

WOODBERRY DOWN ESTATES

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AT WOODBERRY DOWN

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December 2000

PREFACE

The purpose of this report is to describe the approach which the Woodberry Down Regeneration Team (WDRT) has adopted for resident consultation, encouraging new community leadership and structures, and the long-term management of the estate. The opportunity exists at Woodberry Down to do things better. Government is encouraging this and the WDRT is determined to make a long-term lasting difference. Many reports have been written by the WDRT on various technical aspects of the regeneration process and it has defined as carefully as it can its vision and objectives for the estate. Whilst these proposals often take a very different approach to current conventions the WDRT recognises that it is the people who live there, and those who will live there in the future, who will make the real difference given the opportunity.

In writing this report the WDRT is conscious of other work in this field and the largely aspirational and strategic nature of much of it. Government policy is almost by definition in this category, and so it should be. Whilst the WDRT is interested in these strategic policy statements its prime concern is with delivery and implementation at Woodberry Down on a long-term sustainable basis. The justification for long-term sustainable resident structures, if justification is needed, is contained in "Community Leadership in Area Regeneration" published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Their report refers to sustainability in the following way.

"There is a growing recognition of the importance of investing in a regeneration process which is organisationally sustainable (Fordham, 1995; JRF, 1999). This involves the establishment of community institutions that can consolidate and sustain the immediate gains of SRB regeneration schemes and put them to long term community benefit."

Involvement in this regeneration process must be inclusive. Inclusive in the sense that the stakeholders in the process will be from all sections of the community. The WDRT must concern itself primarily with the estate, whilst keeping abreast of developments in the Borough and the sub-region. The housing strategy which the WDRT is working towards must be informed by new consultative structures which are being arranged. The DETR Housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A decent home for all" takes the view that:

"Tenants, residents, housing associations, private sector landlords, voluntary sector agencies, black and minority ethnic community representatives, parish and town councils, planning departments, health authorities, social services, and the police are all key partners. They will need to be fully involved in the production of a housing strategy. Authorities should set up consultative structures and be prepared to listen and empower others to play their part in delivering the strategy."

This WDRT report has drawn inspiration from three sources. First the WDRT's unshakeable commitment to being open, honest and accessible to residents and the favourable response from residents which this approach has had. Second, the WDRT's report "Vision, Objectives and Procurement". This describes the framework for the estates' management and development for the next 20 or 30 years or so.

Third, the report already referred to published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2000 “Community Leadership in area regeneration”, the JRF report, has been used extensively. The JRF report contains a set of researched recommendations which sit easily with the ideas which the WDRT is aiming to implement.

This report by the WDRT uses extracts from the JRF report either to illustrate key features of the argument being developed or to add emphasis or clarity. Where these extracts are used in the text they are printed in italics. In Section 4 the main JRF recommendations for implementation, and which have been adopted by the WDRT, are reproduced in full.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tenant participation or user involvement in local authority services is a popular topic. Consultation with service users is part of the best value framework and many public service areas also now aspire to real user involvement in decision making, empowerment and devolution of power. The link is often made between some kind of ownership of the home and a new sense of responsibility on the part of the resident in wanting to look after that home. In a recent DETR paper "Local Government Finance, Modernising Local Government, Local Democracy and Community Leadership", it is even suggested that, as well as a closer match between aspirations of communities and the services secured for them by their local authority, the prize of increased public participation is a new brand of involved and responsible citizenship.

The area defined as Woodberry Down is large and its management, consultation process and resident involvement is diffuse. The estates contain more than 2500 homes in which live approximately 6000 residents. There are nine registered Tenants' and Residents' Associations with two new ones in the process of registering. There are also six Estate Committees that are serviced centrally by the Council and which meet once a quarter. The area is situated in one of five of Hackney's neighbourhoods. Stamford Hill, which has its own Neighbourhood Committee that meets nine times a year. This is attended by the local Councillors, Council officers, and members of the public. The latter usually involves tenants. The Council's housing stock in Stamford Hill Neighbourhood is managed by Paddington Churches Housing Association (PCHA), on behalf of the Council, which has set up a tenants' panel for the whole neighbourhood. This meets monthly and has an input to all housing management issues.

