

# **housing safe communities**

**an evaluation of recent initiatives**

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## PEPYS ESTATE

### CO-ORDINATED ESIAL E IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

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## Estate description

The Pepys Estate is a large, mixed development comprising low, medium and high rise blocks, located on the banks of the Thames in Deptford, in the north-west corner of the London Borough of Lewisham. The estate was mainly built in the late 1960s by the Greater London Council (GLC). Construction began in 1966 and was completed in 1973, although further additions have been made through several wharfside developments. The estate was transferred in stages to the London Borough of Lewisham from July 1983, during the course of the initiative being considered in this case study.

The Deptford Wharf development, together with more recent housing developments in the area immediately surrounding the estate, have increased the size of the estate from 1,476 units in 1982 to around 2,100 at present. This substantial increase in the size of the estate should be borne in mind when considering changes in crime levels on the estate.

The estate comprises ten interconnected eight storey blocks, three twenty-four storey tower blocks, together with a number of flats and houses by the river converted from old warehouses and two more recent developments of flats and houses. The ten medium rise blocks are connected by an extensive system of high level walkways. It is possible to walk between five of the blocks without descending to street level. These blocks are of a scissors *design*, housing about ten maisonettes on each corridor.

The problems connected with these blocks were described as follows in 1982: 'The main design faults arise from the inter-connectedness, the lack of "defensible space" and opportunity for surveillance over common parts and the ease of access to and escape from the blocks.' (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1982)

Although no up-to-date demographic information is available, the current estate population is estimated at approximately 5,000. Council officers estimate that around one third of residents are from ethnic minorities. These are fairly evenly split between black Afro-Caribbeans, Africans and Asians, with a small number of Vietnamese.

## Estate history

In 1981 the Pepys Estate was selected by the GLC for a Safe Neighbourhoods Unit (SNU) initiative because of the high levels of burglary, autocrime and vandalism being experienced by residents. This was accompanied by high levels of tenant dissatisfaction with standards of caretaking, repairs and management services on the estate. The poor standard of estate services was exacerbated by problems associated with the transfer of the estate to the London Borough of Lewisham, particularly during 1982 when the GLC managed the estate on an agency basis.

Although the estate was only completed in 1972, by 1982 the estate had deteriorated significantly and there was considerable vandalism to communal areas within blocks and throughout the external areas of the estate.

The burglary rate on the estate was high. In 1981, 107 residential burglaries were recorded by the police. By 1982, this figure had risen to 175.

These high burglary rates were greatly assisted by unrestricted access to the medium and low rise blocks, *the general weakness of street doors and locks and poor estate lighting.*

High burglary rates were accompanied by high levels of autocrime. In 1981, 309 cases of autocrime, including 100 thefts of a vehicle, were reported to the police. In 1982, this figure rose to 396, including 149 thefts of a vehicle. There was also evidence of racial harassment against the thirty or so Vietnamese families on the estate.

These high crime rates were accompanied by high levels of fear of crime: 'Many old people, women and children are afraid to use the lifts or stairs and will not do so unaccompanied. Nor do

residents feel confident to confront noisy children, boisterous teenagers or non-resident intruders, because they cannot rely on the support of other residents.' (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1982)

Problems of crime and fear of crime were accompanied by wider social and economic problems, together with general dissatisfaction with the estate. The estate suffered from high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people. In 1982, youth unemployment was estimated at around 22% (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1982). Of particular significance was the high child density. In 1982 it was estimated that 23% of the population was under the age of 18.

The high levels of resident dissatisfaction with the estate were also reflected by the fact that around a quarter of residents were on the housing transfer list and over a quarter of households owed more than two weeks rent.

## Description of initiative

In response to the above problems, a Safe Neighbourhoods Unit project was established on the estate in September 1981.

The project had a broad remit: The overriding aim of the project is to work with the residents of Pepys to develop and achieve ways of improving the quality of life on the estate' (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1982). To achieve this, the project aimed to consult widely with residents and to involve residents in developing and implementing solutions.

The project was overseen by a project steering committee comprising all the main authorities providing services on the estate (the GLC Housing and Works Department, the Borough of Lewisham Housing, Planning, Social Services and Leisure Departments, the police, the probation service and ILEA Youth Service). The Pepys Estate Tenants Association was also represented, together with representatives from the blocks affected by the improvements. The role of the steering committee was to plan, negotiate and ensure the speedy implementation of as many improvements as possible.

