

housing safe communities

an evaluation of recent initiatives

Edited by Steve Osborn

London: Safe Neighbourhoods Unit

MITCHELLHILL ESTATE

ESTATE BASED MANAGEMENT (CONCIERGE) INITIATIVE

Jo Davidson and John Farr

Description of area

The Mitchellhill Estate lies on the periphery of Castlemilk, a large post-war housing development built mainly in the 1950s to house people from Glasgow's inner city slums. Castlemilk contains 10,000 homes, covers 332 hectares and is situated four miles south of Glasgow city centre. It was built on the slopes of the Cathkin Braes, with views over the hills, mature woodlands and the city. As with many of these post-war *overspill* estates, Castlemilk was developed without the necessary facilities and services and the housing is mostly of a monotonous design, much of it consisting of longrows of identical four-storey tenements. The housing tenure was, until recently, entirely local authority rented.

The Castlemilk Partnership was set up in 1988, under the direction of the Scottish Office, and aims to regenerate the area through an integrated strategy on housing, employment, land use and social and community issues. A great deal of work has already been done, with 82 projects being implemented by its member organisations.

The Housing Department of Glasgow District Council is a member of the Castlemilk Partnership and has a number of improvement projects under way in the area, involving partnership with Scottish Homes, housing co-operatives, housing associations and the private sector. Housing expenditure of £70 million is planned in projects due to start by the end of 1991. These initiatives include modernisation, new build and improvements in home security, street lighting, off-street parking and the environment. Their goal is 'to make Castlemilk a place people want to live in, to stem the loss of population, to attract back some who have left but still have ties in the area, and to attract new residents' (Scottish Office, 1990). The involvement of the local community is a key element of these plans. Mitchellhill concierge programme provides an example of the outcomes of this approach.

Mitchellhill Estate

The Mitchellhill high-rise development consists of five 19 storey blocks which are divided into 380 two bedroom flats, 95 one bedroom flats and 95 bedsits, a total of 570 units. They were built between 1963 and 1965, and were initially very popular because they offered affordable under-floor electric heating on an off-peak system, and were spacious and more modern than the tenements on the rest of Castlemilk. There were complaints about the unreliability of the lifts but the major problems did not develop until the early 1980s. A number of management problems manifested themselves through a high level of vandalism to the common areas, a demand from existing tenants to move, a rundown appearance and a sense of fear. Few wanted to move into the blocks — those who did quickly left. Up to half the flats were empty, some being used as *Giro drops* — addresses used for multiple social security claims but not actually inhabited. Break-ins were common, the back stairs were a congregating points for drug users and many people were afraid to go out for fear of break-ins.

Past Interventions

In 1981, the Housing Department sought to solve the problem with the introduction of a controlled phone entry system to the blocks. There was minimal consultation with tenants and, after three days, the system was vandalised and never fully operational.

By 1982, there was a widely held view that high-rise living was unsuitable for families with young children, and Glasgow, in common with many other housing authorities, adopted an allocations policy restricting new allocations of high-rise flats to families without young children. The points scheme was altered to give families with young children an incentive to move out. At

this time the 380 family sized flats are estimated to have contained 1000 children; the smaller flats housed elderly couples or older single people. It was thought that local youngsters were the cause of the problems, although tenants in the blocks denied this.

New lettings were mainly to childless people, 70% of them being young single people. Far from alleviating the problems, this policy appeared to exacerbate them, and glue sniffing, loud parties, vandalism, break-ins and assaults grew.

In 1986, faced with a growing problem of high maintenance, high crime and no demand, the Housing Department sought more radical solutions. In the meantime, they became more selective about new tenants and allowed Qats to remain empty while a solution was found. At one time they even considered demolition or disposal of two of the blocks. When the Council initially presented their ideas to tenants at a meeting, strong opposition to disposal or demolition led to the re-formation of a tenants association. Ideas were subsequently developed in partnership with the tenants, who retain a commitment to the working of the scheme, and a positive role in its management. This was the turning point for MitchellhiU.

Social profile

Reference has already been made to how the social make-up of the Mitchellhill blocks was affected by housing allocations. The needs to be considered against the background of a rapidly declining population in Castlemilk as a whole. The 1971 census showed a population of 36,951 in Castlemilk; by 1981 it was down to 28,855 and it is now estimated to be below 21,000. Castlemilk contains a lot of unpopular housing where supply exceeds demand. The more economically active residents move away to seek better housing and employment prospects elsewhere. The Housing Department, in partnership with other agencies and initiatives, has sought to attract and retain economically active residents' (Scottish Office, 1990) and reduce the number of empty properties which have become centres for crime and vandalism. The favourable housing demand/supply ratio enables them to consider radical measures, such as reducing the sizes of tenement blocks, which could not be considered in other major cities which are experiencing an acute shortage of housing.

