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THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

GIVE US THE CASH!



By a Sentinel reporter

LOCAL people are working overtime to try and find the money to fund their dream of decent homes and a pleasant environment.

The six Neighbourhood Councils for Wester Hailes Park and Drive and Clovenstone, backed by Edinburgh District Council, had asked the Scottish Office for £16 million over four years to fund a package of improvements in their areas.

But as reported in the last edition of the *Sentinel*, the Scottish Office only offered £6 million for improvements in Wester Hailes Drive.

Following this shock decision the neighbourhood councils and other community organisations have, with the backing of the council, been trying to convince the Scottish Office to change their mind.

They have also challenged the Wester Hailes Partnership - the Government led initiative which was set up two years ago to regenerate the estate - to find other ways of funding their projects, if the Scottish Office will not come up with the cash.

Margaret Manzie, of the Wester Hailes Drive neighbourhood council said:

"We have worked up a co-ordinated programme of improvements for each neighbourhood.

"And if you give cash to only one of the areas and ignore the context of the whole scheme, it will totally destroy all the good working relationships we have worked hard to build up over the last two years."

Backing the community's stance, Councillor Jimmy Burnett, chair of the council's Housing Committee, said: "We need to make the government recognise our problem and allocate more money for the scheme. It won't break their bank".

PAGE ONE COMMENT

ON May 15th, 1989, the Wester Hailes Partnership was unveiled. Assorted dignitaries, including the then Scottish Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, joined with the people of Wester Hailes to celebrate a new beginning.

The Partnership published a strategy document which talked of a vision for Wester Hailes. A vision, which according to the Scottish Office, needed "a long-term commitment from all concerned in the public and private sectors and in the community to make the Partnership's vision a reality".

For the last two years local people have been working on their vision for Wester Hailes Park and Drive and Clovenstone. They did this with the full backing of Edinburgh District Council and the Scottish Office.

All they needed to make their vision a reality was the Government's agreement to allow the council to borrow £16 million pounds over the next four years.

But the Scottish Office said **NO**.

It is not their money. At the end of the day, we the rent-payers would have to pay for the investment through increases in our rent. But they still said no.

This decision has upset a lot of people.

The residents of Wester Hailes Park, and Clovenstone do not understand why they are being denied their dream of decent homes and a pleasant environment.

The District Council do not understand why the Scottish Office will not allow them to spend the money to turn Wester Hailes into a showpiece estate.

And the Sentinel does not understand why the Government, a major

partner in the Wester Hailes Partnership has, in one foolish decision, threatened the good working relationship that has been built up over the last two years.

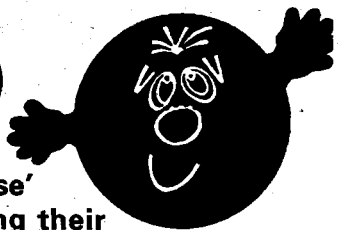
It is not too late to reverse this decision. Local people have joined forces with the District Council to try and convince the Government to change their mind. If that fails, then they want the Wester Hailes Partnership to come up with another way to fund their dream.

Hopefully by the time the *Sentinel* is published, this will have happened.

If not, then it looks like the vision of the Wester Hailes Partnership will have turned into a nightmare.

And nobody wants that - do they?

RED NOSE RADIO



THIS group of WHEC students really 'nose' what it's all about - and they'll be using their talents to raise 'loads-a-money' for Comic Relief today.

Over the past two months they have been learning how to use state of the art radio equipment as part of a sound engineering course.

And on Red Nose day they will be broadcasting live to the whole school - playing requests at 50p a time.