Report of Policy Action Team 5 on Housing Management: main report
On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

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Contents

Foreword

Foreword by the Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister for Local Government and Regions

Key Findings

Executive Summary

Overall Conclusion

Our remit

The key elements of successful, on-the-spot housing management, what kinds of neighbourhood most need it and what is needed to make it happen more extensively

How to assess the costs and benefits of such a package, to housing and other agencies.

How to encourage other agencies to contribute to the costs, perhaps through pooling budgets

Options for promoting joint management of rented housing owned by a mix of landlords.

Action Plan

The Report

Remit

The PAT 5 approach

1. Definition and problem analysis

2. Key features of Good Housing Management

Annex A: The PAT 5 Approach

Annex B: PAT 5 membership

Annex C: Visits by Policy Action Team 5


Stockton-on-Tees: 26 November 1998

Birmingham: 27 November 1998
Background Note

Broadwater Farm and Waltham Forest HAT: 3 December 1998

Annex D: Note by DETR Tenants Democracy and on-the-spot Management in Denmark

Background

Tenants Democracy

Estate budgets

Housing management and maintenance

Super-caretakers

Incentives

Sources

Annex E: List of those attending Policy Action Team 5 Seminar on Tuesday 9 March 1999 to Discuss Emerging Themes

Annex F: A Code of Practice for Housing Managers on Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

Annex G: Assessing the needs of an area

Bibliography
Foreword

Foreword by the Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister for Local Government and Regions

I am delighted as champion Minister for Policy Action Team 5 to welcome this report on housing management in the most deprived areas. I know that Nick Raynsford, as the new Minister for Housing, shares my interest in this report.

Good housing management is crucial in ensuring that tenants in social housing enjoy a high quality of life and in avoiding social exclusion. The Team has set out its ideas in this report. Many will need to be considered by Government and policies such as tenant participation and Best Value will have a key role to play. Other recommendations in the report will fall to local authorities, Registered Social Landlords, professional bodies, tenants groups and others.

The Team has brought a wealth of experience to bear. It included housing practitioners and professionals, tenants, those representing faith communities and black and minority ethnic groups, and a number of Government Departments. All gave generously of their time and I am grateful for their efforts.

The wide experience of the Team is reflected in the breadth of its recommendations. The report is based on good practical experience in housing and is underpinned by an understanding of the issues involved in tackling social exclusion locally. More work is needed on a number of issues raised in the report, including establishing a better baseline of local management on which to set targets, and assessing the cost effectiveness of on-the-spot housing management. The PAT will continue to oversee this work and to ensure that the recommendations in the action plan are carried forward. Moreover you as readers may well have views or suggestions based on your experience. The Team would be pleased to receive them.

Hilary Armstrong
Key Findings

- Good housing management, with an on-the-spot presence, can make a real contribution to reducing social exclusion by improving the quality of life for those in deprived areas. On its own, however, it cannot eliminate social exclusion.
- There are many examples of good housing management around the country. The challenge is for all social landlords to reach the level of the best. We look to Best Value as a major instrument in bringing this about, on the part of both local authorities and registered social landlords.
- On-the-spot housing management, providing a personal touch, is crucial in deprived areas. Housing managers are the landlords main point of contact with tenants and are the eyes and ears of landlords on the ground.
- There is no single model of on-the-spot management which suits all areas. Nevertheless, some form of local presence is necessary, whether estate-based or neighbourhood-based. At the same time, some services, especially repairs, can be more efficiently delivered to the home through the use of call centres.
- Concierges and caretakers can provide the human presence on estates. They reduce vandalism, increase personal security, and are able to provide other help to tenants. They should be more widely introduced.
- Tenants should be encouraged to be involved in managing estates at whatever level they choose, and need practical support. Occasional help for specific initiatives is no substitute for modest but reliable funding.
- The high quality, on-the-spot, housing management required in the most deprived areas is likely to be more expensive than a more centralised housing management service.
- The best service level agreements define enforceable service standards in housing and non-housing (eg street cleaning, grass cutting) services. All areas need one.
- Managing housing effectively in the most deprived areas requires solutions that go beyond housing management. Similarly housing managers are often asked to help tenants develop non-housing projects eg creches, credit unions. The housing manager will often be the first point of contact, and should stimulate action by others. Technically, this role, but not the funding of the wider activity, can be supported from rents.
- Training and professional standards must be raised to enable housing managers to meet new challenges.
- Letting policies that are sensitive to the community and to the need to relieve social exclusion are desirable for the long term stability of an area.
- Black and minority ethnic groups must have confidence that they will be treated fairly. There must be a commitment to racial equality from top management and every social landlord should enforce the Commission for Racial Equalitys Code of Practice. This includes, amongst other things, equal opportunities training, pursuing perpetrators of racial harassment, and setting targets on race and service delivery.
- There are good examples of joint management in areas with several social landlords but they are too rare. They may consist of Joint Management Boards or a lead management landlord.
Executive Summary

Overall Conclusion

1. Bringing Britain together suggested that on-the-spot housing management was a key factor in stabilising fragile communities. PAT 5s work has found this to be the case. Good housing management, with a local presence, can make a real contribution to improving the quality of life of those who live in deprived areas. It cannot, on its own, eliminate social exclusion, but a well trained local authority or housing association housing manager with the right attitude, working with tenants and either within or alongside, a local authority which has good co-operation between departments and good links to other agencies, can make a real impact. At the estate level, schemes such as super-caretakers and concierges can play their part.

2. There are many examples of good housing management around the country. The challenge is for all social landlords to reach the level of the best. Best Value will be the major instrument to bring about this improvement. The Action Plan on pages 10-14 sets out how we propose to move towards this objective.

Our remit

3. We were asked to report by April 1999 on:
   - the key element of successful, on-the-spot, housing management, what kinds of neighbourhoods most need it and what is needed to make it happen more extensively;
   - how to assess the costs and benefits of such a package, to housing and other agencies;
   - how to encourage other agencies to contribute to the costs, perhaps through pooling budgets;
   - options for promoting joint management of rented housing owned by a mix of landlords;

   with the goal of preparing an action plan with targets to extend on-the-spot housing management where cost-effective.

4. The PAT did not consider that all services should necessarily be delivered through on-the-spot management. Local circumstances will dictate the best approach. We therefore agreed, with the SEU, a more flexible goal to prepare an action plan with targets to bring about local housing management that is more effective in tackling social exclusion, including on-the-spot management where appropriate and cost effective.

5. We undertook a number of visits, used research, including projects commissioned specially for the PAT, and held a seminar of tenants, practitioners and academics to discuss our provisional conclusions. We talked to tenants, to local authority members and to officers of local authorities and registered social landlords. Hilary Armstrong was our Champion.
6. This report is written from the perspective of both local housing authorities and registered social landlords (RSLs) and while the detail may vary from landlord to landlord and be more appropriate to some than others, the broad themes apply to all. Increasingly RSLs are taking responsibility through Large Scale Voluntary Transfers for former local authority estates which are in need of the type of good quality housing management discussed in this report. Equally, although the report focuses on deprived areas, many of the ideas will be applicable across the board to the management of the social rented stock. Our conclusions are summarised below and our action plan follows the summary.

**The key elements of successful, on-the-spot housing management, what kinds of neighbourhood most need it and what is needed to make it happen more extensively**

7. The more deprived an area, the more intensive management and good quality managers are required. Managers are likely to be the first point of contact for tenants and are the eyes and ears of the landlord on the ground. Tenants invariably want a human presence. Multi-landlord areas raise particular issues if there are no common standards amongst landlords and no shared vision for the area as a whole.

8. There is no one definition of housing management, nor should there be. But certain functions form the core of housing management for all social landlords. The relative importance of each of these varies from landlord to landlord and area to area. Generally, they include rent collection, void control, tenancy enforcement and repairs and maintenance, but they extend to services such as allocations and rent setting. Whatever wider role housing managers have, these bread and butter services must all be carried out efficiently and effectively. If they are not, tenants lose confidence in the landlord and the area is at risk of decline.

9. It is the quality of the housing management service rather than any particular structure that counts, but on-the-spot housing management, providing a human touch, is crucial in deprived areas. Its presence is reflected in increased tenant satisfaction, although the housing management service alone cannot succeed in turning around an area.

**MODELS OF ON-THE-SPOT HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

10. There is no single model of on-the-spot housing management which is appropriate to all deprived areas, equally. Our visits showed that there are, however, three main models:

   o Estate based surgeries operated on a part time basis and/or visits by housing officers, backed by a centrally based housing service. These are the most basic form of local housing presence;

   o Estate or neighbourhood-based offices which give immediate access to housing officers and provide a means of maintaining a continuous service provider presence on an estate during office hours;

   o Neighbourhood offices, with housing, other local authority Departments and other statutory and voluntary sector agencies working alongside each other, and probably serving an area wider than a single estate. This structure facilitates better inter-agency working and can be the basis of a seamless service to local residents. In Leeds such one-stop shops are replacing local housing offices.
Beyond the basic management model, some form of more local on-site presence, especially in tower blocks, provides a sense of security and continuing personal contact. This can be supplemented by the use of CCTV and video entryphones. Intensive concierge schemes, such as that at Broadwater Farm, tend to be most effective. Similarly caretakers, who provide a local presence and look after communal areas, provide a valuable service. The highly trained super-caretakers of the effective, though costly, Danish system extend their role to include checking the house condition of departing tenants and welcoming new ones, as well as helping to resolve neighbourhood disputes and supporting vulnerable people. They also supervise and carry out some maintenance.

The cost of intensive on-the-spot management and the pattern of the stock may mean that it will not always be feasible or appropriate. For this reason some services, usually repairs, increasingly are being removed from local offices and delivered effectively through call centres using modern technology. This frees up staff time for individual visits. For those RSLs or local authorities in rural areas, with scattered stock providing housing management services in this way makes good sense. Provided such services are run efficiently they can provide a speedy and cheap service to the tenant where it matters, in the home.

**TENANT INVOLVEMENT**

Social landlords must promote the best possible working relationship with their tenants if they are to turn around deprived estates. The adoption of Tenant Participation Compacts linked to the new Best Value scheme will drive this agenda forward. However, in deprived areas it is necessary to make a special effort to mobilise tenant and resident interest. Some tenants and residents are very willing to get involved, some less so, and arrangements must take account of this. In order to become involved in management, tenants need practical support. Being an active tenant in a deprived area can involve a considerable commitment. Often only the retired or unemployed can spare the time. Actively identifying and helping other age groups can make the process more sustainable, and will help to achieve a more balanced voice.

Tenants need practical support if they are to be properly involved in managing their homes and estates. Views differ on whether tenants representatives should be paid for their involvement, although they should not lose out either and expenses should be refunded. Tenants groups, however, often need financial as well as other support. Occasional help for specific initiatives is no substitute for modest but reliable funding to cover basic operating costs. Often a few hundred pounds can make all the difference.

Some authorities have established procedures with their tenants to ensure that their housing and non-housing services are delivered to an agreed standard. York and Liverpool City Councils and the landlords on the Norton Grange estate in Stockton-on-Tees, for example, have developed agreements with their tenants which include service standards, monitoring arrangements and complaints procedures. In Birmingham, the Tenants Quality Promise guarantees standards in a range of services which extend beyond housing. The Promise is signed not by the Chair and Director of Housing but by the Leader and Chief Executive. All areas would benefit from such an enforceable service level agreement.

**THE ROLE OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND THE HOUSING MANAGER**

Although good housing services are key, they are not enough on their own, particularly in deprived areas. They need to be complemented by a range of other services whose nature will depend on local
circumstances. They may well include such initiatives as debt counselling and establishing credit unions, health advice, training or child care provision as well as access to other services such as public transport and health care. Tenants themselves develop aspirations which they will first of all look to the housing manager to fulfil, whether or not they are the responsibility of the landlord. The issue is how far it is the housing managers role, rather than that of other agencies, to meet these aspirations.

18. In our view the local authority, as the enabler for its area, has got to decide explicitly and consciously who should be doing the joining up. The answer may well be the housing manager, who is in practice the first point of contact with tenants. If so, the local authority must recognise this role and support it. But this does not mean that the housing manager can or should be the deliverer of these services. Instead he or she can make the first point of contact and stimulate action by others. The willingness and ability of others to respond will depend on the local arrangements in place, for example, the links with the Training and Enterprise Council or Health Authority.

19. Requiring of the housing management service this wider lead role in ensuring the long term sustainability of an estate on top of day to day landlord services, will mean redefining the traditional role of housing management staff. A team approach may be necessary, with different roles for different members of the team. Landlords will need to think about the respective roles and training needs of the strategic manager, the local manager, the super-caretaker and caretaker. In the same way, the traditional skills required for rent collection or voids management will not be those needed to stimulate action on a wider front. New skills will need to be added to the old. The training available for housing managers generally retains a narrow focus on the traditional skills and will need to be re-examined.

20. As well as being well trained, a modern housing manager must be of high calibre, customer-focused, committed and have a clearly defined role in relation to the centre, with the clout to take an effective lead in the renewal of deprived areas. And the housing manager collects a great deal of information which should be fed back into the strategic decisions made by the centre.

21. It is an issue as to how far these wider activities are paid for out of the rent. In the case of local authorities, although the Housing Revenue Account is primarily a landlord account, Circular 8/95 recognises that, in the most difficult and challenging areas, the rent can fund managers to co-ordinate and facilitate actions by others, though not to provide those wider services. The funding regime for an RSL is different, and depends on how its capital funding was originally raised. In the main RSLs establish their own rent levels based on a number of factors and subject to an overall limit of Retail Price Index + 1%. Thus there is some local flexibility in the use of rent to allow housing managers to ensure that the needs of these areas are met. But beyond this, local authorities and RSLs must decide how far the task of turning around an estate is more than just a housing management one and they must ensure that the necessary funding also comes from other appropriate budgets.

ALLOCATIONS AND RACE EQUALITY POLICIES

22. Two key policies which impinge on housing management are allocations policies and race equality policies. Allocations policies play a significant part in determining the make-up of an estate, and hence the sustainability of the community and the demands on the housing management service. Concentrating large numbers of vulnerable people in an area can lead to a sharp deterioration in conditions, undermining the good effects of on-the-spot management. Many social landlords have developed letting plans or community lettings (for RSLs local lettings policies) which takes account of the needs of the areas as a whole as well as those of the individual. Whether or not tenants are involved in setting allocations policies varies from area to area, sometimes responding to the wishes of the tenants themselves.

23. In areas of severe pressure on stock there is less scope for the landlord to depart from
criteria that are strictly based on housing those in urgent need. Nevertheless experience in the UK and abroad suggests that an allocations policy sensitive to the community and to the need to relieve social exclusion is desirable for the stability of an area. It is also acceptable under current legislation. There is some evidence that, over the long term, community lettings do not result in disadvantaged people losing out.

24. Black and minority ethnic groups must have confidence that they will be treated fairly by the housing department of the local authority or by an RSL. The ethnic make up of the staff in the housing management service should reflect that of the community that it serves. A good strategy will include cultural awareness training, pursuing perpetrators of racial harassment, supporting victims and setting targets on race and service delivery. Most importantly there must be a commitment to racial equality in all aspects of the management service at top management level. This should then extend outwards, including tenants own organisations.

INFORMATION AND DISSEMINATION

25. There is no shortage of good ideas about housing management and, increasingly, ideas that have been tried and tested in practice. They need to be broadcast so that each area can select the mix which suits it best. New ideas for dissemination of good practice are being developed the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency has amongst its main functions assisting local authorities in their performance by supporting and promoting innovation; other organisations are active too. The Housing Corporation has an extensive programme to generate innovation and good practice amongst RSLs. The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is building on the work of its Good Practice Unit to develop an on-line process improvement facility for landlords. DETR, CIH, the National Housing Federation (NHF) and others should continue to ensure that good practice is identified, disseminated and put into practice.

26. The potential for new technology to support the work of the housing management service is vast but as yet undeveloped. New technology can enhance on-the-spot management through the use of call centres and touch screen technology providing a direct service to residents. There are pioneering schemes already underway, but these are mainly yet to be evaluated. PAT 15 is looking at the contribution of information technology to neighbourhood renewal and should do so with particular reference to its vital role in the housing management service.

How to assess the costs and benefits of such a package, to housing and other agencies.

27. On-the-spot housing management services are not in themselves necessarily more expensive than centralised ones, but the high quality intensive housing management required in the more deprived areas is likely to be. Costs are determined in large part by the numbers and levels of staff involved. Although technology means that some services can be run efficiently and effectively from the centre the importance of the local human link between tenants and the landlord cannot be over-estimated.

28. Local management, especially of labour intensive schemes such as concierges or super-caretakers, can appear expensive. However, the savings can also be substantial. Unfortunately while the costs fall on the housing account, many of the savings accrue elsewhere, such as reduced policing or lower demands on environmental or social services. Landlords need to look at the costs and benefits in the round.

29. To inform the work of the PAT, DETR commissioned a case study of the costs and benefits of the intensive on-the-spot management and maintenance service on Broadwater Farm, London Borough of Haringey, (which includes super-caretakers and
This found that on this estate the additional costs of caretakers and concierges are to a large extent offset by reductions elsewhere in the management and maintenance costs. Thus, for example, the concierges reduce vandalism and hence repairs and maintenance. At the same time very substantial benefits have been achieved in the quality of the stock and of tenants lives. This sounds promising, but is not on its own decisive. Other authorities which we visited did not find the same offsetting savings. The PAT recommends that further work is carried out to acquire harder evidence on the true costs and benefits of on-the-spot management in a wider range of case studies.

