

Area profile

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Rock Ferry - Housing Market Renewal Area Development Framework

June 2008

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Wirral
Partnership of Wirral Council
Wirral Housing Partnership

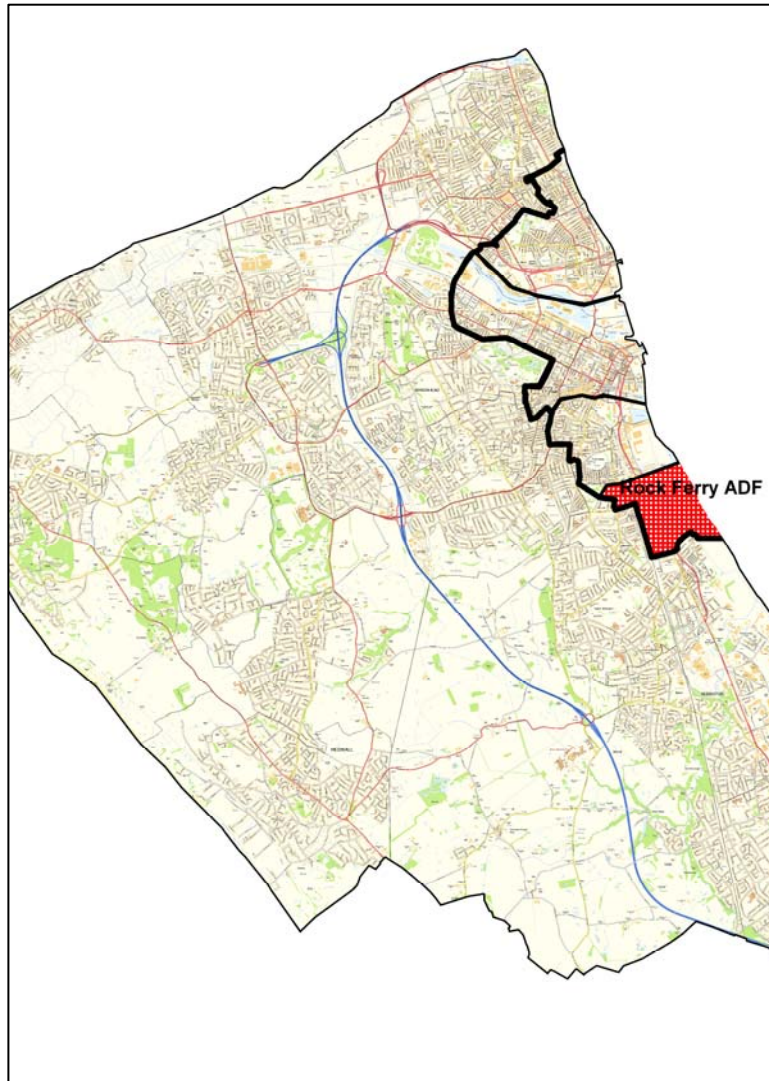
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1. Introduction

Map One: Location of Rock Ferry ADF



Rock Ferry is one of four Area Development Frameworks in the Wirral area of Newheartlands – the Merseyside Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder. The Housing Market Renewal Initiative is set to bring in around £800 million of grant funding to the Newheartlands Pathfinder under a comprehensive 15-year programme. A further £2 billion of investment should in turn be generated from private and other public sources. In addition there is a potential £4.6 billion of private funding that could be invested as part of the Wirral Waters docklands regeneration over the next 30 years. The focus of Wirral's early HMRI intervention was to complete an existing long term area investment programme in the Rock Ferry area.

Since the early 1990s, Rock Ferry has benefited from various regeneration programmes and significant grant and urban programme investment. It continues to be an area of targeted public sector investment including the new Family Centre at Ionic Street and the implementation of a programme of acquisition and clearance of the Fiveways Estate and the introduction of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, Together.

The area is well defined by the intersection of B5136 New Chester Road and B5172 Bedford Road, the main commercial centre for the locality. Rock Ferry railway station occupies a prominent location at this intersection. To the south of the neighbourhood is a large estate of mainly Wirral Partnership Homes (WPH) housing and to the west is the Rock Park residential area.

Since 2003, Rock Ferry has benefited from over £16million of housing investment which has contributed to the clearance of over 160 properties in the Fiveways Estate, backed by the Fiveways Masterplan. There are only 16 outstanding acquisitions to be completed to assemble all three development phases including 10 existing residents awaiting new build completion. These have all been achieved without the need for CPO. In addition, a new £7million commercial, retail and service centre has been developed at the junction of Old Chester Road and St. Paul's Road.

As a legacy of the pre-HMRI investment in Rock Ferry via the Tranmere Housing Regeneration Partnership, two new build schemes in Rock Ferry, totalling over 30 units have been completed including the award winning Riverview Gardens scheme for the elderly, by Riverside Housing Association and a general needs scheme at Grove Road. There is strong evidence of private sector development in Rock Ferry, with the area benefiting from new build housing schemes which complement the HMRI programme. The Hawthornes private development near to Fiveways on New Chester Road is due to deliver 90 units on completion and will consist of townhouses and apartments for sale.

A significant proportion of the housing stock within Rock Ferry is in the social rented sector, in 2007 the figure was 38.18% compared to a borough wide average of 15.39%. Wirral Partnership Homes has significant stock ownership on the Woodward Road Estate and to the West of New Chester Road.

Rock Ferry has benefited from significant complementary regeneration in 2003/08, most notably the activity involving SRB funding. This included economic investment in the Lairdside area of Rock Ferry previously occupied by shipbuilding and dock based industries. This has led to multi-million investment creating new jobs and new workspace units. Part of this development is Royal Standard House; a community trust aimed at developing local enterprise and the base of the "Together" neighbourhood management pathfinder who have become key partners in the implementation of HMRI in Tranmere and Rock Ferry. This has particularly focussed on the delivery of Living through Change initiatives such as Neighbourhood Wardens and Environmental Improvements. Other investment in Rock Ferry has included the A41 Strategy, investing in improvements to the A41 corridor to improve the connectivity of Rock Ferry to Wirral's Strategic Economic Investment Areas and the wider economic sub-region of Merseyside, Cheshire and North Wales.

This report provides an update to the Rock Ferry Area Profile produced in March 2007. It outlines the wider strategic context and local policy framework as well as demonstrating the case for intervention in Rock Ferry supported by socio-demographic and housing data. The next section describes the current situation and future plans for HMRI intervention and the report concludes with a summary of implications that the updated trends may have for policy.

2. The case for intervention

In July 2004, the Council appointed Riverside Housing and Inner City Solutions to develop a Masterplan for the Fiveways area of Rock Ferry. This area has suffered from market failure, and has been identified as a priority for intervention under the Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme.

