



**WARDS AFFECTED – Abbey, Belgrave, Latimer, Coleman, Spinney Hills,
Western Park**

CABINET

23 JULY 2007

**DECENT HOMES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR – HOME IMPROVEMENT AREA
PROGRAMME**

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, ADULTS & HOUSING

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report seeks Cabinet approval to declare further Home Improvement Areas. This is in order to continue our area-based approach in assisting vulnerable and other low-income homeowners to improve their properties to the decent homes standard.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 Home Improvement Grants are primarily targeted at vulnerable households living in non-decent homes. Although there are now estimated to be about 9,000 such households in the City, they tend to be more dispersed than in the early days of the Renewal Programme. This means that the programme can move more quickly through areas than previously. When all the eligible households have been contacted and offered the service it is time to declare a new Home Improvement Area. Uptake in Abbey Lane and Windsor Avenue areas is now slowing down.

2.2 Government methodology, using data from the Building Research Establishment, has been used to select 5 more areas where there are estimated to be about 580 vulnerable households living in non-decent homes (see Appendices 2 & 3). The actual number will only be known when house to house work gets underway. An area by area approach is still believed to be the most effective way of assisting these homeowners and is often how we find the most vulnerable people who simply don't otherwise come forward. The programme is likely to take 2 years to complete, assuming current capital programme provision.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the following Improvement Zones are declared, in the order listed, as Home Improvement Areas with Home Improvement Grants and other renewal services made available in accordance with existing policies, as resources permit:-

Halifax Drive
 Belgrave Village
 Catherine Street North
 Crown Hills
 Westcotes Central

4. HEADLINE FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications – Rod Pearson

4.1.1 The Housing Capital Programme was approved by Cabinet on 15th January 2007.

	2007-08* £,000s	2008-09 £,000s	2009-10 £,000s	Total £,000s
Renovation Grants in Renewal Areas/ Home Improvement Areas	1,400	1,500	1,700	5,700
Energy Efficiency Grants (DFGs & Renewal Areas)	200	200	200	825
	1,600	1,700	1,900	6,525

*Managed programme amounts

4.1.2 In addition to the main programme a further £570k has been secured for 2007-08 through the NRF to help meet our decent homes targets.

4.2 Legal Implications – Joanna Bunting

4.2.1 Powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 replaced the Council's powers and duties under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, giving much wider discretion to intervene to assist owners who have unexpectedly encountered problems or to deal with local needs on a strategic level. Authorities have to ensure that they are targeting their assistance effectively.

5. Officers to contact about this report -

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)

CABINET	23 JULY 2007
CABINET BRIEFING	9 JULY 2007
CORPORATE DIRECTORS BOARD	3 JULY 2007

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION AND APPENDICES

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Decent Homes Standard target, PSA 7, that was originally a target only for social housing, has been applied to private sector housing. The onus is on assisting vulnerable households. Government expect us to achieve a year on year increase in the proportion of vulnerable households who live in homes that are in decent condition. Our Local Area Agreement Target is at least 313 per year. Definitions of a 'decent home' and a 'vulnerable household' are shown in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 According to the English House Condition Survey 2001 only 57% of vulnerable households in the private sector were living in a decent home across England. The national target is to increase this level in stages, reaching 70% in 2010-11 and 75% by 2020-21. By 2005 the level had reached 66%. Leicester is estimated to be between 50% to 60%.
- 1.3 Our private housing renewal strategy has two main elements. High-level area based work undertaken in our declared renewal areas/ home improvement areas and lower level activity provided through the rest of the city. The declared areas aim to have a significant impact on a neighbourhood by assisting low-income owner-occupiers to carry out comprehensive improvement of their homes through Home Improvement Grants and encouraging private landlords to make any necessary improvements to their properties. Energy Efficiency Grants are made available to assist with works from a menu of items that requires the most effective measures to be dealt with first.
- 1.4 Home Improvement Grants are made available to owner-occupiers whose homes are below the decent home standard. The grants are means tested. Owners in receipt of benefits or on low incomes will generally receive grant aid meeting the full cost of work. Owners who have higher incomes may make a significant contribution to the work or may get no grant at all.

1.5 Where provision is made in the Capital Programme, environmental works are carried out.

1.6 Currently we have six 'active' declared areas. These are:

Declared Area	Date Declared	Number of Properties
Evington Valley Renewal Area ph2	November 1999	437
New Humberstone non-statutory Renewal Area	January 2001	571
St Saviours non-statutory Renewal Area	March 2002	779
Swainson Road Home Improvement Area	February 2006	198
Abbey Lane North Home Improvement Area	November 2006	339
Windsor Avenue Home Improvement Area	November 2006	304

1.7 We tend to work through areas more quickly now than in past years because the poor housing is less concentrated. As a result we are now ready to move into the next Home Improvement Area.

2. SELECTION OF NEXT AREA

2.1 Predictive data has been provided by the Building Research Establishment (BRE). The BRE Housing Stock Modeling Service provides estimates for key private sector housing and energy variables at authority, ward and census output area level. The estimates are calculated from statistical models which look at the relationship between key variables which are only available from the English House Condition Survey (EHCS) 2001 and the characteristics of small area data from the 2001 census and other national databases.

