

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting:

21 February 2002

Title: STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RAFFLES ESTATE

Report of: Director of Housing

**Report
reference: H019/02**

Summary:

The report sets out a number of strategic and project planning issues for the Raffles estate. The report has been compiled in consultation with the Raffles Steering Group, comprised of organisations working on Raffles. The report is informed by the recent Raffles Residents survey, which highlights the needs of the Raffles community, and brings together a range of planning and delivery issues to achieve a sustainable Raffles. The report also makes recommendations resulting from the review of community buildings on Raffles undertaken by Len Cockcroft and Joan Ellis Consultants in spring 2001.

Recommendations:

The committee are recommended to comment upon proposed actions in section 2 and 3 of the report.

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1. The Raffles Context

1. Housing Demand

The Sheffield Hallam Study "The dynamics of local housing demand" reveals some important housing market trends that are affecting the long term demand and popularity of the Raffles estate. Whole blocks and sections of streets are completely empty. At the beginning of the Raffles Area Strategy in 1997, Raffles had 1346 council rented properties. Since this time, three phases of demolition have taken place resulting in 388 demolished properties. There are now 958 council rented properties. Of these 28% are void. The greatest problems are to be found in Raffles Avenue, Creighton Avenue and Dalton Avenue.

Evidence from the survey shows that the majority of residents intend to continue living on Raffles. The remaining Raffles population contains a high proportion of 'vulnerable groups', including low income families, lone parent families, older people and single occupant households. **(Survey pg. 5-6 section 1)**

2. Raffles Area Strategy (RAS)

RAS was conceived in 1997, leading to a strategy report in 1999 which set out a four

year programme of decanting, demolition and redevelopment. By November 2001,

three phases of demolition have been completed (see table below), resulting in a 29%

reduction in the total council rented housing stock on Raffles (1346 properties reduced

to 958 properties). Despite the demolitions, void levels are largely consistent to pre-demolition levels – 30% voids in 1999 compared to 29% voids currently.

It is a longstanding aim of the Council to attract a private developer to build houses in Raffles. Proposals for a partnering arrangement with a preferred developer are being considered by the Council Executive on February 18th.

3. Housing Services

As noted in the Sheffield Hallam study, serious steps are needed not only to reduce the supply of housing, but also to sustain existing and create new demand for the remaining stock. Presently few such programmes have been undertaken in Raffles. Based on community consultation, identified areas for improvement include:

- New marketing approaches, including incentives for new tenants
- Support for new tenants, particularly 'vulnerable tenants', to assist them to successfully maintain their tenancy
- More active management of neighbourhood nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- As part of the above an improved system of engaging with local residents on complaint issues and evidence gathering
- Incentives for existing tenants to remain on the estate
- Improved management of rent arrears, to prevent arrears related debt and eviction
- An improvement of the local environment (**Survey pg. 7 section 3**)

2. The Environment

The survey shows a mixed response to the management of the demolition sites, with a preference for new houses to be built, particularly for rent. Should this not prove possible childrens play areas and community gardens are desired (**survey pg. Section**) Residents identify a number of concerns with the general environment:

- Poor management of void gardens
- To a lesser degree poor management of occupied gardens
- Poor management of bushes, shrubbery, trees, hedgerows and road verges
- The under utilisation of Heysham Park (**Survey pg. 11 section 8**)

2. Children and Young Peoples Services

Provision of youth work scored very highly in the survey. (**Survey pg. 8 section 4**) Out of school hours services are offered by a number of organisations:

- Newtown School offer a breakfast club and after schools provision, and are currently assessing the possibility of offering a Neighbourhood Nursery
- Play Raffles offer a range of service for children up to 11, and host a fortnightly ante-natal clinic and health visitor
- The Living Well Trust offer a range of services for children, a mobile youth bus and pastoral work in local schools
- Morton School offer after schools provision

2. Crime and Community Safety

A high percentage of residents feel unsafe alone on the estate, particularly at night. Residents desired new community safety initiatives and particularly an increased police presence. **(Survey pg. 10 section 6)**

3. Training, Education and Employment

The survey shows a relatively high prevalence of adult economic inactivity, but also encouragingly a willingness to engage in training and access employment support services. **(Survey pg. 10-11 section 7)**

4. Resident Involvement

There is no residents association on Raffles, and consequently Raffles residents have been severely under represented in resident forum such as the LSVT Tenants Advisory Group. The major mechanism for resident involvement is through the Raffles Community Forum, an open meeting for residents and professionals working on Raffles which meets approximately every 6 weeks. A high proportion of residents indicated a willingness for greater involvement. **(Survey pg. 9 section 12)**

5. Co-ordination and Review

A range of partner organisations provide, or potentially could provide, services within Raffles. To facilitate co-ordination of services and communication between organisations the Raffles Steering Group has been established (from the original RAS Group and Raffles Joint Working Group). This group has been used to consult on this report and will oversee the implementation of the priorities and actions listed. The group meets monthly (membership is included as Appendix 2). A number of sub groups have been set up to look at particular issues:

- The Advice Project Steering Group
- The Environmental Response Project Steering Group
- The Regeneration Group, looking at redevelopment
- The fledgling housing management group looking at local lettings etc.

