

# **housing safe communities**

**an evaluation of recent initiatives**

Edited by Steve Osborn

London: Safe Neighbourhoods Unit

## GOLF LINKS ESTATE

SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL SCHEME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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### **Estate description**

The Golf Uriks Estate in the London Borough of Ealing is situated in a relatively isolated position two miles from Soulhall town centre and one mile from Greenford town centre, adjoining a private golf course to the south, a major road to the east and predominantly private residential properties to the north and west. The estate was constructed between 1966 and 1969. The building types are mixed, and the estate consists of a mixture of pre-fabricated and pre-cast concrete designs. There are three tower blocks of 98 flats each, 21 three-storey walk-up blocks of flats and maisonettes and an area of 10 Laing Jespersen corridor blocks with 282 flats and maisonettes. The estate has 933 homes in total. A household survey carried out in 1984 revealed an estate population of about 3,000, with a large youth population — over 40% under 15 and nearly 20% under five (NACRO, 1984). About 40% of the residents were white, 20% Afro-Caribbean and 20% Asian. Unemployment was a serious problem on the estate, with 48% of the economically active residents unemployed, according to the survey.

There was a very high turnover of residents at this time — about 33% per annum. A large number of new residents were being referred from Ealing's Homeless Persons Unit, and a number with mental health problems were arriving from the nearby psychiatric wing of St Bernard's Hospital.

The estate had a range of problems in the early 1980s, including racial tension and incidents of harassment, lack of social provision and facilities, particularly for children and young people, a general decline in the quality of housing stock and rising crime rates. The estate was dirty and untidy, and prone to vandalism. Estate facilities were limited and consisted of a small church, a tenants meeting hall with a bar, a launderette, a small play area and a ball games area which had fallen into disuse. Youth provision was limited to one weekly session in the tenants hall, and was dominated by white youths to the exclusion of Asian and Afro-Caribbean young people. The estate management team was based six miles from the estate at Ealing Town Hall, and was not easily accessible to the majority of residents.

The household survey carried out in 1984 showed widespread crime problems (NACRO, 1984). Nearly 10% of residents had experienced a burglary (excluding attempts) in the past year, nearly 40% vandalism to their flats and 10% had been a victim of violence. 57% of the black respondents (and 65% of the Asian respondents) had experienced some form of racial harassment (verbal or physical abuse) since moving onto the estate. 72% of the respondents said that at least one person in the household was frightened to go out after dark.

A number of attempts had been made to improve the conditions and management of the estate in the early 1980s, including installing controlled entry systems for the tower blocks and introducing weekly housing department surgeries on site, but with little apparent effect on crime problems. The controlled entry systems themselves proved unreliable and fell into disuse.

### **Description of initiative**

The initiative began in 1983 with the setting up of a Neighbourhood Development Unit, sponsored by the Housing Department, managed by NACRO and funded through the Urban Programme for five years. The Unit's purpose was to carry out a major consultation with residents and to develop a programme of improvements for the estate. The initiative was multi-pronged and aimed to bring about physical improvements to the estate, improvements in management, changes in policing methods and an increase in youth and community provision.

A steering committee for the initiative was set up in 1983. The committee included representatives from Housing, Architects, Youth Services, Social Services, Police, local voluntary bodies and the residents association.

Chief amongst the initial concerns of residents and police on the committee was the activities of a group of about 20-25 *skinhead* youths who congregated on the estate and harassed tenants, and Asian tenants in particular. Also of concern was the high rate of burglary on the estate, especially in the corridor blocks. The committee decided to focus on improving lighting and flat entrance door security in these blocks.

The initiative began with a programme of consultations with residents. A survey was carried out on the estate between January and March 1984. This survey was followed by a series of residents' meetings to discuss in greater detail some of the Issues raised In the questionnaire. A sample of Asian residents was also consulted on experiences of racial harassment, assault and criminal damage. In addition, a youth survey was carried out to investigate young people's views of the estate and their needs for recreational activities.