The steering committee oversaw the project between late 1981 and mid-1986, when the GLC was abolished and the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit's involvement in the project formally ceased. This led to a reduction in the level of tenant involvement in the management of the project, although some of the committee's functions were subsequently taken over by the Pepys Estate Forum which was established in mid-1986.

A review of progress of the project carried out by the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit in 1986 identified the role of the steering group as having been crucial to the success of the initiative by ensuring a high level of local accountability among both Council officers and contractors (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1986).

The Pepys Estate Forum, which is still active, meets every fortnight and is attended by the chair of the Tenants Association and a small number of other tenants, the Neighbourhood Housing Manager, the caretaking manager, officers from environmental services, the police and contractors. The Forum deals with day to day management issues, the supervision of contractors, and policing issues.

Resident consultations were carried out between September 1981 and March 1982. This involved a series of consultation meetings and special consultations with children and young people in youth clubs and local schools and with the Vietnamese community. Only a very limited self-completion questionnaire survey was conducted. As a result, no additional data was generated on unreported crimes.

The consultations confirmed the existence of very low levels of satisfaction with estate services, high levels of burglaries, auto-crime and vandalism, widespread fear of crime and general unease about a general lack of 'neighbourliness' on the estate.

Housing repairs, which at that time were carried out from a depot on a neighbouring estate, were considered to be slow and unreliable. Housing management, also considered to be remote and unresponsive, was carried out from a district office about two miles away.

Caretaking was carried out by a mobile caretaking team which was based on the estate but also covered about 1900 dwellings on neighbouring estates. It was generally considered that the team provided a crisis service which did nothing to deter vandalism or antisocial behaviour.

Residents also expressed dissatisfaction with both the amount and type of policing on the estate, and it was considered that low levels of contact between residents and the police had led to significant under-reporting of crime. Given the already high levels of reported crime on the estate, this suggests a significant hidden crime problem.

The Safe Neighbourhood's Unit Action Plan was presented in April 1982. The plan's main

recommendations are summarised as follows:

- Physical improvements and extensive modifications to the blocks, incorporating a zone locking system to restrict access.
- Improved caretaking, management and maintenance services, including the introduction of resident caretakers, the establishment of a local estate office and local repairs team.
- A substantial community development input.
- The strengthening of the tenants' and community associations.
- More effective neighbourhood policing,

Following the presentation of the Action Plan, a ground floor flat was converted into a community base for tenants, the two estate based community workers and service agencies. The Safe Neighbourhoods Unit provided one community worker for two years and Lewisham Council provided another on a permanent basis.

Ongoing tenant consultations were held throughout 1983 on specific improvement measures, such as the installation of phone entry systems and the sealing up of milk bottle recesses:

## Description of implementation

A two-phase improvement programme was initiated in Autumn 1983 and was expected to continue for three years. In the event, the failure of some of the original security measures, together with difficulties caused by the transfer of the estate from the GLC, meant that some of the original improvements were delayed and others have had to be replaced. As a result, a rolling programme of phone entry renewal has been under way in the medium-rise blocks since 1986. A programme of major security improvements is currently being implemented with the help of DoE Estate Action support. This aims to address the particular problems being faced by residents in the three tower blocks.

When the improvement scheme was reviewed by the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit in 1986, the following progress had been made:

Phase 1 of the improvement covered the ten interconnected, eight storey blocks. This involved the introduction of a double phone entry system at each block and corridor entrance: redesigned foyers: a zone-locking system to restrict access between interconnected blocks; the decoration of internal public spaces and security improvements to individual flats. However, it was noted that 'much of the communal areas security package was failing as fast as it is being installed' because of vandalism.

Phase 2 covered the three tower blocks and included: extensive structural work; a double phone entry system at each corridor with CCTV in each entrance foyer: upgrading of communal areas; security improvements to individual flats.

In addition, additional external lighting was installed throughout the estate. The total cost of the original GLC Improvement package to the eight storey blocks and the tower blocks was £4.2 million.

Since 1986, following extensive failure of the original system, the phone entry systems have been progressively renewed in all the medium-rise blocks at a total cost of £462,000. The original system began to fail in the medium-rise blocks in 1985, immediately following installation. Poor specifications, combined with difficulties encountered in maintaining the system, meant that the phone entry systems were never commissioned in the three tower blocks. Maintenance of the system in the medium rise blocks has resulted in considerable revenue costs during the past four years (£140,000 in 1990 alone).

The current system was tailored to the specific needs of the blocks, comprising stainless steel door frames, strong doors and screens, improved electronics and high quality closers, hinges and handles. It is generally considered to be operating successfully. Maintenance is carried out by a local firm which operates on a graded system of response times.

