

# Housing in Lewisham From Vision to Reality



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### Mission Statement

The Lewisham Housing Commission will provide a new independent forum in which to explore the future of housing in the borough. It will think as creatively as possible about how to develop and sustain efficient and equitable residential market(s), which improve the quality of life for current and future citizens.

**Endorsed by The Lewisham Housing Commission.**

## FOREWORD

### **Lord Filkin, Chair of the Lewisham Housing Commission**

The Lewisham Housing Commission represents the first independent forum of its type in the UK.

Set up by the London Borough of Lewisham in the Autumn of last year, we were asked to take on a broad and challenging remit. This involved questioning traditional attitudes and approaches to housing policy as well as bringing fresh thinking on how best to ensure that housing plays the most effective role that it can in securing and maintaining a better quality of life for residents in the borough.

The Commission included twelve members with a wide range of expertise in housing, regeneration, health, education, and community development. Professional and personal experience of the locality was combined with acknowledged national expertise, making the Commission a fertile environment for debating and developing recommendations.

Throughout the five month programme, Commission members have given a substantial amount of their time to both meetings and site visits. Witnesses too, have played a crucial role in preparing detailed and carefully thought out evidence. At the same time, the Commission has benefited enormously from the wealth of information, which has been submitted for consideration as part of the wider invitation to comment. The Commission has also been very well supported by its secretariat, particularly Miffa Salter from the Office for Public Management.

This report represents the outcome of our deliberations. We hope it will provoke an informed discussion both within and beyond Lewisham in terms of what needs to be done to make the borough a better place to live, both for present and future residents.

Most importantly of all, we hope it will lead to action so that aspirations for the future become realities of everyday experience.



*Geoffrey Filkin*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Lewisham Housing Commission is an independent forum established by Lewisham Council to explore options for the future of housing within the borough. It is made up of twelve individuals with national and local expertise in housing, regeneration, education, health, and community development.

This report sets out the conclusions of the Commission's work, as well as the associated recommendations for action.

The borough is currently undergoing rapid transition. New patterns of investment - and in particular, new transport connections - are having a dramatic impact. The borough is now well placed to service both the City and Canary Wharf and is becoming an increasingly attractive residential option for workers in both locations. Demand for affordable housing within the area is also growing fast. At the same time, the authority is being encouraged by government to adopt a more strategic role of community leadership with less emphasis on the role of direct service provider. Together, these pressures for change present Lewisham with a host of opportunities and challenges, and require new ways of working in the future.

### The Vision for the Future of Housing

The Commission endorsed a vision for the borough, which seeks to improve the life chances of all residents and make *'Lewisham the best place in London to live, work and learn'*.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission believes that the housing policies that the borough adopts and the way that these are implemented will have a profound effect on the achievement of this vision.

Housing affects everyone. The value of the stock and the scale of future investment decisions are massive. Residents will judge Lewisham's progress in achieving its vision to a large extent on how the Borough addresses the future of housing. Solutions will also need to meet the needs of all residents including vulnerable groups. These issues therefore deserve considerable strategic thought by the authority before it moves into action.

To deliver on its vision will require the Council to look at how best to:

- create balanced communities;
- develop responsive housing management;
- deliver sustained investment in housing and neighbourhoods;
- link housing with wider corporate objectives; and,
- implement these aims in ways that meet residents' needs and preferences.

### Creating Balanced Communities

Lewisham is experiencing an increase in land and property prices. As a result lower and middle income earners may find it more difficult to enter Lewisham's housing market and a growing proportion of households (including those most in need) might have to look elsewhere

<sup>1</sup> Dave Sullivan, Mayor of Lewisham, Modernising Lewisham (Lewisham Borough Council, 1999)

for accommodation or accept temporary and/or substandard housing.

Left unchecked, current trends could lead to a further polarisation of Lewisham's community and a growing imbalance between owner occupation and social housing in the borough, which could undermine the economic viability of key areas and, at worst re-enforce exclusion.

The Housing Commission believes that a more diversified residential market in Lewisham will allow the borough to capitalise on emerging opportunities while at the same time addressing the negative effects of concentrations of residualised social housing.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Develop a strategy to diversify housing stock in the borough which generates a greater range of housing types, styles, and, tenures to deliver more quality and choice for residents.**
- **Promote a higher proportion of mixed income housing projects including 'affordable home ownership schemes'.**
- **Promote an improved private rented sector through support, advice, regulation and funding.**

While the Commission recognises the growing demand for social housing within the borough it considers that concentrations of lower income households in single tenure estates can operate to undermine economic and social sustainability of an area.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Do not provide additional social housing in locations where there is already an 'over-provision'.**
- **Shift allocation policies in certain areas to help create more mixed communities and 'areas of affordability' as opposed to 'areas of dependency'.**

- **Encourage more flexible tenures including 'part ownership' and other shared equity schemes.**

The Commission also recognises the need to create more homes overall either within, or beyond, borough boundaries. This will be particularly important if Lewisham is to sustain and develop a social rented sector.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Promote innovative new-build schemes in specific locations, which can support compact mixed-use developments and innovative high-density housing design.**
- **Develop a comprehensive 'Empty Buildings Strategy' for the borough, which builds on the existing Empty Homes Strategy by looking at the potential to utilise all vacant and under-used premises for housing.**
- **Develop a coherent strategy to provide additional social housing accommodation both within and outside the borough, acting in partnership with adjacent local authorities and the Greater London Authority.**

## **Developing Responsive Management**

Lewisham Council is by far the largest landlord and property owner in the borough, with 33,000 homes owned by the Council.

The Commission concludes that it is crucial that Lewisham gives much more attention to its strategic role to promote and achieve improvements in the quality of housing and environment for residents.

At present the demands placed on the local authority by managing such a vast stock of housing risk undermining this strategic role. At times the authority may also fail to fulfil its role as a regulator and promoter of housing quality because of its role as a landlord.

Driving up the quality of housing and housing services will be essential to meet the present and future needs of residents. However, public experience is that often, large scale municipal landlords operate monolithic bureaucratic services which fail to deliver what the public want. For Lewisham to continue as a 'monopoly provider' may severely limit opportunities for innovation, and consumer responsive services. The Commission therefore sets out a vision for the borough as a '*skilful orchestrator*' of housing and housing services rather than that of a direct provider.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Promote increased quality and choice in the services provided by all landlords across the borough. Seek to give tenants more choice and control over the services they want and the ways they can access them.**
- **Adopt a pluralist approach to housing management, which involves both public and private sector agencies in the delivery of competitive, efficient and equitable housing services.**
- **Promote housing management options which enable tenants to determine the standards of services they want - and will pay for - and give them the power to remove a housing management agency if it is not meeting their needs.**
- **Explore how best to give tenants more choice over how and when they access housing services.**

Breaking up management monopolies may involve the transfer of ownership through stock transfer. The Council should discuss with tenants how best to make these changes. In some cases it may be better to bring in new housing management organisations before deciding whether to transfer the ownership. This may give the opportunity to judge the issues around a change of ownership separately from decisions around who would manage the stock.

A change in ownership may not always be a pre-requisite for improved management and a number of other routes exist which do not involve the transfer of ownership. However, in some circumstances changing ownership will increase opportunities.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Bring in new management organisations which will provide more choice, variety, quality and control for tenants. These options should be explored fully and openly with tenants.**
- **Promote models of tenant management, which give local people a stake in decisions.**
- **Encourage residents to take on roles and responsibilities for housing management within their neighbourhoods or as part of neighbourhood renewal projects.**
- **Explore how best to make major improvements in the quality of management and services enjoyed by tenants, by setting targets to improve service quality and regularly measuring progress as judged by tenants.**

## **Delivering Sustained Investment**

Housing requires major investment to finance repairs, improvements and new supply. The borough has significant responsibilities in this respect across all sectors.

Estimates of the level of housing investment needed can never be totally accurate. Lewisham's council housing may need nearly £400 million spent on it over the next decade; private sector and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) housing also require significantly increased levels of investment. In terms of new supply, the Housing Needs Survey estimates that up to 13,000 additional affordable dwellings might be needed in Lewisham up to 2006.

The main ways for local authorities to fund investment is by selling assets, or from borrowing. For over twenty years central governments have sought to control the level of local authority borrowing. By comparison, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) - such as housing associations - are free to borrow on the open market.

There are indications that the government might look to some relaxation in the level of capital controls on local authorities after the next election, which might ameliorate the position. Nevertheless the Commission thinks it is extremely unlikely that the Council will be able to generate the level of investment that housing needs in the borough by operating in traditional ways.

If the Council retains its current position, it risks seeing the progressive deterioration of stock. This will lead to a worsening of residential environments within Lewisham as a whole. Whilst this may not yet be apparent to tenants and residents, it is clearly the duty of the authority in its role as community leader to address this issue before it becomes a major problem for the borough.

There are a range of measures possible to increase investment resources but the most significant improvement would come through some form of transfer of ownership to appropriate alternative social landlords.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Develop a resident focused approach to stock transfer. This should be about exploring how best to deliver the improvements residents and tenants want for their neighbourhoods and homes. Stock transfer can only take place with the consent of tenants. The Housing Minister in his evidence to the Commission made clear that this would not change.**
- **Explore with tenants at neighbourhood level the improvements they wish to see happen in terms of repairs, improvements, facilities and management for their homes and neighbourhoods. Then jointly explore what is possible under different options of ownership and management. As part of this process,**

**it is perfectly appropriate for the council to make the case as to why it thinks stock transfer is in the interests of tenants and residents.**

- **Over the next few years, offer all tenants the opportunity to improve their homes and neighbourhoods through considering a full range of ownership and management options.**

In the Commission's view transferring stock into new management and ownership has the potential to bring about considerable improvements. But these will only happen if the process is done well. To do it well will require time, skill and patience.

At the same time, the Commission recognises that stock transfer is unlikely to assist in providing the much needed additional accommodation in Lewisham. The Council therefore needs to develop a more comprehensive strategy to reflect the type and quantity of additional affordable housing which needs to be provided, exploring a range of different investment vehicles to do so.

## **Linking Housing with a wider Agenda**

Residents and tenants do not see housing as an 'isolated' issue in the way that local authority departments sometimes do. It is part of a much more composite picture which relates to quality of life experiences, life opportunities or lack of them. To deliver a better quality of life for residents will require the Council to work in partnership with other agencies and to acknowledge the inter-relationships which exist between different services and related policy areas.

Housing is strongly inter-connected with other policy objectives. Housing policies should support education, regeneration, neighbourhood safety and health improvement objectives, just as social services and benefits services may be essential to achieve housing goals. This will not be easy.

Over the next five to ten years it is possible that a substantial proportion of the local authority housing stock may be transferred into new ownership and management vehicles. This could bring substantial additional investment for homes and neighbourhoods, and presents a major regeneration opportunity.

The whole process of discussion, resident involvement, choices over management and improvement of neighbourhoods and homes represents a massive challenge for the borough. The process must not be seen as 'stock transfer' but about neighbourhood renewal so that different localities are better placed to meet the needs and aspirations of Lewisham residents. The approach has to be multi-agency and multi-disciplinary. This has major implications for the way in which the process is implemented.

#### **Main recommendations:**

- **Adopt the role of 'skilful orchestrator' ensuring that a joined-up approach is adopted both internally and externally in the delivery of policy objectives. Build on the best practice experience of the local Health Authority, the education services and the work of the Youth Offending Teams in the borough.**
- **Create multi-disciplinary teams across housing, planning and regeneration to develop creative new solutions for both specific and strategic issues.**
- **Promote a mixed team approach (i.e. cross departmental) to the development of key areas of housing policy and for addressing site specific issues and/or neighbourhood regeneration.**
- **Work with neighbouring local authorities and build a stronger sub-regional role for Lewisham and its neighbours in the context of the Greater London Authority.**
- **Develop clear measurable goals negotiated with local partners to underpin all housing, planning and regeneration policy, with a shared understanding of how partner organisations will contribute.**
- **Recognise that the process of changing ownership and management of 33,000 homes is the biggest regeneration opportunity and challenge the borough will face if it is to deliver real benefits to residents. This means it needs to be well planned, resourced and led.**

## **The Way Forward**

There are very major implications for the political leadership and management of the authority implicit in the recommendations in this report.

In essence, the Commission believes that the Council will need to:

- develop a much more strategic approach to its role in housing;
- progress a strategy to increase the supply of social housing;
- promote and regulate the private rented sector more vigorously; and,
- focus implementation on inter-connected policy objectives.

But, in addition to these, the Council will need to:

- **Involve all council tenants in neighbourhood based discussions over the next five years focusing on how to bring about major improvements in the quality of their homes, neighbourhoods and services.**
- **Develop a number of detailed agreements as to how to implement improvements, some of which will require changes in ownership and management.**



- **Put in place the necessary funding and associated resources to deliver and manage the agreed improvements and regeneration plans according to residents' needs and preferences.**

This programme will involve millions of pounds of expenditure over the next decade.

But the process has to be more than physical regeneration. It has to involve residents and create wider life opportunities, to improve education, training and employment opportunities at a neighbourhood level.

The borough needs now to assess the scale of these tasks and to consider what it will need in terms of resources, skills, political leadership and management to respond to the challenge.

To deliver success will require:

- Adopting a 'Quality of Life Approach' to housing and housing policy which seeks to secure improvements in the quality of life of all residents, as defined by residents themselves.
- Promoting and sustaining dialogue so that all residents are engaged in the debate about the future of housing in the borough.
- Monitoring and evaluating progress by developing agreed indicators with local partners including residents and the business community, which reflect the needs and aspirations of local people and local 'quality of life'.
- Pressing Central Government for the necessary changes which will support local efforts to deliver Lewisham's vision for the future.

