

Shelter NSW Briefing

One Move Only: Practice Lessons from Social and Public Housing Estate Renewal in the UK

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Introduction

This Shelter NSW Briefing Paper is about the regeneration of social and public housing estates and the experience of UK estate renewal over the past 30 years.

The tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in West London on 14 June 2017 heightened attention in the UK and around the world about how to effectively work with residents during processes of change and regeneration. The circumstances and causes of the fire are now the subject of an on-going judge led public inquiry (Grenfell Tower Inquiry 2017).

This briefing paper is focussed on the experience of the UK where the author was the lead program manager for the Alton Estate Regeneration Project in West London. This was a hands-on front-line role with responsibilities to both the council and the community for the success of the project.

The briefing paper will take a practical approach – one that is informed by the practice of numerous architects, planners, community workers, public health officers, program and project managers, local councillors and, of course, the residents of various schemes around the UK.

The briefing paper is intended to complement the *Compact for Renewal* published in 2017 by Shelter NSW, the Tenants' Union of NSW, and the City Futures Research Centre at UNSW. These three organisations agreed to partner in a project to better understand the views and needs of social housing tenants directly affected by renewal projects. The *Compact for Renewal* process involved focus groups in eight social housing estates in Sydney where tenants had experienced renewal programs in the past 10 years or were scheduled to do so in the near future. Out of this process, a detailed fine grained set of principles were developed. Alongside the principles, practical measures

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were recommended to address relocation and resettlement of tenants, sharing the benefits of renewal, and on-going community engagement. The Compact was presented to relevant NSW Government agencies and community sector bodies in order to establish a set of common ground rules for all those involved in and directly affected by estate renewal projects.

This briefing paper does not revisit the outcomes of the Compact. The purpose of the paper is to take a close look at the practice of estate renewal as it has evolved over the past 30 years in the UK. Some of the insights and lessons from the UK experience may have value for similar projects in NSW.

The briefing paper will discuss five inter-related themes that cover the most significant aspects of estate renewal – certainly from the perspective of the tenants and residents directly affected. These are:

- Theme 1: Putting tenants at the heart of estate renewal
- Theme 2: Improving resident and tenant engagement
- Theme 3: Tenure mix and re-provision of social and affordable housing
- Theme 4: Improving design and energy efficiency
- Theme 5: Understanding the renewal process from start to finish.

The briefing paper will conclude with some directions of travel for estate renewal in NSW from this review of practice in the UK.

The evolution of best practice guidance in the UK

Public housing construction in the UK commenced at scale after World War I. In the main, this housing was constructed by direct labour departments of municipal councils who then went on to manage the housing stock. The major wave of large estate building occurred after World War II with comprehensive slum clearance and rebuilding after extensive wartime bomb damage (Harwood & Powers 2008).

Moves to ‘redevelop’, ‘renewal’ or ‘regenerate’ large, especially inner city, public housing estates started to emerge in the late 1970s as issues of crime, anti-social behaviour coupled with declining maintenance took their toll on the physical and social fabric of these places. A discourse of ‘problem estates’ developed as well as social stigma directed at people living there. A prominent government funded program was the Housing Action Trust model. This sometimes involved stock transfer to housing associations alongside physical renewal (Watt 2021). The comprehensive estate regeneration projects where large areas were demolished to make way for mixed tenure medium density housing on traditional street patterns came in the 1990s. The most prominent example was the redevelopment of the Hulme Estate in South Manchester (Manchester City Council 1994).

The emergence of practice guidelines from government and non-government organisations has largely happened over the past 20 years. This has occurred as some of the detrimental impacts on tenants and residents of large scale estate regeneration became more evident. And particularly as the tenants and residents themselves have sought a greater say in the process of estate renewal.²

² The directly affected residents of UK estate renewal schemes include social housing tenants (whether local authority or housing association tenants), temporarily accommodated tenants under the local authority’s

These negative impacts relate to the uncertainties surrounding the process of estate renewal and the benefits of change in relation to the personal upheaval involved.

This briefing paper will review some of the major guidance out of a burgeoning literature, particularly amongst practitioners, architects, think-tanks and non-government organisations in the UK. The sample selected for this paper is representative of the best and most respected guidance or professional advice in the field. The paper also includes the official UK Government *Estate Regeneration National Strategy* (2016) and the latest Mayor of London's *Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration* (2018).

Some leading architecture practices in the UK are now at the cutting edge of detailed guidance on all aspects of estate renewal – not just pure design issues. The leading publications are listed in the references. For completeness, the reference list includes some of the main academic contributions to the subject.

The following box presents a selection of UK exemplar projects. Case books of further exemplar projects can be found in the *Estate Regeneration Sourcebook* (McLaughlin 2015), *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice* (Levitt 2010), and *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice 2nd Edition* (Levitt & McCafferty 2019). A list of publications related to community-led small scale housing regeneration can be found in *Estate Regeneration National Strategy: Alternative Approaches* (UK Government 2016e). Finally, a critical approach to estate renewal has recently been published by Estate Watch and the London Tenants Federation (2023).

Selected estate renewal exemplars from the UK

Packington Estate – Islington, London (completed)

The Packington Estate is a sophisticated and highly successful estate renewal, both for its urban form and its social inclusiveness. A total of 538 structurally defective apartments were replaced with 791 mixed-tenure homes and community facilities. Traditional streets and squares were rebuilt into the site. All existing residents had the option to remain on the estate and were given priority access to the best locations on the site.

Colville Phase 3 – Hackney, London (completed)

The Colville estate renewal scheme was a 15 year project to replace 435 existing homes with 935 new homes for social rent, shared ownership and private sale. Phase 3 of this estate renewal in East London was an ambitious plan to construct two high density towers providing 198 new apartments to cross-subsidise the council's affordable home building program. Extensive community engagement was successful in communicating the council's vision for affordable housing in the borough and a series of design solutions addressed issues of privacy and overshadowing to adjoining properties. Hackney Council retained the freehold interest in the entire estate renewal site.

statutory homelessness obligations, and owners of properties under the Right to Buy scheme (either leaseholders or freeholders). There is sometimes a large category of tenants who pay rent to a private landlord who has purchased a number of Right to Buy properties on a social housing estate.

Bermondsey Spa – Southwark, London (completed)

This was a large former industrial site in South London owned by Southwark Council. The tender to develop the area for high density housing was awarded to Hyde Housing Association. The area was developed over a period of around 10 years with high quality designed mixed tenure medium rise blocks. A number of community facilities and a new health centre were constructed early in the scheme to demonstrate community benefit.

Park Hill – Sheffield, South Yorkshire (completed)

Park Hill is one of the most written about estate regeneration schemes in the UK. The original modernist structure was built around the ‘streets in the sky’ model with 985 apartments in a single deck access complex. In 1998, Park Hill was placed on the national heritage list. In 2004, innovative regeneration company Urban Splash won the contract to redevelop the entire complex. This project is often cited as an example of utilising an existing concrete superstructure in a highly successful but challenging mixed tenure estate renewal scheme.

York Gardens Block 1 – Wandsworth, London (in progress)

This is the first phase of the regeneration of the Winstanley York Road Estate at Clapham Junction, South London. Block 1 commenced on site in 2021 at the south western boundary of the estate. This will be a significant community focal point containing a leisure centre incorporating, two pools and a splash pad, an eight court sports hall, a gym and studios, a new library, community halls, a children’s centre and nursery. There are also two residential towers in the block providing 236 one, two and three bedroom apartments for sale.

Theme 1: Putting tenants at the heart of estate renewal

Key documents:

- UK Government 2016a, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Executive Summary*.
- UK Government 2016b, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Good Practice Guide - Part 1*.
- Mayor of London 2018a, *Better Homes for Local People: The Mayor’s Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*.
- Greater London Authority 2022, *Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide - Section 8: Resident Ballots for Estate Regeneration*.
- Wandsworth Council 2016a, *Alton Area Masterplan: Council Tenant Rehousing Information Booklet*.
- Lichfields 2021, *Great Estates: Planning for Estate Regeneration in London*.

According to a recent study (Lichfields 2021), there are currently over 200 live estate renewal projects in London alone. In practical terms, these are projects that involve comprehensive redevelopment, beyond the cyclical maintenance works that are carried out on social housing estates to comply with the UK Government’s *Decent Homes Standard* (UK Government 2006). They range from small infill projects to the more well-known extensive large scale schemes involving entire estates over many years.