2.2 Government Office for East Midlands and the Regional Housing Group has confirmed that dealing with 'hot spots' of deprivation and poor house condition is the preferred approach to private sector decent homes work. There are also some efficiencies to be gained by working several areas at a time. The approach is well established with the Leicester public.

2.3 The model used does not take into account previous renewal work. A sample House Condition Survey has been commissioned in accordance with Regional Housing Group guidelines. This will give more detailed evidence of where the actual concentrations are of non-decent homes lived in by vulnerable people. Experience from Local Authorities who have done sample surveys as well as model based calculations confirm the model is quite robust. The next group of Home Improvement Areas will be recommended on the basis of both modelling work and the sample House Condition Survey. This report proposes moving into areas previously not declared which have predicted high percentages of eligible homes and households. Decent Homes Officers will use various benchmarks to identify and contact these households.

2.4 Some parts of Highfields, Belgrave and the West End were renewed over 20 years ago and some homes within the areas may now be below the decent homes standard and lived in by people on means tested benefits. In addition, some Council estates not included in the original Renewal Strategy Programme have non-decent homes in the right to buy stock. These issues will be addressed when the sample house condition survey is available. Homeowners in these areas are eligible under the 2 year rolling City Wide Programme.

- 2.5 It will not be possible to begin Environmental works in the proposed Home Improvement Areas this financial year. A decision on the appropriate level of work can be taken when Cabinet considers the Housing Capital Programme for 2008/09.

3 PROPOSED NEXT HOME IMPROVEMENT AREAS

- 3.1 If we exclude areas previously dealt with under the Renewal Programme and Council estates, the Government model identifies the following areas as having percentages of eligible households

Improvement Zone	Number of Dwellings	Predicted Vulnerable Households Living in Non-Decent Homes	
		%	Number
Halifax Drive	266	34	91
Belgrave Village	142	28	40
Catherine St North	1250	17	208
Crown Hills	1126	14	151
Westcotes Central	730	12	90
		Average 16.5%	TOTAL 580

A map of and streets in the proposed areas are listed in Appendices 2 & 3. It is recommended that these areas are declared, in that order, as Home Improvement Areas, as resources permit.

5 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within Supporting Information
Equal Opportunities	YES	
Policy	YES	Throughout
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	
Crime and Disorder	YES	
Human Rights Act	YES	Article 8. Throughout
Elderly/People on Low Income	YES	Throughout

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- Housing Strategy 2005 - 2010
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- 'A Decent Home: Definition and guidance for implementation – Update'. Department for Communities and Local Government, : June 2006
- 'Housing Renewal'. ODPM Circular 05/2003, June 2003
- 'Running and sustaining renewal areas: good practice guide'. ODPM
- 'Decent Homes in the Private Sector / Review of Renewal Strategy Policy'. Report to Cabinet 9th January 2006

- 'Private Housing Renewal Strategy – Reforms'. Report to Cabinet 10th March 2003
- 'Proposed Declaration of St Saviours Non-Statutory Renewal Area'. Report of the Director of Housing to Cabinet, 11 March 2002.
- 'Future Programme of Area Renewal – Declaration of Non-Statutory Renewal Areas'. Report to Cabinet 15th January 2001.
- 'Review of Renewal Strategy Policies'. Report to Housing Committee, March 1997.
- Background Files held by the Corporate Director of Adults & Housing.

7. CONSULTATIONS

8. OFFICERS TO CONTACT ABOUT THIS REPORT

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ODPM Target PSA7 as applied to private housing

1. The Decent Homes Standard was developed initially as a target for social housing. However it has subsequently been applied to private housing. Previously, Local Authorities were set a Best Value Performance Indicator that measured activity in achieving homes, which met the fitness standard only. That indicator has now been dropped.
2. The Decent Homes target is PSA 7. This states, “By 2010, bring all social housing into a decent condition with most of this improvement taking place in deprived areas, **and increase the proportion of private housing in decent condition occupied by vulnerable groups**”.
3. **The definition of a Decent Home** is the same for the social and private sectors. A Decent Home is one that:
 - meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing
 - is in a reasonable state of repair
 - has reasonably modern facilities and services
 - provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort
4. **Vulnerable households** are those who may suffer health problems as a result of living in poor housing conditions that they do not have the resources to remedy themselves. For example, those who are over 60, suffer with a long-term illness, are disabled or families with young children. For the purposes of measuring the original PSA7 target this group were identified as those who are in receipt of income related or disability benefits. Currently these benefits are: income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, income based job seekers allowance, attendance allowance, disability living allowance, industrial injuries, disablement benefit, war disablement pension, pension credit and households in receipt of either working tax credit which includes a disability element or child tax credit, providing the person entitled to the tax credit has a relevant income of less than £15,050. Some of these benefits have changed since 2001, which will have affected the figures.
5. The target is therefore a national one rather than local. More recent EHCS work has shown that by April 2005 the proportion of vulnerable households in decent private sector homes had risen to 66% at the national level, from 57% in 2001.