The work of the Housing Commission aims to widen the debate about the future of housing in Lewisham. In this respect, this report provides Lewisham Council with the necessary basis for an 'active thinking space' and

a framework within which to engage with all stakeholders in the creation and delivery of a better quality of life for all.

It sets out some radical ideas and recommendations to deliver Lewisham's vision to make the borough 'the best place in London to live, work and learn'. The test of success will be whether residents judge that the changes of management, investment, ownership and regeneration deliver real benefits for them. The Council will therefore need to regularly monitor and evaluate whether this has happened in practice.

## CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	iii	<b>Chapter 7 Delivering Success</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	iv	7.1 A Note on Ways and Means	44
<b>Chapter 1 The Challenge for the Future</b>		7.2 An Active Thinking Space	45
1.1 Lewisham 2000 and Beyond	4	<b>Appendix 1 Commission Membership</b>	47
1.2 The Context for Change	4	<b>Appendix 2 Commission Programme</b>	49
1.3 Lewisham's Housing Commission	5	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	50
1.4 The Report	6		
<b>Chapter 2 The Criteria for Success</b>			
2.1 A Vision for Housing in Lewisham	8		
2.2 The Framework for Recommendations	9		
<b>Chapter 3 Creating Balanced Communities</b>			
3.1 Living in Lewisham	12		
3.2 The Drivers for Change	12		
3.3 Implications for Lewisham	14		
3.4 Diversifying Tenure	15		
3.5 Diversifying Stock	18		
3.6 Mixed Communities and Mixed Use	19		
<b>Chapter 4 Responsive Management</b>			
4.1 New Directions for Managing Housing	22		
4.2 Promoting Competitive Management	22		
4.3 Focusing on People	24		
4.4 Developing a Neighbourhood Approach	25		
<b>Chapter 5 Investing for the Future</b>			
5.1 A Common Inheritance	28		
5.2 A Summary of Investment Needs	29		
5.3 Potential Sources of Investment Finance	30		
5.4 Transferring Responsibility	32		
5.5 Investing in New Supply	35		
<b>Chapter 6 A Corporate Agenda</b>			
6.1 A Need for Joining-Up	38		
6.2 Joining Up Internally	39		
6.3 Joining Up Externally	39		

## 1. THE CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE



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## 1.1 Lewisham 2000 and Beyond

Home to over 240,000 residents, and host to a workforce of more than 100,000, Lewisham is poised to capitalise on a new future.

Located in the inner south east quadrant of the Capital, the borough is in a strategically significant location with respect to the main economic drivers of the London economy. The advent of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and the Jubilee Line extension, coupled with improvements to existing rail and road connections, ensure easy access to central London, the City and Canary Wharf. At the same time the borough has experienced a significant growth in small and medium sized enterprises locating within Lewisham, with a 12% increase in the proportion of micro businesses since 1991, as well as an associated growth of 20% of jobs within this sector.<sup>2</sup> These factors, combined with a booming property market, suggest that Lewisham is undergoing rapid transition.

And yet, the borough still remains a hostage to its past with high levels of unemployment, lower than average levels of educational attainment and on-going concerns in relation to health, housing, crime and community safety. Government measures of deprivation show Lewisham ranking as the fourteenth most deprived authority in the country.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst the positive trends affecting the borough's fortunes may be beneficial, they are not without their problems. Rapid change places significant strains on existing structures and could - without careful planning - result in a further polarisation between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' within Lewisham's community. The Council is adamant that this should not be allowed to happen, and instead proposes a vision for the borough which will improve the life chances of all residents.<sup>4</sup>

This vision presents the Council, partner agencies, and residents themselves with an enormous challenge. To deliver on this future will require a new clarity of understanding in terms of interpreting both needs and aspirations as articulated by local people. As important, it will necessitate the establishment of a collaborative framework for delivery - which seeks to secure the inclusion of all stakeholders.

## 1.2 The Context for Change

Lewisham is at the forefront of changes that are affecting the whole of local government in the UK. It is engaged in a process of modernisation, which has already seen it moving away from the traditional role of service provider towards a wider reaching strategic responsibility of 'community leadership', orchestrating public service provision on behalf of - and in association with - residents and partner agencies.

The Council recognises that this transition means radical change in the way the organisation works. While Lewisham welcomes the additional public resources which have already been made available to assist in progressing this change, it has to acknowledge that further significant public investment is unlikely to be forthcoming. This means that achieving the aims set both nationally and locally cannot be done in the old ways. Instead, it will require innovation and entrepreneurial flair to develop more equitable and efficient mechanisms for doing 'more with less', alongside much more effective partnership working.

At a national level it is clear that the changing role of housing authorities has already been made explicit through the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) process and related guidance. Local authorities are not expected to concern themselves simply with council housing. Rather, they should play a strategic role in planning the 'total housing market' in a locality. As a result, a housing investment programme is now assessed in relation to the quality of this strategy, in terms of the extent to which it

<sup>2</sup> Lewisham's Economic Development Strategy 1998 - 2001, Lewisham Council

<sup>3</sup> Rankings of London Authorities in the Department of Environment Index of Local Conditions, Revised by the DETR 1998

<sup>4</sup> Modernising Lewisham, Lewisham Council (1998)

reinforces regeneration plans, builds opportunities for tenant involvement, and successfully addresses service performance.

Local authorities are also discovering as they move towards a more strategic role that they need a better understanding of the operation of local housing markets. They need to move away from simply assessing housing need, to understanding housing demand and supply. Old-fashioned housing needs surveys are being replaced by more complex surveys of needs, aspirations and future choices with a shift from a focus on need alone to a more holistic assessment of demand across the whole community. Moving from a direct supply to market making role involves an understanding of the drivers affecting private sector suppliers and other social landlords. At the same time, a 'market making' role requires greater collaboration between neighbouring authorities and as well as a stronger regional role overall.

### 1.3 Lewisham's Housing Commission

The Lewisham Housing Commission was set up by the London Borough of Lewisham in November 1999. It was made up of twelve individuals with both national and local expertise in: public and private housing provision; education; health; regeneration; and, community development. The Commission sought to include individuals with a range of professional and personal experiences from both inside and outside the housing sector and to combine in-depth local knowledge of the Lewisham context, with a wider understanding of national trends.<sup>5</sup> Commission members were not selected on the basis that they represented a particular sector or interest group but rather, were identified for the broader contribution which they could make.

The Commission was established as an 'independent body with an advising role'. It did not replace existing structures within the local authority, but instead sought to provide a new forum in which to discuss the future of housing in Lewisham.

To focus the debate, Lewisham Council asked the Commission to address three central questions during its deliberations. These are set out in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Questions for the Commission**

What balance of tenures is appropriate in a modern prosperous Lewisham?

Within the social rented sector, should the Council have a role as a direct provider in the future? If so, on what scale and who should own or manage the rest?

What connections need to be made and sustained between housing policy and the Council's broader agenda, and how can housing policy most effectively contribute to our other objectives?

The Housing Commission was set up around a five-month programme of meetings which ran from November 1999 until March 2000. During this period Commission members heard formal evidence from a number of different individuals and organisations from both inside and outside the borough boundaries. The Commission also received sixteen independent Briefing Papers, as well as a number of informal discussion documents and other written statements to inform its deliberations.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to its main programme of meetings, the Commission also established a series of five specialist sub-groups (including Commission Members as well as other experts) to focus specific attention on the links between housing and other issues such as education; regeneration; health; community safety and social inclusion. These groups met separately and reported back to the main Commission in February, 2000.

The Commission actively sought to engage with as wide an audience as possible to assist in informing its discussions. As a result, contributions to the Commission process were specifically invited from: London Borough of

<sup>5</sup> Full details of the Commission Members are provided in Appendix 1.

<sup>6</sup> Witness Statements and supporting Briefing Papers are available for inspection from Lewisham Council.

Lewisham staff; Councillors; MPs; and MEP as well as from senior officers in neighbouring boroughs. A number of additional formal meetings were held with individuals from these various groups to inform the Commission programme.

The Commission also invited specific contributions from established tenants' organisations within the borough with evidence presented by representatives of the Federation of Lewisham Tenants' and Residents' Association (FELTRA), Lewisham Tenants' Council (LTC) and Lewisham Organisation of Private Tenants (LOPT).<sup>7</sup> A separate meeting was also set up with the Chair of the Commission to canvass the opinions of these groups in particular.

At a more wide ranging level, a Prospectus was designed to invite contributions from individuals and groups within the broader community. This document, which outlined the remit of the Commission, and requested a response to its three central questions, was distributed to 4,500 named individuals and organisations across the borough and beyond in January 2000. The invitation to comment was also made available electronically on the London Borough of Lewisham web site. In addition to a number of individual responses, detailed submissions were received from four Housing Associations within the borough; one tenant management co-operative and three different tenants'/residents' associations; as well as three conservation/amenity groups. A number of staff both within the Regeneration Directorate and in other Council departments also commented. In addition, four public agencies submitted responses alongside two voluntary organisations.

As part of the consultation process, the Commission also invited members of Lewisham's Citizens' Panel<sup>8</sup> and Lewisham's Business Panel<sup>9</sup> to comment on the current quality of housing in the borough and to put forward views on the key questions facing the Commission. (The results of both Panel surveys which were conducted in January - February 2000 are reported in full in separate reports to the Council<sup>10</sup>).

All contributions from the wider consultation programme were used to inform the Commission process and have been used throughout this report to substantiate and justify the Commission's thinking on key issues. Written comments and documented evidence have been lodged with the Council.

## 1.4 The Report

The Commission's remit was to generate informed ideas and options for the future of housing in Lewisham. To do this, it was set a wide reaching brief, and specifically asked to challenge conventional wisdom.

This final report sets out the key conclusions as endorsed by all twelve Commission Members and provides detailed recommendations emerging from this five month process.

The report has been structured to reflect the three main questions which were the subject of the Commission's deliberations. In the next chapter, we set out a vision for the future and make explicit the criteria for recommendations. The following chapters set out the analysis, conclusions and recommendations under four broad themes:

- creating balanced communities;
- developing responsive management;
- delivering sustained investment; and,
- establishing housing as a fundamental part of the corporate agenda.

The final chapter sets out the key processes for delivering success in the future across all four areas.

<sup>7</sup> Meeting 5, 28th January 2000, Lewisham Housing Commission

<sup>8</sup> The Lewisham Citizens' Panel was established in Autumn 1997. It comprises a sample of over 1000 individuals drawn from the general population. Surveys are undertaken 4 times a year.

<sup>9</sup> Lewisham's Business Panel was established in May 1998. It consists of a sample of 270 businesses located within the borough. Three surveys have been conducted to-date.

<sup>10</sup> Report 8 of Lewisham Citizens' Panel, Office for Public Management, March 2000

## 2. THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS



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### 2.1 A Vision for Housing in Lewisham

The vision endorsed as the basis for this report is one in which housing, and housing policy, are used to both promote and sustain vital and viable communities within the context of healthy local economies. The key to this future is the successful combination of both dynamism, and balance, in the creation of neighbourhoods which meet the needs and aspirations of current and future residents.

Specifically, the Commission would highlight two fundamental components of this vision:

#### **Quality of Experience.**

**All residents should enjoy high quality living conditions in their homes and neighbourhoods.**

#### **Equality of Opportunity.**

**All residents should be in a position to access a range of different housing opportunities which will allow them to meet both needs and aspirations during their life cycle.**

Clearly, there are a number of ways in which an authority such as Lewisham could use housing policy to address both the residualisation of place and the creation of sustainable communities. At one extreme the Council could act in such a way as to significantly reduce the amount of social housing on offer in the borough and/or allow housing market conditions to develop in such a way that poorer people could no longer compete. This would have the effect of radically changing the social composition of neighbourhoods so that over time less affluent residents would be forced out into neighbouring authorities to be replaced by those coming into the borough with superior purchasing power. 'Displacement' of this kind is often cited as one of the main criticisms of contemporary housing policy in other inner London authorities.

However, there are other options. And, while certain elements of the scenario described above may be acceptable in certain situations, it is clearly more sustainable to pursue an approach which seeks to build the social and economic capacity of existing communities as well as allowing for some necessary social change. Engendering this 'dynamic balance' is central to the Commission's vision for Lewisham. It requires the Council to look at new ways to improve the life chances and opportunities of current residents, while also promoting choices accessible to wider range of potential 'customers'. This will inevitably include the introduction of new households from outside the borough to create both a more mixed community and a more mixed economy within an area.

If Lewisham is to become a more prosperous borough for all residents, housing and housing policy must perform as effectively, efficiently and equitably as possible. To do this will require the Council to undertake an increasingly 'strategic role' - orchestrating, as opposed to delivering, services on the ground. It is highly unlikely that the local authority can adequately perform both management and strategy functions, nor is it necessarily best placed to do undertake both roles. The Commission therefore sets out a vision for the borough as a 'skilful orchestrator' of housing and housing services as opposed to that of a direct provider. In the future, Lewisham will need to develop creative management solutions which guarantee a customer focused approach without jeopardising cost effectiveness or the needs of the most vulnerable. This may mean looking at roles for alternative landlords - outside the Council - who may be both more economic and more responsive to residents needs.

At the same time as addressing improvements in service provision, the Council must also seek to secure resources both for on-going maintenance, improvements, and development programmes. This is particularly important when a review of stock conditions nationally highlights a picture of deterioration and decline across all housing sectors, and when limitations on public funding allocations may continue to restrict the traditional sources of supply of



additional affordable homes in particular. The Commission sets out a future for the borough in which Lewisham successfully secures the necessary investment for sustaining and developing new housing of all types in Lewisham without sacrificing the needs of residents. This will mean looking at how best to maximise all available resources including the possible release of existing asset values through the transfer of ownership allowing for a more creative approach to funding within a more flexible financial framework.

ensure no further degeneration and look at the potential to contribute viable and sustainable progress towards a series of agreed outcomes.