**How to encourage other agencies to contribute to the costs, perhaps through pooling budgets**

30. As noted above, the costs of on-the-spot housing management, who pays for it, and where the savings and other benefits fall, are key issues. We did not come across any instances of agencies pooling budgets. However logical such an arrangement may appear it faces formidable difficulties. These include the definition of the part of overall budgets to be pooled, the willingness of agencies with their responsibility for delivery of specific services from budgets which are already stretched and, in some cases, legislative and accountability problems.

31. From our experience, a more achievable solution in most cases is for agencies to commit themselves to work in partnership, allowing each agency to retain its budget but ensuring that priorities are influenced by and action co-ordinated through discussion with other partners. PAT 4 (Neighbourhood Management) will examine possible models here.

**Options for promoting joint management of rented housing owned by a mix of landlords.**

32. Even joint management, which is far easier to arrange than pooled budgets, (if only because fewer players are usually involved), is rare. Again, joint management involves one landlord giving up some of its direct control. Nevertheless some group housing management schemes exist. On the Holly Street estate in Hackney five social landlords have agreed to share management costs and have formed a joint Management Board. One RSL has taken the lead, on behalf of all five, in setting up a local office. On the Timber Wharf estate in Tower Hamlets tenants voted for which of the three RSLs should provide the management service. The lead RSL has a management agreement with the other two.

33. These, and a few others, are promising but isolated examples. There is little practical advice on what models might be suitable in different circumstances. This gap will need to be filled by the DETR and others such as the Local Government Association (LGA), the Housing Corporation, the NHF and the CIH. Again the task of taking this forward falls to PAT 4, working in conjunction with PAT 5.
Action Plan

The goals of the action plan should be to ensure that:

- Local authorities and RSLs: recognise at a senior level the importance of good housing management as a necessary basis for turning round a deprived area; review the management of their own estates; and take the necessary steps to put good housing management with a local presence in place;
- Local authorities and RSLs identify, recognise and support the key role of the local housing manager as the agent for joined-up thinking;
- The necessary tools/support for this to happen are put in place by Government Departments and other relevant bodies.

The Recommendations are:

Recommendation 1

The importance of good housing management, and in deprived areas of on-the-spot housing management, must be recognised. Under Best Value the housing management service should improve continuously over the next five years

a. The DETR should actively advocate intensive on-the-spot housing management (with a local presence) for large, difficult estates;
b. The DETR should consider enhancing the relative value of housing management in the Housing Investment Programme assessments;
c. The DETR should exhort local authorities with deprived estates and a poor housing management service to review fundamentally that service as an early priority in their programme of performance reviews under Best Value;
d. Local authorities should draw up local performance indicators and targets in respect of effective housing management processes, particularly for on-the-spot management including, where appropriate, initiatives such as concierges and super-caretakers. The Audit Commission should ensure that external auditors scrutinise these as part of their annual inspection under Best Value of local authorities local performance plans;
e. The Audit Commission should ensure that the Housing Inspectorate includes scrutiny of these local indicators as part of the programme of inspections the Inspectorate will undertake under Best Value;
f. RSLs should review the housing management service delivered to deprived estates as an early priority as part of the cycle of reviews under the Best Value framework for RSLs;
g. The Housing Corporation should review Performance Standards for RSLs to ensure that those Standards are framed to assist RSLs in tackling social exclusion;
h. The Housing Corporation should consider revising Performance Standards to enable tenants and residents to have more influence over the level and quality of housing management service delivered by RSLs;
i. The DETR should make housing management one of the services to which Tenant Participation Compacts (TPCs) should apply and in which it is expected tenants will be fully engaged from April 2000. Additionally TPCs should be subject to scrutiny under both
the HIP and Best Value processes;
j. Local authorities and RSLs should ensure that tenants have the support they need to
develop and run their tenant participation structures.

Recommendation 2

On-the-spot housing management should be introduced where the need has been identified

a. Local authorities and RSLs should define with tenants and residents through, for example, Best Value, what the housing service task is within their deprived areas ie whether it should extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the service;
b. The Housing Corporation should use Innovation and Good Practice grant (as proposed in the consultation paper Developing the ADP) to provide capacity building grants to enable tenants and tenants groups to become involved in the management of properties in deprived areas where social exclusion is evident;
c. Local authorities and RSLs should assess what new technology can do to help service delivery.

Recommendation 3

Social landlords must recognise that housing management problems often do not have simple housing management solutions. They must develop links to deliver joined up solutions with other service providers and community organisations operating in their area

Local authorities and RSLs should, as part of Best Value, embrace a corporate approach to housing management, bringing in non-housing departments and other organisations.

Recommendation 4

Good, on-the-spot housing management must be supported through financial mechanisms

a. DETR should review periodically DOE Circular 8/95 on the Housing Revenue Account to ensure that it continues to allow local authorities sufficient flexibility to fund activities beyond those such as rent collection and repairs traditionally associated with housing management, as the housing management agenda changes;
b. Local authorities should, in consultation with their tenants, prioritise the use of resources within the HRA, and where intensive management extends beyond the role envisaged in Circular 8/95, ensure that other parts of the authority make the appropriate financial contribution;
c. RSLs should consider devoting more of their resources to assist them manage their stock in deprived areas;
d. The Government should ensure that the Supporting People policy is implemented in a way that contributes to enabling housing managers and housing authorities to work in
partnership with other agencies to turn around deprived estates;
e. The DETR should consider unfreezing the management element of the management and maintenance allowance, and whether management allowances should be set for each local authority according to the intensity of the housing management task in their area;
f. The DETR and Housing Corporation should examine the potential for revising the regulatory framework for RSLs to enable and encourage relevant landlords to lever in additional resources to enhance the housing management service in deprived areas.

Recommendation 5

Good practice on housing management must be made available to housing managers

a. The DETR (working with the Housing Corporation and others) should by the end of 1999, review existing good practice on housing management and on its role in neighbourhood renewal. The objective is to provide an index of what is available for both LAs and RSLs, and to provide a guide for good housing management in deprived areas;
b. The DETR should consider the value of supporting the system of electronic knowledge management (Housemark) being developed jointly by the CIH and Arthur Andersen, and supported by the LGA, to assist and support housing officers in the field;
c. The DETR (and the Housing Corporation) should review whether allocations policy and guidance provides local authorities and RSLs with the flexibility to encourage and support sustainable communities whilst continuing to meet the requirements of those in housing need;
d. The Housing Corporation should widely publicise the good practice advice on housing management that has emerged from the Innovation and Good Practice programme. In particular the Corporation should use its website to disseminate good practice in this area.

Recommendation 6

Training and professional standards must be raised to enable housing managers to meet new challenges

a. Key Potential UK (the National Training Organisation for the Public and Private Rented Housing Sector), in drawing up its strategy for housing education and training, should identify the training needs of both housing professionals and tenants, and ensure that housing education and training is accessible and appropriate for the needs identified in the PAT 5 report; in particular the skills required for multi-agency working and for ensuring services are accessible to all;
b. The CIH should review its professional qualifications to identify any areas where the skills identified in the report as essential for a housing manager on a deprived estate are not covered (including a review of its professional qualification);
c. The CIH should consider how, through its programmes, it can improve and widen access routes for tenants and other types of community activist to become skilled so as to take up employment as housing managers;
d. Local authorities and RSLs should increase their staff uptake of professional
qualifications and training;
e. Regulatory bodies such as the Housing Corporation should consider, in conjunction with Key Potential UK, ways of monitoring and evaluating take up of training.

Recommendation 7

Local authorities and RSLs must tackle social exclusion suffered by black and minority ethnic communities through a change of culture in core housing management to ensure the process is inclusive

a. Local authorities and RSLs should adopt and implement corporately a written policy on racial equality for their housing management service which reflects the Commission for Racial Equalitie's Race Relations Code of Practice and the NHFs Equality Code;
b. Local authorities and RSLs should ensure that all staff delivering the housing management service are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without discrimination;
c. Local authorities and RSLs should ensure that the staff make-up reflects as far as possible the ethnic balance of the local community. They should undertake positive action towards agencies such as Positive Action Training in Housing (PATH) to enable black and minority ethnic people to compete on equal terms with others for employment opportunities in housing;
d. Local authorities and RSLs should provide literature about the housing and other services in their area in a range of appropriate languages and undertake regular ethnic monitoring.

Recommendation 8

The work of PAT 5 should feed into that of other PATs with PAT 5 members advising and/or attending other PAT meetings as appropriate

a. PAT 4 (Neighbourhood Management) to work with PAT 5 on the role of the housing management service within a multi-tenure neighbourhood management system; the financial mechanisms necessary to support that role; and ways in which budgets might be pooled;
b. PAT 6 (Neighbourhood Wardens) to note how a neighbourhood warden system can be an integral part of the housing management system (and paid for out of the Housing Revenue Account);
c. PAT 7 (Unpopular Housing) to note the role of good on-the-spot housing management and of a sensitive allocations policy in maintaining a balanced population on estates;
d. PAT 8 (Anti-social Behaviour) to note the importance of good on-the-spot housing management, (in particular concierges and super-caretakers), both in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour;
e. PAT 9 (Community self-help) to note the importance of developing tenants capacity to help themselves and so become involved at whatever level they wish in the housing management of their area;
f. PAT 15 (Information Technology) to note the use of new technology as a vital tool in
providing housing management services to tenants and keeping housing officers in the field well informed;
g. PAT 16 (Learning lessons) to note the importance which PAT 5 attaches to improved standards of, and take-up of, training for both housing professionals and tenants;
h. PAT 17 (Joining it up locally) to note the importance of robust, cross-sector information about the needs of an area to enable the housing management service to satisfy the needs of its tenants and measure progress against PAT Recommendations;
i. PAT 18 (Better Information) to note the importance of exchange of good practice amongst housing officers.

Recommendation 9

PAT 5 should reconvene at regular intervals to assess progress against the Recommendations

a. PAT 5 should meet after the publication of the report to consider what form of consultation/dissemination process might be appropriate to inform the further development of the neighbourhood renewal strategy.
The Report

Remit

1. The Social Exclusion Units report Bringing Britain together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal set the following remit for Policy Action Team 5 (PAT 5):

To report by April 1999 on:

- the key elements of successful, on-the-spot housing management, what kinds of neighbourhoods need it, and what is needed to make it happen more extensively;
- how to assess the costs and benefits of such a package, to housing and other agencies;
- how to encourage other agencies to contribute to the costs, perhaps through pooling budgets;
- options for promoting joint management of rented housing owned by a mix of landlords,

with the goal of preparing an action plan with targets to extend on-the-spot housing management where cost-effective.

2. The first meeting of PAT 5 agreed that this remit implied that localised, on-the-spot housing management was always the best form of management. Whilst much information existed already about the different forms of housing management, a consensus had not yet emerged as to which type was best and what works in which area. PAT 5 felt that it needed to have the freedom to explore the possibilities of different approaches. The PAT therefore agreed a more flexible goal with the SEU:

To prepare an action plan with targets to bring about local housing management that is more effective in tackling social exclusion including on-the-spot management, where appropriate and cost effective.

The PAT 5 approach

3. The PAT adopted a three-pronged approach to the work:

- two research projects, already in progress for DETR, were re-specified to feed directly into the PAT. They were on the costs of housing management and sustainable estate regeneration. A case study was also commissioned by DETR to assess the costs and benefits of intensive, on-the-spot housing management on a particular estate;
- the PAT split into sub-groups and visited a number of estates in England and Denmark. In all cases they spoke to managers and tenants (see Annexes C and D);
- a seminar was organised on 9 March 1999 to discuss the initial results and emerging themes of the PATs work with a wide cross-section of tenants, practitioners and
academics (see Annex E for a list of those who attended).

The PAT also held five meetings between October 1998 and April 1999.

4. A detailed description of the PAT 5 work programme is at Annex A.

1. Definition and problem analysis

A. The key elements of successful, on-the-spot housing management, what kinds of neighbourhoods most need it, and what is needed to make it happen more extensively

1.1 Bringing Britain together identifies housing management as a key factor in estate regeneration. But what exactly is meant by the housing management task; what does it look like when carried out on-the-spot and how does it interact with the activities of other agencies operating in the same area?

1.2 The SEUs report confines itself largely, but not exclusively, to areas where the housing is in the ownership of either local authorities or registered social landlords (RSLs) (who are largely housing associations, Housing Action Trusts (HATs), local housing companies and housing co-operatives). PAT 5 has looked at the management practices in both types of organisation. There are many similarities but there are important differences too. Both local authorities and housing associations will share responsibility for certain landlord tasks, such as rent collection or repairs. But the wider responsibilities of a local authority as a public body may mean that a particular local authority landlord will take on, for example, a regeneration role or a role in providing housing for particularly difficult to place applicants, which the general needs housing association will not consider or may not have the powers or resources to pursue. The quality of RSLs' housing management service will, nevertheless, still be of crucial importance.

1.3 Differences in the scale and distribution of local authority and RSL stock are also a crucial factor in influencing how the housing management task is organised. Local authority estates may consist of thousands of homes whereas the smaller housing association, or the larger association with a dispersed stock, may have only a few properties in one location alongside privately rented or owned dwellings. At the same time the trend towards Large Scale Voluntary Transfers of local authority stock to RSLs will mean that, during the lifetime of the neighbourhood renewal strategy, many RSLs will increasingly face the same management challenge as local authorities. In this report, therefore, references to social landlords are to both local housing authorities and RSLs unless stated otherwise.

What is the housing management task?

There is no single definition of the housing management task. It can vary between landlord and estate. Its nature depends on what local circumstances demand. This flexibility gives the housing management service the strength and capacity to meet the aspirations of residents. But local authorities and RSLs must recognise the importance of good housing management and its contribution to neighbourhood renewal.
1.4 The management of social housing is carried out primarily by local housing authorities and RSLs, neither of which see their principle role as making a profit. Local housing authorities have statutory duties, for example in relation to homelessness and housing benefit administration, which do not apply to RSLs. Within each type of organisation there is great diversity in terms of size and type of stock, geographical coverage, administrative arrangements, numbers of staff and the degree of difficulty of the social and economic circumstances in which they operate. Despite the differences, however, in recent years local housing authorities and RSLs have increasingly converged in providing housing for those in society who are the least well off and most likely to be socially excluded. The development of the partnership approach to regeneration (and for RSLs the advent of Housing Plus) has further widened the potential of the housing service.

1.5 So long as the social landlord has existed housing management has existed, but there has never been agreement about what the housing management task is. Moreover, partly in recognition of the diversity of social landlords and the circumstances in which they operate, central government in relation to local housing authorities has not been prescriptive about how housing management should be defined and delivered or what standards should be achieved. The Housing Corporation has defined minimum performance expectations for RSLs (Performance Standards updated in 1997 (and first introduced in 1994)) as part of the Corporations regulatory role, but this does not provide the answer to what the housing management task is. Legislation, moreover, provides local authorities and RSLs with only a very general framework of powers for housing management, stipulating few specific requirements and leaving the task of management undefined.

1.6 It was only with the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) for housing authorities in 1996 that any definition of core landlord functions appeared in legislation. These included:

- rent and service charge collection;
- enforcement of tenancy agreements;
- dealing with the vacating of properties;
- management of repairs and maintenance;
- caretaking, cleaning and security.

Authorities had the flexibility to include in the tender package tasks which fell outside these activities to provide comprehensive estate-based housing management services, including allocations and tenant consultation. But the strictly functional view of the housing management task, as prescribed for CCT, discouraged authorities from taking account of the wider problems that had emerged within the social rented sector.

1.7 Research by Aldbourne Associates for the Housing Corporation, Defining the housing management task, 1998, found that there was no single definition of housing management that was acceptable to all RSLs and defined it as those services which individual RSLs provide to all their general needs tenants and which they fund wholly, or in part, from rents. The interim report of research by Arthur Andersen for DETR on the costs of local authority housing management also identified a complex pattern, with a core of activities that was perceived by a cross section of practitioners to be part of housing management, together with other factors
that could be included or seen as part of a wider service. This represents a consensus, but not necessarily what is most important. As the range of issues which are presented to the housing manager becomes wider it is becoming ever more difficult to say categorically what functions are part of the housing management task. Nor do we think that there is any advantage in trying to codify these functions centrally. What is appropriate for one area, or for one manager, may not be for another. Rather than concern itself with a model definition the social landlord needs rather to decide in its case what the housing management task is that needs doing on behalf of its tenants.

1.8 If the core/traditional landlord services are not carried out efficiently other services to the tenants will be less effective. Tenants will lose confidence in the landlord and this may put the area at risk of decline. Perhaps partly for this reason the housing management task has often tended to concentrate on the immediate issues such as dealing with repairs or collecting rents rather than the longer term goals such as sustainability. However, social landlords can and do provide other services as part of the management of their estates. Increasing focus on meeting the highest levels of housing need have led to a concentration of the more vulnerable tenants in the social rented sector. Thus the demands on the housing service go ever wider than ensuring that broken windows are repaired and communal hallways kept clean. RSLs in particular have a long tradition of dealing with special needs through their housing service. Local authorities have also responded to the changing needs of their tenants with, for example, anti-poverty strategies. Consequently there is a wide variation in the coverage of services delivered to the tenant.

