresham, as a direct consequence of their actions last year.

As a senior estate agent evaluator recently stated in the Gazette (11/1/06)

"Properties within the area have dropped about 20%...probably in the last six or seven months, since they announced they were coming down. Up to that point (he said) we couldn't put enough street houses on the market, Middlesbrough town centre was booming." The same report indicated a 10% drop in house prices in surrounding streets.

To escalate the process MBC will attempt to buy up properties, to stand empty, and thus invite the kind of anti-social behavior witnessed in St Hilda's. Numerous houses were burnt out and vandalized there, creating the kind of blighted landscape guaranteed to bring house prices crashing.

It's called 'made in the Town Hall housing market failure', the idea being that it will spread it to streets in the surrounding areas. Effectively forcing the Government's hand into stumping up more cash, to demolish more and more houses.

Success for MBC hinges on them being able to purchase properties at blighted prices leaving them with enough left over for demolition.

It is also dependent on keeping homeowners and tenants outside of the immediate demolition zone, ignorant of theirs, and their ally (Tees Valley Living)'s (TVL) true objective. To ultimately get rid of all the towns terraced housing as far up as Linthorpe village.

We aim to clear almost 8000 properties and build 6,500 new homes by 2016," boasts a Mr J Johnstone (Director of TVL), who we think must have got a little over excited at the prospect of some cash.

Giving the game away still further he proceeds to spill another MBC secret, namely what the 'affordable' new dwellings will be.

"We have to create the right balance of housing types to *attract more middle to upper income group families to live in the older town centres.*" (So that's what the Mayor meant when he said "this town is ready for take over.")

And what of the less affluent? The ordinary people they plan to dispossess?

"At the same time, we must continue to work with developers and housing associations to *deliver low cost homes for rent and shared ownership housing schemes.*"

So there you have it. **The 'New Vision for older housing' is about transforming once proud homeowners of older houses, into tenants and (at best) shared owners.** We ask could this be why Erimus Housing are keeping 752 houses currently empty, mainly in Grove Hill?

The *Insider* warns people outside of the official demolition zone, not to be complacent, because, **if we go, your home could well be next.** It is likely to plummet in value and that's 'housing market failure', and all the justification this Council needs.

Those of us currently in the front line need to remain wary of the Town Hall propaganda machine, which is in full swing with the glossy now being supplemented by home visits, and the new misinformation centre at St Paul's Road.

As for the threat of compulsory purchase orders, the *Insider* offers everyone a simple rule of thumb. **If MBC haven't got the money to give us a fair price for our homes, then they haven't got the money to CPO us. It's really that simple!**

The reality is that the only way MBC can achieve this and future land grabs, is if we let them. So there you have it!

'DON'T LET THE TOWN HALL BANDITS GET AWAY WITH IT!

We say; 'if MBC want the land to turn Middlesbrough into Yuppieville then, they are going to have to pay the going rate. A minimum £100,000 on the table to begin negotiations, or forget it!'