An interim report on the results of the surveys and residents' meetings were considered at a meeting of the steering committee in May 1984. An action plan was then prepared and presented to the relevant Council committees from August 1984 (NACRO. 1984). Recommendations were divided into three main areas: management and maintenance, physical improvements and social and community issues. The following is a summary of the main elements of the action plan recommendations.

#### **Management and maintenance**

- Maintenance and repairs procedures to be improved.
- Lifts to be cleaned and maintained regularly.
- Stairwells to be repaired and redecorated and stair treads to be made safe.

#### **Physical improvements**

- The heating system to be replaced with individual gas heating.
- Controlled entry systems to be installed.
- Flat door security to be improved.
- Corridor lighting to be upgraded and corridor appearance to be improved.
- Internal fire escape doors to be made secure against burglary.
- Glass panels on balconies to be replaced with a safer vandal-proof material.
- Toilet windows to be replaced with a secure type.
- The central podium within the corridor block complex to be demolished.
- Street lighting levels to be upgraded and improved.
- The whole area of corridor blocks to be demolished and replaced with houses.

#### **Social and community issues**

- Dog free areas to be created for small children, play structures renewed and play areas sited near each block, possibly under the voluntary supervision of residents. *Parents and toddlers* provision to be funded and staffed.
- The Council to review its policy on youth provision In the area and provide premises on the estate so that frequent (five days a week) youth activities could be run under supervision.
- Greater use to be made of the tenants hall, with more community activities.
- More police officers to be allocated to the estate.
- Prompt and effective action to be taken by the Council against perpetrators of harassment and racial attack, and police to respond more rapidly and effectively.
- The alleyway leading from the school to the estate to be widened, vegetation cut back and lighting improved.

## **Implementation**

### **Management and maintenance**

A number of improvements to services on the estate were made as a result of the action plan and a major change in service delivery has been implemented through a radical shift from centralised to localised delivery. A Neighbourhood Centre was opened on the estate in December 1986 and a housing team transferred there from the Town Hall six months later. The housing team is headed by a project manager whose function is to co-ordinate and supervise the work of two estate officers and 1.5 admin staff. The project manager also co-ordinates other Council services on the estate and maintains local Inter-agency work.

It was not until 1988 that repairs problems were dealt with by the creation of an estate-based repairs team. A portakabin was situated near the Neighbourhood Centre to house a repair team of three carpenters, two plumbers and one driver/labourer. A supervisor manages the team. The team is not able to undertake all the work necessary on the estate as neither electricians or heating engineers are included. However, the Housing Department claims that the estate based team has greatly improved the speed at which repairs are carried out and residents' satisfaction with the service.

The development of the estate based housing management and repair service was assisted by a Priority Estates Project consultant from 1986 until the Council dispensed with his services at the end of 1987; this coincided with the Department of the Environment's rejection of the Council's Estate Action bid for the estate (see below). \*

## Physical

## Improvements

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During 1985/6. the Council allocated £300.000 of Housing Investment Programme funds for physical improvements to the corridor blocks: new flat entrance security doors, upgrading of internal corridor lighting, individual gas central heating for four blocks. These improvements were carried out in 1986. Also, some windows in the flats in the corridor blocks were felt to be in a dangerous condition and were either renovated or replaced. However, the bulk of the corridor block windows remain in a similar condition to that at the start of the scheme. Toilet windows in balcony access flats, felt to be insecure due to their louvre style, have been replaced with top hung casement windows. No progress was made on demolishing the Podium and installing internal fire escape doors and controlled entry systems.

limited improvements were also made to street lighting on the estate in 1986. but the alleyway lighting had not been improved by the end of 1988. A number of three-storey blocks to the north of Fleming Road (see map) also had a window replacement programme in 1986, at least partly as a result of concern about burglary.