1.9 Tenants too, as the consumers of these services, have a particular perspective on what the housing management service should provide. Recent research for the Housing Corporation found that RSL tenants did want services that went beyond the core services. But they thought that these should be provided by the local authority, not their landlord, and should not be paid for out of their rent. On the other hand research by Arthur Andersen for DETR confirmed earlier research that showed that local authority tenants focused on core landlord services such as carrying out repairs. Tenants are generally realistic in their expectations but do want to have an opportunity to specify the type of services provided and to be able to monitor results and see how the service costs are reflected in their rent.

1.10 These findings are not inconsistent with the more generally held view, and one which has been verified by the PAT 5 visits, that tenants are also interested in the wider development of their community and the range of services available. This is especially so when regeneration funding becomes available and stimulates those aspirations. Nevertheless, there is a tension between the fact that tenants see rents paying only for the housing related management tasks whilst on the multiply deprived estates the tenants see the housing manager as the most accessible representative of the authority and the housing management service as the deliverer of their wider aspirations.

**What is the role of the housing manager?**

On deprived estates good core housing management is a necessary condition for sustainable regeneration. The housing managers role will not end there. He or she is uniquely placed to act as the joiner-up, but not necessarily as the deliverer of the solutions, and (in the case of local authority housing managers) as the authoritys eyes and ears on the ground. Local authorities will need to clearly identify, recognise and support this wider role.
1.11 The GFA Consulting (GFA) research on sustainable estate regeneration undertaken with the European Institute of Urban Affairs on behalf of the DETR and about to be completed, concludes that it is clear that in areas suffering multiple disadvantage a variety of functions have to be fulfilled. Whether or nor it makes sense to classify them all as housing management, if any is neglected the housing management task becomes more difficult. What matters to the tenants are the results and the key outcome is joined up thinking and action. This backs up what PAT 5 found on its visits and in discussion.

1.12 There appear to be three distinct roles that need to be fulfilled where deprivation on estates is being tackled:

- the core/traditional housing management service;
- liaison with the other agencies to deliver complementary services;
- delivery of those other services.

The housing managers role, over and above delivering the traditional housing management service, is to be the joiner-up, but not necessarily the deliverer of the solutions. It is not necessary or in many cases probable that he or she can deliver the full range of services required by tenants and residents. What is essential is that the local authority (and RSL landlord) consider explicitly how far housing managers themselves are to be tasked to take forward the wider agenda beyond traditional housing management functions. Having identified this wider role, landlords must ensure it is recognised properly, empowered and resourced.

1.13 The GFA research also concludes that, although there are exceptions (which can probably be explained by a combination of estate design and tenure/tenant mix) effective housing management in disadvantaged areas requires a wide range of types of service to be brought to bear, irrespective of who provides them. Playing advocate for the estate and acting as a catalyst to pull in and retain those other services is already seen by at least some managers as part of the job.

On Broadwater Farm, Haringey the consultation exercises which the housing managers carried out as part of the regeneration of the fabric of the housing identified the residents interest in having a health centre based on the estate. The housing manager therefore found himself taking on a role beyond that generally associated with the local housing manager, of establishing the right contacts in order to activate other parts of the public sector. The housing manager was the visible presence of the local authority on the ground and thus served as a focus for the aspirations of the residents. Now that the health centre is up and running successfully in its own right the housing manager can step back from the project.

1.14 However, boundaries between the core housing management task and the wider functions are not the same in every situation and depend so much on individual circumstances that it is not possible to be rigid about where they lie. This is recognised in DOE Circular 8/95 on The Housing Revenue Account which stresses that in the most difficult and challenging housing estates the responsibility of managers covers a wide range of functions. In some instances managers may need to provide these services themselves but often they can better act as co-
ordinators and facilitators of services by other agencies.

1.15 The question of who delivers the broader range of services depends on the local circumstances. In Castle Vale, the HAT, with its wide and flexible powers, was in a position to deliver a wide range of complementary services itself. On less well resourced estates (e.g., Bell Farm, York) almost everything ancillary to core housing management had to be brought in by other agencies. The size of an estate makes a difference; large estates undergoing extensive and expensive regeneration programmes may have large multi-disciplinary teams on site. On smaller estates or, once the regeneration team has moved on, if those ancillary activities are not undertaken or at least brought in by housing staff, they may not happen at all.

1.16 The challenge for all housing managers in deprived areas lies in taking the initiative beyond core housing management. In many areas this challenge will require a change in the culture of housing management and the skills of the housing manager. These skills will include amongst other things those set out in the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional housing skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Estate management (green areas etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Housing management (rent collection, voids etc)</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community development skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Customer liaison and understanding of customer-focused service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community/service user involvement in service delivery and planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Awareness of the role of other professional disciplines and that of voluntary and private sector organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to work on projects or strategies with others</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of community issues such as poverty, benefits, sub housing and employment markets, self help initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Understanding of regeneration and neighbourhood renewal strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Awareness of equal opportunities issues</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to write documents which can be understood by a range of audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Effective public speaking and media skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Negotiation skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New technology

- Understanding of IT and knowledge/information management
- Understanding of the potential application of IT to housing and community development activity

Business skills

- Risk management
- Business planning
- Marketing skills
- Change management skills

1.17 But this challenge is not one for housing managers alone. The difficulty of the housing managers task will relate directly to how well the strategic part of the local authority recognises the relationship between the housing service and other services. If the housing manager is to take on more than just the liaison role with the other services and become responsible for ensuring the delivery of those services, his or her role may have evolved from that of the housing manager to a neighbourhood manager. PAT 4 is exploring separately the wider issues surrounding neighbourhood management. This report, therefore, concentrates on the housing manager as the deliverer of a first class, tenant responsive, housing management service within social housing, but one which looks towards how that service can contribute to the wider agenda of tackling social exclusion.

What does on-the-spot housing management look like?
It is important to have local access to good housing management services and some form of human presence, but not always necessary to have all parts of the service located on-the-spot. There is no single model of on-the-spot housing management. The models range from totally estate-based housing offices to neighbourhood offices providing access to services from a range of agencies and supported by a call centre.

1.18 Just as there is no one definition of the general housing management task, there is no agreed definition of a model of on-the-spot housing management. But the role of on-the-spot housing management as part of the solution to the problems of deprived areas was highlighted by a DOE research team in a 1981 report on difficult to let housing. Remote centralised housing management was seen as a key problem and the report said that local housing management should be the first priority in strategies to turn these estates around. It recommended basing a local manager and caretakers on estates and highlighted the importance of working closely with the tenants. Subsequent work by the Priority Estates Project (PEP) diagnosed the problem further and produced a guide which provided a fully worked up example of local management.

1.19 Social landlords are free to provide their housing services as they will; from one central office, through to a network of decentralised regional, district or estate-based offices. The PEP
model is at one extreme of the spectrum, devolving all core landlord functions and the budget to estate level. Other research has found that in practice a smaller range of services may be run from an estate office; for example, Estate based housing management: an evaluation (Glennerster and Turner 1993) found that the case study authorities had not implemented the PEP model in full, so that, for example, estate offices did not cover rent collection and arrears recovery, but even so local management was beneficial. So there is no one model of housing management that is recognised as being effective in all circumstances. The important point is that the landlord should be aware of the range of models and choose or adapt one for the circumstances of the area, examining a menu of options such as those illustrated in the box below.

### MENU OF OPTIONS FOR LOCAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT PRESENCE

These options are not necessarily alternatives; it is possible to have a mixture of them in response to specific circumstances, e.g., a service that is generally centralised but provides local management surgeries and caretakers on an estate with particular requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</table>
| Centralised management eg. telephone call centre for housing management and maintenance services - no regular local presence but respond to tenants' requests when required | Accessible for tenants with access to telephone  
Relatively cheap because of economies of scale  
Housing staff can be deployed flexibly  
Prompt and efficient service can be provided for services like repairs | Some tenants may not have access to telephone  
Service may appear remote from tenants  
Housing management staff may spend a lot of unproductive time travelling  
Risk of losing touch with developments on estates  
Telephone services may be inappropriate for dealing with issues like community development |
| Area management - area based offices        | Cheaper than estate based offices  
More accessible for tenants to visit than central management  
Cooperation with other services can provide convenient One Stop Shops with high quality premises and user-friendly service | May still be remote for some tenants  
Staffing office may limit time housing managers can spend with tenants in their homes |
| Estate based offices                        | Very accessible to tenants to visit  
Staff able to spend most of their time on the estate - can prevent problems arising or tackle them immediately  
Helpful for issues like community development | Relatively expensive - may only be justified for the estates with the most severe problems  
Not appropriate for scattered RSL stock  
Local staff may lack specialist knowledge to solve some problems  
Staffing office may limit time |
What kind of neighbourhoods most need on-the-spot management?

**Areas suffering from multiple deprivations as identified in Bringing Britain together most need on-the-spot housing management.**

1.20 Research and practice suggest that the kind of areas identified as the most deprived in Bringing Britain together are those which need and benefit most from a degree of local housing management. These are fragile communities suffering from multiple deprivation reflected in a range of problems:

- poor job opportunities;
- high proportion of vulnerable and poor families, deprivation and social fragmentation;
- high levels of turnover and empty properties;
- high levels of crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour;
- problems with the housing stock, such as disrepair and bad design;
- rundown environment and communal areas;
- poor health.

This was confirmed by the PAT 5 visits.

1.21 But there are estates with an apparently similar profile, which despite the absence of regeneration or intensive local management remain enduringly popular and successful. The key features of such estates offer some indication of the types of design and other issues that
contribute to a good neighbourhood:

- location close to local facilities, such as transport, shops, health care and leisure facilities;
- social housing that looks much like private housing and blends into the area;
- environmental quality;
- good reputation;
- social mix;
- presence of local stakeholder institutions such as churches or social centres;
- sensitive allocations policies.

Why is on-the-spot management not more widespread?

On-the-spot housing management is more widespread than Bringing Britain together suggests but it may not be readily identifiable as such because it takes a number of different forms and, in particular, is not most commonly seen in the form of a local office on each estate from which a full housing management service is run.

1.22Research suggests that extensive decentralisation to local estate offices full on-the-spot management remains rare, and this is borne out by the experience of PAT 5 members and the PAT 5 visits. At the same time, the visits illustrated that some degree of decentralisation was common on the more deprived estates, but that this could take different forms and, apart from a small core of common activities, embrace a varied menu of services. On Bell Farm estate in York there is a local caretaker on-site and a housing manager visits twice a week to deal with tenants problems. Repairs and allocations services are organised from the city centre housing headquarters. In contrast the Bloomsbury Estate Management Board (EMB) in Birmingham deal with caretaking, repairs and management at the estate office and have a role in allocations too. Research on case study Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) with local management and budgets showed that there were varying degrees of efficiency and effectiveness between them but that they are able to deliver superior value for money compared with major social landlords, Tenants in control (Price Waterhouse 1995).

1.23Decentralisation can also be a temporary phenomenon during regeneration, financial restraints requiring a pull back to the centre once budgets become mainstream. There is often pressure to redirect staff effort away to other areas once the physical regeneration programme has ended. This is a question of priorities but many estates need on-going intensive management and revenue support to sustain the improvements brought about by capital investment.

1.24There are a number of reasons for the comparative rarity of full on-the-spot management arrangements. For both local housing authorities and RSLs pressures on costs are a constraint on the provision of local management. Whilst during the 1980s PEP and Estate Action made funding dependent on committing to local management and tenant involvement, under their successor, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), the then Department of the Environment was keen to leave decisions to the local partnership and was less active in promoting a particular form of service. In addition SRB has deliberately widened the focus of regeneration from estates to neighbourhoods, in response to the recognition that the wider context is important. PEP and Estate Action resulted in some degree of decentralisation in the most difficult estates. However, despite the achievements of determined authorities, decision making
powers remain centralised, tenant involvement can be limited and locally controlled budgets are very rare.

1.25 Although some long-established registered social landlords have always practised local housing management they are very much in the minority. Pressures from the Housing Corporation and central government in the late 1980s and early 1990s to provide value for money led to the emergence of multi-landlord consortia among registered social landlords which resulted in the development of large estates, but with relatively small numbers of homes belonging to each landlord. Few individual landlords had sufficient revenue stream from these estates to justify local housing management.

1.26 The introduction of CCT was intended to stimulate improvements in management performance and expose established activities to the challenge of new ideas and methods for the benefit of tenants. The emphasis on value for money increased pressure on costs, which has had complex results. On the one hand there has been more formal decentralisation and delegation of budgets, on the other a general reduction in the intensity of management as cheaper options were pursued. Neither are there any financial incentives in the subsidy system to encourage it. Allocation of subsidy to local housing authorities is at district level according to a formula based on needs, and allocation of subsidy does not take account of organisational issues.

1.27 Most obviously, not all social housing consists of estates. Not all estates are large. Some local authorities and more particularly RSLs have scattered street properties or small clusters of housing in villages where local management is either not required or not justified economically. Social exclusion exists amongst dispersed stock too and methods of housing management other than that with a constant on-the-spot presence need to be developed to assist in tackling it.

Is on-the-spot housing management necessary for success on deprived estates or are there other models?

Good housing management, with an on-the-spot presence of some sort, can make a real contribution to reducing social exclusion by improving the quality of life for those in deprived areas. On its own, however, it cannot eliminate social exclusion. Landlords will need to consider the delivery mechanism which best suits the circumstances through, for example, the Best Value process.

1.28 The GFA study on sustainable estate regeneration has found that on-the-spot management often helps to sustain the momentum of regeneration programmes, but it also identified estates where the achievements had not been sustained despite the presence of local housing management. Similarly it found estates which have never displayed significant problems but where the housing management function is organised centrally. It concludes that no single form of on-the-spot housing management is sufficient to turn an area around on its own, although because poor and unresponsive management has often contributed to the decline of an area, systematic improvement of management practices is essential in those areas.

1.29 It is the quality of the housing management service rather than its structure that appears to count. There is not one blueprint for all estates, but there are certain key principles which need
to be met to have even a measure of success. These are:

- customer focused service delivery;
- resident involvement in service planning, delivery and monitoring;
- maximum access to service providers by service users;
- clear and speedy routes to redress for dissatisfied service users;
- service level agreements between providers and service users.

Provided that these criteria are met rigorously, the actual pattern of service delivery need not conform to the norm. Therefore, the extent of local office presence, the use of peripatetic staff and access to services via new technology (e.g., call centres) can be varied according to local circumstances, budget constraints and residents aspirations.

1.30 The estates which were visited by PAT 5 illustrate this well. All the social housing estates visited are regarded as having been revitalised, starting from a very low base. Although not all the housing management arrangements followed the same form there are three main models. These are:

- Estate based surgeries operated on a part-time basis, backed up by a centrally based housing service (e.g., Bell Farm);
- Estate based offices (e.g., Broadwater Farm, Chingford Hall, Norton Grange and Bloomsbury);
- Neighbourhood offices, with housing and other council Departments and independent agencies, serving a number of estates (e.g., Leeds);
- Additionally, a number of landlords are developing call centres, making use of technology to deliver elements of the service centrally, to back up locally based teams.

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Thames Valley Housing Association manages around 5000 homes scattered over 30 local authority areas in West London and five Thames Valley counties, from a single HQ office. It decided to introduce teleworking for its outreach housing management officers to avoid officer time being spent travelling between HQ and the residents homes and to satisfy tenants and leaseholders wish for face-to-face contact. Consultation with residents established the need to improve telephone service and resident consultation. As a result Thames Valley introduced both generic working and teleworking for six housing management staff, plus a service centre. The service centre aims to provide an immediate response to the majority of telephone calls. Four front-line operational officers, covering discreet geographical patches, are provided with laptops and modems. They need to visit the office only one day a week for team meetings etc. The onus is on the Association visiting the customer rather than the customer having to come to the office.

1.31 In Denmark, where social housing is provided by housing associations and by law tenants make up a majority on the central and estate boards, housing management and maintenance
services are delivered with a mixture of locally based and central services.

1.32 The advantage of an estate based office is that tenants have immediate access to housing officers. Norton Grange, for example, is a large estate of some 660 houses in an isolated position on the outskirts of Stockton on Tees. With only one bus service into the estate, tenants may well have difficulties getting into the main housing office. In this case the local office also means that both the local authority and the housing association landlords on the estate can be co-located. One of the most common requests from tenants is for a local office and research has shown that tenant satisfaction increases as a result. Merely by having a regular presence on an estate a local authority can help sustain improvements.

1.33 A twice weekly surgery by housing managers on estates worked well in the case of Bell Farm. The estate was smaller than some of the others, the stock now in good condition and the community stable; the housing managers had established their credentials with the tenants and, via the residents association, were easily contacted outside surgery hours.

1.34 Leeds City Council, on the other hand, is in the process of establishing a network of one stop shops offering easy access to a wide range of services which will replace their system of local housing offices on each estate. They had found, that by spreading resources too thinly across each estate, the benefits which might be expected to arise from a local presence failed to materialise. The staff, who because of their prominent location became the focus for both housing and non-housing problems, were unable to respond effectively to the many demands placed upon them. The smaller numbers of multi-service one stop shops each has a Customer Service Team which deals with all customers requests from across services, sorting out what is needed and actioning or referring on behalf of the customer.

