

THE WILLOWS NEIGHBOURHOOD



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2005, North East Lincolnshire Council transferred its entire housing stock to a new registered social landlord, Shoreline Housing Partnership, following a ballot of tenants. During the transfer Shoreline set out a series of 'promises' within the offer document which have since formed the core of the company's corporate plan. These include direct investment in the fabric of the buildings such as roofs, windows, boilers, bathrooms and kitchens through a major construction partnering programme that will deliver over £50million of additional investment over the next 5 years.

However, the offer document promised the community of North East Lincolnshire much wider benefits from stock transfer than improvement in the bricks and mortar. Shoreline is committed to securing long term sustainable futures for the communities within which it works and recognises the need to invest in the social, economic and environmental aspects of each neighbourhood in order to develop balanced attractive communities that people wish to live in both now and in the future.

Delivering this 'triple bottom line' across all neighbourhoods is a job which Shoreline alone cannot hope to achieve. Successful regeneration will require a coordinated partnership approach with the local community at its heart. Shoreline has worked with community members and their representatives to create a model that is intended to engage partners, stakeholders and the wider community in a neighbourhood specific debate, culminating in the creation of co-ordinated action plans.

These Neighbourhood Investment Plans will drive Shoreline's strategic investment decisions, maximise impact and long term benefit for the community, and enable partners to share resources. In order to achieve this, The Willows Neighbourhood Investment Plan will:

- Provide an accurate profile of the neighbourhood from which investment decisions can be made
- Assess the sustainability of the area in order to prioritise investment and to measure progress
- Provide the community with a voice with which they can articulate their priorities and debate these with existing or planned investment by Shoreline and other partners
- Agree a range of co-ordinated investments, and the appropriate lead agencies, that are designed to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood.

The Willows Neighbourhood

When the Willows Housing Estate was created in 1969 it was Grimsby's largest municipal housing project since the war, designed and built with the vision of an attractive, self-contained estate providing the most modern housing and social amenities. Located to the West of Grimsby Town Centre, the estate is sandwiched between the A180 carriageway and the Great Coates private housing estate. Today, the Willows neighbourhood contains about 4350 residents living in 1,955 households, 42% of which are Shoreline properties. Of this 42%, the majority are concentrated in Lower-Level Super Output Area 004A covering Central Willows, North of Cromwell Road and West of Wingate.



In the past, this neighbourhood has suffered quite significantly through lack of investment because of its location next to some of the more affluent areas of North East Lincolnshire, and has hence been deprived of many of the regeneration activities afforded to other areas of the district. Despite this, there are several highly successful community initiatives operating in the Willows that utilise local knowledge, expertise and resources. The sense of community spirit is also very tangible in the Willows neighbourhood and, as the consultation in the area illustrates, the residents here are prepared to play a full and active role in improving their community and creating a better quality of life for all.

Despite these quite positive aspects of the neighbourhood, it remains a pocket of deprivation in an otherwise quite affluent area of North East Lincolnshire. While the statistics indicate that the ward of Freshney, within which the neighbourhood is situated, enjoys a better than average quality of life, particular areas within the Willows display acute levels of deprivation and social exclusion compared to the rest of North East Lincolnshire.

Employment, Income & Receipt of Benefits

- Residents are **more** likely to be affected by unemployment and economic inactivity. Males are **1.3 times** more likely to be unemployed, rising to **1.9 times in LSOA 004A**. Females also more likely to be unemployed and permanently sick or disabled.
- Income is more likely to be supplemented by work related benefits. Residents are **1.6 times more** likely to claim JSA across the neighbourhood as a whole, rising to nearly **3 times more likely in 004A**.

Education, Skills & Training

- Residents are **1.3 times more** likely to have no qualifications at all and nearly **2 times less** likely to have gained a qualification at level 4 or 5 (HND, degree and higher degree level qualification or equivalent).

Health

- Residents are **more** likely to have poor standards of health where a family member is likely to be in poor health and suffering from a limiting long term illness.

