

NEW DEAL FOR COMMUNITIES: NATIONAL EVALUATION

SCOPING PHASE

**HOUSING AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT DOMAIN: A REVIEW OF THE
EVIDENCE BASE**

IAN COLE

KESIA REEVE

CENTRE FOR REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY

NOVEMBER 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of this evidence base review is to provide a summary of 'what works, where, when and in what circumstances' for the benefit of the NDC partnerships. It is not a comprehensive summary of all the pertinent issues and findings relevant to such a broad domain as housing and the physical environment. Instead, it is intended to provide some signposts to other sources of research and literature for policymakers and practitioners, to identify gaps in coverage and to comment on the robustness of the evaluations that have been undertaken so far.

A range of sources has been used in the review:

- evaluation of government programmes/initiatives;
- reports from housing organisations – eg Chartered Institute of Housing/Housing Corporation;
- research institutions/charities;
- academic research bodies;
- local housing agencies.

The form of this evidence varies considerably: from assessments of 'stand-alone' initiatives to broader programme/policy evaluation; from good practice guides to case study reviews; and from practitioner-centred appraisal to consumer surveys.

2. Quality of the Evidence

Generally, there are many examples of 'what works' - but specifying 'where, when and in what circumstances' is far more problematic. Many evaluations report that a particular initiative (often within a broader programme) was successful - but they are less forthcoming on *why* this success has been achieved. There is also a lack of baseline information to inform a judgement on what has 'worked'. In other case studies, the applicability of the experience to other contexts is open to debate.

Within broader evaluations of regeneration programmes, there is often a lack of evidence about specific housing measures within the package of initiatives. Often the emphasis is on responses to problems on estates rather than 'impact' per se. Evidence of long-term impact through longitudinal research is particularly scarce.

On the more positive side, there are examples of solid pieces of evaluation in housing, and there is certainly no shortage of 'good practice ideas' that might interest Partnerships. It should be noted, however, that many of the cases of 'good practice' have not been mediated by any forthright evaluation - therefore their quality is based more on assertion and judgement than demonstrable outcome-centred evidence. There is a clear need for a more rigorous approach to gauging 'what works' for housing initiatives in programmes for neighbourhood regeneration. The national evaluation of the NDC programme can make an important contribution to this task.

3. Gaps in the Evidence Base

Overall, there are several important gaps in the evidence base which make it difficult to establish the potential effectiveness of initiatives or to apply ‘solutions that work’ with confidence.

- There is insufficient coverage of the impact of local contexts and circumstances on the effectiveness of initiatives. Evaluations of concrete initiatives in areas often comment instructively on what did or did not work, but little attention is paid to wider issues - the context of the local housing market, the consequences for surrounding areas, the importance of the specific tenure mix, or range of property types. It is necessary to interpret or re-analyse broader evaluations of a topic, or to refer to the findings of more academic studies. On the other hand, the more policy oriented/evaluative evidence may point to what works, but not *why* it works. There is a need to bring these two sets of literature together across the full range of potential housing interventions.
- There is comparatively little known about strategies to deal with low demand, empty homes and property abandonment in the *private* sector, despite its prevalence in some sub- regions (and indeed NDC areas). Some of the more complex issues about improvement, demolition, compulsory purchase and dealing with anti-social behaviour have little prior evidence to refer to.
- The impact of area-based initiatives on the surrounding locality has received scant coverage. There are various suggestions that successful initiatives introduced in one area (for example, to deal with anti-social behaviour) can ‘displace’ problems elsewhere. Levels of resident satisfaction in a neighbourhood will inevitably be influenced by perceptions of the wider surrounding area. The issues of ‘spill-over’ and ‘displacement’ are well established themes in regeneration research – but the lack of firm evidence about these effects makes it difficult to comment on the wider ramifications of neighbourhood-focused initiatives.

4. Tackling Low Demand and Empty Homes

i) Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- It is unlikely that areas suffering chronic low demand, with high levels of empty or abandoned properties can be ‘turned around’ using a single approach. Improving the appearance and condition of properties without also tackling social and economic issues, improving management, or addressing the poor reputation of an area is unlikely to have a significant impact on the neighbourhood.
- Low demand is not so much a housing-specific issue but, increasingly, a neighbourhood-centred problem. People are choosing not to live in, or to leave, neighbourhoods rather than selecting properties *per se*.
- Partnerships need to understand the precise nature and underlying causes of low demand in their areas for appropriate strategies to be developed.
- Low demand is not tenure-specific. Unpopular housing is not concentrated solely in areas of social housing. Strategies for tackling low demand in the private sector raise

more complex problems for intervention, especially if compulsory purchase is involved.

ii) Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- There has been an increase in mixed tenure areas which is likely to continue. What is known about the impact of such schemes suggests that one should be cautious about anticipating too many positive changes in patterns of social interaction and local networks.
- Little attention has so far been paid to the impact of initiatives addressing low demand on surrounding areas. Conversely, the broader housing market will affect the capacity of neighbourhood-based initiatives to achieve change.
- There is a clear need for more evidence-based learning about tackling low demand in neighbourhoods with a predominance of private sector housing, and to examine cross-tenure effects – for example, through private landlords buying up and letting low value owner-occupied properties to ‘unpopular’ tenants displaced from the social sector.

5. Tackling Anti-social Behaviour

i) Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- 'Anti-social behaviour' covers a wide range of behaviours - from criminal activity and noise nuisance to neighbour disputes. Measures need to be clearly targeted with regard to the behaviour being tackled.
- A balanced strategy - between legal, design-led and management-led initiatives – is usually more effective than a single strand approach.
- There is a need for effective co-ordination between different services, professions and agencies; possibly codified through an estate contract/agreement.
- On allocations, 'negative' sanctions to exclude/evict 'difficult' tenants need to be balanced with positive measures to attract new households; flexible local lettings policies can offer benefits, but need to be complemented by other initiatives.
- A localised service base can aid preventative work, especially if accompanied by 'out-of-hours' provision. Flexibility is needed in adapting measures to local circumstances - such as property type, population turnover or level of community involvement.
- Concierge and similar schemes can be effective in reducing ASB originating from outside the block; in relatively problematic areas, intensive schemes are far more effective than dispersed schemes.
- There is a risk of 'displacement' - to elsewhere in the NDC area, or to adjacent neighbourhoods. Initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour in one area can simply displace the problems to neighbouring areas. For example, legal remedies to evict anti-social tenants can result in those tenants accommodating themselves in neighbouring areas, or in the private sector within the area.

ii) Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- There is a need for robust longitudinal evaluations that do not rely primarily on recorded crime statistics.
- It is important to assess contextual issues, outside factors, and other projects operating in the area which impact on the effectiveness of different anti-social behaviour initiatives.
- There is a need for broad-based methodologies that can encompass perpetrators, victims, witnesses and preventative agencies.
- The potential value of cross-domain work within the national evaluation of NDCs must be explored.
- It is important to track where possible displacement effects into adjacent neighbourhoods and to attempt to disentangle the impact of separate measures within a package of initiatives introduced to reduce ASB.

6. Housing Investment at Neighbourhood Level

i) Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- The success of large housing investment programmes may be dependent upon strong linkages with other areas such as crime prevention and employment.
- Housing investment alone is unlikely to 'turn around' estate decline and bring long-term changes. To promote sustainability, major investment programmes need to be integrated into wider strategies that encompass physical, management and social issues.
- On-going resident involvement is critical at every stage of a housing investment programme. Investment strategies also need to bear in mind the interests and aspirations of *potential* residents, not just existing households.

ii) Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- There is a need for longer term assessments of the impact of housing investment.
- More research is needed on the impact of investment on surrounding areas.
- Evidence is required to assess the differential impact of investment at a local level, taking into account local market conditions. The increasing variability of local markets makes it unlikely that the effects of investment will be similar from one neighbourhood to the next.
- It is difficult to isolate the impact of housing investment from accompanying initiatives, particularly where it takes place within regeneration programmes.

7. Housing Management

i) Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- Whilst localised housing management initiatives can be an important aspect in a portfolio of measures to improve a neighbourhood, they will have limited impact in areas in serious decline or where there is local housing market failure.
- Particular attention must be given to the management of multi-landlord estates. Variations in services, rents, and property standards can lead to resentment from and amongst tenants. Joint agreements are suggested as good practice.

ii) Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- Although there is virtually universal agreement that localised housing management can bring a wide range of benefits there is little concrete evidence to demonstrate this. Similarly, there is even less evidence which can adequately assess the costs of localised housing management, and therefore judge the cost effectiveness of this approach.
- Choice-based lettings policies are likely to have an impact in many areas in the next few years. However, this approach to allocations, and therefore evidence of its impact, is still in its infancy.
- The links between localised housing management and emerging forms of neighbourhood management require careful evaluation, to assess whether anticipated synergies are achieved in practice.

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of the evidence base review is to provide a summary of 'what works, where, when and in what circumstances' for the benefit of the NDC partnerships. The review does not pretend to be a comprehensive summary of all the pertinent issues and findings relevant to such a broad domain as housing and the physical environment. Instead, it is intended to provide some signposts to other sources of research and literature for policymakers and practitioners, to identify gaps in coverage and to comment on the robustness of the evaluations that have been undertaken so far. It is also shaped around the evidence directly relevant to neighbourhood-based regeneration programmes. Several topics, therefore, such as homelessness and housing finance, have generated a considerable body of literature, research and good practice guides, but they are not included here as they lack direct relevance to area-based programmes incorporating housing strategies.

This review of the domain evidence base is structured thematically, with a list of sources appended.

i) Scope of the Review

Evidence has been brought together on the following topics likely to be of use to NDC partnerships. This list was influenced by the emerging findings of the review of the housing and physical environment domain of NDC Delivery Plans, which made it possible to identify common themes in the planned interventions of the Partnerships (Cole and Hickman, 2001):

- housing investment
- housing / environmental design
- housing plus / sustainability
- housing management
- housing allocations
- anti-social behaviour
- tenant involvement
- low demand / empty homes as a neighbourhood level

ii) Sources of evidence

A range of sources has been used in the review:

- evaluation of government programmes/initiatives;
- reports from housing organisations – eg Chartered Institute of Housing/Housing Corporation;
- research institutions/charities;
- academic research bodies;
- local housing agencies.

The form of this evidence varies considerably: from assessments of 'stand-alone' initiatives to broader programme/policy evaluation; from good practice guides to case study reviews; and from practitioner-centred appraisal to consumer surveys. An attempt has been made to

concentrate on larger studies and research evaluations, where the transferability of findings to other contexts is likely to be firmer.

iii) Quality of the evidence

Generally, there are many examples of 'what works' - but specifying 'where, when and in what circumstances' is far more problematic. Many evaluations report that a particular initiative (often within a broader programme) was successful - but they are less forthcoming on *why* this success has been achieved. There is also a lack of baseline information to inform a judgement on what has 'worked'. In other case studies, evaluations can refer to the specifically local factors that contributed to or hindered success: the applicability of the measure elsewhere, however, is more open to debate.

Within broader evaluations of regeneration programmes, there is often a lack of evidence about specific housing measures within the package of initiatives. Often the emphasis is on responses to problems on estates rather than 'impact' per se. Evidence of long-term impact through longitudinal research is particularly scarce.

On the more positive side, there are examples of solid pieces of evaluation in housing, and there is certainly no shortage of 'good practice ideas' that might interest Partnerships. These should be especially useful for Partnerships where housing problems are prominent locally, or if there is relatively little involvement from practitioners with a housing background in the programme.

It should be noted, however, that many of the cases of 'good practice' have not been mediated by any forthright evaluation - therefore their quality is based more on assertion and judgement than demonstrable outcome-centred evidence. On the basis of this review, there is a clear need for a more rigorous approach to gauging 'what works' for housing initiatives in programmes for neighbourhood regeneration. The national evaluation of the NDC programme can make an important contribution to this task.

iv) Gaps in the evidence base

Overall, there are several important gaps in the evidence base which makes it difficult to establish the potential effectiveness of initiatives or to apply 'solutions that work' with confidence.

- There is insufficient coverage of the impact of local contexts and circumstances on the effectiveness of initiatives. Evaluations of concrete initiatives in areas often comment instructively on what did or did not work, and sometimes offer suggestions about those factors which helped or hindered (such as extensive tenant consultation). But little attention is paid to wider issues - the context of the local housing market, the consequences for surrounding areas, the importance of the specific tenure mix, or range of property types. It is necessary to interpret or re-analyse broader evaluations of a topic, or to refer to the findings of more academic studies. Some of the studies of 'low demand' in housing, for example, offer useful insights into housing market dynamics or the different causes of demand problems, but they rarely offer concrete evaluations. On the other hand, the more policy oriented/evaluative evidence may point to what works, but not *why* it works. There is a need to bring these two sets of literature together across the full range of potential housing interventions.

- There is comparatively little known about strategies to deal with low demand, empty homes and property abandonment in the *private* sector, despite its prevalence in some sub- regions (and indeed NDC areas). Some of the more complex issues about improvement, demolition, compulsory purchase and dealing with anti-social behaviour have little prior evidence to refer to.
- The impact of area-based initiatives on the surrounding locality has received scant coverage. There are various suggestions that successful initiatives introduced in one area (for example, to deal with anti-social behaviour) can ‘displace’ problems elsewhere. Levels of resident satisfaction in a neighbourhood will inevitably be influenced by perceptions of the wider surrounding area. Also, if an area becomes more popular, it may be at the expense of adjacent neighbourhoods. The issues of ‘spill-over’ and ‘displacement’ are well established themes in regeneration research – but the lack of firm evidence about these effects makes it difficult to comment on the wider ramifications of neighbourhood-focused initiatives.

v) Scope of the review

Inevitably, many of these issues identified in this review overlap in practice. For example, landlords frequently adapt and develop new allocation policies in order to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, low demand and empty properties. On-the-spot housing management is often considered a key element in ensuring the long-term impact of a housing investment programme and promoting sustainability, and design improvements are often introduced to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Indeed, increasing attention is being given to *combinations* of measures to be introduced locally, especially in the most deprived neighbourhoods. It was decided that a four-fold categorisation of evidence might be most appropriate: low demand and area unpopularity; dealing with anti-social behaviour; housing management; and housing investment.

The government’s current strategy to promote social inclusion – in which the NDC programme plays a leading role – has emphasised the ‘joined-up’ nature of problems (and any potential solutions) at neighbourhood level. A quick look at the four broad topic areas in this review illustrates the difficulty in keeping clear boundaries around subjects, and in treating housing as a self-contained arena of intervention. To take each in turn: the causes of low demand extend well beyond poor property or environmental conditions; strategies for dealing with anti-social behaviour obviously cut across into the ‘crime’ domain; housing management is often linked with other services, especially in initiatives to localise delivery; and the benefits of housing investment often extend beyond the interests of the households affected and can uplift the overall popularity of the neighbourhood as a whole. Similarly, some housing issues have been omitted here because they form part of wider subjects: such as the links between health and housing, the development of neighbourhood management or strategies to enhance community involvement in regeneration. But one has to start somewhere – and this review should therefore be seen as just such a beginning in providing guidelines for interventions concerning housing and the physical environment, rather than as a completely definitive and comprehensive account.