Do concierges and super-caretakers have a role?
The role of concierges and super-caretakers will vary according to local conditions, but their presence can provide a sense of security and personal contact and free up the housing managers time for more strategic tasks. They should be more widely introduced.

1.35 Most blocks of flats have communal areas that need to be cleaned and maintained by the staff of the landlord. In some areas security problems make it imperative to have a concierge controlling access to blocks of flats. Research has suggested that some kind of in-block staff presence should be regarded as normal management practice for high rise blocks, High Hopes (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit 1997). Intensive concierge schemes tend to be the most effective, either in achieving improvements in management, security and resident satisfaction in reasonably problematic circumstances, or in containing problems in the most difficult circumstances. They are also relatively expensive. They do not in themselves appear to solve problems created by poor management performance or inappropriate allocations, but they do seem to create the conditions in which improved allocations can be effective.

1.36 The members who participated in the PAT 5 visit to Broadwater Farm were impressed by the concierge scheme there. Concierges served two linked blocks each and obviously had a good rapport with the tenants. There was no evidence of crime or graffiti and standards of cleaning and maintenance of common areas were very high. The costs were partly paid by tenants and leaseholders on the estate via higher rents and service charges and partly
subsidised by the Housing Revenue Account.

1.37Caretakers can play an important role as the local presence of the landlord, with whom tenants can raise any problems immediately and locally. On a number of visits to estates, members of PAT 5 were impressed by the work of the local caretaking team in looking after communal areas and green spaces, eg Bell Farm York and Broadwater Farm. PAT 6 looking at Neighbourhood Wardens has identified part of the role of caretakers and concierges as a form of warden coming under the mantle, and indeed the funding regime, of the housing management service.

1.38The members of PAT 5 who took part in the visit to Denmark were impressed by the super-caretakers encountered there, who provide a local presence on every social housing estate. There are super-caretakers for every 80-100 homes who deal with:

- changeover of tenancies (checking condition and liability for costs of damage from outgoing tenants and welcoming and helping new ones);
- taking care of buildings, ordering repairs and planned improvements;
- taking care of green areas;
- helping to resolve neighbour disputes and support vulnerable people.

1.39Most super-caretakers have a blue-collar or professional craftsman background but they are paid about the same as specialist white collar housing managers who are centrally based. They are employed by the housing association but work closely with section (estate) committees, as well as with specialist central staff. To British observers it appeared that the role included elements of our caretakers and estate officers duties in an unusual combination that provided what appeared to be a very effective local presence, dealing well with both people and property.

1.40The super-caretakers on the estates are supported by centrally based specialist teams, dealing with planning and supervising repair and maintenance, with management issues such as running the waiting list and with managing money and chasing serious rent arrears.

1.41Research by PEP on caretaking plus in Britain, building on Scandinavian models, looked at pilot schemes on a local housing authority and an RSL estate, providing multi-skilled members of staff who can tackle repairs, cleaning and a range of other jobs quickly and effectively. The researchers found that the service was high quality and cost-effective. The service was quick, flexible and responsive but some of the benefits were hidden as the presence of the local caretaker meant that potential problems were nipped in the bud before they became too large. The caretakers offered valuable assistance to centrally based staff, for example by informally talking to residents about rent arrears and monitoring the number of empty properties. There were clear benefits. On one estate repair costs were cut significantly and on the other turn around times for empty properties were dramatically reduced.

What significance do allocations policies have in sustaining or turning round deprived estates?

Allocations policies can be a force for good or bad in sustaining a viable community. More flexible, local lettings policies can operate alongside consideration of housing
1.42 Both research and the PAT 5 visits confirm the significance of allocations policies both as a cause of and part of the cure for problem estates. Research by Glennerster and Turner in 1993 on estate-based housing management highlighted the way in which the placing of vulnerable people on an estate could lead to a sharp deterioration in conditions, undermining the good effects of local management. Research in the same year by Page on RSLs also drew attention to the way in which concentrations of disadvantaged or vulnerable tenants on new estates can result in a rapid spiral of decline.

1.43 Social landlords have attempted to deal with these problems by developing local lettings plans or community lettings that take account of the needs of the area as a whole as well as the needs of the individual applicant for housing. Research by the University of Wales in 1996 (Community Lettings: local allocation policies in practice) found that where landlords have monitored the effects of community lettings there does not appear to be evidence of disadvantaged people losing out. The researchers argued that allocations policies do have a role to play in improving and maintaining quality of life but that their contribution should not be exaggerated. They cannot work in isolation and should be seen in the context of an improved housing management service, upgrading of existing estates and the provision of new accommodation, and wider community development work.

1.44 This message is in line with the lessons from the PAT 5 visit to the Bloomsbury EMB in Birmingham. There the council decided who was eligible for housing and the EMB had responsibility for 50% of the allocations to homes becoming empty on the estate. They were able to give priority to those applicants with existing ties to the area or positive reasons for wanting to live there. This was seen as part of the reason for the success in turning the area around. By contrast the Board of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea TMO has chosen not to be involved in individual lettings but to set the policy.

1.45 One of the estates visited in Denmark (Avedore Stationsby, a 1970s estate in Greater Copenhagen) had obtained exemption from the statutory rules to run a lettings policy for two years only which gave preference to the economically active. It appeared to have stabilised the community. There are now no empty homes and crime rates are the lowest in Greater Copenhagen. Local control over allocations and local administration of the housing service were identified by those we met as the key factors in restoring the estate. A similar policy was being adopted in a more central, older estate (Kongens Enghave), subject of a regeneration programme. One of the managers of that work commented that the policy can be used to discriminate against anyone, but can positively discriminate in favour of others.

1.46 The Housing Act 1996 requires local authorities in framing their allocations policies to ensure reasonable preference is given to a range of those in need. Outside this framework they are free to allocate their housing on whatever reasonable basis they think fit. Indeed some authorities restrict accommodation to those living in their area and may allow a quota for those in search of jobs. The flexibility does exist therefore, within the current legislation, for local authorities to have a lettings scheme which promotes mixed communities but at the same time gives continuing priority to those in housing need. Many local authorities may, however, feel constrained by the fact that they need to continue to house those in greatest housing need and may lack the confidence to develop different lettings schemes which also better meet the need of specific communities. This may be particularly so in areas where the pressure on the stock
is greatest. The revised Code of Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness should make this clear to landlords. In areas with large numbers of difficult to let property the problem will be different and PAT 7 on Unpopular Housing will be reporting on this.

B. HOW TO ASSESS THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF SUCH A PACKAGE, TO HOUSING AND OTHER AGENCIES

Is on-the-spot management more costly than other forms of housing management? The high quality on-the-spot housing management required in the more deprived areas is likely to be more expensive than providing a centralised service. But there are ways of sharing costs and maximising benefits. Benefits accrue to other services, eg health and the police. Social landlords need to look at the costs and benefits in the round.

1.47 Research in progress by Arthur Andersen for DETR suggests that decentralised local services are not in themselves necessarily more expensive than centralised ones but that costs are determined by how local the service is and the numbers and levels of staff involved. This makes good sense, since staff costs are the key cost driver for housing management. Thus a very local service at estate level with staff at high grades would be expected to cost more than a remote centralised one. On the PAT 5 visits landlords said that intensive local management was more expensive but was justified by the seriousness of the problems to be addressed and the risks that the costs resulting from doing nothing would actually be much greater. There were cases, however, where part of the housing service had been removed from the neighbourhood level because it was very expensive to run at such a localised level and the cost of running a centre with the necessary level of staff to provide security was diverting resources from day to day service provision. Increasingly new technology, the use of call centres and diagnostic software mean that a repairs service, for example, can be run more cheaply, and as efficiently, from the centre.

1.48 There is an important difference between economy (doing things cheaply) and effectiveness (doing the important things well). By having staff with the right levels of delegated authority and skills at the estate level (who may, therefore, command higher salaries and impact on costs), on-the-spot housing management can provide a more effective service and therefore a better quality of life on the estate. The importance of the human link provided by local housing management staff between the tenants and the landlord cannot be over-estimated.

1.49 Modest expenditure as part of a strategy to prevent problems can often lead to significant savings. Coles, England and Rugg Working with young people on estates, 1998, quote the example of a summer project of leisure and recreation activities for young people that cost the landlord £5,000 but was estimated to have saved £50,000 that would otherwise have been incurred on repairs on broken windows and other damage to property.

1.50 Local housing management often achieves or contributes towards real world savings that will appear in a different budget because of bureaucratic boundaries between services. On most if not all of the PAT 5 estate visits, and in the field work for the GFA research on sustainable estate regeneration, it was clear that better local management and tenant participation, as part of a holistic package of measures, had reduced crime and improved health significantly. But some of the benefits accrued to the police and health services through
a reduced need to spend in the area, as well as to tenants through increased quality of life.
None of these savings figured in housing budgets.

1.51 Good housing management with a local presence may also have an impact on maintenance costs. Reductions in crime result in lower spend on dealing with vandalism and graffiti (see box overleaf). Local managers are able to identify problems early and shift the balance from reactive to preventative maintenance. The results are usually that the same amount of money is spent more effectively, rather than that maintenance budgets are reduced.

1.52 But there remains a lack of hard information about both the costs and benefits of an on-the-spot housing management package for either the housing or other services. The Arthur Andersen research into the costs of housing management concludes that there is considerable difficulty in determining the overall cost of housing management. This is because there is a wide range of variables which can influence costs, including the definition of housing management, the organisational structures, the range of services delivered and the levels of technology used to deliver services.

Concierge schemes can reduce crime and make residents feel more secure and improve their quality of life but the costs are relatively high. In the Broadwater Farm example, only part of the £10pw per household costs were met by residents of the estate, with around two-thirds of the costs being met from the Housing Revenue Account. Landlords need to consider the appropriate balance in setting charges between direct beneficiaries, such as tenants and leaseholds, and the wider benefits for other tenants and residents of reductions in crime in the area.

1.53 To inform the work of PAT 5, DETR commissioned Professor Anne Power of the London School of Economics to undertake a case study of the costs and benefits of on-the-spot management on Broadwater Farm estate in the London Borough of Haringey, where on-the-spot management had been established for many years. The results (see box below) are interesting and raise some important questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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| a) Neighbourhood officer | i) seniority and clout in Council  
ii) motivation and energy to deliver  
iii) clear co-ordination & co-operation  
iv) high level, local supervision  
v) high performance on basics  
vi) strong tenant support |
| b) Housing Management |

**BROADWATER FARM, LB HARINGEY**

Benefits of 5 components of service
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.54 The study concludes that the Broadwater Farm on-the-spot service is more expensive at estate level than the standard housing service provided to other estates in Haringey, which do not have the same intensive management service. However, it also suggests that the full cost of housing services on Broadwater Farm is lower than the full cost of management and maintenance across the borough as local improvements, for example, in reducing vandalism,</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>c) Super-caretaking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) clean, graffiti free environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) no visible vandalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) clean lifts, corridors, stairs, entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) personal contact with tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v) daily liaison with senior staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) close collaboration with repairs staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) enhanced security, supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii) watch-out for vulnerable tenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix) regular contact with police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d) Concierge system</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(currently covers half the estate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) saving of £100 per unit in reduced repair costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ii) elimination of vandal damage</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii) much improved block condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>iv) increased sense of security/reduces fear</td>
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<td>v) informal and formal surveillance</td>
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<tr>
<td>vi) close liaison with office over difficult tenants</td>
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<td>vii) friendly positive contact with residents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>e) Repairs Unit</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>i) fast response to emergencies eg floods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) mutual reinforcement with caretakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii) collaboration with housing office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv) familiarity with estates residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>v) costs one fifth below borough average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi) high tenant satisfaction Borough survey higher than other estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii) extremely well maintained estate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reduce costs.

1.55 These results are interesting but it is important to recognise its limitations: this is a single example of an estate in one London Borough and neither can be typical of the situation in London nor England. This is a complex topic which requires further analysis and evidence about other examples of on-the-spot management. PAT 5 recommends that there should be a further study on the costs and benefits of on-the-spot management.

1.56 The Broadwater Farm on-the-spot service includes five elements: the neighbourhood officer; housing management staff; caretakers; concierges; and a repairs team. The benefits of on-the-spot management are summarised in the box below. As well as providing tenants with a high quality living environment, there have been tangible benefits to the landlord in the high rate of occupancy and rent collection and in reduced repair costs.

**What other issues relating to cost affect housing management performance?**

*The scope of activity falling within the Housing Revenue Account allows sufficient flexibility for local authorities to enable housing managers to take a lead in addressing the problems of difficult estates. But most estates will require a long term revenue funding commitment.*

1.57 The PAT 5 visits also raised some other issues relating to costs:

- An important issue already covered at paragraph 1.14 in relation to costs is where the boundaries of housing management lie. DOE Circular 8/95 on the Housing Revenue Account states that the HRA should be primarily a landlord account but acknowledged that in the most difficult and challenging housing estates the responsibilities of managers cover a wide range of functions. Managers may need to provide some wider services themselves, although it is often better for them to act as co-ordinators and facilitators with other agencies and stimulate activity by others. This catalytic and co-ordinating role, thought not the provision of the wider service, can be funded from the rents.
- Some tenants associations encountered in the PAT 5 visits appeared to be struggling and needed more financial and other support than they were currently receiving from the landlords. Occasional support from landlords for specific initiatives was no substitute for modest but reliable revenue funding to cover basic operating costs. Often a few hundred pounds would have made all the difference.
- The Department of Social Security consultation document Supporting People: a new policy and funding framework for support services published on 10 December 1998, proposed replacing the current funding arrangements for supporting vulnerable people with a single budget for that purpose. Currently these costs are borne by a number of different budgets, including housing benefit and Supported Housing Management Grant. The consultation document included related proposals to amend local authorities legislative powers to provide welfare services through the HRA and, by implication, aspects of the scope of the HRA set out in Circular 8/95. Concern has been expressed that the proposals would define the funding boundaries between housing management activities and personal support that may be provided by landlords (eg in sheltered housing), in a way that could have side effects preventing housing managers from undertaking the broad and challenging role that they need to fulfil on some deprived housing estates. In order to address these concerns, further work will be carried out on
the precise scope of the HRA (within the limits of the boundaries of Ministers decisions in respect of the treatment of sheltered housing services under Supporting People). This work will take full account of the conclusions of the Policy Action Team.

- The amount of capital finance available for estate regeneration will always be limited and regeneration programmes are finite. Once that initial injection of capital has revitalised the bricks and mortar, and in so doing the community itself, a long term revenue based funding commitment to estates remains crucial (see bullet 2 above). The same applies to estates where a new approach to housing management is required even if there is no significant injection of capital funding.

C. HOW TO ENCOURAGE OTHER AGENCIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COSTS, PERHAPS THROUGH POOLING BUDGETS

Examples of pooled budgets were not found, although there are examples of agencies working in partnership. This is an issue which needs addressing further.

1.58 Joined up budgets appear to be a logical step from joined up thinking but PAT 5 found no examples. As noted above, we were frequently told that other services benefited substantially from on-the-spot housing management, for example the police service through a reduction in crime, but we found no instances where another agency had made a financial contribution to the costs of providing the local housing service.

1.59 In Section D below we highlight the examples of the Holly Street estate, where five social landlords have agreed to share management costs, and Timber Wharf, where management has been delegated to one association on behalf of two others. Although interesting and useful models, we feel that these examples of co-operation between social landlords do not embrace other agencies in the sense that the SEU intended. Many social landlords also participate in partnerships, for example under the SRB, but these are generally around bidding for additional resources to provide enhanced services, rather than involving contributions to the costs of core services like local housing management.

1.60 A Department of Health discussion document, Partnership in Action, includes a useful discussion of the issues around pooled budgets. It points out that while there are many examples of multi-agency working in health and social services, budgetary and administrative arrangements currently remain separate and that pooled budgets would allow them to mirror the way services are developing. It argues that legislation is required to allow health and social services to delegate functions and finance to the pool, to provide new and more flexible ways of discharging their responsibilities. A single pool manager would need to be responsible for day to day running, service delivery and meeting the objectives of the budget. The arrangements would be different from existing co-operative ones because the pooled resources would lose their identity and be available at the discretion of the pool manager and would be available for any purpose which met the objectives of the pool.

1.61 A formidable list of practical issues which would need to be addressed emphasises the complexity of the issues involved. Although the discussion document refers to health and social services, similar issues would arise for other services wishing to contribute to the costs of local housing management.
Outside statutory direction, the best way to encourage other agencies to contribute to the costs of local housing management would be to demonstrate to them that it helped them to achieve their own objectives in a cost-effective way. At present this evidence does not exist in any formal and systematic way that might convince sceptical budget holders and this is an area for further work.

The challenge now is to identify examples of joint projects, built on core funding of the various partners, rather than partnerships based on the opportunity to bid for extra funds. Pooled budgets falls between our remit and that of PAT 4 on Neighbourhood Management and, given the reporting cycle, we request that PAT 4 takes a lead in addressing this issue. Since housing management has a major role to play, we suggest a cross-PAT event between our two teams to progress these matters.

D. OPTIONS FOR PROMOTING JOINT MANAGEMENT OF RENTED HOUSING OWNED BY A MIX OF LANDLORDS

Joint management by different landlords can work but has not been taken up extensively. It should be encouraged.

