

## Estate Plan

### Westcliff Closes

**This plan covers the following areas and number of properties:**

Location	No	Location	No	Location	No
Canterbury Close	45	Ripon Close	37	Salisbury Close	53
Coventry Close	45	Rochester Close	50	St. Albans Close	54

### Estate Description

The Westcliff Closes area has 284 properties, which are made up as follows:

Type	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	No of Properties (284)
Flats – Ground Floor	0	60	0	0	60
Flats – First Floor	0	59	0	0	59
Maisonettes – Ground Floor	0	21	0	0	21
Maisonettes – Second Floor	0	22	0	0	22
Houses	0	0	89	28	117
Leaseholders					5

Properties are all of a traditional build. A recent stock survey has shown them all to be well constructed and structurally sound. The area is made up of family houses and low rise blocks consisting of maisonettes and flats. Whilst the houses are generally popular and need little management, the flats and maisonettes suffer from nuisance and anti social behaviour usually associated with this type of accommodation where residents have no privacy or defensible space.

The flats in the corners have no vehicular access and the only pedestrian access to car parking areas is through dark alleyways. The paved courtyard areas tend to be poorly maintained and unpleasant. Parking is generally inadequate although in the mid 1990's, the back gardens to the houses were extended to give residents the ability to park within the curtilage of their properties. Parking areas have also been made in the centre of the closes and speed bumps provided.

The lack of communal gardens to the flats gives these areas a dull and bare appearance. The shed areas to the back of the maisonettes are not well used or maintained and are subject to criminal activity, vandalism and graffiti. It has been suggested that these are either demolished or re sited to give a more open and pleasant aspect to the area.

The Westcliff area is one of the most deprived wards in North Lincolnshire with The Precinct, a 1960's shopping centre, close by. This is now outdated and ineffective in layout, which has led to anti social behaviour and crime forcing shops to close. Yorkshire Forward have funded a study of the area under the Urban Renaissance Programme to look at options for rejuvenation of the area which would include retail, housing and social issues. The most favoured option is

the most comprehensive and puts forward plans to demolish and rebuild. A further bid has now been submitted to secure funding for a more in depth study of this option.

The area has all amenities close by including a supermarket and is on a regular bus route to the town centre. There are schools in the area, a community and youth centre as well as a library and play areas.

Crime is high which tends to make the area as a whole less popular. Reported crime within the Brumby ward as a whole was on average 179 cases per month.

### **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:**

Relets in year as % of tenancies	16.25%
Transfer requests outwards	15.16%
Tenancies under 2 years in length	28.16%

**Amber:** There are no amber indicators

#### **Green:**

Empty properties at 31/10/08	1.08%
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#### **Other indicators:**

Tenancies of 2 – 5 years in length	20.94%
Tenancies of 5+ years in length	50.90%
Potential income after void loss	£802182.96
Repairs expenditure per annum (07/08 actuals)	£116772.96
Repairs in voids per annum (07/08 actuals)	£95206.89
Costs above/below potential income	£590203.11
Tenants in receipt of housing benefit	59.93%

### **Comments on Performance Indicators**

In October 2008, 50.90% of residents had lived in the area for 5+ years. However, there are still red indicators with 28.16% of tenancies being less than two years old. A high number of voids during the year (45) and transfer requests also being at 15.16%, indicates a lack confidence in the area. Whilst occupancy of the houses will generally be more settled, the flats and maisonettes become empty more often.

### **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 high concentration of properties in this area, housing management input is high. The Housing Officer visits 1 or 2 times a day to deal with tenancy enforcement issues, anti social behaviour and nuisance. The majority of nuisance reports are to do with inconsiderate residents either playing loud music or being noisy. Alternatively there are a large number of issues relating to ASB as a result of access to communal block areas. The maisonettes and flats thus lack private and defensible space and dogs are allowed to roam and mess in the communal areas. As the entrance doors are mistreated and generally insecure this allows vandalism, fire play, graffiti and general nuisance to occur. Communal doors are in the process of being replaced but the progress is very slow and not sufficient. Even new doors have not always proved adequate and not all residents of blocks that have had new secure entrance doors have noticed a positive affect.

The Fire Officer has visited the flats and made recommendations for improvement to the design of the entrances to prevent vandalism, fire play and unauthorised

access by drug users. It has also been suggested that wheelie bins be relocated to an external location for safety.

Demand for the houses is high but low to medium for the flats and maisonettes.

### **Estate Inspections.**

These are programmed and carried out by the Housing Officer usually in the presence of one or more tenant inspectors.

The next date for inspection of the area ( Coventry, Canterbury, St Albans, Salisbury, Ripon, Rochester Close) is 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 2-00pm.

The current Traffic Light for this area is Amber.

### **NAT Meetings.**

These are held every 4-6 weeks and are multi-agency meetings to address estate and environmental issues.

### **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
- Gathered crime figures to check types and level of crime
- 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)
- Negotiated a new agreement with Neighbourhood services for the upkeep of our estates, which clearly indicates standards and regularity of maintenance to the environment.
- In response to views put forward in the Crime and Community survey, proposals have been put forward for an enviro –crime hit squad. The squad will work with existing staff and the police to prevent and deter crime and tackle anti – social behaviour.
- Ensure Starter tenancy visits are carried out with as much priority as is possible.
- Provide a regular caretaking presence on our estates
- Work with Rent Recovery 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 Westcliff Closes area, we sent a questionnaire to each tenant

- The response rate was 15%.
- %'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:**

- 67% are happy with their homes
- 51% like the area because it is close to relatives
- 53% commented that the area is noisy /bad
- 56% considered the area to have a high crime rate
- 56% have been the victims of crime
- 44% considered there is no community spirit
- 39% considered the area to be unkempt
- 44% are considering moving away – due to crime in the area and lack of policing
- 63% would like better security
- 53% would like tidier roads and communal areas
- 39% would like a planned painting programme
- 74% are unhappy with the police presence in the area
- The most important improvement wanted is door entry systems/security

### **Proposed Improvements**

The stock condition survey has identified investment works needed to our properties. Westcliff Closes was timetabled for all improvement works to start in April 2008. Subsequent programmes in future years will pick up environmental and estate related issues. To date the following progress has been made:

### **Westcliff Closes progress**

Bathroom Fittings	144
Boiler Replacement	3
Central Heating Systems	129
Chimney	16
External Doors	3
Fires	11
Kitchen	85
Roof	40

Roof Line	49
Windows	41
Wiring	174

The business plan budget allocated for improvement works in Westcliff Closes is **£3,198,839**. By October 2008 a total of **£2,212,672** 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:

- Provision of clearer, better signage to all properties (particularly to the rear)
- All communal entrance doors to be replaced with secure metal doors
- Sheds to be demolished with alternative provided in new location (if appropriate)
- Removal of overflow stains to all external walls
- Remodelling of communal areas to the back of maisonettes /flats
- Lighting to be upgraded to all alleyways
- Programme to cut back overgrown trees
- Relocation of wheelie bins to external location

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.