Further meetings were held to deal with the residents' request for the corridor blocks to be demolished. As a result of these meetings most residents agreed that it was not practical to demolish the blocks, and supported radical design changes proposed by the Architects Department: reducing the height of blocks. remodelling the block entrances to serve fewer dwellings, converting ground and first floor dwellings to provide front door access on the outside of the building, landscaping, the provision of individual gardens and some new build. The scheme took three years to develop from the publishing of the action plan (August 1984 to August 1987) until a bid was submitted to the Department of the Environment Estate Action Programme for approval. The bid was rejected in December 1987. on the grounds of its high costs — at that time the scheme would have cost in excess of £70.000 per dwelling to implement.

## Social and community issues

### Policing

Until 1983. the estate was policed by traditional response measures and by vehicle patrols. The estate was difficult to police effectively, partly due to its layout and partly to the extent and nature of other problems in the area, particularly its history of racial harassment and violence. As recommended in the action plan, the police changed their staffing level for the estate in 1985 by doubling the home beat officer complement to two officers. Patrolling of the estate and the alleyway was also increased as requested by residents. Furthermore, in response to residents' requests for more thorough policing of the estate, a police office was established on the estate in a flat provided by the Housing Department. The office was later moved to the Neighbourhood Centre when it opened in December 1986. The two home beat officers have held surgeries in the Centre four days a week! Furthermore, the continuity of the police work on the estate was maintained by appointing one of the home beat officers for a second term of tenure in post; normally postings are for one (three year) term only.

The police also introduced new practices in relation to racially motivated crimes towards the end of 1986. When a complaint of assault was made, investigating officers were required to record an incident as racially motivated if the victim so defined it. Prior to that, incidents were assumed to have no racial component without corroboration. Officers were also required to carry a briefing note on the handling of racial incidents to help ensure that procedures were properly followed.

From 1987, the homebeat officers were also involved in joint work with the Neighbourhood Centre staff to attempt to reduce the incidence of racial harassment. Where individuals made a complaint of harassment to Council staff, as opposed to the police, they were asked at the time of making the complaint whether or not they would allow the police to investigate.

### **Youth and community provision**

Using the action plan recommendations as a basis, Council officers compiled a report on youth and community provision for the estate in October 1985 (London Borough of Ealing, 1985). The report's main recommendations were as follows:

- A new post of *Neighbourhood Development Officer* to be appointed, to be based at the Neighbourhood Centre.
- A full time youth worker to be appointed to the estate.
- A youth tutor to be appointed to the local secondary school.
- The lease of the tenants hall to be taken over by the Council in February 1988 when it expires, and the hall refurbished and used for youth and community activities.

Local adults and young people collected 400 signatures on a petition supporting the recommendations and lobbied the Amenities Committee meeting in March 1986 (London Borough of Ealing, 1986). The recommendations were agreed, although it was some time before they were fully implemented, particularly the appointment of a full-time youth worker for the estate. This appointment was not made until July 1989, three years after the report was presented to the Community Services Committee. However, one major improvement was the installation of a portakabin structure to serve as a youth centre, located off the estate, adjacent to the local secondary school. The building was erected and opened in November 1986, and a full-time youth worker was appointed to run the centre. An allocation of part-time staffing for the centre was also made by the Youth Service. This provision, although near the local school, did not meet the estate's need for on-site youth provision. Furthermore, the centre is situated in an open, badly lit area and consequently has not been used to any great extent in the evening. It has been better used at lunchtimes and immediately after school.

During 1987, Ealing's Women's Unit and the detached youth worker for girls devoted sessional time to developing activities for girls and women in a room allocated for their use in the Neighbourhood Centre. A variety of activities were set up and the Centre was used primarily by Asian women and girls. Classes, activities and children's outings were organised and a women's group formed. The space available was limited but the Centre was well used and thriving before the appointment of the Neighbourhood Development Worker in October 1987 (10 months after the opening of the centre).

The lease for the tenants hall, held by the Hall Committee, expired in February 1988 and the Housing Department refused to renew the lease and took over the hall. The hall itself was in a bad condition, suffered dry rot and was in need of re-decoration. The Housing Department decided it would be more cost-effective to demolish the building and erect a new centre on the same site. The hall was demolished in February 1988 and a new centre opened in August of the same year. Women's and girls' activities from the adjoining Neighbourhood Centre were transferred to the new hall. Also, recommendations for creche provision were agreed and funding for two creche workers to be based in the hall was budgeted from 1988/89. Housing staff ran the hall temporarily until a manager/development worker was appointed in February 1989.

