

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING****COUNCILLOR TONY HUMPHRYS****PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: SAYYED OSMAN****DATE: 31 MAY 2012****YOUNG PARENTS HOUSING TEAM**

It was reported to a previous Forum that Housing's Community Budget exemplar project, 'New Approaches to Housing Vulnerable Young Parents' has been funded for 2011-2013. The Young Parents Housing Team, which is delivering the project, has become well-known for the high standard of work it carries out with some of the Borough's most vulnerable and difficult to engage young parents.

The team aimed to support 100 individuals during its two-year lifespan but has exceeded this target after only 13 months; such is the demand for its services. 50% of the team's referrals come from health visitors, with a further 31% from Housing Needs. Of the remainder, 9% are self-referrals and the rest from other partner agencies.

**SELECTIVE LICENSING**

The consultation period for the proposed new area finishes on 18 June. The responses will all be considered and a report will be passed to Executive Board as soon as possible following this.

**HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY**

The Home Improvement Agency has just completed its first year of operation in its current form. In the last 3 months of the year it successfully delivered an additional range of services following a successful bid for the Warm Homes Healthy People funding provided by the Government through the Department of Health. This has seen emergency packs delivered to vulnerable residents, additional handyperson works associated with winter conditions, emergency heating repairs, and funding provided to both Age UK, CVS and care Network to support their role in tackling winter based health risks.

A steering group has now been formed comprising officers from Housing, Health and Social Services along with representatives from the voluntary sector to support the work of the agency going forward and to ensure integrated working.

## **STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Griffin Area Regeneration**

The council has now purchased 145 properties from the 165 properties identified for clearance. There are 20 properties remaining to be purchased in the clearance area. Negotiations are ongoing with owners to purchase these properties once residents have been re-housed.

80 properties have already been demolished with further properties on Coleridge Street and Hancock Street planned for demolition in summer.

### **Empty Homes – Intervention Fund**

The Council along with its Pennine Lancashire partners have secured £4.84m from the Empty Homes programme to bring 474 long term empty homes back into use across the five boroughs.

Blackburn with Darwen's allocation is around £1.25m to bring 100 properties back into use over the period 2012-2015. A number of suitable empty properties have been identified and letters have been sent out inviting owners to engage with the Council.

A second bid to bring a further 30 empty homes back into use in inner Darwen was submitted to the HCA for its Empty Homes 'Cluster' programme. We have recently received approval for this bid which will attract a further HCA grant of £840k. The total grant secured for Blackburn with Darwen will be just over £2m with additional match funding to be invested by the Together Group.

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Orchard Grove**

This exemplar development of 95 new homes in Darwen is progressing well. The first phase of 30 properties is now complete and being readied for occupation over the next two weeks. Phase 2 (32 properties) is on site and scheduled for completion in March 2013.

### **Willow Gardens (Tower View)**

This stalled site, on Union Street Darwen, was purchased by Twin Valley Homes in December 2011 and will be developed into 50 independent living homes for older people. The developers commenced on site in February and the scheme is due to be completed spring 2013.

### **Drakes Edge (Tewkesbury Street)**

Twin Valley Homes are working with Mulberry Homes to build 28 new family homes. Site work commenced in January and the scheme is due to complete in December 2012. The new development will offer a mixture of 17 homes for open market sale and 11 for shared ownership.

### **Lincoln Road**

This development of 9 homes is being delivered by our partners Great Places and is due for completion in July 2012. The development will comprise of

seven 3 bed homes and two 5 bed homes which will be offered to local residents through the B-with-us scheme.

### **COMMUNITY CONFIDENCE**

Groundwork Pennine Lancashire completed security enhancements to 52 properties in the Griffin regeneration area during 2011-12. This has helped residents to feel safer and more secure in their homes whilst the area undergoes transformation.

For further information contact: Subhan Ali on (01254) 585768.