

## Estate Plan

### Earl Street Development

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

Location	No	Location	No
Albert Marson Court	38	Hampton Road	16
Beauchamp Street	2	Kenilworth Road	1
Beauchamp Walk	20	Leamington Court	16
Cemetery Road	1	Lygon Street	2
Earls Walk	39	Talbot Walk	24
Earl Street	1	Warwick Road	1

### Estate Description

The Earl St development has 161 properties, which are made up as follows:

Type	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	No of Properties (161)
Flats – Ground Floor	22	12	1	35
Flats – First Floor	56	8	0	64
Flats – Second Floor	9	3	0	12
Maisonettes – First Floor	0	0	9	9
Maisonettes – Second Floor	0	0	1	1
Bungalows	5	1	1	7
Houses	0	2	21	23
Leaseholders				10

Properties are all of a traditional brick build. A recent stock survey has shown them all to be structurally sound and well constructed. The development provides a high concentration of mixed accommodation with properties above and behind a row of community shops as well as 40 garages. Access to the first floor is through security gates. There is a CCTV surveillance system installed to the shop fronts and it covers only a small part of the estate. Whilst much of the development houses residents of a mature age (over 40's), the 3 storey blocks at Albert Marson Court are populated by much younger residents. The younger resident's tenancies are less stable and there is a greater turnover in these properties. The houses and flats on Kenilworth Road, Hampton Road, Leamington Court and Warwick Road are high in demand due to their location and proximity to the steel works, a major provider of employment in Scunthorpe and the general pleasing nature of their environments.

The area is subject to high crime and anti social behaviour and is used as a thoroughfare by local schoolchildren, which creates litter problems. All these aspects can make some properties difficult to let.

There is school provision in the area for children of all ages with primary, junior and secondary schools within easy walking distance. Bus services to the town centre are regular and there is a Community Centre and local shops including a post office.

### **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 30/10/08)

#### **Red:**

Tenancies under 2 years in length	22.15%
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#### **Amber:**

Relets in year as % of tenancies	15.44%
Transfer requests outwards	10.74%

**Green:** There are no green indicators

#### **Other indicator**

Empty properties at 31/10/08	1.32%
Tenancies of 2 – 5 years in length	24.83%
Tenancies of 5+ years in length	53.02%
Potential income after empty property loss	£407412.58
Repairs expenditure per annum (07/08 actuals)	£68865.80
Repairs in voids per annum (07/08 actuals)	£17457.14
Costs above / below potential income	£321089.64
Tenants in receipt of housing benefit	73.15%

### **Comments on Performance Indicators**

Although the figures above relate to the whole of the Earl Street Development the majority of empty properties and the high turnover relates to Albert Marson Court. Due to the design and layout of the Court the area suffers from high crime levels and anti social behaviour which impacts on the elderly living in the rest of the development. This may well account for the low % of tenants who are long term residents although with 24% of tenants over 70 years of age there will always be some turnover due to people dying or going into care.

### **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**

There is an active Residents Association that covers the Albert Marson Court, Earls Walk, Talbot Walk and Beauchamp Walk area. Leamington Court is part of the SWELL Residents Association which has only just formed.

The court is perceived as 'undesirable' with drug and nuisance issues. This has tended to mean that properties are allocated to the younger element on the waiting list (18 – 25yr olds) or those who are in great housing need with a history of drug misuse, as they are the only ones who are willing to accept them. With the increased proportion of young and vulnerable households, this has led to youths congregating and creating a nuisance. There appears to be a lack of awareness within this group of how to conduct a tenancy successfully, however, some individuals have managed to sustain their tenancies with the help of the Young Persons Support Officer and local tenancy support agencies such as Humbercare and ROOF.

The design of the Albert Marson Court development means that there are many places for youths to hide and hang around in which causes problems for tenants and the police. Many of the shrub areas were removed to remove them as a

hiding place for youths and as a storage place for alcohol. The stairwells suffer from frequent graffiti and urination. Although there are magnetic locks to the gates, these are constantly being vandalised to the point where it is no longer viable or cost effective to keep repairing them. North Lincolnshire Homes have been working in conjunction with the Humberside Probation Service to improve the environmental appearance of the Albert Marson Court, Earls Walk, Talbot Walk and Beauchamp Walk area. The Probation Service have used the time of those undertaking community service to undertake tasks such as litter picking, painting and edging of paths. A scheduled estate inspection was undertaken on 2 October 2008 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 meaning the area is a clean and pleasant place to live with no environmental issues.