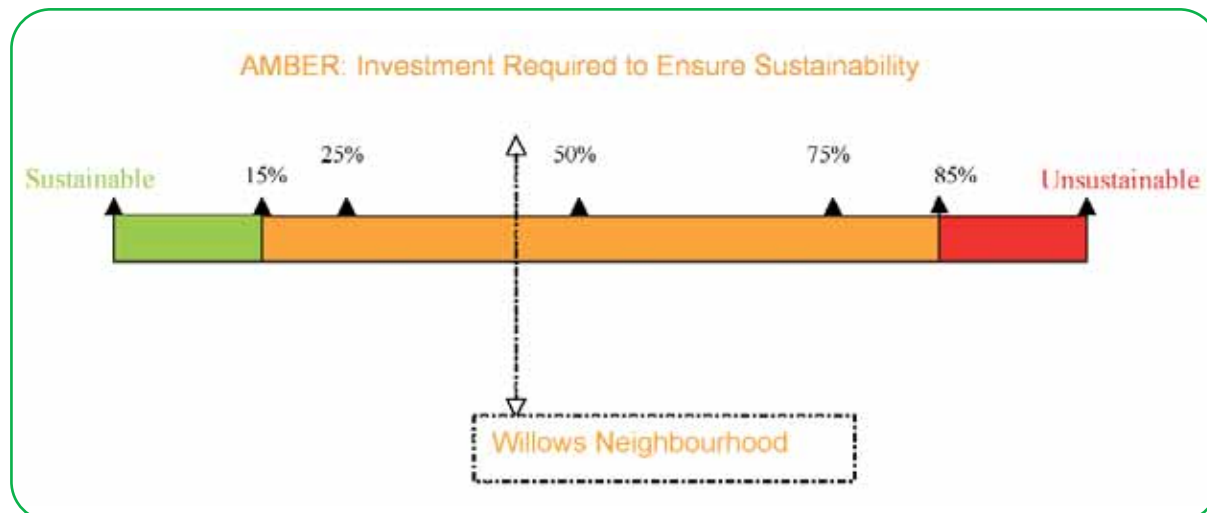
Access to Housing & Services

- Residents may have **more** problems accessing housing in this area where their house is worth more than the average district home and Shoreline's own waiting list data indicates very strong demand.
- They are nearly **2 times more likely** to have no private transport access.

Crime

- Residents are **more likely** to be a victim of burglary, vehicle crime and personal robbery.

Shoreline has undertaken a Housing Sustainability Assessment which uses these statistics, and further information collected on a range of indicators including Demand, Reputation and Social Cohesion. This assessment concludes that the Neighbourhood Sustainability Profile of the Willows neighbourhood should be identified as:



In order to understand what investment is required, and the most appropriate actions to take, Shoreline has worked extensively with the local community and partner agency organisations to devise a set of agreed Investment Priorities for the neighbourhood intended to drive and focus investment to the places it is needed most.

Community Priorities

The extensive programme of community consultation in the Willows neighbourhood was hugely successful and provided the long-awaited opportunity for a great many residents and tenants to express their concerns and outline their priorities for the area in which they live.

The outcome of this ongoing consultation process is a more vocal community, better able to explain their needs and participate in developing solutions. In terms of the Investment Plan the community has identified four key priority areas that they would like to see addressed:



- **The Environment:** concerning fly tipping, graffiti and the poor condition of landscaped areas especially in relation to Wingate Parade and the numerous service roads running through the neighbourhood.
- **Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:** the priorities here centred around the intimidation and nuisance caused by congregations of youths. Car and vehicle crime is also an issue of particular concern.
- **Shoreline Housing Partnership Issues:** focusing upon the service that Shoreline provides locally and the ways in which this can perhaps be improved.
- **Other Issues:** these priorities are concerned with issues of local pride and the future of empty properties in the neighbourhood.

Shoreline Priorities

Shoreline's priorities for the Willows, and all other neighbourhoods, are articulated in the Transfer Document, which sets out Shoreline's delivery commitments, and the associated operational policies that define the method for achieving those standards, such as Decent Homes, Shoreline Standard, Sustainability and Service Quality. This entire policy framework is underpinned by Shoreline's Vision and Values that set out the culture within which the new organisation will operate and the Corporate Business plan that identifies the actions that will ensure effective implementation.

