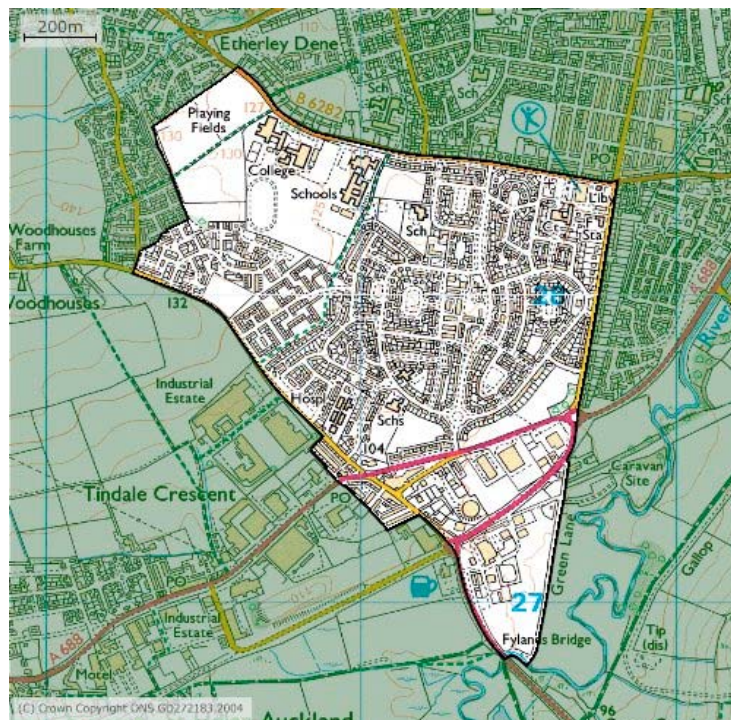


WOODHOUSE CLOSE – NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE

LOCAL AUTHORITY BOUNDARIES



WOODHOUSE CLOSE ESTATE BOUNDARIES



Introduction

The Woodhouse Close estate lies one mile to the South West of Bishop Auckland town centre.

The estate forms part of the Woodhouse Close ward, which comprises some 2,021 properties of which 983 are owned and managed by the local authority. A Registered Social Landlord, Accent Homes Ltd owns and manages 128 properties, the remainder of the properties in the ward are privately owned.

The Woodhouse Close estate was built in the 1950,s to cater for those displaced following the largescale demolition of “D” notice properties in the nearby South Church and Witton Park areas.

The ward is the most deprived within the Wear Valley local authority area and the 119th most deprived ward in England and Wales as measured by indices of multiple deprivation (ONS 2000). The estate also suffers relatively high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour compared to other areas within Wear Valley. Woodhouse Close has been identified as being unsustainable using the Local Authority’s own indicators of sustainability.

Local Authority housing stock is managed from an estate based local Neighbourhood Housing Office on Proudfoot Drive, which is the main thoroughfare through the estate. Generally demand exists for the majority of the Council stock with the exception of one bedroomed bungalows. However 97 long tem void properties are earmarked for demolition in the near future. Demand is particularly high for properties classified as being on the lower part of the estate. There is an active Residents Action Group which holds public meetings once a month.

The ward is served by three District Councillors and by one County Councillor.

The Local Authority Community Safety team are also based in a property on Proudfoot Drive. This team includes two estate based Street Wardens and Manager who, along with two Community Police Officers, seek to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour on the estate. The cost of the provision of the warden service is £43,966.

Woodhouse Close is served by two primary schools, St Wilfred’s R.C School and Woodhouse Close Junior School. Two secondary schools are situated on the outskirts of the estate, St Johns R.C Comprehensive School and Bishop Barrington School. A Family Support Centre at Walker Drive includes Sure Start and a Nursery facility. There is also a nursery school at Aclet Close on the lower part of the estate.

Woodhouse Close library and Leisure complex are located on Woodhouse Lane on the periphery of the estate.

A small number of shops are situated on Proudfoot Drive to serve local residents; a larger selection of shops can be accessed at Bishop Auckland town centre one mile to the North.