The Norton Grange Estate in Stockton on Tees, which PAT 5 visited, was a good example of collaboration between landlords, combining models (i) and (iv) above. The social landlords with homes on the estate had signed up to an Estate Agreement guaranteeing tenants a common standard of service, which represented the highest standard that any of them met, while retaining separate management of their own housing stock. The partners were the local authority, whose half of the estate was refurbished; four registered social landlords, who developed new homes on the other half; and the local community association. The local authority had an estate based office while the registered social landlords provided local management by holding weekly surgeries at the community centre. All the social landlords participated in monthly monitoring meetings with the community association to review their performance against the standards in the Estate Agreement. Both tenants and landlords felt that the arrangements worked well and valued having a range of landlords operating in the area because this gave tenants a choice.

**POSSIBLE MENU OF OPTIONS FOR JOINT MANAGEMENT**

Research by PEP for the National Housing Federation in 1995 (Too many cooks?, Hare and Zipfel) outlined the range of options available:

(i) **Minimum collaboration between landlords:**
This will only work where: tenants are bound by the same policies; there is a common approach to cleaning and caretaking; tenant participation is co-ordinated; there is a framework for co-operation between staff and joint decision making as necessary. It represents the bottom line of joint management.

(ii) **A fully integrated approach to management and maintenance**
Landlords would need to establish an estate-based team, possibly of seconded staff from all the associations, to provide all day-to-day services to tenants; they would pool their allowances to create an estate budget; one association would provide line management/supervision; the
team would account to a joint committee which would include tenant and other representatives.

(iii) Delegated management
Similar to option (ii), in that it provides for an estate-based service from a single team, but responsibility lies with one of the partner associations which operates as the management agent for the other landlords. Delegation is via a management agreement. Each landlord contributes pro-rata to the costs of management and maintenance.

(iv) Separate management
Here a scheme is planned to provide a variety of small-scale, estate-based management arrangements, either by individual associations or, following the precedent set by other estates, via Tenant Management Organisations. Collaboration between landlords is restricted to development. But such arrangements will have implications for design and lay-out and should be planned from the outset.

(v) No partnership
This option reflects the possible advantages of a single lead association carrying out the development, but leasing property to smaller associations for allocation and management, or delegating management via a management agreement to another association or to a Tenant Management Organisation.

1.65 Another example of collaboration between social landlords on development and management was identified in the GFA study on sustainable estate regeneration on the Blackbird Leys estate, Oxford. This was developed through the Oxford City Housing Partnership, which consists of the councils housing department and three RSLs. The RSLs work from a shared on-site facility and have developed a complex management agreement. This seeks to harmonise standards, levels of service and methods of delivery. The RSLs have also tried to ensure that rent levels across the estate are broadly comparable, though this has not proved easy because of the differences in the financial position of each association, as well as the costs of accommodation.

1.66 The Holly Street Estate in the London Borough of Hackney provides a good example of (ii) above, fully integrated joint management, by a consortium of RSLs involved in a major regeneration scheme (Housing Plus and Urban Regeneration, Richard Evans). The consortium established a Joint Management Board (JMB) with financial support from the Housing Corporations Innovation and Good Practice programme. The JMB included representatives of both tenants and management staff from each RSL and its role was to provide feedback on housing designs and the sort of play, community and youth facilities tenants wanted. The Housing Corporation also funded training and support for tenants to facilitate participation.

1.67 There was also a joint approach to management. The consortium appointed an estate officer to help tenants settle in, act as a single referral point for defects, offer advice on benefits and other services and encourage tenants to keep to the terms of their tenancy. The RSLs also appointed a project manager to develop a Scheme of Management for common practices
among the five RSLs on:

- tenant consultation and feedback on design and management;
- customer service standards/maintenance programmes;
- rent collection and arrears procedures;
- rent levels and increases;
- lettings and nomination.

1.68 The JMB has set up a local office for the Holly Street Partnership. This is run by the lead RSL, Circle 33, on behalf of all five landlords. That service is jointly funded, with three local staff based on the estate. All the homes on the estate will be managed from the local office, which will provide a unified service to all the tenants, irrespective of who their individual landlord may be. Under the management agreement, the local office will charge each RSL for the appropriate share of the costs of local management, in proportion to their housing stock. This is an important innovation which the PAT members believe should be evaluated, so that the lessons can be shared widely.

1.69 The Timber Wharf estate on the Isle of Dogs, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, provides an example of (iii) above, delegated management. Three hundred existing homes were acquired by three RSLs as part of the development of the Limehouse Link. As each landlord had only a relatively small number of homes in the area, they were not able to justify local management and this led to tenant dissatisfaction with remote management. The three RSLs agreed to hold a ballot so that tenants could vote for which of the three landlords should provide a management service and Southern Housing Group (SHG) was selected.

1.70 SHG has a management agreement with the other two RSLs with an agreed budget for management and maintenance. SHG now manages the estate on behalf of all the landlords from a local office staffed by a local manager, a customer services officer and two caretakers. Feedback from a tenant survey and the tenants association shows that this scheme of delegated management has addressed the problems which concerned tenants. The key factor in success was that the three RSLs were all willing to relinquish management of part of their housing stock if this gave their tenants a better service, something which seems to be very rare. Further work to explore in more detail the lessons about why this partnership has been successful would be useful.

1.71 Winsor Park estate in the London Borough of Newham is another example of delegated management, reported in the GFA study on sustainable estate regeneration. The estate was developed in the 1990s by seven RSLs and the sheer number of landlords complicated all aspects of programme and estate management. This has now been resolved, partly because some of the associations with the smallest numbers of homes have sold their stock, but principally because the RSLs agreed to delegate the overall responsibility for management to a single association, East Thames, who now manage the estate on behalf of the rest.

1.72 Handsworth in Birmingham is a mixed area with many private landlords and owner occupiers, where social housing is a small proportion of the total and where there is no predominant landlord. When visited by PAT 5, a group of RSLs with homes in the area were developing a partnership to harmonise their own service delivery and to work with the local
community to develop a strategy for regenerating the area. However, this was at a very early stage and it was not possible to identify detailed options or good practice lessons. These kinds of very mixed areas are those where there is the greatest need for neighbourhood management, but where there is no predominant social landlord then the lead may be best taken by another organisation.

1.73 Although PAT 5 has identified some promising initiatives, there is a shortage of good models of joint management, there is no up-to-date good practice advice, no clear incentive and more work needs to be done on this. Like the issue of pooled budgets, joint management falls between our remit and that of PAT 4 and, again, given the reporting cycle, we request that PAT 4 takes a lead in addressing this issue in consultation with PAT 5.

2. Key features of Good Housing Management

2.1 The report to date has concentrated on the questions asked of PAT 5 by Bringing Britain together. During the course of its work, the PAT identified a number of the key features which need to be in place if the housing management service is to make a positive impact on the quality of life on an area. Provided these criteria are met the pattern of service delivery need not conform to a particular model. The remainder of this report summarises these features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key features of successful housing management:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Customer focused service delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tenant/resident involvement in service planning, delivery and monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service level agreements between providers and service users</td>
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<tr>
<td>• High calibre, well trained and appropriately remunerated housing managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge of /sensitivity to the area and its needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strong racial and minority equality objectives</td>
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<td>• Targeted use of new technology</td>
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The Customer (tenants and residents)

2.2 An effective partnership between housing managers and tenants is a pre-requisite for sustainable change; and even more importantly where major investment is not on the horizon. The landlord must engage with local residents properly, initially to identify what they want to see happening in their area, sustaining that relationship when the community has stabilised. Steps to establishing this are:

• discovering what tenants want through residents surveys, community events, skills audits and ongoing engagement with representative groups;

Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (a recently formed local housing company) carried out a face to face survey with over 4000 households in their area. Local residents were recruited to conduct the interviews, reflecting the cultural and ethnic diversity on the
estates (where 28% did not have English as their first language). Results of the survey give a full picture of the current needs and expectations of the residents and how far they want to be involved in the regeneration of the area.

Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) carried out two borough-wide surveys over the last three years through an independent survey company with over 60% response from its 9,760 tenants and leaseholders. The data has been used to benchmark council tenants views against the views of other social landlords tenants. The TMO now knows tenants and leaseholders views on repairs, allocations, tenant participation, whether they believe the rent is good value (70% do) and critically, whether the TMO is getting better. The data has been broken down to area and estate level. The survey material has helped the police and the council in developing their Community Safety Strategy. The TMO has also used market research to establish exactly what tenants and leaseholders want from the TMO, and whether, for example, the cost of funding improvements is significant to the customer. Using attitude surveys and market research the TMO has been able to shape its service strategies and to ensure that they are what really is wanted by the residents.

- finding out how far tenants want to be involved in running their estates. Landlords will be doomed to repeat their failures unless they manage to engage fully with their tenants and residents. Tenant Participation Compacts (TPCs) will be crucial. The TPC framework emphasises that it should be for tenants themselves to decide what level and type of involvement suits them best. Experience shows that when things are going well most tenants do not want to be involved so directly. Tenants interest is most likely to be ignited when regeneration funding is on offer and choices are to be made about how that money is to be used. Most tenants will welcome the opportunity to influence such decisions, and research and the experience that PAT 5 saw in their visits confirmed that tenant involvement was the key to successful regeneration and, even more importantly, to sustaining those achievements. Once regeneration funding is ended the tenant organisation will quickly out grow an agenda limited to routine repairs and maintenance alone. In all cases they moved into other areas to support their members eg crèches, credit unions;
- working with existing community groups, eg faith communities. It takes time and money to set up new consultative fora and they can easily fail once the immediate task has come to an end. By working with their local faith groups from ethnic minorities Manningham Housing Association in Bradford have been able to make more successful allocations of their stock;
- Providing tenants with training, and practical support (eg a meeting place, access to office equipment), moral and financial support. Being an active tenant can involve considerable work. It is clear that in some cases only those who are retired or unemployed have the time and capacity to contribute at that level. This calls for housing managers to recognise and harness the smaller scale contributions that some tenants will be able to make, perhaps for a short time only or for one particular event or initiative. Financial support for tenants activities is crucial. Views vary as to whether or not tenants representatives should be paid and this is left to local discretion. Other support, such as access to free meeting rooms, can be important. In one case PAT 5 found that whilst the tenants had
been supported throughout the regeneration process, they were finding it difficult to obtain further revenue support to sustain that involvement. An appropriate level of support and a defined budget should be agreed between the tenants and the council. Tenants should not have to waste precious time and energy fighting for a basic level of support funding;

- Sustaining tenant interest. Active tenants and key players can burn out after the initial hard work of setting up associations and, where appropriate, developing regeneration schemes. There was a pronounced higher age range amongst the tenant activists on the estates that PAT 5 visited and in the case studies for the GFA sustainable estate regeneration research. Anxieties were expressed as to where the next generation of community leaders would come from.

Dr Keith Jacobs recent report, Blueprint for Success, on the regeneration process at Holly Street, in Hackney identifies the need to maintain effective participation as one of the challenges facing Holly Street in the future. He notes In the long term it is both unreasonable and unrealistic to rely on the same individuals to front projects and be involved in consultative bodies. Incentives need to be offered to encourage new residents to participate in the decision-making process or the existing flow of social capital may dry up.

In response to this the community empowerment process can be adopted to capture the interest of the younger residents. On the Monsall estate in Greater Manchester a Community Forum has been set up which includes as of right representatives of young people, enshrined in a Community Declaration. At Broadwater Farm and Chingford Hall potential activists are being identified from volunteers engaged in other forms of community work.

Service Level Agreements
2.3 Drawing up a clear and enforceable agreement about the relative roles of tenants and housing managers (and other agencies such as the police or health services where they are involved) is essential. Opportunities should be provided at regular monitoring meetings between housing managers and other agencies and tenants associations (preferably open to all tenants) to review the effectiveness of the agreement, how well it is being implemented and whether it still reflects the needs of the area. Regular newsletters can also keep tenants informed of performance and changes.

2.4 An agreement relating to the activities of the housing department alone will generally be insufficient to cover all tenants concerns about local authority services, eg good street lighting, clean streets etc. For this reason some agreements are not between the tenants and the housing department but between the tenants and the local authority, represented by the leader and/or the chief executive. In Birmingham, the Tenants Quality Promise, the document committing the authority to a level and quality of service, is signed by the Leader and Chief Executive, reflecting the fact that the services extend beyond those provided by the Housing Department. In the event of poor performance a tenants group can set in train a range of actions, culminating in an external audit of the service. In the case of Norton Grange in Stockton-on-Tees, the housing associations present on the estate joined in the agreement with the local authority and the residents.

A good estate agreement will have been drawn up in consultation with
the residents and will set out:

- what standard of service a resident can expect with realistic timescales;
- how the residents can be involved;
- what the lines of accountability are;
- how the services will be monitored;
- who to contact for the different services; and
- what they can do if they feel the agreement is not being kept to.

The Housing Manager

2.5 The key player in ensuring that the local authority delivers a high quality housing service is the housing manager. One case study of estate-based housing management in 1993 showed that the control estate outperformed the experimental one because of the superior quality of the local manager. During the PAT 5 visits to estates the energy and commitment of the housing managers shone out. It is not structures alone but how people operate them that make a real difference.

2.6 A successful housing manager must:

- be of a high calibre the complexity of the job should not be underestimated. The ideal manager needs to meet the expectations of the tenants, legislative requirements, locally and nationally set performance standards and to work within (and perhaps around) the structure of the local authority and/or RSL;

- have the right attitude the housing manager charged with revitalising the housing service in an area with multiple problems needs to have the right attitude and be committed. His or her task will go beyond the traditional core activities of housing management, e.g. rent collection, dealing with voids, and beyond the traditional departmental and organisational boundaries. He or she will need new skills as motivator and facilitator. He or she will need to understand the role of other agents in the community development process and to acquire the skills to work outside of the traditional role in partnership with others;

- have the time in which to pursue this new role this may require a restructuring of the housing service. It may be sensible, particularly in terms of recruiting the right person, to split the work into two posts; one the officer dealing with the routine, core activities, the other acting as the catalyst and strategic thinker. Another model may be to have super-caretakers taking over a range of day-to-day work;

- needs to have a clear job specification research by GFA Consulting Going the Extra Mile encountered complaints by RSL staff that management expectations of their role had broadened, but this had not been reflected in the criteria built in to performance appraisal. Job specifications will need to be clear about what is expected of a post, and convey the ethos of the local authority or housing association within which he or she will be working;

- be properly trained housing managers need to be well trained to respond successfully to demanding targets and meet the performance standards of their authority or RSL. The requirements associated with multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working call for access to
forms of training and professional development which may not yet be readily available, but are none the less crucial. Retraining and continuous development are crucial. There is at present a perceived skills shortage which needs to be addressed;

**be appropriately remunerated** housing managers need to be remunerated at an appropriate level which recognises, and rewards, the range of skills that are necessary and the demanding nature of these posts. The officer will often be committed to working outside normal office hours and in some cases be on call for emergencies. If housing managers jobs are to expand as the report describes this must be reflected in their salaries;

**be properly positioned in relation to the centre** the local housing managers role needs to be clearly defined as does his or her relationship with the centre. How far is the housing manager able to act without reference to the central department of the authority, what is their status in relation to other departments of the council and how much clout do they have? He or she must have access to information. At the same time the housing manager collects a great deal of information on the ground which should be feed into the strategic decisions made by all local authority departments, not just housing. The RSL manager will, of course, be in a different position vis a vis the local authority but may have similar issues and relations with other parts of the RSL.

**The Area**
2.7It is clear from research and from the PAT 5 estate visits that if the same rigid model of housing management had been imposed in each of the estates, success would have been limited. Different areas suffer from a wide range and mixture of problems with differing demands from the residents. Before a landlord can begin to address these problems whether through the housing management service or anything else, it needs to be clear what the problems are, and what the residents agenda is. This means changing the culture of the service to focus on the needs of the community rather than the providers. The more the users are involved the more commitment to the housing managers programme there will be.

2.8Research suggests that the durability of regeneration initiatives depends on the quality of the initial design. That in turn must be based on in-depth knowledge of the area and its problems and understanding of the estate in its wider context. Tenant and resident involvement is key to this understanding. GFA's research on sustainable estate regeneration found that the landlord who ignores tenants at the design stage does so at their peril simply because no-one else is as well placed to know what is needed or wanted. GFA found a number of cases where tenants had intervened to alter landlords plans, not only with benefits for the sustainability of what was done, but often saving money in the process.

2.9Annex G looks at a number of ways in which a landlord can establish what services are needed where. PAT 18 on Better Information is to report on how to obtain good quality, small area information.

**Black and minority ethnic equality objectives**
2.10Bringing Britain together concluded that ethnic minority disadvantage cuts across all aspects of deprivation and that ethnic minority groups are more likely to live in poor areas than the rest of the population. Ensuring delivery of a good housing service to those communities is therefore essential. Traditionally, in organisations which have pursued strong racial equality objectives, ethnic minorities have made substantial progress in gaining access to the housing
management service.

2.11 Leeds and Bradford, for example, have a history of training their staff on their racial equality strategy, cultural awareness training, pursuing perpetrators of racial harassment, supporting victims and setting targets on race and service delivery. Most importantly delivery against these targets and the strategy is reported to a corporate body run by the chair of the housing committee. Commitment and determination to deliver racial equality strategies is severely weakened if there is a perception that a landlord is merely paying lip service to the legal requirements. Equal access to and equal outcome from the housing service is what is expected by ethnic minority communities.

