

# **Case Study: Gipton, Leeds**

## **Contents**

Introduction  
The Area  
Problems in the area  
Previous Interventions  
Drivers of Deprivation  
Demonstration Project overview  
Detail of Demonstration Project Plans  
Process Issues  
Commentary from Evaluation Team

## **Introduction**

This report is part of a wider set of documents that form the baseline for the evaluation of the mixed communities initiative, namely:

- The baseline report of the evaluation
- Annex A to the baseline report , which sets out the evaluation approach
- Reports like this one for each of the case study areas
- A set of data files for each case study area.

The report is intended to provide a descriptive account of the Gipton demonstration project at the start of the mixed communities initiative, and to identify key issues and questions for the evaluation of the mixed communities approach in this area. It does not contain detailed quantitative data. These can be found in the accompanying data files.

The structure of the report is guided by the theory of change approach adopted as the basis for the evaluation of the mixed communities initiative. A theory of change is a linked set of propositions leading from problem to outcome, indicating how, in theory, problems can be remedied by interventions, through what change processes and with what outcomes. The evaluation team has set out a theory of change for the mixed communities initiative (see Baseline report, Annex A), and used this to generate a series of research questions about the problems faced by the areas, the remedies adopted and the changes that occur. Clearly at the baseline stage, we are not in a position to report on change processes and outcomes. The report is organized around a set of research questions on the problems faced in the area and the remedies being adopted.

The final section of the report identifies some key questions for the evaluation in this demonstration project area and sets out the bespoke evaluation strategy that will be followed for the remainder of the evaluation, to summer 2009.

## The Area

The MCI area is the Gipton estate, which is two to three miles east of Leeds City Centre. Gipton itself was originally built as a Council housing estate in the 1930s, when it was on the eastern edge of Leeds. Today, to the west are the nineteenth-century back-to-back houses of Harehills, and the large estate of Seacroft is to the east. Major spoke routes into the city centre lie north and south.

Originally it consisted mainly of semi-detached houses, with a few buildings divided into four small flats. Some medium-rise flat blocks and homes were added to the edges of the housing estate in the 1960s, and in the last twenty years there have been a few houses added on small sites; most of these houses are now let by Housing Associations. In 2001, a little over 50% of households lived in social rented accommodation, almost all from the East North East Leeds ALMO, with the remainder renting from RSLs. Owner-occupation stood at 39% in 2001, most of which has come about through tenants exercising the Right-to-Buy. In recent years, ex-Council homes have fetched between £80,000 and £110,000 at second sale on the open market. This is well below what might be expected given the size of the homes and the vigour of the city's housing market.

About 80% of the population was White British at the last Census, although this proportion is since reported to have since diminished, partly due to numbers of settled asylum seekers. There is a significant Asian minority, mostly living in the parts of Gipton near to Harehills. This reflects efforts by the council around ten years ago to promote the then low-demand council housing to the Asian community.

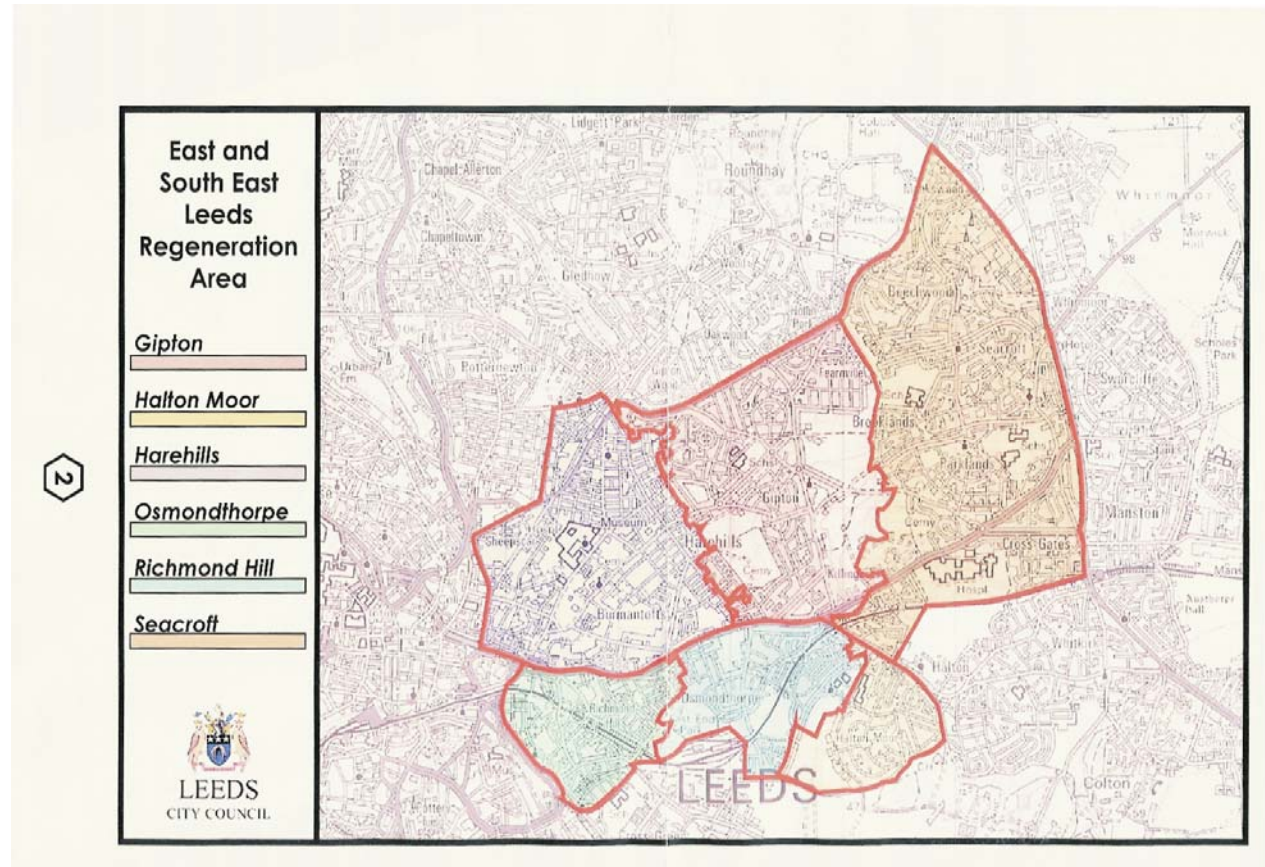
In the past Gipton had been a low-demand estate, which meant that among those housed there were households with few choices elsewhere. Housing need and demand has grown greatly throughout Leeds over the last ten years; this has virtually eliminated the problem of void properties, but Gipton remains relatively if not absolutely unpopular.

