

Estate Plan

Kingsway

This plan covers the following areas and number of properties:

Location	No	Location	No
Bushfield House	18	Queensway House	25
Kingsway House	60	Redbourne House	18

Estate Description

The Kingsway area has 121 properties made up as follows:

Type	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	No of Properties (121)
Flats – Ground Floor	39	0	0	39
Flats – First Floor	38	0	0	38
Flats – Second Floor	38	0	0	38
Maisonettes – First Floor	0	1	0	1
Leaseholders				5

The properties are split into 2 separate areas - Kingsway House flats to one side of the A18 main arterial road and the rest, to the other side of the dual carriageway. The area is not popular despite its location being within easy reach of the town centre, rail and bus links, schools and all amenities.

The 3 separate blocks of flats (Bushfield, Redbourne and Queensway) have suffered due to crime and vandalism. Whilst the Queensway block has a mix of residents, Bushfield and Redbourne are predominantly inhabited by males and suffer the most as regards vandalism and neglect. The design of the blocks, whilst giving residents varied methods of access, also allows criminals various escape routes. There are individual garages to both sites, which are subject to vandalism. The internal bin store areas have been blocked up and new bin storage areas created outside to remove the fire risk to the internal areas of the blocks.

Kingsway House is an older block, built in 1962 of traditional construction, which is quite open with a pleasant central garden area. The flats have benefited from replacement doors and windows and an upgrade to the communal aerial system in the past few years. Due to the layout it is difficult to keep non-residents from using it as a cut – through. It also has the benefit of a laundry room on site for resident's use. The laundry separates 2 large bin stores, which are open and rubbish is not always bagged up. The 2 areas are unhygienic and present a big fire hazard as the bin stores are regularly attended by Humberside Fire and Rescue due to arson attacks. There is evidence within one of the areas of drug use, fire play and use as accommodation. Although these areas are not

connected to the main block of flats, they are unpleasant for residents wanting to use the bin area.

Due to the layout of Kingsway House, residents tend to step over the surrounding wall and cut across the grass for easy access to the main communal entrance doors. There is nothing to prevent others doing this also, as the communal doors are not secure. There are garages available and a car parking area but this is not secure or well lit and can be subject to vandalism.

Both the Police and Fire service have visited the areas to give advice on improving security and safety and proposals will be incorporated within this plan.

The area in general looks dilapidated, unkempt and neglected and there is a desperate need for invest to the environment and properties at Kingsway House.

Performance Indicators

North Lincolnshire Homes has an Asset Management Plan that looks at various indicators. These tell us whether the area is a place where people want to live and remain, whether it is worth investing in the stock and how much it will cost to maintain the properties and bring them up to the Decent Homes Standard which the Government has set. Indicators for this area are as follows:
(Figures are for the year ending 30/10/08)

Red:

Relets in year as % of all tenancies	26.73%
Transfer requests outwards	16.83%
Tenancies under 2 years in length	40.59%

Amber:

Empty properties as % of total	12.93%
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Green:

Potential income after void loss	£263284.00
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Other indicators:

Tenancies 2 – 5 years in length	23.76%
Tenancies 5+ years in length	35.64%
Repairs expenditure per annum (07/08 actuals)	£65216.03
Repairs in voids per annum (07/08 actuals)	£41883.32
Costs above/below potential income	£156184.65
Tenants in receipt of housing benefit	65.35%

Comments on Performance Indicators

This area has a high level of red indicators. There is crime and drugs in the area which will make the properties less attractive, however there tends to be problem in letting them due to their location, which is within easy walking distance of the town centre. The number of transfer requests has reduced to 16.83%, but the

majority of tenants are now new with over 40% having lived in the area for less than 2 years. A very low % of tenants have lived in the area for more than 5 years. In order to stabilise the area, certain proposals are put forward within this plan to create a more sustainable community.

North Lincs Decent Homes Standard

The Government has instructed that all social housing must reach a minimum standard known as the Decent Homes Standard by 2012. However, the North Lincolnshire Standard has been devised by local tenants who want more than the minimum level of improvements to their homes and is the standard North Lincolnshire homes will achieve by 2012.