2: TACKLING LOW DEMAND AND EMPTY HOMES

- 2.1.** Summary points
- 2.2.** Some Key Issues
- 2.3.** Broad Responses to Low Demand and Empty Homes
- 2.4.** The Nature of the Evidence Base on Tackling Low Demand and Empty Homes
- 2.5.** What Does the Evidence Tell Us?
 - 2.5.1.** Improving area demand through housing investment
 - 2.5.2.** Tenure diversification
 - 2.5.3.** Improving estate images
 - 2.5.4.** Management-led approaches: lettings and marketing initiatives
 - 2.5.5.** The private sector

2.1. SUMMARY POINTS

Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- It is unlikely that areas suffering chronic low demand, with high levels of empty or abandoned properties can be 'turned around' using a single approach. Improving the appearance and condition of properties without also tackling social and economic issues, improving management, or addressing the poor reputation of an area is unlikely to have a significant impact on the neighbourhood.
- Low demand is not so much a housing-specific issue but, increasingly, a neighbourhood-centred problem. People are choosing not to live in, or to leave, neighbourhoods rather than selecting properties *per se*.
- Partnerships need to understand the precise nature and underlying causes of low demand in their areas for appropriate strategies to be developed.
- Low demand is not tenure-specific. Unpopular housing is not concentrated solely in areas of social housing. Strategies for tackling low demand in the private sector raise more complex problems for intervention, especially if compulsory purchase is involved.

Characteristics of low demand neighbourhoods

Housing related characteristics

- High turnover of social rented properties
- Small or non-existent waiting lists for social rented housing
- High numbers of empty homes (in all tenures)
- Very little movement in the owner occupied market
- Falling values or negative equity amongst home owners
- Poor neighbourhood reputation

Non-housing related characteristics

- High unemployment
- High crime rates
- Vandalism
- Poor physical environment
- Prevalent drug use
- Poor educational achievement
- Poor health

A Checklist of Possible Initiatives

- Improving physical appearance and condition of the stock
- Demolishing unpopular property types or housing in areas of over-supply
- Reshaping the range and type of residential properties through refurbishment, and conversions
- Devising 'image management' strategies for estates
- Rethinking management and allocations policies
 - Relaxed lettings criteria, to introduce specifically local indicators
 - Move away from purely needs based allocations
 - Developing marketing strategies for empty properties
- Encouraging greater tenure and tenant mix

Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- There has been an increase in mixed tenure areas which is likely to continue. What is known about the impact of such schemes suggests that one should be cautious about anticipating too many positive changes in patterns of social interaction and local networks.
- Little attention has so far been paid to the impact of initiatives addressing low demand on surrounding areas. Conversely, the broader housing market will affect the capacity of neighbourhood-based initiatives to achieve change.
- There is a clear need for more evidence-based learning about tackling low demand in neighbourhoods with a predominance of private sector housing, and to examine cross-tenure effects – for example, through private landlords buying up and letting low value owner-occupied properties to ‘unpopular’ tenants displaced from the social sector.

2.2. The Issues

Although this review focuses on housing-led initiatives, the origins of problems of low demand and unpopularity are not housing-specific. Increasingly research and debate about the role of housing in area decline and unpopularity recognises that, in many localities, ageing housing stock, poor design and extensive disrepair are not the determining factors in the way they once were. The assumption that improving properties or new-build programmes will automatically have a significant impact on levels of demand is increasingly recognised as untenable in the least desirable neighbourhoods. Issues such as high crime rates, location, low school performance and lack of transport are now informing decisions to leave, or not to move into, areas (Cole et al, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, Groves and Niner, 1998).

The condition or type of the housing stock is still important in more buoyant housing markets in London and the South-east, where low demand is more circumscribed. But elsewhere there is evidence of estates that are virtually impossible to let even though they are newly built or have been recently refurbished, under programmes such as City Challenge and SRB (Keenan et al 1999, Lowe et al 1998). The Social Exclusion Unit (1998), for example, identified an area in Blackburn where £3 million was provided through the Estate Action scheme to refurbish property, only for it to be shuttered up and abandoned less than three years later.

Low demand is also not a tenure specific phenomenon. In the past, policy has often focused on concentrations of local authority housing, and with it the recurrent image of the 'sink council estate'. Increasingly low demand pervades the whole local housing system. Thus far, options for tackling empty property in the largely unregulated private rented sector, and for encouraging private landlords and owners to participate in initiatives designed to improve demand, are limited. The situation may change shortly, however, if discussions about introducing a new 'housing market renewal fund' come to fruition. Even within the social rented sector, low demand is no longer exclusively associated with council housing but has become a growing problem for housing associations (Bramley et al 2000, Ford and Pawson 2001). This trend is likely to continue as the programme of stock transfers from the local authority to the housing association sector unfolds.

The changing nature of patterns of housing demand has received more attention of late, identifying trends such as out-migration from the north, economic decline, changing aspirations, and increased ability to choose between tenures (Cole et al 1999, National Housing Federation 2000, Nevin et al, 2001). The result has been stark differences between housing markets throughout the country with some areas (in particular the north of England) witnessing an over-supply, whilst other areas (predominantly in the south) experience very high demand overall, and concomitant problems of affordability and access. Strategies to tackle low demand are therefore having to take account of these changing market dynamics.

2.3. Broad Responses to Low Demand and Empty Property

Bringing area demand in line with supply can be addressed through two broad approaches: by making an estate a more attractive option to existing and potential tenants - i.e. *increasing demand* - or by *reducing the supply* of properties in line with levels of demand for the neighbourhood.

Decisions about whether to increase demand or reduce supply may depend upon the underlying factors contributing to the failure of the market in a particular neighbourhood. In a report for the DETR (2000d) a useful distinction is made between absolute low demand - where there are not enough households in an area looking for homes - and relatively unpopular housing - where it is the housing type or specific neighbourhood characteristics which result in market failure, 'difficult to let' estates and growing numbers of empty properties. In the former case reducing supply – through demolition or conversions - can be a sensible option (DETR 2000c). In the latter situation attempts to increase demand (or a combination of improving demand and reducing supply) may be more viable. There are however a range of complex issues to be considered before a programme of demolition is launched, especially given the likely acute local sensitivities about such an intervention. It has been suggested that the design and implementation of such strategies to improve demand have in the past been fairly *ad hoc* and unsystematic (Cole et al 1999).

The generic term 'low demand' in fact masks a range of issues and can be both a cause and effect of the general problems typically associated with unpopular neighbourhoods. The origins and indicators of low demand can be seen in high turnover of social rented properties, poor stock condition, high levels of property abandonment, void properties, rent arrears, negative equity and falling values in the owner occupied market, a concentration of deprivation, and social and economic problems such as high crime rates and unemployment. Attempts to manage low demand and stimulate the market mirror this wide variety of problematic issues. Approaches include:

- improving the appearance, condition, quality and design of properties, including in some cases demolishing unpopular housing types and replacing them with new build housing;
- management-led solutions such as relaxed lettings criteria, accompanied viewings for prospective tenants and tighter control of void properties;
- encouraging the development of more mixed and balanced communities, for example through introducing a wider mix of tenures in an area;

- improving the image of the estate;
- transferring council housing into different tenures, through wholesale or ‘trickle’ transfers, or encouraging right-to-buy applications;
- developing strategies designed to fill empty properties, without necessarily making changes to the stock or environment - for example, through marketing properties or offering incentives to potential tenants.

The following section considers the extent to which these responses have become embedded in housing strategies in regeneration programmes, and the indications about their effectiveness in reversing trends of growing unpopularity and declining demand.

2.4. The Nature of the Evidence Base on Tackling Low Demand and Empty Homes

Much of the literature on the phenomenon of low demand examines issues such as the underlying causes of low demand, property abandonment, and the impact on neighbourhoods (e.g. Power and Mumford 1999, Lowe et al 1998, Keenan et al 1999). This literature is sometimes located in debates concerned with ‘problem estates’ or ‘sink estates’, often reflecting landlords’ concerns about ‘difficult-to-let’ properties that made demands on their allocation systems and threatened loss of rental income. This represents the most recent manifestation of a longer standing debate about whether ‘problem estates’ are a consequence of poor design, poor management, misguided allocation policies, concentrated deprivation, or the behaviour of tenants themselves. This body of broader research-oriented literature maps low demand comprehensively, identifies and debates some key problems and challenges, and offers some generalised recommendations. However, it rarely provides a clear, evidence-based understanding of those strategies that have been found to be effective, and the circumstances under which they are most applicable.

This review is more concerned with concrete evidence which evaluates actual strategies for tackling low demand than prolonged digressions on the various underlying causes, though this can provide some general pointers about priorities for intervention.

Much existing research tracks national and regional trends in demand (for example DETR 1999, National Housing Federation 2000), but there is less evidence about the dynamics of demand at a more localised level. Social landlords and local authorities certainly employ a range of measures to address the problems of unpopular neighbourhoods and empty homes but Cole *et al* note that landlords themselves rarely monitor the effectiveness of these initiatives. In addition much research is undertaken prior to any intervention, in order to inform strategies to tackle low demand (e.g. Cole et al 2000, Cole et al 2001) rather than *after* initiatives have been implemented. This emphasis indicates that many landlords are still seeking to understand the dynamics and underlying causes of low demand neighbourhoods rather than addressing questions about which previous initiatives have been successful, or why previous attempts have been unsuccessful.

Nevertheless there is still a wide variety of sources to draw on. Some seek to understand and assess responses to low demand generally, while others offer good practice guidance. These sources include:

- National Federation of Housing Associations (2000)

- Bramley et al (2000)
- DETR (1999)
- DETR (2000)
- DETR (2000d)

In addition a variety of initiatives have been designed to encourage and assist landlords with the more specific problem of filling empty homes, and in some cases they have produced research evidence. For example, developing strategies and models for tackling unpopular housing is one area covered by the Housing Corporation's Innovation and Good Practice (IGP) programme. The projects within this programme have been evaluated, and the key findings produced in a short summary report (Housing Corporation 2000). Similarly, the Empty Homes Initiative in Scotland was established in 1997 to assist local authorities to bring empty property back into use across all tenures. This initiative was evaluated in research commissioned by the Scottish Executive in 2000. Other evidence relating to this issue includes:

- Housing Policy and Practice Unit and School of Planning and Housing (1994)
- CIH (1995)
- Pawson et al (1997)

Although local case studies are used in some of the studies above - either as good practice examples or as research data - few focus on area-based responses and initiatives. Indeed evidence addressing the issues of low demand and empty homes at a local level is more limited, although some recent studies have been undertaken (Cole et al, 2000b; Nevin et al, 2001).

Other key sources of evidence are evaluations of wider regeneration programmes, instigated to 'turn around' declining neighbourhoods. Whilst this evidence is not always presented in the specific context of low housing demand, it addresses some of the pertinent issues and is incorporated into the following review.

2.5. What Does the Evidence Reveal?

2.5.1. Improving area demand through housing investment

The various impacts of housing investment are covered in more detail in Section 4 and so this review is confined to evidence about the relationship between housing investment and local housing markets.

Large-scale housing investment programmes are often targeted at more fragile local housing markets, particularly when such investment is undertaken within regeneration programmes (such as Estate Action) where improving the popularity of an area is a key objective. However, evidence arising from these programmes tends not to distinguish the impact of investment on demand from other effects.

There are a few studies which pay particular attention to the impact of investment on both the socially rented and private sector local housing markets. An evaluation of the regeneration of London's Docklands (a UDC area) by the DETR (1998), and a thorough assessment of the impact of Housing Action Areas by Scottish Homes (1996) are, however, examples of studies that examine the impact of these programmes on private sector housing markets.

The regeneration of London's Docklands included 24,000 newly built properties - of which 6,400 were in the local authority sector- and the improvement of 7,963 (mainly council-owned) housing units. The overall evaluation (DETR 1998) suggests that this investment has resulted in a very strong housing market which had previously been failing. The main focus of this assessment, however, was the private market, where most success had been achieved. In 1981 there had been virtually no movement in the private housing market and only 5 per cent of housing stock in the Docklands area was owner-occupied. By March 1998 this had increased to 45 per cent. There is, however, little evidence presented about levels of demand, and in particular changed demand, for the social rented stock in the area. The potentially polarising effects of gentrification – between the incoming and the ‘host’ communities – is also given little mention.

The assessment of the impact of Housing Action Areas by Scottish Homes (1996) also pays some attention to changes in house prices in the private sector as a result of investment programmes. Again, it indicates that housing investment can have a positive impact on the local housing market. In two of their case study areas the market appeared to have responded directly to new investment, with house prices rising at exactly the same time as the improvement work was being undertaken. In a third case study, a similar picture seemed to be emerging, though there were limited research data. As an interesting counterpoint, there was little or no impact in one area where demand was already relatively high. Overall, the research bears out the contention by MacLennan (1998) that investment can produce positive ‘spillover’ effects, increasing house prices in neighbouring areas.

A study by Groves & Niner (1998), however, assessed the impact of urban renewal on inner city housing markets and found that programmes of investment had no impact on house prices. They examined two areas of older terraced housing in Birmingham with predominantly Asian populations and found little movement in house price levels, although the investment had helped sustain the local market. This contrast underlines the degree to which local studies are shaped by market context and the period of change under investigation.

In the social housing sector, a major study by Fordham for the DETR (DETR 2000b) on the sustainability of estate regeneration provides some useful evidence about the role of housing investment in 'turning around' low demand and declining areas. The two case studies below (taken from this study) show how the prospects of the neighbourhoods had been improved as a result of housing investment.

Case studies: the role of housing investment in improving area demand

Town End Farm, Sunderland - In 1990 60 per cent of properties on this estate were void. A comprehensive investment programme - which included extensive refurbishment as well as sale of some stock to achieve a more diverse tenure mix - was undertaken under the Estate Action Programme. There is now a waiting list for properties in the area, voids are practically non-existent, turnover is low, and no properties are considered difficult to let.

Pembroke Street, Plymouth - This estate comprises 160 flats, all of which had become difficult let by the early 1990s. In 1991 57 per cent of the properties were void and a third of tenants were actively seeking to move away. The investment programme involved total renovation and refurbishment of the flats inside and also included some environmental improvements such as changes to external layout and creation of defensible space. Following this investment, the proportion of residents seeking to move from the estate had fallen to 10 per cent, and there were reportedly no voids.