The purpose of the Masterplan was to detail a preferred vision and development framework for the area, which has been developed via a process of consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders. Riverside and Inner City Solutions were accountable to the Council in delivering the masterplan, which was completed in 2005.

Two consultation events were undertaken at the community house in Rochester Road with the Fiveways residents and local stakeholders to develop the Masterplan. Residents and local businesses were given the opportunity to express their concerns and views and talk about the issues affecting them. The first event sought to determine residents' opinions on a range of issues concerning their neighbourhood, including the local housing market. The second event used findings from the first consultation to present a series of redevelopment options. On both occasions, residents were asked to complete a questionnaire with a range of responses under each heading.

Throughout the development of the plan, a series of newsletters were delivered to residents within the masterplan area detailing issues and updates and keeping residents informed.

Two Inter Agency Seminars were held with local agencies working within the Rock Ferry area from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The main aim was to involve key stakeholders in identifying the prevalent issues in the area in order that solutions can be tailored to target as many local issues as possible. In addition, the involvement of these stakeholders in the process will ensure that the regeneration effort is sustainable, and that those involved in service delivery respond to the new agenda.

There were four Masterplanning options presented which were:

- 1) Minor intervention/redevelopment of existing empty sites.
- 2) Medium level intervention
- 3a) Major intervention
- 3b) Total redevelopment of the area

The second Rock Ferry community consultation event sought to obtain a preferred option from four possible regeneration options with differing scales of redevelopment. Residents were asked to select an option based on how well it would resolve a key issue identified in the first community consultation, the favoured option for all key issues was option 3B, followed by option 3A.

The preferred option for Fiveways provides the most opportunity for significant housing market restructuring of all the options put to the community. This option will deliver a popular mix of housing types and tenures for which there is evidence of demand. It is also the option that is most appropriate to deliver the objectives identified in the Strategy for Inner Wirral, to deliver a sustainable neighbourhood where people will aspire to live. It involves the following:

- Demolition of 287 residential and 7 industrial units.
- Construction of 283 new build residential units.
- Provision of 80% new build owner occupied housing and 20% for social renting, in common with the indicative baseline included within the HMRI prospectus.
- Construction of an extra care facility as a housing option for local frail elderly residents.

- Construction at a density of 39 units per hectare.

The preferred option was approved by the Council in May 2005 and since then well over 90% of the properties scheduled for demolition have been acquired by the Council (or a price agreed) and demolition began on the estate in early 2006. As of June 2008, only 16 acquisitions remain outstanding.

3. Existing policy framework

Wirral's housing problems and the solutions needed to address them need to be considered within the wider context of national and regional policy and across community sustainability and economic regeneration agendas. The **Sustainable Communities Plan 2003**, Updated in 2005 with **Sustainable Communities: Homes for All** highlighted the need to tackle low demand and abandonment in the North and Midlands while promoting home ownership. The **North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005** is a key regional element of the Sustainable Communities plan and provides an overarching strategic direction for intervention in the North West's housing markets and the delivery of an urban renaissance, affordable homes and balanced communities. The **City Region Housing Strategy** provides a regional analysis that continues to show that the areas exhibiting the greatest housing market stress are those within the Newheartlands Pathfinder Area contained within the strategy's Northern Housing market Area. The strategy supports the need for the HMR programme as the most appropriate response to these issues, and recognises that it will be at the core of delivering a significant proportion of the additional 75,000 dwellings needed to support the 38,100 new jobs forecast in the strategy. **The Housing and Regeneration Bill 2008** established the new Homes and Communities Agency, which will focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures and will drive and invest in regeneration activities through support for regeneration and providing decent places as well as decent homes. The Bill implements the changes proposed in the Housing Green Paper, to give councils more freedoms and incentives to build new homes, and makes rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes mandatory for all new homes.

The **Regional Economic Strategy for the North West, 2003** identified Liverpool and Manchester as the region's major economic drivers. This economic strategy is now informed by the **Merseyside Economic Strategy and Action Plan, 2005** which sets out clear economic development priorities in a three year action plan within a ten year strategy. The **Liverpool City Region Development Plan, 2005**, sets out priority actions over the next 25 years

Planning Policy

Rock Ferry is within the Council's Regeneration Priority Area, which includes the whole of the Housing Market Renewal Initiative area. The Interim Planning Policy focuses new housing development in the Regeneration Priority Area for New Housing, adopted by the Council in October 2005.

The Council is replacing the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (UDP adopted February 2000) with a Local Development Framework (LDF), prepared under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The LDF Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been adopted, following independent Examination, along with a series of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Supplementary Planning Document SPD 2 – 'Designing for Self-Contained Flat Development and Conversions' impacts on the design quality of schemes in the HMRI area. Public consultation on the Rock Ferry ADF will follow the principles of community engagement set out in the SCI.

The Council is preparing LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options, which will draw on HMRI proposals and integrate the Council's Investment Strategy. A key element of the Investment Strategy is the role of derelict dockland at the heart of the HMRI area, where Peel Developments propose a major mixed use development.

In developing the Core Strategy, evidence bases are being prepared on:

- Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Employment Land Study
- Town Centres, Retail and Leisure Study
- Open Space and Recreation Audit (included in the Strategic Forward Plan for Cultural Services)
- Wildlife Sites and Biodiversity Audit
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Habitats Directive Assessment
- Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study
- Peel Proposals

The review of Cultural Services assets will address the need for existing and future recreation and open space provision.

The implementation of the Fiveways Masterplan is proceeding well with over 90% of the units, acquired by March 2007. It is intended to allocate HMRI funding of £2,560,000 from the 2008/11 programme to complete the acquisition and clearance of residential and commercial units. This will allow phase 1 of new build development to start in summer 2008. Until now, all property acquisitions have been achieved through negotiation but it may be necessary to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire some of the remaining properties, in order to proceed with planned development phases.

Legal agreements have been completed with Lovell, the Council's preferred Private Sector Development partner, and planning permission is in place with new build due to start in the Fiveways area on 1st July 2008. First phase of the development will comprise around 114 units and the building lease was signed in March 2008.

A proportion of the new build properties will be available for rent and Homebuy (Shared Ownership) through Riverside Housing Association. In Phase 1 it is planned to complete 45 RSL units for rent and 15 units for Homebuy. The remaining properties will be offered for sale on the open market and there will be incentives and financial assistance options for current residents affected by clearance.

An extensive Living through Change Programme has been operating across Rock Ferry, which has benefited particularly from extensive interventions from both Environmental and Neighbourhood Wardens. Over the last year alone, the Environmental Wardens secured 29 properties and cleared over 554 fly tipping incidents and there were over 800 household interventions by the Neighbourhood Wardens. This supported the extensive acquisition and clearance currently underway in the Fiveways area of Rock Ferry.

