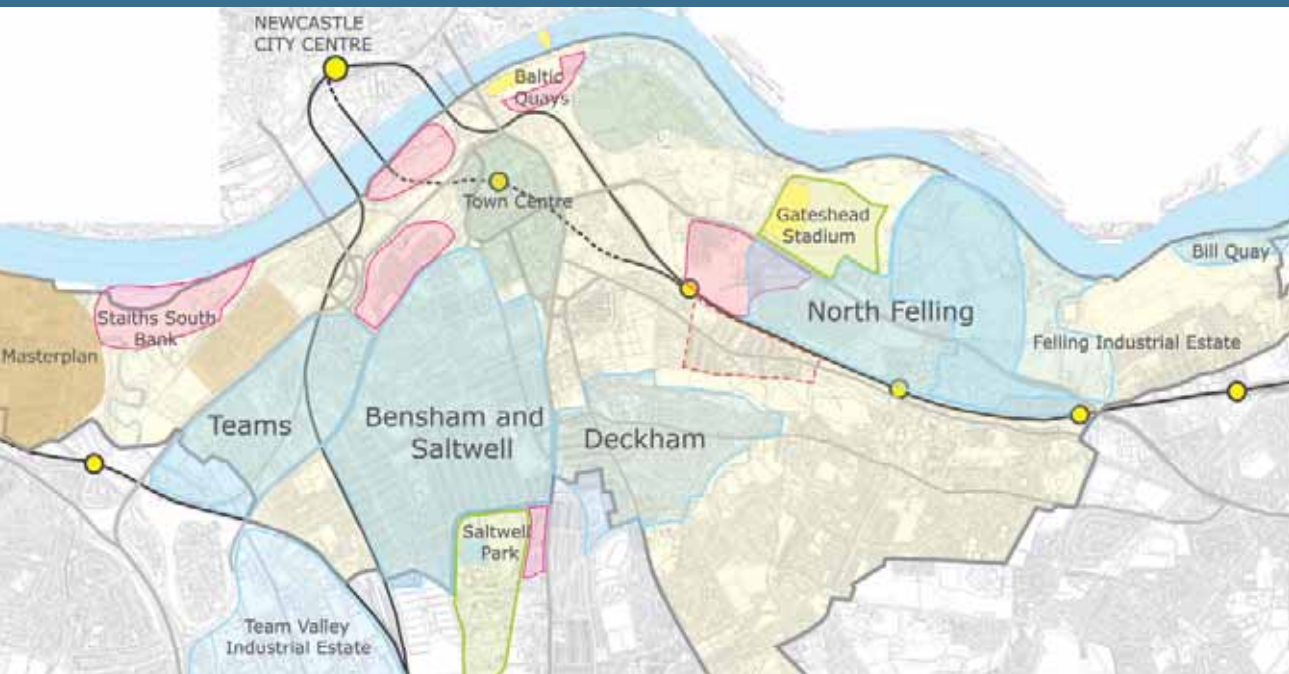


GATESHEAD COUNCIL DECKHAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 2006



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1

This document is the Executive Summary of the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) for Deckham. This work has been developed over the last 18 months by a team of consultants who specialise in neighbourhood planning. The action plan is the culmination of an intensive neighbourhood planning process. GVA Grimley has led the team on behalf of Gateshead Council and Bridging NewcastleGateshead (BNG). GVA Grimley has worked in association with Social Regeneration Consultants (SRC), Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (NLP), WSP and Faithful and Gould.

1.2

BNG is one of the Governments nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders which aim to create more choice and quality in homes and build sustainable neighbourhoods. Deckham is part of a larger area identified by BNG for future investment through the Housing Market Renewal Programme. The neighbourhood is recognised by the Council as one of the key areas in the Borough that can benefit from Housing Market Renewal funding due to the opportunity to create a mixed family friendly sustainable inner garden suburb.

1.3

The purpose of the NAP is to identify the causes (as well as symptoms) of decline and locate key regeneration drivers in the neighbourhood that build on the area's inherent strengths, and link this to a series of spatially and thematically targeted interventions. The NAP is not just a housing plan it adopts a neighbourhood centred perspective.

1.4

There are a series of documents which comprise the Neighbourhood Action Plan covering:

- [Housing Market Analysis](#)
- [Transport Analysis](#)
- [Community Consultation](#)
- [Delivery Strategy](#)

1.5

This summary provides information on the aims of Housing Market Renewal, the approach taken to neighbourhood planning, community consultation, analysis of the place, people and housing market and the strategy and proposals for change in the neighbourhood.

2 HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Market Renewal

2.1

Low demand housing is a relatively new problem, the most obvious outward sign of which

has been neighbourhoods suffering large numbers of abandoned homes. This is most evident in areas that have witnessed profound change as their traditional industries have declined, often without alternatives being established. While new housing continued to be built in and around the area, it has left poorer housing in its wake.

2.2

In other areas like Gateshead the problem is less visible, although no less serious. Here, the housing market is failing because of limited choice and poor quality in housing, in which vulnerable socio-economic groups tend to live. While most homes may be occupied, house prices are low in the private sector and turnover is high in the social sector. The poor quality of local environments detracts from sustainability, disrepair and environmental decay blight many urban housing areas, poor housing, environments, poverty, crime and poor health go hand in hand.

2.3

In consequence, people who can, whether owner-occupiers, social or private tenants, make the choice to move elsewhere, leading to a spiral of decline. Those who remain experience multiple forms of social exclusion. Half of the areas covered by Market Renewal Pathfinders have concentrations of worklessness. Low demand neighbourhoods are also characterised by lower levels of educational attainment and health. Economic opportunity is often restricted.

2.4

Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders have been established by the ODPM to address the causes of low demand, i.e. housing stock obsolescence, surplus housing stock and unpopular neighbourhoods. The aim is to restructure the offer of housing in Pathfinder areas to give residents and potential residents a wider choice of properties that meet their needs better than the existing housing. It requires working in partnership to tackle social and environmental problems that create unpopular neighbourhoods, as simply changing the housing offer will not necessarily retain or increase local populations

2.5

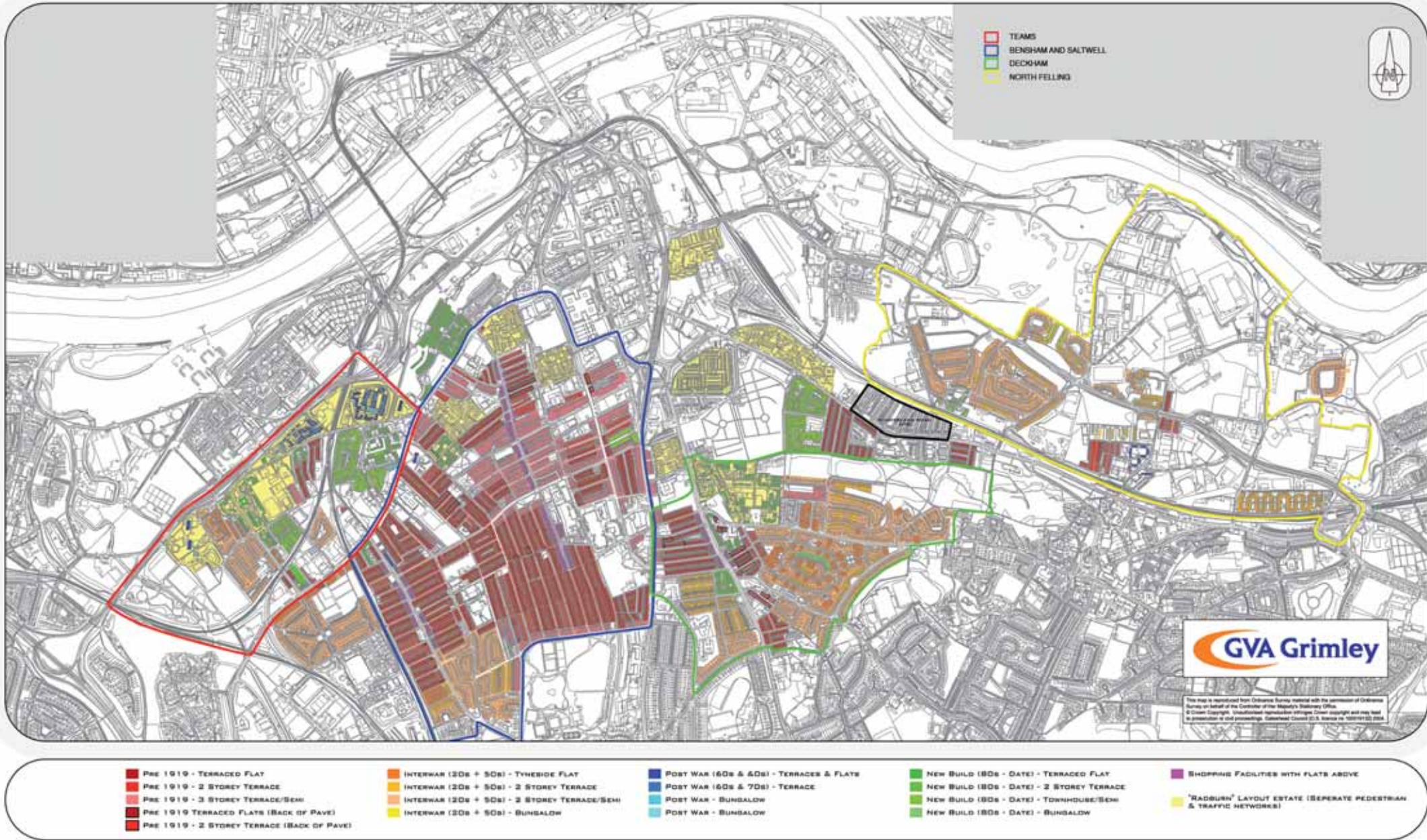
Homes For All (ODPM 2005) states that above all, we need to ensure that these areas provide homes fit for the twenty-first century. In many cases this can be achieved by refurbishment or conversion of existing homes. But some of the housing in Pathfinder areas has reached the end of its useful life and no longer meets modern needs or aspirations. The Government's vision is that: *"through Market Renewal, places once suffering from low demand housing will be transformed into places of real distinction, where diverse people choose to live, work, visit, and invest"*.

