

Estate Plan

Westcliff Poets

This plan covers the following areas and number of properties:

Location	No	Location	No	Location	No
Byfield Road	1	Lichfield Avenue	27	Whitman Road	30
Dryden Road	23	Scott Avenue	18	Wordsworth Road	18
Gray Road	12	Skelton Road	3		

Estate Description

The Westcliff Poets area has 132 properties, which are made up as follows:

Type	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	No of Properties (132)
Flats – Ground Floor	13	26	0	0	39
Flats – First Floor	14	25	0	0	39
Flats – Second Floor	0	1	0	0	1
Houses	0	0	32	21	53

The majority of properties are of a traditional brick build but there are also some non - traditional Wimpey houses and flats (Dryden Road). These were built between 1951 and 1968, and are of a concrete construction. Although major investment is needed, this is not significantly higher than for the traditional brick built properties. A recent stock survey has shown all properties to be structurally sound and well constructed.

The area has two distinct parts with 'The Poets' comprising mainly 3 bedroom family houses and the Precinct (see separate plan), which is surrounded by flats. The Poets area, being open plan in layout, is popular and many houses have been sold through the Right to Buy. The 4 bedroom terraced houses on Whitman Road and Wordsworth Road are higher density with fewer sold as their design gives little privacy but does provide for off road parking. Garage blocks to this part of the area are poorly lit and subject to fly tipping and vandalism

The Westcliff area is one of the most deprived wards in North Lincolnshire. Yorkshire Forward funded a study under the Urban Renaissance Programme to look at options for rejuvenation of the area, which would tackle retail, housing and social issues. The favoured option is the most comprehensive and puts forward plans to demolish and rebuild shops, dwellings and community facilities. 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 supermarkets and is on a regular bus route to the town centre. There are schooling facilities for all ages in the immediate area.

Crime is high which tends to make the area 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	18.46%
Tenancies under 2 years in length	23.85%

Amber:

Transfer requests outwards	14.62%
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Green: There are no green indicators

Other indicators:

Empty properties at 31/10/08	1.54%
Tenancies of 2 –5 years in length	24.61%
Tenancies of 5 years + in length	51.54%
Potential income after void loss	£370569.15
Repairs expenditure per annum (07/08 actuals)	£44864.71
Repairs in voids per annum (07/08 actuals)	£27357.20
Costs above/below potential income	£298347.24
Tenants in receipt of housing benefit	69.23%

Comments on Performance Indicators

The two red indicators represent both a high turnover of properties and a high % of new tenancies. The leaf has recently been split between Westcliff Poets and High so no comparisons are available on previous figures.

However, in order to stop this trend, action needs to be taken to make the area more sustainable and somewhere that people want to take up residence and settle.

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

Management input to this area is on a daily basis due to regular nuisance and anti – social behaviour. Litter and vandalism is also a big problem due to the shops and pub at the precinct. Much of the Poets area is private and open plan therefore management of this part of the area is much less although there are still some NLH garages that have been somewhat neglected which in turn has led to vandalism.

The Precinct area and flats in the vicinity of the shops suffer due to insufficient lighting and the design of communal doorways, which lend themselves to accumulation of rubbish, anti social behaviour and vandalism. There is a high number of single person accommodation in the area as well as OAP tenanted flats which causes problems with the elderly feeling intimidated and unsafe, particularly at night time. There are known drug users in the area and this is one of the issues that residents would like to be addressed by a greater police presence and revitalisation and renovation of the area as a whole.

The main parking areas are located out of sight and of such are underused. The garage area is subject to vandalism by youths in the evenings with bikes being ridden on roofs and objects thrown; this makes the area very intimidating. Although CCTV has been installed to the Precinct, this has not had much of an

effect on anti social behaviour and has not made residents feel more secure. There is still a reluctance to use the shops after dark.

The area is generally unpopular due to its reputation for anti social behaviour and certain properties are difficult to let however there is a demand for single person accommodation, which the area provides. There is a multi agency group, the Westcliff Project Team, which meets every 6 /8 weeks. Issues such as anti social behaviour, neighbourhood and shop watch as well as policing activities are discussed at this group.

A decision was made in 2000 that the Dryden Road OAP flats were 'surplus to requirements' due to the fact that their popularity had diminished. This was due to the type of accommodation, the layout of the blocks, the location and local amenities offered. At the time there was no waiting list and therefore properties were boarded up, as they became empty.

Whilst accommodation for single people is still in demand, finance has not been available to remodel the properties to provide the type of accommodation needed. Some of the flats however have been leased to the Carr Gomm Society and have been let to provide accommodation for clients with special needs. The Carr Gomm Society is of the opinion that the number of units they currently occupy is the optimum.

The area is subject to potential future investment - if funding can be secured to remodel the Shopping Precinct and Surrounding area. If the proposal is viable, it will incorporate not only retail opportunities but also opportunities for accommodation and leisure / community use. This would also provide the ideal opportunity to address the empty flats and deliver a resource that the local community needs.

Estate Inspections

The estate inspection for the area covers Whitman Road, Wordsworth Road, Marlowe Road, Dryden Road and Lichfield Road. The next estate inspection will take place on 26th March 2009 . The inspection will begin at the Youth Centre car park at the top of Dryden Road at 2 p.m. At this inspection the area will be classified under the new traffic light system.

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 Introductory tenancy visits are carried out as a priority
- 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 High & Poets area, we sent a questionnaire to each tenant

- The response rate was poor with only 11% being returned.
- %’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:

- 60% are happy with their homes
- 34% feel there are good local amenities
- 35% like the area as it is close to relatives
- 44% think the area to be noisy /bad
- 44% consider the area to be unkempt and untidy
- 25% are considering moving away – due to crime,anti social behaviour or drug related behaviour
- 56% considered the area to have high crime
- 30% commented that there is no Community Spirit
- 53% want better security – this is considered to be the most important
- 44% would like a planned painting programme
- 37% would like better street lights
- 60% have been the victims of crime
- 77% are not happy with the police presence in the area

Proposed Improvements

The stock condition survey has identified investment works needed to our properties. Westcliff High (including Poets) was timetabled for all improvement works starting in April 2007 and most of the required works were undertaken in the first year. Subsequent programmes in future years will pick up environmental and estate related issues. The table below shows the current progress in the Westcliff High and Westcliff Poets area.

Westcliff High & Poets progress

Bathroom Fittings	160
Boiler Replacement	47
Central Heating Systems	91
Chimney	8
External Doors	68
External Walls	2
Fires	73
Kitchen	81
Roof	30
Roof Line	66
Windows	70
Wiring	231

The business plan budget allocated for improvement works in Westcliff High and Poets leaf is **£3,102,343**. By October 2008 a total of **£2,024,091** 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:

- Refurbishment of all communal entrances
- Upgrading of lighting to all areas
- Remodelling of grassed areas to provide more off street parking
- Renewal of fencing to all areas as necessary
- Consultation to take place on future use (or demolition) of garages to back of Whitman Road
- Provision of off road parking to Marlowe Road properties where possible

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.