4. Socio Demographic Profiles

IMD

The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation is a measure of deprivation which is calculated using a range of housing, economic and social indicators. Every Super Output Area in England has an IMD score, which means that it is an excellent indicator to use when undertaking comparative analysis to identify areas in need of intervention. All of the Super Output Areas in the Rock Ferry ADF area are within the top 4% worst areas of deprivation in England. The lowest SOA in the Rock Ferry ADF area is ranked in 369 in 32,482.

Benefits

Focusing on number of claimants in an area can also give an indication of the levels of economic and social deprivation, which would have an impact on the local housing market.

Benefit Type	ADF Area	Rate (%)
Worklessness	Wallasey	29.45
	Birkenhead	47.48
	Tranmere	33.62
	Rock Ferry	34.73
	<i>Borough</i>	17.40
JSA	Wallasey	5.99
	Birkenhead	10.25
	Tranmere	6.74
	Rock Ferry	6.35
	<i>Borough</i>	3.3
Incapacity Benefit	Wallasey	15.85
	Birkenhead	26.01
	Tranmere	17.46
	Rock Ferry	18.53
	<i>Borough</i>	10.47
Lone Parent	Wallasey	6.64
	Birkenhead	8.89
	Tranmere	8.43
	Rock Ferry	7.89
	<i>Borough</i>	2.91
All Benefit Claimants	Wallasey	41.96
	Birkenhead	56.69
	Tranmere	46.11
	Rock Ferry	39.17
	<i>Borough</i>	26.52

Worklessness is defined as 'JSA, plus Incapacity Benefit, plus Lone Parents on Income Support plus other on Income Related benefits'. The rate of worklessness in the Rock Ferry ADF is 34.73%, compared with a Borough rate of 17.40%. Although high this figure is still lower than the level of Worklessness for both Birkenhead and Tranmere. For all benefit types, claimant levels in the Rock Ferry ADF are significantly higher than the Borough rates but lowest of the four ADF areas. These figures further underline the need for intervention and investment in employment and training initiatives in the area.

Ethnicity

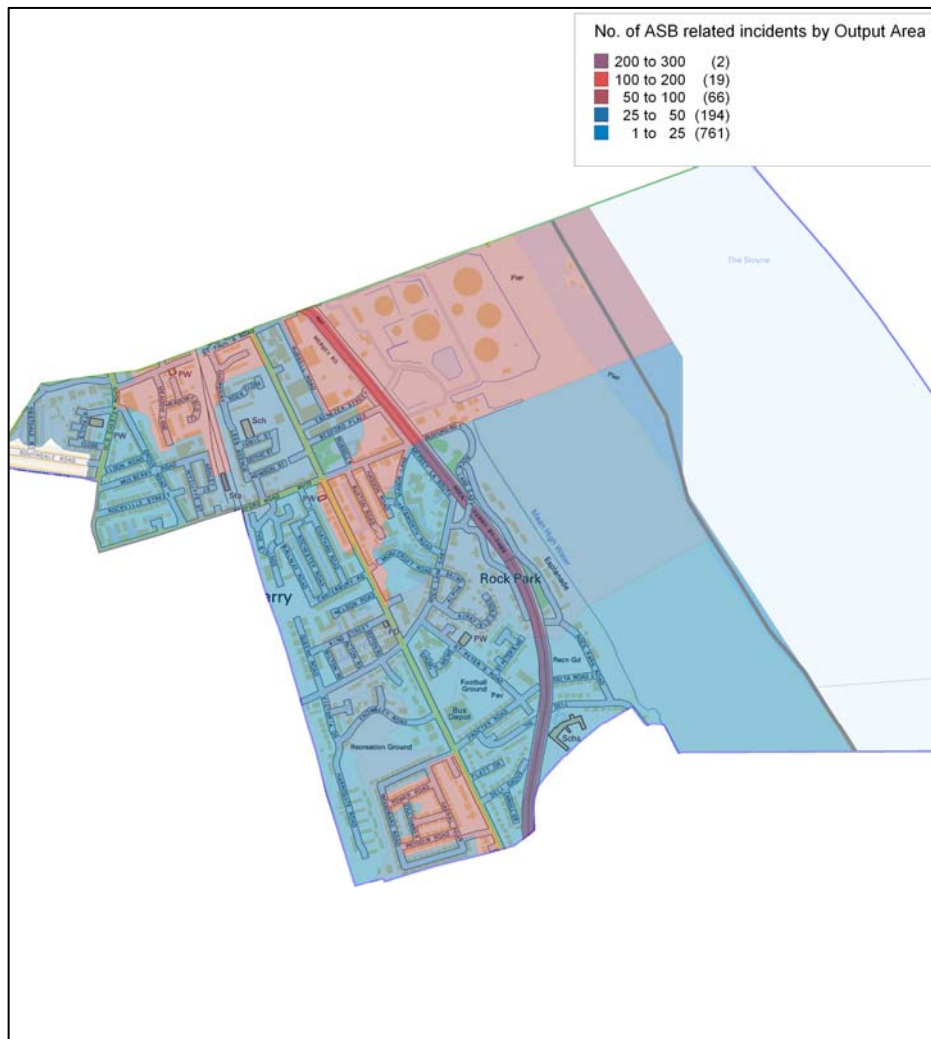
Ethnicity data is now relatively out of date, as it is based on the 2001 Census, however, it does give us some indication of the ethnic makeup of the area. However, Rock Ferry prior to 2004 did not exist as a Ward and therefore there is no accurate 2001 Census data available for ethnicity.

Crime

High levels of crime in an area can indicate a severe lack of community cohesion and instability. Crime figures for 'All Crime', 'Theft from a Motor Vehicle', 'Residential Burglary', 'Drugs' and 'Sexual Offences' and 'Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)' figures have been analysed for the Rock Ferry ADF area, with the exception of 'Theft from a Motor Vehicle' all crimes analysed are higher than the Borough rate, although Rock Ferry has a lower ratio of 'All Crimes' per heads of population than either Birkenhead or Tranmere,.

Thematic Maps for each type of crime can be used to look at the spatial distribution of crime as well as offering Borough wide comparisons. Incidents of crime can be observed throughout the ADF area, however, with the exception of ASB incidents (see Map 2), there are no hotspot areas (incidents of high occurrence) when data is compared with the Borough).

Map Two: Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents by Output Area¹



¹ The map illustrates crime in relation to the Borough. While only the ADF area is shown, the legend represents crime across the Borough i.e. within the whole of the Borough there are 2 Output Areas with between 200 to 300 incidents in the period 07/08.

5. Housing Stock

Social Housing

Within the Rock Ferry ADF area there are 2808 properties. 1072 of these properties are owned by RSLs, this represents 38% of the total residential stock. Within the Borough 15% of all housing stock is owned by RSLs.