Gipton suffers from a very poor reputation in the eyes of many Leeds residents and professional. Crime has been a major problem. Worklessness is high; many residents lack qualifications or even basic skills, and there are many other barriers to some residents finding paid work. Employment rates have long been low, and some informants described this as an embedded culture of worklessness existing across generations of families. There have been some recent localised labour demand problems; the area's largest private-sector employer has greatly reduced its operations. However, Leeds has a mixed and strongly resurgent economy, and Gipton is relatively well connected to the city centre, although less so to the expanding city-edge Aire Valley employment area to the south-east. Employment opportunities are certainly stronger here than in some of the other DP areas.

In political terms Gipton is part of the ward of Gipton and Harehills. For the data purposes of the evaluation, there is an agreed approximation of the demonstration project comprising nine LSOAs. Importantly, Gipton lies within the East 'wedge' defined

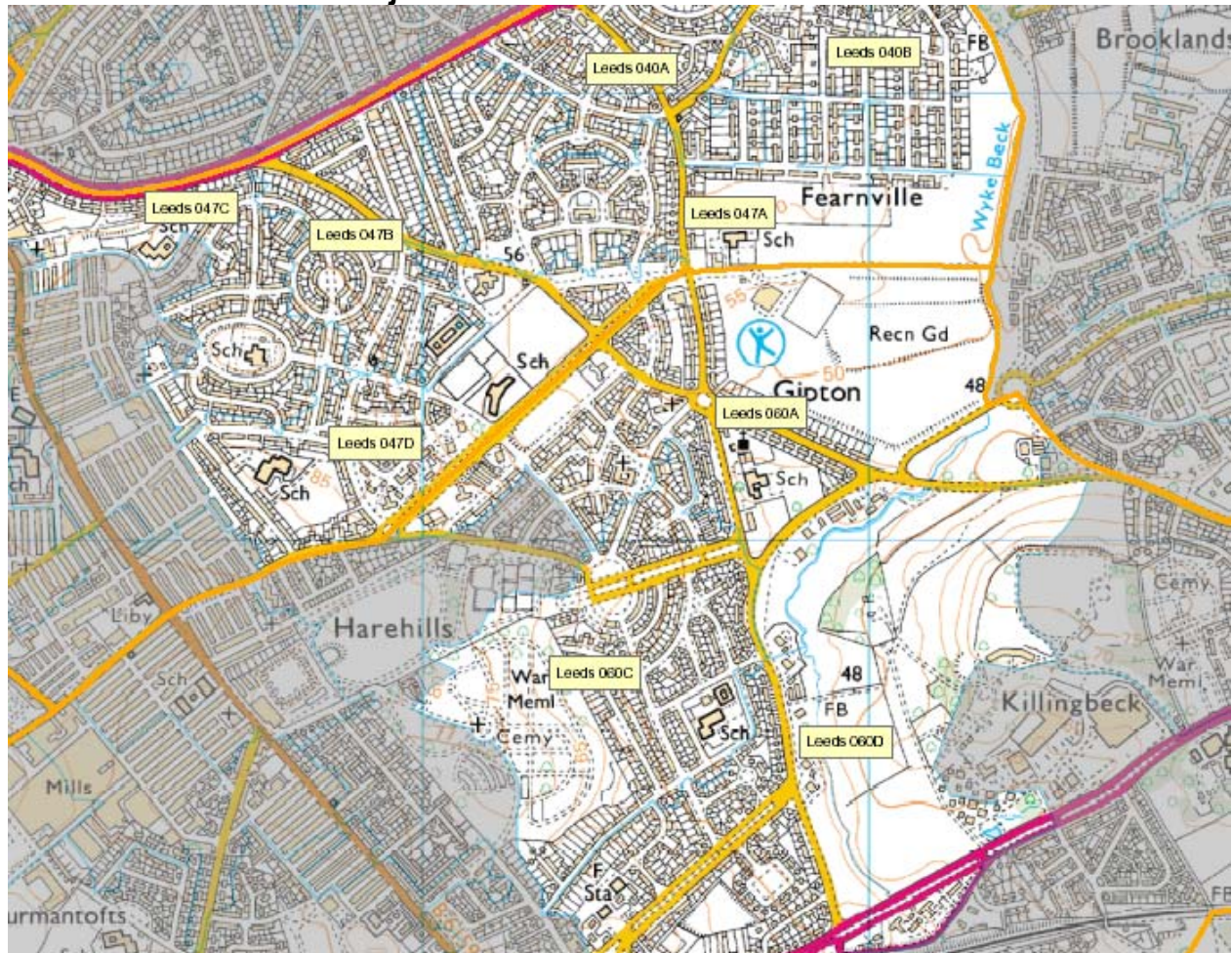
by Leeds City Council for the purposes of the LSP and the EASEL regeneration programme (see below), and is one of six designated neighbourhoods within its inner area. According to the IMD 2004, this wedge contains the highest proportion and concentration of highly deprived SOAs in the city, with Gipton lying in the middle of those.