The above has constituted a large expenditure of energy and yet residents feel they have had little or no effect on decisions. The WDRT's research has revealed that a large majority of residents at Woodberry Down do not feel they have any influence over the policies and practices that affect the homes that they live in, despite all the organisations and committees referred to above. The overwhelming feedback from residents is that:

- The Council does not listen
- The Council makes its own decisions
- They see little point in getting involved
- Even when the Council does listen, it then does what it chooses anyway

Even the residents who are active in these organisations and committees feel that they have an extremely limited influence. Something seems to be drastically amiss with the policies and practices of resident involvement in the area. To be fair, the real and effective involvement of users in the management of public service delivery is notoriously difficult to achieve in practice.

One of the wider policy implications that impinge on real user involvement in regeneration in the area is what the JRF report describes as a 'top down' model where the Council's Regeneration Committee oversees the work of all regeneration partnerships. The JRF report suggests that this "reinforces the power concentrated

in the local authority and, while there is representation from a community forum on individual partnership boards, the model remains local government dominated and strongly top-down". The Council has its own Tenant Participation Compact. In its Joint Statement with leaders of tenant and resident organisations it states that "The Council will resist imposing a top-down approach to tenant involvement because we believe that our compact will only work through a bottom up systematic approach that allows tenants to determine the pace and type of change".

With all this in mind, the WDRT has chosen to develop a mixed approach to this issue and which is described in the WDRT's report "Vision, Objectives and Procurement" in the following way:

"It has been concluded that these major joined up solutions cannot be carried out from the top down, and that it unlikely they would be successful or sufficiently informed if they are implemented from the bottom up. Working somewhere in the middle seems to be the sensible way forward and this approach is being adopted."

This approach requires the Council to provide a high degree of expertise in the work that is carried out in all aspects of the research development and procurement. The WDRT is beginning to describe the relationship as being similar to that an individual would expect to have with a lawyer. That is, the lawyer is expert and knowledgeable in a specific legal area and is able to advise the client of the outcome of the different courses of action available. It is up to the client to make the choice as to which course of action they prefer. Similarly, the WDRT will strive to be expert in gathering and processing the information and data that will inform the vision and objectives leading to the preparation of tender documents for the development work. The residents will be involved making the choices for the area once the 'expert' work has been done and during the course of its preparation. Residents need to direct the work and brief the 'experts' on the needs of the estate. Trust between the residents and the WDRT is the key to unlocking the skills and knowledge of all to work together in partnership.

2. INFORMATION AND THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

At the outset of the consultation, the WDRT recognised the need for a transparent process that actively encouraged full participation from all residents. The WDRT has embraced the DETR “Code of Practice on the Dissemination of Information during Major Infrastructure Developments”. The contents of the code have been accepted as the minimum standards required from all members of the WDRT.

This Code of Practice states two key principles:

- “... requirements of common courtesy which provide that the promoter should seek to minimise the inconvenience to those affected by the proposal or the scheme”.
- “One means towards this end is to keep people well informed. Rumours seem only to work in one direction - to exaggerate the negative. If accurate and timely information about a proposed development (or a development which is proceeding) is not available, human nature is such that people are more likely to fear the worst than hope for the best.”.

In addition to the rights to consultation required by the Code of Practice, the WDRT have also attempted to ensure that information is available to residents early on in the planning process and in particular during the option appraisal. At this stage the Code of Practice states that information provision is discretionary but offers clear advice that:

- “Very often, the success of the proposed development is dependent to a greater or lesser extent upon the support and goodwill of the general public. In such instances, the promoter may have to accept that confidentiality will have to be sacrificed, either at Stage Two or possibly even earlier.”
- “Promoters should realise that, at this stage, the general public will only be able to consider the relative merits of the possible options, and the likely effects upon their own circumstances, if all the relevant information is readily available to them..”

This advice can only be all the more urgent when the proposed development is one that directly affects the homes of the residents themselves.