1. Proposed Actions

1. Housing Services

As a matter of urgency a more responsive and encompassing local lettings policy is required for Raffles. This would cover the points raised in section 2.4 with the specific objectives of:

- Increasing housing demand
- Sustaining existing demand
- Responding to neighbourhood nuisance/ant-social behaviour(**Survey pg. 12 section 10.1**)

2.2 Demolition

In November 2001, the Council agreed in principle to the demolition of two further areas (phases 5 and 6). 64 properties are highlighted for demolition as part of phase 5 of which 91% are currently empty. The Council have also proposed that local residents be consulted over the potential demolition of a further phase 6 of 110 properties of which 59% are void. This demolition needs to be progressed with immediate effect following consultation with residents and the preferred partner in development.

Phase 4 identified in the original RAS has not declined as much as the proposed phase 5 and 6. The houses within phase 4 have a high occupation rate and are stable. The flats, conversely have a high void rate with little evidence of demand. As such the remodelling of the one bedroom flats into houses should be considered.

It should be noted that without positive changes in Housing and other services depopulation is likely to continue. However, the survey provides clear evidence that a majority of residents wish to continue living on the estate, and beyond the areas in Phase 5 and 6 occupancy rates are relatively high. Over all the occasionally muted proposal of demolishing the whole estate is unsatisfactory for three major reasons:

- It is financially prohibitive
- It would disperse an established community with long standing informal support networks. This would have a high social cost
- It would adversely affect local services and business, e.g. school and retail outlet closures.

3. The Environment

The phase 2 demolition site will not be landscaped until April, some eleven months after the demolition finished. Phase 3 is similarly yet to be landscaped. The Council needs to ensure that any further demolition in phases 5 and 6 is more readily landscaped, to ensure health and safety and also to reduce the eyesore factor of demolition land.

To address wider environmental issues the Housing Department, in partnership with the Leisure Department and Carlisle Works are proposing the development of an Environmental Response Team. The proposal is for such a team to be linked to a Community Warden scheme.

4. Children and Young Peoples Services

Raffles SRB Scheme is holding discussions with Newtown School, Play

Raffles and Living Well Trust to ensure that childrens services are co-ordinated and to avoid competition or duplication. This may lead to SRB funding for those organisations as part of a project which would also seek to provide support and opportunities to parents/carers.

Raffles SRB Scheme are also holding discussions with the Living Well Trust, Carlisle and Eden Primary Care Trust and Cumbria Health Action Zone to provide a young peoples advice and support worker. The post would work alongside the Living Well Trust youth workers and assist young people in the areas of health, employment, education and housing etc. This could be hosted in the Community Hall **(Survey pg. 13 section 10.2)**

5. Adult Services

Raffles SRB Scheme, Carlisle City Council Housing Department and Cumbria Health Action Zone will joint fund an advice service to be located in the Area Housing Office, Shadygrove Road. This will be delivered in partnership by the Citizens Advice Bureau, Age Concern and DACE. This is initially a one year project. The project could also host the new Carlisle Credit Union once established, in Raffles. **(Survey pg. 13 section 10.2)**

6. Crime and Community Safety

The Housing Departments proposal to establish Community wardens will address void property security and fear of crime issues and should be actioned. The current secondment of a Police Officer to the Council provides a good opportunity for partnership working to address neighbourhood nuisance, anti-social behaviour and other related issues. Should the SHIRPA domiciliary CCTV project demonstrate positive community safety outcomes the project should be expanded to other streets within Raffles experiencing relative high levels of criminal activity. Finally Cumbria Constabulary should be supported in developing Neighbourhood Watch and similar community engagement. **(Survey pg. 14 section 10.4)**

7. Training, Education and Employment

As outlined in section 3.5 Raffles SRB Scheme is discussing with Children Services Providers ways in which education and training opportunities can be delivered to parents/carers. Newtown Primary School is assessing the potential for the school to host a Learn Direct centre providing information on training and may also form part of the advice service project. Ongoing discussions will be needed with other training providers, e.g. Carlisle College, on ways their services can be offered within Raffles. **(Survey pg. 14 section 10.5)**

8. Resident Involvement

Work is under way with the Tenant Participation Officer (TPO) and residents to agree a new constitution for Raffles Community Forum, which will lead to greater resident input. The Forum will have an inaugural meeting in March to agree the constitution and will require ongoing professional support from the Council through the TPO and potentially also the Community Support Unit.
(Survey pg. 15 section 10.7)

The proposal for the redevelopment process is to have a 12 month partnering agreement with the preferred partner once selected. It will be vital that residents are adequately supported to fully engage in this process.

Raffles SRB Scheme and Cumbria County Council Neighbourhood Development Unit are seeking to establish a Community Chest, offering small grants to local organisations and community groups. Through the community chest residents would be able to nominate small projects they wish to see happen, providing a direct way to influence resource allocation.

9. Co-ordination and Review

The Raffles Steering Group will provide leadership in co-ordination and review of services, and will link closely with Raffles Community Forum. Further co-ordination is provided by Raffles SRB Scheme in assisting service planning. The Housing Department Raffles Area Strategy is due to end in March 2003. Depending on LSVT it will be necessary for an ongoing Raffles Area Strategy to co-ordinate the actions of the Housing Department on Raffles. Should LSVT go ahead it will be important for the new RSL to put a similar mechanism in place.

