



## **Ince Central Estate Newsletter Number 10 Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

Dear Resident,

### **Shortlisting Completed for the Appointment of Consultants**

In the last newsletter we provided a progress report on the appointment of the Lead Consultant who will be responsible for producing a solution to deal with the soil contamination problem and the Independent Adviser who will provide advice and help residents to put forward their views, concerns and ideas.

Forty one companies contacted us to express an interest in applying for the consultancy positions. They were each sent background information about the soil contamination and asked to complete and return a questionnaire providing important information about their company, including financial information and details of their experience of dealing with investigations of a similar nature to the problem on your estate.

Twelve consultants completed questionnaires and applied for the position of Lead Consultant. A panel of senior officers from Wigan and Leigh Housing and Wigan Council has shortlisted 6 companies that have now been asked to submit tenders for the work and explain how they would propose to carry out and complete the investigation within the deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> October. The tenders are due to be returned on 29<sup>th</sup> June when a further shortlist will be prepared and the shortlisted companies will be invited for interviews on 8<sup>th</sup> July. The interviews will be carried out by members of the Wigan and Leigh Housing Stock Investment Committee which includes Council tenants, Stella Allen (tenant) and Hayley Sneddon (owner) **and Councillor Joan Hurst** from the Ince Central Residents Group and senior officers from Wigan and Leigh Housing and Wigan Council.

Seventeen consultants completed questionnaires and applied for the position of Independent Adviser. The six residents who had volunteered to take part in the shortlisting and interviewing process for the Independent Adviser met with Phil Brown and Steve Evans, a member of the Wigan and Leigh Housing Tenant Participation Team, on 10<sup>th</sup> June. Residents agreed what requirements they would like to take into account when shortlisting the applications and how they would score each application. They were given copies of the sections of each questionnaire that contained details of the company's previous experience and the experience of their staff. The group met again on 14<sup>th</sup> June to compare scores and agree the shortlist. Residents shortlisted 6 companies that have been asked to submit tenders and explain how they would carry out the role of Independent Adviser. The tenders are

due to be returned on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and the residents will meet shortly afterwards to agree a shortlist for the interviews that will be held on 19th July shortly after the appointment of the Lead Consultant. All six residents will be involved in the further shortlisting and preparation of questions for the interviews. Two tenants and two owners have agreed to take part in the interviews and choose the most suitable consultant. Elspeth Brighton, the Director of Stock Investment at Wigan and Leigh Housing, will provide support to the residents during the interviews.

The Lead Consultant will be expected to start working on the contract from 19<sup>th</sup> July and the Independent Adviser shortly afterwards. **There is no solution on the table at present, only a range of options. The consultants that we are bringing in will be given the job of finding a solution which will then form the basis of a bid to the Government for funds to tackle the problem. The Government financial machinery is such that October and November is when they decide what funds they are going to give to local authorities in April 2005. It is about then that we would hope that Government funds will be available to begin the task of tackling the solution. This is a very difficult and large problem that will probably take many millions of pounds to sort out and we need Government help to fund this.**

### **Strangers Touring the Estate**

A number of residents have contacted us to tell us that they have seen strangers touring the estate in cars. **It is likely that** these people would be working for the consultants who are putting together their tenders for the consultancy posts. Those consultants that are really keen to get the work will be having a look at the estate first hand to get a feel of what the estate is like. This will be helpful to them when they are preparing their bids and, particularly, if they are shortlisted for interview.

### **Borehole Tests Outside the Estate Boundary**

In the last newsletter we explained that the Council is required to be completely satisfied that the site boundaries are accurate. We needed to drill further boreholes in areas of open land and alleyways around the edge of the estate to enable us to confirm the boundaries. **Five additional borehole tests were carried out at various locations and the tests were completed on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June.**

Two of the original locations had to be changed due to difficulties in contacting the owners of the land to obtain permission to carry out the borehole tests. The original dates for drilling the boreholes had to be put back due to these problems. The boreholes were eventually located in the following places and we are grateful to the land owners for allowing the works to be carried out.

- Alleyway at rear of 102 Ince Green Lane
- Yard at rear of 142 Ince Green Lane
- Alleyway at rear of 14 Heber Street
- Alleyway at rear of 13 Heber Street
- Land between Higher Ince Labour Club and 79 Anderton Street

The results of the analysis of the soil samples taken from the boreholes are due in early July and we will report the results in the next newsletter.

## **Vacant Properties – Maintenance of Gardens**

The Residents Group raised concerns at the May meeting about the untidy state of gardens on the estate. We have now set up a contract with Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust for their staff to trim the gardens and then mow them once a month. You may have noticed their workmen working on some of the gardens already. They will be strimming and cutting the gardens – not digging. The workmen will be wearing heavy boots, eye goggles and mouth masks. The heavy boots are standard issue for use with trimmers and heavy machinery. The masks and goggles are issued to protect eyes from stones and mouths from dog dirt that can be thrown up when the workmen are strimming gardens so please do not be alarmed.

## **Public Meeting**

Members of the Residents Group have arranged two previous meetings for residents on the estate which officers from the Council and Wigan and Leigh Housing did not attend. It is very difficult to hold a public meeting for an estate with over 300 households but we think that it would be useful to hold a public meeting in late July once the Lead Consultant and Independent Adviser have been appointed.

We have booked Ince Public Hall for Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. The public hall has a capacity of 250 people and it will not be possible to accommodate everyone so we would like you to complete and return the attached form to tell us whether you wish to attend. We also want to ensure that the meeting is well organised and that we are able to answer as many of your questions as possible. To help us do this we would like you to write on to the form any questions that you would like answering at the meeting. We will then be able to respond to all your questions on the night.

For those of you who do not wish to attend a public meeting or are unable to do so we will issue a newsletter shortly after the meeting. We will include details of all the questions and answers along with a summary of the main issues that are covered at the meeting.

A pre-paid envelope is attached for the return of the form. You may post it or, if it is more convenient, drop it in to the Area Housing Office at Ince Town Hall or any other housing office.

## **The Advice Line – An Apology**

Hayley Sneddon, a member of the Residents Group, recently discovered that she had been charged on her telephone bill for calls to the freephone number 01942 828436. When we have checked this out we have found that the freephone link is not operating. This means that residents who have telephoned us will have been charged for the telephone calls. We are grateful to Hayley for bringing this to our attention.

We must apologise for this error and we will be happy to reimburse the telephone charges to any resident who can provide us with a copy of their telephone bill/s. Please contact Mike Sollars or Phil Brown who will arrange the repayment.

Advice and information can still be obtained via the Surgery at Ince Town Hall from Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.30pm. We now have a new freephone telephone number - **0800 3284375**.

**Peter Gee**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Wigan and Leigh Housing**