In accordance with the above, the WDRT sought to maximise resident involvement and knowledge of the proposals as they were developed. It is hoped that this will produce maximum support for the programme from residents at the earliest stage. The WDRT also decided that it made more sense to go to residents without fixed plans even though this would necessarily bring to the front questions from residents that the WDRT would be unable to answer sometimes for some years. It was also hoped that by informing, involving, being open, listening, and responding that the WDRT would be able to work with residents towards change in an atmosphere of trust. In parts of the estate the housing is in such a poor condition that something must be done quickly. Because of the limitations on funding, the

WDRT acknowledges that it will have to be innovative in its methods of attracting investment in public housing in this area. Private finance, aided by Social Housing Grant will have to be part of the solution. It will need residents to be fully informed and supportive of this process. The WDRT has therefore begun a programme of resident involvement on a scale, with an intensity and with openness unlike any that has been encountered elsewhere.

ENGAGING THE WOODBERRY DOWN RESIDENTS

The WDRT has already gone a long way to begin the process of real and representative involvement. Three rounds of consultation has taken place. In round 1 most estate committees and tenant and resident associations were visited and briefed on proposals.

In round 2 all 2500 front doors were knocked on once, leafleted twice, and 12 local meetings brought out about 500 residents from over 350 households. Whilst the formal agenda of these meetings included the results of the research, option appraisal and other matters, it became clear very early on that the primary purpose of each meeting was to begin to build trust and a working relationship with residents. Unfortunately, the Council's track record in both the delivery of services and consultation is such that residents were highly sceptical about what the WDRT was saying.

The third round of consultation meetings have taken the consultation process into a different area. Informal consultation was shaped into a more formal structure with the establishment of an Estate Development Committee (EDC) formed by residents elected from each of the 14 local consultation areas. This round of consultation has brought residents into decision making in the regeneration process.

We knew that historically and from other areas, ensuring that the EDC represented all ethnic groups on the estates would be difficult. Our qualitative survey had shown that the population of the estates is broadly 38% white, 10% Turkish, 30% Black/African, 5% Asian, and 17% other. One idea to ensure an ethnically representative EDC was to 'ring fence' numbers of seats according to these proportions. This was felt to be impractical when holding elections in 14 areas and wrong in its approach in trying to tell residents what to do. We decided to develop an alternative approach. Before each election residents would be shown the ethnicity of the estate, the ethnicity of the representatives of the EDC at that point and asked to vote responsibly. Quite simply, we suggested that there was no point having an EDC that did not reflect the communities that lived on the estate. The results were astounding. The table below shows the results that were attained in the ethnicity of the EDC members.

ETHNIC ORIGIN	EDC MEMBERS
Black - African/Caribbean	8
European White	1
Greek/Greek Cypriot	1
Irish	1
Pakistani	1
Turkish	3
UK White	12

Throughout all of the resident involvement programme, we have aimed to work in a way that we hope builds the confidence of the residents in us. This trust building exercise will continue for many months as work with the community continues. Early on a few principles were developed to enable this process. These are discussed later in this report but the main principles are:

Honesty - the WDRT know that it must keep any promises it makes and keep to its word.

Reality - its easier to deal with the reality as it is now. Once this has been acknowledged it is possible to move on.

Open file policy - residents know that they can come and look at all the information which the WDRT has as they please, other than information that relates to individuals or is commercially sensitive, and many take advantage of this.

Local, open access office - residents know they can drop in at any time in a counter-free, informal environment.

Using these principles while acknowledging the present conditions of some of the homes, and past mistakes of housing management, seems to have helped reduce the antagonism from residents which the WDRT faced initially. As residents begin to realise that they do not have to fight to be heard on these issues, the relationship between the WDRT and residents begins to move on.

The WDRT expect the working relationship with the community not only to take time to develop, but also to go through ups and downs. The community is neither a homogenous group nor a system of perfect information flow and acknowledging this has been a major step forward.

RESIDENTS GETTING INVOLVED AND LEVELS OF INVOLVEMENT

The WDRT will not assume, though, that all residents will want the same involvement as others in the process of change. In order to understand and describe this the WDRT has developed the following levels of involvement, each of which need to be delivered effectively. The numbers of residents in each layer is largely notional but is also based on observation at the three rounds of consultation and on experience.