Estate renewal is now a feature of many social housing tenants' life experiences. These regeneration projects take place on what in Australia would be called public housing estates – estates owned and managed by local authorities, usually large councils like London boroughs or the major metropolitan city councils. Increasingly not-for-profit housing associations are the lead partners for renewal programs on their own estates. An example is the Peabody Trust's project involving the upgrade and new construction of a 1930s estate at St. John's Hill, Clapham Junction, South London.

A startling observation of large scale estate renewal projects is that they take time. From initial planning and start on site through to completion, some projects can take 15 to 20 years. Most UK estate renewal projects involve compulsory purchase orders and the mandatory CPO public inquiries themselves can take up to five years, sometimes longer (Cox 2018). Estate renewal projects are time consuming and complex. This has promoted the development of government guidance. Compliance with such guidance is often a condition of gaining access to supporting government funding.

In 2016, the UK Government published its *Estate Regeneration National Strategy*. Since 2002, the UK Government has had specific programs and funding schemes to support the delivery of new housing, including affordable housing. Estate renewal is viewed by the UK Government as a key contributor to increasing the supply of new housing through densification of existing estates. The aim of the National Strategy is 'to support local partners to improve and accelerate local estate regeneration to deliver more and better quality housing, drive local growth and improve opportunities for residents' (UK Government 2016a).

The *Estate Regeneration National Strategy* sets out three main principles for successful estate regeneration (UK Government 2016a). These principles were primarily addressed to local government and housing associations as potential lead partners or delivery bodies:

1. The community should be engaged as partners in the project.
2. The critical importance of the support and leadership of the local authority/local council.
3. A willingness to work with the private sector to access commercial skills and leverage additional investment.

The UK Government is clear about its expectation that residents are at the centre of reshaping their estates, in partnership with local authorities and developers. In recognition of the lengthy timeframes involved, the strategy specifically states that residents should be 'protected during the lifetime of an estate regeneration scheme' (UK Government 2016a).

The focus of the Mayor of London's approach to estate renewal leads with the fundamental principle that residents should be placed at the heart of all estate regeneration schemes (Mayor of London 2018a). This encompasses a number of key areas and is not simply a message to undertake better consultation but must comprise positive resident support for proposed schemes. The main aspects of the Mayor of London's approach are shown in the following box.

The Mayor of London – putting residents at the heart of all estate regeneration schemes

Estate regeneration **directly involves many residents of social housing estates** – this may be through a range of interventions – from refurbishment and intensification to demolition and rebuilding.

Done well, estate regeneration can bring **genuine benefits to social housing residents**, with better homes for local people living on the estate, more homes of all tenures, improvements to neighbourhoods, new opportunities for training and employment, and new community facilities.

But alongside these potential benefits, estate regeneration often involves **disruption and change to established communities**, sometimes over several years, and can result in disagreement between residents and their landlords.

For estate regeneration to be a success there must be **social housing resident support for proposals**, based on full and transparent consultation from the very start of the process, and **meaningful ongoing involvement** of those affected.

Where schemes involve the demolition and replacement of existing homes, the Mayor of London believes those social tenants affected should be guaranteed **full rights to return or to remain through a single move**. Leaseholders and freeholders must be offered a fair deal.

From: Mayor of London 2018a.

Processes and mechanisms for social housing tenant and resident engagement will be discussed under Theme 2. However, two key policies that directly relate to the theme of putting tenants at the heart of estate renewal will be presented under Theme 1. These are resident ballots and the ‘one move’ policy. The resident ballot procedure adopted by the Greater London Authority is shown in the following box.

Good Practice Concept 1 – Resident ballots

A ballot of social housing residents is required as a condition of funding by the Mayor of London for any estate regeneration scheme in London involving the any demolition of a social housing dwelling and **the construction of 150 or more homes** (regardless of tenure) within the boundaries of the social housing estate. For Greater London Authority funding to be released, there has to be a majority ‘yes’ vote in the resident ballot.

There are rules relating to the compilation of a resident ballot voter register and the conduct of the vote itself. The ballot will need to be managed by an **independent body**, who will have to scrutinise and count the ballot. The Greater London Authority has a set of definitions for eligible voters to ensure all such ballots are conducted in a consistent manner across London. The independent body has to undertake or oversee the distribution of the **Landlord Offer** to eligible residents. This is the document that sets out the main elements of the regeneration scheme and identifies all the properties affected.

Ballots are generally expected to take place prior to the procurement of a development partner and/or prior to finalising the precise specification of works.

The track record of such ballots has generally been successful. However, there has recently been a 'no' vote for a scheme in the London Borough of Camden. This has been reported to be the result of a number of factors, including a lack of clarity over the number of properties to be re-provided at social rent levels.

From: Greater London Authority 2022.

Ballots have been used in other parts of the UK to provide a clear mandate from directly affected tenants and residents. In London, ballots are not mandatory on estate regeneration schemes that are not in receipt of Greater London Authority funds. However, ballots are required under UK Government regulations for any transfer of the tenants from a public sector landlord to a housing association or other body.

Resident ballots are becoming more common and a good way to engage the community support needed for a successful project. However, some local authorities and housing association prefer other means to gauge resident support or buy-in. There have been some instances where the ballot process has become highly politicised with outside groups getting involved in the ballot to secure a 'no' vote. As a consequence, some schemes have used detailed surveys of residents to test support for the proposed estate renewal and to better understand residents' concerns and apprehensions. These surveys need to aim to achieve a response rate as close to a census of all residents.

One of the key issues that has to be addressed in the Landlord Offer accompanying the resident ballot is details of how and where tenants of homes to be demolished will be rehoused. This is often expressed as **right to return** or **right to remain** policies. This is probably the single most important issue for existing tenants and other residents (leaseholders and freeholders).

Wandsworth Council's '**one move**' policy is shown in the following box. This is an exemplar policy for putting residents at the heart of estate renewal plans. A one move policy is the gold standard for social housing estate renewal and should be considered for all future estate renewal schemes.

Good Practice Concept 2 – One move policy

Wandsworth Council's housing commitments to tenants:

- You will be offered an alternative home on a social rent within the new development or within the local area.
- The new home will have no less security of tenure than you have now, and you will retain your Right to Buy.
- The size of the new home will be based on your assessed housing need (the size of your household).
- If you are under-occupying, you will be offered an incentive to downsize to a property that meets your assessed need or the choice of a new home one bedroom over what you are assessed to need.
- The development will be phased to minimise the use of temporary housing.

- The new properties will meet the Mayor of London's quality and size standards.
- There will be opportunities for tenants to purchase a new low cost homeownership property within the new development or elsewhere in the borough with help from the council.
- If your tenancy is over one year old, you will be entitled to compensation of £5,300 per household and reasonable moving and decorating costs.

From: Wandsworth Council 2016a.

The one move policy had high level political support from the Leader of Wandsworth Council. The housing commitments were prepared in 2013 ahead of detailed planning and developer procurement for the two major estate renewal schemes in the borough. These were the Winstanley and York Road Regeneration Scheme at Clapham Junction and the Alton Estate Regeneration Project in Roehampton.³

The practical implication of the one move policy is that existing social housing tenants will move directly from their existing home into a new home on the estate. This requires a detailed phasing plan to be provided by the development partner during the public procurement process. This plan will have to demonstrate how new housing blocks are phased to permit existing tenants to move to these new properties.

The so-called 'right to return' policies used in the past are now not considered to be best practice. The impetus for this was probably the experience of the Heygate Estate in the London Borough of Southwark (Cox 2018, pp.42-43). The council instituted a right to return policy, which in theory meant existing social housing tenants could move back to the estate sometime in the future. In practice, all the existing tenants were rehoused in a series of smaller schemes in the local area. The aim was to secure vacant possession of the entire site over a two year period.

In the opinion of the author, estate regeneration projects are too often viewed as property jobs. Issues of securing a vacant site and making the development highly attractive to potential private sector partners take precedence over putting the residents of these estates at the heart of all thinking around the project. Estate renewal is fundamentally about people and their needs should always be the starting point of planning a scheme.

The next theme will examine the best ways to engage directly affected residents and the wider local community, once the existing residents have given a positive response for an estate renewal to proceed.