Castlemilk East has a high level of male unemployment — at 46% in 1988 it is higher than the Glasgow average of 26% (Graham, 1991). Most people in employment have low paid work. Castlemilk residents do badly in the job market because of low skill levels, poor educational qualifications and limited work experience. In 1988, 69% of Castlemilk primary school children received free school meals, compared with a Glasgow average of 46% and Strathclyde regional average of 30% (Graham, 1991). The Castlemilk Partnership aims to 'increase economic activity and employment in and adjacent to Castlemilk' (Scottish Office, 1990) with the involvement of the Department of Employment, community business, the Regional Council and the Scottish Development Agency. The housing improvements and developments are an important source of employment in the building and service sectors. The voluntary community involvement in the development of concierge and other schemes can provide a route to paid employment, and at least provides residents with a sense of control over their environment and their own lives.

Description of initiative

Glasgow's concierge programme

The Mitchellhill concierge scheme is one of 24 developed by Glasgow Housing Department throughout the city. 80 high-rise blocks are now covered. There are 170 blocks not programmed at present which are described as 'good standard' blocks with a 'medium' to 'high demand' and good existing caretaking service. Investment has therefore been concentrated on those blocks and estates which have crime and security problems and which are classed as 'low demand'. Glasgow Housing Department acknowledges that the management of its existing caretaking service needs improvement. The concierge post has more status than that of caretaker, although concierges still perform cleaning duties. The concierges receive a comprehensive training and Initiation, with integration into the housing management structure and its 'customer care' approach. Where concierge schemes are introduced, suitable resident caretakers are assimilated into concierge posts, but non-resident caretakers must apply for concierge posts in competition with outsiders. As competition is very high (the last advertisement for two sites brought in 1,600 applications), most do not succeed but are offered caretaking posts on other sites.

The approach to Mitchellhill

The Mitchellhill Estate comprises five 19 storey blocks, with car parking and open space around each block. The concierge programme was designed to make the blocks in Mitchellhill more attractive to tenants — both existing tenants, to encourage them to stay, and new tenants. The major concern of residents was the high rate of burglaries, the activities of drug dealers and users and the poor appearance of the blocks. The Housing Department was also concerned about the high expenditure on common property repairs — the numbers of repairs to the entrances, landings and other communal areas, peaked at 191 in the second quarter of 1989 and averaged 143 per quarter in 1988.

The attitude of the police to the estate was also felt to be a problem. The service was essentially an emergency only service, with the police reportedly taking up to an hour to respond to an incident. Local police felt unable to leave their cars unattended in case tyres were slashed or missiles thrown at them from the blocks.

Glasgow Housing Department introduced or facilitated six distinct measures on Mitchellhill:

- Target hardening;
- Local management;
- Tenant participation;
- Joint work with the police;
- Active promotion of the estate;
- The provision of furnished flats.

The aim was 'to provide improved on-site management by increasing the level of security, improving standards of care and cleanliness and ensuring the availability of staff at all times' (Graham, unpublished).

Target hardening measures:

- A closed circuit TV system with cameras outside each block, inside each foyer and inside each lift, monitored and recorded by concierges;
- A central control point with 24 hour service, for all five blocks;
- Improved environmental lighting around the outside of the blocks;
- Enhanced lighting in the common areas, together with improvements such as redecoration;
- Removal of internal landing doors to open up the landings and remove areas where people could hide;
- Controlled entry to the foyers;
- Phone entry link-up to the central monitoring station;
- The replacement of half-glazed doors with solid core doors and reinforced door frames. These doors cost £400 each, and have barrel-type locks which are replaced at each change of tenancy. They also remove the need to install steel doors on empty properties, which could easily be identified, inviting vandals and squatters.

Local management measures:

- The setting up of a local office in the block where the concierge control station is;
- The appointment of one housing manager and one housing assistant (the blocks were previously covered by one housing assistant);
- The redesignation of caretaker to concierge with additional security duties;
- The setting up of a local letting committee with representation from the tenants association.
- Changes in allocation policies

Tenant participation:

- Tenants were involved in the development of a new lettings policy, which introduced *quotas* to ensure that new lets produced a better balance of household types;
- The District Council funds the tenants association;
- Tenants sit on the letting committee which interviews all prospective tenants, together with the housing staff.

Joint work with police:

- Two community police (part of a team of eight in Castlemilk) were appointed to the area and regularly patrol the blocks;
- Community police act as advisers to the letting committee;

- *Multi-watch* was set up, which is a variation on Neighbourhood Watch, whereby people may refer incidents or suspicions to the concierge or police;
- A twice weekly police surgery in the housing office;
- A negotiated follow-up/feedback procedure.

Active promotion of the estate:

- An attractive leaflet was produced, outlining the location of the estate, the security measures, bus services and rents for the furnished and unfurnished flats. This was widely circulated to employers and to Glasgow University.
- A video has now been produced to supplement this.