## 2.2 A Framework for Recommendations

The recommendations set out in this report have been based upon an agreed set of criteria which reflect the vision outlined above. Specifically, the Commission has sought to advance proposals for change which will ensure:

- **An inclusive process** - Solutions for Lewisham must be based on on-going involvement with residents and service users. Solutions need to be varied and flexible to reflect the diversity of viewpoints. A key set of stakeholders in this context are tenants and residents of housing owned and/or managed by the borough.
- **An equitable result** - Solutions should not make a minority worse off and should specifically seek to address the needs of the most vulnerable. There must be a 'gain gain' outcome.
- **An acknowledgement of the context** - Solutions need to be coherent with national policy, and recognise the position of Lewisham in the London market. At the same time there needs to be an acknowledgement of the joined up nature of the housing agenda and the interrelationships which exist between housing and other areas.
- **A focus on goals** - Solutions must be realistic and practical. They should be goal specific and milestones should be put in place which allow for progress to be measured. They should safeguard the best of the existing,

### 3. CREATING BALANCED COMMUNITIES



### 3. CREATING BALANCED COMMUNITIES

#### 3.1 Living in Lewisham

Demographic data for the borough describes a resident population closely resembling that of the rest of inner London in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.<sup>11</sup> However, Lewisham is characterised by a slightly higher - and growing - proportion of elderly residents (aged 60 years and above) and a lower proportion of young people between the ages of 18 - 34 when compared to the Capital as a whole.

Projections up to 2016 suggest that Lewisham's population will rise by 2.5% (to a total of 250,000) and that the number of households will increase from 108,800 to 111,000. This growth will be particularly significant amongst black and ethnic minority people who will comprise 1 in 3 of the total population in the borough by 2011.

Lewisham currently has a lower proportion of residents in the higher social classes relative to the rest of inner London. Around 21% of residents are employed in professional or managerial/technical occupations compared to 24% for inner London as a whole. A relatively large proportion of Lewisham's heads of household are economically inactive (14%).<sup>12</sup> At present unemployment in the borough equates to 8%, and at least 14% of the population are retired.

A review of housing benefit recipients by area shows a dramatic increase in claimant numbers since 1993 in both absolute and relative terms. This suggests a further concentration of lower income households in the borough relative to both inner and outer London as well as in relation to national trends. This is borne out by the map below which highlights concentrations of deprivation within Lewisham as a whole.

In physical terms, the borough is for the most part composed of large housing estates and private residential areas criss-crossed by a complex web of road and rail routes.

At the moment, housing in Lewisham falls into the following broad categories:

- 53% is privately owned
- 10% is rented from a range of different private landlords
- 30% is rented from the Council
- 7% is rented from Registered Social Landlords

These figures highlight below average levels of home ownership when compared to national data and an on-going reliance on the provision of Council owned housing.

Whilst the level of home ownership in Lewisham has grown steadily from 37% in 1981, it is still significantly below the national average of 68%. Home ownership in the borough has grown as more private homes have been built; as larger properties have been converted; and, as council stock has been sold under the 'Right to Buy' legislation. Over the last 20 years, more than 10,200 council homes have been sold under the 'Right to Buy' provisions and a further 1,000 council properties have been demolished as part of redevelopment and regeneration schemes.

#### 3.2 The Drivers for Change

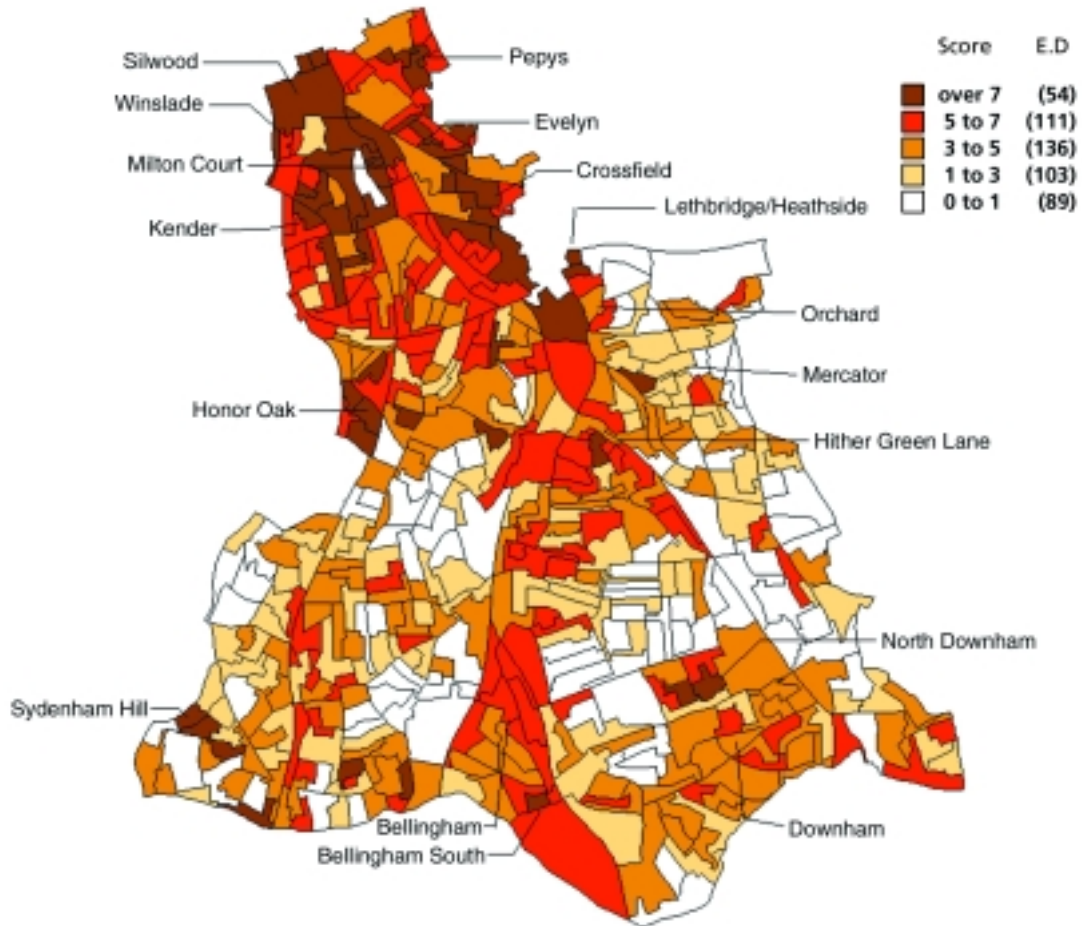
It is clear that trends in both the demand and the supply of housing are placing pressure on the borough in terms of how best to address the needs and aspirations of existing and incoming residents.

Figures released by the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) point to an overall growth in households in England of 19% (3.8 million)

<sup>11</sup> The Condition of Lewisham, First Annual Report 1998, London Borough of Lewisham

<sup>12</sup> 'Inactive' describes people who are economically inactive between the ages of 16-65 years.

Figure 1: DETR Index of Local Deprivation, Lewisham 1998



E.D = Enumeration Districts.

N.B: The higher the score the higher the deprivation.

between 1996 - 2021. The DETR's in-house economic modelling forecasts a need of anywhere between 22,000 and 72,000 affordable homes per annum. However, this assumes major increases in sharing and overcrowding, and most independent studies have estimated the requirement to be nearer to the 90,000 - 110,000 per annum range. This demand is particularly concentrated in key geographical areas such as the South East where the target for new social housing could be as high as 40% of the total output.

In Lewisham it is estimated that between 7,250 and 12,950 additional affordable dwellings might be required over the next 8 years to meet future housing need in full. Demand will be fuelled by growth in the number of households locally as well as internal and international migration (including asylum seekers seeking residency in Lewisham). One of the key reasons behind the reduction in general access to social housing available to the Council over the last 18 months has been due to the use of Council stock for temporary use by homeless people. Lewisham is now seeking to supplement the use of permanent stock for temporary use by building new hostels and by looking at other initiatives to increase supply locally.

The demand for owner occupied housing is also rising in the borough. While Lewisham used to be typified as a borough in which the relatively low cost of housing made owner occupation accessible to first time buyers, the situation is now changing dramatically. House prices in Lewisham have already risen by 25% in the past year (1998 - 1999) and are likely to increase further over the next couple of months. This increase compares to an average of 23% for London as a whole.

In planning terms there will always be a tension between the need to find more space for housing and the desire to protect the natural environment as well as certain existing commercial land uses. Lewisham's Planning Service estimated that there is a total capacity for the provision of an additional 11,200 units in the borough between 1997 and 2016. However, this estimate is based on an ambitious

assumption that at least 43% of all these homes will be built on what are described as 'windfall sites' i.e. sites which have not yet been identified on the ground but are assumed to come forward as a result of changing economic conditions. Of course, it is virtually impossible to know exactly when and where these sites will materialise.

The actual amount of land available for new build housing schemes is in fact very limited. Estimates provided by the authority in response to the National Land Use Data Base<sup>13</sup> (NLUD) show only a very limited number of available sites within the borough boundaries with a maximum additional capacity of nearly 23 acres. There is clearly significant pressure on the supply of land in Lewisham. This in turn is fuelling a growing tension between the need to protect existing commercial land uses (specifically employment land) and the desire to provide additional space for homes in the borough.

At a national level, planning and housing policy is requiring all local authorities to think much more carefully about existing stock, and the capacity of the urban envelop to accommodate additional households. One option that many authorities are considering is how they can best develop sites at a higher density by applying planning standards more flexibly.

### 3.3 Implications for Lewisham

These trends have clear implications. In terms of the owner-occupied sector, they are likely to lead to escalating prices. Left unchecked this will mean that lower and middle income earners will be frustrated in their attempts to enter Lewisham's housing market. Land owners may also be more prone to retain assets in the short term, leaving sites and buildings vacant and/or underused in the hope of greater profits in the future as prices continue to rise.

Social housing will also come under increased pressure and a growing proportion of households (including those most in need) may either have to look elsewhere for

<sup>13</sup> The National Land Use Data Base was established in 1999 to provide a comprehensive review of land uses across England. The first survey has now been completed and will form the basis for trend data to be compiled in subsequent years.

accommodation or be forced to accept temporary and/or substandard housing.

The implications are by no means restricted to Lewisham alone. As a whole, the Capital may suffer as housing options for low income workers shrink, thus restricting the supply of a key component of the workforce. This point was highlighted by a number of respondents to the Commission's Prospectus who stated that 'rising house prices would make places such as Lewisham unaffordable for key workers in essential services'.

Collectively, these trends could lead to a polarisation of Lewisham's community and a growing imbalance between owner occupation and social housing. This would operate to undermine the economic viability of key areas and at worst could provoke social instability and sustained exclusion.

There is a strong rationale therefore to establish and sustain 'viable balanced communities' which help to:

- Stimulate and sustain economic growth within an area;
- Support neighbourhood facilities and associated social networks; and,
- Foster community stability and cohesion.

This will best be progressed at the local level where 'balance' and 'mix' can be interpreted in the light of local conditions, as well as residents' own needs and aspirations.

### 3.4 Diversifying Tenure

The Commission believes that a more diversified residential market in Lewisham will help both to capitalise on opportunities which are emerging in the borough (such as the Docklands Light Railway); and help to avoid the negative effects of concentrations of residualised social housing.

The Council should therefore take an active lead in developing:

- **A strategy, in partnership with other agencies, to diversify housing stock in the borough. This should specifically address the need to generate a greater range of housing types; styles; and, tenures to deliver more quality and choice for residents. [1]**
- **A flexible approach to residency within Lewisham by facilitating movement between different tenures, properties and neighbourhoods. [2]**

The fixed nature of housing stock - and the limited opportunities for new build in Lewisham - will mean that diversification will for the most part be articulated by changes of tenure and/or household within the *existing* stock of housing as opposed to substantial development programmes.

Responses to both the Prospectus and to the Panel surveys demonstrate that home ownership is an aspiration for the majority of households. The results of the Citizens' Panel survey show that 87% of the sample of 661 individuals would ideally like to own their own home in the future. (The vast majority - 72% - also want to stay in the borough.) These results are endorsed by a range of related national research reports which highlight the superior values attached to home ownership as the 'tenure of choice'.<sup>14</sup>

While it is clear that most individuals aspire to own their own homes, the research conducted on behalf of the Commission also suggests that many do not feel that this will require a significant shift in the balance of tenure in the borough. This is highlighted in Table 2 below.

<sup>14</sup> Ford J. and Burrows R., (1998) To Buy or Not to Buy? A Home of One's Own. British Social Attitudes 16th Report, National Centre for Social Research.

**Table 2: Citizens' Panel and Business Panel Response on Balance of Tenure**

Qn: From what you know of the borough do you feel that [Lewisham] has the right balance of owner occupied homes, publically rented homes and privately rented homes to accommodate residents' needs?

Response	Citizens' Panel %	Business Panel %
Yes	58%	46%
No	31%	23%
Don't Know	11%	31%
Sample (n)	661	223

The Commission acknowledges that home ownership is the tenure of preference for the majority. However, the Commission also recognises that while many aspire to home ownership this may not be achievable - particularly in the short term - and the demand for affordable alternatives will therefore continue to rise as pressure in the market sector pushes prices up. It is therefore highly likely that Lewisham will continue to experience a growing tension in this respect as the Council strives to balance the need to retain middle and high income groups; attract in more upwardly mobile households; and, at the same time, respond to the needs of lower income households and those in the most vulnerable position within the housing market.

In response, the Commission endorses a combined approach of both increasing opportunities for home ownership across the borough for a range of different incomes, and also looking at the options whereby the key characteristics associated with home ownership can be appropriated to other market sectors.