³ The Alton Estate Regeneration Project is currently being reviewed and the process of securing a new joint venture partner has been put on hold. This followed a change in political leadership at the council in 2022.

Theme 2: Improving resident and tenant engagement

- Mayor of London 2018a, *Better Homes for Local People: The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*.
- Blackman, V., Grieveson, K., and McCullough, B. 2017, *Thinking Ahead: Estate Regeneration – What You Need to Ask and When*.
- HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP 2016, *Altered Estates: How to Reconcile Competing Interests in Estate Regeneration*.
- Levitt, D. and McCafferty, J. 2019, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice, 2nd Edition*.
- Lichfields 2021, *Great Estates: Planning for Estate Regeneration in London*.
- London Assembly Housing Committee 2015, *Knock it Down or Do it Up? The Challenge of Estate Regeneration*.
- Prince's Foundation and The Hyde Group 2015, *Estate Regeneration: Six Steps to Success*.
- Shelter NSW, Tenants' Union of NSW, and City Futures Research Centre 2017, *A Compact for Renewal: What Tenants Want from Renewal*.

A report by the London Assembly pointed to a fundamental issue in estate renewal. That is for such complex projects there will always be those who gain and those who lose, at least in relative terms (London Assembly Housing Committee 2015). Part of the challenge of resident and community engagement is to be clear about this issue.

The temptation in any community engagement process is to downplay negative aspects of a project. However, if an honest conversation is not conducted with directly affected residents and the wider community, trust will be lost at the outset of what are usually long development timeframes. This is expressed by the London Assembly as 'taking the community with you' from the outset.

Responding to the issues and needs of tenants was the core concern of the *Compact for Renewal*, discussed above (Shelter NSW, Tenants' Union of NSW, & City Futures Research Centre at UNSW 2017). Unsurprisingly improving resident and tenant engagement is similarly a strong focus of the UK estate renewal practice guides (Mayor of London 2018a; Lichfields 2021).

Lichfields (2021) have developed a series of 10 ground rules for effective resident and tenant engagement. These provide a framework and a guide for establishing an effective consultation and engagement program. When commenced from the very start of a project (post initial feasibility), these ground rules can assist in building trust with directly affected residents and the wider community. The following ground rules are shown in the box and are based on the Lichfields' guidance and the author's direct experience in estate renewal in London.

Good Practice Concept 3 – Ground rules for effective resident and tenant engagement

1. **Undertake feasibility work first.** This preliminary feasibility work should be undertaken first by the lead project partner (the council or housing association). This will ensure that there is a realistic commercial understanding of the overall quantum of development needed. However, this information should also be flexible and clearly presented.
2. **Run an early Housing Needs Assessment.** Housing needs assessment are a key tool to understand the precise needs of the estate's existing residents (tenure, unit sizes, accessibility requirements, parking). This housing needs assessment should be comprehensive as it will become the benchmark document for the understanding of the properties to be re-provided. It is also a critical underpinning document for any one move policy and phasing plan.
3. **Involve residents in the options appraisal.** A number of estate renewal guidance documents suggest that directly affected residents should have the opportunity to review alternative development options and to inform the project team of their preferred option for their estate. This is fundamental to enabling residents to genuinely feel involved in the process.
4. **Conduct inclusive engagement by using multiple stages and alternative methods.** Engagement is an on-going process. Residents should be consulted multiple times based on up-to-date project information at key milestones. A variety of engagement methods should be used to involve all tenants and residents including vulnerable and disenfranchised groups. These include workshops, one-to-one meetings, focus groups, newsletters, social media and project websites. Avoid lengthy periods of 'radio silence' as this will result in misinformation gaining currency on the estate.
5. **Form a Resident Steering Group.** A resident steering group should be established for every estate renewal project, large or small. This should comprise directly affected tenants and residents and other organisations directly affected by the estate renewal, such as representatives of local shops or community facilities. The resident steering group should be the first point of contact for the lead project partner and project developers.
6. **Employ an Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor (ITLA).** These are now commonplace in UK estate renewal schemes and will be explained in more detail below. An independent tenant advisor can provide residents with advice and advocacy support and will work as an intermediary between tenants and the landlord. An independent tenant advisor helps build trust and a sense of shared understanding and support.
7. **Engagement based on clarity and appropriate detail.** Resident engagement in estate renewal is a journey and often a very long journey. The level of detail on which the consultation is based must be carefully considered to allow residents to be meaningfully involved while ensuring engagement is driven by the lead project partner (the council or housing association) and their professional team.
8. **Integrate resident engagement with the planning strategy.** Effective engagement must be fully integrated with the planning or development approval process. Engagement for the planning process will need to consider the views of both the directly affected residents and the wider community and organisational stakeholders. It is essential that planning officers and planning consultants are fully attuned to the engagement process to date and should be fully informed of consultation with the community. Community consultation and any other processes, such as social impact assessment, should not be a stand-alone tick-box exercise.

9. **Avoid tokenistic consultation.** Engagement must be meaningful and must inform the design process and planning strategy. There are numerous examples in the UK of estate residents running sophisticated campaigns opposing estate renewal projects, often with the involvement of national print and electronic media. This inevitably leads to unexpected costs and delays along with reputational damage to both the lead partners and developers. Open, inclusive and responsive engagement can avoid such opposition and minimise such risks.
10. **Communicate the benefits case.** When done properly, estate renewal will yield multiple benefits for the community. The engagement strategy should not only focus on mitigating risks and problem solving. It should also effectively communicate the benefits case. Avoid viewing the estate renewal project through a narrow 'property benefits' lens.

Adapted from: Lichfields 2021; and the author's experience with the Alton Estate Regeneration Project in London.

Two of the ground rules for effective resident engagement will be explained in more detail as they have become critical aspects of the consultation process in many UK estate renewal schemes. These are the Independent Tenant and Leaseholder Advisor and the Housing Needs Assessment.

Many councils and housing associations engage the services of an independent advisor or advisors to support tenants and other residents (usually leaseholders) during the process of estate renewal. It is important to state the independent advisors are fully independent from the project lead organisation.

Though the council or housing association (in their role as social housing landlords) will formally engage the advisors and provide finance for their fees, the advisors are answerable to the residents only. This usually occurs through the resident steering group. As stated in the Mayor of London's guidance (2018a), the resident steering group should have the power to deselect the independent advisor if it is unhappy with the advice or support given.

The role of an independent resident advisor or advisors should not be underestimated. They can ensure that all voices are appropriately heard and listened to. They can also ensure that those who support the estate renewal as well as those who have misgivings about it are equally considered. Some key aspects of independent resident advisors are shown in the box and are based on the author's direct experience in estate renewal in London.

Good Practice Concept 4 – Independent tenant/resident advisors

The independent resident advisor role:

- Provide clear, unbiased information about how transfer/redevelopment options may affect residents and their homes.
- Work with residents to ensure they are fully engaged with the process and can understand and influence any proposals that are developed.
- Assist residents to make informed choices and to ensure that everyone is fully informed.
- Enable a collaborative approach between the council and the resident steering group on forming and assessing the estate renewal development options

- Ensure the right information flows from the council to the residents and that this is in a form that is readily understood – including in community languages.
- Ensure that interpreters in community languages are readily available.
- Respond to concerns as they arise and to advocate on behalf of individual tenants and residents.

The tasks and activities of an independent resident advisor:

- Meet regularly with the resident steering group in a resident led process.
- Develop a training and mentoring program for the resident steering group members.
- Build trust and effective ways of communicating and working with the resident steering group.
- Ensure that there is agreement on the process between the council and the resident steering group.
- Get to know the residents personally through door-knocking and home visits to explain the process.
- Develop a Resident's Charter as a clear statement about how the estate renewal should proceed.
- Provide independent advice to residents on aspects of the Landlord Offer in any resident ballot.
- Provide advocacy to individual residents regarding their legal rights to rehousing and the compensation legally required to be paid.
- Hold drop-in community information sessions.
- Distribute introductory flyers, regular newsletters and posters.
- Launch social media, email service and freephone.
- Generally, to trouble-shoot and resolve any problems as they arise on behalf of the residents.

Adapted the author's experience with the Imperial Wharf Estate Regeneration Scheme for Homes for Haringey.