2.12 It is important to ethnic minorities that they believe that they will be treated fairly by the authorities housing department or the RSL. Training and development of front-line staff in culturally sensitive service delivery is crucial. For example, in housing ethnic elders, it is important that specialist meals are provided. Another hindrance to the effective delivery of services can be a fear of the bottom-up approach but, as the support for the Manningham Housing Associations work on mutual aid showed, this approach can pay off if properly handled. Manningham HA developed a new allocations policy and Mutual Aid Compact with the tenants who were to move into a new development.

2.13 Aldbourne Associates report Defining the Management task included research amongst ethnic minority residents which showed that they tended to prefer a focus by the housing manager on the core activities such as repairs. The major priority outside the core services was employment. By contrast Manninghams experience is that their residents do expect housing officers to spend some time dealing with anxieties relating to wider issues such as immigration or the gas bill.

2.14 In culturally diverse areas the housing service must provide more than a housing function and demonstrate that it is genuinely interested in the issues which face local communities. Trust has to be established, confidence won and a mutual empathy. Tenant participation, and a commitment to racial equality within tenants organisations, is as important as for any area, if not more so, but may require a special promotional strategy, for example, ranging from dialogue with community leaders to working with local advice agencies, councillors and MPs. The composition of housing staff can be critically important. Ethnic minority staff reflecting the cultural balance of the area will be able to deal more easily with those for whom English is not their first language and will be more likely to understand local community needs. Annex F contains a suggested code of practice on Black and Minority Ethnic policy for housing managers.

**Role of New Technology**

2.15 One of the most interesting developments that PAT 5 identified was the potential for new technology to support the housing management service and improve the standards of the delivery of that service. New technology can enhance or substitute for on-the-spot management. Examples that PAT 5 found were of call centres and diagnostic software whereby a tenant can speak directly by telephone to the remotely located centre which can diagnose the nature of the repair and arrange for the work to be done. This system sits particularly well with the type of one stop shop that Leeds City Council is providing for estates where in addition to a call centre, tenants can drop in at the one stop shop to speak personally to someone about more complex problems and concerns. The use of SMART card technology
for rent payment and touch screen technology in community centres can all make life easier for tenants. CCTV and video entry phones have a crucial role to play in supporting caretakers and concierges in their community safety role and housing managers with modems can have instant access to advice and information when they are out of the office.

The Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation is developing a customer strategy working from centralised technology in order to provide a more efficient service. The London Borough of Newham has coupled local housing management with IT access to central services via a video link in a one-stop shop.

Housemark will combine on-line access to Arthur Andersens cost, resource and performance benchmarking data with a new CIH process improvement facility as well as access to guidance and advice from the CIHs Good Practice Unit. It will also enable housing practitioners to network with each other to share experience and develop new approaches to housing management and other housing issues.

The service will operate on three levels:

- At the organisational review level it will support the Governments Best Value approach by enabling senior managers to model their cost, resources and performance profiles, identify areas of high and low performance and through the process mapping facility, identify methods of improving service delivery.
- At the practitioner support level it will empower front line staff to deal more effectively with tenant queries and improve the quality of advice and guidance given.
- At the policy level the Local Government Association is supporting the development of Housemark and intends to make policy advice and guidance available through it. Discussions are underway with the DETR, the Housing Corporation and others to determine if similar links can be built.

The proof of concept for Housemark has now been built and the intention is to launch the service on a subscription basis in September 1999.

2.16 The full potential of new technology, and its cost effectiveness is yet to be realised. There are many innovative schemes around but evaluation of these schemes is limited. PAT 5 has not, in the time available, made any attempt to undertake a comprehensive review of what exists, and of that, what works and what could be of real use to the housing manager. (The boxes above contain two examples for illustration only.) PAT 15 on Information Technology is exploring such issues and we ask that they should do so with particular reference to the use of new technology in the housing management service.
Annex A: The PAT 5 Approach

PAT 5 was chaired by Michael Gahagan, Director of Housing at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The twenty three members were drawn from a cross-section of Government Departments, housing professionals and practitioners, consultants with a record of working on housing management and related issues, and tenants. Amongst these members were representatives of faith groups and ethnic minorities. A full list is at Annex B.

The approach to the work was as follows:

- the PAT met five times between October 1998 and April 1999 (20 October, 15 December, 18 February, 22 March and 20 April), to discuss and endorse the key stages of the work and take the views of invited experts; Anne Power of the London School of Economics and Tom Manion of the Irwell Valley Housing Association;
- the views of a cross-section of practitioners and residents were explored during a series of visits to estates and neighbourhoods with different characteristics (on 24, 26 and 27 November and 3 December 1998). During these visits, for which the PAT members broke into four groups, housing managers and residents were interviewed informally, and an assessment was made as to how different management techniques/aspects worked on the ground. The areas visited were:

  - Bell Farm Estate, York;
  - Leeds City Council neighbourhood-based One Stop Shops;
  - Norton Grange Estate, Stockton-on-Tees;
  - Bloomsbury Estate, Birmingham;
  - the Handsworth area, Birmingham;
  - Broadwater Farm Estate, Haringey;
  - Chingford Hall Estate, Waltham Forest.

Detailed reports of these visits can be found at Annex C;

- Six members of the Team visited Copenhagen on 22-24 February to look at the Danish system of Tenants Democracy, meeting tenants, local and central government officials and housing managers (see Annex D for a report of the visit);
- A visit was also undertaken to the London Borough of Sutton on 31 March, which has been running a version of Tenants Democracy as a pilot scheme since 1992, to see how well the system had transplanted to an English framework;
the findings of two pieces of research already in the DETR research programme, on the costs of housing management, and sustainable estate regeneration, were used to inform the report as far as they were able given that their original specifications pre-dated the creation of PAT 5. The latter project was, however, designed to identify what leads to sustainability including the contribution of good housing management and to translate that into a good practice guide;

a short study was commissioned from Professor Anne Power of the London School of Economics to identify the costs and benefits at estate level (exemplified by Broadwater Farm) of running a super caretaker service;

wider views on the emerging ideas and key messages for the draft report were sought at a seminar of practitioners, academics and residents on 9 March (list of those who attended at Annex E);

Five themes were discussed at the seminar:

- is local housing management more costly than other forms of housing management?
- how wide should the role of housing management be?
- What should the tenants role be?
- What should central Governments role be?
- What are the wider/more radical issues to be addressed?

representation by the Chairman, the Secretary and the SEU PAT 5 member on other PATs dealing with related topics, receipt of papers from other PATs and an exchange of views at a joint meeting ensured that there was little or no duplication of the various PATs work, and more importantly, that the cross-cutting issues were teased out and addressed.
Annex B: PAT 5 membership

Chairman

Michael Gahagan DETR

Members

Michael Beverley Kensington and Chelsea Tenants Management Organisation

John Binns Arthur Andersen

Geoff Fordham GFA Consulting

Charlie Forman London Housing Unit

Ross Fraser Chartered Institute of Housing

Roger Jarman Housing Corporation

John Kettlewell Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Paul Lautman Local Government Association

Jeremy Moore HM Treasury

Pat Niner Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham

Atul Patel Social Exclusion Unit

Liz Potter National Housing Federation

Rachael Reynolds Home Office

Anil Singh Manningham Housing Association

Janet Walden Department of Health

Rev David Walker South Yorkshire Housing Association Ltd

Andrew Allberry DETR

George Clark DETR

Keith Kirby DETR

David Sands DETR
Don Stewart *Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber*

**Secretary**

Pauline Prosser *DETR*
Annex C: Visits by Policy Action Team 5


Summary Key messages

Local housing management did not emerge as problematic in either of the Yorkshire locations. The key messages were:

**Bell Farm Estate York**
Recognition that the benefits of local management can be delivered in a variety of ways, in this case a mixture of local surgeries and central service.

Importance of commitment and enthusiasm of the local housing management team.

Importance of active involvement of residents in holding services to account.

A potential weakness of the Estate Agreement is that publicity is the only sanction for failure to deliver or account for themselves by the local authority and other services.

Giving the Residents Association control of an estate improvement budget gives them a feeling of control and the estate handyperson has a strong incentive to deliver a high quality service.

Government policy on subsidy limitation for modular improvements chosen by tenants may be working against the objective of involving tenants fully in regeneration of estates.

**Leeds One Stop Shops**
The One Stop Shops allow council departments and other partners to provide a more convenient service and a better environment for users and staff than they could afford if they were operating independently.

They provide a model for local housing management in a shared facility, which allows housing management staff to spend less time on reception and cash handling and more time on estates working with tenants on issues that concern them.

There is the opportunity for tenant and community involvement in developing and managing the One Stop Shops but there may be a heavy burden on volunteers, with the risk of burnout.

Use of shared information systems allows services to coordinate and target their efforts on those households with the greatest needs and on prevention rather than crisis management.

The intention is for the customer services within each One Stop Shop to eventually be linked and act as a virtual core centre.

**Bell Farm Estate, York**

1. This is a 1930s cottage redbrick estate, which was right on the edge of the City until it
recently expanded when York became a Unitary authority. There are around 360 properties, mainly three bedroom houses in short terraces of four, with a few semis and a small number of one-bedroom flats in two-storey blocks. The estate is now visually attractive, clean and well tended and there is almost no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Around 20% of the homes have been bought under Right to Buy but all of the remainder are rented from the council.

2. There is an active Residents Association, to which all tenants automatically belong, although most activities are run by a small group of enthusiasts. There is a core of long standing residents with good social and organisational skills who have a strong commitment to the area and they are a huge asset. The main amenity is a Social Hall, improved as part of the Estate Action (EA) programme, which is run by the Residents Association. This is a community centre and also provides a local base for the Estate Manager, who holds drop-in surgeries twice a week. EA also provided an adventure playground, kickabout area and playground for small children, all of which seem well cared for. The estate is served by buses into the City centre, although these are regarded as expensive, as well as free buses to peripheral supermarkets.

3. The EA programme began six years ago and invested around £6 million in the estate, around £16.5k per unit. The reason for promoting the EA scheme was that the estate had become unpopular because the dwellings were out of date and because of the peripheral location. The programme was managed by a team including a principal officer, estate manager and community development officer, who all worked closely with residents.

4. As part of Yorks Tenants Choice programme, a menu of optional improvements to dwellings included central heating and insulation, kitchens and bathrooms was offered, and tenants were allowed to spend up to £500 on the home at their discretion. Tenants were also able to chose their contractor from an approved list, with the works carried out with the tenant in residence and the council withholding payment until the tenant signed them off. A handful of elderly tenants declined to take up any improvements but the great majority of tenants were very enthusiastic about the opportunities. York resent being penalised by the subsidy system for offering Tenants Choice, which they argue promotes social cohesion. Environmental works included hard standings for cars, boundary walls or fences, improved street lighting and security lights to the rear of homes and redesign of the Bullring, the central feature of the estate.

5. Housing management services are provided from the City centre, with twice weekly on-site surgeries by the estate officer at the Social Hall. The Residents Association controls an estate improvement budget of £8,000pa, which pays for a part-time estate handyperson, who cares for the public areas, and for weekly provision of skips for disposal of bulky rubbish.

6. The novel feature at Bell Farm was the Estate Agreement which was negotiated between the Residents Association and the public services which served the estate. The tenants wanted to stay with the council as landlord but also wanted a better way of holding public services to account for local performance. As well as Housing, the signatory services include the police, street and environmental cleaning, jobs and training, leisure services and care and support for adults and children. Although services are centrally provided they are locally monitored with the provision of estate level indicators of eg lettings, repairs, reported crime etc. An Estate Agreement Monitoring Group made up of residents, councillors and officers meets quarterly to review progress and follow up problems. The Estate Agreement appears to work well, although some services are becoming irregular in attendance eg the police find it hard to justify concentrating on what is now a very low crime area.

7. Bell Farm was at the bottom of the housing market in York but was probably never as
bad as many estates in larger cities. The EA scheme has been effective in improving the fabric and the reputation of the estate. There are now very few vacancies and no problems in filling them. The involvement of the Residents Association at every stage has been very important in sustaining and developing a stable community. Giving the Residents Association control of the estate improvement budget has resulted in a very high standard of care of public areas.

8. Bell Farm does not have local management on the PEP model but neither the residents nor the council officers think that it is necessary or desirable. A centrally based service with local surgeries is regarded as efficient, effective and economical. The Estate Agreement appears to work well because the officers are committed to it but it appears to lack teeth, beyond naming and shaming, if a service were to decide that it no longer wanted to meet the standards agreed.

Leeds One Stop Shops

9. Since 1983 Leeds has had 38 decentralised local housing management offices for its stock of 75,000 homes, an average of about 2,000 per office. These offices were responsible for provision of local management services, including receiving rent payments. Leeds has found that the need to provide continuous cover in the offices has in fact limited the amount of time which officers can spend on estates in contact with tenants and are changing their system.

10. They are developing a network of One Stop Shops in the City centre and local communities and the target is to have 15 operating by March 2000. These focus on the needs of local people and bring together the council services provided by different Departments together with other partners including the voluntary sector, health providers, police and the Employment Service. This forms part of their Best Value approach and links with community planning and consultation. Leeds are also planning to develop local call centres at the One Stop Shops which will allow people to access the service without needing to visit.

Osmondthorpe One Stop Shop

11. Osmondthorpe estate has about 1700 homes and is located in East Leeds, an area of low demand with a high proportion of social housing. The homes are mainly inter-war houses and low rise flats, which were given basic improvement in the 1970s. The area is not popular and the houses do not meet modern standards. There is a particular problem with one-bedroom flats which are no longer acceptable to the elderly, for whom they were designed. Attempts to let them to younger households have not been successful and there is a city-wide programme to demolish one thousand.

12. The Osmondthorpe One Stop Shop is located in a redundant former school, which was converted by the local community building and training firm, using some local labour, at a cost of £750,000 met from Capital Challenge. It is visually attractive in red brick but anti-vandal security wire (whilst being converted) around the roof makes it look embattled. It feels light, has been converted to a high standard and has security guards, which makes people feel safe. Inside the entrance are general enquiries and cash receiving stations, together with interview booths.

14. The Department of Community Benefits and Rights employs the front-line staff who
deal with the public initially. Other locally-based services include Housing, Social Services, Library, Baby Clinic, local college, police, creche and there is a café, whose kitchen is also a training facility. The One Stop Shop is run by a Local Management Board, including the managers of all the locally-based service. The local Tenants Association was heavily involved in the planning of the One Stop Shop but unfortunately the representatives became burnt out and it has been impossible to find volunteers to replace them, so there is no consumer representative on the Board at present, although the Housing department are working with the local churches on community development. The costs of the One Stop Shop are met according to a complex formula for use of exclusive and shared space by each service and Housing currently pays about 17% of the total. The Board is developing the local plan for improvements to the area and the services.

15. The local Housing Manager was involved in the project from the beginning and was very enthusiastic about what had been achieved for both tenants and staff. There had been a steep learning curve for all the staff to give up their traditional roles and move into a shared facility which had required a culture change. The key lessons were: the importance of involving local people and staff in planning from the outset; and the necessity of letting local solutions emerge rather than imposing a central blueprint. The benefits were: an improvement in coordination of provision for service users; and an improvement in demand for the estate as a result of the highly visible major investment by the council in the area.

Halton Moor One Stop Shop

16. Halton Moor is a low demand, high density estate of 1000 homes in high rise blocks and houses, which is also in East Leeds. It has had serious problems of crime and anti-social behaviour and there is a stigma attached to the estate which is hard to shake off. The estate has been subject to a major Estate Action scheme and there is an active Estate Management Board on the estate with residents committed to improving the area. Local housing management is currently provided from an unsatisfactory office in a converted house.

17. The existing Leisure Centre was threatened with closure because of vandalism and declining use. The new One Stop Shop is under construction as an extension to the Leisure Centre and will include Housing, Sports Development and Youth and Community services, offices for the Estate Management Board (EMB), Social Services, Health Visitors, Leeds Federated Housing Association, and a base for the police (not a full-time police station). Unfortunately there was not time to meet the EMB.

Seacroft One Stop Shop

18. Seacroft estate is another low demand East Leeds estate made up of 1930s houses with almost no local amenities. The One Stop Shop is in an attractive new purpose-built low rise red brick building, which looks and feels more like a private sector building than a municipal service. There is a Pharmacists shop at one end and a GP practice at the other. Other partners include Housing, Social Services, Community Mental Health Services and a Family Learning Centre. Inside there is a security guard and the light and attractive reception area looks like a bank or building society. The cost was £1.2 million with the pharmacist and GP making capital contributions.

19. The Local Management Board planned the development and is involved with community planning. The major benefit is a more coherent service for users, eg a disabled person wanting an Orange Badge can carry out the entire transaction on the same site the same day. Services can also share information to identify multiple interventions and plan how to cooperate to prevent problems rather than just react to
crises. This kind of cooperation and community planning is facilitated by a sophisticated shared Geographical Information System.

Stockton-on-Tees: 26 November 1998

Summary Key messages

There is local housing management from an estate based office by the local authority. The housing associations use a base in the community centre to provide local management and cooperate well together and with the local authority. This appeared to be a multi-landlord estate which worked well.