Work is about to start on a further phase of security and environmental work which includes:

- The introduction of a concierge scheme in one of the tower blocks (Wagon Tower) at an initial capital cost of approximately £200,000.
- The introduction of door entry systems and surveillance equipment covering the two remaining tower blocks at a cost of around £320,000.
- The improvement of internal common areas in the tower blocks at a cost of around £1,400,000.
- The demolition of overhead walkways on two of the medium rise blocks (Bence and Clement) at a cost of £450,000.
- Environmental works on the river front and in car parking areas.

- Stronger front entrance doors being installed on a rolling programme. All blocks which do not lend themselves to a phone entry system will eventually be provided with stronger front doors. The demolition of overhead walkways is being undertaken *in* response to resident pressure as a result of the problems being caused by unrestricted access between the blocks.

*in* addition to the programme of physical improvements described above, a number of important changes were made to the management of the estate. In late 1982 the housing department opened a Neighbourhood Flat on the estate, providing a part-time management presence. In mid-1983, Lewisham Housing Department began to develop an intensive management strategy for the estate. A large full-time estate office opened, together with a local repairs team. These staff were gradually deployed, building up to a total of 30 staff by early 1985. In addition, 12 resident caretakers were employed from mid-1984 onwards.

In 1989, the Pepys Estate Housing Office was incorporated into the wider Pepys Neighbourhood under Lewisham Council's decentralisation strategy. A Neighbourhood Housing Team comprising one neighbourhood manager, three housing team managers and fifteen housing officers now provides housing management services for approximately 3,200 units on Pepys and neighbouring estates.

The additional community development input provided by the Pepys Improvement Project helped to strengthen the role of the Tenants Association and the Community Association. In addition, a new family clubroom was opened, providing a focus for community activity on the estate and providing employment for five local people.

### **Policing initiative**

In addition to the improvements carried out by the GLC and Lewisham Council, the police also responded to the issues raised by residents during and after the consultations with an intensive Policing initiative which has received considerable *national* attention.

In 1981, there was only one young home beat officer assigned to the estate. The 1982 Action Plan expressed concern about the lack of regular police patrols and recommended increased policing, preferably with 24 hour coverage and a contact point for police on the estate.

Following discussions between the police and the Tenants Association and Community Centre Association this allocation was increased to two officers in 1983. These officers used the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit office on the estate as a base.

In the spring of 1984, the police attempted to launch a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in one block. However, the scheme failed due to lack of response from residents.

Following further discussion between the police and the tenants association, a new intensive policing programme was announced in October 1984. This initially involved a local team of five officers: one sergeant and *four* constables. The number of constables was subsequently increased to five. Officers are allocated on a patch basis and each officer is known personally to the tenants living on their patch.

Early in 1984, the Tenants Association also expressed growing *concern* to the police about drug problems *on* the estate. In response to this, an anti-drug squad was placed on the estate and a number of people were arrested, either for dealing *in* or supplying drugs to young people on the estate.

The local police team provides cover seven days a week between 1am and 10pm. There are also regular tours of night duty. Officers are aligned to relief rotas, but have enough flexibility to take account of times of the day which are particularly prone to certain types of crime.

This cover may be compared with cover on another large estate in the area where tours of duty do not start until 10am and there are no officers on duty on a Sunday.

The annual cost of the initiative for 1990 was estimated at £174,036 (source: Metropolitan Police Force — police costs ready reckoner).

### **Crime changes**

Data for the period between September 1983 and September 1990 was obtained from the Metropolitan Police (Table 1). This data was compiled on an October to October basis and covers the current Pepys beat area. This represents a wider area than the estate and also incorporates Trinity Estate and surrounding industrial units.

When considering Table I, it should also be borne in mind that the number of dwellings included in the beat area has increased by approximately 700 (30% since 1984).

The overall number of recorded crimes fell from 975 in 1983/84 to 558 in 1984/85, a reduction of 57%. Figures for subsequent years reveal that this reduction has been largely sustained during subsequent years, although the figure rose from 407 to 468 between 1987/88 and 1989/90. This increase is largely due to an increase in the amount of beat crime during that period.

Table 1: Recorded crime on Pepys Estate, September 1983 to September 1990

	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90
Street crime	25	15	12	13	11	15	- X20
Burglary	297	161	179	142	110	112	111
Beat crime'	178	170	114	130	133	145	176
Autocrime	475	212	203	231	153	174	164
Total	975	558	508	516	407	446	468

Offences such as criminal damage with come to the attention of the police officers whilst on patrol  
Source: Metropolitan Police

Reductions in burglary and autocrime were striking. For example, the burglary rate fell by 63% between 1983/84 and 1989/90 and the autocrime rate by 66%.