The next box outlines the housing needs assessment process as undertaken in UK estate renewal projects. Sometimes this may be referred to as a rehousing plan. It is important to distinguish the housing needs assessment with statistical analyses prepared for social baseline studies, social impact assessments, social outcomes reports, or social sustainability plans. The most important difference is that a housing needs assessment is focussed on the particular circumstances of tenants and residents directly affected by the estate renewal scheme. This usually means that their properties will be demolished or in some instances refurbished. But in all cases, they will be required to move from their existing home. In order to do this, a housing needs assessment will involve detailed one-to-one interviews with every directly affected resident or tenant.

Some key aspects of housing needs assessments are shown in the following box and are based on the author's direct experience in estate renewal in London as well as various guidance publications.

Good Practice Concept 5 – Housing needs assessments

Key principles:

- Understand that the housing needs assessment may be the first in-depth conversation with directly affected residents – they will always have questions to ask.
- Establish the principles of commitment to existing residents including rehousing and addressing local housing need.
- Set out a clear process and program for the estate renewal and timescales for delivery.

The method for the housing needs assessment:

- Engage capable and sensitive interviewers to conduct the individual discussions with residents.
- Aim to interview all the residents who may be directly affected by the estate renewal with one questionnaire completed per household.
- Prepare an open-ended style questionnaire with a comprehensive set of issues to cover the physical aspects of the current property, current tenure, the household's composition and requirements, ages of any children, adult dependents, desired attributes of the new property, income and work status.
- Allow sufficient opportunity for the household head/respondent to raise any special circumstances.
- Identify any residents or households who will need special assistance to address their current needs (for example, households with significant over-crowding).
- Clearly explain to the resident the rehousing commitments and the delivery timescales for the estate renewal.
- Come to the assessment with the perspective that every household's needs are different and unique. Avoid the temptation to categorise households.
- Update the housing needs survey as the project proceeds – but at minimum on an annual basis.

Status of the housing needs assessment:

- The housing needs assessment will be the foundation document for the estate renewal's rehousing plan.
- In the context of a one move policy, the assessment will inform the project's phasing plan. If a phasing plan is specified for the developer procurement procedure, then a summary document will need to be issued to bidders to demonstrate their capability in this area.

Adapted the author's experience with the Alton Estate Regeneration Project for Wandsworth Council.

Resident charters are now commonplace in UK estate renewal. An example of a residents' charter is shown in the following box. Essentially, a residents' charter represents a formal commitment to existing residents of the estate from all the parties involved in an estate renewal project. Their content will vary but they must always include clear commitments on rehousing existing residents.

Short charters that can easily fit on a single page or poster are better than lengthy shopping lists. Placing the most significant design commitments in the residents' charter is an important good practice and these will vary from project to project. Wandsworth Council's one move rehousing policy commitment shown under Theme 1, above, is another example of a residents' charter.⁴

Good Practice Concept 6 – A Residents' Charter with clear design commitments

Circle Housing Merton Priory and Merton Council's 10 Commitments:

1. Circle Housing Merton Priory will consult with residents, consider their interests at all times, and address concerns fairly.
2. Current homeowners will be entitled to at least the market value of their home should they wish to take the option to sell their home to Circle Housing Merton Priory.
3. Current tenants will be entitled to be rehoused in a new home of appropriate size considering the number of people in the household.
4. Existing Circle Housing Merton Priory tenants will keep all their rights and have the same tenancy agreement, including rent levels, in the new neighbourhood as they do now.
5. All new properties will be more energy efficient and easier to heat than existing properties, helping to keep down residents' fuel bills.
6. Circle Housing Merton Priory will keep disruption to a minimum and will do all it can to ensure residents only move once if it is necessary to house them temporarily while their new home is being built.
7. Circle Housing Merton Priory will offer extra help and support for older people and/or disabled residents throughout the regeneration works.
8. Circle Housing Merton Priory will continue to maintain the homes of residents across the three neighbourhoods throughout the planning process until regeneration starts, including ensuring a high quality responsive repairs service.
9. Any growth in the number of homes will be in accordance with the Council's Development Plan so that it is considered, responsible and suitable for the area.
10. As a not for profit organisation, Circle Housing Merton Priory will not profit from any regeneration and will use any surplus to provide more housing or improve existing neighbourhoods.

From: HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP 2016. Merton Council is in South London.

Unsurprisingly, there has been a great deal of focus on what makes good or effective resident engagement in estate renewal guides in the UK. The four good practice concepts highlighted under this theme are not the only exemplars. The over-riding issue is to promote full and transparent engagement with residents from the outset and throughout the lifetime of the project. This will entail doing different things at different stages of the project. Above all the message is not to assume a one size fits all approach will ever be appropriate or effective.

⁴ Wandsworth Council (2016b) also published a companion rehousing commitment policy for resident leaseholders and freeholders who had purchased their home under the UK Government's Right to Buy policy.

Theme 3: Tenure mix and re-provision of social and affordable housing

Key documents:

- UK Government 2016a, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Executive Summary*.
- Mayor of London 2018a, *Better Homes for Local People: The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*.
- Mayor of London 2021, *The London Plan 2021: The Spatial Development Plan for Greater London*.
- Levitt, D. 2010, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice*.
- Levitt, D. and McCafferty, J. 2019, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice, 2nd Edition*.
- McCullough, B. 2019, 'Tenure and sustainable communities', in D. Levitt and J. McCafferty, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice*.
- NHBC Foundation 2015, *Tenure Integration in Housing Developments: A Literature Review*.

In developing *The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration* (Mayor of London 2018a), a series of resident meetings were held in the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Hackney, and Lewisham. Residents were asked what they considered the most important issues in estate regeneration schemes.

The three most popular responses were: firstly, to provide more affordable housing, secondly to build homes that are better suited to residents' needs, and finally to provide better community facilities. The third response included improving the quality of the local environment, a better public realm, and provision of social infrastructure (such as schools, parks, and community centres).

The future tenure mix of the estate renewal proposals can be one of the most contentious aspects of these schemes. In London, clear direction is provided in the London Plan. Extracts of the relevant London Plan 2021 policies are shown in the following box.

The London Plan 2021 – Extracts of key housing policies

Policy H4 - Delivering affordable housing

The strategic target is for 50 per cent of all new homes delivered across London to be genuinely affordable. Specific measures to achieve this aim include:

All affordable housing providers with agreements with the Mayor delivering at least 50 per cent affordable housing across their development programme, and 60 per cent in the case of strategic partners.

Public sector land delivering at least 50 per cent affordable housing on each site and public sector landowners with agreements with the Mayor delivering at least 50 per cent affordable housing across their portfolio.

Affordable housing should be provided on site. Affordable housing must only be provided off-site or as a cash in lieu contribution in exceptional circumstances.

Policy H6 - Affordable housing tenure

The following split of affordable products should be applied to residential development:

- 1) A minimum of 30 per cent low-cost rented homes, as either London Affordable Rent or Social Rent, allocated according to need and for Londoners on low incomes.
- 2) A minimum of 30 per cent intermediate products which meet the definition of genuinely affordable housing, including London Living Rent and London Shared ownership.
- 3) The remaining 40 per cent to be determined by the borough as low-cost rented homes or intermediate products (defined in Part A1 and Part A2) based on identified need.

From: Mayor of London 2021.

Outside London, similar policies relating to the quantum of affordable housing and the tenure split are specified in the local plans of the relevant local planning authority. For any given development, the precise affordable housing quantum and the tenure split will be informed by planning policies and the initial feasibility or viability assessments of the scheme. The tenure split will usually be a mix of social and affordable rent, intermediate tenures such as affordable build-to-rent and shared equity/shared ownership tenures, standard build-to-rent, private rent, and owner occupation.

The central issue for any estate renewal scheme will be the number of existing properties to be re-provided in the new development. This is not merely a numbers issue and should focus on floorspace as the key metric. The Mayor of London's guidance (2018a) states: 'to ensure that new homes of appropriate sizes are provided, replacement of affordable homes during estate regeneration should be on the basis of floorspace, rather than number of units'.

This approach has the additional benefit of allowing housing authorities to specify a more appropriate bedroom size mix in the new scheme. If an estate has a high proportion of one bedroom units, some of these may be replaced with two and three bedroom units. Any changes to the mix of social housing homes on the new estate must also accord with the requirements of the housing needs assessment in rehousing the existing tenants. Obviously, it is good practice for this change of mix to be incorporated into the on-going resident engagement process.