## EASEL Areas





## Leeds Demonstration Project SOA's



## Problems in the area

### **Housing**

Historically Gipton has been a low-demand estate; informants suggest that at the turn of the century there were 10-15% voids, and contemporaneous studies found virtually no demand for housing in the neighbourhood. However, since then city-wide demand for social housing has remained steady whilst supply has fallen. This is in part due to reduced availability of re-lets, in line with national trend, and also reflecting rising city house prices. It is also due to demolitions associated with other housing and regeneration initiatives, in particular two housing PFI schemes. The introduction of choice-based lettings has further helped to eliminate any problems of low demand and the ALMO now report that they never have fewer than twenty bids for a property, and often receive over a hundred (though properties in other parts of Leeds may get several hundred). There is also a fair demand for properties from those that have grown up on the estate, many of whom want to stay. As of 2001 5.4% of dwellings in Gipton were vacant compared with an England average of 3.2%. Leeds overall has 10% low demand social rented properties compared with an England average of 5%. For further data see spreadsheet 3.

Selective clearance of housing in Gipton has taken place since around 2000, partly as a response to low demand, but also due to the poor state of some of the housing and difficulties in improving it to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The remaining dwellings in Gipton are generally spacious and structurally sound, though some would require modernisation to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

*“in Gipton, the demolitions that need to be done have been done, so any further demolition will have some element of Housing Decency justification but it will be more a regenerative approach”*

As a result of rising demand, clearance and longer-term reductions in supply because fewer social rented units are being re-provided than are being demolished indicators, informants and official performance indicators suggest that fewer than 1% of properties in Gipton are now vacant. Turnover and void periods in Gipton are higher than in other East Leeds social housing areas.

*“Rewind 10 years and in the North, areas like Gipton and East Leeds generally were extremely unpopular. Properties were standing empty because they couldn’t be let... You’ve got that kind of underlying lack of demand for estates, but because the housing market in Leeds has boomed, I think also because we’re clearing certain areas now, demand is increasing, so we don’t have any stuff that stands empty for any period of time. We’ve still got unpopular stock, or rather less popular stock, but not low demand.”*

*“All our housing is in very high demand, especially the single person housing. We had over 400 referrals for this housing last year, but can only house 30-40 of these. There is no housing anywhere that is hard to let”*

The majority of social housing in the neighbourhood is managed by East North East Leeds Homes, an ALMO. There were originally six ALMOs created by Leeds City Council, each managing homes in a slice of the city; Gipton was within the area managed by East Leeds Homes. As of April 2007, these six have been reduced to three. In part, informants reported that this is intended to improve strategic co-ordination and supervision of their activities, including clearance.

Informants suggest that there have been three important changes since the Census. Firstly, demand for housing has picked up rapidly. This is seen in property prices and in demand for social housing. The Right-to-Buy has also continued to move some properties over to owner-occupation. Secondly, the area's population has become more ethnically diverse, partly as a result of properties that were originally contracted by the Asylum Seeker Support Service and whose inhabitants stayed on. The current diversity of the area is noticeable at school finishing time, particularly to the west. Lastly, there has been selective demolition carried out by the ALMO on a number of sites, bringing down many of the poorer quality flats as well as some of the semi-detached houses. This has resulted in some Gipton residents being moved to the neighbouring council estate to the East, Seacroft. For additional population census data see spreadsheet 1.

### **Environment**

Gipton has the feel of a suburban council estate. In the daytime it is quiet with few people out and about. There is a small row of shops and a supermarket on one side of the central circus in the estate. There is a great deal of green space, some of which is part of the original layout, and some of which has come about as a result of demolition. Though mostly well kept and clear of litter – something that is reported to have improved in recent years – the function of these spaces is not clear and they are little used. Most residential properties appear well cared-for and many have clearly been improved by their occupants. As a result of ongoing land assembly, some properties are isolated in green space, and there are also some boarded-up homes.

The boundaries of Gipton are very well-defined, meaning that it does not blend easily into the surrounding housing, especially to the west and south where a major road and a sudden change from 1930s semi-detacheds to nineteenth century terraces marks the change. There is also a clear delineation between north and south Gipton, and informants report that these sub-neighbourhoods have distinct identities and loyalties. The Wykebeck Valley provides substantial green space to the East. There are wide traffic routes running through the of the estate, which seem large for the volume of traffic they support. Regular bus services run into the city centre from the major roads bounding Gipton to north and south.

### **Crime and anti-social behaviour**

Crime is seen as a major issue in Gipton. As noted, it has a very poor reputation; it is regarded by professionals and city dwellers as a hotspot for crime and an unsafe area to walk around alone in, especially if not known on the estate.