The hall is currently used primarily for adult education classes, women's activities, *parent and toddlers* groups and the creche. The Youth Service has been allocated two evenings per week, but space is limited and storage a problem. Also there are often complaints about noise from adult education classes which run alongside youth sessions. The new hall has not provided the five nights per week on-site youth provision originally planned, but has helped meet some of the needs for play and creche provision for young children. The recommended development of safe, creative play areas has not yet been met and the estate continues to lack outdoor play areas for young children.

In summary, the period for 1983 to 1989 saw some increase in youth and community provision for the area, with the building of the Neighbourhood Centre and the presence of the housing team on the estate, the space the centre offered for women's activities, and the budding of the Youth Centre and the new tenants hall on the estate. The provision of staffing was slower, and it was not until 1989 that the manager/development worker for the hall and estate youth worker were appointed.

Most of these improvements were not implemented until late in the life of the Initiative, from late 1986 in part but from 1988 in the main. The most significant intervention was the setting up of a voluntary youth project, for three years from November 1984. This involved the appointment of a youth activities organiser to provide on-site youth activities, particularly geared at the outset towards the older gang of white youths found hanging around the estate, often involved in incidents of harassment of primarily Asian tenants. The implementation of this youth project is described in more detail below.

### **The youth project**

The youth project began with the appointment of a youth activities organiser in November 1984, managed by NACRO and funded through the DHSS Opportunities for Volunteering scheme. At this time, youth provision on the estate was limited to one session per week in the tenants hall, run by the Youth Service detached worker for the Southall area. The session was attended primarily by white youths aged 12-17, many of them part of the *skinhead gang*. The playcentre, just off the estate provided a minimal service for younger children. The project's major aim was, in the short term, to provide recreational opportunities for young people, with the principal aim of diverting them from antisocial and criminal activity on the estate. It was recognised that the group most in need of attention in this respect were the young white skinheads. In the longer term, the project aimed to improve relations between young people of various ethnic groups on the estate and between young people and adults.

The project was based in an old one-room rent office on the estate. This served as a drop-in centre for young people. The project also had a minibus and a small annual budget for activities and running costs. The youth activities organiser worked initially to recruit local adults on the estate to assist with activities and even succeeded in involving older youths, former members of the skinhead gang, as volunteers.

The project and the Council's detached youth worker worked together to establish opportunities for adventure activities for local teenagers. The first residential trip to an outdoor pursuits centre in Wales took place in April 1985. The group was multi-racial and the trip not only presented the young people with experiences and opportunities previously unavailable to them but also provided a setting in which racial attitudes and opinions could be discussed. This *residential* was the first of regular Easter and summer holiday trips, with a total of seven adventure holidays (one for girls only) organised throughout the three year funding of the youth project. Finance for these trips was provided by the Council's yearly grants to the voluntary sector. Funding for trips continued after the project's closure in November 1987, and these were organised by the youth worker at the youth centre close to the estate.

By late 1985 there was a programme of clubs and outings, with a weekly senior club, weekly sports session, weekly girls club and an outing every two weeks. All sessions were run by volunteers with the support of the youth activities organiser. Contact was also made with a number of single parents on the estate who were interested in setting up after school provision for 5-12 year olds. Consequently a weekly junior club was set up in the tenants hall, with older members of the senior club helping out. Funding was also obtained from the Council's Holiday Project fund to run a programme of activities and outings during Easter and summer holidays for this age group.