Two issues that impact on scheme design will be considered. These are flexible tenures and tenure neutral design. The starting point of flexible tenure development is based on two observations.

Firstly, owner occupiers tend to under-occupy the spaces they live in – they have more space than they really need. By contrast, in social and affordable rental housing, tenants are allocated space according to their current household size. If they have more children or need to look after adult dependents in their home, they will be over-occupying. A housing needs assessment would state they are in over-crowded conditions. It is these households who are often most supportive of estate renewal as it holds out the prospect of having a home better suited to their housing requirements.

The second observation is that in many areas of older privately owned housing stock, it is increasingly difficult to know the background or income level of the occupants by merely looking at them. This may be more a feature of London and the larger UK cities than of Australian cities. But the general implication is that it is possible to design new homes in a flexible manner so that they can accommodate different lifestyle and household requirements. This is also the case for incorporating universal design principles into new housing developments.

Tenure integration is now a stated objective with many estate renewal schemes in the UK. But the approach taken needs careful consideration about how different management structures for various tenure types will be impacted. Some private for sale developers have claimed in the past that tenure integration reduces sales valuations. This has been refuted in a number of studies but most notably in a review of the literature by the NHBC Foundation (2015).⁵

Some considerations for tenure integration, flexible tenures and typologies are shown in the following box and are drawn from UK architecture practices with direct experience of estate renewal.

Good Practice Concept 7 – Integration, flexible tenures and typologies

Considerations for good practice:

- Aim to include mixed and better integrated tenures in all estate renewal schemes.
- The style of the private for sale component of the development is likely to determine the design of the whole scheme but should not preclude good design for other tenures.
- Tenure integration can take a number of forms: fine grain or pepper-potting; segmented or clustered in separate cores with multiple tenures present in one block or complex. Some tenure models such as build-to-rent present challenges to integration due to their specific management and rent models.
- Consider a mix of housing typologies in order to provide variety and different lifestyle options.
- Mixing typologies will increase densities without the overall impression of over-development: two and three storey terraces, semi-detached housing, maisonettes, and mid-rise apartment blocks.
- Include specific typologies for distinct user groups as appropriate: older persons / sheltered housing, accessible housing, student apartments.
- Consider increasing the number of affordable homes as part of an estate renewal scheme by building at slightly higher densities where appropriate. Minor increases in density can improve scheme viability.
- Adopt local lettings policies for new affordable homes for rent to help ensure that local people benefit from the additional homes being built.

From: Levitt 2010; Levitt & McCafferty 2019; McCullough 2019; Mayor of London 2018a.

⁵ NHBC is the UK's leading provider of warranty and insurance for new homes. The NHBC Foundation provides technical advice and guidance to designers and the house building industry.

Tenure neutral housing design is now a touchstone of UK estate renewal strategies.⁶ Tenure neutral generally means that visible or external differences between tenures are eliminated. This does not necessarily imply a specific integration strategy – such as ‘pepper-potting’. Different tenures may still be distributed in discrete blocks. The key point is that the tenure status should not be discernible from the external features of the building. This should apply across the private for sale element and the social housing element in the scheme.

Some considerations for tenure neutral housing design are shown in the following box and are drawn from UK architecture practices with direct experience of estate renewal. A particularly useful reference is McCullough (2019).

Good Practice Concept 8 – Tenure neutral design

A working definition:

Tenure neutral housing design should aim at eliminating social distinction and stigma by ensuring that there is no discernible difference in external design and external quality between housing tenures across an estate renewal scheme. In particular, it should not be possible to distinguish between the social rent properties and private for sale properties on the estate.

Considerations for good practice:

- Tenure neutral housing design should be treated as an invaluable tool to make tenures integrate seamlessly rather than as a goal in itself.
- Take a place-making approach which creates areas of character across the estate.
- Consider external materials, external facades, a common external design palette, integrated community/public art features across tenures.
- Avoid obvious ‘give-away’ differences in design – such as larger windows or more extensive balconies for private sale homes.
- Front garden areas may lead to tenure being ‘revealed’ by the occupants’ use of the space.
- Cores and common areas will need careful consideration and they need to be handled in different ways that reflect the ability to pay of respective residents.
- Use external quality materials for internal cores that are more tenure neutral.
- Be realistic about the need for separate entrances, different management regimes and the affordability of shared facilities – poor decisions will compromise tenure neutrality over time.
- A particular issue in UK estate renewal has been the creation of so-called poor doors. This is where the affordable housing entrances are located in the least desirable part of the site, whereas the private for sale entrances are in the best locations.
- Adopt a whole of estate design strategy so that the entire estate renewal benefits from tenure neutral principles.
- Test a potential developer partner’s capability and experience to deliver a true tenure neutral scheme in procurement. This should be done at an early stage of the procurement process.

From: McCullough 2019; Levitt & McCafferty 2019; HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, & PRP 2016.

⁶ In some older guidance documents in the UK, the expression ‘tenure blind’ development is used.

Theme 4: Improving design and energy efficiency

Key documents:

- UK Government 2016a, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Executive Summary*.
- UK Government 2016d, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Good Practice Guide - Part 3: Design and Quality Checklist*.
- Mayor of London 2018a, *Better Homes for Local People: The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*.
- Fiehn, R. Buchanan, K., and Haward, M. 2023, *Collective Action! The Power of Collaboration and Co-Design In Architecture*, Royal Institute of British Architects, London.
- HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP 2016, *Altered Estates: How to Reconcile Competing Interests in Estate Regeneration*, jointly published by HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP, London.
- HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP 2022, *Altered Estates 2: How to Address Changing Priorities in Estate Regeneration*, jointly published by HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, and PRP, London.
- Levitt, D. 2010, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice*.
- Levitt, D. and McCafferty, J. 2019, *The Housing Design Handbook: A Guide to Good Practice, 2nd Edition*.
- McLaughlin, G. 2015, *Estate Regeneration Sourcebook*.
- New London Architecture 2019, *Public Housing: A London Renaissance*.

Design issues in UK estate renewal cover a large field. There are useful guides and architectural handbooks that have application to estate renewal in Australia. The most prominent are given in the list of key documents (see Architect design guides).

Before looking at what principles constitute good design, it is useful to consider what architects Levitt and McCafferty (2019) identify as the ultimate goal which is the creation of a 'sense of place'. Taken from the perspective of integration of tenures and tenure neutral design, there is a need to consider the estate renewal as a whole – rather than simply to focus on individual buildings. Levitt (2010) states that 'a sense of place exists when residents have a permanent sense of belonging to somewhere of value'. This can be an entire neighbourhood or part of a neighbourhood. The main feature is that the place is esteemed by residents.

Peters (2015) makes a significant observation from her direct experience of numerous estate renewal schemes. The quality of the places that are created is very much dependent on the organisations that make them – skills, resources, capability of staff, management processes and corporate knowledge. In the UK since around the mid-2000s, the quality of new housing has substantially improved as architects have refined their approaches and a body of knowledge has been integrated into client organisations, developers and house builders, and professional teams.

This leads to another important consideration. For any program of physical regeneration to be successful, it needs to have real, tangible benefits for existing residents and the wider community (HTA, Levitt Bernstein, Pollard Thomas Edwards, & PRP 2016). From the author's own experience of estate renewal in London, some of the benefits most valued by tenants and residents are having

homes that are not over-crowded and that meet their housing needs, having an energy efficient home that saves on energy bills, and having improved community facilities and parks close at hand.

Some UK scheme project leads in the early options phases of an estate renewal take residents on tours of completed schemes. Residents have a chance to talk to rehoused households to understand what they value in their new homes. Almost always the energy efficiency of the new homes is mentioned with the greatly reduced energy bills. These costs savings are usually significant.

With the place-making focus of estate renewal and the challenges of regenerating an existing urban area in mind, some elements of good design can be summarised from the real life practice of architects and designers. Different housing developments will have different drivers. Designing a build-to-rent scheme can be quite different from designing a housing scheme for private sale. Likewise integrated mixed tenure estate renewal calls for an emphasis on specific design elements.

Some of the elements of good design in estate renewal are shown in the following box. For further details and case studies see the publications listed above under Theme 4.