However, a note of caution is required here. Few studies suggest that increased demand and radical reductions in void properties are a result of housing investment alone. The report for DETR (1998), for example, pointed out that the improved transport links, the development of other facilities, and an affordable housing policy will all have played a part in improving demand for the area. The Scottish Homes (1996) study also pointed out that various factors impact on housing markets and it does not attribute the increased demand to investment alone. The picture is clouded by the fact that investment undertaken in the case studies cited above ran alongside other improvements, including improved facilities, environmental improvements, and tenure diversification initiatives.

One response to low demand, often implemented as part of investment programmes, is to reduce the supply of properties in an area, through demolition. Indeed research for the DETR found that demolition activity on local authority estates has tended to focus on 'problem estates' that are unpopular and difficult to let (DETR 2000c), although a relatively high proportion of properties demolished are usually less popular types such as maisonettes and high rise flats. The research found that demolition sites had mainly been redeveloped for housing, but that there had been a significant net loss of properties overall. In addition, those sites *not* earmarked for redevelopment tended to be located in the north east of England; one of the regions where the problems of low demand are most acute.

However, demolition tends to be undertaken as part of a wider programme of neighbourhood remodelling and evidence rarely focuses solely on the demolition element. Selective rather than wholesale demolition is becoming increasingly common, especially where there are concerns from existing residents about more radical strategies. Demolition has also been linked to local strategies for site assembly, to create opportunities for tenure diversification (by offering the land to developers for owner occupied housing, or to RSLs), or to provide a more appropriate match of dwelling type and size (such as replacing maisonettes with more traditional houses).

DETR (2000c) suggests that demolition without replacement housing is a viable option in areas of generic low demand, particularly if the properties are in high density residential areas with expensive refurbishment costs. Demolition in these circumstances can help to align demand more closely with supply, whilst also reducing the visible blight of empty

homes. However, in areas of higher demand such as London, a reduction in the housing stock may only necessitate replacement social housing elsewhere, or exacerbate problems of access and affordability.

2.5.2. Tenure diversification

In developing strategic responses to tackling low demand, attention has been given to ways in which strategies can be developed which will create 'sustainable communities'. This objective has gathered impetus through the social exclusion agenda which recognises the increasing spatial segregation between the poor and better off (SEU 2000, Lee and Murie 1997). Approaches to deprived housing estates have therefore shifted away from the physically based programmes such as Estate Action, towards measures concerned with social and economic processes (Atkinson and Kintrea 2000).

Part of this shift has involved strategies to improve the tenure mix on estates, closely allied to efforts to change the mix of residents to create more 'balanced' communities. For example, in a comprehensive guide to good practice on sustainable estate regeneration for the DETR, based on 18 case study estates, a 'blend' of tenures and proximity to private housing developments constitute one of nine 'critical success factors' (DETR 2000b). Indeed, the introduction or extension of owner occupation in neighbourhoods formerly dominated by social housing has become an axiom of many area-based regeneration strategies (DETR, 2000e).

Tenure diversification is typically achieved in the following ways:

- during major investment programmes which allow, for example, for the replacement of demolished properties with homes for sale;
- through stock transfer;
- by encouraging right to buy applications.

The evidence on the success of this strategy is mixed. There is some evidence that tenure diversification (in particular by introducing owner occupation) can enhance long-term stability of an area. In a review of research assessing the impact of tenure diversification, Scottish Homes (2001) for example found that introducing private housing to estates has achieved the following results:

- physical enhancements to disadvantaged neighbourhoods have taken place quicker than they otherwise would have done;
- repopulation;
- communities have been stabilised;
- home owners in the area are perceived to have improved the reputation and long-term maintenance of their neighbourhoods.

DETR research (2000b) also provides case study evidence of areas which have benefited from tenure diversification. This evidence suggests that on one estate (Bessemmer Park, Spennymoor, Durham) the introduction of owner occupation offered aspiring residents the opportunity to stay on the estate. In this case study numerous examples were found where owner occupiers were instrumental in organising resident involvement. In another case (Town End Farm in Sunderland, cited above) the new tenure mix and the changed appearance of the estate contributed to eliminating the stigma that had formerly attached to the estate.

Other commentators are more cautious, however, pointing out that little is known about the social impact of tenure diversification (Cole and Shayer 1998). While the then DETR suggested that tenure (and tenant) diversification was fundamental to sustainability, it also pointed out the dearth of empirical evidence about its impact (DETR 2000). A Price Waterhouse study (DETR/Price Waterhouse 1998) found that, whilst the highest proportion of the most deprived enumeration districts are found in the local authority and housing association tenure, the next highest concentration are in private rented and mixed tenure categories. Jupp (1999) undertook ten case studies of mixed tenure estates across the country. He found some positive impacts in terms of the external image of the neighbourhoods. Local social networks and informal social interaction, however, still tended to be separated by a tenure divide. Some of the more ambitious aspirations for mixed tenure – in terms of ‘reconnecting’ the socially excluded to the ‘mainstream’ – are overstating its potential.

Research for Scottish Homes (2000) on tenure diversification in Niddrie, Edinburgh also provides evidence of the ambiguous impact of such a strategy. The programme undertaken in this area of Edinburgh included the development of homes for low cost sale and transfer of some stock to a housing association. It found on the one hand that this produced a ‘more balanced’ profile of households, reduced the stigma attached to the neighbourhood, halted the trend of single parent households and large families, and reduced the over-representation of young people. On the other hand, this evidence also questioned whether the resulting mix was an ‘integrated community’ and whether it brought benefits to the council tenants in the area. The reduction in the unemployment rate, for example, was achieved only through the influx of economically active households. In addition, the satisfaction rate in the area was no higher than amongst those living in the wider, and highly deprived, surrounding area. Crime is still a significant problem, and turnover is high. Social mix can be a source of conflict as well as harmony.

Strategies of tenure diversification are closely linked to encouraging a more diverse *resident* mix. Murie (1998) has underlined the importance of the current age profile of residents in an area. A high concentration of elderly tenants, for example, is likely to increase the flow of properties over subsequent years and threaten the stability of an area. Similarly, Page (1993) pointed to the tensions that can arise in estates with high child densities. In some cases, this threat of greater disruption due to a high proportion of young people may be more apparent than real. A study of new housing association developments in Yorkshire and Humberside found no correlation between resident satisfaction and rates of high child density (Cole et al, 1996). Indeed, ‘young people’ were seen as a ‘problem’ by the highest proportion of residents on the estate which contained the lowest proportion of children!

The primary rationale behind encouraging a greater mix of tenants through tenure diversification is to encourage increased economic activity to an area, and to reduce concentrations of deprivation. The DETR study (2000b) added the caveat that encouraging other landlords to an area (in this case through the involvement of housing associations) would not reduce concentrations of deprivation if landlords were constrained by inflexible lettings policies. To illustrate this point an example is given of an estate in the London Borough of Newham where a 75 per cent nomination agreement existed between the local authority and the housing association. Virtually all applicants on the local authority’s housing register were unemployed and homeless so the introduction of other landlords did not greatly increase tenant mix, and 80 per cent of tenants on the estate remained on Housing Benefit.

Research by Robertson and Bailey (1996) into the impact of Housing Action Areas echoed this theme. They stressed the importance of linking strategies to diversify tenure with changes to allocation policies, because, if housing associations acquired and improved dwellings but still allocated on the basis of need, concentrations of low-income households remained.

In addition, mixed tenure estates are likely to be managed by several landlords, which can give rise to a separate set of issues. For example, there is evidence that management of multi-landlord estates can be problematic, and render a co-ordinated approach to issues such as anti-social behaviour more difficult. In some areas, notably in the North-west, RSLs are developing routines to 'swap' property holdings and rationalise the geographical location of their stock, to reduce multi-landlord management at neighbourhood level and secure economies of scale for management input.

There may also be a limit to the impact of mixed tenure on stimulating housing demand in a sub-region. In Sunderland, for example, there was little co-ordination of the range of tenure diversification initiatives and the market became saturated. In some cases, vendors were unable to sell to other owner-occupiers and properties were bought by private landlords instead, which reduced collaboration over issues such as enforcing tenancies in relation to anti-social behaviour (Cole and Shayer, 1999).

2.5.3. Improving estate images

Negative stereotypes and poor images of neighbourhoods have a direct effect on demand. Whatever actual improvements are made to a neighbourhood (through improving the appearance and condition of the stock, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, improving management etc.), demand will remain limited if a negative image persists. For example an overview of evaluations of Scottish Urban Partnerships by the Central Research Unit (1996) identified an area in Paisley where, despite physical improvements, the negative image of the estate continued to present a barrier to attracting new residents. Similarly, a report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on neighbourhood images in Teeside found that despite extensive regeneration activity, the stigma associated with the estate remained (Wood and Vamplew 1999).

Thus far, much of the evidence about the poor reputation of certain estates has focused on its negative impact, or the disparity between the image and the reality, rather than on evaluating efforts to address these issues (for example Silburn et al 1999, Wood and Vamplew 1999). This reflects the lack of priority given to image management in many area-based regeneration programmes, resulting in few initiatives which can be evaluated. However, an exception is a recent, valuable study of the role of image management in successfully improving the reputation of an estate and thereby increasing demand for it (Dean and Hastings 2001).

The study of three estates, all undergoing extensive regeneration and making efforts to address their negative reputation, elicited some key findings:

- the image of an estate does not automatically improve as the estate itself improves. Conscious efforts have to be made to alter perceptions of the neighbourhood;
- regeneration initiatives pay insufficient attention to image management, even though a poor image can undermine the benefits of the programme.;

- conversely, image management will not be effective alone, without associated changes on the ground. The stigma of an estate will not be changed simply through re-branding.

Negative images are difficult to shift, and may persist despite concerted efforts, but this is not a recipe for doing nothing. Although there is no single best model of image management, a number of strategies and initiatives are suggested:

- one member of staff solely responsible for image management who may be located within the regeneration team;
- work with other agencies and ‘gatekeepers’ (such as estate agents) to change their attitudes towards the estate, and persuade them to challenge the current image (or at least not perpetuate it);
- making residents elsewhere aware of the changes on the estate (for example through media and advertising, and encouraging them to visit the estate).

Case Study: Image management as an integral part of a regeneration programme - Greater Pilton, Edinburgh.

Greater Pilton has had a poor reputation within Edinburgh for many years, originating from its initial status as a slum clearance estate. Coverage of the city’s drugs and Aids problems in the 1980s resulted in its reputation as a ‘no -go area’ and Irvine Welsh’s novel *Trainspotting* helped to cement this reputation.

The area has undergone extensive regeneration, led by the North Edinburgh Area Regeneration (NEAR) partnership and involving physical, economic and social improvements. The partnership also paid some attention to tackling the poor image of the estate. A dedicated part time PR officer has been employed to co-ordinate efforts to raise the profile of the regeneration programme, ensure communication between partners, increase positive media coverage, and establish media liaison protocols. A communications strategy is also in the process of being implemented.

There is some evidence that the image of the estate is improving. For example, there is increased demand for social tenancies on the estate, and the new and low-priced homes for sale are proving popular.

However, there is still some way to go, with house prices still depressed relative to the Edinburgh housing market, and poor press coverage remains an issue.

(Case study from Dean and Hastings, 2001)

2.5.4. Management-led Approaches: Lettings and Marketing Initiatives

Management-led approaches to tackling low demand tend to focus on managing void properties – often through lettings initiatives - rather than on broader demand and housing market issues, and the evidence is usually based on the social rented sector.

A number of studies have examined void management practices in social housing (for example Bines 1993, Clapham et al 1995, Murie et al 1994) but these provide general, rather than area-based, evidence - addressing issues such as the overall performance of social landlords (Bines et al 1993) and the factors associated with high void rates (Murie et al 1994)

A review of literature on managing voids and difficult-to-let property by Pawson *et al* for the Housing Corporation (1997) identifies the following housing management initiatives as typical in efforts to overcome barriers to speedier letting of void properties:

- advertising vacancies;
- financial inducements to new tenants;
- group tenancies for single people;
- modifying or relaxing scheme allocation criteria.

They also identify longer-term and more preventative initiatives for void management:

- estate-based staff;
- lower staff-stock ratios;
- employing caretakers;
- increased vetting of applicants.

The more preventative measures may be particularly pertinent given the evidence that low demand does not just affect older, poorly designed estates in bad condition. As stated earlier, Page (1993) studied new housing association estates and identified several that had quickly become difficult to let. Page suggested that allocations and management practices had contributed to the problem. Other commentators subsequently suggested that this aspect was over-emphasised at the expense of more structural factors (Cole et al 1996). Nevertheless, there is clear supporting evidence that, however it occurs, some new build estates become difficult to let. Crook *et al* (1996), for example, found that new homes built on council estates through Housing Association Grant were difficult-to-let in one third of the areas studied. It is worth noting that few of these had long-term agreements about the estate management - a theme echoed in other evidence.

Changes to allocations policies – including relaxed criteria and the introduction of more flexible ‘local’ lettings policies - are a common management responses to problems of low demand (Pawson *et al* 1997, Bramley et al 2000). The DETR guide to good practice on responding to low demand housing supports " *the need for a 'culture shift' from an allocations policy based on strict definitions of housing need to one based on marketing*" (DETR 2000). And there is evidence to suggest that such initiatives can be effective.

Power & Turnstall’s study of ‘twenty unpopular council estates’ (1995) found that local lettings policies consistently led to less empty property over a fifteen year period, while restricted offers and centralised lettings produced more void dwellings. They found that lack of choice for applicants could be associated with subsequent instability and turnover of estates. MacLennan et al’s study of effective housing management drew similar conclusions that limiting the number of offers to applicants resulted in higher transfer rates in the area (MacLennan et al 1989).

Similarly, Fordham et al (1997) highlighted the importance of lettings policies in the success of the implementation of ‘Housing Plus’ on five London housing association estates - particularly in encouraging a mix of tenants and reducing child density.

There is also case study evidence of marketing initiatives (often implemented alongside relaxed allocation criteria) having a positive impact on filling empty homes. A report by Broomleigh Housing Association shows that advertising vacancies not only filled voids quickly but also increased the proportion of economically active tenants in the area without increasing child density (Broomleigh HA, 1996). Other good practice examples identified by Fordham et al (1997) include:

- local lettings policies, such as enabling people with local links wanting to live on the estate to apply to a 'direct access' waiting list;
- changed allocations policies to allow a more generous ratio of property size to household size, providing an incentive to potential tenants;

The case study below provides a further example of a successful marketing initiative.

Case Study: Filling voids through marketing initiatives

A series of adverts in local papers advertising empty properties on an estate (location not specified) promoted a good response. Over 100 empty homes on the estate were filled and over 65 per cent of these new tenants were in employment – many with reasonably high wages. The majority of these did not have children, thus also decreasing the child density on the estate.