*"I am unsure about whether it is a good thing to house such vulnerable young people in Gipton or not. It does mean they are sometimes drawn into gangs. I have particular concerns about housing young people who don't know anyone on the estate there – some have come from good homes, and are in education at first, but they are very vulnerable to getting drawn into gangs, and it can all go downhill. You have to be very careful where you house anyone that looks at all different – eg ethnic minorities."*

A variety of possible explanations were proffered for such problems with crime:

*"There are pockets of issues with certain parts of the estate and that's kind of had a snowball effect. A bit like a cancer, you get a particular area that's bad, particularly the younger single-person's accommodation which there's a lot of in Gipton - that creates issues. The A1F flats are one bedroom flats. They're unpopular, lots of young singles in there, lots of the support agencies, that work with ex-offenders using those properties so that creates a little core of challenging management issues which spreads in an area then....Because of the nature of the area, difficult tenants move on, but more difficult tenants move in – a different difficult tenant."*

*"The problem in Gipton, as in council housing overall is that there are lots of very vulnerable tenants...ASB is an integral problem, very closely tied with vulnerability. I think we need to do a lot more work to support people, and to recognise that there are now a higher proportion of people who need support. But often the housing management approach is to get rid of them. Those involved in the procurement process don't understand the needs of tenants. CBL has also made it harder for housing managers to manage transfers to well – there used to be more options of deciding where to put difficult households. Not it's all much more transparent so you can't do that, which means the only option some times is to evict them."*

Making Gipton a place that people feel safe to walk around is clearly a key objective of the MCI. Tackling crime and related activities are seen as crucial to the success of the initiative:

*"The key issue is that incoming families need to not be frightened of the existing residents."*

### **Worklessness**

Leeds historically and currently has a mixed economy, with no particular prevalent industry or service sector. It has experienced a strong economic resurgence in recent years, outperforming almost all other large northern cities in terms of employment and per capita measures of the value of output. Recent growth has primarily been in the service sector, including financial services, entertainment and leisure.

However, in Gipton, worklessness is high, and skills are low. In 2001 49% of adults had no qualifications compared with an England average of 29%. There are also seen to be many other barriers to unemployed residents entering employment. These barriers arise

from personal and household circumstances, such as drugs, housing and childcare. Employment rates have long been low, and some informants described this as an embedded culture of worklessness existing across generations of families. In 2005 Gipton had a job seeker claimant rate of 4.6% compared with an England average of 2.3%. For additional data see spreadsheet 6.

*“There is a lack of understanding how damaged people here are. You suggest that someone applies for a job in ASDA and they say “what – walk up there?” (it’s about a mile). It’s easy to feel punitive, but these are real problems. People will expect to get a taxi everywhere because that’s what they’ve seen their parents doing. They don’t expect to have to put themselves out.”*

Whilst Leeds’s service sector has expanded, manufacturing has declined, and interviewees report that this has affected Gipton in particular. The neighbourhood’s largest private-sector employer, Arcadia, has substantially reduced its operations; it had employed people from the immediate locality, often for seasonal work. The only other major local employer is the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, although other opportunities do arise in the wider locale:

*“Look at Tesco. They took a chance. They bought the old Seacroft shopping Centre and built an Extra. Part of the deal there was that they would employ local people, and they now positively promote opportunities to people on the estate and train them for work. There are people on the estate who have moved on now to other Tescos or other retail. It’s been brilliant. There were families where the next generation was going to lay on the settee watching Sky TV cause that’s what Mum and Dad did.”*

However, it was seen as insufficient in itself to change the area because people would tend to move away when they get work “so another family moves in bringing a similar bag of issues”. Considering employment opportunities in the wider area, the neighbourhood has poor connectivity to the expanding city-edge Aire Valley employment area to the south-east, though connections to the centre are somewhat better.

### **Educational attainment**

There are four primary schools in or close to Gipton, one of which, Upwood School has recently been re-housed in a brand new building acquired through the PFI. There is no secondary school in Gipton: a secondary girls school in Seacroft takes many pupils from Gipton while others attend a range of schools elsewhere in inner East Leeds. At both levels, attainment of Gipton pupils is low, and truancy is high; interviewees see these posing challenges to the intervention:

*There are obstacles around the schools, and we’re working closely with Education Leeds to address that. There is a lot of poverty in the area clearly, there are kinds of indicators around that [such as] not attending schools.*

For additional data on attainment see spreadsheet 4.



## **Health**

There are no GP surgeries within Gipton so residents need to travel north, south or east to find the nearest surgeries. The major nearby hospital is St James, in Harehills. For further data on health see spreadsheet 5.

### **Do the problems of the area affect the life chances of people in the area? In what ways?**

It is hard to determine whether, and to what extent, the objectively poor outcomes for many individuals in the area arise from the estate's problems. Some informants clearly expressed the view that there is an embedded "culture" of worklessness within households and neighbourhoods that bears upon the life chances of individuals. Though there is substantial open space, it does not provide corresponding amenity to residents; this, limited local facilities, and crime and anti-social behaviour all impinge on quality of life.

### **What level of public expenditure is required in this area relative to others on an ongoing basis?**

At this stage, we have not collected data on local service expenditure. Given high levels of social and economic problems, it is likely that expenditures on individual-level services (such as social services, education welfare) are disproportionately high

## **Previous Interventions**

### **What additional regeneration programmes has the area had and at what cost?**

Gipton and the neighbouring areas have been the subject of numerous previous area regeneration and social programmes, including South Gipton Estate Action. Notably, however, there is no NDC in Gipton or elsewhere in Leeds, and until very recently it had not benefited from major European expenditure.

Recent area regeneration funding has come from Neighbourhood Renewal and Single Regeneration Budget sources. Social programmes include a Health Action Zone and SureStart; there is a Children's Centre in Seacroft and a local programme in Harehills. While the management of public areas, for example, is seen to have improved in the last five years, these programmes have not brought a 'transformational' change.