2.6

Housing Market Renewal differs from previous area based regeneration approaches because it is aimed at restructuring the housing market in a particular area. The concept of Housing Market Renewal is based on the assumption that sustainable communities have

1 Source ODPM (2005) Homes For All

Figure 1 Housing Typology Plan



healthy housing markets². Housing Market Renewal interventions should take into account local aspirations with a view to developing a more balanced mix of residents, through anticipating market conditions. It needs to address the causes of low demand not just the symptoms and be co-ordinated with other regeneration activities if it is to contribute most effectively to the sustainable communities agenda. Housing Market Renewal provides the opportunity to help join up local strategies and initiatives.

2.7

The Government looks to Pathfinders to help transform areas by working with others to improve economic and job prospects, to bring a better offer on education, crime and behaviour and health, tackle dereliction and provide high quality public space and capitalise on the rich heritage of many areas as well as bringing a greater choice of housing. Innovation and transformation are at the heart of this approach.

2.8

The Government has asked the Pathfinder to be innovative, taking a strategic approach which will bring about lasting change, rather than tinkering at the edges as has happened with past programmes. In many places a wider choice of homes is needed in order to stimulate demand. Sometimes this can be achieved by conversion and renewal within the existing built form to give larger homes. But in some areas, the only option for providing a mix of housing to meet current day expectations is to replace less desirable homes with new ones.

Sustainable Communities

2.9

Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, the report that launched the Government's Plan in 2003, sets out a new vision for changing the way we address housing problems and neighbourhood decline and abandonment. The Government has made housing a central element in its regeneration strategy. The Communities Plan aims to address the challenge of coping with low demand and creating sustainable communities through excellent design, high quality homes and public spaces³.

2.10

A key fact underpinning the plan is the trend of suburbanisation. This is understood as something that is not part of a migration south, but of a move to the suburbs and rural areas within the same region, fuelled by large scale housing building on green fields, often on the edge of conurbation's, and reinforced by inner city decline and lack of reinvestment in older stock.

2.11

The Plan suggests that sustainable communities should embrace urban renaissance ideas of higher density, greater use of brown field land and existing buildings, higher quality, more environmentally sensitive design and more mixed communities. Housing Market Renewal areas should promote mixed family friendly sustainable inner suburbs⁴.

2.12

The ODPM 5 year plan Homes for All argues that *"we need to reconnect our Pathfinder areas to their surrounding markets and to the renewed, vibrant city centres that lie next to so many of them, so that the benefits of urban renaissance are enjoyed more widely"*. Key characteristics that make mixed income inner urban neighbourhoods succeed:

- A sufficient density of population to sustain facilities and services
- A range of households on different incomes sustaining a variety of community facilities, schools , shops and services
- Broad range of house types, including affordable family homes
- A safe, clean and friendly neighbourhood
- An attractive and unified environment with good open spaces, walking and public transport
- Good primary schools and child care
- Proper neighbourhood management and community-building measures

2.13

At present very few Housing Market Renewal areas are perceived to offer these qualities⁵. The purpose of the Bridging NewcastleGateshead Pathfinder and the Neighbourhood Action Plans is to help create these sustainable neighbourhoods. Market renewal will target major capital investment and better management and maintenance to create a more sustainable neighbourhood in Deckham.

*"Sustainability involves creating places that are multi-dimensional, have mixed income groups, mixed tenure, mixed uses and users. They must appeal not to just one generation but for the next generation. In order to create sustainable communities they have to have all generations living there"*⁶

3 STUDY PROCESS

3.1

The approach to neighbourhood planning and the development of the neighbourhood action plan has been driven by both the strategic and the local context. The neighbourhood action plan was informed by a wider spatial framework outlined in Gateshead's Regeneration Strategy and the Area Development Framework. Key components of this included housing supply and demand, economic repositioning of the city region, the Tyne & Wear Metro, the regeneration of the River Tyne corridor and the cultural axis from the Angel of the North through Saltwell Park to the Sage and Baltic.

² Audit Commission (2005) Housing Market Renewal

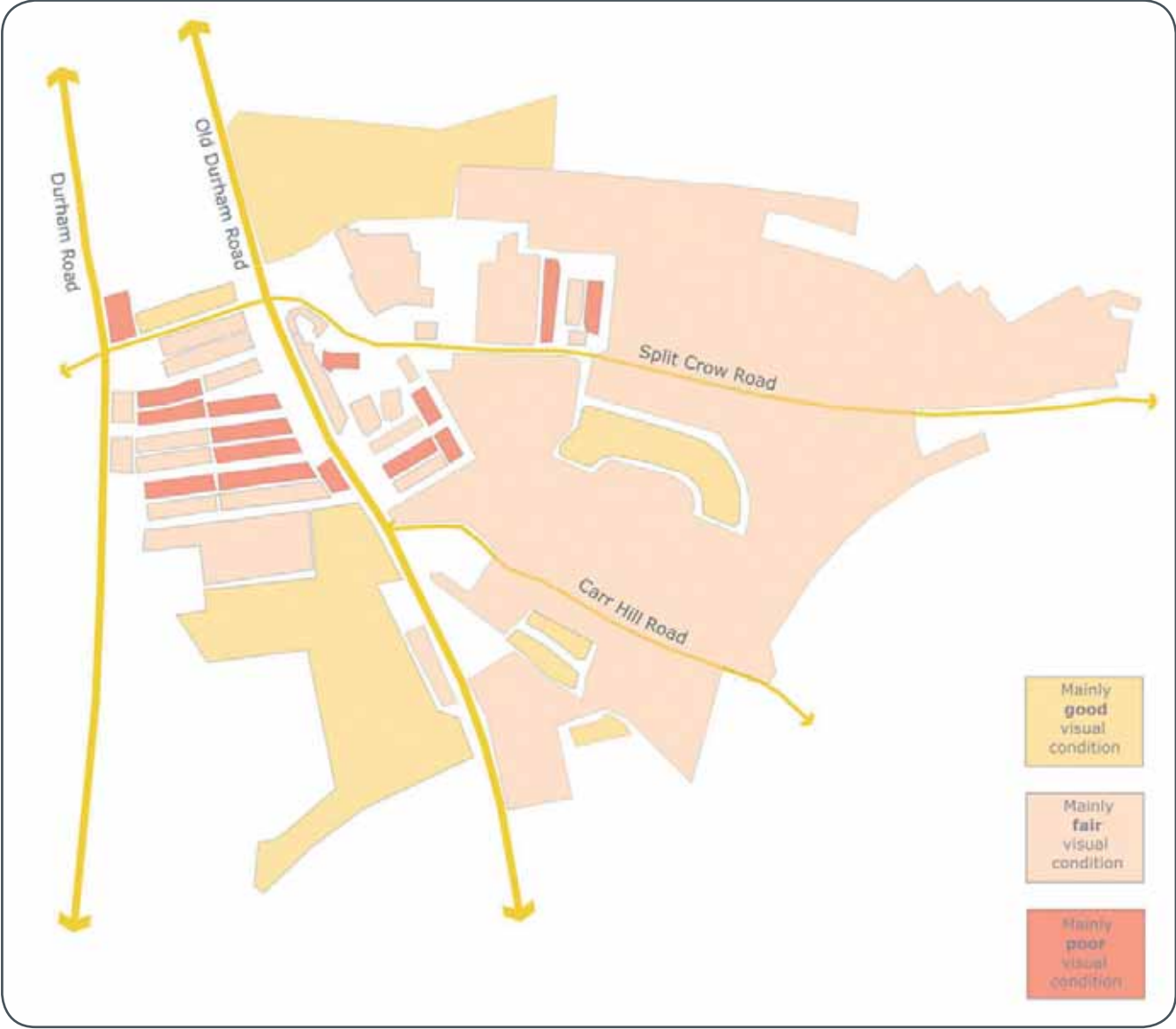
³ ODPM (2005) Homes For All

⁴ IPPR (2006) City People: City centre living in the UK.

⁵ Which suggests that the rise in house prices in some parts of the Pathfinder have been driven by speculative and investor activity rather than actual moves

⁶ Source: RICS Foundation and The Turner & Townsend Group (2004) Towards More Sustainable Places

Figure 2: Housing Condition Plan



3.2

The community consultation engaged as many people as possible in the planning of their neighbourhoods⁷. This involved residents at every stage in the process from identifying the issues to developing the proposals. This iterative process ensured that community feedback was fed into the plans and allowed people to comment on areas where they lived and choose from a selection of options to improve the neighbourhood.

3.3

The neighbourhood planning was undertaken in the following stages:

- Data collection and analysis (October - December 2004);
- Draft analysis plans and initial community consultation (January-March 2005);
- Preparation of vision and objectives for the area (April 2005);
- Confirmation of vision and objectives and preparation of a range of possible options and further community consultation (April - July 2005);
- Identification of a preferred option and community consultation (August - September 2005)
- Following from the consultation, refinement of the preferred plan - circulated to residents in December 2005 (October -December 2005).

4 ANALYSIS AND EVIDENCE BASE

4.1

The physical, social and economic characteristics of the neighbourhood were analysed, to assist in identifying some of the drivers of the local housing market and potential solutions to improving the vitality and viability of the community. The key areas of analysis are the 'place' (character and condition of the physical environment): the housing market; (housing supply and demand) and the 'people' (demographic and socio-economic characteristics and community views).

4.2

The analysis assisted in identifying the focus areas which need to be targeted for investment in each area, where the community helped to identify the approach for change.

The Place

4.3

The character of Deckham is shaped by its distinctive topography. The north of the area sits on a ridge that affords excellent views of Newcastle and the Tyne Valley. The area sits between the two main transport corridors of Durham Road (which is a major bus route into

Newcastle and Gateshead) and Sunderland Road which is the main transport corridor to the north of the area, where the nearest Metro stop is located.

4.4

The neighbourhood of Deckham is made up predominantly of large estates of social rented stock largely of interwar 'garden suburb' style houses, owned by Home Housing Association and Gateshead Council. These estates were built with more basic materials, and far less landscaping and architectural detail than similar housing to the south. Mount Pleasant is an area of Radburn⁸ style housing to the north. To the west of the neighbourhood is an area of terraced Tyneside Flats, mainly privately owned although Home Housing own 30 properties on Shipcote Terrace.