The provision of furnished accommodation:

- A total of 110 flats (20%) have been furnished and equipped to a high standard, to compete for tenants with the private rented sector in Glasgow. Higher rents for these units help to pay for the cost of providing the furniture, and the concierge are responsible for checking the inventory with outgoing tenants. Many of these tenants are short-term residents. Ten of the furnished flats in Mitchellhill are for emergency homeless cases. Originally, the Housing Department wanted to locate all the furnished units together in one block. The tenants argued successfully against this, and the furnished flats are therefore located throughout the five blocks.

Cost

Cost estimates for the scheme were supplied by City of Glasgow Housing Department (City of Glasgow, 1990). The capital cost of the scheme at Mitchellhill was £1.4 million. This was met mainly through the Housing Investment Programme. {Some ongoing capital works were also carried out — £150,000 was spent on roof repairs.}

The breakdown of capital costs is:

• lifts	£500,000
• Entrance doors	£300,000
• Landings	£150,000
• Foyers and security	£450,000
Total	£1,400,000

The capital costs of furnishing flats are £2,300 for a one bedroom flat and £2,450 for a two bedroom flat. 110 flats have been furnished at an estimated cost of £253,000.

The cost of furnishing flats is partly offset by revenue income from the higher rents charged. For example, a one-bedroom furnished flat costs £185.60 per month, compared to £90.08 for a one-bedroom unfurnished flat.

Glasgow had originally planned a staff of nine concierges and three seniors to replace the nine existing caretakers, at an estimated net cost for the enhanced service of £32,096. However, due to additional security requirements at Mitchellhill, 12 concierges and three seniors were required at an estimated additional net cost of £60,000 at 1988/9 prices. The cost for 1990/91 of 12 concierges and three senior concierges is £176,202.

In addition to the annual salary costs above, initial costs of training and concierge uniforms was estimated at £4,848 for 1988/89 and annual costs of equipment maintenance and electricity as £4,250. The cost for 1990/91 for uniforms and training is £6,375. However, the cost of equipment maintenance has been increased to £25,000. This may be due to the difficulties experienced with the original contractor, and the continuing problems of poor performance. The annual office running costs are £5,000.

The local estate management office costs £30,000 per annum in staffing (one estate manager and one housing assistant) and £15,000 in running costs.

Glasgow City Council has adopted a policy of spreading the revenue costs of its concierge service for all sites across the whole of the Housing Revenue account, so that the cost is borne by all tenants, not just those in receipt of the service. In 1988/89, this cost was estimated at 7.2p per week for 160,000 tenants. If tenants in the Individual sites had had to pay for the concierge service themselves, the additional cost per tenant would have been up to £3.15 per tenant per week at 88/89 prices. The policy of spreading rents was adopted because of the anomaly that, because of the way rents are calculated, the least desirable flats often have the highest rents. Undoubtedly, the low cost of the service affects the level of tenant satisfaction.

At present, there have been no Right to Buy sales in concierge blocks, but if there are the

Housing Department estimates that £5 to £6 per week would have to be charged for the concierge service, plus an appropriate portion of the cost of the capital investment.

Implementation

On-site management

The Mitchellhill Estate was previously managed by one Housing Assistant from the Castlemilk district office. An on-site office was opened in June 1988 with an increased staffing of one Housing Manager and one Housing Assistant. This office is on the first floor of the block in which the concierge control office is situated, and provides close liaison with and back up to the concierge.

The concierge service was introduced in July 1989, with 12 concierges and three seniors providing a 24 hour security service.

Other (physical) improvements

The five blocks were re-roofed in 1987; the lifts were replaced in November 1988; in April 1989 solid core entrance doors were instated and landing improvements carried out to blocks 3.5 and 7; in November 1989 solid core doors were installed and landings improvements to blocks 9 and 11; in July to late 1989 foyers were improved, close circuit TV. controlled phone entry systems and external lighting were installed.

Policing

The two community police officers on Mitchellhill are part of a team of eight on Castlemilk. This initiative was introduced in February/March 1989 at a cost of £15,000 per officer per year (Strathclyde Police estimate).

implementation difficulties

In a report of the Director of Housing in October 1988 (City of Glasgow. 1988). a programme of sites where concierge would be introduced was set out. Mitchellhill was programmed for the financial year 1988/89. In fact, the scheme did not become operational until July 1989.

Additional and continuing problems were caused by the fact that the contractor who installed the security system at Mitchellhill went into liquidation several months into the contract. This delayed installation and affected maintenance. Although a replacement contractor has been found, at the time of our visit in January 1991, 18 months after implementation, the intercom system in 151 flats of a total of 570 are not fully operational. The new contractor is repairing the faulty equipment.