## **Drivers of Deprivation**

### **What are the drivers of area deprivation?**

#### **Public Services**

Informants described the development of the East Leeds Partnership - part of the city-wide LSP structure - as having had a significant impact on the co-ordination of public service delivery across functions.

There is seen to be a weak voluntary sector in Gipton as compared to neighbouring areas such as Harehills; certainly no voluntary groups are engaged in the regeneration programme on an ongoing basis. There is a community centre in North Gipton on Amberton Place, although it is underused. One active organisation is GIPSIL, which manages somewhat over 100 social rented properties in Gipton and provides support for independent living for young single adults and lone parents

**Is a more mixed population needed?**

As above, some interviewees clearly felt that a more mixed population and mixed housing stock may go some way to raising aspirations, as well as increasing demand for private sector services. However, as discussed below, the increasing housing mix is also driven by the desire to generate funding for non-housing social and physical regeneration programmes.

## **Demonstration Project overview**

EASEL (East And South East Leeds) is a fifteen-year regeneration plan for East and South East Leeds. The first major public consultation specifically on EASEL was held in summer 2006, though planning, discussions and some consultation with residents have been taking place since 2005 (LCC 2006). Formally, it will be an Area Action Plan forming part of the Local Development Framework. EASEL covers six designated neighbourhoods, among them Gipton, Seacroft, and Harehills, and altogether affects a population of around 79,000 people. It starts from fairly typical high-level regeneration aims: “Quality of Place”; “Learning” (including school performance and family support); “Affordable and Social Housing”; “Local Economic Development”; “New Neighbourhoods and Flagship Schemes” (including commercial attractions and public open space).

The principle of public-private partnership is at the heart of the project, with an acknowledgement that changes cannot be wholly funded by public sector funds and that public-private partnerships are a necessary vehicle for change, and therefore a public-private partnership is to be used: a “proportion of private sector profits ... will be retained within the area and used to fund projects” (LCC 2006 – AAP options consultation, p4). Publicly owned assets, principally land, are being used to generate a return for the Joint Venture Company which will be charged with delivering a comprehensive regeneration programme. In public documents, private investment needs are more specifically linked to the need to pay for specific projects such as housing refurbishment, new affordable housing or specific social and environmental schemes.

The plan proposes a remodelling of the EASEL area, with demolition of around 4,000 homes, and building around 9,000 new homes. As well as an increase in the proportion of private-sector stock, it clearly foresees a substantial net reduction in the number and proportion of social rented dwellings across East Leeds. Gipton, as well as part of Seacroft, are in the forefront of the plan, with six sites in Gipton, and two in Seacroft, in the first phase of the development. It is the first phase of development in Gipton that has been designated as the MCI DP. The first phase projects, currently under planning consideration, comprise the development of about 740 new homes, the large majority for private sale.

The Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber does not participate directly in the East Leeds District Partnership, but oversees its activities through regular involvement in the central LSP. – *How does this fit in with easel?*

## **Detail of Demonstration Project Plans**

### **Housing and tenure mix**

Planning applications for around 740 new homes spread across the six Gipton sites were submitted by the housebuilder Bellway in February 2007. The largest part of these will be private for-sale dwellings. About 15% of the homes will be ‘affordable’ - shared equity, sub-market rent and discounted sale are all possibilities. There is no new social

rented housing proposed on these sites. The affordable housing proportion is in line with Leeds City Council's policy to seek 15% on appropriate housing sites.

A majority (roughly 80%) of these will be houses rather than flats, though at substantially higher densities than the existing council housing.

**Housing changes to date and to what extent are they attributable to MCI?**

Low demand, and the poor quality of some of the stock, have been tackled by a programme of selective clearance in Gipton taking place since around 2000. The local reduction in stock, in tandem with a city-wide stock reductions, decanting pressures from other regeneration initiatives, and rising house prices in the city as whole, has apparently virtually removed the demand problem. Compared with a void level of 10-15% in 2000, fewer than 1% of properties in Gipton are now vacant, although turnover and void periods in Gipton are higher than in other neighbourhoods where the ALMO manages housing. The retained stock in Gipton is generally spacious and structurally sound, though some dwellings would require modernisation to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

**Specific mechanisms other than house price and design, designed to control mix?**

Shared equity, where an equity stake would be retained in non-open-market housing, is one model under consideration for the affordable element of new development.

**Does mix require any displacement of existing residents?**

The first phase is being built on six sites which had been previously demolished piecemeal over five or six years. There remain about 100 properties to clear:

*“ We started with around 700 properties that we intended to clear and we’re down to about 100 now and they’re scattered across the sites. We’ve got to the stage when we’ve got areas of sites that we’ve got clear and we’ve got other areas where we’ve got one property in a block.”*

However, the likely future plans for Gipton involve more extensive demolition, a substantial reduction in social rented housing, and new housing that is likely to be more expensive than the prices currently fetched by second-sale Right-to-Buy properties.

The package offered to tenants is disturbance payments and some compensation: £4,000 plus “reasonable expenses”. Tenants then “typically come for rehousing”, but there is no guarantee that they will be offered a home in the same neighbourhood; indeed, given the currently proposed nil re-provision of social rented homes within Gipton it is rather unlikely that they will. As respondents to the 2006 consultation noted, the consultation paper did not articulate any specific relocation guarantees; for example, this participant at one of the Gipton sessions:

*“Where will Council tenants be re-housed. Will we have to move out of the area? How much new rented housing will there be? What is meant by affordable housing? Will we be able to afford the new rents?”*

As noted, many homes have been purchased under the Right to Buy, and a different approach is taken to these purchasers.