Neighbourhood Characteristics

Total resident population of Woodhouse Close (ward), 4,816

Total households 2,021, of which –

- 61.4% Economically active
- 5.8% aged 75 or over
- 15.6% with only elderly people
- 35.9% with dependant children
- 14.0% one parent families
- 25.9% aged under 16

(Source 2001 Census)

Unemployment rates

57% of the population of Woodhouse Close are of working age. The unemployment rate is 14.6% this compares with an unemployment rate of 8.2 % throughout the Wear Valley area and 5.8 % nationally.

(Source 2001 Census)

Health and provision of care

The 2001 Census asked people to describe their health over the preceding 12 months as good, fairly good or not good

	Woodhouse Close	Wear Valley	England and Wales
Good	58.1%	61.7%	68.6%
Fairly Good	26.6	25.3	22.2
Not Good	15.3	13.0	9.2

With a limiting long term illness

	Woodhouse Close	Wear Valley	England and Wales
With a limiting long term illness	27.1%	24.7%	18.2%

(Source 2001 Census)

Educational Achievement

Qualifications

	Woodhouse Close	Wear Valley	England and Wales
No Qualifications	53.0%	39.8%	29.1%
Qualified to degree or higher	6.0%	13.0%	19.8%

(Source 2001 Census)

Economic Activity (percentage)

	Woodhouse Close	Wear Valley	England and Wales
Employed	43.4	55.2	60.6
Unemployed	7.2	4.7	3.4
Economically active students	1.8	1.3	2.6
Retired	13.8	15.0	13.6
Economically inactive students	2.8	3.0	4.7
Looking after home/family	10.6	7.3	6.5
Permanently Sick or disabled	13.8	9.9	5.5
Other economically inactive	6.6	3.6	3.1

Tenure Breakdown

	Owner Occupier	Council	RSL	Private rented
Woodhouse Close	44.8%	45.2%	5.2%	4.7%
Wear Valley	67.5%	19.2%	4.8%	8.5%
England and Wales	68.9%	13.0%	6.0%	11.9%

'Right to buys' and Council Tax Bands

Since the inception of the Tenants Right to Buy scheme 440 properties have been sold on the estate. Typically the properties which have been purchased have been in the higher demand areas of the estate, which has resulted in a decline in the supply of vacant properties for let in these areas. Subsequently choice for new housing applicants has become more restricted.

The majority of properties on the Woodhouse Close estate fall within Council Tax Band A. Some on the lower part or on the periphery of the estate which have been sold under the Right to Buy scheme fall within bands B, C and D.

RSL and Local Authority stock data

Accent Group Ltd. (formerly Bradford and Northern Housing Association):

Property type	Estate Stock	Weekly Rent Level
1 bedroom flats	14	£51.75
2 bedroom bungalows	18	£68.90
2 bedroom flats	14	£58.52
2 bedroom houses	35	£69.28
3 bedroom houses	45	£73.14
4 bedroom houses	2	£80.14
Total	128	N/A

The weekly rent level is inclusive of a management service charge.

Currently Accent have one void or vacant dwelling which represents 0.78 % of their stock on the estate.(December 2004)

Stock Management is provided by an estate based caretaker. Housing Management staff are based at Accents' regional Office in Middlesbrough.

Local Authority Stock (Wear Valley District Council)

Property type	Estate Stock	Typical Weekly rent Level
1 Bedroom flats	6	£49.18
1 Bedroom bungalows	125	£49.54
2 Bedroom bungalows	18	£50.69
2 Bedroom flats	10	£52.71
2 Bedroom houses	465	£52.18
3 Bedroom flats	3	£54.56
3 Bedroom houses	346	£52.88
5 Bedroom houses	2	£54.21

(The Council stock on the estate includes a further 4 miscellaneous buildings and 4 shops)

The Local Authorities' stock is managed from the Woodhouse Close Neighbourhood Office based on Proudfoot Drive. This office is shared by the neighbourhood team for the Woodhouse Close estate and teams managing Local Authority stock in the rest of Bishop Auckland area. The team managing the estate comprises a Neighbourhood Manager and two Housing Officers supported by two Customer Services Assistants. The annual management cost of the neighbourhood operations team is £88,579 (2004/05). The services provided by this team are:

- tenancy and estate management
- housing income management

- lettings and allocations

Current rent arrears for Woodhouse Close estate (as at 1st April 2005) are £29611. The number of tenants in arrears at this time was 230, this represents 24.5 % of tenants living on the estate.