The standard includes:

- Heating boilers renewed every 15 years
- Heating systems (radiators) renewed every 30 years
- Properties rewired or upgraded where the wiring is over 30 years old – and to ensure that there are adequate power points
- Windows and doors renewed if they are 20 years old
- Properties insulated to maximise energy efficiency
- Bathrooms renewed every 30 years
- Kitchens renewed every 20 years and to have adequate space for storage and the preparation of food
- Renewal of roofing if it is over 50 years old
- Replacement of gutters and fascias that are over 20 years old
- Homes to be free from structural defects that affect the soundness and stability of a home
- Homes to be free from damp and water penetration
- Adequate lighting in communal areas
- Closure of some footpaths to reduce crime
- Controlled entry systems for communal entrances
- Improved access to communal entrances to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Fencing to create secure spaces
- Modern alarm call systems for the elderly
- Improved car parking provision
- Improvements to the environment / landscape

Housing Management

Housing Management input to the area is high with regular visits from the Housing Officer and Caretakers. There are also ongoing problems with anti social behaviour within the flats, which has, at times, been drug related however possession action has been taken on some of these cases. There is repeated damage to some of the communal entrance doors and communal waste areas to the Queensway side.

There is a resident group, which meets every 6/8 weeks and is attended by the Resident Involvement Officer as well as the Housing Officer. A report is presented to each meeting detailing management action that is being taken in the area and a good working relationship has been established. The Chair of the group, who lives within the Kingsway block, liaises closely with the Housing Officer to ensure matters are dealt with promptly and efficiently. The group has low attendance and has struggled of late to remain active due to lack of interest from residents.

Resident group representatives are invited to attend the Neighbourhood Action Team meetings held but it is rare that anybody attends. These meetings provide a valuable two – way sharing of information to help cut and deter crime and anti – social behaviour.

Crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental offenses in the area are very high and this, along with the appearance of the area, has created a low demand issue. A Local Lettings Policy was introduced in April 2008 to reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour and to reduce the number of vulnerable residents. The policy has been successful on the Queensway side with all voids being let and the aim is to create a healthy waiting list in the area. The policy has not been successful at Kingsway House with 20% of the stock currently void as of October 2008. This is due to the reputation of the area and letting of void properties is extremely difficult.

Actions

In order to plan for the future we need to look at the sustainability of the area. This will depend not only on the properties continuing to be homes that our tenants want to live in but also the area being a safe and secure environment where people want to stay for years to come. We have already done the following:

- Looked at the 'make up' of residents in the area
- Gather crime figures to check types and level of crime by attending Neighbourhood Action Team Meetings and Area Action Team Meetings
- Checked reports of ASB and nuisance
- Gathered information from staff, stock surveys and other departments
- Worked together with tenant representatives to make decisions on standard fittings in empty homes and selection of contractors (ongoing)
- Have an agreement with Neighbourhood Services of North Lincolnshire Council for the upkeep of our estates, which clearly indicates standards and regularity of maintenance to the environment.
- Introduced a new caretaking Service in June 2008 to keep our estates clean and tidy, and to make them a pleasant place to live.

We also need to:

- Ensure Starter Tenancy visits are carried out as a priority
- Work to help prevent people losing their homes
- Provide debt advice / referral when necessary
- Support vulnerable tenants in order to sustain their tenancies

- Consider local letting policies where there is shown to be a need
- Enforce tenancy conditions to ensure clean, tidy and secure environments
- Continue to work with other agencies i.e Police and Community Safety Partnerships to combat crime and anti – social behaviour
- Work proactively with Health and Adult Services to ensure that older peoples needs are catered for so they can remain in their homes with the correct level of support

Consultation

To give us more detailed information on tenant's aspirations and what it is like to live in the Kingsway area, we sent a questionnaire to each tenant

- The response rate was 10% which was quite low
- %'s below refer to the number of replies received to each question. Some people chose not to answer or ticked 'No comment'.