All the landlords have signed up to a common level of service under an Estate Agreement and report regularly to the community association. The Estate Agreement had succeeded, in theory, in tying in the other services, but tenants were sceptical about what would be delivered, and much of the weight remained on the shoulders of the housing management service provided by the local authority, which remained the only service with a permanent physical presence on the estate.

Regeneration of the estate was housing led and focused. The quality of the housing stock has improved dramatically but many of the residents are still very poor and many are excluded from the labour market, largely because there are few jobs available in the area.

The additional costs of the local housing management presence were acknowledged. This might be the best use of resources in the longer term as it could be seen as the price of protecting the large capital investment. Housing staff said that it might be possible to deal with repairs remotely, eg by a touch screen, but that community regeneration required the physical presence of real people.

The local presence of housing management staff was always seen as an important symbol of the outside world. Housing managers had willingly recognised their responsibilities beyond management of the stock, but there was a point beyond which they were not able to go. Housing services were unwilling to shoulder the broader burden for ever.

The community association is well led by a small group of volunteers but they need continuing practical and financial support, which does not seem to be available.

Endeavour RSL has a small housing cooperative on the estate, whose tenants are actively involved in management, including selecting applicants. The role of the successful and committed tenants group was crucial. This development was perceived by all the landlords as the part of the estate with the greatest chance of being sustainable, because of the apparent commitment of the residents. These are new properties in an area of new RSL housing and time will tell whether this is the case.

Overall conclusion:

The benefits of local housing management were clear but it has to be part of a wider spectrum of service provision. It was not clear whether this would be fully achieved in practice.
Background

1. The estate was originally known as New Blue Hall and consisted of about 800 red brick houses built in the 1930s in short terraces and semi-detached groups. There was a major refurbishment in the 1970s comprising new doors and windows, new central heating, new bathrooms and kitchens and new external fencing. During the 1980s the estate became unpopular and there were very high crime levels, with house burglaries and joy-riding by young people being particular problems. Residents felt that the police had given up on the area. In 1992 there were serious disorders on the estate, with young people from the estate and outside looting and burning houses.

2. City Challenge funding was obtained to regenerate the estate through a partnership which included the council, the community association, the private housebuilder Wimpey Homes, the Housing Corporation and four housing associations. In total about £26 million has been spent on a major improvement which comprised demolition of part of the estate, new building by Wimpey Homes and the housing associations, major refurbishment of the remaining council homes and provision of a new community centre on the estate.

3. Changing the name to Norton Grange was part of the regeneration strategy. There has been a considerable change in population, with an overall reduction in the number of households and a conscious attempt to balance the community by reducing the proportion of children and young people and to bring in owner-occupiers. During the construction phase the housing department employed neighbourhood wardens to protect the area. Subsequently the police have become more active in the area and crime levels are now relatively low and declining.

4. The estate now appears attractive and well kept, although it was barren with no trees or green spaces and lacked amenities. There are a total of 660 homes. The particularly attractive new housing association and Wimpey Homes look virtually identical and face one another across the street. Wimpey have sold all the 120 homes at around £35k per unit and lenders have provided mortgages, indicating confidence in the future of the area. The 300 council homes have had new roofs and insulation, rendering and new fences. There are about 80 RTB properties which were excluded from the improvements, some of which are in a poor condition.

5. The estate has few amenities. The new community centre is light and spacious and has a large hall, small meeting rooms and a kitchen which provides a community café, all run by volunteers. It was built as an extension to an existing building which is used as the local housing office. The housing associations also hold surgeries in the centre and the cooperative has an office there. There is also a small shop attached but this is currently closed as the last licensee went out of business after offering too much credit. The community association campaigned for a year to get a post box and telephone box provided at the community centre and for a bus service through the estate. This required the construction of a mini-roundabout, so that the buses could turn, on land donated by the council, with the housing associations sharing the construction costs. Although this was clearly essential to improve the communications of estate residents and the costs were trivial compared with the entire regeneration scheme, the landlords had experienced considerable difficulty in sorting out the funding because of rigidities in the different financial regimes. There is no provision for children or young people, apart from youth clubs run by volunteer residents. A job shop based at the centre had closed down but was about to re-open.

6. The regeneration programme appeared surprisingly narrowly focused on housing for City Challenge Round 2. The job shop had placed 600 people in work over five years but
this served a wider area than the estate and its local impact was not known. There had been some limited use of local labour in the construction phase but the long term effects were not known. There appeared to be no social services, health or education involvement. Generally there seemed little hard information about the wider effects of the programme or about the current population.

7. A local council presence was vital in the regeneration phase. The local authority is committed to providing a local housing management service from the office on the estate. The housing associations also provide local management by holding weekly surgeries at the community centre. The RSLs cooperate together well and have a no poaching agreement about tenants. The Estate Agreement commits all the landlords to provide the same high level of service. There is a high cost in officer time with representatives of four housing associations and the council attending the monthly monitoring meetings but this is seen as important in demonstrating commitment. This appeared to be a multi-landlord estate which was working well. Although the homes are brand new attractive houses, Tees Valley RSL is experiencing a 25% tenancy turnover, compared with only 5% in the Endeavour cooperative, reflecting the ease with which tenants can move in this area and the greater apparent commitment to the area of coop members. The landlords work alongside one another but do not share budgets or services for management or maintenance.

8. The Residents Association covers all landlords on the estate and is led by an impressive group of enthusiastic volunteers, including tenants and owners. They had funding and a support worker from City Challenge for the regeneration phase but this has now ceased and they need £2,000pa for administration, which none of the players seems willing to provide. The council and housing associations provided limited funding for specific ad hoc projects but no regular funding. The residents felt that the partnership had been put together too quickly and too narrowly to meet bidding timetables and that the outstanding problems of jobs and facilities for children and youth had been identified from the outset but not addressed. The council housing services and the housing associations did a good job within their remit but the outstanding needs of the area went much wider and they were only now seeking to pull in other relevant partners. The residents felt that they were being asked to do the jobs of professionals, for which they were not qualified.

**Birmingham: 27 November 1998**

**Summary Key messages**

We visited two entirely different types of areas over the day. The Bloomsbury Estate is a former local authority conventional 1950s-60s mixed block estate that has had major external refurbishment. Handsworth is a large Victorian and Edwardian inner city area with mixed tenures. The key features that they had in common were:

- Improving local conditions means building on existing structures in the case of the local authority estate the commitment of organised tenants and Estate Action refurbishment had provided considerable momentum; in the Handsworth area a start was being made with some of the key players in the area setting up an appropriate structure.
- Allocations policies played an important role on the Council estate, the changes to allocation policies appear to have reduced problems arising from reluctant tenants; in Handsworth the RSLs hoped that a more co-ordinated approach to allocations might help deal with its problems, although this was yet to be tested.
• Obtaining the support of key stakeholders in Bloomsbury, Birmingham City Council's support is evident although there are differences of opinion with tenants, nevertheless this appears to have made a major contribution to the success of the scheme; in Handsworth the commitment of the RSLs to the Partnership also appears an important start, although the position of the City council appears ambivalent but will be critical for success.

• Birmingham's Tenants Quality Promise attempts to give teeth to enforcement agreements on quality of service but this is a new initiative so its effectiveness is untried.

Key difficulties appeared in both cases:

• In Bloomsbury the point about fragmentation of City Council services was important, the commitment of housing to a localised approach was not always enough; likewise in Handsworth the lead role played by RSLs can create difficulties in bringing on board other key players.

• The involvement of tenants this is an asset but continuity and sustainability may be a problem. In addition building up a strong representative tenant organisation was clearly going to be a difficulty in an area like Handsworth where there is no predominant social landlord and many private owners and landlords. In Bloomsbury, there was inevitably the suspicion that it was not tenant democracy as much as empowering enthusiastic and energetic champions of change which were the real sources of success. However, the EMB members were quite clear that tenant involvement had been very important in transforming the estate.

**Bloomsbury Estate**

1. This estate is characterised by two historical factors. Firstly, successful and continuous tenant organisation with a Tenants Association formed in 1980 which evolved in 1989 into the Estate Management Board (EMB) with a wider membership of 20p shareholders. Secondly, the estate has benefited from substantial injections of investment through Estate Action about £35,000 per dwelling. This investment has primarily been targeted on remodeling the estate to improve its appearance and layout and to improve the environmental quality of dwellings through new cladding providing more insulation together with double-glazing and central heating. The tenants representatives stressed the major impact this had made on the health and wellbeing of its inhabitants.

**Tenant Management**

2. The EMB has twelve elected representatives of which half are regularly active. One representative stressed how being unemployed enabled him to make a full contribution to the work of the EMB and he made a veiled reference to the negative impact of benefit restrictions. There is a locally based team of Birmingham City Council employed housing staff who are seconded to work for the EMB and these dual loyalties can cause problems.

3. Many of the EMB had received substantial training over time and were taking on tasks of greater complexity. Continuity and sustainability were acknowledged as a difficulty, although we were introduced to a new member of the board indicating that this was not an
intractable problem.

4. A ballot is due to be held, organised by the City Council, to set up a TMO. The ballot is being delayed by disagreements with the council about the scope of the draft management agreement. The tenants have considerable ambitions to expand their role beyond housing management to cover sponsorship of LETS, a credit union, redevelopment of nine acres of open space as leisure facilities for local people with a sports council grant and management of grounds maintenance, when the council contract runs out in the year 2000.

5. The EMBs role in housing management is to secure the rent income, paying the City for management charges, a method which is said to avoid voids which have reduced significantly since the EMB took over; securing control of contractors to provide maintenance of voids etc: participate in allocations with rights to decide 50% of allocations (for transfer and family cases).

6. Birmingham City Council sets rents, something that the tenants are quite happy to leave to the Council and the level is around £30-£40 per week with little variation by property type. The tenants would like to take on responsibility for capital works, bidding through the current system although they accepted this was unlikely to happen.

**Allocation Policies**

7. The EMB has responsibility for 50% of allocations, with the remainder coming from the City Housing Department. The tenants reported that despite having significant problems on vandalism and tenant turnover in the past, neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour was less of a problem today. Certainly this seemed to be born out by the visit where, apart from two stripped down cars in one block car park, there was little sign of significant vandalism or other anti-social behaviours. Part of the reason for this may be that Birmingham Council has changed its allocations policies so that instead of one offer only, successful applicants now have the right to three (reasonable) offers so there may be fewer involuntary tenants.

**Crime etc.**

8. In dealing with neighbour nuisance, the police and local authority used to pass the buck. Now they organise joint visits to any problem tenants (although these are said to be few in number) and this approach is thought to be more successful. Outreach detached workers on drugs projects were also working with estate residents and the EMB had ensured that this was done in a way that would provide assurances of confidentiality to potential clients.

**Beyond Housing Management**

9. The tenants were keen to expand the role of their organisation and its activities. A local enterprise organisation (Nechells Employment Resources Agency) would be able to set up a company which would recruit and employ staff on behalf of the TMO to do grounds maintenance. The City Council was introducing an initiative called the Tenants Quality Promise, which its representative outlined at some length. This involves agreeing
standard of services to be delivered by council departments at estate-level Housing Liaison Boards and reporting regularly to tenants on performance. If standards are not met tenants can serve a notice on the Department and if they are not satisfied with the response they can complain to the Chief Executive and leader of the Council. This was challenged by some of the tenants as the latest in a number of housing department led initiatives that tended to fail because other local authority Departments were more centralised and monolithic. Nevertheless, the commitment of the council leadership was seen as significant.

Handsworth

10. This is a large area including about 23,000 dwellings a quarter of which are owned by RSLs. The area consists of a network of 460 streets, largely Victorian terraces with some larger Edwardian semi-detached houses, that at first sight are very attractive. However the area suffers from high levels of deprivation and there is a difficult mix of a large number of ethnic groups.

11. Key problems are high crime levels (burglary, robbery, drug dealing, car theft) and environmental problems (rubbish, dumping and vandalism/graffiti). Other issues in the area include high turnover of residents, care in the community cases, HMOs and health issues.

12. The main impression received in the tour of the area (based on the small sample of properties we saw) was that some of these difficulties may have been exacerbated by Housing Associations in the 1970s buying up properties and converting them cheaply into accommodation for high priority groups without regard to the impact on the overall character and nature of the area or the needs of tenants, eg the homes are hard to heat for poor households.

13. We were given a presentation about the Handsworth Area Partnership Trust which has been formed by five RSLs with 4,000 properties in the area. The objectives of the Trust are harmonising service delivery, enabling community intervention and facilitating interagency approaches. The associations are seeking to involve the Council but the City representatives refused to commit themselves.

14. The Trust had secured, for example, insurance deals for tenants (previously it was impossible to insure the contents of dwellings), credit unions, hot line services and was planning some labour initiatives.

15. A key priority was to integrate their systems to provide better delivery of services. It was explained that in a mixed tenure area service delivery is complex and an integrated governance structure was one approach to integrated services. Other aspirations included local letting agreements, local management agreements as well as maintenance and local call outs.

16. Compared to the large Council estate, this approach, beginning with a completely different set of factors, appeared to be much more top down, probably justifiably so. It was acknowledged that resident involvement needed to be built up and that tenants needed to be integrated into wider community forums.

17. Overall the aim appeared to be to deliver a culture change through the recruitment and employment of new kinds of individuals in key posts in the area, again much more of a management-type initiative than a resident driven one. It had, for example, been decided not to use the existing representative groups which were felt to be problematic due to factionalism between different groups of residents.

18. Although the presentation emphasised community building, local partnerships and a management based approach, the visit on the ground suggested that some of the partners were keen on an overly physical approach to the areas problems. Considerable
prominence was given to an initiative to secure through high security fencing a piece of open land where there had been major problems of dumping and crime in the past. Plans for making use of this open land were however only partly thought out. The architect concerned considered that some demolition of property was necessary to open up the land and to change the aspect of houses on one side of it. However, resources for this transition appeared not to be available and it was not clear what the purpose of this approach was.

19. A local worker who operated a workshop also spoke about an initiative to carry out small repairs for the elderly and those with special needs and to train poor owner occupiers on how to do their own repairs and improvements. This was funded by the City Council and seemed to be like a local Care and Repair project.

20. The presentation by the housing associations was very strong on aspirations but there were no positive achievements to show to date. There were clearly tensions between them and the City Council. The visit highlighted the need for better neighbourhood management in a mixed tenure area but also the difficulty of achieving this with a large range of players who did not seem able to agree on priorities.

**Background Note**

**(1) Bloomsbury Estate**

The Bloomsbury Estate is located in the Nechells area of Birmingham. It came into existence after the Second World War when the City Council began a massive programme of slum clearance. Nechells was one of the first waves of redevelopment areas to be declared and one of the first to be rebuilt. The estate was a mixture of houses, maisonettes and blocks of flats built between 1956 and 1970 and consisted of 1,200 dwellings. Originally the estate was popular with a long waiting list for accommodation. This gradually changed and the properties became difficult to let, by the 1980s the classic problems of deteriorating structural conditions, designs problems and high tenant turnover turned the estate into a virtual no go area.

It became the subject of a small Estate Action Scheme (£2.4m) in 1987, which led to a much larger scheme (£22.57m) in 1990 and the establishment of an Estate Management Board (EMB) which was the first in the country. The main aims of the estate action scheme were: to top lop a four storey block of 12 maisonettes to produce 6 two story houses and to top lop a three storey block of 12 flats to produce 8 two storey flats and to undertake refurbishment works and environmental works on the estate.

Phases 1-3 concentrated mainly on the provision of housing, phase 4 aimed to replace shops previously demolished, create a village centre and build a replacement Health Centre. The last phase, 5, consists of 33 new houses and flats including 14 for shared ownership. There has also been selective demolition and redevelopment by housing associations.

The EMB comprises 12 elected tenant representatives, 2 ward councillors and 2 local authority officers who worked with the City Council, Heartlands Development Corporation and 3 Housing Associations (Friendship, Moseley and District and Family) during phases 1-3 and Bournville Village Trust in phases 4-5.

**(II) Handsworth**
The area of Handsworth is situated approximately 2 miles north of the City Centre. It is an area categorised by high levels of multiple disadvantage; 50% of households in the area do not have a car; unemployment is currently running at 18% (male unemployment is 23%); there are double the reported incidents of violent crime in the area compared to Birmingham as a whole; and this area has one of the highest mortality rates in Birmingham, despite the lower than average age of the population.

Handsworth was declared a Renewal Area in 1991 and was scheduled to run for ten years. At that time it consisted of 2,020 properties, mostly built before the first World War, but with some pockets of inter war housing and infill new properties on previously cleared sites.

Housing Association ownership is high with new properties and renovated properties interspersed with landlord owned rented and owner occupied housing.

**Broadwater Farm and Waltham Forest HAT: 3 December 1998**

**Summary Key Messages**

**Broadwater Farm**

- The estate is the only one in the London Borough of Haringey with estate-based management. The service is more expensive than the average for the Borough but the benefits outweigh the costs.
- There is an active Residents Association who are involved in monitoring the Estate Agreement but do not wish to take on management. A large burden falls on a small group of active residents.
- The regeneration programme under Estate Action is physically transforming the estate. The estate forms part of the Haringey Heartlands SRB Partnership and employment and training issues are also being addressed.
- Training for housing managers involved in the wider regeneration strategies is largely learning on the job and there is a need for better training on working together with the community and other services.