(Case study from Fordham, Kemp & Crowsley 1997)

Yet the evidence does not always point in the same direction. A study of social housing management and landlord performance by Bines et al (1993) found no evidence to suggest that restrictive policies increased transfer rates. Similarly, a good practice guide to void management suggested that restrictive transfer policies may in fact reduce turnover (University of Stirling undated).

Whilst letting initiatives are amongst the most common responses to low demand and may have some success, research commissioned by DETR (200d) suggested that they were among the least effective marketing initiatives (DETR 2000d). This comprehensive study into the causes, effects, consequences and responses to low demand suggests that simply opening up social housing to a wide range of people will rarely resolve the problems of low demand. Rather, the approaches likely to achieve the most success are those involving capital costs and a variety of improvements (DETR 2000d).

Case study evidence from a range of sources supports the view that a variety of lettings and marketing strategies alone are not always effective. An evaluation of local lettings policies in four case study areas, for example, found that relaxing Edinburgh District Council's allocation criteria in some areas resulted in higher levels of abandonment (Griffiths et al 1996). Although these kinds of strategies can be successful in filling void properties in the short term, this is not always sustainable (Pawson et al 1997).

Fordham *et al* (1997) provide evidence of a range of initiatives which did *not* work in their case study areas. These included:

- 'storing' all empty properties for future sale;

- setting higher rents for some properties to attract applicants with higher incomes. In fact some of these new tenants developed substantial debts and the policy was abandoned;
- targeting local key workers, students, and people wanting to share, mainly through advertising, did not prompt much of a response.

Local circumstances in each of these studies may explain the variation in the effectiveness of different strategies. However, it is rarely possible, in reviewing the evidence, to identify what these circumstances are, how they differ, and how one might tailor a management response to the specific contours of the neighbourhood concerned.

2.5.5. Tackling low demand and empty homes in the private sector

Whilst there is a firm body of evidence about strategies to deal with low demand in the social rented sector, private sector housing has often been neglected. The lack of evidence partly reflects the problems of identifying, let alone tackling, empty properties in the private sector. Agencies are faced with the problem of tracking down absentee landlords, housing benefit complications, potential resistance from owner-occupiers against CPOs, requirements for special rules for those in negative equity, and ‘pepper-potting’ in terms of the distribution of empty homes. The current options open to local authorities are often deemed inadequate for a major programme of neighbourhood regeneration which may involve purchasing and demolishing private sector housing. Existing powers for compulsory purchase, for example, are based upon standards of (un) fitness and are not designed for a context of property abandonment and over-supply.

Attempts to address private sector empty properties and low demand have often involved use of Renewal Areas or initiatives such as SRB (DETR 2000d, 1999). However, it has been suggested that current arrangements for clearance are inadequate and need to be reviewed (DETR 2000d).

The Housing Corporation has launched a ‘New Tools’ programme to explore the options open to RSLs in areas of low demand private housing. This is currently at the pilot stage. The programme enables RSLs to acquire properties for demolition without the requirement to provide replacement social housing, and to convert two properties into one larger property. This may allow RSLs to take an active role in developing initiatives to tackle recovery in private sector areas in decline. The evaluation of the pilot programme is underway and research evidence is expected in the near future.

The options open to local authorities and regeneration partnerships may also be clarified following the publication of the report of the Special Inquiry into Empty Homes by the Select Committee of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, which is currently under way. Many of the submissions of evidence to the Inquiry have focused on private sector neighbourhoods, raising issues ranging from the selective licensing of private landlords to council tax payment on empty homes, and from compulsory leasing of empty properties to the need for a new ‘housing market renewal fund’ across all tenures. The Committee’s report will be published in the New Year.

3. TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- 3.1.** Summary Points
- 3.2.** The Nature of the Evidence Base on Anti-Social Behaviour
- 3.3.** Legal Remedies
- 3.4.** Design-led Approaches
- 3.5.** Management-led Approaches
 - 3.5.1.** Dealing with perpetrators and victims
 - 3.5.2.** Concierge schemes
 - 3.5.3.** On the spot housing management
 - 3.5.4.** Allocations and lettings
 - 3.5.5.** Tackling racial harassment
- 3.6.** The Move to New Approaches
 - 3.6.1.** Effective co-ordination
 - 3.6.2.** Resettlement services

3.1. SUMMARY POINTS

Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- 'anti-social behaviour' covers a wide range of behaviours - from criminal activity and noise nuisance to neighbour disputes. Measures need to be clearly targeted with regard to the behaviour being tackled;
- a balanced strategy - between legal, design-led, management-led initiatives – is usually more effective than a single strand approach;
- there is a need for effective co-ordination between different services, professions and agencies; possibly codified through an estate contract/agreement;
- on allocations, 'negative' sanctions to exclude/evict 'difficult' tenants need to be balanced with positive measures to attract new households; flexible local lettings policies can offer benefits, but need to be complemented by other initiatives;
- a localised service base can aid preventative work, especially if accompanied by 'out-of-hours' provision;
- flexibility is needed in adapting measures to local circumstances - such as property type, population turnover or level of community involvement;
- concierge and similar schemes can be effective in reducing ASB originating from outside the block; in relatively problematic areas, intensive schemes are far more effective than dispersed schemes.
- there is a risk of 'displacement' - to elsewhere in the NDC area, or to adjacent neighbourhoods. Initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour in one area can simply displace the problems to neighbouring areas. For example, legal remedies to evict anti-

social tenants can result in those tenants accommodating themselves in neighbouring areas, or in the private sector within the area.

A Checklist of Possible Initiatives

- Security upgrading for properties - for example security doors, window locks
- Concierge schemes
- Childrens' play areas
- Creating defensible space by using communal open space to create gardens or ground floor flats.
- Sensitive or local lettings policies, and estate profiling. On-the-spot housing management
- Pre-allocation visits, and settling in visits for new tenants
- Witness mobility scheme allowing speedy relocation and support to witnesses and victims of anti-social behaviour.
- Surveillance using CCTV, particularly mobile systems for crime 'hotspots'.
- Dealing with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour through legal remedies such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and possession proceedings.
- Supporting and resettling perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to develop their skills to sustain tenancies and address their behaviour.
- Specialist multi-agency nuisance teams.
- Tenants contracts, going beyond normal tenancy agreements;
- A co-ordination project officer for the different agencies within an area
- Neighbourhood agreements/estate contracts
- Multi-landlord agreements on a common approach towards anti-social tenants.

Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- the need for robust longitudinal evaluations which do not rely primarily on recorded crime statistics;
- the importance of assessing contextual issues, outside factors, and other projects operating in the area which impact on the effectiveness of different anti-social behaviour initiatives;

- the need for broad-based methodologies that can encompass perpetrators, victims, witnesses and preventative agencies;
- the potential value of cross-domain work within the national evaluation;
- the need to track where possible displacement effects into adjacent neighbourhoods
- to attempt to disentangle the impact of separate measures within a package of measures introduced to reduce ASB

The high policy profile of strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance is of relatively recent origin, and as a result the evidence base is still being developed. The need to deal with concerns about anti-social behaviour and 'difficult' tenants is central to many of the NDC programmes. This is, however, an area of intervention where the current impetus to develop programmes, initiatives, new appointments and new structures to deal with problems at the neighbourhood level is moving at a faster pace than the evidence base and the dissemination of emerging research findings. The impact of new Crime and Disorder partnerships being developed at the local level will provide critical evidence of inter-agency working for NDC partnerships.

Clearly, anti-social behaviour is not a purely 'housing' issue, as it cuts across the 'crime' domain as well. Distinctions between the two policy areas are inevitably rather artificial, but here we have concentrated on those measures initiated by housing agencies and focussed on the neighbourhood as part of a wider programme to reduce the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour. This therefore involves a scrutiny of strategies to deal with anti-social behaviour ranging from legal remedies to housing management, allocations policy, housing and environmental design, and wider inter-agency collaboration.

The term anti-social behaviour is used loosely, to encompass a wide range of activity – such as criminal behaviour (from vandalism to murder), neighbour disputes, noise nuisance, nuisance from animals, joy riding, domestic violence, drugs, racial harassment and children playing in unauthorised areas.

Tackling anti-social behaviour has become a key concern for residents, for many local authorities, for other housing organisations (in terms of the potential consequences for management, rental income and estate popularity), for the police, for the youth service and social services and, increasingly, for regeneration partnerships. Some of the most ambitious initiatives to tackle criminal and other anti-social behaviour have been undertaken within area-based regeneration programmes. As a result, the initiatives developed to tackle 'anti-social behaviour' are varied, cover a wide range of problems and solutions, and are drawn from diverse sources of evidence.

3.2. The Nature of the Evidence Base on Anti-Social Behaviour

There are several key 'good practice' guidance 'manuals' (Scott et al 2001) suggesting possible responses to anti-social behaviour:

- Albourne Associates (1993)
- CIH (1995)
- Karn et al. (1993)
- Scottish Office (1998)
- Crime Concern (1998).

These documents range in emphasis and focus, and some of the more directly criminological literature contains examples of initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour. There is, however, limited *evaluation* of initiatives to deal with anti-social behaviour. The report by Scott et al (2001b) on good practice in housing management, for example, found that none of their case study landlords had commissioned an evaluation of their anti-social behaviour initiatives. Much of the debate about ‘what works’ is therefore based on supposition as much as demonstrable impact or longitudinal analysis.

Another source is the guidance provided primarily for social housing organisations. Many of these advise on legal remedies for tackling anti-social behaviour, including the law on eviction/possession and ASBOs (e.g. Collins and O’Carroll 1997). Similarly there are guidance manuals on issues such as dealing with harassment (e.g. Positive Action in Housing 1997, Lemos 1997, Crime Concern 1998, CIH 1995). These are obviously useful texts for landlords, who need to know about their legal position (and that of the perpetrators). However, they rarely give evidence-based reviews about the effectiveness of different initiatives.

Overlapping with this literature are good practice guides. Again many of these are aimed at social landlords, offering examples of initiatives in operation, or recommendations about initiatives which could be developed. These do not tend to include evaluative information, but provide useful examples for consideration.

Some of the research evidence has primarily sought to understand the *extent* of crime and anti-social behaviour prevention initiatives amongst social landlords (e.g. Osborn & Shaftoe 1991, Dhooge and Barelli 1998). This is often survey research, indicating how many local authorities in England have racial harassment policies, or have used ASBOs, and so on. This provides some context, but is not directly useful for policymakers and practitioners seeking to apply remedies to particular neighbourhoods.

Evaluations of neighbourhood-based initiatives offer the most useful source for policymakers and practitioners involved with the NDC programme. This evidence is found in evaluations of broader crime-led programmes such as Safer Cities (e.g. Police Research Group 1994), in some housing-led broader programmes such as DICE, or by housing organisations evaluating their own initiatives. Evidence can also be culled from selective extracts from reviews of wider issues, such as housing management (e.g. Scott et al 2001b).

A very useful, if by now dated, review by the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (1993) commented that much of the evidence on crime-prevention initiatives at the time:

- was designed to be read by researchers rather than practitioners;
- did not give sufficient consideration to contextual issues and external factors which may have contributed to a decrease in crime, and crime trends generally in the area;

- depended on recorded crime statistics, which are inherently problematic (differential willingness to report crime, differing recording practices, and dependent on intensity of surveillance etc.).

These general observations still hold true for much of the evidence.

The most commonly used research design evaluating crime initiatives is the longitudinal, or ‘before and after’, study – an approach sadly lacking in many evaluations of regeneration programmes. There are methodological problems here - in ensuring like is being compared with like, and that intervening variables have been controlled for. In addition, these longitudinal studies frequently rely on officially recorded crime statistics to assess the impact of an initiative which is problematic for the reasons stated above.

There is a lot less evidence of before and after surveys in the housing field (partial exceptions are Power and Tunstall, 1995 and Cole and Smith, 1996). Furthermore, the impact of initiatives to reduce the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour is often subsidiary to the main objectives of the evaluation.

The various approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour can be categorised in different ways: by the extent of the responses, by the stage in the process, and by the policy emphasis of the measures.

Scout and Parkey (1998), for example, identified three approaches to managing anti-social behaviour:

- the *minimalist* approach, which avoids close involvement in neighbour disputes except where absolutely necessary;
- the *traditional* approach, the most common response by social landlords, which deals with problems pragmatically as and when they arise;
- *innovative* approaches, which seek new ways of intervening, involve all parties where possible and have strategic intent: these initiatives were few and far between.

In a similar vein, the report of Policy Action Team 8 (2000) categorised the main approaches in terms of different steps in the process: as prevention, enforcement, and resettlement. Initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour (including neighbour nuisance, harassment, racial harassment) tend to focus on *identifying* anti-social behaviour and perpetrators, and *gathering evidence* against perpetrators, reflecting the emphasis on the traditional approach mentioned above. Preventative initiatives tend to originate from management-led initiatives, especially in terms of adjustments to allocations and lettings policies.

The evidence on measures to deal with anti-social behaviour can be categorised into legal, design-led or management-led responses. Clearly, these responses may overlap. (Concierge schemes, for example, are sometimes cited as a management-led initiative and sometimes as a design-led initiative). But they offer a convenient framework for an analysis of the evidence base.

3.3. Legal Remedies

There is a growing literature on legal options to deal with anti-social behaviour and indeed an increase in the legal powers themselves – through the introduction of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), and probationary (or introductory) tenancies.

Much of this literature comes in the form of guidance, or manuals (for example Collins & O'Carroll 1997, Positive Action in Housing 1997) rather than primary research evidence. There is some evidence evaluating the *effectiveness* of legal remedies (e.g. Hunter, Mullen & Scott, 1998, Atkinson *et al* 2000, Hunter *et al* 2000), but this is rarely undertaken at an *area* level, and rarely specifies the contexts within which legal remedies might be most effective. This reflects the extent to which legal remedies tend to be derived from national 'policies' and legislation rather than neighbourhood-centred programmes. Awareness of the legal channels available for tackling anti-social behaviour in this literature is undoubtedly of general use to landlords and others involved in neighbourhood renewal. It does not however provide much material that is specifically targeted at those devising long-term programmes for community regeneration.

On a slightly different note, there have been a number of studies such as Karn's (1993) looking at the effectiveness of tenants complaints procedures, including approaches to dealing with neighbourhood disputes, and of the potential contribution of mediation services. However, this is again mostly about 'free-floating' good practice, rather than what might be appropriate in a given neighbourhood setting.

The evaluations of management-led and design-led responses to anti-social behaviour tend to be more directly useful for area-based initiatives, and provide examples of the more innovative thinking in some areas. It is here that assessments of *what works where and when* can be found.

3.4. Design-led approaches

The focus of design-led approaches is often on tackling crime, especially assault, theft and burglary (rather than specifically on neighbour disputes or other forms of anti-social behaviour), and they seem to be more reactive, than preventative in origin.

Initiatives within this approach range widely from the major 'designing out crime' programmes, to the introduction of CCTV, to more limited security measures. A distinction can also be made between initiatives which *introduce* design features (e.g. CCTV) to tackle high crime or anti-social behaviour in an area, and those which simply incorporate security-conscious design into new or remodelled estates.