LEVEL ONE

Only a few residents will actually take part in representing the estate, in decision making and getting involved on a daily basis in the finer points of the regeneration. They may well be involved in a local area steering group, the residents' EDC, SRB6 structures and other local bodies as described above. While this level of involvement was originally made up of residents who had a long-standing involvement, the election of the EDC has seen a generation of newcomers get involved here. There are about 50 residents at this level.

LEVEL TWO

Residents at this level will come forward in local areas to become members of local steering groups, perhaps attending the central workshops and beginning to get involved in the wider structures. There are about 150 residents at this level.

LEVEL THREE

This level will comprise those who will attend local public and other meetings from time to time to keep in touch with the regeneration process. They will tell others 'by word of mouth' what's going on. The problem with this of course is that the message often gets changed in the telling. There are about 500 residents at this level.

It is expected that at any of the above three levels of involvement residents will take up any paid training and work opportunities that will arise in community consultation and development.

LEVEL FOUR

Those at this level will have no interest in getting involved in any of the above but they will want to be kept informed of changes. They will also want to know whom to telephone, and where to drop-in to get the information they need as questions arise. There are about 2500 residents at this level.

LEVEL FIVE

The changes are happening around them and residents at this level have little or no awareness or even interest in anything going on. The WDRT may need to outreach to them when the time is right to let them know what is going on. There are about 1500 residents at this level.

LEVEL SIX

Residents at this level are the young, say under the age of 16, and some of the very elderly, but have the same rights as everyone else. There are barriers making it difficult for these residents to get involved. There are about 1300 residents at this level.

The following diagram shows these levels and their relative size in graphical form, starting at level one at the top and level six at the bottom.



The WDRT expect the number at each level to stay largely constant although residents will move between them as they get more involved or reduce their commitment with the process. Many external factors will influence this including work, health, and family and other responsibilities and commitments.

There is a large population here that are under the age of 18, about 1700 out of a total population of 6000. Given the length of the programme planned for Woodberry Down, the resident involvement process is just as important for them as it is for adults and perhaps more so. In fact, one measure of success of a programme such as this would be the change in lifestyle expectations that young people may hope to experience as a result of regeneration. As a result the work is developing on two fronts.

First, the WDRT are working with local youth service providers who are engaging young people of secondary school age in a project 'Young Voices'. This group will be consulted in a similar way about how work within the geographic areas is progressing. For children of junior school age and below, the work is linked with an organisation delivering 'Safer Routes to School' at the Woodberry Down Junior School under an SRB5 programme. The WDRT also does what it can to support the delivery of services to children and young people of all ages in the area.

The Woodberry Down estates has a lower than normal elderly population, about 12% of the population compared with 16% in the UK. It is known that many of the elderly will find themselves at levels five and six of the model on the previous page. The WDRT is already planning now for working with the elderly on a one to one basis to ensure that their needs can be catered for. Ensuring good communication with all residents and in particular the elderly residents is vital in reducing the additional worry that is caused by a regeneration process.

The remainder of this report focuses on the involvement of residents at levels one and two in the future of the regeneration programme. At a later date, the mechanisms that inform and involve those at levels three to six will need further examination.

3. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN AREA REGENERATION

The JRF paper identified and studied community leaders in area regeneration partnerships who occupied positions as community representatives. The WDRT is now engaging the community in a regeneration process that is both considerably larger than the tranche of funding that the SRB6 will provide, and a programme which will be of much longer duration. The lessons and recommendations of the JRF report research is summarised below because it is of direct relevance to the impending involvement of community leaders in the Woodberry Down estates. In some instances, due to the potential duration of 15 or 20 years of the regeneration programme, these lessons will be of even greater relevance when compared to a standard 5 to 7-year SRB programme.

The JRF report suggests a framework for understanding community leadership that incorporates 5 themes:

The policy context of community leadership:

This is the external influence of regeneration policy which now emphasises community engagement but which also reminds communities of a long experience of regeneration leading to disempowerment and disenchantment

The impact of working in partnership:

The interplay of power and trust forms an enduring theme throughout the life of any regeneration partnership, shaping the relations between community leaders and others involved.

The personal experience of leadership:

There is an internalised and often unshareable mixture of energy and commitment, juggling time and money, fighting off burnout and role strain, and balancing conflicting loyalties between community roots and the wider partnership.