The project's three year funding came to an end in November 1987. By this time, regular clubs and outings were running and a core group of volunteers had undergone training and were working together to run activities and raise funds for the project. Relationships were said to have improved between adults and young people on the estate and the project did succeed in involving young people from different ethnic groups on the estate in activities together. This was most successfully achieved with the younger age group although inroads were made into the attitudes and particularly the behaviour of older teenagers with complaints of harassment from this group declining. The Council's youth worker most closely involved in the project reported in 1988 that "racist attitudes amongst the group were changed at least to the degree that normal relations between the young people of different ethnic groups prevailed for part if not all of the time" (NACRO, 1988).

The further development of the project was hampered by the failure of the Youth Service to appoint a youth worker for the estate to ensure follow on work. The delay was caused by the Youth Service waiting to appoint from apprentices who were not due to complete their training until the summer of 1989. The detached workers for Southall continued to devote some sessional time for work on the estate, but only about half of their week. The break from November 1987 to the

appointment of a full-time youth worker for the estate In July 1989 left volunteers unsupported, and they began to lose enthusiasm. Some limited use was made of Dormers Wells Youth Centre and the *wsideniials* continued In 1988. As for the junior club provision, the demolition of the tenants hall in February 1988 resulted in the club being cancelled until the new building was erected. It has only been with the appointment of a youth worker in July X 989 that activities began to be or^inised on site for children and young people.

### Implementation failures

As previously described, a great deal of the original action plan was only partially or latterly Implemented, and some not at all. The major failures are summarised below.

- The bid made to the Department of the Environment was rejected in December 1987. The reason given by the Department was the high cost of the scheme, which at £70.000 per dwelling, was considered too costly. Unforeseen technical difficulties and Inflation increased original estimates for the scheme. The scheme was abandoned and residents informed In an estate newsletter in March 1988.
- The localisation of Council services to the estate took place at a later date than originally anticipated. The Neighbourhood Centre remained unstaffed for six months after the centre was ready for occupation in December 1986. The estate-based repair team was not introduced until 1988. and the Neighbourhood Development Officer was not appointed until July 1989.
- No purpose-built on-site youth provision was provided and there was considerable delay in appointing a youth worker for the estate. The new tenants hall only provides minimal resources for young people on the estate.
- Whilst the new tenants hall provides for parent *and toddlers* groups, women's activities and creche facilities, it does not provide the kind of safe play areas which had been thought necessary for children on the estate.
- The Steering Group which met throughout the project, ceased to function in the summer of 1988. The abandonment of the DOE Estate Action bid meant that much of its impetus was lost. Although on-site workers meet informally to co-ordinate their work, this operates as a support mechanism, rather than as a forum to co-ordinate and develop joint initiatives which involve residents.
- Although not part of the action plan, the estate survey and reports commented on the high rate of unemployment on the estate and the need to look at possible initiatives to provide increased employment opportunities on the estate. This did not happen, and in the view of local housing staff, was one of the major failings of the project.

### Crime changes

Recorded crime statistics for the beat area covering the estate were provided by the police throughout the scheme, 1983-87. and then again recently in January 1991. for the period 1988-90. Table 22 shows crime figures for the estate for the period 1983-1990. The percentage figures in the table compare crime levels for each subsequent year against the levels in 1983.

Table 22: Recorded crime on The Golf Links Estate 1983-1990

	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Burglary	82	90+10%	61 -26%	63 -23%	11 -87%	27 -67%	29 -65%	27 -67%
Criminal damage	82	65 -21%	97 +18%	75 -9%	21 -74%	27 -67%	29 -65%	24 -71%
Assault	19	13 -32%	33+74%	12 -37%	8 -58%	24 +26%	34+79%	39 + 105%
Theft of motor vehicles	17	21 +24%	28+65%	9 + 12%	A -76%	15 -12%	6 -65%	8 -53%
Taking and drying away	13	35 +6%	48+45%	42+27%	11 -67%	8 -38%	19+46%	42 +85%
Theft from motor vehicles	62	45+13%	67+29%	58 + 12%	10 -81%	25 -58%	26 -58%	23 -48%
Total	285	269 -6%	334+17%	269 -6%	65 -77%	126 -56%	143 -50%	164 -42%

SoufCG: Metropolitan Police

The recorded crime rate peaked in 1985, fell marginally in 1986. but dropped dramatically in 1987. All types of crime were at a greatly reduced level in 1987, except for assaults which remained at

a reasonably constant level from 1983 to 1987, except for a sharp Increase In 1986; the number of Incidents Involved are relatively small, however.