Equality and Diversity

In keeping with the Wear Valley area generally, Woodhouse Close black and minority ethnic groups form a very small percentage of the overall population (less than 1%).

Wear Valley District Council has two recorded cases of racial abuse and harassment over the period 2002- 2004. In one case the victim was rehoused into another area, the other case was resolved without recourse to rehousing.

Over the same period (2002 – 2004) the Council received one complaint of homophobic abuse and harassment this case was resolved through the intervention of the Housing Departments Tenancy Enforcement team.

Community Groups

Community activities are centred at the Auckland Youth and Community Centre based on Walker Drive. The centre was built in 1963 and refurbished in 1995 following the receipt of a grant of £25300.00 from the National Lottery Charity Board. Activities provided at the Centre include:

- Youth and sports groups
- Internet café and I.T courses
- family based activity groups
- after school club
- out of school care facility
- social services contact point
- community partnership meeting venue
- social care and health family service

The estate benefits from a family centre situated on Walker Drive, which incorporates a day nursery and is used as a base by Sure Start.

The Goodall Centre also on Walker Drive is a Primary Health Care Trust centre providing a range of services and facilities for people with Mental Health problems in the wider Bishop Auckland area.

Cost of Accommodation

1. House Prices

	Woodhouse Close	Bishop Auckland	England/Wales
Detached	£182,567	£186,494	£284,497
Semi-detached	£89,450	£91,177	£169,898
Terraced	£64,928	£65,914	£143,074

(Source UpMyStreet, November 2004 – information based on Postcodes not ward boundaries)

For the period July – September 2003 to July September 2004 house prices in the Woodhouse Close ward had risen by 47%, for the Bishop Auckland area prices for this period had risen by 43.9 %, for England and Wales prices had risen by 42.2 %. Although house prices for the Woodhouse Close area are still well below the national average.

2. Market Rents

Local Authority rents are between £50.23 per week for a one bedroomed bungalow to £52.50 for a three bedroomed house. This represents the average rent level for the authority as a whole.

Housing Association rents (Accent) vary from £51.75 per week for a one bedroomed flat to £73.14 for a three bedroomed house. These rent levels include a service charge for an estate based caretaker.

Housing Needs and Demands

The total Council housing stock in the area is 983: 83 % of which are houses, 14.5% are bungalows and 2.5% flats. Most properties are traditionally built although Farm Close houses and bungalows are Hawthorn Leslie built. At present 15.4 % of the stock is empty including 97 properties that are earmarked for demolition (9.86 % of the stock).

Public Sector – Changing Demand

Demand for properties is highest for the lower part of the estate (to the east of Proudfoot Drive) and for the periphery of the estate, particularly Woodhouse Lane. The demolition as mentioned above will rationalise demand and supply for the upper part of the estate (to the West of Proudfoot Drive). The demolition of these properties will also lower traditionally high (%) void levels in this area.

The high void level represents a proportionately high turnover of stock. However the demolition of excess properties and the expected increase in demand for the remainder should help to stabilise turnover rates.

Demand is highest for three bedroomed properties and two bedroomed bungalows. There is a shortage of this type of property on the estate. Demand for one bedroomed bungalows is very low. The local housing management team are utilising the moveUK scheme to widen the "catchment" areas to include the London Boroughs, current interest from those living in these areas is encouraging.

Reason for Refusal data (April 2004 – December 2004) shows that 34.8 % of offers of accommodation made to applicants are accepted. The average for Wear Valley district is 30.3%. The reasons given for refusal are –

- 61.9% of applicants refused to accept an offer because they felt that the area was unsuitable,
- 11.9% refused because they had a change in circumstances,
- 23.8% refused because they felt the property was unsuitable
- 2.4% were found to have been rehoused during the offer process.

Private Sector

Census data shows a 44.8% of home ownership for the Woodhouse Close ward, although owner occupation on the Woodhouse Close estate is lower. Currently (December 2004) no properties are For Sale or advertised for rent on the estate.

Stock Investment Requirements

A stock condition survey undertaken in April 2002 indicated that 84% of housing stock did not reach the Decent Homes Standard. A projection of the required investment over a 30-year period to ensure that all properties reach (by 2010) and maintain this standard is £33,302,473 or £1,169,792 every year.