3 COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

3.1. The Hall

There has been considerable investment in the building over the past 5 years, mainly as part of the original 'Raffles Sets the Pace' SRB Programme. However, despite much effort by Officers of the Council, the various community groups and the Raffles Youth and Community Development Partnership, usage of the building has never matched the anticipated potential.

No significant new ideas have emerged from discussions which would suggest that continued effort to encourage community ownership of it, would lead to any significant improvement in that situation. Indeed the present low usage levels have led to the building being temporarily closed.

However, there has been an offer from a 'community' organisation with a significant interest and level of activity on the estate already, to assume responsibility for the building in the belief that they can develop it's use by and for the residents, particularly young people, which will build on their current

successful developments.

Their anticipated programme of activities would be very much in line with the original intentions for the building and are considered to be both viable and appropriate. It is **recommended** therefore that negotiations be pursued with the organisation on the basis of a short-term lease (3-5 years) for the building on a 'restricted-use' basis and at a minimum rent as they would assume the full running costs.

2. The House

The House has been the administrative and operational base in recent years for the RYCDP, which is now no longer in existence. Unfortunately, the organisation's demise has also inevitably led to the demise of many of the projects in which it took a leading role, some of which took place in the House.

However, the principal use of the premises has centred for a number of years around the successful operation of Playgroup and Out of School activities. This arm of the RYCDP has been re-constituted as Play Raffles in order to protect its existence and they continue to provide a reliable, effective and well-organised service.

The building has a custom built extension specifically for playgroup provision and remains an excellent and well used facility. Play Raffles wish to continue to use it and expand their service and have recently been awarded a Children in Need grant to provide the necessary staffing for a 3-year period. There is considerable support and goodwill on the estate for the facility but it could not exist without some subsidy for the running costs, etc.

It is **recommended** that the building be offered under licence, to Play Raffles and that the Council continues to support the service, particularly in terms of building maintenance, rates and some running costs, to an agreed level which ensures the adequate maintenance and operation of the facility.

3. 25 SHADYGROVE ROAD

Part of this building is currently leased by Age Concern as a shop and the other part was fitfully used by residents groups for meetings etc and as an occasional base for Raffles FM Radio. That part has not been in use for some time and there is no prospect of it being so.

However, Age Concern are anxious to retain a presence on the estate, particularly on this site and would be prepared to take on the lease for the whole of the building and develop their operation from it. There is a concern that the property next door, which is privately owned but has been unoccupied for some years, may have to be demolished, but this should not

affect Age Concern's use of No 25.

Other sites for their operation have been considered but none have been considered suitable either in terms of accommodation or location and it is felt that the shop provides such a useful service to residents that it should remain where it is.

It is **recommended** therefore, that the building be leased in its entirety, to Age Concern for a further 3-year period.

4. THE ANNEXE

Raffles Rovers FC currently use the Annexe as changing accommodation and the building is shared with the Raffles Independent Youth Club. It sits adjacent to the football pitch and has been fitted with showers and a small kitchen. Effectively, the two organisations run and maintain the building with little assistance from the City Council other than contributions towards the rates, electricity and gas costs. They do so under a very informal agreement due to the fact that neither group is formally constituted, but it is nonetheless an arrangement which has operated relatively successfully for a number of years.

However, it is **recommended** that further discussions take place with both organisations with a view to entering into a more formal licensing arrangement, whilst not necessarily jeopardising the continuing use of the building.

5. Staffing Implications

If these arrangements proceed there will be financial and staffing implications. Under the arrangements outlined, there would be no requirement for the two posts currently attached to Raffles buildings.

However, one post has been vacant for 6 months, following the postholder's resignation and has not been replaced pending the results of this review of building usage. The other postholder is already temporarily being re-deployed as the diminished use of the Hall and the House has effectively made his job temporarily redundant. It is however, confidently expected that he will be eventually be re-deployed, with his full agreement, by the DSO. UNISON has been consulted on this issue and does not object.

3.6. Financial Implications

The effect of the proposed changes will not only be to secure the use of the facilities on the estate, but will at the same time improve and develop their use, in community ownership.

It may also be the case that the services will be provided at a lower cost than at present, but it is **recommended** that no action be taken on either the replacement of staff or a revision of the budget, until the outcomes of the various service reviews currently being undertaken e.g. regeneration, organisational structure etc have been considered.

4 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to consider the content of this report and the adjoining Raffles Residents Survey report to assess ways in which the Council can more fully contribute to sustaining the Raffles Community. Members are particularly requested to confirm their agreement with the suggestions regarding 'community buildings' and to recommend the Executive Committee to approve the actions outlined. Further areas of support are highlighted throughout section 3 of this report and include:

- The demolition of phases 5 and 6 and a decision on phase 4
- The approval of the Environmental Response and Community Wardens Project
- Fully consider the information contained in the Raffles Residents Survey report

APPENDIX 1

RAFFLES RESIDENTS SURVEY

This Report

This report provides an analysis of recent research undertaken on the Raffles housing estate. The report is divided into two sections an Executive Summary and the Full report.