Housing Tenure

There is strong evidence of private sector investment within the local area also. Portergate Residential Ltd have completed a small residential scheme on New Chester Road while in the New Ferry area nearby, Beazer Homes has completed a much larger development at Longfellow Drive. Applications for residential planning consent continue to be submitted in the Rock Ferry neighbourhood, including on existing industrial land, a powerful indicator of market confidence in the area. For this reason, the Rock Ferry area was one of the first areas to be addressed through the Housing Market Renewal initiative in Inner Wirral.

A number of high-density pre-1919 terraced streets, centred on Rock Ferry Station, characterise the north of the neighbourhood. To the north of Rock Lane East is a mix of pre-1919 terraces and 1980s constructed semi-detached dwellings. A number of large Victorian semi-detached properties that have been severed from Rock Park by the by-pass can be found to the south of Rock Lane East, together with a number of 1980s constructed semi-detached dwellings and also including the new housing development adjacent to New Chester Road. To the south of the Rock Ferry neighbourhood, is a large 1960s Council housing development located either side of New Chester Road.

A significant proportion of the stock within Rock Ferry is in the social rented sector. Wirral Partnership Homes has significant stock ownership on the Woodward Road Estate and to the west of New Chester Road.

The 'fiveways' estate, including the now demolished Railway Road, contained a number of RSL properties and also a number of private rented properties. The estate clearly displayed the most serious evidence of housing market decline within Rock Ferry and therefore required the highest priority for intervention. Furthermore, properties to the north of Bedford Road are also showing signs of acute stress, particularly in and around the Wycliffe Streets area. Within this area, there is also a significant clustering of private rented sector housing

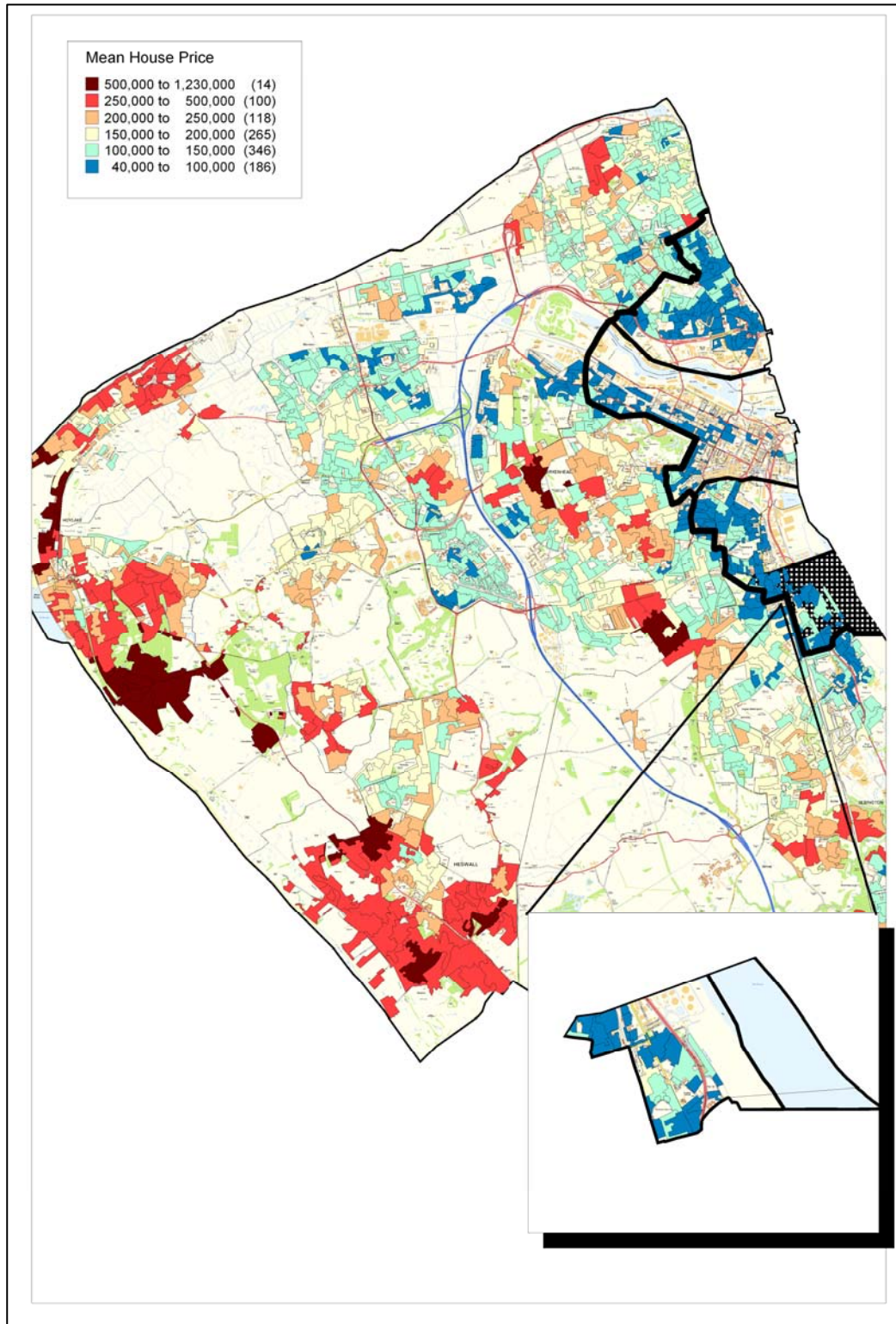
Decency²

The Rock Ferry ADF area has seen a vast increase in the number of RSL properties that meet the Decent Homes Standard. 84.05% of all RSLs are 'Decent', compared to 36.5% in the previous financial year. 'Decency' in the Rock Ferry ADF is slightly higher than the RSL Borough rate of 74.89%. All RSLs are working towards 100% 'Decency' by 2010.

² 97% based on 97% of the RSL stock base.