The recorded crime rate began to climb again between 1988 and 1990—in fact the total number of recorded crimes in 1990 was more than double that in 1987. Increases In crime were most notable for *taking and driving away* and *assaults*, although both were consistently amongst the lowest volume crimes. Overall, however, the rate of crime has still not approached the kinds of levels experienced prior to 1987.

The local home beat police officer reported increases in incidents of vandalism on the estate, particularly during the summer holiday periods from 1988 to 1990. when there were several incidents of rubbish chutes being set alight, electricity cables cut. and break-ins and vandalism to Dormers Wells Youth Centre (particularly when it was closed over the summer of 1988). These comments are supported by similar remarks made by the estate youth worker and the manager/development worker of the new tenants hall.

The police were also able to supply recorded crime data for Southall police division (which covers the Golf Links Estate) for the period from 1986 to 1990 (see Table 23). It was not possible to access data prior to 1986, but the figures provided predate the first dramatic crime reductions on the Golf Links Estate and therefore provide useful comparisons. The overall trends in the division were very different. The recorded crime rate in the division remained reasonably stable between 1986 and 1989, reducing overall by less than 5%. and then more sharply (by about 14%) between 1989 and 1990.

Table 23: Recorded crime in Southall Police Division 1986-1990

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Burglary	2032	1744	1620	1873	1963
Criminal damage	2153	2324	2376	2378	2717
Assault	337	438	508	539	709
Theft of motor vehicles	610	474	460	490	542
Taking and driving away	1075	785	681	545	669
Theft from motor vehicles	1544	1374	1703	1554	1787
Total	7751	7639	7348	7379	8387

Source: Metropolitan Police

The divisional trends were closer to the Golf Links trends in respect of theft of motor vehicles, where the total number of recorded Incidents fell by 23% between 1986 and 1987 (79% fall on the Golf Links Estate), and taking and driving away, where the total fell by 27% over the same period (74% fall on the Golf Links Estate). However, in respect of all motor vehicle crime (ie including theft from motor vehicles) in the division, the numbers of incidents fell by only 3% in this period (79% fall on Golf Links Estate). Recorded Incidents of burglary fell by 14% in the division over the period (83% fall on the Golf Links Estate). Divisional figures for the other offence categories (criminal damage and assault) showed increases between 1986 and 1987, compared with sharp decreases on the Golf Links Estate.

### Other outcomes

Racial harassment has been a constant problem for the estate. The police have been recording incidents since 1987. and these show increases in incidents from nine cases In 1987, to 14 cases in 1988 and 26 cases in 1989. In 1990. however, the numbers of incidents have fallen again to nine cases.

It is difficult to discern trends from these figures, and not just because of the small numbers. The Increase from 1987 to 1989 may have reflected an increase in reporting, rather than an actual increase in incidents. A clause on racial harassment was added to tenancy agreements in August 1986. There was also a change in police procedures in this period, with the victim and not the police deciding if a case should be classified as a racial incident. The Council's high profile on racial harassment may also have contributed to an increase in reporting. The drop between 1989 and 1990. on the other hand, coincided with a change of administration and some change in priorities.



Perhaps more significantly, the Housing Department has been experiencing increasing difficulties in moving victims of racial harassment, and this may have led to reduced confidence in action being taken and, therefore, less incentive to report.

Comments from local agencies suggest that relations between the different ethnic groups have improved. The youth service and police both commented that there are no longer gangs of white youths hanging around the estate, harassing tenants, as had been the case in 1983. Youths do congregate together, but with black and white youths making up the groups. In the police's view, many of the current cases of racial harassment are inter-neighbour disputes, with one family on the estate causing particular problems. The manager/development worker of the tenants hall also reported that activities and clubs running in the hall attract a mix of tenants from all ethnic groups on the estate, with Afro-Caribbean tenants participating in more activities than had been the case prior to 1988. It would appear that the dominance of white youths and adults over facilities has ended and that use of facilities is currently being made by all groups. This is a significant change from the situation that existed at the outset of the project in 1983.

