

**ANNIVERSARY EDITION! – 12 months on, and not one brick out of a single wall.**

Make no mistake, that without your continued mass opposition to MBC's lunacy, Phase 1 would have been well underway by now, and MBC would probably have received from the Government, near enough the amount of money they originally requested for Gresham – in the region of 20m for the first two years.

We reproduced quotes directly from the July 2005 Executive Report, in our Issue Five, which proved incontrovertibly that 20m over the first two years was the very least they were going to need. At that time, (Jan 06), MBC were struggling to brazen out the embarrassing possibility that they were only going to obtain about 10m over two years, a 50% reduction. Now seven months further on, the council have in fact only received an approximate four way cut of £18.25m, amounting to only 4.25m over two years, and yet they're still endeavouring to convince us that they remain on track. - **MBC clearly thinks we are all fools.**

The reality is that *if* the Mayor and Co. were embarrassed back in January, at the prospect of receiving less than 50% of what they required, THE PIDDLING SUM THEY HAVE ACTUALLY RECEIVED NOW is tantamount to **acute and abject HUMILIATION**. If nothing else it's the clearest indication yet, that the Government **has no faith whatsoever**, in their harebrained grandiose schemes. But clearly Mallon & Co plan to 'carry on regardless', which begs the question – **who, are the real fools in this town?**

MBC's latest glossy 'New Vision' issue 9, wishes us to believe that £4.25m over two years, "...can start to firm up its programme of improving houses, building new homes and acquiring properties that need to be cleared." The truth is, we can reveal that all the money will be used exclusively for the latter - to purchase properties for demolition, none of which actually 'need to be cleared'.

Back in January when MBC were expecting the paltry 10m, their Director of Regeneration, Tim White, wrote that: "*None of the funding referred to above (the 10m) can be used to support improvements of houses. It is allocated specifically for acquisition and demolition.*" (E-mail to Ken Walker, 23/1/06. So tell us all again Tim what you are going to be doing with the even paltrier sum of 4.25m?

The Insider has maintained all along that spending money on **improving older housing stock was never ever on the agenda**. It has always been a **cynical ploy** to lull people outside the immediate demolition zone, and particularly the **Bow Street triangle**, into a false sense of security, about the futures of their own homes, and kid them along in the process, that they may even benefit from mass demolition. The Insider says that the only people who will benefit from this are the speculators and developers, and everyone else will just be strung along, until it's **their turn to be dispossessed**, under the **false** name of regeneration.

MBC we can reveal will use every bit of money at its disposal in order to purchase properties to stand empty in order to artificially run the town centre down, and justify more Government funding at a later stage, to fund more demolition. As Cllr Budd puts it himself in said glossy, "It is very important we...make sure the investment keeps coming in, so we can do this job quickly". The job being of course to clear the land upon which 1500 families have their homes in central Middlesbrough in order to sell as prime real estate. In other words - a LAND GRAB. But this will only be the beginning. **We have it on very good authority that if phase's 1 2 & 3 do go ahead here, it will be closely followed by phase's 1 2 & 3, somewhere else.**

But we have to let it happen here first. It can only happen if we allow MBC to con us. But who seriously believes this council leadership will treat us fairly? There is no way the Mayor's "guarantee (that we) will be offered a house of similar or better standard", and his further promise that "**homeowners will be paid full market value for their homes CALCULATED AS IF NO DEMOLITION PLANS EXISTED**" (Evening Gazette 11/8/05), is already exposed as the **DESPICABLE LIE IT ALWAYS WAS.** (PTO)

The market MBC is looking to is one that hardly exists anymore, a market they have thoroughly destroyed. Yet on page 6 of their Information Booklet (delivered to our doors recently), they tell us that, "*as an owner-occupier you are entitled to the **open** market value of your property.*" In using the term **open** in this context, someone is clearly enjoying themselves at our expense. What market is left in the demolition zone is most certainly **NOT OPEN. This 'market' is well and truly CLOSED, in every sense of the word,** and the sole responsibility for this disgraceful state of affairs, lies with Ray Mallon and his Executive.

No one can get a mortgage to buy properties here, and so no one can sell their home through the proper channels should they wish to, which gives MBC a virtual monopoly, in order to benefit from a depressed market of their own making. The use of the word '**open**' does however, have some meaning. It illustrates in the starkest terms possible, **the degree of complete and utter contempt in which the self proclaimed 'People's Mayor' and his Executive hold ordinary people.**

At the recent Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting (12/6), (called by Cllr Walker to highlight the fact that MBC's financial packages are totally inadequate, and would leave homeowners thousands of pounds out of pocket) Tim White and Cllr Budd made it abundantly clear, that they were not looking to pay more than **40 odd k** for the average home in the demolition zone, and this despite the fact that comparable properties elsewhere in the town, are selling from between 70 and 90k, and these prices are rising all the time.

House prices in Middlesbrough have gone **up by 22.7%** in the last 12 months according to the BBC Website News (8&9/5/06), placing the town in the top ten nationally, alongside places like **Oxfordshire,** and **Southend on Sea,** and the same source predicts increases of a further 7% nationally over the next few months. Prices here in Gresham, have long since ground to a halt, and receded, as the Evening Gazette reported (11/1/06 - "Properties within the area have dropped about 20%...probably in the last six to seven months, since they announced they were coming down.")

This means **dispossession** for the 1500 families in any ones language, **and MBC's much heralded 'financial packages' are merely window dressing aimed at disguising this fact.** It stands to reason, that if MBC are only going to pay us an artificially low price for our homes, we will only be able to afford properties of lesser value than our current homes, and consequently dwellings in poorer condition. By the same token we can only move into homes which are empty, in other words houses that nobody wants. There are such properties outside of Gresham - these were identified in a £300,000 funded survey in 2004 (paid out of public funds), the findings of which were then hastily suppressed, because they wanted to target Gresham and the Gems, whose land is more valuable. Of course when it suits them they will rediscover said document, and all the people who were forcibly removed from good quality housing here, and downgraded elsewhere, will once again find themselves targeted for demolition a few years further down the line. And this is at best, because many - one time proud homeowners - would be forced to rent.

This is Mr Mallon and Co's so called 'vision' for older housing - *a nightmare* more like, for the thousands of ordinary people who will be its victims. **DON'T LET THE TOWN HALL BANDITS DISPOSSESS US, AND DON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY THE THREAT OF CPO.** MBC have neither the money to fund Compulsory Purchase Orders, nor do they meet the legal requirements to be in a position to issue them. Keep up the good work folks & **next years Anniversary Insider will be celebrating 2 years and not one brick...**

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**Finally, it has come to our attention that some individuals at MBC have recently claimed to have received 'dubious' e-mails from the Streetwise Insider. We categorically disavow any knowledge of this, and affirm that the sole purpose of our e-mail address is to enable readers of this newsletter to contact us, and voice any comments or views. We see the Insider as a crucial means of getting the truth out to people who would otherwise be at the mercy of Town Hall spin and propaganda (not to mention downright untruths), and we would certainly not be foolish enough to do something *in it's name*, which might tarnish it in some way, an ultimately undermine our struggle to save our homes. Having said that, it is abundantly obvious, that there are certain people at MBC who would dearly love to discredit this newsletter, the difficulty they have however, is that they cannot do so by legitimate means. They cannot challenge the veracity of what we say, because they know full well, that what we say is all true. That leaves them having to invent other means to discredit us. - This presumably, is such an attempt - Pathetic isn't it!**

**Contact us on our new email: [streetwise@rediffmail.com](mailto:streetwise@rediffmail.com)**