4.5

The Carr Hill estate to the south is the first public housing built in the town and is an exemplary piece of garden suburb design with a wide avenue layout, generous landscaping and rustic cottage housing form. This area to the south is now mainly privately owned and commands higher prices exhibiting the characteristics of a high demand and popular market area. A housing typology plan is shown as Figure 1.

4.6

Key qualities can be summarised as:

- Proximity to the centres of Newcastle and Gateshead
- Well connected by the A1 strategic route
- Mix of high and low density stock;
- 'Garden suburb' design and family size homes of Deckham Hall and Highfield;
- Striking views from elevated north of the area over the Tyne
- Removal of unsustainable stock has taken place with more programmed
- Quality refurbishments under way on Shipcote Terrace and some Council estates;
- 'Durham Road' and 'Old Durham Road' are high profile routes with shops and civic facilities.
- Shipcote Civic Area and Saltwell Park are within easy reach of the western part of the neighbourhood

4.7

Key challenges for the area:

- Area lacks memorable image or identity and has a weak sense of place
- Steep topography isolates the 'garden suburb' estates on top of the steep ridge

⁷ The consultation exhibition boards were put on display in the civic centre following the consultation events, consultation material was also posted on the Bridging NewcastleGateshead web site and there was a phone line available to Council officers to request further information and make comments.

⁸ This housing layout departs from traditional street forms and is based around cul-de-sacs and winding pedestrian pathways.

Figure 3 Property Void Plan

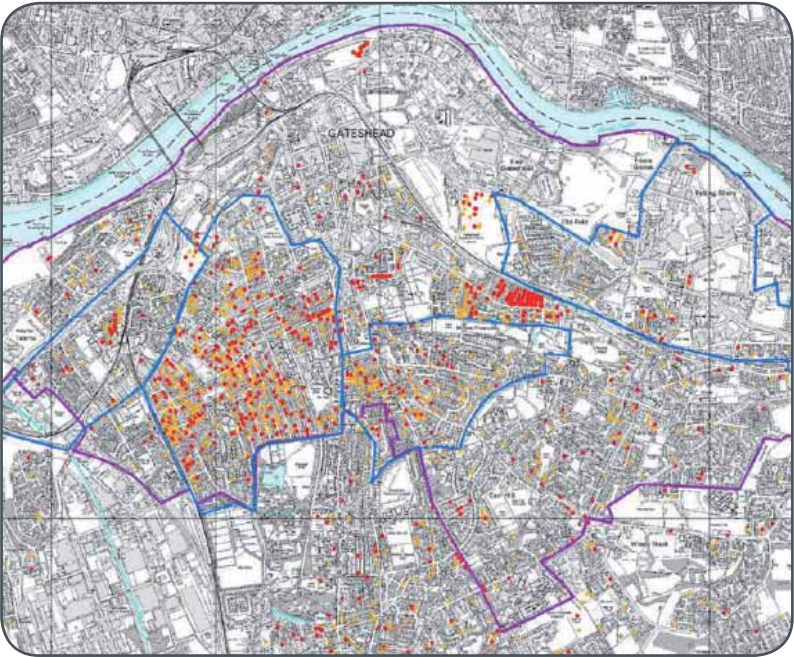


Figure 4 Change in House Price

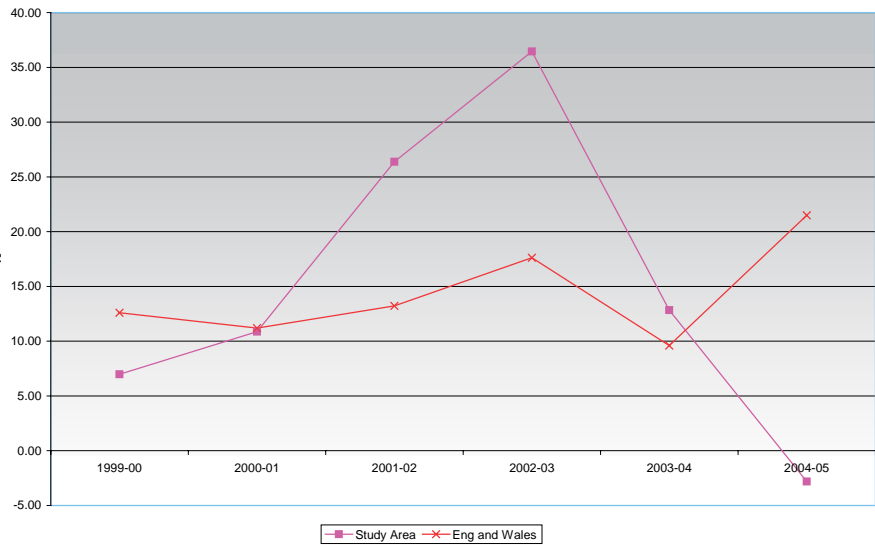


Figure 5 Average House Price

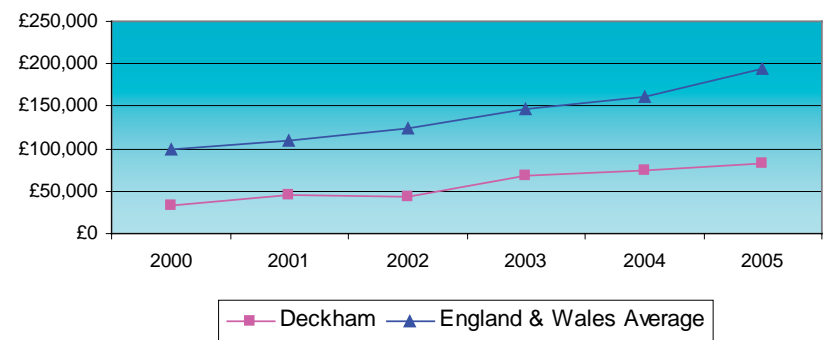
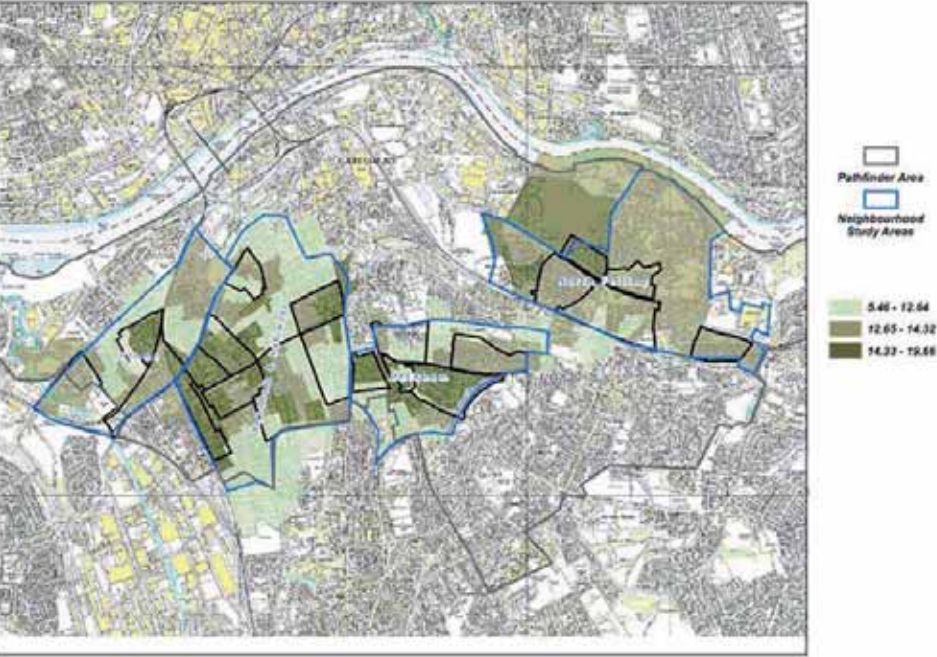


Figure 6 Sustainability Matrix



- Degraded and poorly designed recreation spaces including the Bankies and Mount Pleasant;
- Poor design of certain spaces encourages anti-social behaviour, notably around Mount Pleasant and Banky Fields
- The initial landscaping of the estates was austere, lacking greenery and results in poor image and harsh street environment and setting for the houses
- Pockets of pre-1919 properties in poor visual condition
- Few community and retail facilities in eastern and northern area of neighbourhood

4.8

A visual condition survey was undertaken in March 2005 and has informed the strategy within the neighbourhood action plan. As property investment and thus condition is constantly in flux the survey will need to be updated and monitored. This update should use the March 2005 survey as a baseline.

4.9

The March 2005 **visual assessment** indicated that the condition of the properties broadly correlates with age:

- New build bungalows, suburban homes to the south west and north west are in good repair;
- Relatively few homes in better than fair condition - many in need of improvement;
- Some stock in poor condition including pre-1919 properties;

4.10

Figure 2 shows a plan of broad housing condition. Gateshead Housing Company has recently undertaken appraisals of all their stock to identify the investment required to bring the properties up to Decent Home Standard and above. In addition, Home Housing has carried out a property option appraisal of their stock in the area to determine investment requirements. Poor visual property condition effects housing and community sustainability. This visual appearance deters investment and market appeal and can further blight surrounding areas putting further homes at risk

The Housing Market

4.11

The housing market analysis monitors housing supply and demand to gauge areas of strength and weakness in the market.

Type and Tenure

4.12

Whilst there are a proportion of semi-detached properties in Deckham Hall⁹ terraced

⁹ There are 28% of semi-detached properties in the Deckham neighbourhood.

houses and flats dominate the housing supply within Deckham and together comprise 67% of the total stock. Whilst the neighbourhood has a house type profile more varied than in other locations across the Bridging NewcastleGateshead Pathfinder area, flats remain a significant house type within the area, accounting for 33% of all properties within the neighbourhood, compared to 19% across Gateshead. This higher density housing, in the form of terraces and Tyneside flats is concentrated on the lower slopes either side of the Durham Road corridor.

4.13

In terms of tenure, properties are broadly split between social rented (44%) and owner occupation (43%), this varies according to estate¹⁰. To the south of the study area in the vicinity of Salkeld Gardens there are higher levels of owner occupation. Home Housing own the majority of the social housing across the neighbourhood (62.4%), with other stockholding including Gateshead Housing Company (34.6%), Enterprise 5 (2.7%), and Newcastle and Whitley (0.4%). The majority of properties are 2 and 3 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom flats with a limited numbers of newly built two bedroom bungalows.