This will require the Council to:

- **Promote a higher proportion of mixed income housing projects including 'affordable home ownership schemes' through the use of challenging procurement procedures (such as Planning Briefs,**

**Supplementary Planning Guidance, Section 106 Agreements and funding criteria). [3]**

Options in this context could include:

- Cross subsidising within new-build schemes to allow for the inclusion of 'affordable home ownership' options.
- Encouraging Registered Social Landlords and others to provide a greater proportion of shared ownership schemes<sup>15</sup> as part of their portfolios.
- The introduction and promotion of innovative low cost new build schemes (such as 'Flat Pack' and 'Self Build') for lower income homeowners. (Although the Commission acknowledges that this may only provide a very small number of additional units).

However, home ownership will not be the answer for everyone. First-time buyers in particular are making more considered choices in entering into home ownership than in previous times of rapid house price inflation.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, demand for more flexible housing options - particularly good quality rented accommodation - is likely to continue to grow in line with an increasingly mobile labour market. There is therefore a real need in the Lewisham context to reflect this by looking at opportunities to improve both the quality and quantity of properties in the private rented sector as a viable alternative to home ownership.

This will require:

- **Maintaining and assisting the private rented sector through effective support and advice to promote high quality private landlords, while at the same time creating and enforcing a regulatory framework to ensure the provision of consistently high quality rented accommodation. [4]**

This could involve Lewisham launching a new voluntary registration scheme for all private landlords which acknowledges their importance in local housing markets and seeks to provide a mechanism for regularly monitoring

<sup>15</sup> Only 19 units out of the 1999/2000 ADP in Lewisham were for shared ownership.

<sup>16</sup> Macleanan D. et al, (1997) Fixed Commitments, Uncertain Incomes: Sustainable Owner Occupation and the Economy. Joseph Rowntree Foundation

performance against an agreed set of quality standards.

Prior to the development of such a scheme, there is a clear need for Lewisham to:

- **Progress a stock conditions survey of all properties within the private rented sector as well as those owned by Housing Associations to provide an up-to-date picture of current deficiencies and to guide the development of a strategy and action plan for Lewisham.**[5]

The Council could also review possible options for increasing the overall proportion of both market and sub-market rented properties in the borough. The development of high quality market renting, particularly around transport nodes connecting to key labour markets, in conjunction with institutional investors represents a huge opportunity in Lewisham. Specifically the Commission would advise Lewisham to:

- **Actively explore privately funded opportunities for high quality market renting activity by institutional investors.** [6]
- **Develop a better understanding of the investment decisions of private landlords and in particular focus on what makes them offer property to rent in different segments of the market.** [7]

In particular, the Council needs to have a clear appreciation of the factors which discourage private landlords from offering property to rent, and seek ways of overcoming these. For example this could involve prompter payment of Housing Benefit which would make landlords more willing to take tenants on benefit.

In addition, the Council could make greater efforts to:

- **Explore the potential for market and sub-market renting through Registered Social Landlords.** [8]

Finally, the Commission acknowledges that diversification may be particularly necessary in areas where the downward spiral of a neighbourhood has been caused by a concentration of households in need. In such contexts:

- **The local authority should not be obliged to require additional social housing in locations where there is already an 'over-provision'.** [9]

Rather, there is a need for a fundamental shift in the traditional approach to public sector housing provision by actively marketing social housing in such areas to a wider band of the population as a way to both raise its real and perceived value and increase both the social and economic viability of the neighbourhood. This will require:

- **A shift in allocations policies in certain areas to focus on the creation of mixed communities and 'areas of affordability' as opposed to 'areas of dependency'. This will require a balancing of the simple 'needs' driven system against one in which housing in certain neighbourhoods is purposefully marketed to a range of low to middle income working households.** [10]

Such a shift might include the use of fixed term council tenancies, along the lines of Assured Shorthold Tenancies, for certain middle income groups. It is important for the Council regularly to review its allocations and nominations policies with RSLs to ensure that the need for change is critically evaluated. To respond to this need, the Commission would specifically recommend:

- **Exploring diversification of tenure as one option to generate a more viable and sustainable mix of households in areas of residualised social housing. This may be best addressed by encouraging more flexible tenures including 'part ownership' and other shared equity schemes properties.** [11]

While the Commission endorses a strategy for diversification which seeks to: increase the overall proportion of owner-occupied units; widen access to



owner-occupation; and improve the quality and quantity of units in the private rented market, it also recognises the importance of sustaining and developing the social rented sector. This means that to have a 'win win' situation, more homes must be provided overall either within, or beyond, borough boundaries.

Responses to both the Citizens' Panel and to the Prospectus highlight the importance of retaining and increasing the overall quantity (and the quality) of social housing within the borough. Nearly two thirds (63%) of all Panel members who wished to see a shift in tenure in the future suggested that they would like to see more council housing, and a similar proportion identified a need for more housing provided by Housing Associations. A review of responses to the Prospectus also showed that the largest body of opinion favoured an increase in affordable renting with almost equal numbers expressing a preference for either council or Housing Association provision.

In response, Lewisham must therefore:

- **Adopt a well planned and vigorous programme to deliver new affordable housing supply both within and outside the borough. This will specifically mean identifying additional opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing to compensate for the loss in certain areas and to address the rising demand from newly forming households. [12]**

To do this will require a re-appraisal of the Unitary Development Plan to allow a more flexible approach to additional residential development throughout the borough and specifically on key sites.<sup>17</sup> It will also necessitate the development of sub-regional supply partnerships with neighbouring boroughs such as Greenwich as well those in the wider South Eastern region.

However, the Commission recognises that the ability to deliver additional units is clearly affected by financial

resources as well as land availability. This is considered in greater detail in Chapter Five.

### 3.5 Diversifying Stock

While the opportunities to create more balanced communities will for the most part revolve around changes to the tenure of existing stock as well as a more flexible allocations policy, opportunities will also arise for experimenting with a range of house types and styles on key sites in the borough.

In this context, the Council should consider:

- **Identifying more opportunities for the development of a range of different styles and types of home within a given area (including family houses; single person units; and retirement homes). [13]**

This will allow existing residents to consider a range of opportunities within their existing neighbourhood and will encourage them to stay in the borough throughout their life cycle. It is also a key way of attracting in a range of new residents into an area to help stimulate catchments for both local businesses, and key services such schools.

At the same time, the Council should:

- **Promote a mix of opportunities for innovative new-build schemes by identifying specific locations which can support compact mixed use developments and innovative high density housing design e.g. around highly accessible transport nodes; and, the river frontages. [14]**
- **Developing a comprehensive 'Empty Buildings Strategy' for the borough which builds on the existing Empty Homes Strategy by looking at the potential and appropriateness of all vacant premises for housing use. This should particularly focus on addressing the problems of long-term vacant private sector accommodation. [15]**

<sup>17</sup> Objections of the Lewisham Housing Commission to the Deposit Draft of the Lewisham Unitary Development Plan Review, Ref: 85, March 2000

- **Progress mixed use schemes particularly in secondary and tertiary parades which could benefit from the injection of vitality brought about by an on-site residential population. [16]**

### 3.6 Mixed Communities and Mixed Use

It will not be sufficient to generate a 'mixed neighbourhood' without also putting into place the crucial mechanisms which ensure that the mix actually works on the ground. Any strategy to diversify the type of tenure as well as the type of households cannot be purely property based. This is particularly important on housing estates which have historically been characterised by single tenure accommodation.

It is significant to note that research recently undertaken by DEMOS<sup>18</sup> on ten mixed tenure estates suggests that most relatively new mixed estates do not enjoy inclusive social networks. Moreover, many of the problems which characterise non-mixed estates can - and do - re-emerge in more mixed settings.

It is therefore of crucial importance that any efforts to introduce a more diverse pattern of tenure are also accompanied by a careful consideration of how best to make this work for residents. In this context, the Commission would draw attention to:

- The way in which diversification is undertaken - e.g.. blocks or streets - and the way in which 'mix' manifests itself geographically;
- The physical characteristics of the stock itself, and the need to create accommodation which cannot be identified or labelled as 'affordable';
- The relative flexibility which needs to exist within the housing system to promote movement between different tenures, properties and neighbourhoods;

- The need to promote and sustain social and economic linkages which help to promote cohesive mixed communities;
- The role for local housing managers and others such as the police, the local GP, community leaders, local school teachers and others in facilitating inclusive neighbourhoods.

In response to these issues, Commission would therefore advise Lewisham to consider:

- **Opportunities for street level mixing of tenure wherever possible. This will mean rejecting tenure 'zones' both in new developments, and in established neighbourhoods in favour of a more diffuse mixture. [17]**

In terms of new development this can be enforced through the use of planning briefs, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Section 106 agreements. In existing single tenure estates it will require a careful programme of diversification, which looks to move away from 'blocks' of single tenure properties to a more integrated pattern.

In addition, the Council should develop:

- **Strictly enforced procurement procedures which alongside the powers of development control will seek to improve the overall design quality of all new buildings so that social housing and private housing cannot be distinguished. [18]**
- **At the same time every effort should be made to work alongside residents on existing estates to introduce physical changes, which facilitate integration between different stock, different neighbourhoods and different communities. [19]**

There is also a need to develop mechanisms to promote freedom of movement between properties, neighbourhoods and tenures. This is a particular

<sup>18</sup> Jupp B., (1999) Living Together: Community Life on Mixed Tenure Estates, DEMOS

imperative for social landlords in the borough since one of the best elements about renting should be the freedom of movement for households within the sector.

This will require:

- **Improved transfer and mutual exchange arrangements within the local authority sector as well as between local Authority and Registered Social Landlords. It will also mean that additional efforts will need to be focused on improving the provision of information and advice to existing and prospective tenants so that they are better placed to review and act on available options. [20]**

Making mixed neighbourhoods work, will also require the Council to promote and support the development of local neighbourhood management functions. In this context Lewisham should look to:

- **Expand the opportunities to use housing management and related services as a way of developing the skills and capacity of local people to take on these varied roles so that neighbourhood issues are managed and delivered by local people. In particular, the potential of Resident Service Organisations to fulfil such aims should be fully explored. [21]**
- **The more effective sharing of success stories and examples of best practice between social landlords in the borough, which demonstrate capabilities in neighbourhood management. This could include exchange visits for tenants and should see Lewisham Council host regular dialogues between tenants and landlords. [22]**

Integrating land-uses and creating mixed neighbourhoods which include a range of facilities is also critical to ensuring the success of mixed communities. The importance of developing mixed-use neighbourhoods has been the on-going theme of a host of research publications issued by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the

Regions (DETR),<sup>19</sup> English Partnerships,<sup>20</sup> the Urban Villages Forum and others.<sup>21</sup> It was also a theme which was strongly endorsed by the Government's Urban Task Force.<sup>22</sup>

The Commission strongly believes that the successful diversification of tenure and the creation of more balanced sustainable communities will require those who own, build and manage urban areas to deliver a composite package of goods and services over and above a range of tenures. This will mean mixing land-uses within neighbourhoods as well as mixing tenures to ensure that residents can access a range of facilities and services within their immediate environment. The Commission therefore recommends:

- **The development of 'mixed use' as well as mixed tenure developments. This will mean acknowledging the key role which commercial and community facilities can play in creating an integrated community. It will also need to be progressed with careful consideration of both the context and scale of a given development. [23]**

19 Llewelyn-Davies et al., (1999), Delivering Mixed Use (Especially Housing) in Town Centres, DETR

20 Making Places: A Guide to Good Practice in Undertaking Mixed Use Development, English Partnerships and the Urban Villages Forum.

21 Coupland E. (ed), (1997), Reclaiming the City: Mixed Use Development, E & FN Spon

22 Towards an Urban Renaissance: The Final Report of the Urban Task Force, (1999) E & FN Spon

#### 4. RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT



## 4. RESPONSIVE MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 New Directions for Managing Housing

At present, Lewisham Council takes a lead role in the management of local authority housing stock and the provision of associated landlord services. In total, it currently manages and maintains 32,800 (and 4,500 leasehold) properties at a cost of £59 million per year.<sup>23</sup>

While such models of management have typified public sector housing services during the post-war period, a number of authorities are now questioning the efficacy of the 'monopoly provider' and have opted for a more pluralist approach to housing management by devolving their management duties to other public and/or private agencies. In presenting to the Commission, Lewisham's Mayor also made it clear that the Council should seek to withdraw from direct management on the grounds of efficiency, and should concentrate instead on strategic issues.

The rationale for effecting these changes is based on the belief that monopolies are often unable to innovate, expensive to run, and insufficiently customer focused. In particular, local authority monopolies tend to resort to single management models as opposed to specialist tailored management systems. In the context of housing services, there is also a belief that tenants remain trapped with one landlord and one manager unable to exercise control or choice. As importantly, opportunities for innovative investment solutions are severely frustrated. These arguments have re-enforced the case for stock transfer which inevitably brings with it a shift in owner / landlord.

Evidence presented to the Commission suggested that to improve housing management will mean addressing these criticisms by exploring options which:

- challenge the role of the local authority as a monopoly

- provider by introducing a diversity in provision;
- separate out the functions of landlord and manager;
- improve tenant choice; and,
- generate additional investment.

Central Government is also keen to progress this agenda. In his evidence to the Commission, Nick Raynsford the Minister responsible for Housing highlighted the need to look at how best to develop a wider strategic role in the delivery of housing and housing services.<sup>24</sup> In particular he focused on the importance of developing linkages with partner organisations; promoting a range of providers; and engaging with other neighbouring boroughs in cross boundary initiatives. While he did not dismiss local authority ownership and management of stock as incompatible with strategic objectives he did endorse a pluralist approach to management .

The Commission acknowledges that if the Council is to undertake a more strategic role, time and resources must be freed to devote to this end. There is therefore a rationale for exploring options, which allow the local authority role to be discharged to other agencies as a mechanism for improving the quality of services to tenants and residents.

