

## **Newcastle Warm Zone**

### **Project proposal: Lemington area home insulation improvements 20 July 2007**

#### **Background**

A Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment has been carried out on the older terraced properties in South Lemington. The assessment was carried out on behalf of Strategic Housing by independent consultants CPC Ltd and was completed in July 2007.

The report concludes that the area has significant problems in terms of housing condition related to disrepair but is popular, provides a substantial supply of affordable housing, and has a stable community with strong household networks based on family and friends. Notwithstanding problems in the area, residents are generally happy with their homes and, to a slightly lesser degree, the area overall. Where people were dissatisfied, disrepair was the main reason.

When house condition are analysed in more detail the rate of non decency in the study area was 45%, higher than the Newcastle average of 31%. Occurrences of non decency by category showed that poor degree of thermal comfort 29.4% and disrepair 19.3% were the two key categories where failure occurred.

The report recommends that the area be declared a Neighbourhood Improvement Area and that a comprehensive housing investment program is developed. The report will be used as a basis for funding bids from year 2008/09 onwards. Prior to this we have secured a £200,000 SHIP allocation for this year to carry out an initial project based on the reports findings. A number of options have been investigated focusing on tackling disrepair, thermal comfort, delivery and impact on the area. The project selected is the Newcastle Warm Zone (NWZ) proposal focusing on tackling the thermal comfort problem as NWZ have an established delivery mechanism, able to secure additional funding, improve a greater number of homes and can spend the monies by the end of this financial year.

The following section outlines the Newcastle Warm Zone proposal.

#### **Newcastle Warm Zone Proposal**

This project will be managed and delivered by NWZ and will include the delivery of a package of cavity wall, solid wall and loft insulation measures together with the Warm Zone's integrated package of benefits assistance and energy efficiency advice.

The project outputs will include maximising the number of homes in the area that are fully insulated with conventional cavity wall and/or loft insulation and delivering solid wall insulation to a selected number of 'hard to heat' homes. This will be used as a demonstration project to help secure further additional funding for the city for future work of this type – to date NWZ has not been able to secure significant funding to tackle such 'hard to heat' homes.

## **Newcastle Warm Zone**

NWZ is a not-for-profit partnership (with Newcastle City Council, YHN, ScottishPower and National Grid) that aims to significantly reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency across all homes in Newcastle.

It does this by effectively working across its broad-based partnership to secure funding & deliver a coordinated programme of free (or heavily discounted) insulation and heating measures, together with free benefits & energy efficiency advice.

In so doing NWZ is also helping to significantly improve the health and well being of residents, providing and supporting local employment, contributing to neighbourhood regeneration and reducing harmful CO2 emissions.

## **The target homes in Lemington**

There are 683 target homes in the designated area in Lemington. Although a number of these properties have already been insulated, NWZ estimates that up to 150-200 additional homes in this area may still require conventional insulation home improvements, subject to survey. Furthermore, there are many solid wall properties that could benefit from additional wall insulation, together with the other services offered by the NWZ partnership.

## **Proposed home insulation improvements**

There are two streams of work associated with this proposal:

- 1) NWZ will identify and target the homes in the designated Lemington area that could benefit from conventional cavity wall and loft insulation, offering such measures (together with the delivery of low energy light bulbs, benefits assistance and energy efficiency advice) free of charge to residents. This work will be carried out using the existing and successful NWZ marketing & delivery mechanisms.

It is estimated that up to 150-200 homes will be able to take advantage of these services, depending on the physical requirements identifies by NWZ and take-up from residents.

- 2) A number of 'hard to heat' homes with solid walls will be identified and selected in partnership with Strategic Housing for the delivery of external solid wall insulation. The final number of properties will depend on a range of factors, including: physical size and type of property; completion of a full external wall survey; the final cost of the measures; and the additional external funding secured by NWZ. An initial estimate suggests that around 25 properties will be able to be insulated, although this is subject to clarifying the above factors.

NWZ has already agreed in principal an enhanced level of external funding with its partner ScottishPower for this specific demonstration project. This will help maximise the number of properties that will be able to benefit from solid wall insulation.

The installation of such measures will typically save each home £100-200+ on their fuel bills and reduce CO2 emissions by 1-2 tonnes each year. The project will be carefully scoped and managed to ensure that total cost does not exceed £200K, with project delivery completed in good time before 31 March 2008.

### **Project development**

Following the formal approval of the project NWZ will carry out a more detailed assessment of the properties in the Lemington area (via site visits and a desktop analysis using existing information) to help firm up the project outputs.

Work associated with the delivery of conventional insulation measures can start immediately afterwards, utilising the existing NWZ arrangements. NWZ will work with Strategic Housing to agree a detailed scope of works and secure the services of an appropriate contractor for the delivery of the solid wall insulation. NWZ will then work with the designated Contractor and ensure the prompt and cost-effective delivery of the insulation measures to the selected properties.

NWZ will manage both streams of the project, including the independent quality assurance of the works and regular reporting of project outputs and spend.

### **Further information**

Please contact Colin White, Housing Development Team Ex 27839 or David Connor, Director, Newcastle Warm Zone for further information.