6. The Housing Market an Update

Map Three: Mean House Price (2007/08 Sale Figures) by Output Area

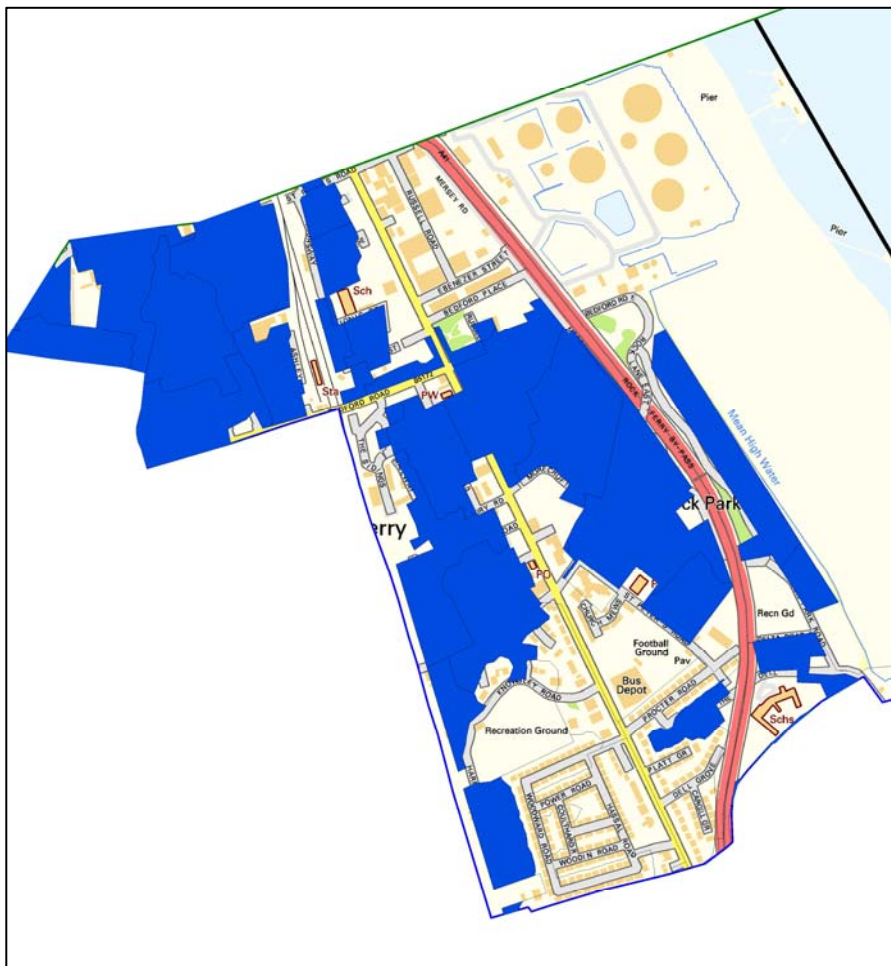


House Price³

Mean house prices, based on property sales, in the Rock Ferry ADF have witnessed an approximate 12% increase in the last financial year, when compared with 2006/07; the mean house price for the ADF being £92,637. The increase is nearly twice the increase of the Borough rate, which is 7.89%. Despite this sharp increase, the mean house price is still £70,124 less than the Borough mean.

Map 3, visually illustrates the mean house price, based on 2007/08 sales across the Borough, and offers a comparison to the trend observed in the ADF. Despite there being some high value sales, there are no output areas where mean house price exceeds £150,000 and many of the Output Areas are characterised by house sales in the region of £40,000 to £100,000.

Map Three: Affordable Homes⁴ (based on 2006/07 House Price / Sales Figures) by Output Area



³ Based on 96% of all housing sales in 2007/08 financial year.

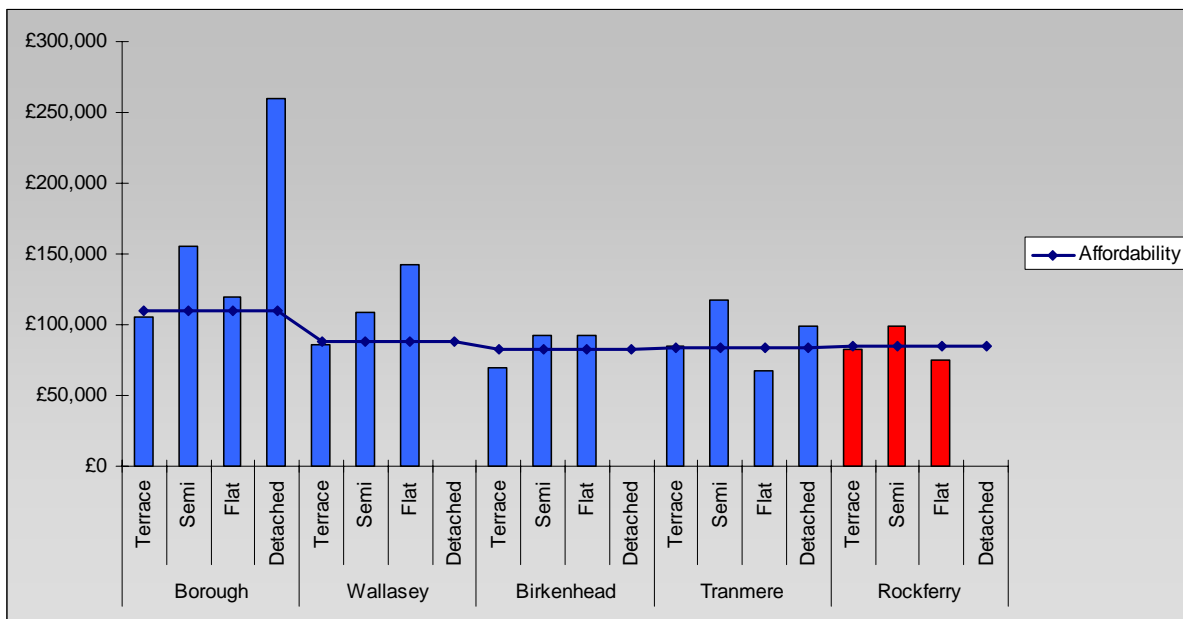
⁴ Areas shaded in blue represent Output Areas with high levels of affordable homes.

Housing Type and Affordability

Map 4 and Chart 1 highlight the major issue of affordability. It is evident from Chart 1 that based on median house price sales in 2007/08 in the ADF area, terraced housing and flats are affordable housing types for the resident population. (Affordability is calculated by multiplying average income by 3.5). This issue is illustrated by Map 4; the Output Areas are clearly dominated by affordable terraced housing. In Rock Ferry, in 2007/08, flats are a more affordable housing type than terraced housing. Whilst the Map may illustrate affordability throughout most of the ADF, it is important to note that this is not necessarily a positive; the choice of housing type is taken away from residents, due to the cost of other housing types. In the Rock Ferry ADF in 2007/08, 67.71% of all house sales were terraced, whilst this is slightly lower than the HMRI rate of 75.84%, but still significantly higher than the Borough rate, 30.23%. Flat sales also contributed to 11.46% of all sales, this figure is higher than the HMRI rate of 9.21%, thus highlighting the affordability of flats in this area.

Affordability is not only an issue within the area, it is clear from Chart 1, that even at Borough level, terraced housing is the only housing type that is accessible to the entire resident population, when median house price sales for 2007/08 financial year are analysed. It should be noted that in the Borough in general there would appear to be greater choice in the housing market as 39.93% of sales were semi-detached properties and 13.52% detached, compared to only 11.46% semi-detached sales in the Rock Ferry ADF (housing stock availability may also be a contributing factor).

Chart One: Housing Type and Affordability⁵



Within the Rock Ferry ADF, 90.53% of all properties are within Council Tax Band A, this is a slight decrease from 90.90% in 2006/07, but still significantly higher than the Borough average of 40.39%. 97.3% of all properties in the ADF are in Council Tax Band A or B, this illustrates the

⁵ Affordability is calculated by multiplying average income by 3.5.

low value of property in the ADF. Boroughwide approximately 40% of housing properties fall outside of Band A and B.

