

Cluster Review - Homes and Housing

Review of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

Date of Review Meeting: 13/05/04

Attendance at review meeting: Councillor Coleridge, Geeta Nanda, Mark Conyers, Helen Kay

NRS ISSUE 5: Need to improve the quality of management, maintenance and repairs across social housing

Special Achievements:

- The Dalgarno Neighbourhood Management Alliance has been established. The alliance includes the five main social landlords working in the Dalgarno area and its aim is to improve the consistency and standard of environmental services, such as cleaning, caretaking, grounds maintenance and street care in the area and providing services that are responsive to local needs. An Action Plan has been drawn up and a number of local successes achieved, e.g. environmental and security improvements. NRF funding has been awarded to establish the post of a Neighbourhood Management Co-ordinator in 2004/05 and 2005/06.

(Achievement to be highlighted in the KCP Annual Report)

- The RBKC ALMO has been established following a successful Audit Commission inspection and the awarding of 2 stars with excellent prospects for improvement. The first tranche of ALMO funding has been released and will be used to improve local authority housing to meet the government's Decent Homes standard. **(to be highlighted in the KCP Annual Report)**
- Improvements to Holmefield House have been completed resulting in improved heating and insulation to 189 homes.
- Kensington Housing Trust are developing a dialogue with the residents of the Wornington Green estate regarding the potential regeneration of the estate. A Regeneration Manager has been appointed and plans are being drawn up for a new base for the Wornington Green Regeneration Team. A programme of repairs and improvement works are currently underway on the estate; this includes essential repairs, health and safety works and security improvements.

(to be highlighted in the KCP Annual Report)

Cluster Review - Homes and Housing

Barriers

- At the same time as the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Management Initiative is being developed some of the participating landlords are reviewing the delivery of their front-line management services. The uncertainty that this creates has made it difficult to operate on a neighbourhood basis.
- Residents of the Dalgarno area still need to become engaged with the neighbourhood management initiative.
- The total cost of bringing the Council's housing stock up to the Decent Home's standard is expected to exceed the current allocation under the ALMOI investment programme.
- The cost of essential repairs and bringing the 207 dwellings up to the Decent Home's standard at Trellick Tower are high because of heritage considerations and the scale of the building.
- The initial MORI survey of the Wornington Green estate has shown that the needs of its residents are complex.

Possible Solutions

- It will be important to maintain the momentum of the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Management initiative. This can be achieved by ensuring that the initiative continues to receive a high profile and political support.
- Ensuring that the Dalgarno Neighbourhood Management thrives by continuing to support it at a high level within the Council
- Involving residents in setting standards for service delivery
- Establishing a clear picture of the investment needs of the local authority stock

Action for Improvement

- Establishing a Resident's Group in the Dalgarno area to ensure that local residents are involved in setting and monitoring standards.
- Preparing the case for additional government funding through the ALMO programme to achieve the Decent Home's standard.
- Ensuring that the regeneration of the Wornington Green estate is successful by developing a strong partnership with residents and other stakeholders.

Cluster Review - Homes and Housing

Review of the Community Strategy

Date of Review Meeting: 13th May 2004

Attendance at Review meeting: Councillor Coleridge, Geeta Nanda, Mark Conyers, Helen Kay

Special achievements:

In May 2003 an Audit Commission inspection of the Tenant Management Organisation took place. The housing service was awarded two stars with excellent prospects for improvement. The effect of this is that the first tranche of ALMO funding, which totals £20 million has been released and this money will be used to improve local authority housing in the Royal Borough to meet the Decent Homes standard **(Highlight in Annual Report)**

In the Dalgarno area the five main social landlords have come together to form a 'Neighbourhood Management Alliance' that aims to improve the standard of services being delivered to the residents of the area. **(Highlight in Annual Report)**

A *Rapid Response Protocol* for dealing with 'crack-houses' on Council estates was implemented in 2003. This protocol has brought the Police, the Council and landlords together to tackle the problems of 'crack houses'. The robust application of this protocol has ensured that there are no 'crack houses' operating in Kensington and Chelsea. **(Highlight in Annual Report)**

In January 2002, RBKC had 192 families with children living in bed and breakfast accommodation with an average stay of one year. Now, there are no families in B&B accommodation. This has been achieved by the Council working with housing providers including the private sector to find temporary accommodation.

RBKC has worked successfully with the LB of Hammersmith and Fulham on the Rough Sleepers Initiative. The number of rough sleepers in the area is now at a very low level.

RBKC became a partner to the West London Housing Strategy in June 2003, which is intended to set the strategic framework for the delivery of housing services across the West London sub-region. The strategy seeks to increase the supply of housing, increase the provision of affordable homes, improve the quality of housing and create sustainable communities

Cluster Review - Homes and Housing

Barriers

It was felt that Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are not always an appropriate response when dealing with certain categories of ASB.

The TMO has recently carried out a stock condition survey and there is concern that it will be difficult to meet the Government's Decent Homes standard within the current allocation of ALMO funding which is based on a notional unit cost of £5,000. In Kensington and Chelsea the costs of preliminaries are traditionally high and the fact that many properties are in high-rise blocks and/or listed buildings exacerbates the situation.

The government funding available to move families out of B&B is only available over the next two years. There is some concern that the solutions are not sustainable without ongoing Government support.

Possible solutions

- Improved joint working between Police, Council and landlords on responses to anti-social behaviour.
- Increased level of resources being available from central government to improve homes to the Decent Homes standard
- Continued government support for tackling homelessness
- Should the KCP be reviewing its structure on an Area basis? Neighbourhood Level Plans with a number of partner agencies work well in Westminster.

Action for Improvement

- The Housing Cluster Champions and the Chief Housing Officer will meet to discuss where the opportunities lie for the Kensington & Chelsea Partnership to 'add value' in dealing with housing issues, for example in the areas of tackling anti-social behaviour and innovative solutions to over-crowding.
- Increased joint working between social landlords in the Royal Borough particularly in terms of sharing best practice and resources.