A common theme is that design initiatives alone are not enough to tackle anti-social behaviour and should be combined with management initiatives (e.g. Scottish Office 1998, Far & Osborn 1997). Osborn and Bright (1989) also suggested that too much emphasis had been placed on design-led approaches to anti-social behaviour, and that these must be combined with management-based initiatives.

Coleman (1985) promoted design initiatives to reduce crime and 'social malaise' in an influential if controversial research programme, and her ideas were taken on board through the DICE schemes launched in 1989.

The type of work undertaken within the DICE schemes followed Coleman's recommendations closely. It included removing overhead walkways from estates, re-modelling estates to provide more traditional street layouts, and creating 'defensible space' by changing open space to private gardens for ground floor flats. An evaluation of five of the seven schemes examined the effectiveness of using design initiatives to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, but found that none of the DICE schemes were successful in meeting the objectives set out by Coleman. In particular, the reduction of crime directly attributable to the scheme was only evident in two of the five cases (DoE / Price Waterhouse 1991).

The evaluation also concluded that outcomes differed significantly from area to area (including aspects other than crime, such as maintenance costs). For example, the cost of dealing with crime reduced on some estates, but increased on another. The evaluation therefore underlined the strong influence of the local context and factors other than the schemes on the outcomes on the estates – but it did not examine *which* local factors contributed to the variation of outcome. The key message is the importance of a flexible, broad-based approach, rather than reliance on a standard series of design measures.

Design-led approaches do not always involve major remodelling of estates like the DICE schemes, but come in the form of smaller scale, or security focused changes. The Scottish Office (1998), for example, discussed ways of tackling anti-social behaviour through a range of design-led initiatives at estate level. They also suggested, on the basis of research, that such initiatives were most effective where they were combined with other measures. Initiatives included:

- **Door entry systems** - these could be very effective under certain conditions and could reduce burglary, vandalism and graffiti, but at other times this was also the least effective measure. Farr and Osborn's examination of concierge systems suggested that these were most effective when the anti-social behaviour originates from outside rather than inside the block. Other research has also questioned the effectiveness of entry-phone systems and other similar physical measures, advocating that intensive management might be more effective. (e.g. Safe Neighbourhood Unit 1985, Skilton 1988).
- **Creating Gardens for Flats** - this idea was taken up by some of the DICE schemes mentioned above, and advocated by Coleman. The Scottish Office (1998) research agreed that this could reduce vandalism, reduce complaints about trespassers and improve tenant satisfaction. However, using communal open space to create gardens for ground floor flats would only be effective if it was combined with garden maintenance (which might be taken on by the local authority).
- **Children's Play Areas** - Children's behaviour is one of the most common causes of tenant complaints. It is recommended that children's play areas should be small scale and located close to dwellings. Research suggests that children prefer to play on streets, pavements and open spaces and are unlikely to use play areas for sustained periods of time. In addition, children's play areas are often used by older children and teenagers so complaints do not always decrease with extra provision.

Many directly security-focused initiatives have been reviewed as part of area-based programmes such as DICE, Estate Action and SRB. These programmes involve initiatives such as improving security on properties (security doors, window and door locks), marking property, setting up neighbourhood watch schemes, and holding local police surgeries.

The Police Research Group (1994), for example, evaluated 10 Safer Cities Schemes, all of which involved some security measures to dwellings, amongst other initiatives such as employing Safer Cities Co-ordinators, and project workers. It found that, while security measures had a positive impact overall on burglary rates, the local context was, once again, important. Where area-based *packages* of measures (i.e. security improvements combined with other initiatives) were introduced, these were mainly successful where small areas received 'high dosage interventions'.

There is also some evidence that design-led approaches (such as security improvements) can simply shift the problems to neighbouring areas. For example, the Police Research Group (1994) found that security upgrading on a post-war estate in Bradford did result in a drop in the burglary rate from 9 per cent to just 2 per cent. However, the rate in an adjoining area increased and they suggested that there was therefore displacement of crime. A similar 'displacement effect' was also found in the study of the Estate Action programme on the Bell Farm estate in York (Cole and Smith, 1996)

Case Study - small scale 'security / design' initiatives.

Surveillance: Bradford and Northern HA uses movable CCTV in an area of Cleveland. The surveillance can be moved to focus on specific crime hotspots. It has gathered evidence on a range of situations from sub-letting to burglary, racial harassment, domestic violence and murder. (Housing Corporation, undated) There is, however, only general information on the impact of the scheme - which led to 10 convictions and a number of evictions.

3.5. Management-led Approaches

Management-led initiatives contain various strands:

- dealing with the 'actors' involved – perpetrators and victims;
- through the use of concierge schemes;
- through localised 'on-the-spot' housing management;
- through modifying allocations and lettings systems;
- by devising specific strategies for handling racial harassment.

3.5.1 Dealing with Perpetrators and Victims

Eviction (from social housing) is a common response to anti-social behaviour perpetrated by tenants. However, there is evidence that this is not always effective. For example, evicted tenants often move into private rented accommodation in the same area; alternatively, this strategy may only serve to transplant the problems elsewhere (Hunter *et al*, 2000). Research undertaken by Shelter (Butler, 1998) has also pointed to some of the problems associated with exclusions from the housing register.

However, other parties to the process may also be included in crime reduction initiatives. Waltham Forest, for example, has developed a **Witness Mobility Scheme**, with seven RSLs taking part. This provides fast track temporary or permanent relocation together with support packages for witnesses of crime and victims of harassment and domestic violence. (Housing Corporation, undated)

3.5.2 Concierge schemes

Studies of ways of improving management and security in high-rise blocks have found:

- schemes which operate through technology rather than personnel were satisfactory in relatively stable areas (e.g. where there are mature residents, or few children), but limited for less stable areas (Farr & Osborn 1997). Similarly, the Scottish Office (1998) found that technology-based schemes had disappointing results and were only effective in areas which had little crime in the first place.
- intensive concierge schemes were most effective in relatively problematic circumstances. Scottish Office found that intensive concierge schemes were more effective if combined with sensitive lettings policies. Farr and Osborn came to a similar conclusion from their work.
- dispersed concierge schemes are more effective in the block where personnel are based and where there are more generous staffing levels (Farr & Osborn 1997). An evaluation of the Safer Cities Scheme (Police Research Group 1994) provided case study evidence of a successful dispersed concierge scheme on an estate in Birmingham. This scheme covered six tower blocks and was effective in reducing the burglary rate. However, this initiative was running alongside other burglary prevention initiatives that improved security to properties, and raised paving to prevent stolen cars being driven onto the grass.
- concierge schemes have a limited impact on blocks with high proportions of young people, vulnerable people, and unemployed people. They are most effective when the problems originate from outside rather than inside the block (Farr & Osborn 1997).
- concierge schemes cannot solve problems created by poor management or allocations, but can create the conditions in which improved management and allocation policies can be effective (Farr & Osborn 1997).
- concierge schemes combined with CCTV seem to have been effective. Anecdotal evidence reported by the Scottish Office (1998) suggested that crime on an estate in Edinburgh reduced by 49% in the year following introduction of the scheme.

3.5.3 On the spot housing management

Some initiatives seek to tackle anti-social behaviour as just one of a series of objectives. For example, many local authorities and an increasing number of housing associations have introduced estate-based housing offices in the hope of improving management effectiveness, increasing tenant satisfaction and strengthening levels of demand as well as reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour. When such initiatives are evaluated, however, they rarely pay detailed attention to the impact on anti-social

behaviour as such, and rely on more generalised perceptions of neighbourhood change (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit 1993).

An exception is the evaluation of the Priority Estates Project (Power 1984, Power 1987) which provides some detail on the benefits of local housing management in reducing crime, vandalism and feelings of security amongst tenants on 20 estates. More tellingly, perhaps, the follow-up survey by Power and Tunstall (1995) found that on 16 estates residents felt that crime had decreased in eight instances and stayed the same in a further five (taking a six year period for the measurement). Local managers took a broadly similar view. Nevertheless, crime and vandalism was still seen as a serious problem on the majority of the estates, despite the introduction of various measures to mitigate their incidence. A local housing management presence, of course, might only provide a day-time service as the 'eyes and ears' of the estate, and many of the offending acts will be carried out at night. With this in mind, some landlords have set up community watch patrols to monitor crime hot-spots outside office hours, as on the Old Sinfin estate (DETR 2000).

In a more recent research study of on-the-spot housing management in deprived districts undertaken for the DTLR (Cole et al, 2001b) 18% of the 126 landlords covered in the survey felt that on-the-spot provision 'always' reduced the level of crime/anti-social behaviour and 59% felt that it 'sometimes' had this effect. However, the study also showed that few landlords undertook systematic monitoring of the impact of on-the-spot measures - these responses were based largely on perceptions of change rather than concrete empirical evidence.

The evaluation of the impact of employing neighbourhood wardens and street wardens in difficult neighbourhoods - a central part of the national strategy of neighbourhood renewal - will be undertaken over the next two years, and the lessons from these initiatives will provide valuable on-going material for NDC Partnerships.

3.5.4 Allocations and Lettings

Sensitive lettings policies are increasingly used to tackle anti-social behaviour. They allow for applicants on a waiting list to be bypassed in order that people with potentially clashing lifestyles are not housed in close proximity, or to avoid concentrations of similar types of people (e.g. children, vulnerable people). This is sometimes taken further and 'vetting' is built into a lettings policy so that tenants with a history of anti-social behaviour can be excluded from certain areas, or their properties can be managed more intensively (Cole et al, 2001a).

It is generally recognised that 'exclusion' policies should only be used as a last resort, and with a view to local authorities statutory duties. Lettings policies should also be combined with other initiatives and not used alone to tackle anti-social behaviour (Scottish Office, 1998). This may include:

- home visits to prospective tenants in order that lifestyle preferences which could lead to neighbour disputes can be identified and discussed (e.g. pets, music);
- pre-allocation visits where prospective tenant is introduced to neighbours;
- settling in visits to explain tenants rights and responsibilities;
- tenants contracts;

- more formal adoption of ‘profiling’ measures in order to allocate to a more diverse group of households in particular neighbourhoods (Cole et al, 2001a).

Case studies: lettings-based initiatives

A system has been set up in Suffolk where 6 RSLs share information on current and former tenants which acts as an early warning system to inform allocations. This may be used to exclude tenants with a history of anti-social behaviour (and others, such as tenants with arrears) but it can also prompt closer management of a property in a more preventative manner (Housing Corporation, undated).

Following a major improvement programme on the Monsall Estate in Manchester prospective new tenants are checked, references are requested, and they are encouraged to sign up to a ‘community charter’ outlining their rights and responsibilities (Foster 2000).

The impact of the adoption of choice-based lettings pilot schemes by social landlords is currently being evaluated by a team from the Universities of Bristol, Cambridge and de Montfort, but this is still at an early stage (for more details of this approach, see Brown et al, 2000). There is also keen interest in trying to attract in new households to a neighbourhood for ‘positive’ reasons, rather than relying solely on negative sanctions for ‘difficult’ tenants. Various ‘bands’ or ‘streams’ have been introduced into needs-based systems in recent years to attract the economically active, those with local links or those ‘active in the community’ into specific neighbourhoods – though as yet few of these schemes have been evaluated in terms of their impact on neighbourhood dynamics (Cole et al, 2001a).

3.5.5 Tackling racial harassment

Many social landlords take the approach that action should focus on the perpetrators of racial harassment, rather than on transferring the victims. Specific housing initiatives tend to focus on action against perpetrators in the form of ASBOs and possession proceedings. However, a study by Lemos (2000) - based on interviews with 250 agencies in 67 local authority areas - found that a very small proportion of reported cases resulted in possession action. Use of anti-social behaviour orders was rare. Although many front-line staff in housing departments had received training in equal opportunities or race awareness, specific training on racial harassment was less common. Good practice guidance on tackling racial harassment has been recently issued by DETR (2001).

3.6. The Move to New Approaches

3.6.1 Effective Co-ordination

Hunter et al (2000) argue that specialist nuisance teams or officers from a range of professional backgrounds can be a valuable part of strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour. There is evidence, in the form of good practice examples, where this approach, and other initiatives relying on effective co-ordination between agencies, have been used to some effect.

A Tenancy enforcement team set up by a consortium of RSLs, and funded by a charge to clients (the 15 RSLs to which the service is provided). It is an out-of-hours service which gathers evidence on a range of anti-social behaviour, using surveillance amongst other things. The team passes the evidence to the client (landlord) which then decides what action to take. This initiative is now in its fourth year and has been successful to the extent that 40% of complaints have been resolved, with 90% customer satisfaction. (Housing Corporation, undated)

Co-ordinated approaches to tackle crime have been adopted on an estate in Elswick. This is a project which co-ordinates the work of different agencies in the area (including early intervention with young people, targeting anti-social residents, joint interviews with co-ordinator, police and LA). This has resulted in a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour, better multi-agency working and faster response from agencies. The project is funded through Safer Cities Project. (Housing Corporation, undated)

Castle Vale Housing Action Trust is one of an increasing number of agencies appointing an Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator, who works for the HAT and a local Housing Association. This helps provides a consistent approach to anti-social behaviour regardless of the tenants landlord. (Cited in PAT 8, 2000) A safer estates agreement has also been developed in conjunction with the West Midlands police, including joint procedures to exchange information on breaches of tenancy conditions. (DETR 2000)

South Yorkshire Housing Association, Rotherham MBC and a private landlord, with the support of an inter-agency working group, established a joint approach to tackling anti-social behaviour on an estate, culminating in a formal agreement . Each agreed not to re-house any resident evicted on the grounds of anti-social behaviour, and to support each other in action taken against perpetrators (Cole et al, 2001b)

The **Neighbourhood Agreement** on the Foxwood estate in York has incorporated a wide range of agencies with an interest in reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour - such as the youth service, the police and all social landlords. The agreement includes formal procedures for dealing with neighbour disputes, target times for police responses and wider issues of community safety (see Cole et al, 2000).

3.6.2 Resettlement services

There is very little evidence about resettlement initiatives, and indeed very few landlords have so far taken this approach to anti-social behaviour (PAT 8, 2000). However, the DTLR has recently commissioned research to be undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University that will touch on this issue. The few examples identified below have not been evaluated but tend to be presented as 'good practice' in the literature.

The Dundee Family Project supports families threatened with eviction, or following eviction because of anti-social behaviour. The project helps families develop skills to maintain their tenancies. Families are either accommodated in a Core block where there is 24 hour support available, or in dispersed accommodation. An outreach prevention service is also offered by the project to families in their own homes who are at risk of losing their accommodation. The PAT 8 report notes that the project has 'worked successfully' with 70 families so far.