### 4.2 Promoting Competitive Management

The Commission believes that Lewisham needs to address the criticisms levelled at large scale bureaucratic management systems by seeking to develop solutions, which are more sensitive to local levels. It acknowledges that the local authority approaches to the management of housing and housing services has tended in the past to be characterised by:

- A heavy reliance on rules and regulations to administer the management system making it unwieldy and time consuming for both administering officers and for

<sup>23</sup> Approximately 2,000 properties in Sydenham are managed by a private contractor, JSS Pinnacle.

<sup>24</sup> Meeting 7, 25th February 2000, Lewisham Housing Commission

customers.

- A 'one size fits all' approach, which fails to reflect local conditions by enforcing a single (or very limited set of) options right across an authority.
- A poor interface with residents, making it difficult for the public to shape services to reflect priorities on the ground.

The Commission argues that there are therefore good reasons in principle for breaking up the local authority management monopoly and creating the context for innovation and change. However, it recognises that establishing new systems of management will only succeed if they deliver real improvements which residents themselves value and prioritise.

A recent survey<sup>25</sup> of tenants in Lewisham showed that 77% thought that the standard of management had either stayed the same or improved in the last year. At a general level two-thirds of the sample were satisfied with the service provided by Lewisham while a third were dissatisfied. When asked about the potential for externalising management, 34% support council moves to explore the possibility of contracting out housing services, 38% rejected the idea and 28% were unsure as to whether or not to support or reject the concept. Similarly around a third of those questioned were interested in finding out more about changing from the Council to another type of social landlord, 40% did not want to progress this and a quarter did not know.

The Commission therefore recommends:

- **The adoption of a pluralist approach to housing management which involves both public and private sector agencies in the delivery of competitive, efficient and equitable housing services. [24]**

The Council will also need to develop 'fast track learning' so that best practice from different management models can be effectively applied to minimise the potential additional costs of a 'tailor made' approach to management.

The Commission also acknowledges that re-engineering management may need to involve radical and innovative solutions to be truly effective. In particular, breaking up management monopolies may also involve the transfer of ownership through stock transfer - an issue debated in greater detail in Chapter Five. However, this may not always be a pre-requisite and a number of other routes exist which do not involve the transfer of ownership.

In response, the Council should specifically consider:

- **Transferring management to private sector or not-for-profit organisations outside the local authority, where such a move has the support of tenants. [25]**
- **Promoting examples of successful models of tenant management which give local people a stake in the decision making process and - as importantly - provide the context for wider capacity building within the local community. [26]**

Lewisham should actively explore whether there is interest and enthusiasm for such methods of management by working with tenants and tenants' organisations. Evidence presented to the Commission<sup>26</sup> suggests that there is both a willingness to be involved as well as a very real potential to deliver alternative tenant controlled management models. There are a range of vehicles which can be considered in this context including: management co-operatives and estate management boards. Other models also exist which offer more limited delegated responsibility such as 'Residents' Democracy' options (based on the Danish model); area based housing management committees; estate agreements; and, 'Residents' Action' (a modular approach developed by Swathling Housing Association).<sup>27</sup>

The Commission acknowledges that merely replacing one management vehicle with another will not necessarily guarantee the necessary improvements in service provision. This is not least because it can effectively involve the replacement of one monopoly with another. Rather,

25 10% random sample of all Lewisham tenants, 1999

26 Witness Statements 7,8,9, Meeting 5, 28th January 2000, Lewisham Housing Commission

27 Gillanders G., and Blackaby R., (1999) Models of Resident Controlled Housing, The Housing Corporation and the Office for Public Management

the recommendation is for a flexible approach to housing management which will reflect local conditions and preferences, and respond to the changing requirements of residents on the ground. In particular, the Commission endorses the adoption of new management regimes which allow tenants the freedom to reject appointed managers who fail to deliver according to an agreed contract. Evidence presented by JSS Pinnacle highlighted examples of where these models had been successfully developed elsewhere.<sup>28</sup>

The Council will need to consider with tenants whether or not to go for longer-term management options in some contexts or to investigate new management regimes as a stepping-stone to housing transfers in others.

### 4.3 Focusing on People

Improving the relationship with customers was a recurrent theme throughout the Commission's deliberations. This can be done by improving existing lines of communication, and by appropriating new management models, which place tenants and residents more firmly in control of management of services.

Improvements to existing management practices could include:

- **Delivering some housing management services over wider time bands (e.g. around the clock access) and via a wider range of access opportunities (e.g. digital TV, the internet, the telephone etc). [27]**
- **Prioritising a variety of different access arrangements (including telephone, home visits, open offices, digital television and the internet) so that vulnerable people in particular would benefit.[28]**
- **Restructuring of the service to differentiate between front and back office functions to reflect which services actually need an interface with tenants. [29]**

- **Ensuring that contracts with providers are drawn up under the Best Value regime to make services as effective as possible from the point of view of the customer. [30]**
- **Involving residents directly in the monitoring of service providers. [31]**
- **Training for social landlords on how to involve tenants. [32]**
- **Looking for opportunities to utilise information technology as a way of enabling change (e.g. hand held computers for housing staff, use of the internet by tenants for repair ordering). [33]**

The Commission acknowledges that information technology is not a panacea in itself and will only add value if it can deliver services in a flexible and responsive way.

However, it should also be recognised that for many the customer/consumer focus will grow in the future and will be translated as a 'co-producer' role for stakeholders with typical examples including new co-op management boards and new mechanism for resident control in terms of both ownership and management. Direct tenant control still accounts for a small proportion of social housing and there is continuing debate about how interested most tenants actually are in housing management. Nevertheless there is also evidence that tenant participation in management does improve tenant satisfaction and can contribute to community capacity building by helping tenants to develop new skills.<sup>29</sup>

The Commission acknowledges that tenant controlled housing management has a key role to play in delivering an informed and accountable service to residents. It can also play a crucial role in providing both the skills and support network to access both the formal and informal labour market. Closer links therefore need to be forged between involvement in housing management and other

<sup>28</sup> Meeting 5, 28th January 2000, Lewisham Housing Commission

<sup>29</sup> Gillanders G., Blackaby B (1999) Models of Resident Controlled Housing, Office for Public Management for the Housing Corporation

opportunities both within the neighbourhood and beyond. The local authority should:

- **Allocate resources to create posts with specific responsibility to encourage the development of Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs). There should also be allowances or expenses paid for active participation for certain roles. The excellent work already undertaken on promoting local employment in the construction industry and housing sector should be expanded and the potential to establish Resident Service Organisations researched. [34]**
- **Promote other opportunities for tenant involvement in wider neighbourhood management initiatives e.g. community safety. [35]**

The Government's own New Deal for Communities programme offers some ideas as to how these recommendations could be taken forward. However, there is clearly a key need to fill the gap between the voluntary and the professional sector in this context.

Lewisham should ensure that tenants have the knowledge they need to make good choices, and understand the range of options they have. There is a strong need to follow up new roles with good training and to ensure that those involved in management can use similar skills to access other opportunities - (e.g. see if it can be accredited towards NVQs and other qualifications). It is also important to ensure safety nets are created to protect tenants who have taken on too much, and create rescue schemes for 'burnt out' co-operatives.

#### 4.4 Developing a Neighbourhood Approach

It is clear from a number of studies conducted in the early 1990s that the great majority of British households regard being in 'a good area' as just as important as having a good house or flat. More recently, research published by

the Popular Housing Forum<sup>30</sup> supports the hypothesis that households are actively seeking 'good neighbourhoods' with a survey that showed potential buyers are twice as interested in the area than the look of the house.

This research alongside the results of the consultation conducted as part of the Commission process highlights the importance of 'neighbourhood management' in creating places that people want to move to and - as importantly - stay in. So, what needs to be done differently?

The Commission believes that the future of effective and efficient housing management in Lewisham depends on developing 'real neighbourhood management' characterized by an integrated system of service delivery, which seeks to break through departmentalism, lever in investment and affect a single point of accountability for customers. Specifically this will mean effective management of the wider environment rather than just the homes themselves. It could involve a more joined-up approach to the creation of sustainable local economies which provide jobs, and training opportunities as well as a range of commercial and community facilities for local people. Similarly it is likely to involve the promotion of 'good neighbour' behaviour by seeking to develop a framework which shares responsibility for community safety and community cohesion between a range of different partners including residents themselves.

It is important to emphasise that this does not represent a return to 1980s models of service delivery. Rather it presents a new option for management in which the customer comes first, innovation and experimentation is encouraged at both a macro and a micro scale, and the organisation itself is typified by an outward looking management style with decision making informed by an on-going dialogue with service users. It acknowledges that the problems which people face are often to do with accessing other services besides housing.

This approach acknowledges that the most successful projects tend to be those driven by empowered and

30 Popular Housing Forum (1999) Kerb Appeal



energetic individuals at the local level. Many of these initiatives work best when they are carefully connected together in a specific place - where the head teacher, GPs, youth worker, local employer and housing managers know each other well and can make things work 'on the ground'. In comparison grand schemes that have to be implemented regardless of local capacity or local circumstances, seldom work.

For Lewisham to effect this kind of change will require the authority to develop the mechanisms for social landlords to operate as good neighbourhood managers. This will mean:

- **Ensuring that local housing managers are empowered and sufficiently well resourced to build a working dialogue with tenants and residents. [36]**
- **Encouraging joint management arrangements between several landlords with stock within an area and establishing fora where service providers and users within a neighbourhood can discuss and resolve problems of common concern including the capacity and willingness to operate in this way as a criterion when allocating grants to RSLs. [37]**

At the same time, landlords themselves will have to do more to:

- **Encourage residents to take on roles and responsibilities for managing activity within their neighbourhoods and/or leading projects. This will mean offering the right resources to support self-help and working with local people to create a range of community or volunteering activity that matches the needs of the locality. [38]**

If empowered, and given the time to think and work together, local people including staff and residents can - with the right resources - deliver sustainable and viable neighbourhoods. If the authority is clear about its objectives, the next step is to engage managers, staff, tenants and partner organisations in working out practical

ways to achieve this. There are a number of examples in the Lewisham context which may offer either best practice learning in this respect or a fertile environment in which to experiment on 'pilot projects'. The Commission would recommend that the Council looks at how best to:

- **Build on the New Cross Gate New Deal for Communities pilot project as a vehicle to pilot a comprehensive neighbourhood management approach and explore opportunities to export the best practice learning from this location elsewhere within the borough. [39]**

## 5. INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE



## 5. INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

### 5.1 A Common Inheritance

In Britain, local authorities began to own and manage residential stock at the beginning of this century in order to provide better housing conditions for citizens. The post Second World War period in particular witnessed local authorities delivering housing at a huge scale, with major new building programmes progressed throughout the fifties, sixties and seventies. Despite this period of intense development, the UK still possesses the oldest housing stock in Europe with only 38% of all homes built post 1960. It is not surprising therefore, that the costs of maintaining the housing portfolio are substantial, and continue to rise.

For England as a whole, it is estimated that almost 40% of pre-1919 stock is in disrepair.<sup>31</sup> At the same time as the stock continues to deteriorate, gross public investment in housing has fallen in real terms from an equivalent of £9 billion in 1979/80 to just £3.6 billion in 1996/97.<sup>32</sup> Local authorities have also seen the 'Right-to-Buy' policy of the 1980s result in the sale of better quality Council stock into the private sector. Spartan funding regimes have meant that there has been relatively little investment in the maintenance of the remaining, older stock and severely constrained resources provided for the development of new properties by RSLs.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that when viewed nationally, council housing stock is for the most part structurally sound. This is because it tends to be newer, with 75% built post 1945. The English House Conditions survey shows that only 7% of the stock can actually be described as 'unfit' compared to 19% of dwellings in the private sector.

The council housing stock in Lewisham is one of the oldest in London. Over a third (39%) was constructed before 1944. Many of the homes built since 1964 are high rise high density estates which have subsequently proved less

popular amongst residents as well as being difficult to maintain and manage.

These factors raise a number of important issues with relation to future finance options:

- Without sustained investment, all housing deteriorates, and left unattended will fall into disrepair. A local authority which retains ownership of properties will inevitably be faced with growing demands for public investment in its own housing stock.
- However, there will also always be a substantial proportion of homes over which the local authority can exert little or no control despite similar needs for on-going investment.
- While there are some indications that the government may look to some relaxation in the level of capital controls on local authorities after the next election it is likely that the limitations on additional public funding opportunities will continue in the near future. This will require local authorities to look at other options for raising the necessary finance. The future amount and structure of public investment in housing will have a significant impact on the potential to lever in private investment in particular. Public funds should be viewed - and used - as a catalyst for making the private sector work more effectively to deliver change.
- Transferring ownership of better quality stock may help to secure future investment and raise revenue, however, it will not necessarily solve problems for more marginal properties, and may in fact aggravate concentrations of deprivation.
- Requirements for additional investment have historically reflected the landlord's assessment of 'need' both now and in the future. This may not match the experience and perception of residents themselves.

Clearly, a prime determinant of the future quality of the existing stock and its associated environment will be the ability to secure adequate and appropriate investment.

<sup>31</sup> English House Conditions Survey 1996, DETR 1998

<sup>32</sup> Housing Finance Review (1997/98), Joseph Rowntree Foundation 1998

This is also critical in terms of the ability of the local authority to promote the additional supply of housing. However, there is growing debate about the best means of achieving these objectives and in particular, whether or not direct ownership and/or management by the local authority is still the best option for residents.

The arguments for moving away from the local authority as owner and manager of social housing are based on three inter-related issues:

1. The need to move towards a new role as a strategic orchestrator of services as opposed to a direct provider which necessitates a prioritisation of one set of responsibilities over and above others;
2. The need to stimulate improvement in housing management and related services for residents (as discussed in the previous Chapter); and,
3. The need to increase investment opportunities, which may be limited if the Council retains a traditional owner and/or manager role.