Good Practice Concept 9 – Elements of good design

Considerations for good practice:

- Adopt **place-making strategies** as a starting point for good design. See the estate renewal as a whole and not simply a series of discrete construction projects.
- Mix **combinations of land use activities** on the same site (living, working, trading, and leisure). This should be considered especially where densities are increased.
- **Design apartments** so that they can become a home of choice for family living by focussing on internal layout, shared circulation spaces (including entrances and common facilities), and aspect/orientation. Avoid the driver to squeeze as many people as possible into smaller space.
- Consider **maximising dual aspect** homes for medium and high density homes so that occupants can take advantage of through ventilation, sun at different times of the day, and different views.
- **Design balconies** so that the whole family can use it for meals and ensure balconies have sunlight at some time of the day.
- **Non-family apartments** may have different requirements, such as an economical use of space through open floor plans and having a bathroom accessible from the bedroom.
- Recognise **changing lifestyles** and household needs by ensuring that the home has a range of **storage options** – within the home, in secure common areas at ground level, storage for cycles, and also an internal utility room.
- Carefully consider **security issues** for internal corridors and also external gallery access. This will be an issue there are long corridors from a lift or staircase.
- Poorly designed **entrances from the street** can allow intruders to enter the building. Carefully consider a range of options such as two sets of entrance doors to deter tail-gating. Avoid simple fob entry systems that often break-down exposing the building's security.

- Some new developments will permit some residents to have their own **private open space**. Others may be designed with internal courtyards or gardens with access for all residents. Consider on-going environmental, privacy and maintenance issues.
- Car ownership and **car parking** provision can be a vexed issue for new estate renewal schemes. Making the right decisions about parking is a critical design issue that needs realistic assessment.
- Consider whether a detailed **design code** should be adopted for the entire estate renewal scheme. The NSW Apartment Design Guide will be a useful starting point. Test a potential developer partner's capability and experience with design codes during procurement. This will influence the selection of the architectural design team that developer partners put forward.

From: Levitt 2010; Levitt & McCafferty 2019; McLaughlin 2015.

Co-design processes are now commonplace in many fields of endeavour. They are used in product design, finding ways to improve government services, and for a vast array of other purposes. Co-design essentially refers to a process for finding the best solutions to sometimes complex problems. The first stage involves understanding and clearly defining the issue or task. The next stage involves developing a range of solutions that might fit the issue or task. The final task is testing these solutions and identifying the best fit. The process is cyclical and means that participants to a co-design process can go back and redefine the issue or seek to discover other solutions.

Processes similar to co-design have been used since around the 1960s to involve communities or prospective occupiers in design of new neighbourhoods or new housing. This was often as part of the community architecture movement. Co-design is usually conducted through a workshop format with practical exercises to test design ideas. Some neighbourhood planning processes involve residents leading walks around housing estates to identify to the architectural team issues around security, problem locations, poor design and also what works well. Much of this has been informed by Newman's seminal study of large public housing estates in the USA called *Defensible Space* (Newman 1972).

Co-design has been used for specific purposes in UK estate renewal. Often co-design is used to engage specific user groups, such as older women or over-55 year olds. This is one of the most effective tools to ensure housing for specific groups really does meet their needs. Nuances and special requirements can be identified and incorporated into the design brief. The author participated in a co-design process with the project architects and existing tenants to develop a design brief for the upgrade of heritage listed sheltered housing for over-55 year old tenants on the Alton Estate in Wandsworth, London.

Some of the elements of good practice co-design processes in estate renewal are shown in the following box. For a contemporary guide to co-design in architecture, see the Royal Institute of British Architects' publication *Collective Action! The Power of Collaboration and Co-Design In Architecture* (Fiehn, Buchanan, & Haward 2023).

Good Practice Concept 10 – Co-design

Considerations for good practice:

- Ensure that all participants can come to the co-design workshops. Take time to explain to individual participants in advance what the purpose of the workshops are and what to expect on the day. Developing one-to-one relationships early on ensures a better outcome.
- Take time to fully prepare for the co-design workshops and ensure key design team members are present.
- Develop a clear brief at the first workshop for how the workshops will be run and what is possible to be achieved through the process.
- The architectural team should be specific about what inputs they need from residents, but also plan for open sessions where all ideas are welcome.
- Provide feedback in written form to participants at every stage of the co-design process.
- Consideration should be given to funding a ‘project enabler’ to work directly with the residents and to ensure that the outcomes feed-in to subsequent design and procurement processes.
- The architectural team will need to take time for a co-design process to be effective. Participants need time between workshops to think, consider information, and discuss ideas with other residents.
- Don’t rush the process. A good architectural co-design process may take around six months.
- At the conclusion of the co-design process, a detailed project brief should be produced with illustrative designs and models if helpful.
- Be clear with the participants what the next project stages are and how the outcomes of the co-design process will inform the detailed project design and planning permission or development approval stages.

From: Hill 2019; Fiehn, Buchanan, & Haward 2023; and the author’s experience with the Alton Estate Regeneration Project.

As mentioned above, energy efficient new homes are frequently mentioned as a major benefit of estate renewal by the new occupants themselves. The following box on energy efficiency is not a technical check-list. It is more focussed on how to involve residents in decisions about the energy efficiency of their new homes and ways to make aspects of energy efficient design more flexible.

Good Practice Concept 11 – Energy efficiency

Considerations for good practice:

- Start with the site. Avoid a tick-box approach to energy efficiency and consider issues of orientation, density of the site, location of buildings, and the integration of open spaces.
- Overheating is a prevalent issue with apartments in Australia. Good thermal comfort is rarely achieved by chance. Install flexible solutions that occupants are able to control.
- Optimal solar orientation cannot always be achieved in schemes with a large number of new homes, whatever the density. Consider other measures, such as limiting the number of windows that have floor to ceiling glass, that will affect excess heat loss or gain.

- Sustainability rating tools are useful for certification purposes but should not be an end in themselves. An additional layer of design consideration, client leadership, and resident engagement is required.
- Focus on reducing energy demand through design measure first before the inclusion of the latest new technologies.
- Regular monitoring the performance of new homes through post-occupancy surveys of new residents should not stop at handover. The most effective resident engagement follows the entire project cycle – from engaging with residents in the planning and design stage, to involving residents at handover, and monitoring performance long after completion.
- The most useful data source will be actual cost and usage information from the occupants’ own energy bills.
- Last but not least, do not assume that new homes meet resident needs just because they are lived in.

From: Murray 2019; Levitt & McCafferty 2019.

The final good practice concept in this section is often either over-looked or poorly understood – *cost in use*. Though there are important cross-overs with whole-of-life costing, cost in use should in practice be much broader in scope. Comparable whole-of-life costs of specific building types and elements of buildings can often be difficult to find. This can be a real challenge for prospective cost in life analysis.

In very general terms, there are two types of developers. Firstly, the typical buy to sell developer is really only concerned with the purchase price to the potential buyer. Issues of long term maintenance are assumed to be the responsibility of the buyer and, in multi-unit developments, the body corporate.

Social housing authorities, in the UK context councils or housing associations, will have to take a longer view about cyclical and long term maintenance costs. This long view of cost in use is now a central principle for the design and construction of build-to-rent schemes. Some of the insights about cost in use come from the experience of build-to-rent designers and operators.

The following box presents some very general considerations for addressing cost in use in estate renewal.

Good Practice Concept 12 – Cost in use

Considerations for good practice:

- For estate renewal projects comprising social rental housing or affordable rental housing, involvement of the client organisation (public housing authority or housing association) is essential from the start of the design process. This may necessitate considerable input from many levels of the client organisation.
- Issues around cyclical and periodic maintenance need to be fully understood in the early design stages. However, many types of major maintenance works are not easily predictable in advance, such as roof or window replacements.

- Understand the particular challenges facing public sector and not-for-profit housing organisations as long term asset holders.
- A key lesson from build-to-rent developers and operators in the USA and UK is the selection of materials, internal fittings and other aspects of common areas that can quickly and easily be replaced. Durability, cost and ease of replacement are the main attributes to focus on.
- Minimise building running costs and look for design ingenuity to reduce service charge liabilities. This goes beyond energy and cleaning costs. Consider the cost of maintaining external spaces, car parks, landscaping, and shared outdoor spaces. Avoid tricky detailing that may be highly costly to repair.
- Commission regular post-occupancy evaluations after completion to better understand how the building and individual homes perform in the real world.

From Barnes 2019.