The Renewal Strategy Programme



KEY

- Areas dealt with through the Renewal programme
- Current areas (July 2007)
- Proposed areas

Proposed Home Improvement Areas

- 1 Halifax Drive
- 12b Westcotes Central
- 37 Crown Hills
- 46 Catherine Street North
- 53 Belgrave Village

Areas still to be dealt with

- 3 Abbey Lane South
- 4 Abbey Meadows
- 5 Blackbird Road
- 6 Anstey Lane
- 7 Buckminster Road
- 13 Westcotes South
- 15 Narborough Road*
- 16 Evesham Road
- 19 Aylestone Village
- 20 Wigston Lane
- 21 Aylestone Park West

- 22 Aylestone Park East
- 23 Lansdowne Road*
- 24 Aylestone Road
- 25 Knighton Fields
- 26 Gainsborough Road
- 27 Clarendon Park*
- 31 Evington Vale (remaining part)
- 38 Humberstone Heights
- 44 Fairfax Road
- 45 St Gabriels
- 47 Catherine Street East
- 52 Woodbridge Road

* former GIA (pre Renewal programme)

STREETS INCLUDED IN PROPOSED HOME IMPROVEMENT AREAS**Zone 1 - Halifax Drive**

Astill Drive	1 - 87	2 - 78
Belgrave Boulevard		2 - 86
Halifax Drive	1 - 67	2 - 62
Helena Crescent	1 - 59	2 - 96
Pamela Place	1 - 23	2 - 24
Thurcaston Road	241 - 285	
Woodstock Road	1 only	2 - 38

Zone 53 - Belgrave Village

Belgrave Avenue	1 - 55	2 - 60
Day Street	1 - 11	10 - 14
Loughborough Road		206 - 348
Palmer Street		8 - 10
Shirley Street	1 - 41	
Thurcaston Road	1 - 39	
Vicarage Lane		2 - 62

Zone 46 – Catherine Street North

Cannon Street		74 - 206
Catherine Street	213 - 339	260 - 366
Collin Place	1 - 19	2 - 20
Gipsy Lane	5 - 123	4 – 36 62 - 116
Harrison Road	133 - 299	
Norbury Avenue	1 - 13	2 – 12
Northumberland Avenue	1 - 23	2 – 24
Penrith Road	1 - 63	2 – 72
Puley Road	1 - 61	2 – 62
Queniborough Road	1 - 99	2 – 122
Ragdale Road	1 - 15	2 – 16
Rearsby Road	1 - 5	2 – 6
Redcar Road	15 - 55	2 – 54
Rotherby Avenue	1 - 121	2 – 102
Scarborough Road	17 - 59	18 – 56
Shetland Road	1 - 61	2 – 64
Sutton Avenue	1 - 63	2 – 72
Sutton Place	1 - 13	2 – 14
Tranter Place	1 - 19	2 – 20
Wakefields Place	1 - 17	2 – 18
Watson Road	1 - 87	2 – 80
Westmoreland Avenue	1 – 23	2 – 24
Yorkshire Road	17 - 55	2 – 84

Zone 37 – Crown Hills

Bolsover Road	1 - 23	2 - 28
Bradfields Close	1 - 23	2 - 24
Broad Avenue	29 - 165	12 - 50
Clumber Road	1 - 85	2 - 48
Copdale Road	1 - 91	6 - 108
Crown Hills Avenue	1 - 63	4 - 70
Crown Hills Rise	1 - 37	2 - 38
Drinkstone Road	7 - 51	20 - 48
Elizabeth Street	17 - 43	30 - 48
Gedding Road		2 - 62
Green Lane Road	191 - 305	242 - 330
Hilcroft Road	1 - 7	2 - 16
Jellicoe Road	1 - 67	2 - 58
Kegworth Avenue	1 - 11	2 - 10
Kitchener Road	141 - 201	164 - 200
Nansen Road	25 - 117	6 - 114
Nottingham Road	83 - 87	
Rufford Street	1 - 19	2 - 20
St Saviours Road	419 - 579	308 - 466
Saville Street	1 - 31	2 - 38
Sherwood Street	1 - 29	2 - 22
Sidwell Street		2 only
Suffolk Street	1 - 11	
Temple Road	1 - 5	2 - 12
The Approach	1 - 21	2 - 18
The Circle	3 - 87	2 - 48
The Retreat	1 - 3	2 - 4
Thoresby Street	1 - 21	2 - 26

Zone 12B – Westcotes Central

Barclay Street	1 - 161	2 - 148
Beaconsfield Road	1a - 129	4 - 132
Browning Street	1 - 55	2 - 50
Cambridge Street	1 - 133	2 - 138
Fosse Road South	101 - 191	72 - 192
Harrow Road	1 - 183	2 - 170
Narborough Road	75 - 143	
Shaftesbury Road		2 - 14
Sykefield Avenue	1 - 49	2 - 46
Upperton Road	55 - 171	82 - 104
Westcotes Drive	1 - 51	2 - 134