This is what you told us:

- 50% are happy with the location of their homes
- 42% are happy with their home
- 53% like the area because it is close to the town centre
- 33% would like a planned maintenance programme
- 25% would like speed ramps
- 33% would like door entry systems (improved or more secure)
- 83% would like better security
- 92% would like tidier roads and communal areas
- 33% dislike the size of their property
- 67% consider the area to be noisy or bad
- 67% think the area is unkempt
- 53% are considering moving out of the area
- 33% consider there is no Community Spirit
- 43% have been a victim of harassment
- 71% have been a victim of drug related behaviour
- 33% dislike the area because of crime
- 67% are not happy with the amount of police presence in the area
- 53% would like caretakers to visit once or twice a week
- 42% not happy with the service they get when reporting ASB

Proposed Improvements

The stock condition survey has identified investment works needed to our properties. Kingsway was timetabled for improvement works to start in April 2008. Subsequent programmes in future years will pick up environmental and estate related issues. The table below shows the current progress in the Kingsway area.

Kingsway progress

Bathroom Fittings	33
Boiler Replacement	1
Central Heating Systems	35
Kitchen	29
Wiring	36

The business plan budget allocated for improvement works in the Kingsway leaf is **£1,294,432**. By October 2008 a total of **£416,123** has been expended on all improvement work.

The stock condition survey told us that in order for all our homes to meet the North Lincs Decent Homes Standard around £164 million needs to be spent over the next 10 years on repairs and improvements.

In order to meet the North Lincs standard the following work needs to be carried out before 2012.

<u>Element</u>	<u>Programme Numbers</u>
Bathroom Fittings	6,129
Boiler Replacement	1,193
Central Heating Systems	3,756
Chimney	3,793
External Doors	6,675
External Walls	3,275
Fires	3,092
Kitchen	5,056
Roof	4,608
Roof Line	4,386
Windows	5,721
Wiring	6,420

Other works identified specifically for the area are as follows:

Kingsway

- Provide secure fencing and upgrade lighting to car park
- Create a new bin store area
- Redesign external layout to provide secure residential community – using lockable gates, fencing, feature walls
- Install railings to top of wall surrounding frontage to prevent unorthodox access to area
- 'Residents only' signage to all entrances
- Consult on provision of gate and footpath to main entrance doors (adjacent to roundabout)

- Provide a secure door entry system to prevent unauthorized access with a intercom system
- Renew and upgrade balconies and walkways to make the area more aesthetically pleasing
- Install pigeon deterrents
- Secure car parking
- Repairs to garages to make them lettable
- Upgrade central stairwell and walkway to make the area more aesthetically pleasing
- Refurbish and improve the laundry area
- Install communal door with fob entry system to the laundry room
- Provide storage area for bulky items awaiting collection

Queensway

- Relocate bin areas to external car park area to prevent fire hazard. – Completed September 2006
- Demolish or block off bin stores allowing access to service personnel only – Completed September 2006
- Consider removal / relocation of mail boxes from common entrance to individual flats
- Gate off walkways between blocks and provide 'Residents Only' signage
- Remove entrance from Ashby Road to create more defensible space
- Refurbish communal areas and install new floor covering
- Upgrade communal doors with improved intercom system
- Install CCTV as a crime deterrent
- Install better external and internal lighting
- Make care parking area more secure by installing drop down bollards
- Provide blinds to flat windows
- Refurbish and improve the laundry area
- Install communal door with fob entry system to the laundry room
- Rebuild the small wall under the laundry room window
- Remove concrete slabs to footpaths and resurface all areas
- Landscape grassed area
- Provide storage area for bulky items awaiting collection

All the above works have been identified as needing to be done but will be subject to funding becoming available to carry them out. Once these works have been carried out all homes in the Kingsway area will be maintained to the North Lincs Decent Homes Standard and will provide substantial homes for years to come.

In Conclusion

This plan will continue to be reviewed and updated. Whilst environmental improvements may well be the priority for residents, initial spending will have to

focus on works to improve tenant's homes to ensure that the North Lincs Decent Homes Standard is met. However, it is also important that people feel safe and secure in their homes, and want to live and remain in them for many years to come – which is why estate improvements and environmental works have been identified. North Lincolnshire Homes want to meet the aspirations of tenants and although it does not have the resources to carry out all of the works that are needed it is important to identify the priorities for each estate.