Crime outcomes

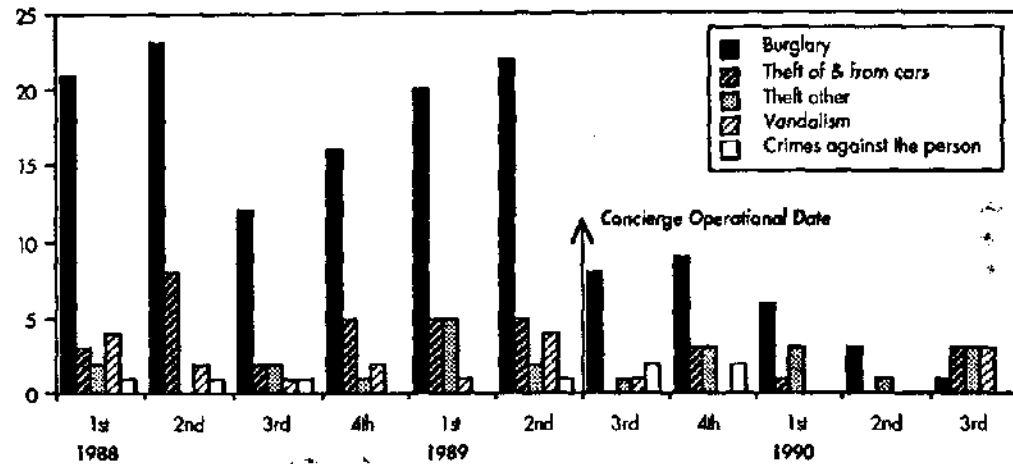
Recorded crime statistics indicate that the overall rate of crime has reduced substantially since the introduction of the concierge service and associated management measures in July 1989 (see Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 3: Mitchellhill recorded crime statistics

Quarter	1988				1989				1990		
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	1st	2nd	3rd
Burglary	21	23	12	16	20	22	8	9	6	3	1
Theft of and from cars	3	8	2	5	5	5	0	3	1	0	3
Theft other	2	0	2	1	5	2	1	3	3	1	3
Vandalism	4	2	1	2	1	4	1	0	0	0	3
Crimes against person	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	2	0	0	0
Totals	31	34	18	24	31	34	12	17	10	A	10

Source: Strathclyde Police

Figure 1: Mitchellhill development - Crime figures



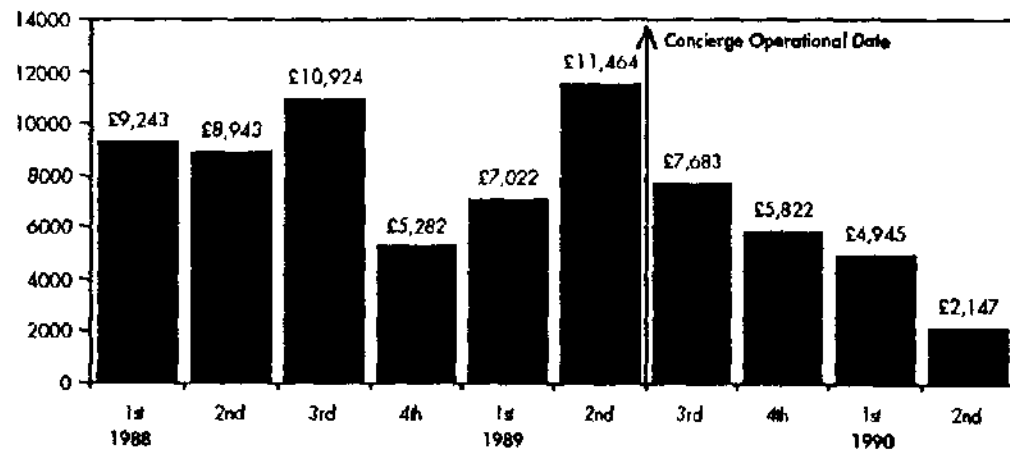
In the 18 months prior to its introduction, crimes averaged 19 per quarter, the highest rates being recorded in the second quarters of 1988 and 1989, with 34 each. The third quarter of 1989, in which the concierge security system was introduced, showed an immediate reduction to 12. The rate has fluctuated a little since then, with a low of four crimes recorded in the second quarter of 1990.

The majority of recorded crimes are break-ins to dwellings. The steady decline of burglaries, from a high of 23 in the second quarter of 1988 to one in the third quarter of 1990, is striking.

Thefts of and from cars reduced from 17 in the 12 months prior to implementation, to four in the first 12 months of the scheme's operation.

Vandalism recorded by the police has fallen from eight incidents in the 12 months before implementation, to only one afterwards. Similar trends are apparent from the Housing Department records on the numbers and costs of repairs to communal areas, which show that the cost of such repairs, 95% of which are estimated to be caused by vandalism, dropped from a high of £11,464 in the second quarter of 1989 to £2,147 in the second quarter of 1990 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Mitchellhill development — Repairs to communal areas



The small numbers of recorded crimes against the person made it impossible to draw conclusions from the small rise during the period under study.

Strathclyde Police provided recorded crime figures for the beat (28) covering Mitchellhill, although the crime categories supplied were not exactly comparable with those previously described for Mitchellhill itself. As shown in Table 4, the recorded crime rate in the rest of beat 28

remained fairly constant between 1988 and 1990.