**Chingford Hall**

- The Community Based Housing Association (CBHA) provides local management that meets residents needs because it has effective sanctions through control of the budget. The former local authority estate office did not have the control of services and could not make them deliver.
- The Board includes a core of active residents but they are anxious to widen their representation.
- Housing management has been seen as part of a wider service, addressing the needs of residents and working closely with other professionals on job, training and employment issues.
- The attitude of housing management staff has been as important as their skills.
Willingness to work closely with tenants has been a key requirement.

- The HAT and the CBHA have taken tenant involvement seriously and tried to facilitate participation e.g. by providing a creche and play scheme whenever meetings are held.

**Broadwater Farm: Haringey Council**

1. Broadwater Farm Estate is situated in Tottenham in the London Borough of Haringey. The Estate is made up of 1063 units which form 12 blocks most of which have 4/6 storeys. The stock is constructed using the Neilson Larsen large pre-cast concrete panel system and was built between 1967 and 1973. A key feature of the estate which has in the past contributed to problems of crime, in particular drug dealing were the deck access and walk ways which had linked all blocks at first floor level. As well as a high crime rate and an associated fear of crime, the estate had poor services and lacked community facilities locally. Retail activity had existed on the estate but this failed as services and goods were unaffordable. By 1976, the design faults and lack of amenities on the estate resulted in a high percentage (53%) of applicants refusing accommodation and a long queue of transfers from existing tenants.

2. In October 1985, major disturbances took place as a result of tensions between youths and the police and has since given the area a notorious image of a violent and troubled estate. The image still exists today even though there have been major advances in the physical, environmental and social and economic regeneration of the estate.

3. Local authority housing service staff have been located on the estate since 1983 to provide a responsive and local service to the community. They have been working closely with tenants on day to day repairs and longer term major improvements. A team of architects and other design staff are also based on the estate along with a maintenance team.

4. A strong partnership has developed between the local authority and the community over the past two decades. Local residents are involved in the decision making processes of the housing service; this includes placing residents on recruitment panels of new staff. The council also encourages a target of 20% local employment with contractors. This partnership is formalised in a negotiated Estate Agreement.

5. In 1993, £33 million of Estate Action funds were allocated to the estate which started a ten year programme of regeneration. The reasons for promoting the EA scheme was that the estate still needed extensive capital works to modernise and secure the estate given its design faults. The partnership between residents and the council also contributed to funds being allocated to Broadwater Farm. An estate strategy group meets every fortnight to direct the fund.

6. The results of the programme are already evident: there is a new community centre (including pensioners club, youth club, sports, recreational, social and educational facilities), a health centre, a play centre, 21 small units for new businesses and substantial environmental and building improvements. The walkways which originally linked the blocks have now been demolished to isolate and secure the blocks. Pairs of blocks are served by security concierge schemes and there are numerous cameras which are monitored by concierges sitting in well designed and welcoming reception areas. Tenants are charged £4 per week through rents for the revenue to support the concierge schemes, (the scheme actually costs £10 per week). Other environmental improvements such as gardens and pavements have also contributed to the feeling of security.

7. The health centre located on the estate is a good example of residents involvement in the regeneration of the estate. This centre was campaigned for by the residents and is
managed by a former resident. The practice has GPs, school nurses and health workers. A high level of continuing user involvement (allowing residents to make decisions) is encouraged through organising evening party events and focus groups on health. Funds to organise such events are provided by the Kings Fund.

8. Resources allocated to housing management are broadly based on the stock conditions, socio-economic environment and management performance, which is reviewed annually. Staffing resources for housing management include a manager, deputy and four housing managers. The staffing is more generous than the borough average. There is also a large caretaker team consisting of a supervisor and 7 staff. They keep the blocks and estate clean. The supervisor also oversees two road sweepers based on the estate and the grass cutting services provided by the Leisure Department.

9. The neighbourhood renewal manager said that they had no plans to diversify the basic housing management functions of the management service. They saw their role as providing a wider strategic role to co-ordinate the provision of services on the estate.

10. The qualities of staff working within the local housing management service sought by the council and residents association were: a commitment to working within and with a community; a knowledge of user involvement management; strategic planning and a firm grounding in what the council does. Training was geared to developing such skills. There was no problem recruiting staff to work in the estate, perhaps because it was a flagship for regeneration.

11. Tenant training was sometimes funded from contractors sponsoring events. A residents office is provided and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service was used to facilitate and provide training on housing finance and negotiation skills. Monthly meetings with local residents are held which provide an opportunity for residents to review and question the performance of services against the Estate Agreement.

Chingford Hall Estate: Waltham Forest HAT

1. In April 1996 the CBHA received the temporary transfer of new homes from the Housing Action Trust. The temporary transfer guarantees tenants the right to a Landlord Choice ballot in 2001. The CBHA has inherited 862 units in four estates comprising mainly three bedroom houses in terraces. There are also a number of one bedroom flats in three storey blocks. The number of units will rise to 1500 by the year 2000. The transfer has enabled the HAT to raise £42 million which will help fund the remaining redevelopment work on the HAT estates. CBHA is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Peabody Trust. The CBHA employs 65 people most of whom transferred from the HAT. The majority of employees deliver services to residents from four open plan offices in four locations with a central team based in Leytonstone.

2. Problems on the estate pre-1991 included a high crime rate in part caused by an underground car park. A number of high rise blocks have since been demolished. There were no play areas, a great deal of vandalism and no effective means of clearing rubbish. A local based estate office did exist but it was not effective in delivering services and moved around a lot which added to the lack of confidence the tenants had in the management of the estate.

3. The CBHA has approached housing management in a different more customer-focused way. They have more resources and complete budgetary control. One of the main immediate effects of new management was to physically remove the barriers and counters in the locally based estate offices. Property inspectors were also placed on the estates.
4. The CBHA is a tenant led organisation with 10 of the 15 Board members being elected residents. The meetings of the Board are held locally and are open to all residents. The elected resident members are involved in the specification and tendering of contracts and the board has provided work placements for residents studying housing management, human resources and computer skills. Tenants have also been involved in drafting the new tenancy agreement which is based on Clear English. Tenant board members are keen to widen the pool of active volunteers.

5. Crime rates have been reduced by involving tenants in designing the new homes. The reduction in crime has had a knock on effect and reduced vandalism. Also it was felt that those responsible for anti-social behaviour who are still resident on the estate changed their behaviour as the management changed.

6. Other achievements have included developing a Housing Plus Strategy in June 1998. Current initiatives have included offering maintenance skills for women (which female residents suggested) and a computer gym aimed at young people during the school holidays (which tenants suggested). Tenant board members can also bid for funds to run schemes. The housing plus strategy is a reflection of the housing management style of CBHA which is a flexible approach which does not wholly focus on housing but on community development. A creche and play scheme is always provided for children of residents whenever meetings are held.

7. The CBHA have also aimed to achieve high rates of resident employment. One way of securing employment for residents is by including Local Labour clauses in service contracts. The CBHA met its target of 30% resident employment in 1997/98. They have also funded tenants training into finance, repairs and maintenance, as well as seminars and courses on tenant participation and negotiation at the Chartered Institute of Housing. The recruitment of staff has focused on their attitude and willingness to work with tenants. In recruiting residents to jobs in the HAT and CBHA, priority has been given to finding people with the right attitudes and competencies and then providing them with training to meet any specific skill deficiencies.
Annex D: Note by DETR Tenants Democracy and on-the-spot Management in Denmark

**Background**

1. The non-profit housing sector accounts for around one-fifth of the housing stock (another one-fifth are privately rented or in cooperatives and 60% are owner-occupied). There is no general needs council housing, virtually all social housing is provided by not-for-profit housing associations.
2. All income groups are eligible, although low-income groups predominate in the non-profit housing sector. Local authorities supervise the associations in their area and have the right to nominate to 25% of vacancies. Construction of new homes is subsidised by central and local government. Housing assistance is provided for people on low incomes but every tenant has to make a personal contribution to their rent.

**Tenants Democracy**

3. As a condition of receiving funding, housing associations must comply with Tenants Democracy, which is based on comprehensive legislation. Tenants have a majority on the managing boards of all the non-profit associations. Tenants at an annual meeting and representatives of the local authority have to give their agreement to major financial decisions made by the housing associations.
4. All tenants have a right to form a board for their estate and to have a big say in the operation and maintenance of their estate. The local board normally consists of 3-11 tenants depending on the size of the estate. The local board works out the overall policy for running the estate and its operating budget, which is presented to all the tenants at an annual meeting. Powers can be delegated, for example to a group of tenants using the same staircase, so that they can manage activities or improvements within a fixed budget. If there is not sufficient interest from tenants then the central association board will take responsibility for the estate but that is very rare indeed.

**Estate budgets**

5. A local section of a housing association is an independent financial unit. The expenditure includes interest on building loans and running costs. The income is solely the rent paid by tenants and there is no possibility of transferring money in or out. If the running costs increase or if there are empty properties then the rents must rise and if the running costs fall rents can also be reduced or services enhanced. Tenants have a strong interest in keeping running costs low and also in keeping the estate attractive, so that all the homes remain let. The primary objective of the board of tenants is to create an optimal balance between quality and attractiveness of the estate and the level of rent. The board of tenants can select the organisation they want to manage the estate for them; in practice most choose the housing association which developed the estate but there is some shopping around.

**Housing management and maintenance**
6. Housing management and maintenance services are delivered with a mixture of on-the-spot and central services. The result appears effective and affordable. A manager from the housing association or another managing organisation based off the estate is employed to manage the estate for the local board. The super-caretakers based on the estate are highly skilled both technically and in social skills. They deal with most problems that arise on the estates.

7. Arrangements for management and maintenance vary from estate to estate, depending on what the local tenants want. On some estates tenants take on some management tasks themselves, to keep the running costs low and to increase their involvement. Sometimes tenants work with caretakers on maintenance of buildings and communal areas, resulting in lower rents and higher quality. In addition feelings of community have been strengthened, vandalism and graffiti reduced and turnover has reduced because people have not wanted to move away from the estate.

**Super-caretakers**

8. Locally there are super-caretakers for every 80-100 homes who deal with:

- changeover of tenancies (checking condition and liability for costs of damage from outgoing tenants and welcoming and helping new ones);
- taking care of buildings, ordering repairs and planned improvements;
- taking care of green areas;
- helping to resolve neighbour disputes and supporting vulnerable people.

9. Most super-caretakers have a blue-collar craftsman background but they are paid salaries comparable to those of the specialist white collar housing managers who are centrally based. They are employed by the housing association but work closely with section (estate) committees, as well as with specialist central staff. The local super-caretakers are supported by centrally based specialist teams, dealing with planning and supervising repair and maintenance, with management issues such as running the waiting list, with managing money and chasing serious rent arrears.

**Incentives**

10. The system provides a number of incentives for tenants and their families to behave well towards the property and their neighbours. All tenants pay a deposit equivalent to three months rent which is only returnable on moving if the property is left in good condition, although the local authority will pay this for people on low incomes. Each estate is an independent budget unit and the costs of empty properties fall on the tenants so they have an interest in keeping the estate attractive. At the margins the tenants can choose the level of service they want, for example hiring an additional super-caretaker or taking on some of the cleaning themselves. Because of the transparency of estate budgets the implications for rent levels are clear. The super-caretakers and tenants committee continuously monitor estate conditions and raise any problems immediately with the tenants concerned.
Sources


Combating social exclusion: area-based interventions in Europe, Michael Parkinson, 1998

Cooperation between Tenants Democracy and local social authorities creating socially well-functioning housing areas, Ole Kirkegaard, 1998.

Regeneration: post-war neighbourhood renewal, Freddy Avnby, 1998
Annex E: List of those attending Policy Action Team 5 Seminar on Tuesday 9 March 1999 to Discuss Emerging Themes

Andrew Allberry DETR
Michael Beverley Kensington and Chelsea TMO
Jan Bird DETR
Eamonn Boylan Sheffield City Council
Mike Burbidge Independent expert (former DETR)
Cora Carter TAROE
Theresa Crisp DETR
George Davidson DoE Northern Ireland
John Denny Irwell Valley Housing Association
Peter Fiddeman Government Office London
Geoff Fordham GFA Consulting
Charlie Forman London Housing Unit
Jem Fouweather London Borough of Haringey
Michael Gahagan DETR
Robina Goodlad Glasgow University
James Gorringe DETR
John Hocking City of York
Peter Jarman Carrick District Council
Roger Jarman Housing Corporation
Angus Kennedy Castle Vale Housing Action Trust
Keith Kirby DETR
Paul Lautman Local Government Association
Pam Lockley Birmingham City Council
Peter Marcus Joseph Rowntree Foundation
Ivan McConnell Arthur Andersen
Adrian Moran Housing Corporation
Tracy O Connor Pinnacle
Atul Patel Social Exclusion Unit
Liz Potter National Housing Federation
Anne Power London School of Economics
Pauline Prosser DETR
Carol Rafferty Tenant on Housing Corporation Consumer Panel
Anil Singh Manningham Housing Association
Gwen Smith Leeds City Council
Helen Spooner South Yorkshire Housing Association
Clive Taber William Sutton Trust
Janet Walden Department of Health
The Rev D Walker South Yorkshire Housing Association
Andrew Williamson Hastoe Housing Association
Mike Wilson Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust
Tricia Zipfel Priority Estates Project
Annex F: A Code of Practice for Housing Managers on Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

1 Local authorities and RSLs should adopt the following practices:

- Establish a written policy on racial equality for core housing management services that is linked to a wider corporate policy.
- Ensure that their racial equality policy reflects the CREs Race Relations Codes of Practice and embraces the need to address social exclusion.
- Consult local service users, tenants and residents groups and community groups about the policy. Ensure that the consultation includes a balance of women and men, perhaps of different ages and from different ethnic groups.
- Ensure that the policy acknowledges the impact of social exclusion on minority ethnic communities.
- Ensure that the policy is endorsed by council and committee members and senior officers in all housing organisations.
- Ensure that plans for service delivery take account of the needs of all ethnic groups in the community.
- Ensure that all staff delivering core housing management services are trained to provide an appropriate and informed response to all service users without unlawful discrimination.
- Undertake regular ethnic monitoring on the take-up of services and use the data to feed into policy review and targeting.
- Provide literature about housing services, democratic structures and participation in a range of formats in a range of appropriate community languages.
- Provide language-link interpretation services for service users whose first language is not English.
- Ensure that the housing management workforce reflects the ethnic make-up of the community it serves.
- Develop closer links with other service providers such as social services, health, education and employment to tackle social exclusion.

2 Local authorities and RSLs should consider the following good practice suggestions:

- Have mechanisms in place to respond to racial harassment, racial attacks, the need for victim support and the removal of racist graffiti.
- Work with the Department for Education and Employment to identify training opportunities and work placements for individuals from under-represented ethnic groups within the housing management service.
- Provide information about core housing services on audio cassette and other formats in a range of community languages. Make sure that these are available in community venues such as libraries and community centres.
- Monitor all lettings by ethnicity. Set targets over a year to ensure that lettings reflect the ethnic make-up of the local community.
- Offer a specialist language translation service for non-English speaking people e.g. provide staff and service users with access to translators through a language-line service/system.
• Undertake a housing needs and supply study of the minority ethnic community.
• Work closely with BME RSLs to ensure that specialist and culturally sensitive housing services are available if required.
• Undertake outreach work with ethnic minority community organisations to raise the profile of housing services and improve access.
• Make regular visits to local schools to raise the profile of local housing services
Annex G: Assessing the needs of an area

There are a number of ways in which a landlord can establish what services are needed where:

- Demographic analysis: particularly in areas of low demand the age profile of families will assist with forecasts about the mix of requirements. Some of the cases studies for the GFA research on sustainable estate regeneration include examples where landlords were surprised to discover they had a growing proportion of ageing empty nesters who no longer required family accommodation. Where the mix of stock within the estate does not offer the prospect of transfers to smaller accommodation on the estate, large numbers of transfers elsewhere might de-stabilise the community, as might a large influx of vulnerable families into the vacated properties;
- Socio-economic data: if any kind of wider, economic activities are under consideration a baseline is important to measure the impact of those activities. How data are gathered depends in part on the objective of the programme, the nature of the proposed projects and the size of the estate. Data on claimants are available by postcode, so on larger estates it may be possible to keep a running total based on the claimant count from the Employment Service. Alternatively Housing Benefit data can provide an accessible proxy;
- Skills and aspirations; using market research firms can be expensive, but there are cheaper ways to undertake a skills audit for example as undertaken by Poplar HARCA have done. A skills audit is an important element in the design of training programmes. GFA found that some local construction labour schemes that they looked at had not performed well because demand had not been assessed beforehand;
- Housing demand (as opposed to needs); the housing preferences and aspirations of existing and potential households will be a powerful driver on any investment decisions;
- Housing management indicators; a clear picture of indicators (voids, turnover, duration of vacancies etc) is crucial.

At the cross-PAT seminar, Leeds demonstrated how it was possible to use integrated information systems to build up a picture at the very local level of both needs and opportunities, for example eligibility for the New Deal for young people. This kind of analysis can facilitate community planning. Guidance on involving the community in identifying needs and opinions is given in Involving communities in urban and rural regeneration, DETR 1997.
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