The Government requires that all local authority houses must reach the Decent Home Standard by 2010. Wear Valley District Council is pursuing the setting up of an Arms Length Management Organisation (by 2006) to assume the management of their stock. It is expected that this Organisation will be able to attract the funding to ensure that all properties receive the required investment to reach the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

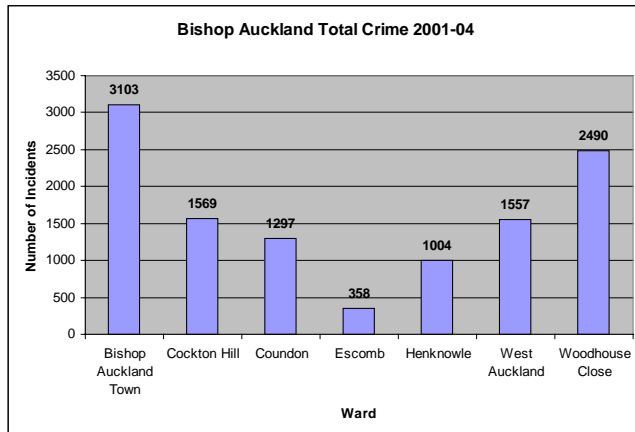
Limited Capital Programme improvements are ongoing. Improvements for the current financial year (2004/05) for the Woodhouse Close estate include the replacement of the heating systems to 3 no. properties and kitchen refurbishment work to 119 properties. A further 67 properties ,on the lower part of the estate are programmed for window replacement (2005/05 into 2005/06)

Properties on the estate will benefit from the following Capital Programme work in 2005/06 -

- Window replacements to 98 properties and Central heating replacements to 75 properties

Crime Analysis

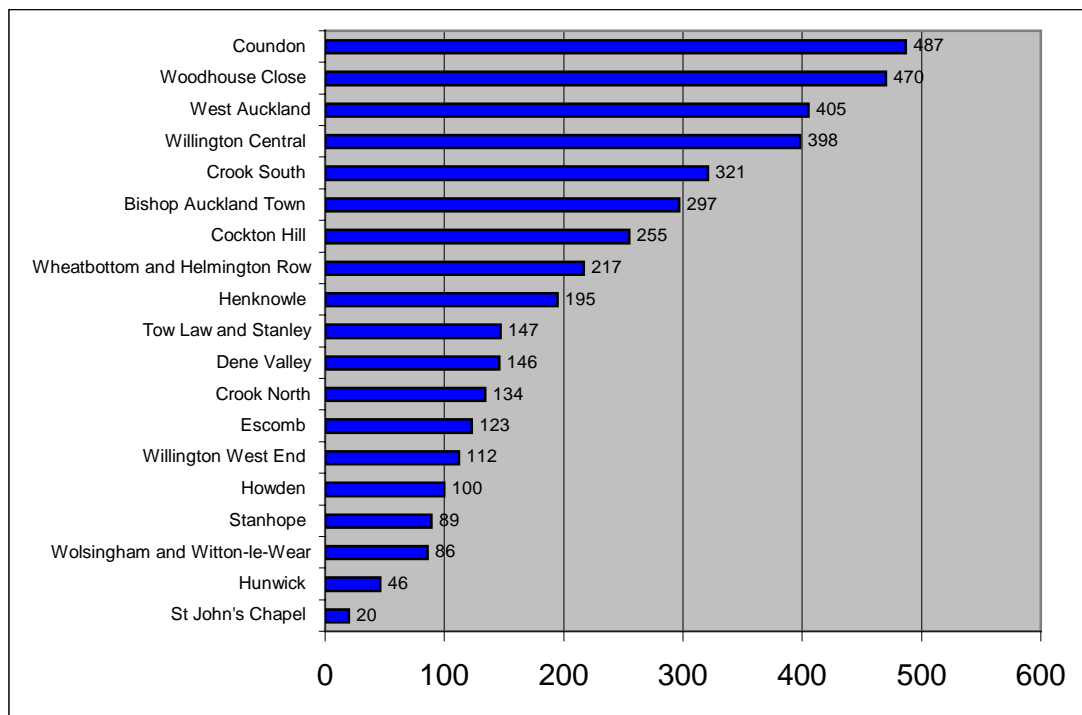
An analysis of crime figures for the wards in Bishop Auckland shows, that with the exception of the town Centre ward, Woodhouse Close suffers the worst crime levels .It is worth noting that the Town Centre ward is in part non residential and the crime figures for that area reflect this.