4.14

The level of private renting at 12% is lower compared to the other neighbourhoods but still higher than the Gateshead average of 8%. The private rented properties are concentrated in the older pre-1919 properties to the south and west of the neighbourhood.

4.15

Right to buy (RTB) sales provide an excellent barometer of the health of the housing market. There have only been 23 RTB transactions during the period 2003 - 2005, which is very low given the proportion of social stock in the neighbourhood. The RTB sales have been concentrated almost exclusively within the Highfield and Mount Pleasant areas which indicate better market confidence in these locations.

Vacancy Rates

4.16

2005 council tax data has been used to show the number of void properties in the area. This shows that approximately 5.4% of the properties within Deckham were void at the time of data collection. Higher than the Gateshead rate of 4.4%. These are mostly concentrated in the Northbourne and Deckham Terrace areas within the pre-1919 properties.

Figure 3 Property Void Plan.

House Prices

4.17

Analysing house prices provides an overview of the existing housing market and gives an indication of popularity and demand for properties. The graph at Figure 4 compares the percentage change in house prices for the study area¹¹ and England and Wales. This clearly shows the variations in the study area compared to national trends. The percentage

¹⁰ There is a high level of social renting on Deckham Hall at 82.4% and relatively high owner occupation at Northbourne (51%) and Deckham Terrace (40%).

¹¹ The study area comprises the Gateshead Pathfinder area

increase in house prices up to 2003 within the study area has been greater than the national average. Consistent with previous housing market booms, the lower end of the market often increases at a faster rate than the rest of the market and this is evident in the graph¹². However, this is usually followed by an equally dramatic fall against average house prices as experienced since 2003, it can be seen that the percentage change in house prices in the study area have reduced considerably compared to prices within England and Wales.

4.18

The graph at Figure 5 shows that although prices have risen sharply in the area over the last 5 years the average house price within Deckham (currently £55,093) still remains well below the Gateshead average house price of £113,144.

4.19

A sustainability matrix has been prepared to gain an understanding of housing supply and demand within Deckham. The matrix examines a range of housing market variables that reflect housing demand and supply. Combining them provides a composite indicator of stable and weak housing markets. This can help inform which areas require intervention alongside other factors such as condition surveys, urban design and heritage analysis, community consultation and housing needs. The matrix identifies those areas that are most vulnerable and those that are stronger. The matrix identifies the following variables and ranks them accordingly:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004
- Benchmarking of house prices against the Gateshead average for 2005
- Long term and short term voids 2005
- Private rented % 2005
- Social Rented % 2005

4.20

The stronger areas are:

- Southern section of Salkeld Gardens and
- Parts of Highfield and Mount Pleasant.

4.21

The sustainability matrix indicates that the weaker areas are:

- The Northbourne Street Area;
- Old Durham Road and
- Parts of Deckham Hall.

4.22

Other areas of concern are parts of Highfield and Deckham Terrace. Figure 6 shows a plan

of the Sustainability Matrix.

The People

4.23

The total resident population within the Deckham neighbourhood¹³ in 2001 was **5,325**.

There were 2,498 households in the Deckham neighbourhood. Key findings are:

- The demographic profile within the neighbourhood is broadly consistent with the wider Gateshead and averages;
- There is an average representation of households with children at 39% but a higher than expected number of single households (21%) compared to the 17% Gateshead average rate.
- The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 shows that the area in the eastern part of the neighbourhood is within the 5% most deprived, and the area in the western part of the neighbourhood is within the 10% most deprived nationally.
- In addition, there are significant concentrations of employment, health and disability deprivation in the neighbourhood which falls within the 5% most deprived across England and Wales against these indicators. Of specific note is the area covering Deckham Hall, which falls within the 1% most deprived areas in the health and disability domain;
- The Ward that comprises Deckham includes parts of Felling. Figures for the gross weekly income figure for earning households in Felling/Deckham is £340.70. This illustrates that gross weekly income is well below the Gateshead and North East averages which are £387 and £402 respectively;
- A proxy for disposable income is provided by levels of car ownership. The North East has the highest proportion of households without a car outside London. 57% of households within the Deckham neighbourhood do not have access to a car, more than twice the national average and 15% above the Gateshead average. This highlights the extent to which the local population are heavily reliant on public transport, and services and facilities within a walkable distance in the neighbourhood;
- In addition to the low incomes recorded for those in employment, a significantly high proportion of people resident within the neighbourhood are economically inactive (42 %) compared to the wider averages in Gateshead and England and Wales of 39.3% and 33.5% respectively;
- Qualification levels in Deckham compare relatively unfavourably with those across Gateshead, and England and Wales. A total of 44.3% of the working age population within the neighbourhood have no formal qualifications and skills, a proportion markedly above the Gateshead average of 38.4%.

¹² Interviews with estate agents suggests that this has largely been driven by speculative and investor activity and first time buyers

¹³ Measured by the total number of relevant Census output areas that make up the neighbourhood

Table 1 Key Housing Market Indicators: Deckham Focus Areas

Area	% Flats	% Semi-detached	% Private Rented	% Social rented	% Owner Occupied	% Poor condition	% No central heating	% Economic Inactivity	% Households without car	% No qualifications	% Properties void 2005
Northbourne	70.5	2.9	25.5	17	51	43.7	20.3	35.2	57.9	36.1	10.50
Deckham Terrace	66	8.4	24.8	31.1	39.4	29.8	14.2	39.8	63.5	45.6	4.40
Deckham Hall	29.4	48.5	1.5	82.4	13.7	0	1.3	44.9	71.1	63.3	5.75
Mount Pleasant	27.8	23	3.5	53.3	37.8	56.5	1.1	43.8	56.7	49.7	3.41
Highfield	13.3	56.6	3.7	67.4	27.7	0	1.2	48	62	49	2.54
Deckham	33	28	12	44	43	-	7.5	42.2	57.5	44.3	5.4
Gateshead	18.8	44	7.6	37	57.7	-	4	39.3	45	38.4	4.4
England and Wales	19.2	31.6	8.7	19.2	68.9	-	8.5	33.5	26.8	29.1	3.23

Source: Census 2001, unless otherwise stated

*Data from 2005 Council Tax Records

** Data from HM Land Registry, 2006

Conclusions

4.24

An analysis of the area, particularly the existence of much more buoyant housing markets on the periphery of the area, suggests that it is the lack of market housing, poor stock condition and physical environment of Deckham that are limiting its demand as a place to live. When residents can afford property they are likely to purchase elsewhere rather than purchase property in Deckham due to the lack of market housing and low confidence in the neighbourhood. Incomers to the area are equally in small numbers due to the lack of market housing and low market appeal of the neighbourhood.

4.25

General points to arise from this analysis across the area are:

- The housing offer within Deckham is limited (terraces and flats comprise 67% of the housing stock) and the market is localised.
- There is a large supply of social rented stock; (the waiting list and low RTB- an important indicator of confidence, reflects that the housing is far less popular than other areas nearby such as Carr Hill
- The nature and ownership of the housing stock has influenced the demographic and socio-economic profile of the area and consequently the area has a shortage of the higher socio-economic groups
- Home Housing stock requires substantial investment to bring up to decent home standards;
- Landscaping around the housing is very poor
- Distinct lack of attractive and usable public open space
- Monotonous and harsh streetscape creates low quality residential environment
- Problems of anti-social behaviour and the perception of crime exist in parts of the neighbourhood;
- Current housing market providing for those who cannot move into owner occupation;
- There is a need to improve the tenure mix of the two main socially rented estates and provide housing for owner occupiers through new housing and right to buy

Deckham Hall and Highfield

4.26

The poor environment of the two socially rented estates is broadly due to the use of low grade materials, under investment in upkeep and lack of attractive landscaping rather

than fundamental structural weaknesses in the layout and design of spaces. The lack of in-curtilage parking has led to the disappearance of the grass verges and their replacement with low grade parking materials which has eroded the garden suburb character and quality of the public realm.

4.27

Property boundaries across the area are in a poor condition and paving and street furniture are of the lowest quality. Coupled with the poor condition of some of the properties this creates a harsh environment lacking quality and distinction. This impacts on its market appeal and confidence in the neighbourhood in general.

4.28

Environmental and security improvements have taken place along Carr Hill and Hendon Road and have made a positive impact on the appearance of properties and the environment. The tree-lined streets to the south of Deckham around Carr Hill show how good landscaping can make a huge difference to the public realm of estates made up of similar stock and should be applied similarly to Deckham¹⁴.

Northbourne and Deckham Terrace.

4.29

Within this area of back of pavement terraced streets, there is a high concentration of Tyneside flats. Some of the poorer condition stock and the highest number of voids at 10% in the neighbourhood are located in these streets. Private renting is also increasing in this area, currently at 25% which significantly exceeds the Gateshead rate. Intervention is required here to improve the condition of the housing. The incidence of voids is increasing in Deckham Terrace and small pockets of the area are identified as weak housing markets. The area would benefit from refurbishment and environmental improvements to the streets and back lanes. The acquisition of properties and development of shared equity schemes should be considered here to improve opportunities for owner occupation.

Banky Fields

4.30

This area of open space presents a considerable challenge due to its severe topography. At present the social impact of this space on the neighbourhood is rather negative and is more a cause of neighbourhood blight than a positive recreational space. It is unsafe, unsightly and inaccessible. Its role and function is poorly defined and is under maintained. Anti-social behaviour is a problem around in the area, particularly in the evenings as overlooking and supervision are both weak. The scope for improvement to the Bankies will depend on resources available. Intensive action is required particularly as the area is deficient in public open space.