Table 4: Recorded crime for Beat 28 (excluding Mitchellhill)

	1988	1989	1990
Crimes of dishonesty (burglary, Theft of and from motor vehicles, other theft)	256	281	238
Vandalism	72	89	101
Crimes of violence (non-sexual)	31	25	27
Crimes of indecency	3	2	4
Totals	411	448	420

In Castlemilk as a whole, the recorded crime total remained fairly constant in 1988, 1989 and 1990 (2,428, 2,368 and 2,484 crimes respectively).

However, there was evidence that burglaries in Castlemilk did begin to drop sharply in 1990. For example, there were 34 burglaries in the last quarter of 1990 compared with 89 in the same quarter of 1989, a 62% reduction. The reduction in burglary in Castlemilk as a whole was not as dramatic as that in Mitchellhill but was clearly influenced by the ongoing programme of replacing existing flat doors with solid core doors throughout the estate. Castlemilk is largely a tenement estate where the majority of burglaries have involved entry through front doors rather than windows. The police report that not one of the new solid core doors has yet allowed access to dwellings for burglars.

Perceptions of crime

Glasgow has planned *before* and *after* satisfaction surveys for its first eight concierge sites. The *before* survey has been completed but data is not yet available. The *after* survey has not yet been carried out, but this will attempt to cover the same tenants as in the *before* survey. There is close liaison with the tenants association through monthly meetings, and feedback is received by the on-site housing management staff and concierges. They report a reduction in the fear of crime. 'Residents now tell us they feel much safer and secure in the knowledge that they can leave their homes and they won't be broken into' (City of Glasgow, 1990b). In our discussion with two representatives of the tenants association, both long-term residents, they expressed satisfaction with the service and described the extent of the problems of vandalism, drug dealing and antisocial behaviour of tenants which existed prior to the concierge scheme.

Safe Castlemilk, a Scottish Office funded Safer Cities initiative, is monitoring the Mitchellhill scheme and has conducted interviews with tenants representatives in 1990 (Graham, unpublished). These show that whilst the whole package of measures was welcomed by tenants, the security feature which they believe has made the most difference to their lives is the introduction of solid core security doors to flats. As most break ins took place via the previous half-glazed doors, this is not surprising. *Safe Castlemilk* are promoting the introduction of these doors throughout Castlemilk. The Housing Department has been replacing doors in Castlemilk on a phased basis.

One indicator of the reduction in problems associated with young people is the fact that the Youth Forum in Castlemilk had targeted Mitchellhill as an area where a lot of young people congregated. In the autumn of 1989 two detached youth workers were assigned to work with them. Within six months, these workers were reallocated to other areas as young people no longer congregated there.

The police believe that the concierge scheme reduces police staffing needs and eliminates many problems on the estate. The community consultations and *target* hardening measures such as new doors were considered to be important factors.

Displacement

The police thought some displacement was taking place, in two ways:

- To *soft targets*—from burglary to crimes of dishonesty such as shoplifting, and to easier targets such as cars;
- To daytime crime — 55% of all crime is now committed in daytime. This causes problems because of the heavy daytime commitment of the police (for example, in court work) and the restrictions on overtime.

Safe Castlemilk project staff believe that there might be some displacement of crime to other parts of the Castlemilk area, especially drug dealing, but have no evidence for this.

The police believe that, although there might be some displacement of drug dealing to other parts of the estate, nowhere else in Castlemilk exhibits the same scale of problem as that which previously existed in Mitchellhill.

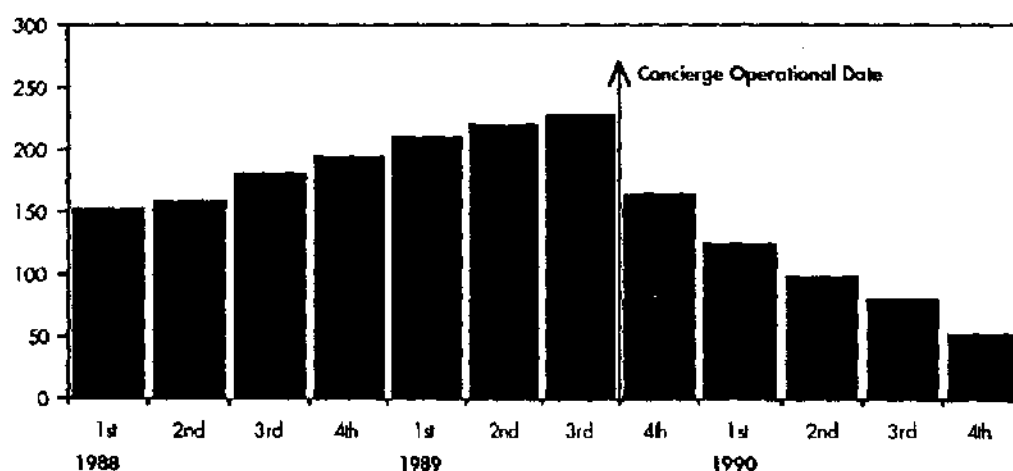
Other outcomes

Glasgow Housing Department, in its monitoring process, has considered a number of factors: voids, turnover rate, lets, rental income, tenant participation, common repairs and crime. The last two issues have already been covered.