Theme 5: Understanding the renewal process from start to finish

Key documents:

- UK Government 2016b, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Good Practice Guide - Part 1*.
- UK Government 2016c, *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Good Practice Guide - Part 2*.
- Mayor of London 2013, *London Development Panel Handbook: Guidance for Users*, Greater London Authority, London.
- Mayor of London 2019, *London Development Panel 2 Handbook: Guidance for Users*, Greater London Authority, London.
- Blackman, V., Grieveson, K., and McCullough, B. 2017, *Thinking Ahead: Estate Regeneration – What You Need to Ask and When*.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2016, *Estate Regeneration: Briefing for Expert Panel*.
- Lichfields 2021, *Great Estates: Planning for Estate Regeneration in London*.
- London First 2017, *Estate Regeneration: More and Better Homes for London*, London First, London.
- McLaughlin, G. 2015, *Estate Regeneration Sourcebook*.
- Trowers & Hamblins 2019, *Estate Regeneration Made Easy*.

Estate renewal is a complex and often lengthy process. Furthermore, plans that appear settled at the start of an estate renewal scheme can and do change. Sometimes there are multiple changes of direction. This can have an exhausting and debilitating feel for those directly affected by estate renewal – the residents and tenants.

A somewhat overlooked issue is understanding the process. The UK Government in *Estate Regeneration National Strategy Good Practice Guide - Part 2* (2016c) has helpfully produced an activity diagram on a single page. This is reproduced in Appendix A at the end of the briefing paper.

This activity diagram may not be the same for all schemes, but the diagram can be a useful check on aspects of the renewal program that may not be immediately visible to residents and other

stakeholders. In particular, the activity diagram displays how resident engagement links to other processes and stages.

The following box headlines the key generic elements in an estate renewal program. The contents of this box follow the UK Government's activity diagram. It is probably a good idea for every estate renewal project to produce an activity diagram that is specific to the project. This can be of immense assistance to residents and can guide the engagement process in an orderly way. The partnering and procurement elements of the activity diagram will be discussed more fully in the next two good practice concepts.

Good Practice Concept 13 – Understanding the process

Understanding the timeline:

- **Preparation stage:** Setting up an initial feasibility.
- **Planning stage:** Options appraisal and plan development.
- **Delivery stage:** Implementation of development / construction.
- **Occupation stage:** Completion of development to full occupation of the estate.

Understanding the key elements:

- **Partners:** Establishing a partnership model/joint venture, setting objectives, clarifying approval/sign-off procedures, appointing a professional team, conduct a housing needs assessment, procurement of a delivery partner or partners.
- **Resident engagement:** Initial resident engagement, agree resident engagement strategy or engagement framework, demonstrate resident support (ballot or surveys), prepare landlord/resident offer, publish a resident charter, employ independent resident/tenant advisor, engage residents in options appraisal and design, establish community benefits, post occupancy evaluations.
- **Design/construct/manage:** Initial estate conditions assessment, initial high level feasibility, defining brief, options appraisal and business case, plan preparation, masterplanning, prepare development/planning application, prepare detailed design, agree detailed phasing plan, post completion, on-going estate management strategy and plan.
- **Finance:** Initial high level feasibility, full financial appraisal, prepare business plan, finance and delivery plan for entire scheme, commence land assembly if required, procure construction contracts.
- **Planning:** Initial planning policy review, develop planning strategy, prepare and submit amendments to planning policy/rezoning, commence development/planning application process by stages, satisfy planning conditions by phases, finalise planning procedures on completion.
- **Public and community services:** Consider setting up a multi-agency partnership for larger schemes, align agency planning and delivery processes, undertake social impact assessments/social infrastructure assessments, prepare or review agency delivery plans.

From: UK Government 2016b, 2016c.

Before the major changes to public housing in the UK that occurred in the 1980s, building and upgrading of social housing estates was the preserve of local councils who often had their own dedicated direct labour departments. Funding models for public housing changed in the 1980s and alongside this housing associations became much bigger players in social and affordable housing provision. This was mainly the result of substantial stock transfers from local councils many of whom relinquished any role in directly housing their residents.

In the light of these structural changes, partnership models are a major consideration in initiating an estate renewal project. Local councils in the UK still have a major role to play. Firstly, they may still be the housing authority. Even if they do not manage the housing directly, the local council will probably have a direct role as the local planning authority and as the representative of the community. Different types of organisation now lead estate renewal schemes in the UK. The most prominent of these are housing associations, some of which have significant programs of estate renewal on their own properties.

The lead estate renewal partner will vary depending on a range of factors, such as who owns the estate, the scale of the project, and the aims of the regeneration. Even where the local council is the landlord and the underlying freehold owner of the estate, the council may decide to partner with a housing association to jointly lead the estate renewal project. However, in all cases, the local council's views about the estate renewal scheme will be central to any given project. The role and powers of local councils in Australia are very different to those in the UK. However, as representatives of the local community they should have a significant voice in estate renewal and not just as the local plan-making authority.

All projects will require a lead developer or several developers to manage the construction of the project. While direct development models are not unknown for local authority estate regeneration schemes, particularly for infill development, generally a lead partner's decision to procure a developer partner is as much about risk management as about the specific capabilities and experience of the developer partner. Partnering with the private sector also releases significant investment opportunities that may not be available with a solely public sector funded scheme.

Integrated partnering models are currently the preferred way of partnering with the private sector. This model means there is a direct link between a single responsible private sector organisation and the public sector, council or housing association lead.

The comprehensive regeneration of the Heygate Estate in South London is a partnership between Southwark Council and Lendlease. The renewal project is called Elephant Park. This integrated model means that Lendlease fulfil the roles of development manager, project manager, principal contractor and estate manager at Elephant Park. A similar role is being played by Taylor Wimpey in the regeneration of the Winstanley York Road Estates in South West London. Here Wandsworth Council have entered into a joint venture agreement with Taylor Wimpey for an estate renewal project for the delivery of 2500 new homes.

The following box lists the main areas for responsibility of a delivery partner under the integrated model of partnering. This list has been informed by the Mayor of London's (2013, 2019) London Development Panel. This is a pre-qualified procurement panel of developers and large housing associations who can undertake a variety of roles in residential development on behalf of public

sector bodies in London. It is important to point out that consultation, communication and negotiation with residents and stakeholders will always be a joint role between the lead partner organisation (local council or housing association) and the delivery partner.

Good Practice Concept 14 – Integrated partnering model

The main areas of responsibility of the delivery partner using the integrated model:

- Provide development management services as required to enable delivery of the scheme.
- Consultation, communication and negotiation with residents, adjoining landowners, and other stakeholders – though this will be a joint responsibility shared with the council or housing association.
- Assist with delivery of land assembly to enable delivery.
- Demolition, site remediation and enabling works to prepare the site.
- Secure development finance, including any public sector funding.
- Undertake the masterplanning, design and planning processes, including obtaining outline/detailed planning permission and all required consents.
- Negotiate, enter into and discharge Section 106 Agreements (similar to Voluntary Planning Agreements in NSW).
- Provision of social and affordable housing, including partnering with housing associations.
- Design and construction of supporting infrastructure.
- Conduct discussions with transport authorities and relevant stakeholders to enhance public transport provision.
- Commission construction phases and enter into appropriate construction contracts with phasing conforming to commitments around resident rehousing.
- Supply chain management, including commitments to social procurement (local labour schemes, women in construction schemes, use of local businesses in the supply chain) and environmental sustainability, including waste minimisation and materials reuse.
- Market and manage the sale of homes and leasing of other assets (retail, workspace).
- Maintenance and long term estate management.
- Deliver the redevelopment of the estate from start to finish.

From: Mayor of London 2013, 2019; London First 2017.

Poorly planned and managed public procurement processes are not uncommon. Inevitably they lead to additional expense and, in some cases, the selection of a development partner that is not the right fit for the estate renewal scheme. Good preparation can take time but, for projects that could be 15 year commitments, this is time well spent. The simple message is that a clear and properly resourced procurement strategy will more likely facilitate the successful delivery of an estate renewal scheme.

The following box lists six key considerations for an effective public procurement in estate renewal. Some of these insights come from *Estate Regeneration More and Better Homes for London*

published by London First (2017).⁷ These six considerations are also informed by the author's direct experience of leading two large developer procurements in the UK.