Both sections provide information on:

- Household profile
- Housing Status and Housing Intentions
- Housing Services
- None Housing Services
- Redevelopment
- Crime and Community Safety
- Education and Employment
- The Environment
- Resident Involvement
- Proposed Actions to be Taken

Further copies of the report are available from:

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Background and Introduction

The following is a summary of the results and analysis of a structured survey of Raffles residents. During October 2001 face to face interviews were conducted with 196 residents of Raffles. The survey was funded by Carlisle City Council Housing Department Raffles Area Strategy budget. The content of the survey was constructed by Raffles SRB Scheme in partnership with the Raffles Joint Working Group, now replaced by the Raffles Steering Group.

The overall aim of the survey was to provide up to date, comprehensive and reliable information which could be used to help plan and deliver services more effectively and which allowed residents to express their opinions, needs and aspirations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Households Profile

A high percentage of raffles residents fall within vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, compared with the Cumbrian average:

1.1 Household Group

- 24.5% of households were single adults, a further 10.5% were elderly single (65+)
- 13% of households were single parent families, 41% all the households with children
- 15.5% of households were made up of older people, 65% of which live on their own

1.2 Socio-Economic Information

- 20.5% of respondents had a total annual household income (including benefits), below £5, 000
- 35.5% had a total annual household income of between £5, 000 and £10, 000
- Only 3.5% had had a total annual household income over £20, 000
- Only 35% of residents are employed, 21.5% full time and 13.5% part time
- 64.5% of households included a benefit claimant, with
 - 33.5% of claiming housing benefit (50% of council tenants)
 - 31.5% claiming job seekers allowance

2 Housing Status and Housing Intentions

Encouragingly, there was evidence of a long-term commitment to the estate from a majority of residents:

- 46% of respondents had been living in Raffles for 10 years or more
- 70.5% intended to continue living on Raffles for 11 or more years
- only 6% intended to move away from Raffles in the next years

3 Housing Services

Respondents were asked to give a rating of importance to key housing activity:

- To let empty houses (76.%), Resolve Neighbour Nuisance/Problem Tenants (74%) and Tidy Gardens and Land (72.5%) received the highest ratings of 'very important'
- The redevelopment of demolition sites, improved repair service and planned maintenance were all rated 'very important' by more than 50% of respondents

There was very little support for further demolition. Only 26.5% rated demolition as very important, while 50.5% rated demolition as not important. These figures remained roughly consistent across the estate, with slightly higher support in Dalton Avenue.

4 None Housing Services

More than 45% of respondents ranked all of the proposed further services as very beneficial. Services receiving the highest ranking of major benefit were:

- Health Services (69.5%), Sport and Leisure Activities (65%) and Youth Work (64%)

5. Redevelopment

Respondents were asked about potential uses for demolition site land:

- 44% of respondents wished to see new houses for rent been built on demolition sites, with a further 31% wishing to see new houses for sale
- Popular alternative options were Play facilities (21%) and a community garden (13%)
- Only 23% of respondents said they would consider buying a new house on Raffles
- 39% of residents supported the idea of changing the name of Raffles

6 Crime and Community Safety

- 58.5% of respondents wanted increased the police presence
- 40.5% of respondents felt very unsafe, or would not be alone on the estate, at night

7 Education and Employment

Residents were asked what kind of support should be given to people out of work.

- *Providing jobs on the estate, education and training and giving support when applying for jobs were the most popular measures, each scoring over 40%*
- 40% of respondents said that they would be interested in training and learning opportunities offered on the estate

8 Environment

Residents were asked to rank the standard of maintenance of environmental features

- *Gardens of empty houses were of highest concern, ranked as badly maintained by 69.5%, while litter, graffiti and fly tipping was ranked as badly maintained by 43%*
- *No environmental feature was ranked as well maintained by more than 18%*
- 50% of respondents said that they did not know how well maintained Heysham Park, showing the park to be an under utilised resource

9 Resident Involvement

Respondents were asked what types of activities they would contribute to

- 30.5% would attend public meetings, while 19% wanted to get involved in residents groups and 14% wanted to do voluntary work

10 PROPOSED PROJECTS AND ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY

10.1 Housing

- Implement a local lettings policy on Raffles with additional incentives for new tenants, including recycled furniture and redecoration (outlined in Executive Report (ref))
- To introduce a neighbour conflict resolution service
- Develop an Environmental Response Project, employing residents to deliver garden and land management services in partnership with Carlisle Works

10.2 Other Services

- With Carlisle Primary Care Trust to assess if health services could be made more accessible on the estate.
- Support the Space for Sports and Arts development at Newtown Primary School
- Develop further support services for young people and parents/carers
- Deliver advice services on Raffles on benefit, debt, legal and other social issues

10.3 Redevelopment

- Pursue the potential of a building development following the recent submission of two expressions of interest from developers.
- Should a development not occur look to incorporate childrens play areas and community gardens into the demolition sites, and ensuring reasonable basic landscaping occurs on demolition sites as a minimum
- Further investigate the potential impact changing the name of parts of the estate may have on a more localised basis

10.4 Crime and Community Safety

- With the Police assess ways of improving visible police presence and reducing fear of crime, including support for the development of Neighbourhood Watch
- Expand the domiciliary CCTV project currently been run on Brookside to other parts of the estate if it proves successful and re-assess the use of existing CCTV

10.5 Employment, Education and Training

- Provide local jobs and training through the Environmental Response Project.
- Support training and education offered by Newtown School CREDITS initiative
- Expand community based learning
- Employment advice to be delivered as part of the advice services project

10.6 Environment

- Improve environmental maintenance through the Environmental Response Project
- Make Heysham Park more accessible and attractive to provide leisure opportunities
- Develop demolition sites as outlined above

10.7 Resident Involvement

- Build on the work of Raffles Community Forum
- Recruit community representatives to instigate community activity
- Identify staff resources to support this

APPENDIX 2

RAFFLES RESIDENTS SURVEY: FULL REPORT

Section 1 Households Profile

This section was designed to provide contextual information about the Raffles population in terms of demographics, household groups, household income, resident employment status and benefit claimant levels.

