

Goole residents seek p

Opponents of a clearance scheme hope to get their say after a compulsory purchase order was served.

It's five years since East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) announced plans to demolish two terraced streets in the Shuffleton neighbourhood of Goole, but councillors only issued the order last month.

During that time all but eight of the 117 homes have been tinned up, a developer has been selected and a planning application lodged.

But Google Action Group (GAG), which includes some owners, is determined to trigger a public inquiry into the scheme for Phoenix Street and Richard Cooper Street.

GAG would like to see the existing buildings retained and refurbished to meet good eco standards, preserving the

character of the area. And members believe their alternative scheme would prove cheaper for the taxpayer in a time of recession.

Alan Wilson, who has rented out a house on Richard Cooper Street for nine years, said: "It's a disgrace. ERYC claims to be a green council but demolition is the least green approach to regenerating this area. Goole's an area of acute housing need yet dozens of properties now owned by the council are empty.

"They are structurally sound and would provide good, affordable housing yet will be knocked down to clear the way for new homes. We don't understand why the council still – even now we're in a recession – can't accept that renovation would be a better use of public money."

Clearance plans were

k public inquiry on demolition

unveiled in 2004. Since then most of the properties – some owned by housing associations – have been sold to the council by agreement. Last year the project was put out to tender and now compulsory purchase orders (CPO) are on their way.

At the last planning committee meeting, power to

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grant full planning permission was delegated to the council's departmental director.

Developer Peter Ward Homes wants to halve the number of dwellings on the streets and build a mixture of houses and flats on the site, which also includes a derelict warehouse.

But the stand-off between the remaining owners and the local authority means the whole process could be delayed for years as the CPO process runs its course.

If no objections are received by this week, ERYC will ask the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber to confirm the order. An objection will lead to the scheme being called in for a public inquiry.

“We have been waiting for them to issue CPOs quicker so we can get a public inquiry,” said Wilson. “It will be interesting to see how the council justifies replacing 117 affordable, efficient properties with 59 that few can afford.”

ERYC dismisses GAG as a group made up of landlords and “speculative developers” and insists it has most Goole residents on its side.

Paul Abbott, acting head of housing and public protection for the council, said: “We have always recognised that CPO would be a lengthy and complex process. Unfortunately, it is the only route open to us given that we want to progress with the redevelopment of this area of the town as quickly as possible.

“The council was always clear about its intention to redevelop the area rather than refurbish the existing properties. As well as tackling long-running problems with crime and anti-social behaviour, this will enable us to provide a range of quality, affordable homes to suit the needs of a broad cross-section of local people, including older people and families, in safe and attractive surroundings.”

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