Good Practice Concept 15 – Setting the right framework with procurement and contract

The six key considerations in effective public procurement in estate renewal:

1. **Conduct soft market testing at the start.** This is an important tool for understanding the market to explore potential approaches to the estate renewal. As well as alerting the market to the potential opportunity, soft market testing can enable project leads to shape the scheme objectives and strategy for the procurement process.
2. **Undertake risk management early.** Risk management should be considered by the project lead prior to procurement. This enables an 'intelligent client' approach to be taken. It also can result in greater clarity and control over the final legal agreements – poorly understood project risk will lead to onerous legal clauses being incorporated into agreements.
3. **Provide meaningful and comprehensive information.** Ensure that information is clear and comprehensive to potential bidders. A comprehensive suite of site investigations and other studies that can be made available to bidders will avoid duplication and confusion later in the process.
4. **Clearly state what you require.** There is a temptation in public sector procurement processes to add open-ended 'innovation' questions. This approach can lead to bids that are difficult to compare. The project lead organisation should be in a position to state what it requires under all likely headings – such as social procurement and social benefit. If this is not immediately clear, commission social benefit or social value studies when conducting soft market testing.
5. **Put time into constructing robust scoring criteria.** Many large public procurement processes fail due to poorly structured scoring criteria. In particular, pay close attention to the balance of scoring criteria and weighting allocations used in relation to the quality of design versus those applied to financial criteria. Conduct dummy runs to ensure perverse outcomes are not embedded in the criteria.
6. **Find ways of introducing resident/tenant perspectives.** There are a number of tried and tested ways of ensuring tenant or resident views form part of the selection process for a developer partner. This can also include involvement in the soft market testing stage. Some ways this has been effectively done are having a resident representative on the evaluation panel or having an arm's length feedback process on final bids. Another method is to have final shortlisted bidders present their masterplanning and design solutions to the resident steering group or a wider workshop. Using some method of engaging residents in procurement helps to establish community support and a sense of involvement.

From: London First 2017; and the author's own experience of leading large scale developer procurements in the UK.

The final good practice concept relates to long term estate management. Many flow charts and activity maps of estate renewal miss this off the end of the process. But it is a critical consideration the needs to be addressed from the initial feasibility and business case stages. Long term estate

⁷ London First is an independent non-profit business organisation with similar aims to the Committee for Sydney.

management resonates with Theme 1 of this briefing paper – putting residents at the heart of estate renewal. They will be living on the estate long after the last contractor has left.

Long term estate management also resonates with Theme 4 and the ultimate goal of good design being the creation of a sense of place. Not only is this new place created at the conclusion of the estate renewal construction phase, the concept of a ‘place that gets better over time’ must be at the forefront of thinking about long term estate management (Levitt & McCafferty 2019). Cost in use (Good Practice Concept 12) is relevant from a technical perspective. But the over-arching principle is community stewardship.

Long term estate management has to address a number of fundamental issues. For land currently in public ownership a decision will be a required early in the feasibility and business case stages as to whether the long term leasehold (or freehold) interest will be retained by government. Retaining the long term leasehold interest will enable the land to revert to public ownership and control at a future date. Both Hackney Council and Wandsworth Council in London retain the freehold interest in the land, whether the new housing is private for sale or social and affordable tenures.

Estate management, as its name implies, is best carried out on a whole site basis and not sectioned off to a plethora of block by block private management arrangements. This may be challenging in the Australian context where such site wide management arrangements are rare. But to create a sustainable estate management platform, a long term management arrangement that addresses the whole site should be the ultimate objective. On larger schemes, transitional arrangements will be required as new homes reach completion and occupation on a phased basis prior to completion of the entire scheme.

Many estate renewal schemes in the UK are comprised of privately owned homes alongside social, affordable and intermediate tenure housing. In some situations, the council retains the estate management function. Sometimes this is carried out through a specialised management company. In these cases, there may be separate block service charges (similar to strata fees) and separate estate fee to cover maintenance of landscaping, the public domain and street lighting. Usually, there is an over-riding objective that service and estate charges are not overly burdensome to residents, whatever their tenure.

The following box lists six key considerations for a sustainable long term estate management strategy. Some of these insight derive from the author’s own experience of estate renewal in London.

Good Practice Concept 16 – Long term estate management

The six key considerations in developing a sustainable long term estate management plan:

1. **Legacy planning.** From the initiation of the project – during the initial estate assessment and high level feasibility analysis – consider long term estate management. The perspective should be that of legacy planning to create places and neighbourhoods that get better over time.
2. **Develop long term estate management options for the business case.** Long term estate management should form part of the scheme’s business case. Different options for whole of

site estate management should be considered and appraised. Long term cost and charging structures should be identified and tested in the business case.

3. **Understand cost structures and implications for service changes.** Existing residents will be concerned about increases to service charge payments and their own day-to-day cost of living. These concerns should be recognised early and managed sensitively. Information on service charges should be as clear and as accurate as possible. The direct benefits of improved housing quality on energy costs and major works expenditure should be clearly explained.
4. **Include long term estate management and maintenance issues in procurement.** Seek proposals for post-completion estate management in the procurement process for a developer partner. Response should cover cost apportionment, financial management, and practical operational issues.
5. **Address management cost issues during construction.** Consider any likely increased estate management costs that occur during the construction itself. It is important that residents are certain about who pays and how costs are apportioned between the lead partner (the housing authority), the developer, and individual resident households.
6. **Landscape and public realm enhancements.** Particularly with large scale estate renewal schemes, there are major enhancements in the quality of landscaping, shared communal facilities, and the public realm. Sometimes these take the form of extensive tree planting, new outdoor fixtures and garden areas. The associated additional maintenance costs will need to be fairly apportioned between the scheme partners and new residents.

From: Blackman, Grieveson, & McCullough 2017; and the author's own experience estate renewal in London.

Conclusions: Lessons from UK practice and experience

The purpose of this Shelter NSW Briefing Paper is to bring the experiences of estate renewal in the UK to a wider Australian audience of housing practitioners, urban planners, architects, public sector decisions makers, and above all the tenants and residents of estate renewal schemes.

The five themes would seem to have general applicability to all estate renewal schemes wherever they are undertaken. Putting the directly affected tenants at the heart of estate renewal should be adopted at the very start of any and every estate renewal scheme, large or small. The corollary of this is not to view estate renewal as simply a 'property job' with all the potentially negative implications that this approach may have for the people currently living on the estate.

The themes move from the foundational principle of Theme 1 to the on-going imperative of ensuring effective resident engagement throughout what may be a long and complex process. The over-riding message of Theme 2 is that standard consultation techniques may not be sufficient to achieve long term trust and buy-in.

Themes 3 through 5 are more focussed on design and delivery issues. The key message to keep in mind is architect David Levitt's important mantra of creating places that get better over time (Levitt 2010). Most of the good practice concepts in these three themes have dimensions where directly

affected residents can and should be involved. Places that get better over time need care and commitment to an integrated design process and an early recognition of the importance of stewardship in long term estate management.

The themes of this briefing paper are summarised in the following box.

One Move Only – A summary of themes and good practice concepts from UK estate renewal

Theme 1: Putting tenants at the heart of estate renewal

Good Practice Concept 1 – Resident ballots

Good Practice Concept 2 – One move policy.

Theme 2: Improving resident and tenant engagement

Good Practice Concept 3 – Ground rules for effective resident and tenant engagement

Good Practice Concept 4 – Independent tenant/resident advisors

Good Practice Concept 5 – Housing needs assessments

Good Practice Concept 6 – A Residents' Charter with clear design commitments.

Theme 3: Tenure mix and reprovizion of social and affordable housing

Good Practice Concept 7 – Integration, flexible tenures and typologies

Good Practice Concept 8 – Tenure neutral design.

Theme 4: Improving design and energy efficiency

Good Practice Concept 9 – Elements of good design

Good Practice Concept 10 – Co-design

Good Practice Concept 11 – Energy efficiency

Good Practice Concept 12 – Cost in use.

Theme 5: Understanding the renewal process from start to finish

Good Practice Concept 13 – Understanding the process

Good Practice Concept 14 – Integrated partnering model

Good Practice Concept 15 – Setting the right framework with procurement and contract

Good Practice Concept 16 – Long term estate management.

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Appendix A – UK Government Estate Regeneration National Strategy: Activity Map