The area has been declared to be eligible for CPO, but although the threat of CPO has been used to stimulate negotiations with “unreasonable” owners reluctant to sell up, the full legal process has not yet been employed. Owners are offered the value of their home plus 10% and reasonable expenses. At the time of writing, June 2007, ex-council properties in Gipton are on the market for £90,000 to £115,000, whilst the entry prices for the first new market-rate homes are expected to start at £120,000:

*“We haven’t got any definitive price list but we think we’re looking for example, a three bedroom semi town house , £120,000 – which is pretty good for a bespoke design here which is contemporary materials, nice space around it, parking space.”*

However, these houses are not yet available, and given that Gipton lies near or at the bottom of the overall Leeds housing market, it is perhaps not surprising that other interviewees report that most former Right-to-Buy owners are in fact moving back into social rented housing when their house is bought up for demolition:

*“Owners, we do property swaps, so we give them another council house that we sell to them in effect, so we buy theirs and sell them another council house, provided the value is within a certain range. They can buy on the open market, we give them the cash and they can do their own thing. Or, one of the more popular options is we’ll give them another council tenancy. So they get £100,000 in their pocket and a council tenancy. And then they can hold on to that £100,000, build up the Right-to-Buy discount and buy again. Though they’re basically starting from scratch again, so they’ve got to wait five years before they can exercise their Right-to-Buy again.”*

Those involved in taking the regeneration plans forward acknowledge these concerns about displacement. Several interviewees stressed the employment and training interventions aimed at existing residents as the key to addressing displacement; by improving the financial circumstances of existing residents, residents will be able to avail themselves of the new housing offered in Gipton. There is a recognised risk that if residents’ incomes are not improved, they may “miss out” or “be left behind” in the regeneration of the area.



**What effect is population change in the DP area expected to have on population mix in adjacent areas?**

In one direction, some interviewees foresee the new housing meeting demand from households currently living in Harehills. In the other direction, some Gipton residents have been rehoused in neighbouring Seacroft.

**How is it intended that the design of new developments will contribute to mixed community objectives for example, social networks between owners and renters?**

The new housing proposed in phase I is designed to link up with the existing street patterns, and will be open, not gated. There will also be public open spaces provided around some of the new housing. Nonetheless, the new open-market and intermediate housing will be distinct in design from the existing council and ex-council stock.

**Service improvements**

As well as the housing changes, there are a number of related area regeneration activities taking place currently in Gipton and managed by the same council team responsible for Mixed Communities. These include two EU-funded projects, one a Building Family Wealth programme taking a broad approach to barriers to residents' employment, including drugs, housing, childcare and schooling and the other a Learning Partnerships project intended to build confidence and interview skills for parents. Safer Stronger Communities money is being used to implement an Intensive Neighbourhood Management approach. The exact focus of this work is at present being determined following a recent consultative survey delivered to all households; it is intended to address public realm issues such as "anti-social behaviour". The PFI and Building Schools for the Future have already provided one new school within Gipton, and there are plans underway for additional new provision.

**How is it intended that service improvements support mixed communities objectives eg a better school.**

The new school, enhanced area management, and proposed improvements to transport links and public open space are seen as contributing to some of the Mixed Communities objectives. This is partly by raising the innate appeal of the neighbourhood in order to attract households with more choice, and also by better linking existing residents to employment opportunities in the city. However, the school and area management are being funded from existing streams of public sector regeneration money rather than cross-subsidy from the private sector.

The scale and final use of land sale capital receipts is rather less clear at present. Ideas include upgrading the Wykebeck Valley green space to the east of Gipton, and improving transport connections, including to the Aire Valley. These environmental and social programmes and others have been couched in terms of 'potential' and 'possibility' in the Area Action Plan. At present discussions of the land sale prices, the potential developer profits, and ensuing spend in Gipton and EASEL are being covered by 'commercial confidentiality'. Some informants feel that there is a government focus on the capital spend, and a housing management focus on eviction and decanting, to the possible detriment of programmes of long-term support for tenants.