## 5.2 A Summary of Investment Needs in Lewisham

At present, Lewisham Council owns 32,800 homes plus a further 4,500 leasehold units where it operates as ground landlord where tenants have bought ex-council dwellings through 'Right-to-Buy'. Following the comprehensive review of housing investment needs conducted in 1997, the Council estimated that it would need a total of £327 million to bring all of these units up to an acceptable standard over the next decade. More recent figures suggest that when the needs of different dwelling types (e.g. flats and homes of different styles and relative ages) are taken into consideration, the figure rises to £374 million. This figure refers to both repairs and improvements and is the total needed to bring all properties up to a modern standard.

An assessment of the last Private Sector House Conditions survey conducted in the borough (1994) suggests that at least 4,900 owner occupied homes are also unfit and another 11,600 require work to bring them up to an adequate standard of repair. In addition, at least 3,500 private rented homes are deemed as unfit with a similar number requiring substantial work. The total costs of undertaking this work equates to £74 million for owner occupied homes of which £43 million could be the cost to the Council of renovation grants. A further £74 million is required for up-grading private rented homes of which £36 million could be in the form of renovation grants from the Council.

In 1997, Registered Social Landlords in the borough estimated that they would require an additional £30 million to bring their 7,750 properties up to habitable standards. This is estimated to require at least £15 million of public expenditure.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, Lewisham is estimated to have at least 2,300 empty private sector properties. A ten year programme to bring these voids back into use would cost in the region of £20 million.

Alongside the need to maintain existing stock, is a growing demand for the provision of additional homes. This is fuelled by a combination of natural growth in indigenous households as well as domestic and international patterns of migration. In Lewisham, the Housing Needs Survey carried out in 1998 estimated that between 7,250 and 12,950 additional affordable dwellings would be needed up to 2006. This equates to an annual requirement of 1,260 units per annum. This figure is likely to rise if the Commission's own recommendations in relation to the diversification of tenures and stock were progressed.

Over the past three years, Registered Social Landlords have provided an average of 320 new homes per annum (i.e. a quarter of what is actually required). However, at least half of these have been replacement housing for existing tenants who have been decanted from estate

<sup>33</sup> Discussion Paper Lewisham Housing Commission, Investment Review 2000, London Borough of Lewisham 12/01/2000

modernisation and regeneration schemes rather than providing homes for newly formed households. If this rate of provision continued for at least the next ten years, it would cost £342 million of which 50% would be required in the form of public expenditure.

A summary of investment need is set out below:

**Table 3: Investment Need for Council Housing in Lewisham**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Approximated Costs</b>
Safety works (e.g. structural)	£31 million
Health related work (e.g. damp, rewiring)	£64 million
Weather proofing (e.g. roofs, windows, heating)	£165 million
Security	£13 million
Upgrading bathrooms and kitchens	£57 million
Environmental works	£32 million
Other	£17 million
Professional fees	£25million
Less contributions from leaseholders	- £30 million
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>£374 million</b>

**Table 4: Investment Need by Housing Tenure in Lewisham**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Costs</b>
Council Housing Units	£374 million
Owner Occupied Units	£43 million
Private Rented Units	£36 million
Vacant Property	£30 million
Housing Association Units	£15 million
Allowance for further deterioration	£50 million
New Provision	£162 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>£710 million</b>

Clearly, this places an enormous strain on limited public sector resources. It also raises a number of questions:

- What type of work is actually required and where is demand concentrated?
- Do residents themselves see such improvements as a top priority? A review of why tenants rejected the Hill Green Homes transfer package shows that improvement to the stock was not seen as a top priority by tenants thus negating the rationale for transfer. The Council's desire to increase investment opportunities may therefore not reflect the priorities of residents themselves.
- How much investment would really be needed to respond adequately to the need for additional affordable homes? At present RSLs in Lewisham are providing only 25% of the additional affordable homes required in the borough. Current investment levels are therefore quite inadequate to address additional need directly.

### 5.3 Potential Sources of Investment Finance

The Government has made it clear that priority spending for local authorities should focus on the repair, maintenance and improvement of the existing stock rather than on meeting the need for additional housing. As part of its own Investment Review, Lewisham undertook an assessment of the resources available to meet housing investment in the borough. By reviewing conventional means such as straight forward borrowing as part of the Housing Investment Programme; capital receipts from sales; revenue contributions from the Housing Revenue Account and capital grants such as Estate Action alongside other opportunities, the Council produced a range of optimistic and pessimistic scenarios for the future. These are set out in Table 5 below. The analysis assumed a 10% rate of deterioration over the ten year time period and showed that even on the most optimistic assumption there was still likely to be a substantial gap in the investment available over the next decade.

**Table 5: Investment Potential**

Source of Funds	Projection	Pessimistic Scenario (25% < projection)	Optimistic Scenario (25% > projection)
Public Resources	£329 million	£247 million	£412 million
Investment Required	£710 million	£710 million	£710 million
Gap in Resources	£381 million	£463 million	£298 million

Under the current regime the only effective ways to increase the investment resources available for social housing are to:

- sell off assets;
- introduce private finance into the ownership of the existing stock;
- utilise Section 106 agreements (i.e. a form of negotiated 'planning gain' on a development) to generate affordable housing off the back of market developments; and,
- maximise the extent of central government, European Union and other subsidies through bidding for grants such as Single Regeneration Budget Round 6, European Social Fund and New Deal for Communities.

In the main, selling assets (through land and asset disposal) tends to run into problems with Treasury rules and may not always generate significant net gains to the borough. In the absence of a strong supply programme, such an approach will further frustrate demand for affordable properties within the borough.

The use of Section 106 agreements is also limited because although there is every incentive to maximise the use of such agreements, the resources made available are restricted by:

- the extent of market provision (i.e. the agreement relies on private sector development being advanced successfully in the first place);

- the emphasis on regeneration (which is both more costly than traditional development and usually results in losses of housing stock); and,

- the needs for other types of social infrastructure investment.

Recent research completed last year on behalf of the Urban Task Force<sup>34</sup> as well as more recent work currently being explored on behalf of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors<sup>35</sup> has shown that to date there has been only limited evaluation of such agreements both at a general level, and also specifically in the context of the provision of affordable housing. However, what this work and related studies have highlighted is the significant variations which exist with regards to:

- a) The application of Section 106 agreements;
- b) The process of implementation; and,
- c) The impact of such agreements on the ground.

This suggests that if it is agreed that more resources are required to fund investment, the only possible approach under the current regime is to undertake some form(s) of transfer of ownership. Within this general framework there are a number of different types of approach which can be considered.

34 Punter L., June 1999, The Future role of Planning Agreements in Facilitating Urban Regeneration, (Urban Task Force) DETR

35 The Implementation of Section 106 Agreements in the Provision of Affordable Housing (publication pending June 2000) RICS in association with the Housing Corporation.

## 5.4 Transferring Responsibility

Having reviewed evidence presented on the investment shortfall in Lewisham, the Commission acknowledges that the borough will need to look at alternative mechanisms to raise the necessary finance for both the repair and improvement of existing stock. It will also have to develop a detailed investment programme for the delivery of additional supply (see below).

If the Council retains its current position - particularly if tight constraints are retained on the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) - it will see the progressive deterioration of stock in terms of both overall quality and the state of repair. This will lead to a worsening of residential environments within Lewisham as a whole. Whilst this may not yet be apparent to tenants and residents, it is clearly the duty of the authority in its role as community leader to address this issue before it becomes a major problem for the borough as a whole.

Unlike the local authority, other social landlords (RSLs) are not constrained in the level of their borrowing. It therefore makes sense to consider how best they can be used to secure the necessary additional investment required.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- **The Council should look for viable opportunities which will allow it successfully to devolve and/or transfer ownership and management of its stock to improve the overall quality of life for residents. These decisions should only be progressed with the close involvement and support of tenants and other stakeholders, with sufficient time set aside in the process for genuine engagement. [40]**
- **Over the next few years the Council should offer all tenants the opportunity to consider alternative methods of ownership and management. [41]**

However such an approach requires careful consideration of the following key questions:

- **Which responsibilities should be transferred?** Possibilities range from the transfer of management to give tenants more control, transfer of operational control through long term contracts linking rental revenues to investment while maintaining ownership to full transfer of ownership. In addition there is a growing potential for including wider ranging activities through, for instance, housing regeneration and urban regeneration companies.
- **What size of transfer?** The possibilities, in principle, range from a full large scale voluntary transfers to a single owner such as those currently being explored by cities such as Glasgow and Birmingham, to transferring individual estates or even parts of estates.
- **What type of ownership and control?** Should transfer involve a debt financed management buyout, existing RSLs, other landlords or management companies? How much involvement should there be from the local authority in terms of on-going control and how many tenants should there be on the board etc?

A large number of urban local authorities are now actively exploring full scale, partial or phased stock transfers and there are examples of a wide range of options across the country. However, there are still important limitations on what local authorities can do, notably with respect to the role that the local authority can play, while still enabling the finance raised to be counted outside the PSBR. Equally there are constraints on the potential to benefit from the sale of assets. In particular if the transfer is only of management or rental revenue/management it will not usually be possible to release land and other assets to fund other investment.

The range of options with respect to transfer for Lewisham are limited by two factors: the current value of the stock in relation to outstanding debt; and, government policy on breaking up monopoly.

In some areas, the value of Lewisham's stock may be negative and transfer will only be viable where central government is prepared to fund the debt overhang.

However, it does not rule out the transfer of large parts of the stock where the value is positive. Nor does it affect the potential for management contracts and other forms of management transfer. Other subsidies and initiatives concentrating investment on low valued stock may also over time ensure that the value of the remaining stock increases until it is positive. Alternatively, partial externalisation could leave a proportion of the poorest quality housing still in council hands.

The second, more political, factor is that the government appears to be seeking greater diversity in large scale voluntary transfers and will look more kindly on proposals which include a range of owners (as well as high levels of tenant involvement) alongside other contractual management and operational arrangements. However, this approach is undoubtedly more resource and time intensive when compared to wholesale transfers to single bodies.

In the light of the above, the Commission therefore recommends that the Council should undertake:

- **An examination of each estate or neighbourhood to evaluate its net present value within current government rules; [42]**
- **A review of the potential for internal cross subsidy to improve existing stock more widely; and, [43]**
- **An evaluation of the potential advantages and disadvantages of transferring ownership. [44]**

It should then move on to:

- **Consider the merits the whole range of transfer vehicles including general, specialist and community based RSLs, ownership co-operatives and local authority influenced companies. [45]**

A key challenge for the Council will be to win the support of tenants for more radical transfer options. This will include the need for Lewisham Council to make it clear as

to why it wishes to withdraw from direct management and/or ownership responsibilities as well as highlighting the potential benefits for tenants of a more devolved approach. The Commission believes that the Council should focus on:

- **Providing detailed evidence, on the potential options estate by estate. Where particular options appear appropriate on real resource and tenant choice grounds but are excluded by central government regulations and funding rules a case should be made to government on investment grounds. [46]**
- **Approaches to tenants should be built on a clear vision for the future of housing in the borough and a strong rationale for any given proposal. Progressing change will only be possible if options are built around the shared objectives of both tenants and other key stakeholders (e.g. lease holders) and if the potential benefits are both acknowledged and prioritised by residents themselves. [47]**

This will mean working with communities at a micro-level to understand their priorities and preferences. In many instances, the result of this process may result in strategies which consider a spectrum of possible solutions including demolition and re-build as well as repair.

Specific recommendations to guide the transfer process are set out in Table 6 below.



**Table 6: Improving the Transfer Process**

**Landlords with a Track Record.** Promote organisations which are established and dependable. (Group structures or parenting arrangements between a new community organisation and established parent RSL may assist in the case of transfers to new community based organisations.)

**Responsible Staff.** Use credible staff who can see the job through. Allocate a significant amount of senior staff time to the job and ensure that senior staff are backed by strong Member support.

**Sufficient Time.** Allocate sufficient time to detailed negotiations with tenants to establish trust and understanding with landlords. (Experience elsewhere suggests that this can take around two years.)

**Consultation and Involvement.** Use newsletters, fun-days, open meetings etc. as a way of informing and consulting with local people. Speak to everyone who could be affected by the change and use a 'Tenants' Friend' to offer unbiased advice. The prospective landlord, the local authority, and tenants need to take joint responsibility for writing the brief for this position.

**Packaging Estates.** Only package up different estates where this makes sense to tenants on the ground. Smaller transfers may have more resonance in terms of local communities / neighbourhoods.

**Promoting Diversity.** Progress a number of different transfers to allow for a diversity of landlords.

**Neighbourhood Renewal.** Opportunities for area-wide improvements, training and employment packages etc. should be actively promoted as part of a transfer.

**Local Management.** Establish neighbourhood management networks, staffed by local people including neighbourhood caretakers who are able to deliver services at a local level.

**Competitive Tendering.** Ensure that the Council and the tenants enter into early discussions with prospective landlords rather than preparing a brief in isolation. Councils and tenants should look in some detail at: experience; commitment; innovation; and, the organisation's record in joint working with tenants.

**Packaging the Consortia.** It is often better not to put the whole consortia in place pre-transfer. Certain partners are more critical than others at this stage and competition later on will ensure best value.

**Protect the most vulnerable.** Ensure that the requirements for (and the cost of providing) services to the most vulnerable are built into any tender specification.

**Transfer vehicle.** Seek to ensure that a suitable proportion of board members are tenants. Substantial time and resources may be needed in the form of capacity building for the board.

**Post transfer.** Plan for early success stories post ballot when expectations are high. Delivering changes in this period e.g. lighting and security, are important to retain momentum and support.