Table 1.1 Residents by Age Group

Age Group	Number	% of Total
Under 5	33	7
5 to 16	96	20.5
17 to 29	65	14
30 to 44	97	20.5
45 to 64	109	23.5
65+	67	14.5
Total	467	100

Table 1.2 Residents by Household Group

Household Group	% of Households
Single Adult (one person over 18)	24.5%
Single with children under 18	13.0%
Couple with children under 18	18.5%
Adult Couple (2 Adults over 18)	17.0%

Adult family (3 or more people over 18)	4.5%
Elderly single (1 person over 65)	10.5%
Elderly couple (2 people over 65)	5.0%
Other	7.0%
Total	100

As illustrated in table 1.2, Raffles has a high percentage of residents that may be considered to be at greater risk of social exclusion. A high number of people live alone, 24.5% of households were single adults, a further 10.5% were elderly single (over 65) and a further 13% were single parent families. In total 48% of households include only one adult, meaning that a large number of people are living without the support of other adults in the household.

Altogether 31.5% of households include children. Of these 18.5% are a couple with children, while 13% of households were single parent families. This is 41% all the households with children. In total 15.5% of households were made up of solely of older people, with 10.5% of households comprised of a single occupant over 65 (65% elderly households)

Respondents were asked to estimate total household income, including benefits, by either a weekly, monthly or annual figure. Table 1.3 below illustrates the responses and shows a very high percentage of households with low income levels. The lowest range, up to £5, 000 was selected by 20.5%, while the next £5, 001 - £10, 000 contained the largest number of respondents at 35.5%. In total this means that 56% of households have a total annual income of less than £10, 000. These groups include a large number of single parent and elderly households, as well as benefit claimants. It is likely that these figures are actually higher, as 6% said they did not know the household income while another 10.5% did not want to answer.

Table 1.3 Estimated Total Household Income (including benefits)

Income Range	Percentage of Households
Up to £5000	20.5%
£5001 – 10000	35.5%

£10001 - 15000	14.0%
£15000 - 20000	10.0%
£20001 +	3.5%
Don't know	6.0%
Don't want to answer	10.5%

Table 1.4 All Household Members Main Activity (Employment and Education)

Main Activity	Number	% of Total
Full Time Education (school, college, university)	107	27
Employed Full Time	85	21.5
Retired	81	20.5
Employed Part Time	54	13.5
Unable to Work (e.g. long term sick)	41	10.5
Job Seeking	17	4
Domestic Work (unpaid, e.g. minding own children)	8	2
Training	4	1
Total	397	100

Table 1.4 shows the main activity of all household members above school entry age. Only 35% of residents are employed, 21.5% full time and 13.5% part time. This shows a high level of economic inactivity. Table 1.5 below, shows that a correspondingly high number of households included one or more benefit claimant, 64.5% of households. A third of households (33.5%) were claiming housing benefit, 50% amongst council tenants and 31.5% of households included a job seekers allowance claimant. A high percentage of households (14%) include someone claiming a disability related benefit.

Table 1.5 Households with Benefit Claimants by Benefit Type

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Benefit	% of Households with Claimant
Housing Benefit	33.5%
Income Support	31.5%
Job Seekers Allowance	4.5%
Disability	14.0%
Working families tax credit	8.0%
Other	16.0%
Do not want to answer	2.0%
None	35.5%

2 Housing Status and Housing Intentions

Table 2.1 Length of Residence at Current Address

Length of Residence	Percentage
Less than 1 year	14.5%
1-2 years	10.5%
3-4 years	13.0%
5-10 years	16.0%
10 years +	46.0%

Table 2.2 Intended Length of Continued Residence in Raffles

Intended Length of Continued Residence	Percentage
1-2 years	6.0%
3-4 years	5.5%
5-10 years	6.5%
11 + years	70.5%
Don't know	11.5%

As stated in the introduction, Raffles has undergone a huge depopulation over the last five years, clearly evidenced by the number of empty properties on the estate. However, when asked about length of residence, and intended future continued length of residence, the signs were very encouraging. Almost half of the respondents (46%)

had been living in Raffles for 10 years or more, showing a large number of residents with an established long term commitment to the area.

Encouragingly, 70.5% of respondents indicated that they intend to continue living on Raffles for 11 or more years, while only 6% intended to move away within the next years. In combination this suggests that the large scale depopulation may be bottoming out, and that Raffles may be nearing its natural population size. This gives further impetus to ensuring that those still living on the estate, who wish to stay, have a real choice to do so, by providing a reasonable quality of life.