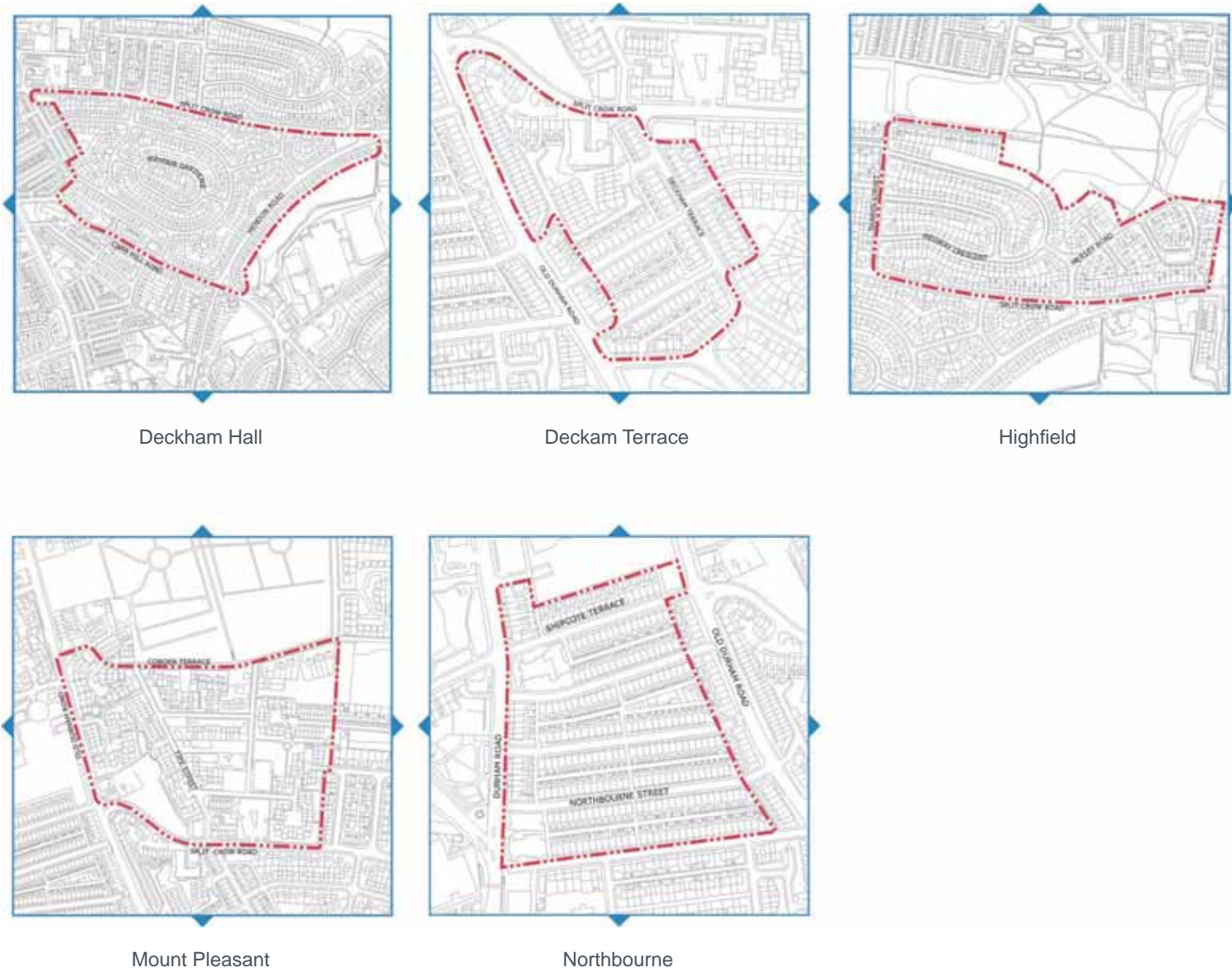
Mount Pleasant

4.31

This area of Radburn housing is sustainable and comparatively the housing market

14 See *Decent Homes Decent Spaces* (2006) *Improving the Green Spaces For Social Housing. Neighbourhoods Green*

Figure 7 Deckham Hall, Deckam Terrace, Highfield, Mount Pleasant and Northbourne Focus Area



performs well. However the layout of spaces and routes within the area and routes to the estate need improvement. The heart of the Mount Pleasant estate is provided by a blighted space in poor condition which lacks overlooking due to the poorly configured layout, making the space harder to secure. This creates a neglected environment which provides a negative image of the area. There are also a number of semi derelict buildings that blight the appearance of this part of the neighbourhood that need to be addressed.

Focus Areas

4.32

This analysis identified key spatial areas where the housing market shows signs of vulnerability. These areas exhibit one or more of the following indicators

- High levels of social renting
- High levels of Tyneside Flats
- Concentrations of Voids¹⁵
- Evidence of property in poor visual condition¹⁶
- Poor environment¹⁷
- Evidence of low economic activity and deprivation¹⁸

4.33

These areas were divided up into **5 focus areas** and consultation was progressed on **options**¹⁹ based on **three approaches: development-led, design-led and management-led**. This is outlined in the next chapter. The focus areas and indicators of market weakness are outlined in Table 1. Plans of the focus areas are illustrated at figure 7.

5 CONSULTATION, PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND OPTION APPRAISAL

Analysis plans and initial community consultation

5.1

A draft plan was prepared to summarise the analysis of the Deckham area and a series of small workshops were held with the community between January and March 2005 to ascertain residents' views on the key issues and opportunities for the area. This is described in more detail in the main body of the report.

Preparation of Vision, Physical Framework and Neighbourhood Objectives

Vision

5.2

The vision for the Deckham neighbourhood area is:

'To promote Deckham as an attractive residential area of Gateshead, that takes advantage of its views and provides good family housing, facilities and services'

Physical Framework

5.4

The Physical Framework for the Housing Market Renewal intervention area of Gateshead is set within the context of Gateshead's Regeneration Strategy and the Bridging NewcastleGateshead Scheme Update. This builds on two core economic and spatial drivers identified in the Gateshead Regeneration Strategy and Spatial Framework, namely the Waterfront Corridor and the Cultural Corridor.

5.5

The main body of the report describes the 5 themes that form the policy and spatial framework of the Neighbourhood Action Plan. Collectively these 5 themes and their related proposals and projects will contribute to the regeneration of Deckham in the short, medium and long term.

5 Themes of the Neighbourhood Action Plan

5.6

The following themes have been considered in formulating the policy and physical framework for the Deckham neighbourhood plan:

- Housing;
- Environment;
- Transport;

¹⁵ Sourced from Council Tax records

¹⁶ Based on a door to door visual assessment in Spring 2005 and 2001 Census data on properties with no central heating

¹⁷ Based on site inspections, urban design analysis and community consultation

¹⁸ Sourced from 2001 Census economically inactive households, no qualifications and no car ownership

¹⁹ These included selective clearance, remodelling, refurbishment, environmental works and neighbourhood management.

- Community;
- Neighbourhood management.

Neighbourhood Objectives

Housing

- Create a balanced housing market with a wider and more balanced range of property types and tenures;
- Improve market demand and meet household aspirations by investing in the condition of properties and quality of the environment;
- Improve the built form through better design and a mixture of properties;
- Support people through change and regeneration by providing advice and assistance and identifying and meeting housing needs;

Environment

- Utilise and further enhance the spatial and environmental assets of the area, including the River Tyne views and Banky Fields
- Improve the legibility, image and environmental quality of the neighbourhood through investing in the quality and design of development, streets and public realm;
- Create new and improve existing green spaces and public realm through redevelopment, remodelling and design.

Transport

- Improve the street environment and promote walking and cycling by addressing physical barriers to movement and providing better routes and crossings;
- Create safe, green and cleaner streets;

Community

- Improve the environment and service provision in the Old Durham road neighbourhood centre;
- Enhance local community centres as clusters by improving linkages, the environment and services;
- Improve the provision of and access to community services and facilities.

Neighbourhood Management

- Further develop and maintain robust neighbourhood management focusing on crime, community safety and the environment
- Develop a localised neighbourhood management approach to neighbourhood renewal
- Improve the management and condition of privately rented accommodation;

Preparation of Possible Options and Community Consultation

5.7

A number of plans were prepared for Deckham between April and July 2005. Options were prepared for each of the focus (priority) areas that had been identified at the analysis stage. The options were:

- Management-led (intensive management - no physical intervention);
- Design-led (mainly renewal and refurbishment) and
- Development-led (mainly clearance and new housing)

5.8

52 residents attended the community drop-in events and 85% agreed with the overall approach and vision for the area. The key findings of the consultation are highlighted in more detail in the main body of the report.

5.9

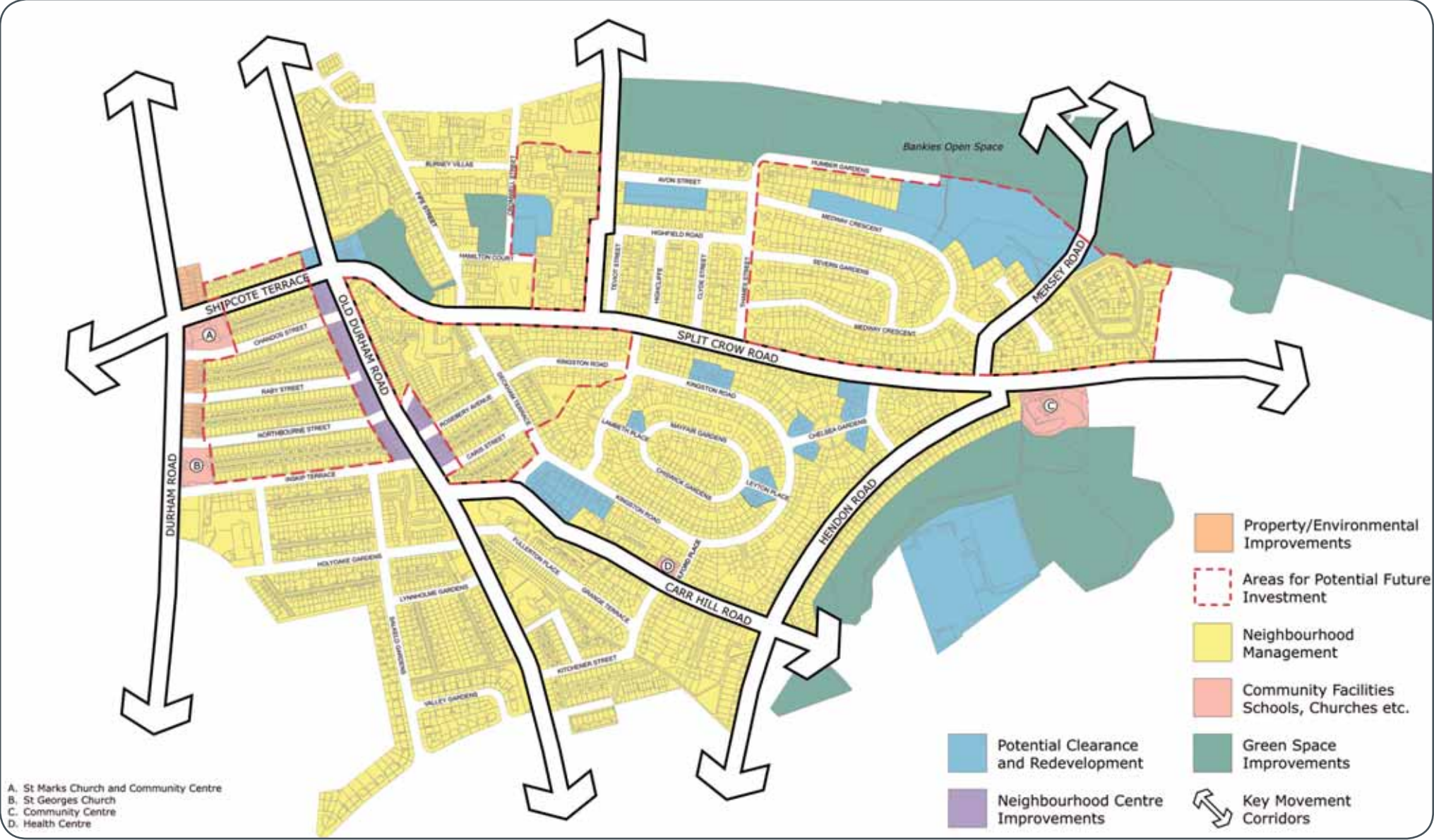
The feedback on each of the focus areas was as follows:

- **Northbourne** – support for the design led approach, including the refurbishment and remodelling of Tyneside Flats, redesign of back lanes and improved boundary treatments;
- **Deckham Terrace** – half of respondents adopted for a design led approach to improve housing and the street environment;
- **Deckham Hall** – clear support for design measures to improve the housing and street environment;
- **Mount Pleasant** – preferences equally divided between the design and management led- approaches;
- **Highfield** - Limited support for comprehensive demolition and redevelopment and support for improvements to housing, open space and the environment.

5.10

An analysis was undertaken of the performance of each of the options which looked at each of the following criteria:

Figure 8 Preferred Plan (Intervention Plan)



- Ability to address vulnerability in the housing market;
- Ability to meet neighbourhood objectives;
- Deliverability and value for money.
- Community and stakeholder support

5.11

A preferred option was selected for each of the focus areas which were integrated into the NAP. This was taken to the community for a further round of public consultation in September 2005. 148 people attended and the main points arising from the consultation were as follows:

- High level of overall support for the plan (93%);
- The most popular measures were increasing the level of owner occupation, improving the condition of the housing and environment, open spaces and addressing litter and fly tipping, anti social behaviour, youth disorder and crime.

5.12

The preferred options set out in the framework for regeneration are subject to necessary funding, resources and capacity being identified and further consultation with residents.

Supporting people through the process of change and regeneration

5.13

One of the key objectives of the strategy is to support people through change and regeneration by providing one on one assistance and identifying and meeting housing needs. Evidence already suggests early work done with residents is providing the confidence required.

5.14

A fundamental aim of the housing strategy is to encourage as many residents as possible to stay and share in the long-term vision for improving their neighbourhoods.

5.15

The Council's relocation strategy has been developed upon the following principles:

- To ensure owners of property receive market value for property
- To ensure households receive appropriate compensation and disturbance payments
- To ensure where possible residents can remain in the local area if they wish
- To provide alternative housing appropriate to residents needs and aspirations
- To provide a range of home ownership packages to help with gaps in affordability
- To provide comprehensive one on one support and assistance

- To strive to keep friends and relatives together where requested

5.16

Provision of appropriate compensation for properties that are agreed to be acquired.

Homeowners will be entitled to 100% of the open market value of their property, as valued by an independent qualified valuer²⁰. If values have decreased due to the area being identified as a clearance area Gateshead Council will compensate for the loss of this value. Homeowners who have lived in their property for 12 months or more will be entitled to a home loss payment equal to 10% of the market value of their house²¹. Private landlords will be entitled to a basic loss payment equal to 7.5% of the market value of the property. Social housing tenants and private tenants who have lived in the property for 12 months or more are entitled to a home loss payment of £3,800. All owner occupiers and social housing and private tenants are entitled to a disturbance payment to cover costs directly resulting from moving.

5.17

Provision of Relocation Advice and Assistance. One-on-one financial assistance will be provided by the Council. A team of dedicated staff will be required based in the local neighbourhood to undertake the necessary advice, support and assistance with resident's relocation requirements.

5.18

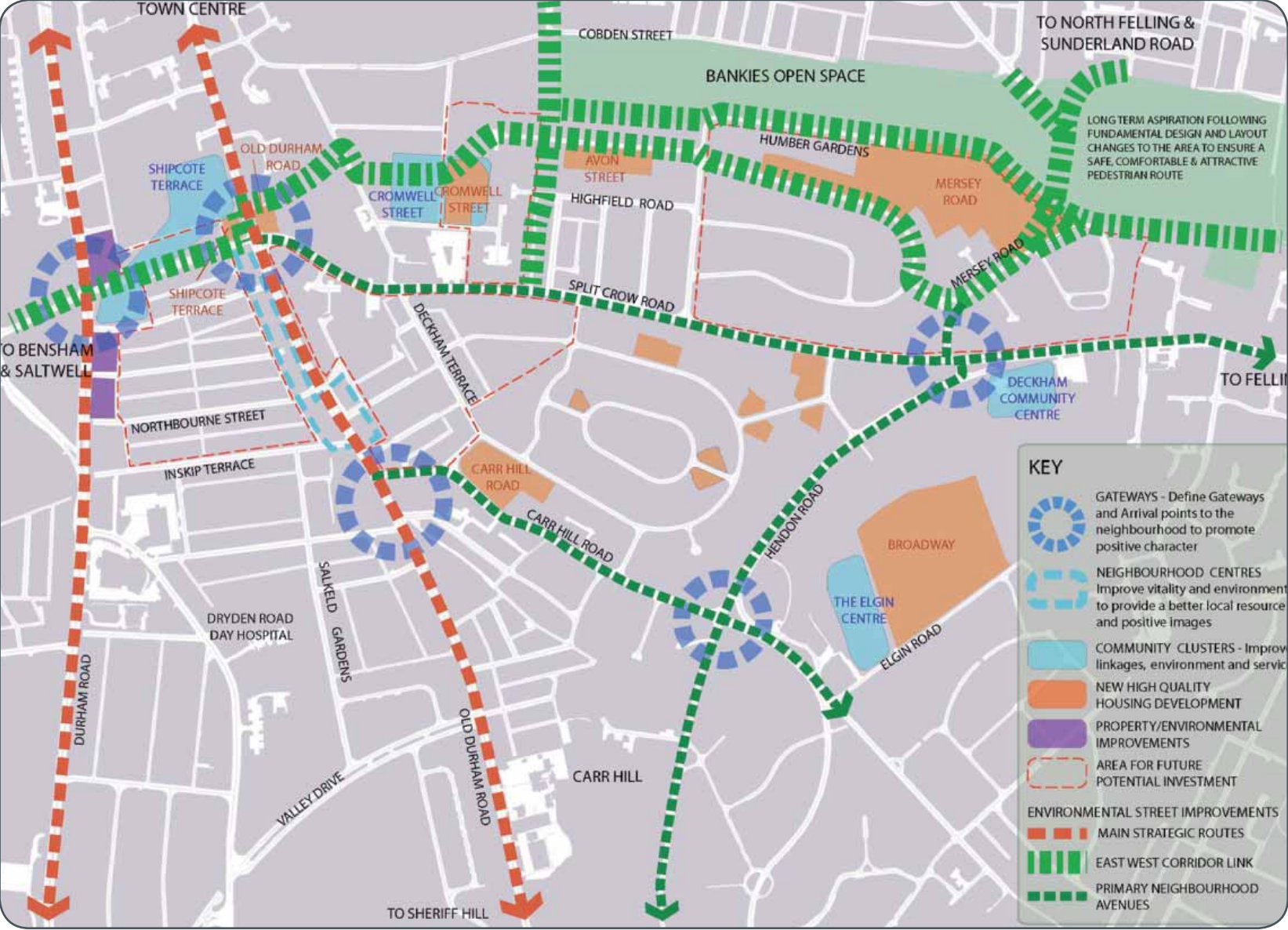
Development of Relocation Packages. Gateshead Council and Bridging NewcastleGateshead are currently developing a number of options for relocating residents and enabling them to move into the housing they require. Such packages enable any affordability gaps to be addressed and assist people into owner occupation. **Equity loans** help meet the gap between the compensation money available for the current dwelling and the purchase price of a replacement home. The loans are paid back when the replacement home is resold. **Shared ownership** is a low cost ownership scheme offered by social landlords such as housing associations. This allows residents to purchase a % of a new property (e.g. 50-75%). Rent has to be paid on the % not owned by the resident. Residents have the opportunity to buy the properties outright at any time.

5.19

Under a **Home Swap**, the Council would arrange to swap your home for an alternative replacement of equivalent or higher value within the Pathfinder area. The Council would purchase your new home at an agreed value and any difference in value between the old and the new (after any mortgage charge) would be a debt to the Council in the form of a charge on the new home. This debt would be repayable to the Council in the event of the new home being sold.

²⁰ A member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Reasonable valuer's and conveyancing fees will be paid by the Council.
²¹ The minimum home loss payment is £3,800 and the maximum £38 000.

Figure 9 Physical Framework Plan



6 NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN

Preferred Plan

6.1

The Preferred Plan for Deckham is based on detailed analysis and consultation and is recommended as the preferred course of action to assist in the regeneration of the neighbourhood. The plan was circulated to residents in December 2005 and is presented in Figure 8.