Voids

As the concierge scheme was being developed and new letting guidelines were being drawn up with the tenants association, flats in Mitchellhill were left void. This partly accounts for the high void rate of 152 (32% of flats) in the first quarter of 1988, and the steady climb to 226 (48%) in the third quarter of 1989. Many tenants left, and there was no demand from anyone to move in (see Figure 3 for overall voids trend).

Figure 3: Mitchellhill Development — Voids.



The policy of marketing the new concierge service and the availability of furnished flats led to a growing demand for vacancies. The waiting list was prioritised over transfers, to avoid creating voids elsewhere on Castlemilk. The number of voids steadily reduced to 41 in January 1991. The estate manager now maintains a waiting list of 250 people wishing to move onto the estate, including some who previously left. The letting committee (with two tenant members) interviews all prospective tenants carefully and this inevitably takes more time, but ensures that incoming tenants are clear about the behaviour expected of them. Priority is given to people with the highest points and a local connection, to improve community cohesiveness.

Lets

An analysis of lets over two quarters following the introduction of the concierge scheme showed that 92 flats were let as follows:

- 23% to single under 25s
- 39% to single over 25s
- 10% to single parents
- 28% to a couple or family

This shows the majority (62%) of lets going to single people. The Housing Department states: 'Our aim in Mitchellhill is to achieve a balanced community with a good mix of household types and

avoid the concentrations of vulnerable groups which caused so many problems in the past.' (City of Glasgow, 1990²)

Tenancy turnover

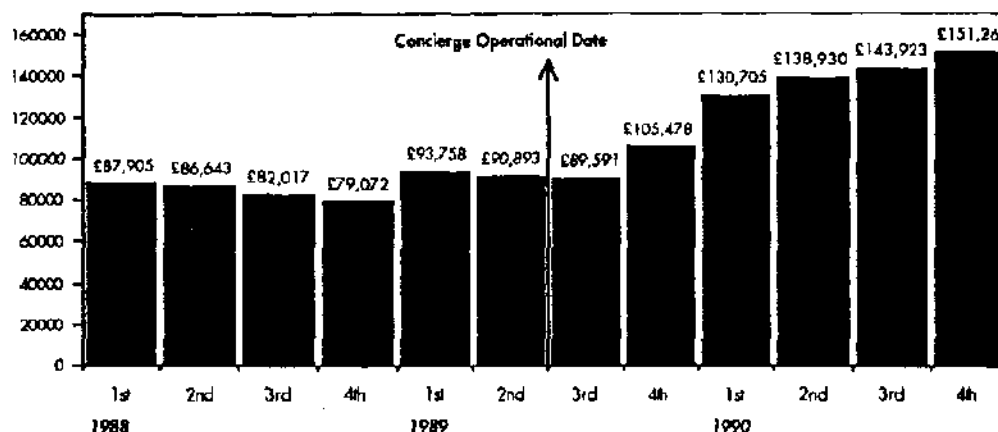
In Mitchellhill in 1988, around 40 flats per quarter were given up, representing an annual turnover rate of 27%. The Castlemilk average is 15% and the city-wide average is 11.5%.

The rate of tenancy terminations dropped to 37 (13%) in the last six months of 1989, but appears to have increased again sharply in 1990 (exact figures not available). The Housing Department thinks this may be due to 'less desirable tenants leaving because of the increased security... more rigorous enforcement of tenancy conditions... and identifying Giro drops' (City of Glasgow, 1990b). Longer term monitoring is needed. No information was available on where these tenants moved to, which would illuminate their reasons for leaving, and details of transfer requests to move off the estate are not available.

Rental income

As more flats have been let, the rental income has inevitably increased (see Figure 4). The lowest rental income in the period of Glasgow's evaluation was £79,072 in the fourth quarter of 1988. In the fourth quarter of 1990 it was £151,266.

Figure 4: Mitchellhill development — Rental income



The proportion of rent collected does not necessarily correspond to the number of flats let; ie the lowest amount of rent collected did not occur at the same time as the largest number of voids. This is partly because the rent collected is the total figure for the quarter, whereas the void figure is a *snapshot* of the total number of voids at a given date. The other reason is the high level of arrears at Mitchellhill. In January 1991, with 91% of the flats let, 386 tenants, 74.5% of the total of 518, were in arrears of rent.

This compares to 63% of tenants in Castlemilk as a whole, which is already a high figure, though not untypical of an area with high levels of deprivation like Castlemilk. 125 or 32% of the tenants in arrears are not receiving benefits. A number of these (the exact number is not available) are students who are struggling to pay their rent on limited grants. Housing benefit is no longer available to students since September 1990.

The arrears position is one which is being closely monitored by the Housing Department in Castlemilk. The number of tenants in arrears is down slightly on the September 1990 figure of 77%, but the arrears as a percentage of the debit is up from 9.33% in June 1990 to 11.54% in January 1991.