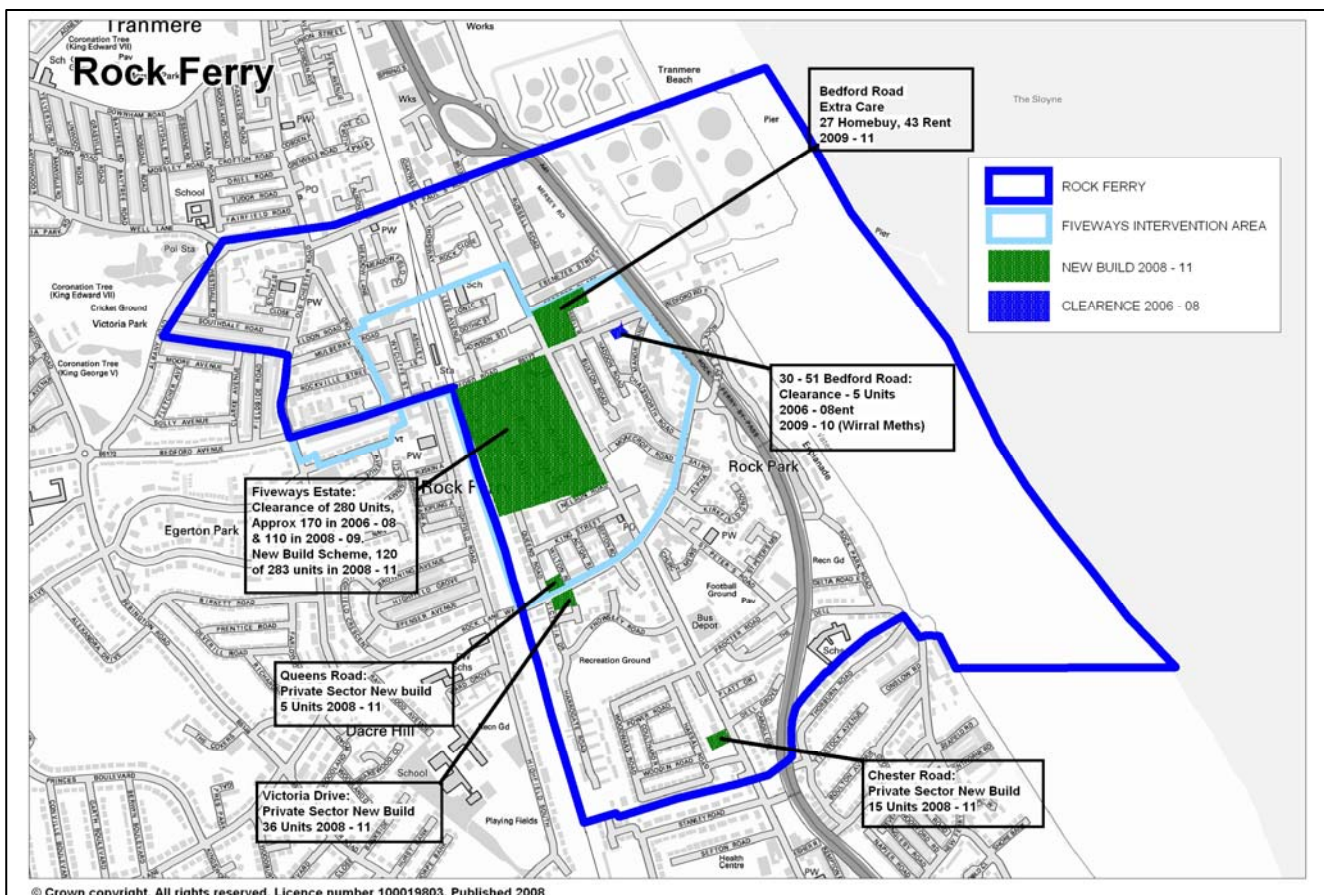
7. Vacants

All tenure vacant properties within the Rock Ferry ADF have witnessed an increase in 2007/08 when compared with the previous year, from 6.10% to 6.27%, Boroughwide there has been a 0.25% reduction. Long term all tenure vacancy properties have witnessed an increase of 1.74%, this is greater than the Boroughwide increase of 0.89% and is a reflection of the Fiveways Clearance Schemes progress.

Private sector vacants in the Rock Ferry ADF have increased slightly in 2007/08, by approximately 0.09%, this trend has not occurred throughout the Borough, with a slight reduction of 0.14% witnessed.

8. Interventions – Planned and Potential

Map Four: Interventions in Rock Ferry ADF



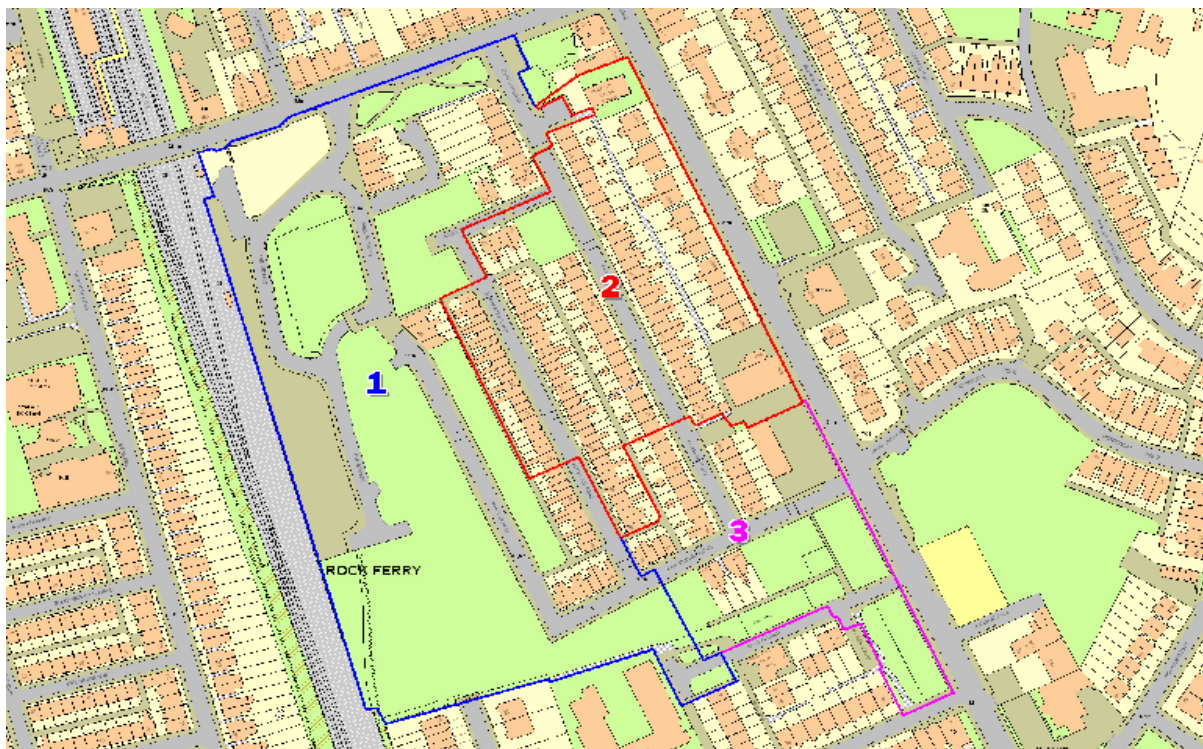
Fiveways in Rock Ferry is bounded by Bedford Road, New Chester Road and the Chester – Liverpool railway line. The housing market within the estate has declined in recent years and is