The Housing Department reports that levels of tenant dissatisfaction remain high, with a large number of complaints about heating, design factors and lack of play and youth facilities. The radical redesign options put forward by tenants in the original consultation period have not been taken on board and this continues to cause dissatisfaction on the estate. Current figures reveal that 45%-50% of the tenants are on the transfer list and rent arrears are high.

## Assessing the evidence

### Evidence of reduced crime problems

Recorded crime statistics were collected for eight consecutive years from 1983 to 1990. These showed a gradual rise in crime rates until 1985, a small fall in 1986, and then a dramatic reduction in 1987. Overall crime levels were 77% lower in 1987 than in 1983. There was also a remarkable consistency across all offence categories in terms of the size of reduction in 1987. The scale of reduction is persuasive, even in the absence of confirmatory data from other sources, especially as one might have expected an increase in public reporting following the increased presence of police beat officers from 1988 onwards. Recorded crime trends in the local police division did not account in any way for trends on the Golf Links Estate.

The area of crime which it has been difficult to monitor is racially motivated crimes. The estate was notorious in this respect at the beginning of the initiative but the extent of the problem did not show up in recorded crime statistics. In the survey carried out in 1984, over half of the black (and 65% of the Asian) respondents reported having been the victim of racial harassment (verbal or physical abuse) on the estate, and more than half of these believed it was the work of racist organisations. Only about one fifth said they reported incidents to the police. The Joint police/Council monitoring of Incidents, accompanied by a campaign to encourage reporting, began in 1987 and these show an initial (and not unexpected) rise in the number of incidents and a sharp decline again in 1990 (when the campaign may have lost some of its impetus), although the views of the police and youth services were that incidents of racial harassment had been reduced, particularly as a result of the decline of white gangs which had been much in evidence in the early 1980s.

### Evidence of Initiative's effect

The initiative began in 1984 with the formation of an estate steering committee, the undertaking of a programme of resident consultations and the publishing of an action plan. The first elements of the plan began to take effect in 1985, the year in which the recorded crime rate for the area reached its peak. In 1986, there was a small fall in the recorded crime rate, to around the level it had been in 1984, but it was not until 1987 that dramatic reductions took place. The various elements of the initiative took effect over a period of several years and individually may have had an impact on particular types of crime. Their cumulative effect may have been felt by 1987. An attempt to disentangle these different elements has been made below.

It was possible to examine the progress of the initiative between 1983 and 1988 in some detail through the minutes of and reports to the estate steering committee (London Borough of Ealing, 1983-88), and there was no evidence of other factors which might have contributed to reduced crime problems.

## **Evidence of effect of Individual measure**

Many of the measures proposed for the estate did not materialise or were implemented at a far later date than had originally been planned. Most of the physical improvements were not implemented at all and most management improvements were not introduced or completed until after the sharp reduction in recorded crime rates in 1987.

Measures which were introduced before crime rates fell and which may, therefore, have accounted for reduced crime were:

### **Physical security measures for corridor blocks and for a number of the three-storey walk up blocks**

The corridor blocks, which account for 31% of the accommodation on the estate, were generally regarded as the most problematic. Residents interviewed in 1984 were more likely than residents elsewhere to want increased security (NACRO, 1984). More secure flat entrance doors were introduced in 1986, some flat windows were replaced (including all the vulnerable toilet windows in balcony access flats) and internal corridor lighting was upgraded.

The three-storey walk up blocks to the north of Fleming Road (Sunningdale, Panmure, Thurleston and Disley; see map) had a window replacement programme in 1986, at least partly as a result of concern about burglaries.