The Housing Department states: The rise in arrears was expected as the blocks filled up. Arise was also expected because of furniture charges and the fact that such tenancies would be shorter.

By comparison the arrears in Mitchellhill are higher than in the rest of Castlemilk, but there are a lot of new tenants who need to be educated on the need to pay rent and apply for housing

benefit. Managing arrears in Mitchellhill is already more intensive but I think it will be some time before a clear picture emerges and whether or not we need to review letting policy.' (City of Glasgow, 1991)

The increase in rental income can also be expected from periodic rent increases. Over the three years for which monitoring information is available, the rents of the flats on Mitchellhill have increased substantially. For example, a one bedroom furnished apartment cost £171.16 per month in 1989/90 and £185.60 per month in 1990/91. The rent of a one bedroom unfurnished flat was £63.20 in 1988/89, £78.96 in 1989/90 and £90.08 in 1990/91. The income actually collected does not fully reflect these increases, particularly those attributable to furniture charges. Nevertheless, the increased rental income partly offsets the cost of the concierge service

Tenant participation

The initiative has led to the formation of an active tenants association which participates in the management of the estate and contributes to resolving problems as they emerge.

Assessment of evidence

Evidence of reduced crime problems

Recorded crime statistics, gathered for the period from January 1988 to September 1990, show a very substantial fall in the level of crime and a consistent pattern across most offence categories. The overall level of crime fell by 54% in the last 12 months compared with the previous 12 months. The scale of the reduction makes it unlikely that it could be explained by reporting or recording artefacts.

It had been anticipated, at the time that this scheme was selected for a case study assessment, that victimisation data from a post-survey would have been available to compare with victimisation data from the pre-survey. In the event, the post-survey has been delayed and will not now yield data until after the conclusion of this review. At that time an invaluable source of data will be available to confirm (or otherwise) the evidence of reductions in recorded crime, as well as providing additional information on crimes with low reporting rates, on any changes in the characteristics of the victimised population and on residents' perceptions of safety.

Supportive data was obtained, however, from Housing Department monitoring statistics. The costs of repairs to common areas fell by 41% in the 12 months up to September 1990 (compared with the previous 12 months), and if the last quarter is anything to go by the costs may be halved again in the next 12 months. This appears to confirm the recorded crime evidence of reductions in incidents of vandalism.

The evidence from recorded crime statistics was also confirmed by subjective assessments provided by residents, police officers and council staff who have lived or worked on the estate for a number of years.

Evidence of initiative's effect

Strathclyde Police supplied crime data for the beat area covering Mitchellhill and for Castlemilk as a whole. These showed that the overall crime rate in the rest of the beat and in Castlemilk remained stable in 1990, Burglaries throughout Castlemilk began to drop sharply in 1990, although not as dramatically as had been the case for Mitchellhill. The police believe that the door replacement programme in Castlemilk has contributed to the widespread reduction in burglary.

Changes in the make up of the population in Mitchellhill may also have contributed to the crime reduction. At the beginning of the 1980s the flats were mainly occupied by families with young children, elderly couples and older single people. Lettings policy from 1982 dictated that families with children and the elderly should be offered transfers and an estimated 70% of new tenants during this period were young single people. It is claimed by Housing Department staff that this was a period of growing crime and vandalism problems.

Following the introduction of the concierge scheme in July 1989, the majority of lettings (62%) have gone to single people but there has been a noticeable change in the socio-economic status of new tenants following the targeting of academic institutions and local employers. 45% of the lettings of furnished flats have been to students and the remainder to other young people, the majority of whom are in employment.

Evidence of effect of Individual measures

The recorded crime rate began to drop rapidly in the third quarter of 1989. Shortly before (in April 1989), solid core doors for flats had been introduced to three of the five blocks and, in July 1989, the concierge scheme became operational. In the fourth quarter of 1989, prior to further reductions in recorded crime, solid core doors for flats were introduced to the remaining two blocks and the security cameras, phone entry systems and external lighting were installed. It appears, therefore, that a combination of physical security measures and concierge scheme was the key factor.

The introduction of the on-site housing office, however, appeared to have no such impact. For 12 months following the setting up of the office in June 1988 there was little change in the recorded crime rate. It is difficult to judge, however, whether the policy adopted by the housing office of allowing flats to remain vacant in the lead up to the introduction of the concierge scheme contributed to sustaining the level of burglaries (i.e. by making it easier to burgle flats because they were empty or because there was reduced surveillance of occupied flats).

Evidence of permanence

The period covered by this study, from 18 months before the introduction of the concierge scheme to between 12 and 18 months afterwards (depending on the measures analysed), was adequate but not ideal. The now delayed post-survey of residents will allow for an extended follow-up period of between six and 12 months (depending on the measures analysed).