characterised by low demand, poor stock condition, low property values, and increasing abandonment, however, through comprehensive intervention, market failure is being addressed.

In July 2004, the Council appointed Riverside Housing and Inner City Solutions to develop a Masterplan for the Fiveways area of Rock Ferry. The purpose of the Masterplan was to detail a preferred vision and development framework for the area. The Masterplan has been developed via a process of detailed consultation with the local community and relevant stakeholders.

The HMRI Masterplan for Fiveways recommended an opportunity for significant housing market restructuring including major clearance for the area with the demolition of 241 residential and 7 industrial units. The area would consequently be developed to incorporate 283 new-build residential units. The Masterplan was agreed by the Council in May 2005.

Fiveways Phasing Plan June 08



The Fiveways Development Scheme is progressing well with over 90% of the properties now either acquired by the Council or an acquisition price has been agreed. A phasing plan has also been agreed for acquisitions, clearance and new-build for the scheme, with clearance commencing in 2006 on the former Railway Road site and the former sidings area (1A) and is currently underway in Canterbury Road and Medway Road. Development of the site is to commence July 2008.

Lovell, the Council's preferred Private Sector Development partner, is working with DK Architects to complete designs for the new build properties that will replace the cleared houses. An outline planning application was approved by the Council in April 2007 following detailed consultation with CABE. Due to the rapid speed that properties have been acquired through negotiation, there has been a necessity to alter the phasing plan. There are now 3 phases for

the new development with the clearance procedure continuing, phase 1 now completed, phase 2 and 3 demolitions on target.

71-85 Chatham Road was acquired by the Council in 2006 and these properties are now being used for decant purposes giving priority to existing Fiveways residents affected by the clearance who wish to take up the offer of a new property within the next 18 months – 2 years. They are being occupied by long-standing Fiveways residents who want to remain on the estate in order to retain as many potential occupiers or renters of the planned new-build homes. Occupiers of 71-85 Chatham Road will be liable to pay rent until their new home is ready for occupation.

Fiveways Clearance



Community consultation remains ongoing with officers from all partners – Local Authority, Lovell, and Riverside Housing Association meeting with residents on a monthly basis. There is also an intensive Target Hardening Scheme in place including Neighbourhood and Environmental Wardens maintaining the area to assist residents who feel particularly vulnerable due to ongoing regeneration of their area.

A consultation workshop was held in May 2007 with the residents that remain in the Fiveways area to look at and comment on the design of the new build properties.

Lovell will start on site in July 2008 and although new build outputs reduced from 305 to 283 units due to site constraints, this will be compensated by enhanced public realm improvements. All homes will now meet Code for Sustainable homes Level 3 and 10% renewable energy sources will be provided. The scheme also offers bespoke house types which have been developed with residents' approval. Development levers in Private Sector revenues of £40 million specific to development and has stimulated market confidence in area, number of new units being built opposite site with indicative value at £130k to £180k per unit through private sector. Projected sales revenues will be over £13 million.

Proposed Fiveways Layout



Since 2003, house prices in Rock Ferry have stabilised and in the 12 months to July 2006 increased by 24% but have slowed since. This signifies increased optimism in the market, as the area is currently subject to on-site HMR and new build can be viewed, especially around New Chester Road and shortly onsite on the Fiveways estate. Currently, average prices in the Rock Ferry HMR area are £92,637; however although this is still short of the Borough average of £162,761 it is slightly higher than the HMR average price of £91,024.

The building of 283 new homes on Fiveways will take place within 5 years of agreement of Masterplan for the area and other recently completed schemes include Regency Court in Rock Lane West, development of 16 x 2 bed flats, Royal Court in Rock Lane West, development of 20 x 2 bed flats and Rossvie Court, Rock Park, development of 16 x 2 bed flats and increased numbers of planning applications have been submitted through confidence in area.

The Fiveways development will also be complemented by an Extra Care Scheme at Bedford Place being developed by Housing 21 and will provide housing for older people with extra care needs. The scheme comprises 70 units of 51 one and two bedroom apartments and 19 two bedroom bungalows. These include 8 units for people with cognitive problems. There are 43 units for rent and 23 units for homebuy. The scheme aims to be on site in October 2008. In addition Wirral Methodist Housing Association plan to build 8 units for rent on the cleared site of 33-51 Bedford Road which will consist of 4 four bedroom houses, 2 three bedroom houses and 2 two bedroom flats for general needs rent. The scheme aims to start on site in August 2008.

Future improvements in the area include major investment by Wirral Partnership Homes and other RSLs in their housing stock to meet Decent Homes Target. This will amount to 750 properties improved at a cost of £15 million.

There will be a continuation of the Living through Change schemes in Rock Ferry. Projects will be tailored and directed in accordance with other HMRI Activity and demolition and will focus mainly upon environmental and neighbourhood warden services, as well as specialist intervention by the ASB team and Youth workers to improve perceptions of ASB in the

neighbourhood. The HMRI programme is seeking to leave a legacy of neighbourhood management in Rock Ferry sustained through the involvement of Lovell and Riverside Housing in the Fiveways scheme.

Intervention in the areas of high housing market stress such as Fiveways, Rock Ferry has clearly had a significant impact on the housing market in the area and will continue to do so with the completion of the development being undertaken by Lovell and other private developments planned. The HMRI programme will continue to invest in improvement to existing stock via empty property schemes such as the HOUSED Scheme in Rock Ferry. This scheme has already been successful in bringing two empty properties back in to use for sale as affordable housing. The HMRI programme will tackle priority issues such as empty properties, dereliction, decent homes and affordable homes. Neighbourhood and Environmental Warden Services, Energy Efficiency and Handyperson schemes will remain available to Rock Ferry residents and activities will continue to be coordinated through the ASB Team and Youth Workers in respect of ASB.