Shoreline's priorities are designed to drive neighbourhood investment to create sustainable communities where people want to live both now, and in the future and therefore encompass 'more than bricks and mortar'.

- **The Built Environment.** Achieving Decent Homes and Shoreline Standard, improving physical safety and improving the environment.
- **Maximising Income.** Increasing the number of properties in rental, reducing turnaround times and reduce non payment.
- **Service Delivery.** Increasing the speed, effectiveness and customer focus of the repairs, allocations and lettings functions.
- **Group Dwellings.** Providing focused support for vulnerable adults that addresses the need within the community.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour.** Addressing tenants' concerns around the issue of low level crime and the fear of crime.
- **Tenant and Community Involvement.** Providing effective methods to consult with communities including minority and hard to reach.
- **Creating Sustainable Communities.** Ensuring that the above priority actions are co-ordinated to provide maximum impact whilst addressing some of the underlying problems including employment, skills and education, crime and fear of crime and health.

Partner Priorities

Principal Partners in the Willows neighbourhood include:

- Humberside Police
- The Local Strategic Partnership
- North East Lincolnshire Council
- North East Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust
- Safer Communities Partnership

These, along with other voluntary and community sector organisations, work together in a number of forums to ensure that actions are targeted to the places most in need. The recently awarded Neighbourhood Renewal Funding will be allocated on the basis of this partnership work and through extensive consultation involving all stakeholders in a particular area.

Although many of the priorities identified in the Investment Plan do not focus upon the Willows neighbourhood in particular, for many partners it is viewed as a priority area and will therefore benefit from targeted investment over the coming years.

Investment and Implementation

Through the above extensive consultation process, Shoreline, partners and the local community have concluded that substantial investment is required in order to achieve long-term sustainability within the Willows neighbourhood and indeed, the Investment Plan identifies **over 3 million pounds worth of improvements that will be taking place over the next few years.**

In order to successfully implement such a large scale investment programme, an Action Plan, based on the priorities identified above, has been developed and agreed by all stakeholders. This action plan will provide a comprehensive framework for the delivery of regeneration in the Willows neighbourhood.

Action Plan

Crime and the Fear of Crime

- Tackling ASB especially around the precinct.
- Eskdale Flats improvements.
- Combating the fear of crime.
- Combating vehicle crime.
- Combating drug use to break the cycle of offending.
- Supporting victims of crime.
- Supporting the development of community led initiatives.
- Investment and improvement to properties and surrounds to improve safety.

Environmental Improvements

- Proactive response to fly tipping.
- Improvements to Wingate Parade shopping centre.
- Service road improvements.
- Develop better use of open space and unused buildings to provide visible community amenities.
- General environmental improvements.
- Development of community owned schemes.

Young People

- Provision of recreational facilities for young people.
- Young people achieving success in academic development.
- Supporting vulnerable young people.

Employment and Skills

- Provision of apprenticeship schemes.
- Development of basic and key skills
- Supporting job search.
- Targeting local employment.
- Development of social enterprises.
- Provision of alternative programmes designed to raise aspirations and stimulate an interest in learning opportunities.

Community Empowerment

- Developing community capacity.
- Encourage Local Pride.
- Funding community led initiatives.
- Support the BWTA and TARAs
- Ensure that all information is clear and accessible.

Health and Well Being

- Develop healthy living campaigns.
- Ensure help is provided to those who need it.
- Deliver health services that are required and accessible.
- Deliver services that allow the adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Vulnerable Adults

- Group dwelling investment and improvement.
- Develop initiatives to combat fuel poverty and its causes.
- Reduce numbers addicted to drugs.
- Tackle the problems of mental health illness.

Quality Of Life

- Safe and clean environment for all.
- Competitive and thriving economy.
- Promoting Fire Safety education.
- Decent Homes by 2010.

Service Delivery

- Improving the repairs system.
- Review of allocations and lettings policy.
- Greater accessibility to Shoreline office.
- Promote openness and accountability in all practices.
- Maximise income through void minimisation and the encouragement of responsible tenancies.

This is the start of the regeneration of the Willows neighbourhood and this Investment Plan will need to be implemented and monitored. To this end, Shoreline Housing Partnership will continually monitor progress and report regularly, making informed changes as and when they are required.