The Westminster Support Service, comprising two housing support workers and a team co-ordinator, provides a support and resettlement package for new tenants who may have difficulty sustaining their tenancy, and tenants at risk of eviction due to anti-social behaviour. The service began in 1997 and there have been no evictions amongst the tenants receiving the service (they work with around 50 tenants at a time). (This case study is cited in PAT 8).

4. HOUSING INVESTMENT AT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

4.1. Summary Points

4.2. The Nature of the Evidence Base

4.3. Housing Investment Linked with other Housing, Environmental, and Non-Housing Initiatives

4.4. The Impact of Housing Investment on Physical Improvement

4.5. The Impact of Housing Investment on Resident Satisfaction

4.6. Involving Residents in Housing Investment Programmes

4.1. SUMMARY POINTS

Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- The success of large housing investment programmes may be dependent upon strong linkages with other areas such as crime prevention and employment.
- Housing investment alone is unlikely to 'turn around' estate decline and bring long-term changes. To promote sustainability, major investment programmes need to be integrated into wider strategies which encompass physical, management and social issues.
- On-going resident involvement is critical at every stage of a housing investment programme. Investment strategies also need to bear in mind the interests and aspirations of *potential* residents, not just existing households.

Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- There is a need for longer term assessments of the impact of housing investment.
- More research is needed on the impact of investment on surrounding areas.
- Evidence is needed about the differential impact of investment at a local level, taking into account local market conditions.
- It is difficult to isolate the impact of housing investment from accompanying initiatives, particularly where it takes place within regeneration programmes.

4.2. The Nature of the Evidence Base

Housing investment is undertaken to tackle a wide range of issues – from poor stock condition, to bad housing design, to low demand. Investment programmes are often part of wider regeneration measures seeking to make a range of physical, environmental, social and economic changes, and investment may be accompanied by other initiatives tackling issues such as unemployment and crime.

Capital investment programmes range from large-scale demolition, rebuilding and remodelling of estates, to small-scale initiatives such as replacing windows, renewing roofs, modernising kitchens or installing central heating.

As large-scale housing investment is often a key part of regeneration programmes, and it is within government-led or commissioned evaluations of these programmes that much of the evidence can be found. Some key evaluations include:

- DETR 1998
- DETR 1998b
- DETR 1998c
- DoE 1995,
- DoE, 1996
- DoE, 1997
- DoE, 1997b

Many of these evaluations focus on the impact of housing investment on *physical* improvement, while assessments of other impacts (for example on tenant satisfactions, or area demand¹) are more limited. Some programmes, such as Estate Action and Housing Action Trusts have, however, adopted wider objectives associated with improving the quality of life on run-down estates, going beyond physical refurbishment. An emphasis on improving local housing management, diversifying tenure and attracting private investment, alongside related objectives such as enhancing employment opportunities, can be identified from evidence such as:

- Beazley et al (1997)
- Power and Mumford (1999)
- Lee and Murie 1997
- SEU (1998)

¹ Although see section X (low demand) for some evidence relating to the impact of investment on area demand.

Jones and Watkins (1996) note that evaluations of property-led urban policy initiatives such as Urban Development Corporations - which have aimed to encourage private sector investment to regenerate derelict, usually inner city, areas – tend to focus on assessing value for money rather than on the broader and more elusive environmental, social and community impacts.

Identifying what works *where and when* is also problematic from the regeneration evidence. Much of this material draws conclusions about the success of an overall regeneration programme, making it difficult to distinguish the impact of specific housing initiatives, or the direct consequences of housing investment. At times, it is suggested that housing investment is enhanced within such programmes because it makes such a tangible and visual transformation, compared to some of the less clear-cut objectives, such as ‘developing community capability’ or ‘improving the quality of life’.

4.3. Housing Investment linked with other Housing, Environmental, and Non-Housing Initiatives

The consensus about securing longer term benefits through housing-led regeneration programmes is that they need to be integrated into wider strategies which encompass physical, management and social issues (DoE 1996, Groves & Niner 1988). They need to be combined with other social and environmental initiatives, such as improving the commercial core of the estate, traffic calming, creating more traditional street layouts, and replacing underused public spaces with community play areas (DETR 2000b).

Much of the evidence refers to the linkages between housing and non-housing initiatives as a key factor in the success of investment programmes. For example, evidence of good practice from City Challenge (DETR 2000e) and regeneration practice on social housing estates (DETR 2000b) revealed that successful housing projects were based on establishing strong links with crime prevention projects, community initiatives, environmental improvements, and employment and training projects. Similarly, Foster (2000) suggests that tackling social problems alongside physical improvement (for example, an apprentice scheme to improve employment opportunities) was one of the key factors contributing to the success of the major regeneration programme on the Monsall estate in Manchester.

Research by Scottish Homes (2000b) into a major programme of housing renewal and development - prompted in part by high instances of crime in areas of Edinburgh - suggests that the security conscious design was partly responsible for enhanced stability in the area. There was some doubt, however, about how far reduced crime could be directly attributed to improved design. It is suggested that other factors, such as increased methadone prescriptions, may have also made a significant contribution.

DETR (2000b) found that, of the eighteen case studies in the research, all had embarked on non-housing and non-physical initiatives within their regeneration programmes. The evidence underlined the importance of getting the balance right between housing and non-housing elements. An over-emphasis on housing improvements could lead to neglect of issues such as community capacity building or the need to promote positive images, while an emphasis on environmental (non-housing) improvements could provoke resentment from tenants.

Other evidence supports this finding. The evaluation of Housing Action Areas (1996) by Scottish Homes revealed that a primary focus on physical improvement had little impact on other problems such as labour market disadvantage. Any changes in economic activity were more attributable to changing tenure patterns and in- and out- migration. This in turn raises the need for a balance to be struck between the priority given to the 'static' aspects of a neighbourhood – namely its physical infra-structure – and the more dynamic elements of household turnover and the impact of incoming groups. In a different vein, McGregor et al (1994) also noted the limited effects of the wider impact of housing investment; residents who tended to secure jobs in construction or administration due to investment would usually have been in employment anyway.

In their study of twenty unpopular council estates, Power and Turnstall (1995) found that *"intensive localised management was as important in arresting decline as reinvestment"* (p6). Conversely, improved housing management and similar initiatives to combat problems on estates might be unlikely to work without substantial investment. For example Foster (2000) shows that on the Monsall Estate in Manchester there had been previous attempts to address social problems without capital investment. Eventually it was recognised that the estate could not be turned round without design changes and major capital investment. The ensuing intensive regeneration programme was underpinned by significant investment and reaped better reward.

4.5. The Impact of Housing Investment on Physical Improvement.

The evidence suggests that investment in the housing stock has been generally successful in bringing visible physical improvements to estates and areas. Indeed it has been claimed that the achievements of area-based housing initiatives within broader regeneration programmes tend to be greatest in terms of bringing about physical improvements to the design and condition of stock (DoE 1996, DoE 1997). Two evaluations of UDCs, for example, suggested that they contributed to the provision of new and improved housing (DETR 1998, DETR 1998b) and the Scottish Homes evaluation of Housing Action Areas (1996) mentioned improving stock conditions as a key impact. Between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of housing in the HAA case study areas were below tolerable standard before investment. After intervention, in some areas this had reduced to just 2 per cent of properties failing standards tests on the basis of damp, and 5 per cent due to structural instability. The HAA intervention had also improved the provision of local amenities - although this may have occurred without the programme.

This evidence points to concrete benefits in bringing about physical improvements in the neighbourhoods, but the wider benefits of investment are more contestable. Failure to address management, social and economic problems often detracts from the physical improvements and results in limited impact on resident satisfaction. (DoE 1996, DoE 1997b). In many instances this has reflected the undue focus of the regeneration programme on physical improvement.

There is extensive evidence that investment has had a limited impact on tackling issues such as poverty and social deprivation (Crook et al 1996, Central Research Unit 1996), crime and vandalism (DoE 1996) and poor estate image (Hastings and Dean, 2001). Similarly, an independent evaluation of Newcastle's West End City Challenge (Robinson 1997) shows that, although success was achieved in relation to improved physical condition and range of stock, the void rate rose to a higher level than it was when the programme began.

It is also questionable whether the physical improvements achieved through investment are sustainable. Much of the evidence, particularly in terms of regeneration initiatives, is collected during, or shortly after the end of, the programme. There is very little longitudinal evidence assessing whether physical improvements have been sustained. Groves and Niner's study of predominantly owner-occupied inner city areas which had undergone renewal investment found that properties quickly deteriorated again (Groves and Niner 1998). They also found little evidence that investment had stimulated further improvements by owner occupiers. The limited comparative longitudinal evidence on investment in the social rented sector makes it difficult to assess the influence of tenure on the findings of the Groves and Niner study.

4.6. The Impact of Housing Investment on Resident Satisfaction.

Section 2 discussed the role of housing investment and physical improvement in stimulating demand for a neighbourhood – not least in terms of its effectiveness in increasing *external* demand for an area from *potential* tenants. Here the evidence on the impact of investment on the satisfaction of existing residents is assessed.

There is relatively little material that seeks to identify the links between investment and satisfaction levels, which partly reflects a lack of baseline information. However, some evidence can be gleaned from post-intervention research. For example, Scottish Homes research (1996) found that satisfaction rates in the eight case study Housing Action Areas ranged from 60 per cent to 90 per cent following the improvement process. This evidence does not, unfortunately, capture the extent of *change* in satisfaction.

Increased resident satisfaction is often implicit in the conclusions drawn about the impact of housing investment, rather than taken from solid evidence. It is generally assumed that where the condition, type, and layout of properties are improved, so resident satisfaction will increase. In other cases improved satisfaction is assumed from other indicators, such as changing rates of transfer requests. However, one must be cautious in drawing appropriate inferences from this data. An increase in requests to move out of an area might, for example, represent growing confidence about moving on or higher aspirations in the household concerned, rather than signal dissatisfaction.

Evans' study (undated) with the Housing Corporation evaluated Housing Plus initiatives in six case study areas in terms of changes in residents' perceptions of their 'quality of life'. Over 70 per cent of the survey respondents in four of the areas felt that the new development had improved their quality of life. Evans (1998) has also measured resident satisfaction in terms of the proportion of people wanting to leave six estates undergoing regeneration, and the level of confidence in the communities. The findings revealed marked improvements in both areas. However, Evans acknowledges the difficulty of disentangling the effects of core housing activity from housing plus initiatives and the contributions of other agencies.

Foster's study (2000) does seek to make explicit links between tenant satisfaction and housing improvements. This evidence is based mainly on surveys of council and RSL tenants at eight research sites representing a range of capital schemes. Some of the schemes involved major regeneration of large estates, whilst others involved only minor modernisation of small numbers of properties. The study usefully identifies those factors likely to increase the chances of investment having a positive impact on resident

satisfaction. The case study illustrates some of these key factors, which are highlighted in more detail in the following section.

Case Study: Impact of Housing Investment on Resident Satisfaction

Oliver Close, Waltham Forest, London

Oliver Close is one of four newly built estates, replacing four existing high rise estates and comprising 260 terraced houses built by Waltham Forest HAT and managed by Waltham Forest Community Based Housing Association. It is reported that levels of satisfaction on this estate are extremely high (although no figures are provided). The management of the investment programme was considered crucial in achieving this result.

- Tenants were involved in the design and planning of the new estate, influenced the design of the new houses, and the road layout. They had a choice of 90 house design types.
- Tenants also had extensive choice of internal fittings and fixtures, including a voucher scheme so tenants could make their own choices from local suppliers.
- Show houses were set up so that tenants could see how different combinations of colours and other internal features worked and were visited in their homes by designers.
- New homes were built whilst tenants were still living in their own homes.

In the above case study, the high levels of satisfaction were not necessarily attributable to the investment *per se* but to the way the programme was managed. The high degree of tenant control over the redevelopment process, the extent of choice over their new homes, and the commitment of the HAT to tenant-led decision making are thought to have had a significant impact on the overall success of the programme. As the Oliver Close scheme was fully grant funded from central government, rents were kept relatively low for high quality dwellings. It is not possible to assess whether satisfaction would have been as high if rents had risen to part fund the additional investment.

An earlier, three-year monitoring study of an Estate Action programme on Bell Farm Estate in York (Cole and Smith 1996) found that a programme of housing and environmental improvements, alongside changes in service provision and resident involvement, increased satisfaction from 57 per cent in 1989 to 86 per cent in 1994.

Set against such findings, Scottish Homes (2000b) found that in one case study area a programme of extensive investment had not produced satisfaction rates any higher than those in the surrounding deprived area. Again, this evidence is not able to contextualise its findings. It is therefore unclear from the case study how much the location (within a generally deprived area, rather than as a pocket of social exclusion in an otherwise popular area) may have affected the success of the programme.

4.6. Involving Residents in Investment Programmes

Many of the lessons from the evidence focus on the importance of tenant involvement in investment programmes, however large or small (for example JRF *Housing Summary 5*, Foster 2000, DETR 2000b, Watson, undated). The following emerge as key requisites for a successful programme of investment, likely to result in higher satisfaction amongst residents.

Give tenants as much choice as possible.

For example with regard to property type if new build, fixtures and fittings, and also involve in decisions about priorities. Foster (2000) identified a small estate in Dorset (Lower Cranesmoor) on the edge of a rural village where there was some tenant dissatisfaction following the work. Tenants felt they were not given enough choice over their window types and other fixtures and fittings, and felt that the new kitchens which were installed would not have been their priority if they had been better consulted. While a range of options for tenants does help to raise satisfaction, the trade-off between extending choice, on the one hand, and the loss of economies of scale or increased demands on management, on the other, has never been costed in any systematic way (Cole et al, 1998).

Involve tenants in the design of the estate and of their homes

On the basis of eighteen case studies of different regeneration programmes a DETR report (2000b) has stressed the importance of involving tenants at the earliest possible stage of the programme, so that their design preferences are considered. The example of the Beechwood estate in Birkenhead is given, where tenants were involved in regeneration through an Estate Management Board and were able to influence significant changes to the estate design. This resulted in a more appropriate property mix for the needs and preferences of the local population. Similarly, Foster (2000) provides an example from Monsall in Manchester of tenant involvement through estate meetings, steering groups, and door to door surveys to promote participation in planning the new estate. (This included rejecting local authority plans to retain some pre-1919 housing, along with plans for car parking arrangements). This is reported as the key to the success of the programme. Conversely, some dissatisfaction with the outcome of the programme had stemmed from a failure to respond to tenants' suggestions to reduce drastically the number of flats in the neighbourhood.

Involve tenants as early as possible, and allow for a long lead-in for their involvement

Evidence from the eighteen case studies examined by Foster (2000) indicated that a relatively long period of time is needed if tenants are to be involved in planning and implementing capital programmes. During this period, the capacity of residents to contribute to the different stages of the process can be developed sequentially. Examples of this approach are found in Bonamy (Southwark, London) and Bloomsbury (Birmingham) which for various reasons were able to build capacity prior to the programme. This significantly aided the subsequent regeneration programmes.