6.2

Sites which have been cleared and have the potential for new high quality housing development are:

- At the junction of Shipcote Terrace and Old Durham Road;
- Cromwell Street;
- Avon Street;
- The Broadway Centre Site; and
- Mersey Road

6.3

Existing housing sites to be cleared at this stage are limited to infill sites within the Deckham Hall estate, which involve mainly the removal of unsustainable flat accommodation.

Physical and Public Realm Frameworks

6.4

A Physical Framework Plan and a Public Realm Framework Plan have been prepared to explain the Preferred Plan in more detail. These plans provide the strategic spatial frameworks for change in the Deckham area for the next 10-15 years. They also provide an integrated spatial strategy for the development of complementary individual projects by the Council and its partners. The plans are the physical expression of the Vision and Strategy for Deckham.

Figure 9: Physical Framework Plan

Figure 10: Public Realm Framework Plan

Areas for Potential Future Investment

6.5

These 4 large areas exhibit characteristics of housing market vulnerability due to mix of type and tenure and in places poor property condition and environment. These areas will be monitored and investment and regeneration opportunities pursued as and when resources

are available based on the strategy outlined in the Neighbourhood Action Plan and further consultation with residents and stakeholders:

- The Shipcote Terrace and Northbourne area;
- To the east of Old Durham road to Split Crow Road, including Deckham Terrace;
- Land and properties to the east of Cromwell Street;
- Highfield from Thames Street to Ettrick Gardens

New Housing Areas

Sites to the East and West of Old Durham Road

6.6

These two sites both front this key route into Central Gateshead at the junction of Shipcote Terrace. There is an opportunity here to create new housing development of a mixture of types and tenures with consistent and good quality, memorable frontages that enhance the street environment in this location and provide a key attractive gateway into the neighbourhood.

6.7

The small infill development at the end of Shipcote Terrace should reinstate the street block and provide a well integrated contemporary development to this prominent corner site. This will complement refurbishments to Shipcote Terrace and the improvements to the Old Durham Road local centre. There may be scope at the corner of the blocks on both sites to raise the storey height by a floor relative to adjacent buildings to reflect the presence of the junction.

Cromwell Street

6.8

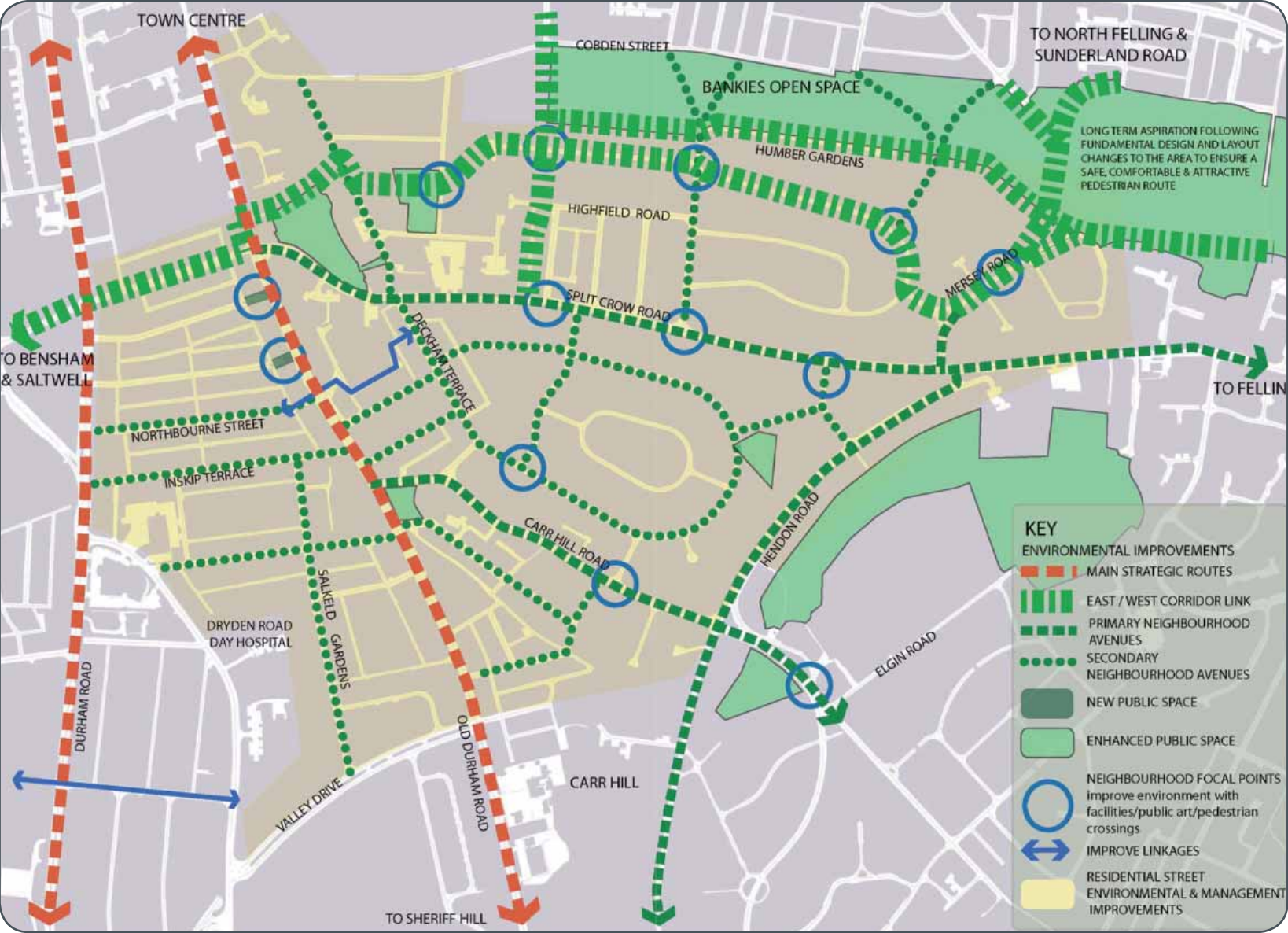
The existing club building has been identified as an unsightly use in the centre of the Mount Pleasant estate, and the poorly secured rear of the site attracts anti-social behaviour. Redevelopment for housing and/or community use would make a significant positive impact on the estate environment, and complement improvements to the semi-derelict play and recreation area on the west side of Cromwell Street.

Avon Street

6.9

Redevelopment of this grassed over clearance strip is an opportunity to bring quality new housing to an area that has had little new building for some years, and to reinstate the development form disrupted by the gap site. The buildings will need to be domestic in scale to respect the surrounding houses.

Figure 10 Public Realm and Place Framework Plan



The Broadway Centre Site

6.10

Just outside of the Deckham NAP area, redevelopment of this substantial former school site is an opportunity to make a major impact on the housing offer of the neighbourhood, meaning its role and function should be considered carefully alongside the NAP strategy. Close to the Sure Start, primary school and elderly person's facilities of the Eldon centre, and to the attractively landscaped 'garden suburb' estates south of Deckham, this site can attract development of the highest design quality. The green area to the north affords breathtaking views across the conurbation to the mouth of the Tyne and North Sea, an aspect that should be taken into consideration in the development brief of this key site.

Mersey Road

6.11

Land off Mersey Road adjacent to the Highfield estate provides the opportunity to enhance the sustainability of the estate by providing some high quality market housing to help mix the tenure of the area. This will help to both retain residents in the neighbourhood and attract incomers. The design should provide for high quality family homes with gardens, good quality landscaping and take advantage of the exceptional views over the Tyne. An attractive frontage should be provided both on Mersey Road to create a new entrance to this estate and over the Bankies. Buildings should continue the street form established by Medway Crescent and Humber Gardens to ensure a well integrated development.

Property/Environmental Improvements

6.12

Initial property improvements are proposed along Durham Road at the end of Shipcote Terrace, Raby Street and Northbourne Street and will support investment to properties proposed in the Bensham and Saltwell NAP along the western frontage of Durham Road. These will include block work improvements, boundary wall treatments and back lane improvements.

6.13

Home Housing also propose to remove a number of unsustainable properties within the Deckham Hall estate as part of a wider property and environmental improvement programme.

6.14

Works to improve the visual appearance of the stock to improve the confidence and perception of the area are more likely to have a positive effect on regeneration of the neighbourhood. Investment in the refurbishment of existing properties will enable residents to stay in their own homes and gives them the incentive to invest further in them

Green Space Improvements

6.15

These include the opportunities for new and enhanced green space within the area.

Banky Fields

6.16

A comprehensive physical and management plan is essential for Banky Fields. Targeted community planning events are needed to decide what the optimum role and function of this space is for the future. It is considered a priority for action in the NAP due to the blighting effect it currently has on the neighbourhood's sustainability both socially and environmentally.

6.17

During the consultation process the idea was suggested that parts of 'the Bankies' could become an activity space for more intensive youth focused recreation and a base for managed diversionary activities especially during evening, weekend and holiday time. This would provide a complement to the more genteel pleasure grounds of Saltwell Park, which caters especially well for younger and older residents rather than teenagers. The sloped landform would lend itself to exciting 'adventure play' type installations, well away from housing.

6.18

The flatter areas on the top of the hill could have more conventional facilities such as 'multi-use games areas', seating and shelters. Pathways and lighting would need upgrading and overgrown planting trimmed back. There is scope in future for much better configuration of the edges to provide stronger overlooking with new development²². The concept of a 'Riverview Promenade' running east-west along the top of the bank and linking with other pedestrian 'green routes' through the Cultural Quarter and to the Tyne waterfront provides a defining idea with which to raise future aspirations and guide any redevelopment that comes forward.

6.19

Final design solutions will require considerable discussion and resource assembly, but short term measures to make pathways safer and address drainage problems are recommended. An illustrative design of the potential for change of this space is included in the main NAP report.

