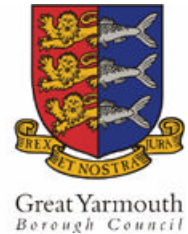


# Press release



PR 165

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **COUNCIL PIONEERS SHARP GROUND-BREAKING HOUSE REJUVINATION**

Great Yarmouth Borough Council's housing department is leading the way with a ground-breaking scheme to encourage property owners to refurbish run-down buildings to turn them into desirable homes.

A bid for £4.42 million funding gained the approval of the Regional Housing Board (RHB) and has now been approved by Government Ministers.

It is anticipated that the scheme, known as SHARP (Secondary Holiday Area Regeneration Project) will also attract in £2 million of private funding.

A team from housing, planning and environmental health has worked with Great Yarmouth Tourist Authority. They are proposing that money from a special projects pot for RHB funding aimed specifically at housing projects - be used to encourage landlords and owner occupiers to renovate properties in a part of the town which offers holiday accommodation.

The aim is provide grants of up to 60 per cent to help property owners bring the interiors of buildings in Wellesley and Paget Roads, up to a decent standard to provide the kind of accommodation to attract people looking to rent or buy private homes. They will also offer grants to bring empty homes back into use.

Money will also be allocated to renovate the exteriors of the buildings and the streetscape, as well as introducing measures to significantly improve the management of dwellings in the area.

"Our role in housing needs is primarily to help people find homes, and to tackle the causes of housing need such as disrepair," said Mark Burns, Head of Housing Needs and Welfare Services. "However, this project is also about supporting the tourism industry and working with other partners to raise standards in these areas and engender investment confidence."

"It will also mean that people living in rented accommodation will enjoy better standards.

"We appreciate that people involved in the holiday trade want adjoining properties, and the area, to attract visitors. We have worked with the tourism board to create a scheme which should help us all.

"When the area has been improved we are hopeful that it will also be seen as an excellent investment opportunity for hoteliers, who will have the chance to purchase empty buildings - although they will not be able to access grants from this new funding. These areas have great potential.

"Great Yarmouth has so many exciting projects either underway, or on the horizon, and this is another one that will help improve the town.

"There is the work going on to give the seafront 21<sup>st</sup> Century appeal, when it begins the Outer Harbour will bring work to the Borough, and projects under the guidance of 1<sup>st</sup> East will also make the town a more attractive and vital place to be.

"We need to offer housing to meet these needs, while helping to put some heart back into the town.

"Currently, visitors who arrive at the coach station are faced with an area - parts of which look neglected - this will make their first impression much more positive.

“The problem some owner’s face is that their properties need a sizeable investment to bring them up to the standard we would like to see, especially in a tourist area. This scheme will help them to achieve that.

“The bid also includes money to renovate the fronts of buildings, garden walls, street lighting, parking and safety aspects such as alley gates, with the Council footing the total bill.”

Malcolm Bird, Director of Quality Assurance for Greater Yarmouth Tourist Authority has given his support to Mark Burns’ pro-active approach in dealing with run down properties together with social housing issues.

He said: “While the state of some of these properties may be due to the decline of tourism use, it is still a vital component to the economic future of our town. It is paramount that business proprietors feel confident in reinvesting in a touristic future.

“A social policy that embraces planning, environmental services, housing, tourism, and has the support of other agencies will, I’m sure, bring much needed long-term investment, thereby raising standards for all.”

Property owners will be contacted individually by the Council to explain what the scheme means for them.

Enquiries can be made on the Council's hotline 01493 846518 or by emailing sharp@great-yarmouth.gov.uk.

## **ENDS**

**Note to Editors:** For further information call Mark Burns, Head of Housing Needs and Welfare Services on 01493 8464450, or Penny Dimond, Manager Housing and Social Policy on 01493 846527.

## **Picture captions:**

Pictures 1 and 2 – Boarded properties in Wellesley Road.

Picture 3 – An aerial picture of the SHARP project area.

## **Issued by:**

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