The study by Fordham *et al* into implementation of Housing Plus initiatives (1997) found that these initiatives significantly improved the capacity of tenants' organisation to participate in the management and regeneration of the estates. Similarly, on the basis of evaluation of Bell Farm estate and North Hull HAT Arnold and Cole (1998) argue that

sustainability may depend upon ability of residents to continue to have influence and control after the 'drama' of undertaking and completing the major capital works has passed.

If possible, ensure equity of treatment between households in terms of their benefits from improvements;

Foster (2000) found that tenants of newly built properties on Hillside Road, Bexhill-on-sea in Sussex were less satisfied with their new homes than tenants whose homes were rehabilitated. There was little standardisation between the two types of property - for example UPVC frames were put in the rehabilitated properties whilst wooden windows were used in the new build scheme. In addition, the rehabilitated properties were considered of a higher standard and had fewer snagging problems. There is also evidence that, where a programme is 'phased', tenants involved in the first phase are less satisfied than those in later phases, as any problems have, by then, been ironed out (Foster 2000).

Keep decanting to a minimum, and introduce other strategies to ensure that the community does not become fragmented

The DETR study (2000b) suggests that minimum decanting during refurbishment is important to prevent fragmentation of the community. Foster (2000) also provides a case study in Bristol where tenants were decanted from a very unpopular estate and given their choice of properties to be moved into. The redevelopment took many years and by the time the work was completed the original community had been dispersed. No original tenants wanted to return to the estate. This estate had been remodelled with the needs of the *existing* community in mind, many of whom were elderly. The result was an estate with too many sheltered and elderly persons units for which there was not enough demand. Further remodelling was then necessary. This again underlines the importance of determining the extent to which physical improvements are directed to the preferences of households *in situ*, or to the assumed requirements of potential in-comers.

Some lessons for investment programmes'

- Tenant involvement in planning is critically important in larger schemes, especially if funded through competitive regeneration programmes.
- Where people move from high rise to new build houses they tend to respond positively. But where people are already living in houses they often prefer rehabilitation to redevelopment.
- In larger schemes dissatisfaction arises if tenants in a later phase receive a higher specification and better design, as problems from the first phase are resolved. Some compensatory measures may then be required for the 'guinea pigs'.
- Scottish Homes (1996) found that amalgamation of flats to improve the mix of dwelling size was more successful in areas where social landlords acquired and improved the dwellings. In those cases with higher levels of owner occupation, the level of amalgamation was lower or non-existent.

DETR (2000b) also suggested two additional general principles to inform capital investment programmes:

- provide traditional housing rather than maisonettes or high rise, including converting maisonette blocks into houses by decapitating.
- reduce density – through selective demolition.

5. HOUSING MANAGEMENT

5.1. Summary Points

5.2. Issues

5.3. Local Housing Management

5.4. Management of Multi-Landlord Estates

5.5. Allocations and Lettings

5.1. SUMMARY POINTS

Key Messages for NDC Partnerships

- Whilst localised housing management initiatives can be an important aspect in a portfolio of measures to improve a neighbourhood, they will have limited impact in areas in serious decline or where there is local housing market failure.
- Particular attention must be given to the management of multi-landlord estates. Variations in services, rents, and property standards can lead to resentment from and amongst tenants. Joint agreements are suggested as good practice.

A Checklist of Possible Initiatives

- **Localised housing management**
 - Estate-based offices
 - Specialist staff such as caretakers, concierges and neighbourhood wardens
 - Locally determined allocations
 - Estate Management Boards
 - Other forms of Tenant Management Organisations
- Estate/neighbourhood agreements or contracts
- Multi-landlord initiatives
- **Lettings and allocation initiatives**
 - Community or local lettings policies
 - Vetting tenants/introductory tenancies

Issues for the Future Evaluation of NDCs

- Although there is virtually universal agreement that localised housing management can bring a wide range of benefits there is little concrete evidence to demonstrate this.
- Similarly, there is even less evidence which can adequately assess the costs of localised housing management, and therefore judge the cost effectiveness of this approach.
- Choice-based lettings policies are likely to have an impact in many areas in the next few years. However, this approach to allocations, and therefore evidence of its impact, is still in its infancy.
- The links between localised housing management and emerging forms of neighbourhood management require evaluation, to assess whether anticipated synergies are achieved in practice.

5.2. Issues

The contribution of housing management initiatives to area-based regeneration programmes, and to tackling a range of neighbourhood issues (such as anti-social behaviour, void properties or low demand) has been highlighted in other sections of this review. Changes to allocation policies, for example, are reportedly the most common response to problems of empty properties in the social rented sector (see section 2), and on-the-spot housing management is thought to help tackle anti-social behaviour (see section 3). In this section, the overall role of housing management to neighbourhood renewal will be briefly addressed

With the exception of the Priority Estate Project (PEP), discussed below in more detail, the focus of regeneration projects has tended to be on housing development, rehabilitation and investment rather than on housing management. The PEP has been the main housing management-led regeneration programme, but this was only subjected to partial monitoring and evaluation.

The contribution of housing management is certainly coming to the fore again, particularly with regard to ‘on-the-spot’ service delivery and the need to rethink allocations and lettings at the local level. The Social Exclusion Unit (1998) and Policy Action Team 5 (1999) have both suggested that on-the-spot housing management has an important role to play in combating social exclusion. The Chartered Institute of Housing has produced a series of good practice briefings suggesting that effective housing management can retain and attract residents (CIH 1998) and that caretaking and estate services can improve residents’ quality of life (CIH 1997). The current piloting of choice-based lettings, and the evaluation attached to this will be producing evidence within the next two years. Social landlords are already moving away from a sole reliance on needs-based allocations (Scott et al 20001b) and some evidence of the effect of such initiatives has already emerged (Cole et al 2001a, Housing Corporation 2001).

However, evidence about the impact of choice-based lettings is still in its infancy, other than an evaluation of a successful pilot scheme in Harborough District Council (Brown et

al, 2001). Research for Scottish Homes by the Policy Research Centre at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside found that few housing organisations have yet to make clear links between increased choice for applicants and social exclusion. The study of changing allocations policies by Cole et al (2001) found that monitoring and evaluation of revised allocations and lettings policies has yet to be developed.

5.3. Local Housing Management

In the study by Scott et al (2001b) of good practice in housing management, it is suggested that social landlords' contribution to regeneration programmes is usually in the form of decentralised service delivery. Scott et al (2001) also note that advice on improving management in problematic areas usually focuses on recommending a localised approach.

Local, or 'on-the-spot', housing management may be implemented through a range of initiatives including:

- estate based offices
- caretakers
- concierges
- neighbourhood wardens
- local repairs services
- local administration of lettings
- estate budgets.

Developing a localised management approach to tackling deprived and problematic estates is not new. Following criticisms of inefficient, unresponsive and bureaucratic housing management in the local authority sector in the 1970s a range of initiatives and programmes were introduced. The most influential programme was the Priority Estates Project set up in 1979 and based on the premise that neighbourhood based, sensitive management could 'turn around' difficult-to-let, problematic estates (Power 1982, 1987).

The evaluation of the PEP in 1993 by Glennerster and Turner concluded that this approach had been a success but it also stressed that localised housing management was not enough to combat the multiple problems of difficult to let estates. This echoes much of the evidence presented throughout this review that a 'one note' approach, whether investment-led, management-led or even solely housing-led, is unlikely to have as significant an impact as a co-ordinated range of strategies. In their guide to sustainable regeneration, DETR (2000b) advocates the benefits of *intensive* housing management during regeneration programmes, but suggests that this does not necessarily have to be *localised*. The research uncovered examples of successful improvement programmes where there was no dedicated local presence and it suggests that the critical factor is high quality, sensitive and responsive management rather than local service delivery *per se*.

Nevertheless, research by Cole et al (2001), based on a postal survey and nine case studies, found that social landlords perceived on-the-spot housing management to produce a wide range of benefits, even though none of them could support this with hard evidence. *Perceived* impacts included:

- increased resident satisfaction
- help to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour by identifying emerging problem early on

- improving estate popularity
- contribution to the success of regeneration programmes
- reduce demands on other service providers
- raised management and maintenance performance.

The earlier study by Power and Turnstall (1995) echoed some of these perceptions. They found that the introduction of local housing management on 18 unpopular estates had resulted in:

- reduced voids on most estates
- Improved lettings
- lower turnover
- improved in popularity in relation to other estates.

The various initiatives introduced within the strategy of local housing management also receive some support from the evidence. Delivering a local housing management service through local offices is, for example, recommended by Page (1994), Taylor (1995) and Anderson (1998) in the context of social exclusion and regeneration. The research by Cole et al (2001) found that the most common way in which on-the-spot housing management was implemented was through estate-based offices.

The success of the regeneration of the Bell Farm estate in York was due in part to the intensive local presence (Cole and Smith, 1996, DETR 2000b). During the extensive improvement and remodelling of the estate a team of three staff worked from an empty property on the estate. Similarly, the research by Cole et al (2001) highlights an example of a housing association in South Yorkshire providing a local presence throughout an extensive investment programme. Housing management staff felt firmly that this presence was a positive turning point in the programme. The difficulty with such approaches concerns the demands on landlords' resources, the imbalance with levels of service delivery elsewhere and the need for an 'exit' or 'forward' strategy after a time limited period.

The DETR study (2000b) also suggests that estates which had introduced an Estate Management Board (EMB) during improvement programmes displayed greater levels of customer awareness with regard to repairs and other aspects of service delivery. In addition, on one estate (Beechwood) the cost of maintenance and repairs halved after EMB took over. As with most of this evidence it is not possible to attribute this to the introduction of an EMB alone. This estate had also been extensively remodelled, and new community, health and employment facilities had been introduced.

Much of the evidence discussed above is based on the perceptions of housing professionals and tenants. While there is widespread agreement about the benefits of local housing management, there are few studies which can demonstrate this conclusively. A further gap in the evidence relates to the cost effectiveness of local housing management. The report of Policy Action Team 5 suggests that *"...there remains a lack of hard information about both the costs and benefits of an on-the-spot housing management package..."* (Policy Action Team 5, 1999, 1.52)

There have been several attempts to address cost effectiveness but all have been constrained by the complexities of assessing both costs and benefits on the ground. Cole et al (2001) examined the extent to which social landlords could calculate the additional costs and benefits produced by introducing on-the-spot management and found that very few

social landlords had the necessary tools to do this. A study undertaken by Arthur Anderson and the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham (2000) drew similar conclusions, finding that local authorities' attempts to evaluate their localised housing management initiatives were relatively crude.

5.4. Management of Multi-Landlord Estates

Much of the evidence discussed thus far focuses on housing management by a single landlord. However, multi-landlord estates are becoming increasingly common with as initiatives to produce mixed tenure estates become more popular, and stock transfer continues (see section 2).

Research into multi-landlord estates is still very limited but available evidence suggests that this can give rise to management problems. Research by DETR (2000b) found that on multi-landlord estates there are often variations in management arrangement and rents which can create disharmony between residents. Hare and Zipfel (1995), in their study of multi-landlord estates for the National Federation of Housing Associations, found that multi-landlordism *"did nothing to...address complex problems that flowed from the concentration of disadvantaged households."* (p8). A key reason is that multi-landlord arrangements are complex, and tenants can receive different levels of service or different standard of improvements which causes resentment. Furthermore, research by Crook et al (1996) found that few associations had developed agreements about the long-term management of the estate.

There are examples of good practice. On the Monsall estate, a joint estate agreement between the four landlords has been developed in order to ensure common management standards (DETR, 2000b). On the Foxwood estate in York, a multi-landlord, mixed tenure area, a Neighbourhood Agreement has been devised along similar lines, involving the local authority, three RSLs, health, social services, the police, the youth service and an employment service. An initial evaluation has pointed to positive benefits for residents in different parts of the estate (Cole et al, 2001c). There are also an increasing number of examples of joint agreements between different landlords on estates to establish a common policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour (Cole et al, 2001).

5.5. Allocations and Lettings

Evidence suggests that reforms to allocations and lettings systems can be crucial in addressing demand problems, and contributing to the success and sustainability of regeneration programmes. Kemp and Fordham (1997), for example, highlight the importance of lettings policies in 'housing plus' programmes on five London housing association estates, particularly in terms of encouraging a mix of tenants on estates, and reducing child density. Power & Turnstall (1995) also found that local lettings policies consistently led to less empty property over a 15 year period.

The research by Griffiths et al (1996) - based on seven case studies of community lettings schemes and a wider survey - examined initiatives introduced to improve difficult to let estates, and, alongside other initiatives, protect existing stable communities, prevent future problems on new or recently modernised estates and help to achieve a wider social mix. Their evaluation of these schemes produced mixed results. On some estates there was a reduction in voids, lower turnover and increased demand but in others serious problems

remained or grew worse. This evidence concludes that the effectiveness of community lettings is unclear, and the study could not specify why success was achieved in some case study areas and not others. The authors also found a reluctance amongst social landlords to implement community lettings schemes. The impetus to experiment has, however, gathered pace rapidly in recent years.

Traditionally, housing need has been the primary basis for allocation of social housing in Britain but the criteria governing access have often been an amalgam of different systems, ideas and practices rather than based on a single principle (Cole et al, 2001b). More recently there has been a move away from needs-based lettings in efforts to promote consumer choice, and encourage balanced communities.

Research for Scottish Homes (Policy Studies Research Centre undated) examined the role of allocation policies in tackling social exclusion. It found that initiatives such as local lettings policies can promote social inclusion, meet needs more effectively, support community networks, and give applicants choice. However, they also found that social landlords rarely developed local lettings policies for precisely these reasons, due to the extra demands on management time. Cole et al (2001) highlight the growing expectation that choice-based lettings will empower customers, thereby increasing satisfaction; creating sustainable communities; filling empty properties; and responding to changing expectations. There is a risk, it is suggested, that some of the broader social goals attached to changed policies may not be realised in practice, though the need to rethink allocations and lettings procedures is undoubtedly overdue.

An evaluation of the a choice-based lettings pilot in Mansfield by People for Action and summarised in a Housing Corporation report (Housing Corporation 20001) - found that interest in letting a home from a participating landlord increased dramatically during the pilot period, and demand was generated for properties which were considered difficult to let. However, the evaluation also suggested that taking this approach would be a challenge, and potentially expensive for a housing association with stock dispersed across many local authority areas.