3. Housing Services

Table 3.1 Rating of Housing Services by Importance

Action	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Let empty houses	76.5%	16.5%	6.0%	1.0%
Neighbour Nuisance/problem tenants	74.0%	19.0%	6.5%	0.5%
Tidy gardens and land	72.5%	21.5%	4.0%	2.0%
Redevelop demolition sites	64.0%	24.5%	6.5%	5.0%
Better repair service	59.0%	29.5%	3.5%	8.0%
Planned maintenance	57.5%	33.5%	3.0%	6.0%
More demolition	26.5%	20.0%	50.5%	3.0%

Table 3.2 Importance of Demolition by Street of Residence (Streets with Potential Further Demolition Sites)

Street of Residence	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Creighton Avenue	11	7	17	2
Dalton Avenue	7	3	5	0
Raffles Avenue	7	6	18	0
Total	25 (30%)	16 (19%)	40 (48%)	2

				(2%)
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When asked to rank how important they considered types of activity from the Housing Department to be the most important things were:

- To let empty houses, ranked as very important by 76.%
- Resolve Neighbour Nuisance/Problem Tenants ranked as very important by 74%
- Tidy Gardens and Land ranked as very important by 72.5%

These ratings were the highest of any part of the survey, showing how strongly residents feel about the need for the Housing Department, or indeed a Housing Association following the possible stock transfer, to address these issue. The redevelopment of demolition sites, improved repair service and planned maintenance all also scored a rating of over 50% very important.

There was very little support for further demolition. Only 26.5% rated this as very important, while 50.5% rated further demolition as not important. These figures remained roughly consistent across the estate, and within respondents from the proposed Phase 5 and 6 areas, though support for further demolition was evident from respondents living in Dalton Avenue as shown in table 3.2 above.

4 Non-Housing Services

In this section residents were asked to rank how much benefit they felt existing and proposed services would be to residents of the estate. This is presented in table 4.1 below

Table 4.1 Perception of the Benefit of Existing and Proposed Services

Service	Major benefit	Minor benefit	No benefit	Don't know
Health services, e.g. District Nurse	69.5%	20.0%	7.5%	3.0%
Sport and leisure activities	65.0%	24.0%	9.0%	2.0%
Youth Work	64.0%	22.0%	12.5%	1.5%
Social activities	61.0%	29.0%	9.0%	1.0%

Support for families/parents	59.0%	25.0%	10.5%	5.5%
Advice workers, e.g. benefits advice	48.5%	26.5%	14.5%	10.5%
Counselling, e.g. for bereavement	46.5%	29.0%	17.5%	7.0%

More than 45% of respondents ranked all of the proposed further services as very beneficial. Services receiving the highest ranking of major benefit were:

- Health Services (69.5%), Sport and Leisure Activities (65%) and Youth Work (64%)

However, considering the high numbers of residents living alone, single parent families and people on low incomes described in section ... social activities, support for parents/families and advice services are all also needed services.

5. Redevelopment

Respondents were asked to consider potential redevelopment issues, including the possibility of a development to build new houses.

Table 5.2 Consider Purchasing Newly Built House on Raffles

Development Option	Brookside	Thomlinson Avenue
Build new houses for rent	44.0%	43.0%
Build new houses for sale	30.0%	31.5%
Play Facilities	17.0%	25.0%
Community Garden	11.5%	14.0%
Allotments	3.5%	7.0%
Enlarge Heysham Park	6.5%	4.0%
Don't know	13.0%	8.0%
Other	12.5%	14.5%

Residents were most in favour of new houses been built on the demolition site, either for sale (44%) or rent (31%). This option is currently been pursued by Carlisle City Council following the submission of two expressions of interest from developers. The next options receiving support were for childrens play areas (21%) and community gardens (13%), which could be incorporated into the demolition sites and Heysham Park. Should a building development not come to fruition these options should instead be undertaken. In the meantime it is important for demolition sites to receive basic landscaping to avoid leaving large areas of unattractive land.

Table 5.2 Options for the Redevelopment of Demolition Sites

Would Consider	Percentage
Yes	23.0%
No	65.5%
Don't know	11.5%

Despite the support for building new houses on Raffles only 23% of respondents indicated that they would consider purchasing a new house on Raffles, possibly because home ownership is considered too expensive considering levels of household income.

Table 5.3 Willingness to Change the Name of Raffles

Willing	Percent
Yes	39.0%
No	61.0%

Table 5.3 shows that only 39% of respondents supported the idea of changing the name of the estate. However, other consultation has shown that residents increasingly feel the estate to be fragmented following the demolition programme and consider that renaming parts of the estate may be worth investigating.

6 Crime and Community Safety

Table 6.1 Perception of Safety When Alone on Raffles

Time	Very safe	Fairly safe	Bit unsafe	Very unsafe	Would not be alone
Day Time	52.5%	35.5%	7.0%	3.5%	1.5%
Night	22.0%	19.5%	18.0%	20.5%	20.0%

Time					
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A high percentage of residents are concerned about safety on the estate at night, 20.5% said they felt very unsafe and a further 20% said that they would not be alone on the estate at night. These concerns were most prevalent amongst older people and women. These figures show a high level of fear of crime, which is not necessarily reflected by the reality of crime levels. A large part of this dynamic relates to concerns about unsupervised groups of young people.

