

Estate Plan

Lincoln Gardens

This plan covers the following areas and number of properties:

Location	No	Location	No	Location	No
Almond Grove	9	Elm Grove	1	Poplar Gardens	18
Alvingham Road	25	Emmanuel Court	88	Queensway	24
Annes Crescent	21	Fulbeck Road	4	Raymond Road	1
Ash Grove	9	Gloucester Avenue	20	Revesby Avenue	13
Aspen Grove	2	Kendal Court	34	Riverdale Road	3
Bardney Avenue	3	Kingston Road	9	School Road	5
Barlings Avenue	9	Laburnum Grove	2	Spalding Road	4
Beechway	42	Larch Grove	8	Stockhill Road	3
Broom Grove	3	Lime Grove	2	Stow Road	2
Cherry Grove	81	Lincoln Gardens	6	The Cottages	16
Chesnut Way	47	Oak Road	1	Thornton Avenue	9
Collum Avenue	66	Old Brumby Street	2	Traviss Court	3
Crowland Avenue	8	Peterborough Road	3	Willow Grove	8

Estate Description

The Lincoln Gardens area has 614 properties made up as follows:

Type	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	B/Sit	No of Properties (614)
Bedsit – Ground Floor	0	0	0	0	6	6
Bedsit – First Floor	0	0	0	0	5	5
Flats – Ground Floor	76	95	0	0	0	171
Flats – First Floor	68	94	0	0	0	162
Flats – Second Floor	18	15	0	0	0	33
Maisonettes – First Floor	0	0	8	0	0	8
Bungalows	0	40	3	0	0	43
Houses	0	0	144	2	0	146
Leaseholders						40

The area is very popular due to its location with good shopping and schooling facilities nearby. More than half the stock in the area is flats as many houses have been sold through the Right to Buy prior to the stock transfer to North Lincolnshire Homes. Demand is high especially for family houses and the Lincoln Gardens community is very sustainable due to the low turnover of properties.

The **Beechway** shopping area has problems as access to the flats above is either through communal doors at either end of the complex, or via open metal staircases to the back. The communal doors at the front suffer from vandalism and youths have been known to gain entry to the block. However, these entrances are the quickest access for residents as the alternative means a fair walk round the block to the back. The rear entrance is poorly sign posted, has inadequate lighting and is in need of remodelling. The garages are not well used and shed areas are boarded or in a bad state of repair. Although new brickwork has been provided to the exterior communal landing, this has failed to make the area more attractive. In September 2008 North Lincolnshire Homes hosted an action day to the rear of the Beechway shops to improve the environment and to encourage residents to take ownership of the area where they live.

There are empty units to the shops despite their central location to the estate. The whole block is in need of painting and repairs. Some of the shop units are unoccupied but a specialist angling shop, which gets most of its business from outside the immediate area, takes up four of the units.

Cherry Grove, Collum Avenue and School Close, is an area of mostly flats with a small amount of houses. The area is very high in demand and rarely suffers from anti-social behaviour. Tenancy enforcement action is rare and this part of Lincoln Gardens is clean, tidy and popular with residents. Residents have complained about youths congregating in the area and playing football on the grassed area however identification of the offenders has proved very difficult. Local Police Community Support Officers patrol the area and this has helped resolve the issue.

There are many overgrown trees in the area, particularly in the Cherry Grove, Almond and Willow Grove area. These would benefit from a regular maintenance programme. Parking is also difficult and limited to the various 'groves' off Chestnut Way where there are aged persons bungalows. These could do with remodelling to provide more parking and wider access roads.

Emmanuel Court area is a highly popular and has a long waiting list from applicants on the housing register. Occasionally the area suffers due to its location off the main Ashby High Street as parking can be difficult due to non-residents parking there whilst using the nearby shops; market day can be particularly bad.

The narrow access road to the garages has had remedial works undertaken due to being badly pot – holed and there is little room for turning.

In response to residents reporting speeding as an issue, speed humps were placed at the entrance to Emmanuel Court with well positioned sign to warn drivers not to speed.

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 to 31/10/08)

Red:

Tenancies less than 2 years in length 14.08%

Amber:

Relets in year as % of all tenancies 8.27%

Transfer requests outwards 6.87%

Green:

Empty properties at 31/10/08 1.05%

Other indicators:

Tenancies 2 – 5 years in length 20.07%

Tenancies 5 + years in length 65.85%

Potential income after empty property loss £1,600,607.88

Repairs expenditure per annum (07/08 actuals) £262415.10

Repairs in voids per annum (07/08 actuals) £95867.22

Costs above/below potential income £1,242,325.56

Tenants in receipt of housing benefit 69.37%

Comments on Performance Indicators

The indicators show this to be a stable community with a reasonable turnover of properties. More than half of all tenants have lived in their homes for over 5 years which is surprising considering that over half the properties are flats. Yet Lincoln Gardens remains in the top four wards for employment deprivation, income deprivation, child poverty, health deprivation and disability.

