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David Bayliss            Development and Asset Director: RHA  
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- Purpose of the meeting was to record the views of the RHA towards the future of the study area in general, and the future of the two RHA sites within the area in particular;
  - These views could then be an input to the site appraisal study of the Council's lands that was to be undertaken by the planning office;
  - Additionally the study could form a basis for possible negotiation with owners and potential developers of adjacent sites;
  - An area map and a project programme chart were tabled;
  - RHA owns two local sites (Phoenix Court and 58 Upper High Street (UHS)), the current accommodation in both being seen as below standard; the Association accordingly submitted a planning application to redevelop Phoenix Court (together with some adjoining Council owned land) for social housing; this was later withdrawn when the Council refused the large retail-based development beside Upper High Street, which had involved the demolition of 58 UHS;
  - The sale of the latter site was important to the financing of the new housing development, and also involved land exchanges between the RHA and the Council;
  - It was important to RHA that as part of the Council's study, the need to provide new temporary housing of good standard within the area was recognised; there were some 22 dwellings (14 + 8) at present, and the previous proposal had been for 28; this was the minimum number required; legal constraints on the uses of both sites (which had been purchased from the Council) meant that they needed to be used for social housing;
  - Currently, the residents typically stayed for up to 6 months before being re-housed, and the general location was considered to be ideal, being close to the town centre, transport, public facilities and employment;
  - The new housing needed to be designed with adaptability in mind, to reflect changing accommodation needs over the years ahead; good outlook from temporary accommodation was usually less critical than for general needs housing;
  - If the new accommodation for temporary housing could be built on a site fairly close to Phoenix Court, this would allow the existing accommodation to continue in operation until the new housing was ready, avoiding the loss of a valuable resource whilst the new construction was taking place; the possibility of using some of the car park land between Phoenix Court and the Unity Hall was mentioned;
  - If more new housing were to be built on the car park (or Helical Bar or other privately owned lands in the study area) then the RHA would be eager to take on the social housing element that would be provided; the prime requirement was for general needs housing, with sizes ranging from 4 bedroom down to 1-2 bedrooms; sheltered housing was not seen as a priority, but instead, those needing support could have "bought in" services whilst living in their homes;
  - Housing with an amount of shopping etc could create a more cohesive community than would be the case with a development that was solely residential (cf Hollymore Lane?)
  - Some shared ownership housing in the area would also be valuable, to increase the range of housing options available.