Anti –Social Behaviour Analysis

The chart below details incidents of anti –social behaviour for the period March 2003 to April 2004, this illustrates that throughout the Local Authority area the Woodhouse Close ward suffers the second highest incidence of anti – social behaviour.

(Bishop Auckland Task Group Sept./Oct. 2004)



Sustainability

The criteria for the Sustainability Index figure is marked 1 – 5. 5 indicates unsustainability.

The purpose of the sustainability index is to:

- identify the level of stability in neighbourhoods
- indicate trends in neighbourhoods overtime that identify where stability is declining or improving
- act as an early warning system to detect areas that are on the verge of decline
- assist in targeting resources to areas that are sustainable
- provide a focus for consultation with residents in regeneration issues
- encourage strategic thinking and initiatives
- assist with bidding for funding for deprived areas.

Based on the sustainability criteria outlined, Woodhouse Close is one of two wards within the Wear Valley area classified as being unsustainable.

Woodhouse

DEMAND

Indicator 1: Void Periods

0 - 15 Days

16 - 25 Days

26 - 35 Days

36 - 49 Days

50 - 64 days

Over 65 days

5

Indicator 2: Long Term Voids

0 - 2 Properties

3 - 5 Properties

6 - 10 Properties

11 - 15 Properties

16 - 24 Properties

25 +

5

Indicator 3: Prevalence of Vacant Properties

0 - 0.9%

1 - 1.9%

2 - 2.9%

3 - 4.9%

4.9 - 7.4%

7.5% +

5

Indicator 4: Percent Turnover of Properties in a year

0 - 2.5%

2.6 - 5%

5.1 - 7.5%

7.6 - 10%

10.1 - 12.5%

12.6% +

5

Indicator 5: Transfer Requests

0 - 1.9%

2 - 3.9%
4 - 6.9%
7 - 9.9% 3
10 - 15.9%
16% +

Indicator 6: Right To Buy Applications

20 + Applications
16 - 20 Applications
11 - 15 Applications
6 - 10 Applications
3 - 5 Applications
0 - 2 Applications

REPUTATION

Indicator 7: Rejections of Offers of Accommodation (offer per 100 lets)

100 - 150
151 - 200
201 - 230
231 - 250
251 - 300
301+ 5

CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Indicator 8: Number of Crimes

0 - 25
26 - 50
51 - 75
75 - 150
151 - 250 4
250 +

Indicator 9: Neighbour Disputes/Harassment Complaints

0 - 3 Complaints
4 - 6 Complaints
7- 9 Complaints
10 - 19 Complaints
20 - 30 Complaints
31+ Complaints 5

SOCIAL EXCLUSION & POVERTY

Indicator 10: Rent Arrears

0 - 1%
1 - 2.5%
2.6 - 3.5%
3.6 - 5%
5 - 7.5%
7.6% + 5

Indicator 11: Benefit Claimants

0 - 3%
3.1 - 5%

5.1 - 7%	
7.1 - 8%	
8.1 - 10%	
10.1% +	5

Indicator 12: Unemployment

0 - 2%	
2.1 - 3%	
3.1 - 4%	
4.1 - 5%	3
5.1 - 6%	
6.1%+	5

Indicator 13: Household Income

Indicator 14: Educational Attainment	3
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THE ACCESSIBILITY OF FACILITIES, SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT

Indicator 15: The Accessibility of Facilities, Services and employment

Accessible	1
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Non Accessible

Indicator 17: Attendance at Community Meetings

15% +	
10 - 15%	
7.6 - 9.9%	
5.1 - 7.5%	
2.51 - 5 %	
0 - 2.5%	5

Indicator 18: Private Sector Condition 'Unfit'

0%	
0.1 - 0.5%	
0.6 - 1%	
1.1 - 1.5%	3
1.6 - 2%	
2.1% +	

Indicator 19: Fuel Poverty

0 - 7%	
8 - 15%	
16 - 20%	
21 - 24%	
25 - 29%	
30% +	5
Total	77

5

Indicator Colour

