

Ratification Committee 5th December 2001

- **Recommendation references in Housing concurrent:**

The following refers directly to the “Comments from the Director of Housing” contained in paragraph 7 of the report to the Ratification Committee on 5th December 2001

4. Sustainability in regeneration. Design and Specification Guide in use, and under first review. Sustainability checklist procedure still in use.
5. Special housing needs. The referencing process involves a face to face interview and specific discussion of any medical or special needs, albeit on a non specialist basis. Once a need is identified, referrals will be made to ensure that the housing registration includes the necessary information to meet the needs. It is continuing practice to deploy project officers to deal with rehousing and other issues through the life of the scheme, so that any needs arising after initial registration can be identified and the appropriate processes initiated. In the larger schemes e.g. Aylesbury, where redevelopment and decant will be progressed through phases, there will be a need to resolve whether there is an earlier referencing exercise across the whole scheme to identify issues early, or whether this will best be dealt with phase by phase.
7. Good practice guide for management of housing elements of regeneration scheme. Scrutiny Panel had considered that housing components of the programme were meeting their objectives. The principles used in successive schemes are carried forward, mindful that each scheme has different characteristics and that a tailored approach is required.
8. Elephant and Castle and Aylesbury schemes to be based on a one move policy. The decant policy used for early SEI schemes and Elmington was reviewed by a working party and the new policy that resulted was agreed by Executive on 17th December 2002 one of its primary principles was that sufficient housing supply to enable the decant should be provided by the scheme itself so that households would need to make only one move. Circumstances with a number of schemes that have been worked up since then have made the implementation of the policy difficult, and in the case of Wooddene and Heygate, specific policies have had to be agreed. The Executive decision about Aylesbury on 27th September 2005 has triggered the need for a decant policy for Aylesbury to be developed; given the scale of the Aylesbury scheme, it is probably more appropriate to review the boroughwide decant policy, undertaking the appropriate consultation work associated with it.
10. Role of Police in design. In all regeneration schemes, the involvement of the Police design advisors and working towards ‘Secured by Design’ accreditation is now routine.
36. Housing and environmental management. In all regeneration schemes, management options are explored. For example, in the Linden Grove and Coopers Road SEI schemes, there are a mix of Council and RSL units. For Linden Grove, all three landlords are managing their own stock but there are joint arrangements for cleaning and community development. At Coopers Road, where a second phase of development by Peabody Trust is due to

commence, joint management arrangements will be considered before scheme completion. It must be said that joint management will not be pursued for its own sake, and that proposals will need to demonstrate added value in terms of service standards achievable by individual providers.

Current Experiences and Issues

The following details the current practices utilised to deter, prevent and discourage squatters on major works schemes involving decanting:

There are a number of regeneration schemes in place which are directly linked to the role of Southwark as a landlord. These are:

- Silwood – Rotherhithe
- Bermondsey Spa - Bermondsey
- Coopers Road – Bermondsey
- Heygate – Walworth
- Acorn Estate (Wooddene) – Peckham
- East Dulwich Estate – Camberwell
- Elmington Estate –Camberwell
- Aylesbury Estate – Walworth
- Gloucester Grove/North Peckham – Peckham

The above schemes vary in size, each scheme is at a different stage of the regeneration and each have local factors that influence the management issues that need to be considered during the life of the scheme.

There are a number of primary issues that are repeated within each scheme that by their nature require a planned management response. The area offices that have responsibility for these schemes must have protocols in place in order to effectively manage the projects.

These are summarised as follows:

- **Day to Day Service provision**

This captures services such as

- Cleaning and ground maintenance – These services must be maintained to the standard of permanent properties but to include the risk of increased levels of bulk waste and furniture caused by out-going residents or opportunist people who target the estate for the disposal of waste.
- Engineering services – This includes lifts, heating, ventilation systems and other electrical services. These are all costly to maintain and with a limited “life” expectancy difficult decisions have to be made about repairing or renewal of appliances which will be made redundant once blocks are decanted.
- Estate Lighting – As blocks become empty the lighting generated from homes into communal areas reduces and an increased reliance on the communal lighting is required. An awareness of this factor will lead to increased lighting being provided to compensate for associated loss of lighting.

- General maintenance – providing clear guidelines to staff on the ordering of work. Such guidelines to be known in advance by residents. Such work to give value for money.
- Pest Control – Monitoring for increased levels of rodents, clearing empty homes of rubbish and likely food for pests, and reviewing any block baiting treatments as the scheme develops.

- **Communications**

- **Project Board** - At the early stages of the scheme the local Tenant and Residents Association will be consulted and from this a project team of resident representatives is formed to act as the focal point for consultation. This project board will meet on an agreed cycle with a clear terms of reference to discuss the various stages of the regeneration scheme and to identify problems at an early stage and to seek solutions with residents to those problems.
- **Newsletters** – Whilst the project board will be the formal point of communication all residents need to be kept informed of developments, sharing information and addressing local issues as they arise. These newsletters will be published at a frequency that is agreed between residents and the council.
- **Ward Members** – The elected councillors must be kept fully briefed on the regeneration schemes.
- **Inspections** – In addition to the normal estate inspections that take place a regular cycle of inspections should be undertaken to monitor progress on site and to identify areas of concern. These inspections will be undertaken by resident representatives, ward councillors, representatives of the council and consultants/contractors.

- **Visibility**

Housing staff will undertake day to day inspections within the scheme to identify housing management issues. This is the normal task undertaken by Southwark as a landlord. The presence needs to be supplemented where felt appropriate by support from:

- The warden services
- The metropolitan police
- Contractor services.

This visibility will provide re-assurance to residents that the area that it is not forgotten and that services will continue to be maintained.

- **Responses to risk of vandalism/squatters/crime**

There is a significant risk that as estates/blocks are decanted and fewer residents are in occupation that low level crime and anti-social behaviour will increase. Areas of concern are;

- Vandalism – graffiti and the disposal of rubbish and furniture is likely to occur.
- Squatting – Empty homes will be a target for squatters and other criminal elements to use the dwellings for a range of purposes.

- Crime – There has been a link established between squatting and low level crime which on occasions is linked to serious crime. The remaining residents are particularly vulnerable to this.

In addition to the measures described above a strategy should be in place to:

- Improve security of empty homes by grills or other measures to deter squatting.
- Remove services and other essential appliances to discourage squatting.
- Increase patrols on the area and this should include evaluating the merits of deploying security guards.
- Working with the police to prevent crime and to tackle criminal activity within the area.