Serious reservations have emerged, however, over the viability of elements of the City's strategy for Mitchellhill. As previously noted, there has been a deliberate policy of introducing a different socio-economic mix to the blocks by targeting students and professionals looking for short-term accommodation. However, the government's withdrawal of housing benefit for students from September 1990 has contributed to increasing levels of arrears and the Housing Department has temporarily suspended lettings to students whilst the situation is reviewed. Consideration is being given to requiring a deposit from tenants taking furnished accommodation and to transferring those in difficulties to unfurnished flats which are about 50% cheaper.

Evidence of replicability

Glasgow City Council's concierge programme includes 80 blocks of flats, of which 50 are already covered by concierge schemes. A full evaluation of the first phase of this programme, including Mitchellhill is due. This will provide valuable insight into the effects of concierge schemes in a variety of settings.

The specific location of Mitchellhill may have contributed to the apparent success of the scheme. In particular, Castlemilk has a declining population which means that properties can be left empty to facilitate the introduction of new allocation policies and a more considered approach to the selection of tenants. In addition, Mitchellhill is benefiting from the special priority status of Castlemilk which means that a considerable amount of resources is being extended to improve the physical, social and economic fabric of the area. These factors are not likely to be a feature of other sites where concierge schemes are being considered.

The capital cost of the foyer and security works required for the concierge scheme was £450,000. Additional works to lifts and landings brought the total capital cost up to £1.4 million, with some additional expenditure on the external appearance of blocks planned for 1991/92.

The cost of running the concierge service (staffing, running costs, system maintenance and training), over and above what it would cost to retain the nine caretakers previously deployed, is estimated at £85,000. The costs of an additional estate manager (£18,000) plus office costs (£5,000) brings the total revenue cost of the concierge and associated management service to around £108,000 per annum. This works out at about £190 per annum or £3.65 per week per flat. In Glasgow, the cost of the concierge programme is pooled amongst all of the City Council's 160,000 properties, which has meant a negligible additional rent cost for tenants benefiting from the concierge service.

There are grounds for believing that the net cost of the concierge service in Mitchellhill is in fact somewhat lower. Repairs to common areas have reduced by about £14,000 in the 12 months following the introduction of the scheme. Rental income has also increased. £465,000 was collected in the 12 months to September 1990 (i.e. in the year after the concierge scheme was introduced), compared with £346,000 in the previous 12 months — an increase of £119,000.

However, this Increase needs to be treated with caution as the Housing Department allowed some flats to remain void in the 12 months prior to the concierge scheme being phased in. In fact the level of voids jumped from an average of around 32% in early 1988 to an average of around 45% in the 12 month period of less vigorous letting activity up until the introduction of the concierge scheme. This could have accounted for as much as £82,000 of the lost rental income in the period, which means that only some £37,000 could realistically be claimed as additional rental income. Taking both increased rental income and reduced cost of common repairs together, the net cost of the concierge and associated management service may be closer to £57,000 per annum (just under £2 per week per flat).

Undoubtedly, some benefits have also been gained from reduced crime in Mitchellhill. Apart from the reduced repairs to common areas (about 95% of which were attributed to vandalism), the residents have experienced far fewer burglaries (according to recorded crime statistics) and have, presumably, derived both monetary and non-monetary benefits from this. The planned post-survey planned will provide an opportunity to explore this area more fully.

Postscript

Recorded crime figures for Mitchellhill Estate for 1991 and 1992 showed increases in recorded totals to 43 and 51 respectively. However, these figures still represent only about half the annual rates prior to the concierge scheme being introduced. Burglary levels were sustained at a reduced level: 10 burglaries in 1991 and 10 burglaries in 1992. The same is true for theft of and from motor vehicles: 2 incidents in 1991 and 6 incidents in 1992. Recorded incidents of vandalism rose to 10 in 1991 and 16 in 1992. Also, crimes against the person appear to have increased more recently — 9 incidents were recorded in 1992. The latter trend accords with the impression given by concierge staff that there has been a recent upsurge of gang violence.

Source material:

Scottish Office (1990), *Castlemilk Partnership Strategy Report*. Edinburgh, HMSO
Graham I (1991), Data supplied by *Safe Castlemilk* for purposes of case study, January 1991
Graham I, unpublished report on *Safe Castlemilk* initiative
City of Glasgow (1990a), *Concierge Information Package*
City of Glasgow (1988), *Concierge Provision in Multi-Storey Flats*, Report by Director of Housing, 14 October 1988
City of Glasgow (1990b), *Mitchellhill Concierge Service Monitoring Information*. Report by Director of Housing, 16 May 1990
City of Glasgow (1991), *Mitchellhill Arrears Analysis February 1991*, Housing Department
Scottish Homes (1993), *Crime Prevention in the Housing Sector in Scotland*, report by the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (unpublished)

Case Study Interviews:

Glasgow Housing management staff — January, February, March 1991
Glasgow Housing Department concierges—January 1991
Strathclyde Police —January 1991
Safe Castlemilk project staff— December 1990, January 1991
Mitchellhill Tenants Association —January 1991