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

Due to the large number of properties and the percentage of flats in the area, housing management input is quite high with regular visits a few times a week. Congregating youths cause trouble around the Beechway area, particularly the shops. The police have been notified of this and given details of the registration numbers of the cars involved.

Residents and visitors to The Cottages have been approached regarding unauthorised parking on the grassed area to the front of the bungalows; attempts to stop this have generally been ignored due to residents needs to have easy access from vehicles to their homes. It is hoped to address this issue by providing better parking facilities within this plan.

There is an active residents association in the Lincoln gardens area which meets on a regular basis. The Beechway group appears to be less positive than other resident groups which is possibly due to frustrations about lack of improvements and remedies to longstanding problems. Representatives of the group attend the Neighbourhood Action Team meeting for the Lincoln Gardens with Kingsway ward area. The meetings provide an opportunity for the police to give and receive information on crime within specific areas. Residents can often help the Police, North Lincolnshire Homes and other enforcement authorities with identification of persistent offenders.

A scheduled estate inspection was undertaken on 4 September 2008 to the Beechway, Poplar Gardens, Gloucester Avenue and Larch Grove area. The inspection was attended by the Housing Officer and invitations sent to North Lincolnshire Homes tenant inspectors and residents of the area. The area was rated as Green by the tenant inspector meaning the area is a clean and pleasant place to live with no environmental issues. This estate inspection was undertaken prior to the day of action in the Beechway area.

Emmanuel Court and Kendal Court

The Housing Officer visits the area weekly to check for any tenancy enforcement issues and will carry out any necessary follow up action. There have been problems with fly-tipping from residents however these are dealt with quickly through tenancy enforcement action and the regular attendance of the caretaking service on the estate.

The area, in relation to nuisance behaviour, is good however there are pockets of nuisance behaviour which usually relate to noise nuisance. Delivery drivers drive over the grassed area which causes a nuisance to residents and damages the grassed area. Housing demand for all types of properties is good and tenancies are sustainable.

Emmanuel Court has a well established residents association which meets on a regular basis and is well attended by residents and Ward Councillors. The chair of the association is a frequent attendee at the Neighbourhood Action Team Meeting.

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 Lincoln Gardens area, we sent a questionnaire to each tenant

- The response rate was 39%.
- %'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:

- 71% are happy with their homes and 76% the location
- 42% commented that the area is clean and well kept but 12% feel the area is unkempt
- Only 24% considered the area to have a low crime rate
- 11% commented that there is no Community Spirit
- 33% would like caretakers to visit the area as and when necessary
- 13% would like to move elsewhere – in the majority of cases this was due to neighbour problems
- 24% would like to see a planned painting programme – this was considered the most important improvement
- 24% would like tidier roads and communal areas
- 67% are not happy with the police presence in the area but 21% are
- 24% have suffered from Anti Social Behaviour
- Only 45% were aware of the opportunities for tenant involvement
- Many comments were also received on the need for new windows

Proposed Improvements

The stock condition survey has identified investment works needed to our properties. Lincoln Gardens is timetabled for improvement works to start in April 2009 with the exception of the window programme which started 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 Lincoln Gardens area.

Lincoln Gardens progress

Bathroom Fittings	31
Boiler Replacement	14
Central Heating Systems	59
External Doors	9

External Walls	10
Fires	15
Kitchen	35
Roof Line	2
Windows	10
Wiring	5

The business plan budget allocated for improvement works in Lincoln Gardens is **£7,324,884**. By October 2008 a total of **£501,417** 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 Lincoln Gardens area are as follows:

- Remodel back of Beechway shops, removing sheds and garages to provide well – lit and secure parking for residents, retailers and visitors to shops
- Refurbish / remodel all communal entrances to provide access to parking at rear and secure access to stairwells for residents.
- Improve lighting to Poplar Gardens and Beechway
- Move communal doors to front at School Close / Collum Avenue
- Remodel front grassed area to The Cottages to provide large parking area
- Remove grassed areas to bungalows at ‘The Groves’ to provide better access and parking.
- Provide anti cycle barrier to pathway from Cherry Grove (54 – 70) to Collum Avenue to prevent unauthorised parking and driving over footpath
- Maintenance programme for trees to be pruned to reasonable height
- Provide disabled access to all blocks of flats, especially Gloucester Avenue
- Redesign area at rear of Poplar gardens to provide better parking facilities

- CCTV to Collum Avenue and Cherry Grove to help identification of anti-social behaviour offenders.
- Make Emmanuel Court 'Residents Only' parking
- Repair / resurface pot holed road to Emmanuel Court – Action completed
- Provide security doors to flats Emmanuel Court – Action completed
- Fence off and gate grassed areas to back of Emmanuel Court to give defensible space.
- Maintenance programme for trees to be pruned to reasonable height to Emmanuel Court
- Consultation on closure of footpaths to each end of Emmanuel Court
- Install bollards to stop vehicles gaining access to grassed areas at Emmanuel Court
- Improve drying areas at Emmanuel Court
- Improve lighting to rear of flats at Emmanuel Court
- Provide a location for storage of bulky items awaiting collection at Emmanuel Court

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 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.