Representation and accountability:

The concept of an homogeneous or unified community within any geographical area is misleading; in principle and in practice the limits to representativeness make it difficult to hold community leaders to account.

Leadership succession and capacity building:

Tensions often arise between a generation of community leaders, recruited at speed, to legitimise a SRB bid for example, and a second generation who emerge as a consequence of long-term capacity building.

For each of the above themes, some of the discussion points in the JRF paper apply in the context which the WDRT meets as it now begins its work. Understanding these and taking them into account as the work begins is vital in building a successful partnership with residents. Some of these in relation to the above themes are described below.

THE POLICY CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Two quotations from the JRF report this policy context:

'Local authorities and other statutory agencies are still perceived as endlessly seeking the views of communities, but seldom accepting these views.' At Woodberry Down, this is very much the case both with the SRB5 bidding process which took place and the Capital Challenge programme which finished in the area at the end of March 2000.

'The profile of an SRB scheme in the community can benefit from a visible project that local people can see as a tangible change in their neighbourhood, such as the building of a new community centre. Visibility can, however, generate opposition.' This is also true at Woodberry Down in the case of the Robin Redmond Resource Centre which was the old community library converted into a resident resource centre by the Capital Challenge programme. Local residents are still angry that not only was their library taken away but also that the centre is, to many of them, not providing any tangible service or benefit to the estate. The WDRT believes that this is not because of fault of the resident managers but due to the conception and delivery of this project. As a result, continuing support of the Robin Redmond Resource Centre and its management committee has been requested by resident managers and this is being provided by the WDRT.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIPS - OPPONENTS

The following quotation from the JRF report has been included simply because it clearly identifies the pitfalls of partnership working with local residents.

'Opposition, and the way in which those involved feel they have been treated, leads to a low level of trust . . . In one case, an apparently popular partnership was viewed as a one-way street, built on power not trust. The community was obliged to trust the council, but the council did not trust the community. The community representatives felt they could not trust the council to deliver the services they had promised. Nor could the council be trusted to act out of goodwill. The community leaders felt undervalued; their time was used as if they had nothing else to do. They were not able to make any significant decisions, but were merely informed of decisions made by others. They felt manipulated into the partnership to serve the interests of the Council, rather than being properly consulted. Some respondents claimed that the Council lied to them and stole back any achievement of theirs. The community representatives often felt like dogsbodies and second-class citizens.'

Unfortunately, much of the Council's work with residents in the Woodberry Down area in the past has suffered because of many of the above issues. This is known from feedback which has been received from residents through surveys, the three rounds of consultation meetings, and also from meetings on a one to one basis. The WDRT therefore knows that the approach it adopts must continually prove that its way of working is different to that that has gone before. A trusting and real partnership working arrangement with the local community must be achieved and an "ethos" that explains this to all associated with the regeneration programme will be developed.

REPRESENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

To be representative and accountable is important. The issues raised here, which have also been taken from the JRF report, and which are relevant to the work at Woodberry Down and indeed most other similar estates include:

Tensions between the black and ethnic community and the white community can be stark.

Communities split along lines between those that perceive themselves as 'locals' and those that are perceived to be newcomers.

Young people are largely missing from the leadership roles and decision-making structures in the area regeneration partnerships . . .

Black and Asian leaders are much clearer than white leaders as to their prime support base . . . White community leaders . . . were much less clear about the nature of the community they actually represented or their methods of keeping in contact with this base. Realistically, they represented an organisation such as a residents' association . . . SRB area-

based regeneration in general utilises a notion of community of place, based on shared experience of neighbourhood. In practice, all too often leaders have access only to fragmented communities of identity based on limited social networks.

Feeding back to the community can be a large burden on an individual leader, requiring a range of time-consuming tasks such as attending meetings, translating key decisions into community languages, producing leaflets and posting them through doors. Extra resources are required to make this sort of feedback work.