Wirral's investment strategy provides a framework for economic development and regeneration and the recent launch of Working Wirral addresses the challenges of worklessness, full employment, enterprise and business growth which are particularly prevalent in the Rock Ferry area. The rate of Benefit Claimants in Rock Ferry in 2007, 39.17%, was just over one and a half times higher than the rate for the borough, 26.52%. Opportunity to implement a range of activities and capitalise on the huge potential construction generated through HMRI and Wirral Waters and assist local company's participation in the construction and redevelopment schemes currently taking place and those that are planned for the Borough. Vital that existing residents who are in neighbourhoods that are amongst the most deprived in the region, 33.08% worklessness in Rock Ferry compared to 17.28% for the borough, are provided with opportunities to benefit from economic investment that is taking place in Rock Ferry through encouraging innovation and enterprise and improving the availability of sites and premises for new investment. Working in partnership with Lovell, Riverside and other agencies Wirral Council will look to implement schemes to ensure the creation of opportunities through major regeneration activities planned for the Borough in order to enable access for residents to affordable high quality homes within their neighbourhoods.

Significant investment by Network Rail and Merseytravel is planned for Rock Ferry train station and the A41 Strategy will continue to improve the contribution that Rock Ferry can make to the local economy. However the Investment Strategy for Wirral and the Wirral Waters scheme will have the greatest impact on Rock Ferry. Immediately adjacent to a dockland area which will benefit from £4.5 billion of investment, Rock Ferry will offer an important housing market.

Wirral Council will continue to keep a close working relationship with the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder organisation which proposes to evolve into a community Development Trust to allow the good work achieved to date to be sustained for the long term, and other associated groups and agencies. This will include the continuation of attendance to various multi-agency meetings such as Neighbourhood Action Groups and local resident groups.

The 2008/11 programme will represent the exit strategy / slowdown of HMRI activity in the Rock Ferry ADF area after 10 years of housing investment in the area.

Appendix One - Data Sources & Methodologies

Census Output Area:

In England and Wales 2001 Census OA's are based on postcodes as at Census Day and fit within the boundaries of 2003 statistical wards (and parishes). If a postcode straddled an electoral ward/division (or parish) boundary, it was therefore split between two or more OA's. The minimum OA size is 40 resident households and 100 resident persons but the recommended size was rather larger at 125 households.

It is important to remember that Census OA's cover non-residential areas and can therefore vary in size. If there is a particular high count in a small section of a large OA, then the whole OA will show up as having a high count within.

Map Base:

Ordnance Survey ISM & Mastermap.© Crown copyright.
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LandUse Data:

The GeoInformation Group © 2008
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Building Class Data:

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Non Decency

Address point data of all social housing that fell below the required decency standards was collected from all Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in April 2008 and mapped by the Wirral Area Mapping Project (WAMP).

Property Price

Property Price data produced by Land Registry
© Crown copyright. Material is reproduced with the permission of Land Registry. This material was last updated on 31.03.08. It covers the period from 01.01.07 to 31.03.08

Crime

Data provided under service level agreement from Wirral MBC Community Safety Team via MIA (Merseyside Police). Data aggregated to 100msq level. Data covers NSIR Crimes Burglary in a Dwelling, Drug Offences and Theft from a Vehicle from the period 01.04.07 to 31.03.08

Long Term Voids

Long Term Voids data is sourced from Wirral MBC Council Tax dept and categorises all residential property vacant for more than 6 months on 24.03.08

Appendix B

ADF: ROCK FERRY	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Residential Dwelling Count	2,347				2,724	2,793	2,808
<i>Boroughwide Dwelling Count</i>	132,797				141,406	143,604	144,233
Council Tax Band A					91%	90.90%	90.53%
<i>Boroughwide Council Tax Band A</i>					40%	40.30%	40.39%
Council Tax Band B					6%	6.30%	6.77%
<i>Boroughwide Council Tax Band B</i>					21%	20.80%	20.98%
Estimated Population							4887
<i>Boroughwide Estimated Population</i>							312,326
Mean Household Income				£17,756	£18,410	£23,362	£24,260
<i>Boroughwide Mean Household Income</i>				£29,071	£29,394	£30,615	£31,232
Rate of Social Housing					42%	31.80%	38.18%
<i>Boroughwide Rate of Social Housing</i>	17%				22%	15.70%	15.39%
Rate of All Tenure Vacants at 24.03.08					5%	6.10%	6.27%
<i>Boroughwide All Tenure Vacancy Rate at 24.03.08</i>					4%	4.30%	4.05%
Rate of All Tenure Long Term Voids at 24.03.08					3.60%	2.60%	4.34%
<i>Boroughwide of All Tenure Long Term Voids at 24.03.08</i>					1.9%	1.8%	2.69%
Rate of Private Sector Only Vacants at 24.03.08					3.60%	7.40%	7.49%
<i>Boroughwide Private Sector Only Vacancy Rates at 24.03.08</i>					3.50%	4.20%	4.06%
Median House Price⁶	28,099	44,248		60,500	69,630	80,693	(£87,000) £90,269
<i>Boroughwide Median House Price</i>	75,391	99,021		124,011	139,559	150,865	(£140,000)£162,761
Rate of Decent Social Housing at 1st April					15.20%	36.6%	84.05%
<i>Boroughwide rate of Social Housing</i>					53%	57.9%	74.89%
Cost to Make Decent							
<i>Boroughwide Cost to Make Decent</i>							
Rate of Households in Receipt of Housing Benefit					52%	42.40%	
<i>Boroughwide Rate of Households in Receipt of Housing Benefit</i>					26%	19.50%	
Ratio of All Crimes to Heads of Population⁷					34.00%	30.70%	1:10

⁶ 2007 / 2008 House Prices are 'Median House Prices' to coincide with SLA Agreement. Data prior to 2007 is presented as a 'Mean House Price'. For comparative reasons the 'Median house Price' is provided in brackets. It is worth highlighting that typically 'Median' values are lower than the 'Mean'

Appendix B

<i>Boroughwide Ratio of All Crimes to Heads of Population</i>	23.20%	21.00%	1:14
Ratio of Burglaries to Number of Residential Dwellings	1.80%	1.50%	1:112
<i>Boroughwide Ratio of Burglaries to Number of Residential Dwellings</i>	1.30%	1%	1:379
Ratio of Drug Offences to Heads of Population			1:94
<i>Boroughwide Ratio of Drug Offences to Heads Of Population</i>			1:199
Ratio of Theft from Motor Vehicle to Heads of Population	1.50%	0.9%	1:407
<i>Boroughwide Ratio of Theft from Motor Vehicle to Heads of Population</i>	6.30%	0.8%	1:335
Ratio of Anti Social Behaviour to Heads of Population			1:9
<i>Ratio of Anti Social Behaviour to Heads of Population</i>			1:14

⁷ All Crime figures for 2007 / 2008 have been presented as ratios to coincide with SLA Agreement.