**Monitoring progress and learning from experience.** While measurable improvements have been achieved it will take some time before the true impact of transfers can be evaluated. Set up a best practice group to learn from the experience.

**Community capacity building.** Invest time and resources in developing the capabilities and capacity of the local community to participate effectively pre and post transfer.

It is clear that the objectives for stock transfer need to be far more ambitious than simply improving the stock. It could offer scope to create a greater diversity of landlords and greater tenant choice. It could also help to achieve Lewisham's wider goals if it were to be designed in way that improved community engagement and built new networks of relationships, and if providers offered access to a range of opportunities. Creating skilled, empowered and self confident residents will only happen by directly involving individuals and communities in decision making which affects the future of their neighbourhood and their homes.

These recommendations acknowledge that transferring ownership and management has the potential to bring about a significant improvement in the quality of life of residents if it is done well. However, in selecting alternative providers, the Council should recognise that merely changing landlords will not solve the problem of under-investment and residualised stock. Equally, it does not mean that the authority can wholly divest itself of responsibility in this respect.

Rather:

- **Lewisham must seek to explore the range of options for both ownership and management of the stock in instances where tenants reject transfers. Sustaining both the ownership and improving the management function of the Council will be particularly critical in the short and medium term. [48]**

## 5.5 Investing in New Supply

It is important to note in this context that stock transfer of whatever type is unlikely significantly to address the problems of providing additional accommodation in Lewisham. The only three options currently available for an authority which cannot make a 'profit' from wholesale transfer are:

- Transfer of 'profitable' parts of the stock, including the release of land and other assets, which could enable additional output to be provided. (However this has other costs in that it reduces the capacity to cross subsidise between existing tenants);
- The use of S106 agreements which make it possible to build affordable, usually social, housing on the back of market housing. The opportunities here are limited by the extent and value of market provision in Lewisham; and,
- Private Finance Initiative arrangements. These are still at the pilot stage for housing and Lewisham was not identified as one of the pathfinders in this respect. The approach may have some potential for leveraging in additional funds in the longer term. However, given the gap between social and market rents and the extent of subsidy necessary to make new housing affordable, opportunities in Lewisham are likely to be very limited.

Lewisham cannot therefore address the issue of the large identified need for additional affordable housing on its own. Rather, it needs to work alongside other local authorities as well as the Greater London Authority to develop a comprehensive supply strategy which acknowledges Lewisham's relationship to neighbouring boroughs and the Capital as a whole.

The Council therefore needs to develop a more comprehensive strategy to reflect the type and quantity of additional affordable housing which needs to be provided alongside the on-going maintenance and repair requirements associated with the existing portfolio.

To develop this new supply strategy will require:

- **In-depth capacity assessments and demand assessment which acknowledge the range of new house building techniques and styles now on offer. Procurement should be focused on new and innovative construction and design which reflects both the needs for environmental sensitivity and the changing demands of customers e.g. for more flexible space. [49]**
- **The development of a coherent strategy to provide additional social housing accommodation both within and outside the borough by operating in partnership with other neighbouring local authorities as well as the Greater London Authority. [50]**

## 6. A CORPORATE AGENDA



## 6. A CORPORATE AGENDA

### 6.1 A Need for 'Joining-Up'

Over the past twenty years or so, conventional public service delivery has become fragmented, involving a wide range of public, private, and voluntary sector bodies, as well as a host of different partnerships and networks. More recently, the need to build stronger relationships with local citizens, has focused providers' attention on the practical issues faced by local people in their everyday lives. This experience has also served to demonstrate that overcoming problems and delivering on shared objectives cannot be achieved through a single agency working alone. Local authorities are therefore increasingly required to work in partnership with other agencies and to acknowledge the interrelationships which exist between different services and related policy areas.

It is clear that the power of local authorities to control local events lies not simply through providing services - not least because fewer and fewer services are directly provided by local authorities. Rather, there is a wider sphere of influence exercised through the skilful orchestration of resources across public and private sectors within an agreed and flexible joint strategy.

Inevitably, the structure and organisation within local authorities has also been changing in response to these new roles. Many authorities have merged departments and created multi-disciplinary teams. There is greater emphasis on corporate, 'cross-boundary' and partnership working. Horizontal project teams have grown up along with neighbourhood teams, business units and decentralised structures. The introduction of Best Value regimes has further served to encourage radical thinking about the ways that desired outcomes are achieved. In parallel, inter-agency work is developing to link the Council more effectively to the health service, the police and probation services and to the private sector

Despite a strengthened commitment to a shared agenda

and collaborative working, it is true to say that most local authorities experience difficulties translating these new ideas into practice. Many new horizontal project groups are bolted onto traditional vertical departmental structures and many merged departments continue to have a single director in charge but divide into separate departments with separate 'deputy directors' immediately below them. It has proved particularly difficult to translate the modernisation agenda into practical results for local residents, and the Best Value pilots have tended to pilot the process without yet achieving visible service improvements for customers.

Lewisham, like many other authorities, has already begun to redesign management and staffing arrangements to break down barriers and encourage creative working across boundaries. The evidence here as elsewhere is that change is not easy, and has to encompass not simply new structures and systems, but new ways of thinking, new attitudes and behaviours, as well as a different set of relationships between consumers and the Council. This requirement also applies to the relationships between the Council and other partner agencies.

In terms of housing policy, it is clear that specific strategies for both the stock and the associated services are no longer expected to be separate from the wider corporate strategy. Housing has to deliver on education, regeneration, and health improvement objectives, just as social services and benefits services may be essential to achieve housing goals. But the factors that drag people back into a narrow professional focus are very powerful, and if the linkages are not very strong, it is likely that 'joined up working' will only take place on the margins, and will not affect the mainstream.

Over the next five to ten years it is possible that a substantial proportion of the local authority housing stock may be transferred into new ownership and management vehicles. This should be seen as part of a wider process of neighbourhood regeneration which seeks to address much more than just the dwellings but includes the environment and also wider economic and social objectives for the

community as a whole. To ensure that the additional investment secured for homes is translated into a wider regeneration initiative will require strong corporate management and direction as well as adequate resourcing. Lewisham will need to look beyond housing issues and consider the wider neighbourhood needs as well as the potential of different areas to accommodate and sustain positive change.

The whole process of discussion, resident involvement, choices over management and improvement of neighbourhoods and homes represents a massive challenge for the borough. The process must not be seen as 'stock transfer' but about neighbourhood renewal so that different localities are better placed to meet the needs and aspirations of Lewisham residents. The approach has to be multi-agency and multi-disciplinary. This has major implications for the way in which the process is implemented.

## 6.2 Joining Up Internally

The Housing Commission believes that 'joining up' the housing agenda with the corporate agenda in Lewisham will require actions as well as words. Specifically, the implications of a more 'joined-up' approach are:

- A shift in the local authority role from a direct provider of services to an organisation, which orchestrates delivery from a multitude of agencies;
- A change in local authority structures in response to its new roles with a new emphasis on corporate working, cross-boundary and partnership working, horizontal teams and a new neighbourhood focus; and
- New ways of thinking about problems e.g. in housing there has tended to be a focus on understanding housing need not housing demand, this would need to shift with closer involvement of customers/consumers.

Specifically, the Commission recommends that:

- **Lewisham should adopt the role of 'skilful orchestrator' ensuring that a joined-up approach is adopted both internally and externally in the delivery of policy objectives. With respect to housing in the borough, this will mean building on the best practice experience of the local Health Authority; the education services and the work of the youth offending teams in the borough. [51]**

At a general level this could manifest itself as:

- **Using the new structures to create multi-disciplinary teams across housing, planning and regeneration to ensure policy and practice are consistent, to improve diagnostic power and develop creative new solutions for both specific and strategic issues. [52]**
- **The adoption of a mixed team approach (i.e. cross departmental) to the development of key areas of housing policy and for addressing site specific issues and/or neighbourhood initiatives. [53]**

## 6.3 Joining Up Externally

There was agreement across the Commission that Lewisham cannot hope to influence the housing market alone and that a 'market making' role requires greater collaboration between neighbouring authorities as well as a stronger regional role. By encouraging all the key players at regional and sub-regional level to support Lewisham's strategy, all available resources can be deployed in ways that reinforce rather than undermine local goals. This will become particularly important with the advent of the Mayor for London and the associated emergence of London-wide development policies, which may impact directly and indirectly upon Lewisham's housing market.

For this reason the Commission advocates:

- **A strong commitment to greater collaboration between neighbouring authorities and a stronger sub-regional role for Lewisham and its neighbours in the context of the Greater London Authority. [54]**

The strengthening of Lewisham's strategic role at regional and sub-regional level can best be achieved through the consolidation of existing linkages and as well as developing new ones with key entities such as the Greater London Authority (G.L.A)

This will mean

- **Developing clear measurable goals negotiated with local partners to underpin all housing, planning and regeneration policy, with a shared understanding of how partner organisations will contribute. [55]**

Specifically it could translate as:

- **Greater effort and energy devoted to the joint-commissioning process with the regional Housing Corporation to explicitly reflect wider corporate strategy. This should include a revival of the close liaison with the Joint Commissioning partner RSLs selected through competition in 1999. [56]**
- **Closer work with all the RSLs in the area to explore the contribution they do - and can - make to community sustainability. [57]**

Specific areas to address were highlighted by the work of the various sub-groups and are summarised in the boxes below:

#### **Housing and Regeneration**

- Promote flexibility within the land-use planning process - e.g. a more flexible approach to change of use from commercial to residential and mixed use. This should be achieved through the use of Supplementary Planning Guidance and other mechanisms which sit alongside the Unitary Development Plan.
- Identify key sites of opportunity - e.g. around transport interchanges - which could support compact mixed-use development including additional housing.
- Understand and capitalize on Lewisham's position with the South East quadrant and within London as a whole by improving strategic decision-making across the borough in relation to regeneration opportunities.
- Improve the procurement process for new development to ensure that the objectives and principles which underpin housing led regeneration are upheld.
- Develop a 'neighbourhood approach to regeneration' as piloted in Forest Hill and around New Cross Gate.
- Promote a diversification of tenure and in particular aim to retain and expand the band of higher income earners in the borough.
- Promote cross-stakeholder partnerships such as Lewisham Challenge Partnership to facilitate 'joined-up' working between different interested parties.

### **Housing and Health**

- Consolidate on the good work which is already underway in the borough linking health and housing (especially the links between primary care and housing department and mental health functions). The housing officer is often an early warning system especially for the most vulnerable (e.g. the elderly; the mentally ill and those with disabilities).
- Improve the overall ability to 'cost' in the capacity to develop such links and sustain them over time. Transferring ownership or management of housing stock should not mean foregoing the link with health care services. Rather new owners and/or operator managers will need to look at how links can be specified as part of their contracts.
- Look at the potential to develop joint performance indicators for health and housing so that health improvements become a measure of the performance for housing services in the framework of the Health Improvement Programme for Lewisham.
- Protect the needs of the most vulnerable and socially excluded. This is particularly important at a time when there is a move to diversify tenure and households in the borough. There is a danger that in such circumstances polarization may increase. Support new providers in their involvement in partnership working.
- Review the impact of changes in revenue streams as they affect existing resources for supported housing and specifically acknowledge the importance of the 'Supporting People' national policy.
- Consider how best the needs of households on modest incomes and vulnerable households can be supported in a scenario where the Council is either no longer a landlord or has significantly decreased its role in management and/or ownership.

- Recognise that non-institutional community care for vulnerable people including people with chronic mental illness, people with learning difficulties, people with disabilities, and the elderly will continue as a policy framework nationally and locally.
- Consideration should be given as to how mainstream housing resources can more effectively contribute to the health of the local population. For example, refocusing expenditure on central heating away from those properties with the lowest thermal ratings towards people with the greatest health need for affordable warmth would have a significant impact.

### **Housing and Community Safety**

- Involve all service providers in improving community safety not just the police. Different agencies need to think how they can achieve this both strategically and operationally.
- Involve local people in defining and delivering community safety. In particular there is a need to respond to the diversity of communities on the ground in this context to understand their individual needs and aspirations.
- The shift in police resources from street to core police activities means that other avenues must be examined to bring equivalent services back onto the street. Community policing should remain an important part of police activity.
- Develop a better understanding of 'unacceptable behaviour' and mechanisms for tackling this and monitoring this within a community. More needs to be done to share information between different agencies concerned with community safety.
- Look at other finance options outside core organizational funding e.g. the use of housing resources to fund additional police patrols on housing estates.



### **Housing and Education**

- Ensure that schools are able to attract a range of pupils from mixed income communities. Schools are more likely to succeed in raising achievement if they have an intake that has a balance of pupils across the ability range. There is evidence that children in poor areas are more likely to fail in school. Schools serving estates with the highest concentrations of need and deprivation have the highest chance of becoming failing schools.
- Retain higher band pupils in local schools. This is important to success. Parents need to feel that their higher achieving pupils can mix with similar pupils. Policies around housing and regeneration should aim to provide schools with catchment areas that are as similar as possible.
- Provide support to schools in instances when the local community changes significantly and rapidly. Changes within a community can significantly change the overall performance of a school. The arrival of a significant cohort of refugees in a particular area creates very real challenges for the local schools.
- Link schools more effectively with the local community. The community needs to be brought in to school but opportunities should also be taken to take children out to the community. This exchange may be help to attract parents to local schools.
- Address the way that schools look. Schools need to look modern, and attractive and to have excellent facilities. It is important the school buildings are maintained to the highest standards.
- Provide subsidised housing to attract teachers to live and work in Lewisham. This will help to ensure that teacher recruitment is supported by appropriate housing opportunities and will be essential in securing sustained improvements in education.