Cromwell Street

6.21

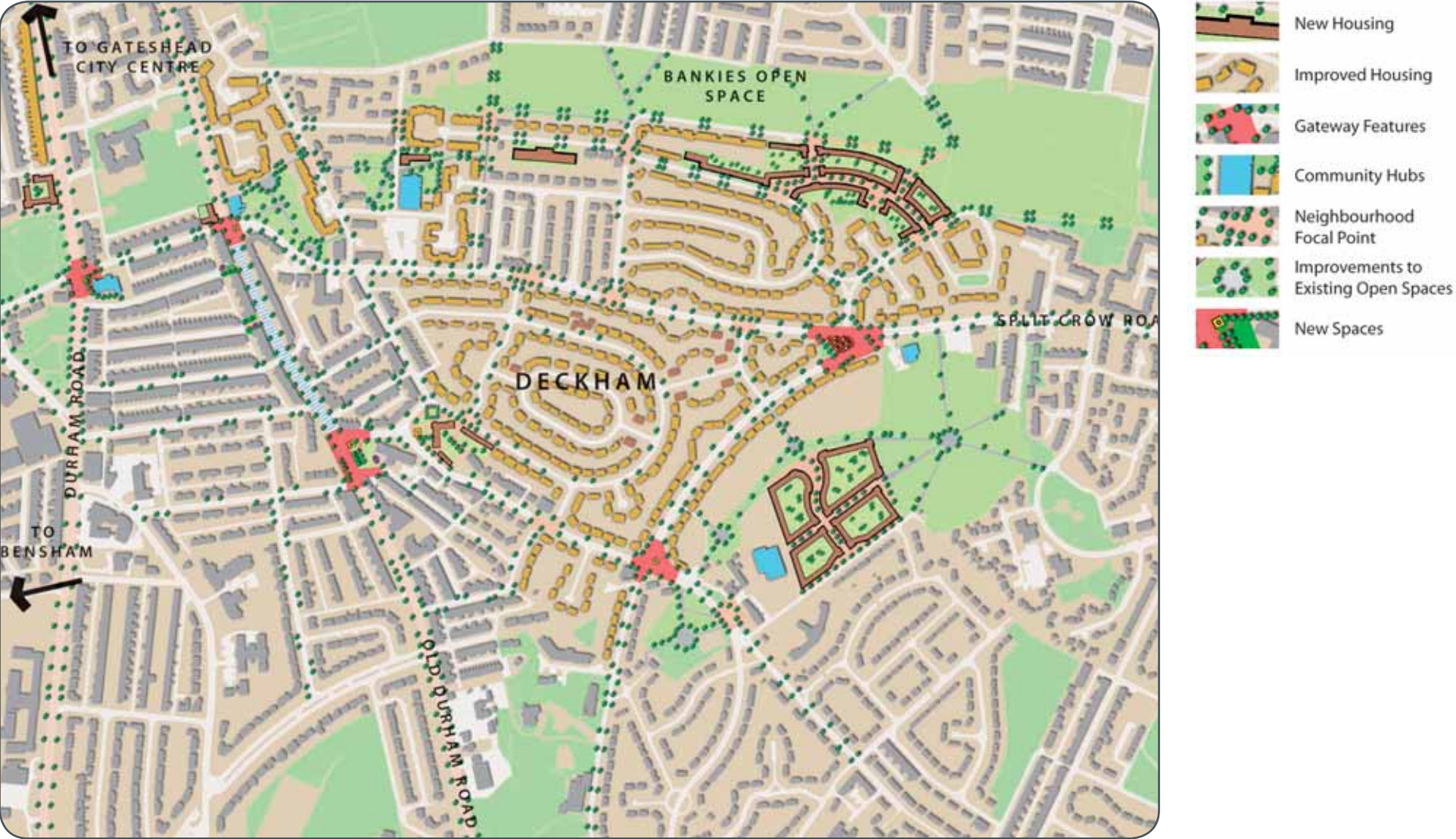
With the building of the new 'Radburn' layout estate the land here was laid out as a play area. It is currently in a dreadful condition, with basic basketball hoops but no nets, markings or boundaries, and a broken and dangerous hard surface. Fly-tipping and broken glass is a problem, making the play area unsafe. There is no decent landscaping. The lack of overlooking due to the poorly configured development layout makes the space harder to secure, and also generates security problems for the properties whose rear garden fences back directly onto the footpath that runs through the space.

6.22

Because it is the only formal recreation area directly serving the neighbourhood it does

22 Such as development at Mersey Road

Figure 11 Deckham Conceptual Masterplan



attract use by local children and young people, even in its current poor state. Mostly these uses are positive and are ones that should be supported and given acceptable, attractive accommodation in a decent setting. The neglected environment does however encourage some misuse of the site which can be intimidating for residents and visitors.

6.23

Addressing what is currently a blighted site and introducing quality amenities will have a positive impact on the environment, security and perceptions of the Mount Pleasant estate, with likely benefits to health, community cohesion and property values.

6.24

Suggested uses include play spaces aimed at both under and over 8s, a multi-use games area, a youth shelter, improved lighting and new seating. Some greening of this harsh space is also desirable, as is a new surface treatment. There may be scope for reconfiguring the adjacent Radburn housing layout to provide a much better overlooked space. Any improvements here will complement the pedestrian and cycle linkages to the Cultural Quarter and aspired for Riverview Promenade. There is also scope to link to potential housing and/or community facility developments on the existing club site.

Old Durham Road

6.25

The site at the junction of Fullerton Place, Deckham Terrace and Old Durham Road is in a strategic location within the neighbourhood centre offering the potential to introduce some good quality public realm to refresh and uplift this centre of activity. This space should provide a formal public space with high quality landscaping and street furniture to complement the neighbourhood centres renewal. Traffic calming along Old Durham Road in this location would help create a more attractive and restful environment for sitting and relaxing.

Community Strategy

6.26

The Community strategy will focus on improving the Old Durham Road neighbourhood centres by a range of property refurbishment, new development, public realm and traffic management measures. This will be supported by enhancing local community clusters as animating and welcoming community centres of activity. Key clusters to be enhanced by improving linkages, the environment and service provision are at the Elgin Centre and Deckham Community Centre. Scope to introduce new retail and local facilities to areas within the Highfield and Deckham estate should be explored, for example along Mersey Road, Carr Hill Road and Kingston Road

Neighbourhood Management Strategy

6.27

Neighbourhood management is a core component of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and is the preferred approach for all 4 neighbourhood action plan areas. Whilst good work has and is being done to tackle neighbourhood issues Deckham

needs better managing. Quality of life issues have been a constant theme in the community consultation indicating dissatisfaction with the way services are currently delivered and the need to find solutions for improving them. It is critical to address these issues as they together with areas of poor housing stock compound low demand and reduce the market appeal of the area and its future sustainability.

6.28

Whilst the Local Strategic Partnership and Area Executive Forums are helping to bring together plans, initiatives and partnerships between service providers and improve joint working this is at a strategic level. This could be extended to develop full scale neighbourhood management at the neighbourhood level. The Council has a neighbourhood management team that could be used to oversee the implementation of such an enhanced role. Such an approach would tie the Area Action Plans and the Area Executive Forums to the further development and implementation of the neighbourhood action plans, providing an integrated approach to physical change and service improvement.

6.29

To deliver neighbourhood management on the ground a more localised model will need to be set up to support and strengthen housing and neighbourhood renewal which go hand in hand. One of the essential elements of Housing Market Renewal is ensuring a local presence in the neighbourhood and constantly communicating with residents and tackling these kinds of neighbourhood issue. This is key to building early community confidence and will help develop a more active and engaged community.

6.30

The resource implications of neighbourhood management are acknowledged, as such the neighbourhood action plan proposes a hub and spoke model to neighbourhood management with the hub based in Bensham and Saltwell with satellites in other neighbourhoods such as Deckham where the approach would differ according to property ownership's and the local characteristics and needs of the neighbourhood. In Deckham Home Housing would be well placed to lead neighbourhood management using a similar model to that employed in North Benwell in Newcastle which has been most successful.

6.31

A tailored neighbourhood management strategy for Deckham will be an essential requirement of regeneration and housing renewal. Key principles are to further develop local partnership working in devising ways to address crime, anti-social behaviour and poor environments. Development of a short term action plan based upon the findings of the consultation focusing on the priorities of most importance to people (including increasing the number of wardens, police, and more facilities for young people and improved traffic management and parking) should be progressed.

Conceptual Masterplan

6.32

A conceptual masterplan at Figure 11 has been prepared to show the development and design potential of the area and to show some of the ideas that could be taken forward for the future regeneration of the area.

7 NEXT STEPS

7.1

The Neighbourhood Action Plans and Framework Plans have been produced to establish a **vision and long term plan** for the area. The Framework is designed to be **flexible and responsive** to changing circumstances and market demand. Its intention is to clearly identify what **changes** need to be made in the neighbourhood to improve the housing market and make the area a **sustainable community** into the future. It is also designed to provide some **certainty of what scale and type** of change is planned for the future. This will allow both the private and public sector to focus their **investment plans** and work together in achieving the vision for a more sustainable neighbourhood.

7.2

The **scale, type and location** of change proposed in the neighbourhood action plan have been developed following detailed analysis and community consultation. This has included analysis of the housing market, socio-economic and demographic data and a careful assessment of the place and its physical strengths and weaknesses. As such this scale of development, clearance, refurbishment and environmental investment is considered necessary to ensure the area becomes a **more sustainable community** with a range of house types and tenures in a high quality environment with good local services.

7.3

The neighbourhood action plan will need to be endorsed by the **Council and LSP and partner organisations** who will be expected to formally adopt the document as a key reference for all neighbourhood **planning and investment decisions**. The neighbourhood action plan can only be delivered by all partners working together to address physical regeneration and service delivery objectives.

7.4

Further work will be required to refine and detail the proposals within the neighbourhood action plan into a set of more **detailed interventions** for the area. This work will need to be phased as time and resources allows.

7.5

Policy alignment is an important component of implementation. A key issue is to ensure that the physical proposals within the neighbourhood action plan are translated into the **statutory development plan (Gateshead UDP)**. This could be progressed by adopting the plan as a Supplementary Planning Document or by translating the physical objectives and strategies within the neighbourhood action plan to inform an Area Action Plan for Deckham. This will allow the neighbourhood action plan to be given more weight in the planning system and to **directly inform planning decisions**.

7.6

The implementation of the neighbourhood action plan will be a **long term** commitment over the next 12 years. The scale of change made will be dependent on a mixture of public and private sector funding, in particular from the Government through **Bridging NewcastleGateshead** the Housing Market Renewal **Pathfinder**. However the purpose of the neighbourhood action plan is to provide a framework for all funding partners and

investment decisions. Co-ordinating and maximising this investment will be an important requirement of the delivery vehicle..

