

**Report of: Chief Officer Highways & Transportation**

**Report to: Director of City Development**

**Date: May 2017**

**Subject: Response to Beckhills Residents Deputation to Full Council**

Are specific electoral wards affected? Chapel Allerton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity or cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If 'yes', access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### **Summary of main issues**

At the Full Council meeting in March 2017 members of the Team Beckhills Residents Group presented a deputation setting out concerns about the condition of footway areas and steps within the Beckhills housing estate, which is situated on the border of Meanwood and Potternewton, within the Chapel Allerton Ward.

This report sets out the Council's response to the deputation and its current position regarding the Beckhills.

### **Recommendation**

The Director of City Development is requested to note the contents of this report and approve it as the response to the deputation.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's response to the deputation and its current position regarding the Beckhills. The deputation is attached at Appendix 1.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Beckhills housing estate is located on the border of Meanwood and Potternewton, north-west of the city centre. The area can be considered to extend within the boundaries of Potternewton Lane, Stainbeck Lane and Stainbeck Road. A plan of the area is included as Appendix 2 to the report. Building of the housing estate was completed in 1966 and consists of approximately 480 homes in a mixture of public and private ownership.
- 2.2 Unusually for such a significant estate containing a considerable number of dwellings it is largely served by a network of footpaths, with little roadway access to the majority of people's homes. The topography of the area means that between the separate series of paths serving each block of dwellings, large lengths of footpaths are interconnected by long sections of steps.
- 2.3 Although some of the housing stock is in private ownership the majority still falls within the public sector's housing mechanisms and in the main the footpaths and steps are similarly the responsibility of the Council to maintain.
- 2.4 The deputation raised the specific matter of Team Beckhills Resident Group wishing to see improvements to the steps and pavements across the whole area of the estate.

## **3 Main issues**

The following information details the Council's response to the deputation and the issue raised, the current activities being carried out in the area, and the work that is taking place to support further investment in the area's non-motorised-user infrastructure.

### **3.1 Highways & Transportation**

- 3.1.1 The DfT publication 'Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure,' published in 2002, is a set of guidelines with the purpose of providing good access for disabled people to infrastructure. Certain sections within the publication offer guidance on the design of steps and footpaths and set out parameters for design values, such as maximum step height and maximum gradient of a footpath.
- 3.1.2 The condition of the existing footpaths and steps across the Beckhills has been assessed and from an asset management evaluation the Council accepts that the adopted footpaths and steps in the area do not meet DfT guidelines and are in need of maintenance. However, they are not yet uniformly of sufficiently poor condition to be on the programme within the forthcoming three years when taken in context across the city as a whole. The highway authority will continue to inspect the adopted footpaths and carriageways on an annual basis and priorities will be re-evaluated if necessary.

- 3.1.3 Having looked at the records of repair work undertaken in the streets in the Beckhills area, it is evident that reactive and routine repairs are carried out in the same way as the rest of the Leeds area. Residents, members of the public and highways inspectors raise reports about safety defects and the depot maintenance teams carry out appropriate repairs. Essentially, to date the Beckhills estate is not treated any differently to any other area of Leeds even though the majority of access to homes is on foot.
- 3.1.4 Notwithstanding the assessment methodology being applied the Council have invested an initial £400,000 to begin steps and footpath reconstruction in one area of approximately 10% of the whole estate. This initial area was designated of most immediate importance by officers together with Team Beckhills through their regular forum discussions with housing and highway colleagues. In addition there has also been consultation undertaken with residents through Housing staff at an action day in May 2016, and again at the Team Beckhills fun day in July 2016.
- 3.1.5 Work commenced on this section of the estate on 27 March 2017 and is expected to last until the autumn of 2017. The nature of the work and conditions of the site, with restricted mechanical plant access, suggest this characteristic of work is typically best undertaken by the Council's Highway's Direct Labour Organisation. The work that has now commenced will help to understand the most effective method of working to facilitate the repair of the paths and steps.
- 3.1.6 **Waste Management**
- 3.1.7 Housing Leeds and The Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team have been in dialogue with Team Beckhills to try and tackle the issues of fly tipping and waste on the estate and various work streams are now taking place as a result of this.
- 3.1.8 Team Beckhills are heavily involved in the Housing Leeds Walkabouts identifying problematic locations which will now receive new bins and signage. They have been on refuse collections with Waste Management to understand the complexity of the job at hand and they are in the process of arranging an action day with The Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team to understand the work of the street cleansing crews who are on the estate each week.
- 3.1.9 The current Waste Management Service Level Agreement is being reviewed with an input from the residents and clear documentation is being prepared to go out to residents on the estate on how to present their waste.

#### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Ward members and officers have been in dialogue with the Team Beckhills local resident group about the issue of steps and footpath condition during the last eighteen months.
- 4.1.2 Senior Council Officers and Ward Members recently met with representatives of the Team Beckhill Resident's Group in February 2017 to discuss how further capital monies beyond the initial £400,000 could be reserved or allocated to continue with a full programme of work in the coming years to address poor access standards across the estate as whole.

4.1.3 Dialogue will continue as part of the ongoing delivery and consultation on the area currently being re-constructed and further monies will be requested in the capital programme for 2018/19 (£500,000) and subsequent years in the total sum of £2,650,000 to deliver a programme of improvements. Subject to approval this will enable a phased programme of repairs to progress.

4.1.4 The Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport & Planning has been briefed and is supportive of the response.

### **3.2 Equality and diversity, cohesion and integration**

3.2.1 There are no actions or decisions to be screened in relation to this report. The issues relating to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration will be screened as part of future Council reports where any relevant decisions are to be made.

### **3.3 Council policies and the best Council plan**

3.3.1 There are no actions or decisions to consider in this report. However the issues raised highlight the role of the Beckhills in delivering Best Council Plan objectives, ensuring people live in clean well cared for places and that people can easily move around the city.

4.3.2 The issues also relate to the Best Council Plan objective of better lives for people with care and support needs as the improvements needed for the steps and the ramped footpaths would adhere to DfT guidelines for inclusive mobility.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 There are no specific resource implications raised by this report as it is for information only in response to the deputation to Full Council. All future resource issues relating to the matters raised will be addressed in future Council reports.

### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information and call-in**

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications raised by this report as it is for information only in response to the deputation to Full Council.

### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 There are no specific risks raised by this report as it is for information only in response to the deputation to Full Council. All future risks relating to the matters raised will be addressed in future Council reports.

## **4 Conclusions**

4.1 At the Full Council meeting in March 2017 members of the Team Beckhills Residents Group presented a deputation setting out concerns about the condition of footway areas and steps within the Beckhills housing estate.

4.2 The council has made a commitment of £400,000 in 17/18 to being works on approximately 10% of the estate. Monies have been included in the capital programme request for subsequent financial years in grand total of £2,650,000.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

6.1 The Director of City Development is requested to note the contents of this report and approve it as the response to the deputation.

## **7.0 Background Documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

## **APPENDIX 1: Deputation to March 2017 Full Council**

Text of speech to Leeds City Council

Lord Mayor and Members of Council,

We represent Team Beckhills – a group of residents from the Beckhill Estate, which is on the border of Chapel Allerton and Meanwood wards.

We are here to tell you about how we are bringing people together to make life better. And we are seeking a commitment from Leeds City Council to complete vital repairs to steps and pavements, which have been unsafe for many years.

For many years residents have felt the estate has been neglected. People have been reporting problems with antisocial behaviour, litter, flytipping and unsafe pavements for a long time. All of us have individual stories of things that make us angry and disappointed. We've lost track of how many times we were promised repairs and redevelopment over the years. Consultations come and go, but we are still faced with the same problems.

It felt like no one was listening to us. And people have got used to it. There hasn't been a functioning residents' association in years. Residents have few positive things to say about the Council. Many have lost hope of seeing positive change.

But over the last 18 months, we have decided to take some responsibility. Instead of complaining, we decided to get organised. We teamed up with Leeds Citizens, Stainbeck Church and Mill Field Primary School to see if we could build up some pride in our estate and get some things done.

We started with some training in Community Organising. Then we joined year 6 pupils on a walkabout to identify local issues. Then we knocked on doors and spoke to our neighbours about what change they wanted to see on the estate. We helped run a very successful Fun Day last summer. We reached out to our local councillors and even hosted the Lord Mayor for tea. Gradually, we are starting to see change.

We have developed our negotiation skills and have organised meetings with Mark Grandfield, Tom Smith and other senior officers from the Council about the main issues of litter, waste collection and unsafe steps. None of us were experts in how to hold such meetings, but with the support from Leeds Citizens and Stainbeck Church, we are growing in confidence and starting to see positive changes, such as a better bin collection system, and service level agreement with the waste team.

One of the most important issues we have is the unsafe steps and pavements around the estate. These are a major hazard and are not fit for purpose. They have already caused injuries for people trying to get round the estate. We have knocked on doors around the estate and over 150 families have signed our petition to get them fixed. Repairs have been approved for about 10% of the estate, but that leaves another 90% of the estate unsafe.

Please will you act immediately to prioritise repairs to the rest of our estate? We have worked so hard to bring people together and get them to the point where they believe change is possible. It would be a real shame to let them down now.

# APPENDIX 2: Location Plan