REFERENCES

Aldbourne Associates (1993), *Managing Neighbour Complaints in Social Housing: A Handbook for Practitioners*, Aldbourne Associates, Aldbourne

Anderson, K. (1998), *Unlocking the Future: Tackling Social Exclusion*, CIH in Scotland, Edinburgh

Arnold, P. and Cole, (1998), 'Community Involvement and Neighbourhood Regeneration', in Cooper, C. and Hawtin, M. (eds), *Resident Involvement and Community Action: Theory to Practice*, CIH

Atkinson, R., Mullen, T. and Scott, S. (2000), *The Use of Civil Legal Remedies for Neighbour Nuisance in Scotland*, Scottish Executive central Research Unit, Edinburgh.

Atkinson, R. and Kintrea, K. (2000), 'Owner Occupation, Social mix and Neighbourhood Impacts', *Policy and Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 93-108

Beazley, M., Hall, S., Lee, P., Loftman, P., and Nevin, B., (1997), *Housing and the SRB in London and West Midlands*, CURS, University of Birmingham, Birmingham.

Bines, W., Kemp, P., Pleace, N., and Radley, C. *Managing Social Housing: A Study of Landlord Performance*; London HMSO 1993

Bramley, G., Pawson, H., Hague, C., MacIntosh, S., Third, H. and Parker, J. (2000) *Low Demand Housing and Unpopular Neighbourhoods*, The Stationary Office, London,

Broomleigh HA: *Report on the operation of the Cray Local Lettings Scheme: Paper to operations committee 25.7.96*

Brown, T., Hunt, R., Bacon, N. (2000), *A Question of Choice*, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry

Butler, J (1998) *Access Denied*, Shelter, London

Central Research Unit (1996), *Partnership in the Regeneration of Urban Scotland*, HMSO, Edinburgh

Chartered Institute of Housing (1995), *Neighbour Nuisance: Ending the Nightmare*, Good Practice Briefing No. 3, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry:

Chartered Institute of Housing (1995b), *Making the Best Use of the Social Rented Stock: Good Practice Briefing No. 2*, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry:

Chartered Institute of Housing (1997), *Taking Care of Estates*, Good Practice Briefing 8, CIH, Coventry

Chartered Institute of Housing (1998), *Community Regeneration: Good Practice Briefing No. 12*, CIH, Coventry

- Clapham, D., Kintrea, K., Malcolm, J., Parkey, H. and Scott, S. (1995) *Baseline Study of Housing Management in Scotland*, Scottish Office Central Research Unit, Edinburgh
- Cole, I., and Smith, Y. (1996), *From Estate Action to Estate Agreement*, Policy press, Bristol
- Cole, I., Kane, S. and Robinson, D (1999), *Changing Demand, Changing Neighbourhoods: The Response of Social Landlords*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield
- Cole, I. and Shayer, S. (1998), *Beyond Housing Investment: Regeneration, Sustainability and the Role of Housing Associations*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield
- Cole, I, McCoulough, E. and Southworth, J. (2000), *Neighbourhood Agreements in Action: A case study in York*, York Publishing Services, York
- Cole, I, Iqbal, B. and Slocombe, L. (2001a), *Social Engineering or Consumer Choice? The Future of Housing Allocations*, Chartered Institute of Housing, Coventry
- Cole I, Hickman P and Reeve K (2001b) *On-the-Spot Housing Management: A Review of Policy and Practice by Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords* CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield
- Cole, I., Greenwood, S., Hickman, P. and McCoulough (2000), *The Dynamics of Local Housing Demand: A Case Study of the City of Carlisle*, Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield,
- Coleman, A., (1985), *Utopia on Trial*, Hilary Shipman, London
- Collins, S., and O'Carroll, D. (1997), *Anti-Social Behaviour and Housing: The Law*, Legal Services Agency, Edinburgh
- Crime Concern (1998), *Reducing Neighbourhood Crime: A Manual for Action*, Crime Concern, Swindon
- Crook, A. D. H., Darke, R.A. and Disson, J. S. (1996), *A New Lease of Life? Housing Association Investment on Local Authority Housing Estates*, Policy Press, Bristol
- Dean, J. and Hastings, A. (2000), *Challenging Images: Housing Estates, Stigma and Regeneration*, JRF, Policy Press
- DETR (1998), *Regenerating London Docklands*, DETR, London
- DETR (1998b), *Urban Development Corporations: Performance and Good Practice*, DETR, London
- DETR (1998c), *The impact of Urban Development Corporations in Leeds, Bristol and Central Manchester*, DETR, London
- DETR (1999), *A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Report of Policy Action Team 7, Unpopular Housing*, DETR, London

DETR (2000), *Responding to Low Demand Housing and Unpopular Neighbourhoods: A Guide to Good Practice*, DETR, London

DETR (2000b), *Regeneration that lasts: a guide to good practice on Social Housing Estates*, DETR, London

DETR (2000c), *Demolition and New Building on Local Authority Estates*, DETR, London

DETR (2000d), *Low Demand Housing and Unpopular Neighbourhoods*, DETR, London

DETR (2000e), *City Challenge - Final National Evaluation*, DETR, London

DETR (2001) *Tackling Racial Harassment: Code of Practice for Social Landlords*, Housing Research Summary, No. 148,

Dhooge, Y., and Barelli, J. (1998), *Racial Attacks and Harassment: The Response of Social Landlords*, DETR, London

DoE (1995), *Final Evaluation of Enterprise Zones*, DoE, London

DoE (1996), *An evaluation of six early Estate Action Schemes*, HMSO, London

DoE (1997), *Housing Action Trusts; evaluation of baseline conditions; Regeneration Research summary*, DETR, London

DoE (1997b) *Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment and Renewal Areas*, DoE, London

DoE / Price Waterhouse, *The Design Improvement Controlled Experiment (DICE): An Evaluation of the Impact, Costs and Benefits of Remodelling*, Price Waterhouse

Evans, R., *Tackling Deprivation on Social Housing Estates in England: An assessment of the Housing Plus Approach*, *Housing Studies*, September 1998, Vol. 13, Issue 5

Evans, R. (undated) *Housing Plus and Urban Regeneration: What Works, How, Why and Where?* Liverpool, John Moores University and MORI, Housing Corporation, London

Farr, J., and Osborn, S., (1997), *High Hopes, Concierge, Controlled Entry and Similar Schemes for High Rise Blocks*, DoE, London

Ford, T. and Pawson, H. (2001), *Low Demand for Housing Association Housing: Measuring Low Demand, the National Picture*, Sector Study 7 for the Housing Corporation,

Fordham, G., Kemp, R. and Crowsley, P. (1997) *Going the extra mile: implementing 'Housing Plus' on Five London Housing Association Estates*, The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

Foster, A., (2000), *Putting your House in Order: Evaluating Tenant Satisfaction with Improvements to Social Housing*, Treasury, Public Services Productivity Panel, London

- Glennerston, H. and Turner, T (1993) *Estate Based Management: An Evaluation*, DoE, London
- Griffiths, M., Park, J., Smith, R., Stirling, T. and Trott, T (1996), *Community Lettings: Local Allocation Policies in Practice*, York Publishing Services for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York
- Groves, R., and Niner, P. (1998) *A Good Investment? The Impact of Urban Renewal on an Inner City Housing Market*, Policy Press, West Sussex
- Housing Corporation (undated), *Not Afraid Now: Housing Associations Making Safer Neighbourhoods*, Housing Corporation
- Housing Corporation (2000), *Empty Properties Strategies and Models*, Housing Corporation
- Housing Corporation (2001), *Choice in Lettings*, Summary of Key Findings
- Housing Policy and Practice Unit and School of Planning and Housing (1994), *Good Practice Briefing in Housing Management: Void Management Good Practice Note No. 3*. Scottish Office, Edinburgh
- Hunter, C., Mullen, T., Scott, S. (1998), *Legal Remedies for Neighbour Nuisance: Comparing Scottish and English Approaches*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York
- Hunter, C., Nixon, J., & Shayer, S., (2000), *Neighbour Nuisance, Social Landlords and the Law*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Chartered institute of Housing, Coventry
- Jones, C. and Watkins, C. (1996) Urban Regeneration and Sustainable Markets, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 7, 1129-1140
- Karn, V., Lickiss, R., Hughes, D. and Crawley, J. (1993) *Neighbour Disputes: Responses by Social Landlords*, Institute of Housing, London
- Keenan, P., Lowe, S., Spencer, S. (1999), Housing Abandonment in Inner Cities - The Politics of Low Demand for Housing, in *Housing Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 5, pp703-716
- Lee, P. and Murie, A. (1997), *Poverty, Housing Tenure and Social Exclusion*, The Policy Press, Bristol
- Lemos, G. (1997) *Safe as Houses: A Guide to Supporting People Experiencing Racial Harassment*, Lemos & Crane, London
- Lemos, G., (2000), *Racial Harassment: Action on the Ground*, Lemos & Crane, Plymouth
- Lowe, S., Spencer, S., and Keenan, P. (Eds.), (1998) *Housing Abandonment in Britain: Studies in the Causes and Effects of Low Demand for Housing*, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York, York
- Mcgregor, A., Fitzpatrick, I., McConnachie, M. and Thom, G. (1995), *Building Futures: Can Local Employment be Created from Housing Expenditure?*, SAUS Publications, Bristol

Maclennan, D. with Pryce, G. (1998), *Missing Links: The Economy, Cities and Housing*, National Housing Federation,

Maclennan, D., Goodlad, R., Kemp, P., Malcolm, J., Satsangi, M., Stanforth, J. and Whitefield, L. (1989) *The Nature and Effectiveness of Housing Management*, HMSO, London

Murie, A., Wainright, S. and Anderson, K. (1994), *Empty Public Sector Dwellings in Scotland: A Study of Empty Public Sector Dwellings in Scotland in 1992*, Scottish Office Central Research Unit, Edinburgh

Murie, M., Nevin, B. and Leather, P. (1998) *Changing Demand and Unpopular Housing*, Housing Corporation, Coventry

National Housing Federation (2000), *Responding to Change in Demand for Social housing*, National Housing Federation, London.

Osborn, S., and Bright, J. (1989), *Crime Prevention and Community Safety - A Practical Guide for Local Authorities*, NACRO, London

Osborn, S., and Shaftoe, H., (1995), *Safe Neighbourhoods? Successes and Failure in Crime Prevention*, Safe Neighbourhood Unit.

Page, D. (1993) *Building for Communities: A Study of New Housing Association Estates*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York)

Page, D. (1994), *Developing Communities*, Sutton Hastoe Housing Association, Teddington

Pawson, H., Kearns, A., and Morgan, J. (1997) *Managing voids and difficult to let property: literature review*, London, The Housing Corporation

Police Research Group, (1994), *Burglary Reduction: Findings From Safer Cities Schemes*, Crime Prevention Unit Series: Paper No. 51, Home Office Police Department, London.

Policy Action Team 5 (2000), *Report on Housing Management*, DETR, London

Policy Action Team 8 (2000), *Report on Anti-Social Behaviour*, DETR, London

Policy Studies Research Centre of the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, (undated), *Written Housing Allocation Policies and Social Inclusion*, Precis Research Summary No 110, Scottish Homes, Edinburgh

Positive Action in Housing (1997), *Tackling Racial Attacks and Harassment; Model Procedures for Scottish Housing Providers*, Positive Action in Housing, Glasgow

Power, A. (1982), *Priority Estates Project 1982: Improving Problem Council Housing Estates*, DoE, London

Power, A. (1984), *Local Housing Management: A Priority Estates Project Survey*, Department of Environment

Power, A. (1987), *Property Before People: The Management of Twentieth Century Council Housing*, Allen & Unwin, London

Power, A., and Tunstall, R. (1995), *Swimming Against the Tide: Polarisation or Progress on 20 Unpopular Council Estates, 1980-1995*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York

Power, A. and Mumford, K., (1999), *The Slow Death of Great Cities? Urban abandonment or urban renaissance?*

Price Waterhouse (1993), *Evaluation of Urban Development Grant, Urban Regeneration Grant, and City Grant, Inner City Research Programme*, DoE, London.

Price Waterhouse (1998), *Mapping Local Authority Estates Using the Index of Local Conditions*, DoE, London.

Robertson, D, and Bailey, N. (1996), *Review of the Impact of Housing Action Areas: Research Report 47*, Scottish Homes, Edinburgh

Robinson, F. (1997), *The City Challenge experience: A Review of the Development and Implementation of Newcastle City Challenge*, Newcastle City Challenge West End Partnership Ltd., Newcastle

Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (SNU), (1985), *After Entryphones*, Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, London

Safe Neighbourhood Unit (SNU), (1993), *Crime Prevention on Council Estates*, DoE/HMSO, London

Scott, S., and Parkey, H., (1998), *Neighbour Problems in the Scottish Social rented Sector*, Occasional paper 44, Centre for Housing and Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, Glasgow

Scott, S. (ed.), Currie, H., Fitzpatrick, S., Pawson, H., Kintrea, K., Rosengard, A. and Tate, J. (2001a) for the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, *Good Practice in Housing Management: A Review of the Literature*, Scottish Executive, Edinburgh

Scott, S., Currie, H., Dean, J., and Kintrea, K., (2001b), *Good Practice in Housing Management: Case Studies, Conclusions and Recommendations*, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, Edinburgh

Scottish Office (1998), *Housing and Area Regeneration: Housing and Neighbour Problems: Circular 16/1998*, Scottish Office, Edinburgh

Scottish Homes (1996), *Review of the Impact of Housing action Areas: Research Report*, Edinburgh, Scottish Homes

Scottish Homes (2000), *Assessing the Impact of Tenure Diversification: The Case of Niddrie, Edinburgh*, PRESiS, Summary No. 108, Scottish Homes, Edinburgh

Scottish Homes (2001), *Improving the Understanding of the Influence of Owner Occupiers in Mixed Tenure Neighbourhoods*, Scottish Homes, Edinburgh

Scottish Executive (2000), *An Evaluation of the Empty Homes Initiative*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive

Silburn, R., Lucas, D., Page, R. and Hanna, L. (1999), *Neighbourhood Images in Nottingham: Social Cohesion and Neighbourhood Change*, JRF, York

Skilton, P., (1988), *A Better Reception: The Development of Concierge Services*, DoE, London

Social Exclusion Unit (1998), *Bringing Britain Together*, Cmd 4045, Social Exclusion Unit, Stationary Office, London

Social Exclusion Unit (2001), *Preventing Social Exclusion: Report by the Social Exclusion Unit*, Cabinet Office, London

Taylor, M. (1995) *Unleashing the Potential: Bringing Residents to the Centre of Regeneration*, Policy Press, Bristol

University of Stirling, Herriot-Watt University, Chartered Institute of Housing, *Good Practice in Housing Management: Void Management*; Good Practice Note 3, Scottish Office, Edinburgh

Watson, D. (1994), *Putting Back the Pride: Case Study of a Power Sharing Approach to Tenant Participation*, ACTAC, Liverpool

Wood, M. and Vamplew, C. (1999), *Neighbourhood Images in Teeside: Regeneration or Decline?*, York Publishing Services, York