

# **Beeston Hill and Holbeck – a quick overview**

## **The 1960s to the 1990s**

These decades saw the entry into a period of gradual decline for the communities of Beeston Hill and Holbeck for a number of reasons:-

- Disconnection – the building of the motorway through the heart of the area is a classic example of this, which bisected the area as well as disconnecting it from the City centre
- Decline of manufacturing industries – the failure of significant manufacturing operations in and around the area, particularly in Hunslet, led to the communities being host to significant levels of unemployment
- Housing – the scale of terraced housing in the area was not totally addressed by the remodelling of the 60s and 70s

By the early 1990s it was becoming clear that significant investment in the area was needed to help stabilise the communities and start to bring them out of a spiral of decline that appeared to be increasing with mounting crime, environmental degradation, empty properties and lack of choice in terms of housing and facilities.

## **Single Regeneration Budget Round 4**

After a failed City Challenge bid in the early 1990s, the area was successful in its bid to the Government for funding through Round 4 of the SRB programme. A total of £7.4 million was made available to spend over a seven year programme. The aim of the programme was to provide the local communities with improvements to the quality of their lives, create a positive change in the perception of the area and increase confidence, making the area one in which people want to live rather than have to live.

In March 2005 the Programme came to an end. Full spend was achieved with 48 projects supported, the majority of them being revenue based as the Programme only allowed 25% of the SRB funding to be used for capital schemes.

It is generally accepted that SRB4 had significant impact as a catalyst for focusing attention on the area and, as well as supplying useful pump priming for regeneration activity, helped to create the

conditions for significantly more resources to be committed to regeneration (see the section on capital investment below).

### **Other funding streams**

The area has continued to benefit from other funding streams that either nationally, regionally or locally have been allocated. Some of these include:-

- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
- Objective 2 – ERDF and ESF strands
- Sure Start
- Regional Housing Board
- Safer and Stronger Communities Fund
- Leeds LIFT

These and others have allowed a broad approach to regeneration to be pursued with the understanding that social, physical, environmental, cultural and economic aspects of regeneration have all to be addressed if the area is to become truly sustainable.

There has been significant investment, either made or in the pipeline, in capital schemes within the regeneration area, amounting to a total of over £100 million and a general list is given below. In addition an Outline Business Case for a further £90 million is with the Government for credits through a Housing PFI scheme that will transform areas of Council housing within Beeston Hill and Holbeck.

### **Capital schemes and broad funding allocations 2000-2007/8**

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| New high and primary schools                                       | - £25m  |
| Public sector housing investment                                   | - £22m  |
| Swimming and diving centre   | - £21m  |
| Two new health centres   | - £8.5m |
| Private sector housing   | -£12.2m |
| New road link  | -£4m    |
| FE College   | -£2.2m  |
| Other (including sports, community safety and environmental works) | -£7.9m  |

Total - **£102.8 million** plus other private sector interest in some sites not accounted for.

### **Regeneration Partnership Board**

A Partnership Board consisting of senior officers from a number of agencies significantly involved in the area meets regularly. Residents are also represented. The aim of the Board is to drive forward the regeneration of the whole area. It commissioned a Land Use Framework and a number of subsequent studies and local regeneration plans are now being developed. It is chaired by Councillor Angela Gabriel, a local Ward Councillor.

### **Community Involvement**

This has been a key feature of work as voluntary and community groups started to establish themselves during the 1990s to seek to campaign for and directly deliver improvements to the area. Additionally, dedicated resources through the Council were allocated to this area of work and there remains today strong representation of residents at neighbourhood forums, on an overarching area residents' forum and on the Regeneration Partnership Board. It is recognised as an area of the City where good practice in community engagement has been undertaken and an external evaluation confirms this.

### **Other improvements**

Along with capital investment the area has seen significant improvements in a number of other key issues, for example:-

- Crime has come down, particularly domestic burglary
- The number of long-term empty properties has reduced
- Educational attainment has increased at secondary and especially at primary school age
- There are now more community meetings and events than there were a few years ago
- Fewer people are on benefits

### **Conclusion**

However, many complex issues still remain to be resolved, particularly around housing, antisocial behaviour and improving the image of the area, which deteriorated following the events of July 2005.

To increase the momentum, further work is underway to secure approval for change that will ensure the sustainability of recent and future investment. This includes developing the three regeneration plans and completing an agreement with the private sector for major physical improvements through a joint partnership arrangement with

the Council. In addition bids have been made for more resources, and in particular the outcome of the PFI is awaited.

Beeston Hill and Holbeck remains one of the most vibrant and cosmopolitan areas of the City and residents are well placed over the next few years to benefit from the regeneration activity both within and just outside the area, e.g. in Holbeck Urban Village and potentially around Elland Road.

The strength of these diverse communities has shone through even stronger since July 2005 and it is to the credit of residents and the agencies that work with them that they are moving forward with hope and commitment that even more improvements can be brought about over coming years.