**Measures to attract jobs into the area or connect residents to job opportunities in the wider labour market**

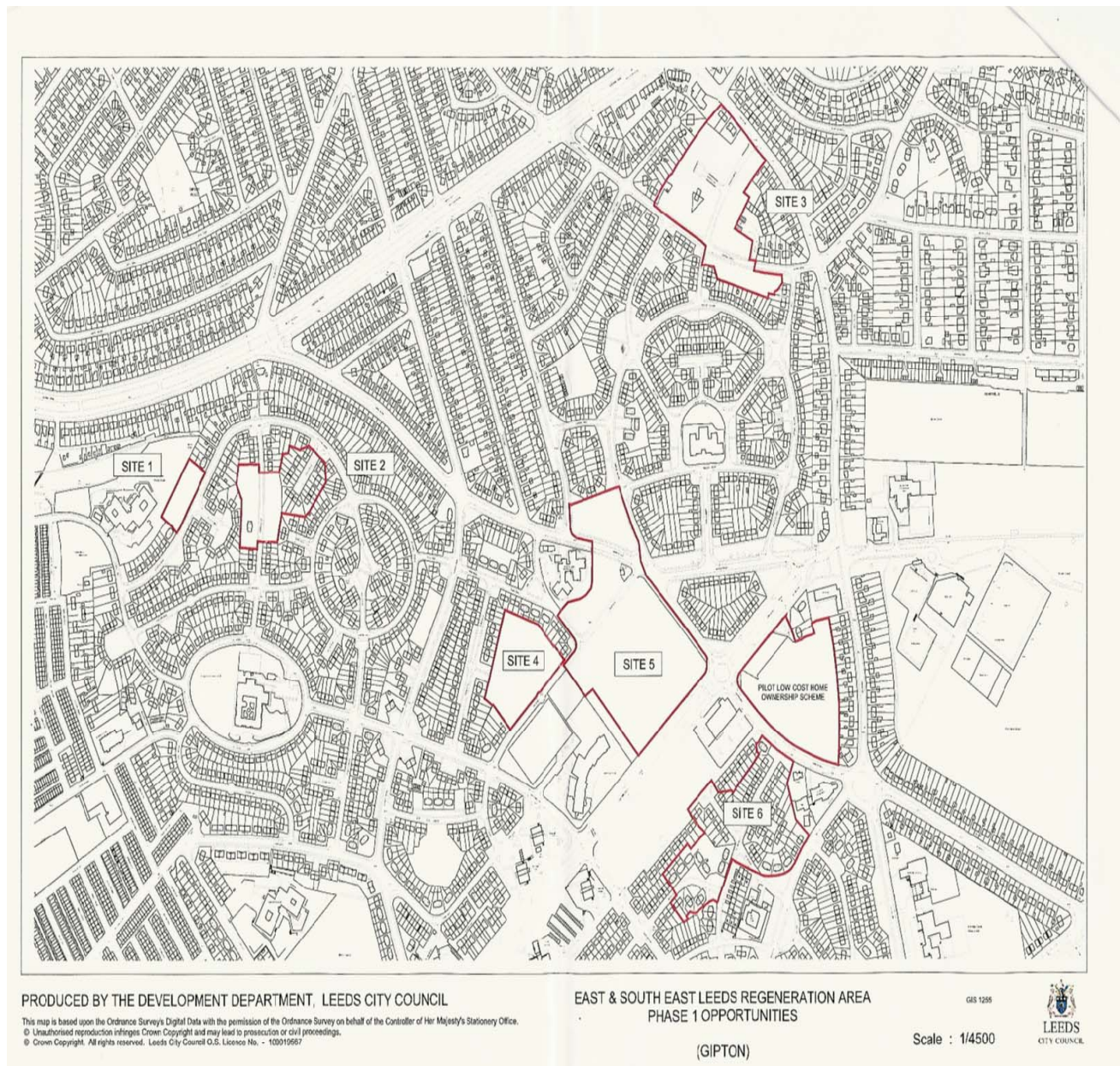
There is not currently a job centre or training facility within Gipton. However, plans are underway to create a “one-stop” centre in the heart of Gipton which will include a job shop and advisory services. This is being overseen by the workless subgroup of the East Leeds District Partnership, and directed by the East Leeds Regeneration Team.

The *Building Family Wealth* programme has since December 2006 been employing two caseworkers specifically within Gipton and South Seacroft to take a broad approach to barriers to residents’ employment, including drugs, housing, childcare and schooling. A *Learning Partnerships* project is intended to build confidence and interview skills for parents. These are both funded through EU Objective 2 money and will currently run until the end of 2007.

**Time line**

February 2006: Bellway identified as preferred partner  
Summer 2006: First EASEL consultation  
April 2007: Planning permission secured on most Phase I sites  
April 2007: Council endorses Bellway as partner  
April 2007: Revised EASEL proposals put to consultation  
Autumn 2007: Site start on Phase I sites  
Late 2008: First new open-market homes come to market

## Gipton Phase 1 Sites



## Process Issues

### Governance Structure

Currently the East Leeds Regeneration work is being delivered by a team of council officers (East Area Regeneration) drawn from the council's regeneration function. They are based in an office in the area, in a building which they share with the East Area Management team.

Gipton is significant within the plan because of the availability of land as a result of the piecemeal clearance that has taken place over the last five years. Gipton, and also Seacroft, are therefore becoming the first phase of EASEL. There are two sites in Seacroft and six sites in Gipton in this first phase, plus another site in Gipton which is being developed separately for low-cost home ownership by the ALMO. It is not known exactly how many homes were demolished to make way for these sites, as the clearance has been carried out piecemeal over a period.

It is this first phase of EASEL in Gipton that has been designated the MCI Demonstration Project. The "Mixed Communities" designation has not however been used as the public 'brand' of the housing activities, although the broader concept of mixed communities is clearly a central part of the EASEL plan, and is known to most organisations engaged in the area.

Three development options were put out to consultation with residents, local businesses and organisations, developers and statutory bodies in summer 2006. These options varied in the extent of the development proposed. The most moderate option involved mainly the use of existing cleared sites, whereas the most drastic option proposed the demolition of around 4,000 homes, and building around 9,000 new homes. As well as an increase in the proportion of private-sector stock, it clearly foresees a substantial (several thousand) net reduction in the number of social rented dwellings.

The council has taken the results of this consultation as a mandate to proceed on the broad basis of the most drastic option. However, the plan is only a framework, and the regeneration team is modifying the plan to reflect specific concerns about sites proposed in the consultation document.

A competition was held to select a preferred bidder to be the partner on the delivery of EASEL. At the beginning of 2006 Bellway Homes was selected as the preferred bidder and since then procurement negotiations have been ongoing. These are taking place with a view to forming a joint venture company which will develop the sites over the 15-20 year period which EASEL will run for. These negotiations with the preferred bidder were originally meant to conclude within 12 months but have been extended twice with the hope of reaching an overall deal on the land and housing.