One might expect that these security improvements would have some impact on burglary rates. These had fallen by around 25% in 1985 (ie prior to the introduction of physical security measures), were maintained at around that level in 1986 (ie during the course of physical security works) and then dropped to a remarkably low level in 1987. It seems unlikely, however, that these security improvements to the corridor blocks and the small number of walk-up blocks could have accounted for what was clearly an estate-wide reduction in burglary. The majority of the estate remained untouched by security improvements, other than modest improvements to street lighting.

The local police and housing staff have pointed out that there may have been another contributory factor — the arrest of residents involved in estate burglaries in late 1986. The *main culprit*, who lived in one of the corridor blocks, received a custodial sentence and was unable, therefore, to continue these activities.

### **Increased police presence**

The home beat officer complement for the estate was doubled to two officers in 1985 and an estate base for the officers was established in 1986. The officers began more regular patrols of the estate, including inside the blocks, and became more heavily involved in estate based recreational activities for young people.

### **Increased management activity**

The estate based housing team was not fully established on the estate until midway through 1987 but had become more active on the estate from early 1986. This involved regular meetings with residents and local agencies, and closer liaison with the local police over, for instance, incidents of racial harassment.

The housing team also adopted a more proactive approach to community affairs; for example, it was prominent in developing activities such as the estate carnivals which began in 1987; and it promoted action against racial discrimination and harassment through enforcement of new clauses in the tenancy agreements and through its firm stand against the exclusion of black residents from the tenants hall.

### **Enhanced recreational activities (or children and young people)**

The appointment of a youth activities organiser at the end of 1984 was followed by a period of consultation with local young people and intensive developmental work. The project was fully developed from 1986 onwards and it was the view of the local police and youth workers that the activities contributed to greatly reduced crime problems on the estate, as well as to some improvements in relations between ethnic groups.

The strongest indicator of the relationship between the youth project and local crime problems is the apparent impact of the closure of the project at the end of 1987. From 1988 onwards recorded crime rates have begun to rise again. The overall crime rate was nearly doubled between 1987 and 1988 and has continued to rise since. Although crime rates in 1990 have still not reached the levels apparent from 1983 to 1985 (except for large proportionate increases in two lower volume crimes

— *assault and taking and driving away*), the trend has been consistently upwards for three consecutive years.

### **Evidence of permanence**

The impact of the Initiative may be beginning to wear off. Whilst the youth project in particular may have had some ameliorating effect during its three year life, it is clear that the poor physical conditions of the estate are still unresolved.

### **Evidence of replicability**

The voluntary youth project is a readily replicable discrete programme with low running costs. The project was allocated £43,000 from the DHSS for three years staffing and overheads and, in addition, the project raised about £7,000 from grants and appeals towards the cost of activities. The concern remains, however, over this kind of short term funding approach to provision. The expectation had been (as is often the case with these kinds of programme) that the project would have developed an *exit strategy* which ensured continuation of the work through voluntary work and/or local authority resourcing. This was particularly unrealistic given the financial pressures which the local authority was under.

The Urban Programme funded development team which co-ordinated the Initiative from 1983 to 1988 was also responsible for two other initiatives in the Borough — on the South Acton Estate and Copley Close. The total five year funding, roughly evenly divided between Golf Links and the two other initiatives, was £250,000 (at 1987/88 prices). The Urban Programme no longer appears to be a vehicle for long term *community development* initiatives of this kind and may, in any case, be more cheaply achieved through a combination of in-house staff resources and strategically deployed external consultants.

The funds (£300,000) allocated to enhancing security in the corridor blocks appears to have contributed to the greatly reduced burglary levels (although the *accident* of fortuitous arrests may have been crucial) but the measures taken were little more than a *holding operation* in the context of the radical redesign needs of the blocks.

It could be argued that the (apparently) dramatic reductions in crime on the estate were achieved for a relatively small financial input. The voluntary youth project, in particular, appears to have been particularly cost-effective. However, the initiative was only partially implemented and without resolving the serious (and expensive) physical problems of the estate (and of the corridor blocks in particular) it seems likely that the estate's serious crime problems will re-emerge before very long.

#### **Source material:**

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