Table 6.2 Desired Crime Reduction Measures (unprompted)

Desired Measure	Percentage
Increase police presence	58.5%
Better CCTV	13.5%
Community Wardens patrolling the estate	7.0%
Residents working together (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch)	6.0%
Burglar Alarms	6.0%
Security lights	5.5%
Residents security cameras	5.0%
Improve police relations	3.0%
Don't know	3.0%
Other	49.5%

The main response to crime which respondents sought was an increased police presence, particularly at night. However, this question was unprompted, and if the options had been given less obvious measures, such as community wardens and domiciliary CCTV may have been more popular.

7 Education and Employment

In this section respondents were asked what support should be given to people out of work on the estate, and to indicate if they would personally be interested in training and learning opportunities.

Table 7.1 Desired Support for People out of Work (multiple options)

Type of Help	Percentage
Provide jobs on the estate	42.0%

Education & Training	41.5%
Support when applying for jobs	40.5%
Workshops/small business units	32.5%
Courses on setting up in business	23.5%
Voluntary community work	23.0%
Support group	15.0%
Other	11.5%

Providing jobs on the estate, education and training opportunities and support applying for jobs were the options receiving most support in aiding those out of work each scoring over 40%.

Table 7.2 Interest in Estate Based Training and Learning

Interested	Percentage
Yes	40.5%
No	59.5%

A high percentage of respondents, 40.5%, stated that they would be interested in training opportunities if offered on Raffles. this shows a willingness amongst residents to build their own capacity and increase their skills and employability

8 Environment

Respondents were asked to state their perception of how well different aspects of the estate environment were maintained.

Table 8.1 Perception of Standard of Maintenance of Environmental Features

Feature	Badly	Reasonably	Well	Don't
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	maintained	maintained	maintained	Know
Sheehan Crescent/Dobinson Road Demolition site	10.0%	23.5%	12.5%	54.0%
Heysham Park	13.5%	21.0%	15.5%	50.0%
Occupied gardens	17.0%	71.0%	11.0%	1.0%
Thomlinson Avenue Demolition site	17.5%	35.5%	9.5%	37.5%
Trees, shrubs, bushes	35.5%	46.0%	15.0%	3.5%
Litter, graffiti, fly tipping	43.0%	34.0%	17.5%	5.5%
Gardens of empty houses	69.5%	25.0%	2.5%	3.0%

The responses in table 8.1 shows a general dissatisfaction with the maintenance of the environment, no feature scored a well maintained rating over 19%. The main areas of concern were empty gardens, which 69.5 % of residents ranked as badly maintained. 50% of respondents indicated that they 'did not know' how well maintained Heysham Park was, showing that this is an under utilised resource locally. Similarly over 54% and 37.5% did not know how well maintained the demolition sites on Sheehan Crescent/ Dobinson Road and Thomlinson Avenue were. Again this indicates an under utilisation of these areas.

9 Resident Involvement

Table 9.1 Activities Residents Would Become Involved in

Activity	Percentage
None	54.0%
Attending public meetings	30.5%
Getting involved in residents groups	19.0%
Doing voluntary work	14.0%

Organising activities	11.0%
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As shown in table 9.1 the majority of respondents did not wish to become further involved in resolving the issues facing Raffles. However, almost a third were willing to attend public meetings, while 19% were willing to become involved in residents groups. This indicates interest amongst residents in being part of the regeneration process, the challenge is to harness that interest constructively.

10 PROPOSED PROJECTS AND ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE SURVEY

10.1 Housing Services

The three main areas residents wished to see improved were:

- To let empty houses, ranked as very important by 76.0%
- Resolve Neighbour Nuisance/Problem Tenants ranked as very important by 74%
- Tidy Gardens and Land ranked as very important by 72.5%

To address these it is proposed that the following is undertaken:

- Implement a local lettings policy on Raffles with additional incentives for new tenants (outlined in Executive Report (ref))
- Recognising that many new and potential tenants have limited resources to implement a furniture recycling scheme. This would include furniture removed from void properties and from the Carlisle City Council waste removal services which would be stored adjacent to the Raffles Area Housing Office and offered to new tenants at low cost. (under discussion with Raffles SRB)
- To introduce a neighbour conflict resolution service, delivered by an external agency and taking referrals from both Housing staff working on estate management and the police, and potentially linked to the Raffles Advice Service (see below) (under discussion with Raffles SRB)
- To develop a new Environmental Response Project, training and employing Raffles residents to deliver garden and land management services in partnership with Carlisle Works (under discussion with Raffles SRB)

Despite the low level of support for demolition there are still areas of the estate which have very high levels of void properties which are subject to high levels of vandalism. It is proposed to demolish those properties as described in the Executive report (ref). It is further proposed to offer sitting tenants a move when they are the only occupants within a block of four houses.

10.2 None Housing Services

All of the options presented to respondents for further non housing services were ranked as very beneficial by more than 45% of respondents. The most desired area was Health Services. Representation should be made to Carlisle Primary Care Trust to assess if health services could be made more accessible on the estate.

The Space for Sports and Arts development at Newtown Primary School offers an exciting opportunity to provide sport and leisure activities to Raffles residents. The facility will open at the end of 2002 and ongoing revenue funding should be offered to support the initiative.