### **Housing and Social Exclusion**

- Engage more effectively with all sectors of the community - particularly the socially excluded - to develop a more responsive package of services.
- Look at how social exclusion is defined, by whom, for what purpose. To deliver inclusion will require a set of initiatives which seek to improve educational standards; economic capacity and activity; and housing quality for all. Regeneration expenditure and housing expenditure should be seeking to deliver on these aims.
- Focus on tenant participation as a mechanism for neighbourhood management.
- Improve collaboration between RSLs active in the borough and recognize that competition for contracts will undermine collaboration and shared learning.
- Improve the co-ordination of area-based initiatives - New Deal for Communities represents a good link. Prioritise a Best Value review around social exclusion.

## 7. DELIVERING SUCCESS



## 7. DELIVERING SUCCESS

### 7.1 A Note on Ways and Means

The Commission believes that housing, and housing policy, have a key role to play in the Council's vision for the borough. Moreover, this role could grow significantly in the future. However, at the same time, the Commission recognises that change will only be positive if it is well planned, adequately resourced, and delivered with a true appreciation of the priorities articulated by residents and service users.

There are very major implications for the political leadership and management of the authority implicit in the recommendations in this report.

In essence, the Commission believes that the Council will need to:

- Develop a much more strategic approach to its role in housing;
- Progress a strategy to increase the supply of social housing;
- Promote and regulate the private rented sector more vigorously; and,
- Focused implementation on inter-connected policy objectives.

But in addition to these the Council will need to:

- Involve *all* existing council tenants in neighbourhood based discussions over the next five years focusing on how to bring about major improvements in the quality of their homes, neighbourhoods and services
- Develop a number of detailed agreements as to how to implement improvements, some of which will require changes in ownership and management.

- Put in place the necessary funding and associated resources to deliver and manage the agreed improvements and regeneration plans according to residents' needs and preferences.

This programme will involve millions of pounds of expenditure over the next decade. But the process has to be more than physical regeneration. It has to involve residents and create wider life opportunities, to improve education, training and employment opportunities at a neighbourhood level.

The borough needs now to assess the scale of these tasks and to consider what it will need in terms of resources, skills, political leadership and management to respond to the challenge.

For Lewisham to capitalise on the recommendations set out in this report will therefore require an appreciation of both the barriers and the opportunities which will impact upon the speed and the direction of progress.

To deliver success will therefore require:

#### **Adopting a 'Quality of Life Approach' to Housing and Housing Policy.**

The future approach to housing, and housing policy in Lewisham must secure improvements in the quality of life of all residents. A change in the way that stock (and/or services) is administered, managed or owned cannot be seen as an 'end result' in its own right. Decisions must be evaluated in terms of whether or not the outcome will achieve greater quality of experience, and equality of opportunity for all. Success can only be assured if the priorities adopted by Lewisham to guide decision making accurately reflect those articulated by residents themselves.

#### **Implementing a Strategy for Managing Change.**

Local government is already experiencing a fundamental shift in relation to its core responsibilities. In terms of housing, this is likely to include a radical re-invention of the ways in which assets and services are both managed and/or owned. These represent the most sizeable changes

which any local authority will ever have to undertake in the near future and they will have a direct impact on resource allocations within the organisation. To succeed, Lewisham will need to develop a strategy for managing change which recognizes and accommodates the additional pressures which will be placed upon staff and delivery mechanisms. In particular, this strategy accommodates a detailed and inclusive process of engagement which guarantees a productive dialogue with all stakeholders.

### **Promoting and Sustaining Dialogue**

The Council must seek to engage all residents in the debate about the future of housing in the borough. This dialogue must be based on a clear articulation of the vision for the future alongside a rationale which accords with residents' own objectives for themselves and their families. While it is acknowledged that Lewisham is already at the forefront of developing many of these processes for engagement, more work needs to be done to develop participation which extends beyond established networks. This will require both sufficient resources to sustain an on-going dialogue and also a realistic appreciation of the time needed by the public to consider what are often both complex and emotive issues. In this respect, the Housing Commission's report represents a useful framework for discussions.

### **Guaranteeing Adequate Resources**

The vision of 'quality and equality' in housing will require sustained investment to underpin success. However, resources allocated solely for housing and housing services will still be severely pressed to deliver the necessary changes on the ground. As a result the Council must seek to mobilise as many non- housing related resources as possible to underpin the necessary changes, which need to take place in relation to both housing stock and services. To do this will mean elevating housing as a corporate responsibility as well as facilitating and incentivising partner organisations outside the local authority to support the changes prioritised by the borough.

### **Establishing a Process of Monitoring and Evaluation.**

The vision presented for Lewisham must be articulated and

measured using objectives, which have been agreed with residents themselves. Lewisham therefore needs to develop a set of agreed indicators with local partners including the resident and the business community, which have a real resonance in terms of needs and aspirations of local people and local 'quality of life'. The Council must take on the role of monitoring and evaluating progress. However, this too should be done in association with local people playing a key scrutiny role.

### **Delivering a Message to Central Government**

As well as acting as a catalyst for local partners and associated agencies, Lewisham has a role to play nationally in petitioning for the necessary changes, which will support its efforts to deliver its vision for the future. Specifically, the Council should continue to highlight the need for new investment in housing and new mechanisms to achieve such investment in the short, medium and long term. In this respect, the Housing Commission's Report should be used as a basis for the borough's response to the Housing Green Paper

## **7.2 An Active Thinking Space**

The Housing Commission Report is not intended as a definitive document. Rather, it seeks to focus attention on the potential, which exists within the borough, and to galvanise action to realise these opportunities both now, and in the future. Most importantly of all, it aims to widen the debate about the future of housing in Lewisham by highlighting the mutuality which exists between housing, and other aspects of people's lives, and inviting comment and reflection from all stakeholders.

In this respect, the report provides Lewisham with the necessary basis for an 'active thinking space' and a framework with which to engage with all stakeholders in the creation and delivery of a better quality of life for all.

It sets out some radical ideas and recommendations to deliver Lewisham's vision to make the borough 'the best place in London to live, work and learn'. The test of

success will be whether residents judge that the changes of management, investment, ownership and regeneration deliver real benefits for them. The Council will therefore need to regularly monitor and evaluate whether this has happened in practice.

## APPENDIX 1 COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

### LORD GEOFFREY FILKIN CBE

Geoffrey worked in local government as a Chief Executive and Director of Housing, in housing associations and housing aid. He was latterly the Secretary of the Association of District Councils. He now works as a policy analyst, writer and speaker on local government and as a working peer. He is Local Government Advisor to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. He chairs the Independent Advisory Panel on Beacon Councils and is a non-executive Director of the New Local Government Network.

### KEITH AJEGBO OBE

#### HEAD OF DEPTFORD GREEN SCHOOL

Keith was awarded the OBE for Services to Education in 1995. He has worked in Inner London Schools since 1972, and served as Head of Deptford Green School since 1986. He is a member of Hargreaves Committee that wrote 'Improving Schools' for the ILEA, and was a member of NACETT for 2 years. He is a Governor of Lewisham College and made Fellow of Goldsmith's College in 1997

### ANDY CLARKE

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LEWISHAM CHALLENGE PARTNERSHIP

Andy is the Chief Executive of Lewisham Challenge Partnership, which is responsible for bringing together stakeholders from major public, private and voluntary sectors for the regeneration agenda. He has 20 years of experience in planning, economic development and regeneration in East London. He was an advisor to the Local Government Association on regeneration issues and a member of DETR Compulsory Purchase Policy Review Group.

### KATE DAVIES

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE SERVITE HOUSES

Kate recently joined Servite Houses, which is a registered social landlord. Prior to this she was Brighton & Hove Council's Director of Housing for three years. Within this role she developed the 'Whitehawk Initiative' a multi agency programme to turn around the quality of life of local residents, which led to Brighton & Hove's success in the governments New Deal for community programmes. She was Chief Housing Officer in the London Borough of Bexley.

### LOUISE GARNER

#### DIRECTOR OF LEWISHAM VOLUNTARY ACTION

Louise has worked at Voluntary Action Lewisham since 1998. Voluntary Action Lewisham is the borough's Council for Voluntary Service, which provides information and support to 740 voluntary and community groups. Its services include advice to groups on funding, charity status, employment law, financial services and policy and development work, particularly in areas of urban regeneration and of health and social care. Prior to this her experience in the voluntary sector includes special needs housing which involved managing supported housing for women, reception centres for the Refugee Council and the Bosnia Project. She has also worked for the London Borough of Lewisham managing direct access provision for single homeless men and women

### ALISON GHANI

#### CHAIR OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Alison has been involved with the New Deal for Communities initiative in East Brighton since 1998, and was elected Chair of the Community Partnership in spring 1999.

The Partnership is comprised of representatives from local authorities, statutory, voluntary and private sectors, looking at key issues which include employment, training for employment, low educational attainment, health, housing, crime and young people. Prior to this she has been Chair of her local tenant's association and served as Chair of District Housing Management Committee.

### PETER GLUCKMAN BA MSc

#### DIRECTOR HEALTH OF CLIENT GROUPS, LAMBETH, SOUTHWARK AND LEWISHAM HEALTH AUTHORITY

Peter joined the NHS in 1986 after twelve years in Local Government, which included GLC Housing Policy Development. Initially he worked for Camberwell Health Authority as Director of Consumer Services Policy and then at the Lewisham and North Southwark Health Authority where he was General Manager for priority care.

He is responsible for ensuring that the Health Authority's long term Health Improvement Programme, 'Health Action Zone', and

work for different client groups are fully developed in partnership within the NHS and alongside local authority and voluntary organisations.

#### **EDITH MEGEBELE**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER

Edith has played an active part in Lewisham Council since 1986, when she joined as a volunteer for the Deptford Health Challenge. She later became an integral part of the Social Services Department, providing support for the Sheltered Housing Unit as a Housing Support Worker. Edith is now a member of the Lewisham Citizens Panel. As part of this role, she has assisted in a range of debates on major projects. Edith is also a member of the Lewisham Community Development Partnership which identifies and provides for health and social needs. Edith is a local authority tenant in the borough and is currently completing a Higher Diploma in Youth and Community Education.

#### **Cllr GAVIN MOORE**

DEPUTY MAYOR

Gavin has been a councillor in the London Borough of Lewisham since 1986. He has chaired the Direct Labour and Education Committees and served as Chief Whip. As Lewisham's Deputy Mayor, his new cabinet level post includes responsibility for housing, economic development, planning and transport policy. Gavin has worked closely for many years with tenants associations in his ward, which has a high proportion of council properties in areas of serious economic deprivation. On a wider scale he has represented local government nationally in developing education and direct services policy

#### **JOHN PAYNE**

PRINCIPAL OF JOHN PAYNE ESTATE AGENTS

John established his own practice in 1974. He now manages three practices in Greenwich, Blackheath and Lee, together with Head Office Survey and Commercial Department. With a staff of 30, they primarily concentrate on residential sales, surveys and valuations.

#### **DARRA SINGH**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF HEXAGON HOUSING

Darra has been the Chief Executive of Hexagon Housing Association for four years. Based in Lewisham, Hexagon provides a range of housing support and care services across South East London. He has been a member of the National Housing Federation National Council for five years and is Chair of the Investment and Regeneration Committee. Prior to this he was Chief Executive of Asra Greater London Housing Association and for two years as Regional Director of North British Housing Association and in Local Government.

#### **CHRISTINE WHITEHEAD OBE, PhD, BSc(ECON) London, HonMemberRICS**

PROFESSOR OF HOUSING AT LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

Christine is Professor of Housing at LSE, and Director of the Property Research Unit, at the University of Cambridge. She has been working in the field of housing economics, finance and policy for many years and was awarded an OBE for services to housing in 1991. She is the author of a large number of academic and policy articles and major reports on housing. Christine has been a regular advisor to House of Commons Select Committees on housing and finance issues.

## APPENDIX 2 COMMISSION PROGRAMME

### Meeting 1, 27th October 1999

Witness: David Wilson, Deputy Mayor, London Borough of Lewisham

Briefing Papers: The Legacy and the Challenges: Social Housing from the Industrial Revolution to the New Millennium, (Office for Public Management)

### Meeting 2, 19th November 1999

Witness: Barry Quirk, Chief Executive, London Borough of Lewisham  
Dave Sullivan, Mayor, London Borough of Lewisham

Briefing Papers: The Housing Situation in Lewisham, Supply and Demand (LB Lewisham)  
The Housing Situation in Lewisham, Stock Conditions (LB Lewisham)

### Meeting 3, 15th December 1999

Witness: Joe Montgomery, Executive Director for Regeneration, London Borough of Lewisham

Briefing Papers: Public Attitudes to Tenure (Office for Public Management)  
Statement from Lewisham Planning Services (LB Lewisham)  
Externalisation of Management of Sydenham (LB Lewisham)  
Background Information on Hill Green Homes (LB Lewisham)  
The Housing Market in Lewisham (John Payne Estate Agents)

### Meeting 4, 12th January 2000

Witness: Barbara Brownlee, Director, ERS Section, LB Hackney  
Jon Rosser, Director, London Region, Southern Housing Group

Briefing Papers: Lessons from Housing Stock Transfers (Office for Public Management)  
Investing for the Future (LB Lewisham)  
Externalisation of Management of Sydenham (LB Lewisham)

### Meeting 5, 28th January 2000

Witness: Barry Simons, Director of Housing Services, LB Hammersmith and Fulham  
John Swinney, Managing Director, Pinnacle Housing  
Jean Kysow, Chair, FELTRA  
David Thornley, Vice Chair, LTC  
Julie Peakman, LOPT

### Meeting 6, 11th February 2000

Witness: Dr Sue Goss, Office for Public Management

Briefing Papers: Linking Housing to Lewisham's Corporate Goals (Office for Public Management)  
Report of Sub-Groups (Office for Public Management)  
Report of Prospectus Comments (Office for Public Management)

### Meeting 7, 25th February 2000

Witness: Nick Raynsford, Minister for Housing and Planning



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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