The WDRT has already begun to try and address many of the above issues. It has become aware of tensions that exist between ethnic groups. For example specific meetings for Turkish residents have been held for the 250 Turkish families on the estates. It is planned to hold a separate meeting for residents of African origins and a system of ethnic monitoring and promotion of equality for the residents' EDC has been put into place. Work with Groundwork Hackney's Young Voices programme and Hackney's Youth Empowerment Strategy has commenced to ensure young people's voices are heard, and this has already been referred to. The WDRT is providing extra resources to help community leaders communicate with their constituents.

SUCCESSION OF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The WDRT has recognised the issue of working with the existing resident representatives and introducing new residents to this task in order to obtain a more representative age and ethnic profile. It also recognises the problems which this brings. The JRF report summarised this problem in the following way:

The most striking aspect of all the partnerships in our case studies was a more or less open conflict between an existing (first) generation and a new (second) generation of community leaders....The first generation had been recruited to legitimate the SRB bid. The second generation had emerged as SRB resources began to be spent on capacity building.

In most areas, the few activists are overloaded and would like broader support, but acknowledge that having gained some knowledge of the working of the system it is easier to take on further responsibilities than to train up new people. Retirement of overburdened burnt-out community leaders can lead to gaps in community representation that all too often left empty due to lack of succession planning.

At Woodberry Down, there is a group of existing community leaders who have been involved in resident groups and committees for some time. The WDRT is working with them and ensuring that they do not feel left behind by the process of involving residents. Places have been ringfenced on the residents' EDC for existing registered resident groups. This has been taken a stage further in discussing with them the need to activate new residents into participating. This was received well and existing

community leaders have recognised for themselves the issues of 'burn-out' and sustainability. The new EDC is much more representative of the community on the estates.

4. ENHANCING COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AT WOODBERRY DOWN

The JRF report describes community leadership as 'a small cog in the transmission of regeneration policy from powerful central government policy directives through to local communities'. It suggests that 'if you strengthen community participation (or the community drivers) you make the whole (regeneration) machine operate in a different direction - powered by community drivers rather than the policy drivers'.

The JRF report concludes that this will result in:

Enhancing policy dialogue about community involvement

Supporting the role of community leaders in partnerships

Strengthening community leadership

The WDRT hope that by publishing this report it will begin to achieve the first of these results here. The rest of this section addresses some of the recommendations which relate specifically to the above. The recommendation numbers are those used in the JRF report. The action points for each of these recommendations are contained in the JRF report.

RECOMMENDATION 4

'Regeneration partners should dedicate funds to meet the practical needs of community leaders.'

RECOMMENDATION 6

'Regeneration partners should establish training strategies and budgets and support prompt and appropriate training for community leaders, with decisions over training devolved to community level.'

RECOMMENDATION 7

'Regeneration partners from all sectors should be able to justify their selection on the grounds of clearly specified criteria of representativeness.'

RECOMMENDATION 9

'Existing community leaders and other regeneration partners need to accept leadership succession, change and conflict as inevitable consequences of regeneration and part of partnership working.'

RECOMMENDATION 10

'Community leaders have to be more prepared to set limits on the many demands made on them by partnership machinery.'

These recommendations from the JRF report are reproduced here because the WDRT believe that the conclusions are correct, and its instincts and experience from working in this environment are in line with this thinking. As a result, the final section of this report outlines some of the steps already taken to work in this way and areas that have yet to be developed. The WDRT will effectively develop and support community leadership that will guide the large scale long-ranging regeneration process that has begun. At a recent regeneration workshop residents were told: 'without you, the residents, all our work will effectively be meaningless. We can come up with a variety of clever solutions for the future of the Woodberry Down estates - only you will know which ones will work'.

5. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The WDRT has now gathered together local data and defined a set of ultimate objectives for the long-term regeneration programme at Woodberry Down. This takes account of national and local policy requirements. These are described in the WDRT report "Vision, Objectives and Procurement". The ultimate objectives are:

1. Satisfy the long-term aims of education and housing as described in The Borough's Education Strategy 2000-2002 and in The Borough's Housing Strategy 2001 to 2006.
2. Harness the energy, spirit and enthusiasm of local people to develop a long-term sustainable community, which is confident, safe and secure.
3. Become a good place to visit and a place where people want to stay.
4. Provide new and refurbished housing, schools, and health and other facilities to modern long-term sustainable standards, in such a way that it will make a substantial contribution in terms of improved health, education, self esteem and other benefits.