## **Planning Framework**

If and when EASEL is adopted as a plan by the council, it will have the status of an Area Action Plan with the Local Development Framework. It is intended to set out a broad land-use strategy across East Leeds by identifying existing and potential sites for development. Though it identifies some for housing development, it does not prescribe a more specific mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to be built on them. Similarly, whilst the AAP includes broad commitments to housing quality, there is no overarching design code. This is understandable given the dispersed nature of the sites among existing uses. Both design specifics and dwelling mix will be determined on a site-by-site basis, through the planning system, with Leeds as the responsible planning authority.

## **Funding**

Funds for acquisition and clearance have come through the council's and ALMO's normal capital funding allocations. Land sales are overseen by standard council procedures for asset disposal. In the longer term, the Joint Venture Company will generate revenues for regeneration. The terms for determining how these revenues are calculated and divided are the subject of continued negotiations between the council's officers and the developer.

## **Resident involvement and Consultations**

Extensive consultation exercise on the Area Action Plan is regarded as having provided a broad mandate for the EASEL plan. As well as organising consultation events, the council has also engaged the services of other organisations to support the consultation. Given that it is an outline plan, further consultation at a more local level is foreseen as specific plans for sites as they evolve.

There is an active Gipton Together group which has ongoing links to the regeneration team; there are also a small number of other groups which represent tenants and residents living in sub-neighbourhoods within Gipton

## **Monitoring**

Operational scrutiny by the Leeds Initiative, and council scrutiny of the plans and delivery of the East Leeds regeneration work are the main means of monitoring. A number of indicators have been selected on the area management side; at present a specific monitoring strategy for the Mixed Communities Pilot has not been finalised and it is felt this is an area where the evaluation can contribute. The city council already has substantial expertise in the spatial analysis of administrative data. Some of these analyses are made publicly available on the web, at <http://statistics.leeds.gov.uk/>.



## **Commentary from Evaluation Team:**

### **Theory of Change**

In many respects, the Gipton DP appears to closely reflect the core MCI TOC. However one of the interesting elements of this project is the emphasis on the necessity and opportunity for private investment to achieve area transformation. The principle of public-private partnership is at the heart of the EASEL project, with an acknowledgement that changes cannot be wholly funded by public sector funds and that public-private partnerships are a necessary vehicle for change, with a “proportion of private sector profits ... retained within the area and used to fund projects”. Publicly owned assets, principally land, are being used to generate a return for the Joint Venture Company which will be charged with delivering a comprehensive regeneration programme. In public documents, private investment needs are more specifically linked to the need to pay for specific projects such as housing refurbishment, new affordable housing or specific social and environmental schemes.

Moreover it is notable that, in EASEL as a whole, including future phases of the development in Gipton, land will be assembled in part by the substantial demolition and remodelling of social housing, not just the sale of already cleared sites. There is a recognised risk that existing residents may not be able to afford and so will ‘miss out’ on the new housing opportunities if there is not substantial progress on worklessness and low earnings, especially if rapid house price growth in Leeds continues.

In relation to the Gipton sites particularly, there is an emphasis on tenure mix, which is suggestive of a neighbourhood effects theory. Currently, tenure mix is to be achieved through infill private development rather than new mixed tenure development. While affordable homes will be included in the first stage, none will be social rented dwellings. This may differ in future phases. Attracting households with higher incomes to the area is a central aim of the project, but it is less clear whether the problem is seen to be with the prevalence of social rented tenure, or with the income mix such a tenure mix produces. The specific ways in which service improvements will facilitate either social mixing or improved outcomes for existing residents are not yet strongly articulated.

A further interesting variation is that, perhaps because of the absence of an NDC programme, the scheme has been planning-led. Whilst the NDC areas in the study started out as broad-based non-housing interventions which later engaged with housing questions, in Leeds the housing and planning elements are being advanced whilst the comprehensive regeneration plan is still in development. The LSP and its area subcommittees provide a forum for the DP to work with other agencies, but there does not yet appear to be a strong emphasis on the linking of mainstream services.

## **Key Research Questions**

### **Remedies:**

- To what extent are measures developed to benefit existing residents, particularly to tackle worklessness?
- Are changes needed in the way that mainstream services are delivered, and if so what?

### **Change processes:**

- What is the socio-economic and demographic profile of the purchasers of the new homes and what is the ongoing stability of this population?
- How do the occupants of the new for-sale housing use local public- and private-sector services, and how does this affect the quality of those services?
- Is there a difference between building new largely private developments among the existing social housing, and building wholly new developments that are mixed in tenure?
- Does the new build housing trigger a greater uplift in house prices or demand than is already occurring?

### **Outcomes:**

- Is worklessness reduced?
- Does the reputation of the area improve?
- What is the impact on housing affordability in the area?
- Do existing residents benefit from the new housing opportunities?

## **Proposed Evaluation Strategy**

(see separate document – should this be inserted here?)

## **Key process issues**

- The development of the regeneration plan that will use the capital receipts in an area where there was not already a defined regeneration plan and where housing elements have come earlier.
- Vehicles for resident involvement on an ongoing basis where there are not existing mechanisms, as in the NDCs.
- Decision-making over the types of intermediate affordable tenures offered in the new housing.
- Negotiations and outcomes over the special purpose joint-venture vehicle for the longer term regeneration programme.
- Whether high housing demand and other social housing programmes in the city (such as two housing PFI schemes) affect the achievability of decanting needed.
- The form and outcomes of local labour agreements and local labour market initiatives.