The bin chutes at Albert Marson Court were too small to take the volume of rubbish and were constantly getting blocked. This meant that caretakers had to visit the area on a daily basis to remove the general build up of rubbish. A new bin storage area has recently been created on the ground floor and the old bin shuts blocked up. Recycling facilities have also been provided for residents use.

The mixture of ages means that there is sometimes friction between the elderly and the young. Residents have been consulted about fencing and gating to certain areas to create smaller communities and help prevent intimidation and harassment. A project team is looking at 'designing out crime' to the area and funding has been secured to provide a system of gates and fencing to prevent the area being used as a thoroughfare and to deter youths from gathering. This project is currently in the planning stage and the actual installation of fencing will commence shortly. There has also been an issue with young people riding bikes through the area, which can be dangerous to elderly residents who may not hear or see the danger.

The area has previously been subject to a dispersal order that prevent people from gathering in groups large than two and the Police had the powers to remove people from the area if they were causing anti-social behaviour. The dispersal order was very successful with a great reduction in nuisance behaviour and the Police still provide a high presence on the estate in the form of regular patrols by the area's Police Community Support Officers.

Estate inspections are carried out by the Housing Officer on a weekly basis and any tenancy enforcement issues are acted on. Any graffiti or rubbish in the communal entrance areas is picked up by the estate caretakers who visited the area on a regular basis.

Housing Management input into the Cemetery Road, Kenilworth Road, Hampton Road, Leamington Court and Warwick Road area is low with visits by the Housing Officer being quite infrequent. The demand for properties within this area is quite high and turnover of properties is very low.

## **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 Earls Walk area we sent a questionnaire to each tenant.

- The response rate was 16%.
- %'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:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 33% are happy with their homes</li><li>• 43% like their neighbours</li></ul> |
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- 33% feel there is a good community spirit
- 57% like the area as it is close to the town centre
- 86% consider the area to be noisy / bad
- 81% dislike the area because of the high crime
- Both of the above are considered to be the worst aspects of the area
- 62% dislike the area as it is unkempt
- 33% dislike the property itself
- 24% dislike the area because they are not close to relatives
- 57% want to move away – of these, 61% want to get away from the noisy/bad area, 33% say their property is too small, 31% want to get away from drug related behaviour and 30% want to be nearer relatives
- 33% would like to see better street lights
- 52% would like to see a planned painting programme
- 52% would like door entry systems
- 48% would like walkways closed / gated off
- 62% would like tidy roads and communal areas
- 62% would like better security – this was considered to be the most important improvement needed
- 67% have been the victims of crime – of these, 64% have suffered intimidation and 71% have suffered harassment
- 43% didn't report these incidents, either because they didn't feel there was any point (24%) or because they were afraid of what would happen (24%)
- 81% are not happy with the police presence in the area
- 62% have suffered some form of anti social behaviour but 61% did not report this to either the Housing Officer or the police
- 60% were not happy with the way their problem was dealt with but 57% failed to report it to their area office
- 62% are not aware of the opportunities for tenant involvement

### **Proposed Improvements**

The stock condition survey has identified investment works needed to our properties. Earl Street Development is timetabled for all improvement works to start in April 2009. Subsequent programmes in future years will pick up environmental and estate related issues. Some ad-hoc improvement works have already taken place but these are only scheduled in if there is an urgent need. To date the following has been replaced:

#### **Earl Street Development progress**

Central Heating Systems	8
External Doors	3
Fires	1
Kitchen	2
Roof Line	4
Windows	3

The business plan budget allocated for improvement works in Earl Street Development leaf is **£1,218,671**. By October 2008 a total of **£20,076** 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 Earl Street area are as follows:

- Painting to external balconies
- New doors to the electric meter sheds
- Gates to stair towers to be renewed with improved anti – vandal locks
- Security to be improved to communal entrances with new entrance doors installed
- Communal entrances to be painted and new flooring
- Guttering to be renewed
- Shed doors to be renewed
- Landscaping to grassed areas once fencing and gating project completed
- Secure letter boxes to communal entrances on Earls Walk, Beauchamp Walk and Talbot Walk
- Revamp stairwells and walkways to Albert Marson Court to make the area more aesthetically pleasing
- Improve CCTV in the Albert Marson Court and Earls Walk Development area to deter offenders of environmental crimes
- Increase litter and dog bins

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.