5. Change the current uniform tenure and ownership pattern by providing new and refurbished housing with a range of different tenures, levels of affordability and ownerships.
6. Provide an integrated cross-sectoral approach to unified and joint ownership of assets, their use, and the use of relevant income, in such a way that it includes resident participation.
7. Unlock the value of land for the benefit of those who live on the estates.
8. Ensure the ethnicity of the estate is balanced in such a way that it reflects fairly the needs of all communities it should serve both from its existing population and any immediately identifiable local populations.

The WDRT has already embarked on a comprehensive community involvement strategy. So far it has:

- Started a programme of local consultation meetings that have involved 700 individual residents in 14 local areas. Each home has received two leaflets on separate occasions, each front door has been knocked on and a high proportion of homes canvassed. Each resident who has attended a previous meeting received a personal invitation to the next.
- Started a 'central workshop' that is open to all residents and is a learning environment for all issues relating to the regeneration.
- Developed a local regeneration newsletter and has published four issues. A community website is also being developed.
- Worked consistently with existing tenants and residents' associations consulting with them on every important stage of the process so far.
- Developed a structure and election process that has formed an EDC with over 30 members.
- Planned a programme to train and pay local residents in helping with the above.
- Employed a local Turkish speaking resident to work as one of the WDRT's administrators.

Round 3 of the consultation process has consulted with the community on the ultimate objectives for the regeneration and resulted in residents electing an EDC. In addition over the coming year the WDRT will be:

- Continuing to hold public meetings in each of the local areas at least two times per year.
- Ensuring residents are kept informed throughout the year with continued newsletters, table top information programme, doorstep

canvassing, meetings for the elderly, events for young people and information provided in different languages.

- Training and supporting the residents' EDC members that will come from these local meetings.
- Development of a website that will inform residents, act as a discussion forum, and utilise latest research in presenting images of the estates now and future plans.
- Finding ways to resource the EDC representatives and help them achieve their task which may involve installing ICT resources in each of their homes.
- Supporting the development of the local Robin Redmond Resource Centre and its management committee and resident staff.
- Developing resident steering groups in local areas when the detailed plans for a local area begin to take place.
- Continuing to hold a central workshop for any residents wishing to learn more about the different issues relating to regeneration and the decisions that will need to be made.
- Recruiting and training local residents to get involved in paid work leafleting and canvassing on the estates.
- Exploring models of local resident involvement in the future management of their properties.
- Linking residents into participating in the wider SRB6 activity and opportunities.

In addition to the above, and perhaps most importantly, the WDRT has actively changed the way it works with and treats residents. The essential components of the ethos that guides resident contact are that the WDRT:

- Believes what residents are saying.
- Will not make promises that it cannot keep.
- Deals only with reality and acknowledges where problems exist for residents either in the present conditions of their accommodation or in dealing with the Council. It believes that this approach enables residents to stop fighting and engage in the process of planning.
- Encourages resident involvement from the start.
- Tries not to overburden residents and produces documents that describe what is going on in a form which is easy to understand.

- Welcomes residents when they visit and maintain an open door policy.
- Has an open file policy and lets residents know that they are welcome to come and look at the WDRT's work, other than information that relates to individuals or is commercially sensitive.
- Treats residents with respect and tries to welcome them individually when they attend meetings.
- Provides refreshments and tries to look after them when they have contact with us.
- Does not pretend to know everything and follows up queries when it cannot respond immediately.

In essence, the WDRT believes that it needs to build a trusting working relationship, a real partnership, with the residents. It is certain that when it comes to involving the local community in the regeneration, the quality of their involvement in the process may well be more important than the final outcome of any key decisions. Around the country, there are examples of regeneration planning having failed because of poor consultation with residents ineffectively or too late in the process. In Scotswood, Newcastle, for example, the local community has rejected what would seem to be adequate plans purely on the basis of not feeling consulted.

The WDRT feels that it has a responsibility to be expert in what it does. Furthermore, it aims to be able to provide residents with viable choices for the future of their homes and genuinely involve them in making these choices and in the future management arrangements.

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