Youth Work has been provided by RYCDP, Living Well Trust and from the annexe off Raffles Avenue. It is proposed to further establish a scheme whereby young people engage in community activity which they accrue points for which can then be cashed in for activities etc. This would be run on the model of the 'dream scheme' operating in the Allerdale District Council area. Residents report that a small number of young people have a high level of problems and cause a disproportionate amount of difficulties. To address this high need group specialised young peoples services should be offered covering of opportunities, personal development, sexual health, drug and alcohol use and related issues. This could tie in with initial proposals from Carlisle Primary Care Trust to establish this type of service and could link to the advice services project (See below).

Social activities are increasingly provided through LWT. Support for families/parents is delivered through the Play Raffles scheme and by the Living Well Trust who both offer childrens services and informal support.

Advice services are been developed by Raffles SRB Scheme, in partnership with Carlisle City Council Housing Department and Cumbria Health Action Zone. These will offer a range of advice services, including benefits, debt and services for particular target groups including older people and those with a disability.

10.3 Development

Residents were most in favour of new houses been built on the demolition site, either for sale or rent. This option is currently been pursued by Carlisle City Council following the submission of expression of interest from two developers.

The next options receiving support were for childrens play areas and community gardens, which could be incorporated into the demolition sites and Heysham Park.

Should a building development not come to fruition these options should instead be

undertaken. In the meantime it is important for demolition sites to receive basic landscaping to avoid leaving large areas of unattractive land.

Despite the support for building new houses on Raffles only 23% of respondents indicated that they would consider purchasing a new house on Raffles, possibly because home ownership is considered too expensive, especially when levels of household income are considered.

Only 39% of respondents supported the idea of changing the name of the estate. However, other consultation has shown that residents increasingly feel the estate to be fragmented following the demolition programme and consider that renaming parts of the estate may be worth investigating.

10.4 Crime and Community Safety

A high percentage of residents are concerned about safety on the estate at night, 20.5% said they felt very unsafe and a further 20% said that they would not be alone on the estate at night. These concerns were most prevalent amongst older people and women.

The main response to crime which respondents sought was an increased police presence, particularly at night. This needs to be addressed in partnership with the Police. Measures addressing fear of crime, particularly around personal safety, also need to be introduced.

A high percentage of crime on Raffles is committed against void properties. The securing of void properties has been reviewed as part of the voids best value study. Residents of Brookside, which records the highest levels of crime, have been offered domiciliary CCTV and security lights through the Communities Against Drugs initiative.

10.5 Employment, Education and Training

Providing jobs on the estate, education and training opportunities and support applying for jobs were the options receiving most support in aiding those out of work each scoring over 40%. Similarly 40.5% of respondents stated that they would be interested in training opportunities if offered on Raffles.

To progress this the Environmental Response Project will provide local jobs and training. Key skills education, particularly around numeracy and literacy is currently being delivered by Carlisle College at the Living Well Trust Raffles Centre, with further Information Technology training available through the CREDITS scheme at Newtown School. The involvement of Carlisle College should be expanded on if the current scheme proves successful.

Currently no support in applying for jobs is offered on the estate. It is proposed that

this should be addressed through:

- Employment advice delivered through the employment service as part of the advice services project
- The Connexions service delivering a sessional service to young people as part of the advice services project and/or specific services for young people. This may be particularly important for young people who have disengaged from formal education and are currently not in employment, education or training.

10.6 Environment

69.5 % of residents ranked empty gardens as badly maintained. This will be addressed through the Environmental response Project described above, as will issues of vandalism and fly tipping.

50% of respondents indicated that they 'did not know' how well maintained Heysham Park was, showing that this is an under utilised resource locally. The Park should be made more accessible and attractive to provide leisure opportunities to local people.

Similarly a high percentage did not know how well maintained the demolition sites on Sheehan Crescent/Dobinson Road and Thomlinson Avenue were. Again this indicates an under utilisation of these areas. This is further covered above under development above.

10.7 Resident Involvement

The majority of respondents did not wish to become further involved in resolving the issues facing Raffles. In part this is due to the low community morale engendered by the demolition programme and bad past experience of fruitless consultation exercises. However, almost a third were willing to attend public meetings, while almost 20% were willing to become involved in residents groups.

It is proposed that further support should be given to Raffles community Forum is a an unconstituted open meeting attended by local professionals and residents. This should include Tenant Participation Officer time to constitute the group and to build capacity in residents. Funding to advertise the forum should also be given through the format of a community newsletter, successfully piloted this year.

As a start towards increased resident involvement, and picking up on those who wish to be involved in resident groups, it is proposed to form 4 loose resident groups in 4 areas of the estate. These would be supported by a Community representative, resident in the area, who would be supported in organising meetings and activities by a Community Worker. the Housing Department has allocated £10, 000 (Executive Report ...) to progress resident involvement.

11. Conclusions

The residents of Raffles are subject to much greater levels of disadvantage than the Cumbrian average, and the estate houses a large number of people from vulnerable groups. Raffles has undergone a dramatic depopulation over the last five years and many residents have in effect voted with their feet. However, this research suggests that this depopulation may be coming to an end, at least at its rapid rate. To support those residents who do wish to stay, to address their needs, and to encourage others to join the Raffles community, a series of measures need to be put in place. The support of a wide number of organisations will be needed to put this in place.

To forward this an overarching strategy for the future of Raffles estate has been prepared by Carlisle City Council Housing Department, in partnership with Riverside Housing Association as preferred partners in stock transfer and Raffles SRB Scheme. The strategy picks up many of the issues presented above.

T. Bramley

Director of Housing