### Linking crime reductions to Interventions

The police were unable to provide the monthly or quarterly break downs of recorded crime which would have allowed for a closer scrutiny of the key period in 1984/5 when the crime rate began to fall sharply. However, it was possible to obtain a clearer picture by making use of recorded figures supplied by the police for an earlier report (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1985), which were provided in the same form but for two nine month periods — October 1983 to June 1984 and October 1984 to June 1985. Table 2 utilises both sets of figures to provide nine and three month break downs during the key period. To facilitate the presentation of trends, the numbers of recorded crimes in each column have also been translated into monthly averages (see figures in brackets).

Table 2: Recorded crimes on Pepys Estate during 1983, 1984 and 1985

	Oct 83 - June 84	Jul 84 - Sept 84	Oct 84 - June 85	July 85 - Sept 85
Street crime	21 (2)	4 (1)	11 (1)	4 (1)
Burglary	232 (26)	65 (7)	106 (12)	55 (18)
Beat crime	121 (13)	57 (19)	99 (11)	71 (24)
Autocrime	359 (40)	116 (38)	142 (16)	70 (23)
Total	733 (81)	242 (81)	358 (40)	200 (66)

Note: Monthly averages in brackets  
Source: Metropolitan Police

From Table 2 it seems apparent that the sharp reduction in the overall recorded crime rate did not materialise until late 1984 or early 1985. However, the trends amongst the highest volume categories (burglary and autocrime) appeared to be somewhat different and need to be considered separately.

A very sharp reduction in recorded burglaries is apparent in the third quarter of 1984. This accords with what we know about the timing of the physical improvements, and security improvements in particular. Although the major improvement programme began in the autumn of 1983. It was not until mid-1984 that there was any visible impact on the physical condition of the estate. For example, security doors began to be installed in individual dwellings in January 1984. By the middle of 1984 the police were reporting to the project steering committee that these doors had had a dramatic effect on burglaries in the affected blocks. They also reported that there had been some displacement to other areas of the estate. Following these police reports, the steering committee prioritised security improvements in blocks where displacement had where the number of burglaries had increased. These improvements began to take effect in the second half of 1984.

Other measures pre-dated or coincided with the fall in recorded burglaries. Improved estate lighting began to be installed during the first half of 1984. Lewisham Housing Department began to develop its intensive management strategy for the estate in mid-1983, although the estate team was not fully in place until early 1985. Resident caretakers were deployed on the estate from mid-1984. Also, in response to tenants association complaints about drug problems in the blocks, the police mounted a covert drug squad operation during August 1984.

Potentially just as significant, in terms of increased surveillance, was a gradual increase in the presence of contractors on the estate from the beginning of 1984. By mid-1984 there was a work force in excess of 40 people involved in the improvement programme.

*Other initiatives were* not properly in place by the time recorded burglaries began to fall. As previously mentioned, the estate based management team was not fully in place until early 1985. The intensive beat-policing initiative, which was proposed to the project steering committee in mid-1984 after a Neighbourhood Watch scheme failed to get off the ground, was not initiated until October 1984. The phone entry systems for the medium-rise blocks were a widespread failure and were not replaced until 1985 or later. Systems for the tower blocks were never commissioned.

Without reiterating what has been said about the timings of improvements, it appears that the fall in recorded autocrime from late 1985 may have had more to do with increased surveillance and the introduction of the intensive policing initiative. We know that the contractors were aware of the estate's reputation for autocrime and that the work force kept an eye on their own vehicles. The deployment of council staff — 30 staff in the estate office and 12 resident caretakers — added to the presence of estate based workers. The policing Initiative has committed officers to providing cover for the estate between 1am and 10pm each day with regular night patrols.

It is worth noting that all the measures taken on the estate were an integral part of the multi-agency project. This included the policing initiatives, the development of which were closely linked to police involvement in the project steering committee and their response to pressure from the committee, the tenants association and the community association.

### **Other evidence of crime reduction**

Given the maintenance of recorded crime figures at a significantly reduced rate over a six year period, it is clear that, taken together, the package of measures introduced on the estate since 1982 has had a beneficial effect on crime rates. However, the absence of *any* household survey data, means that it is not possible to make a confident assessment of the scale of the reduction, given the possibility of changes in reporting rates as a result of the policing initiative.

Evidence provided by crime statistics is supported by the views of tenants representatives, council officers and the police. Housing officers consider that the burglary rate on the estate is lower than might be expected on an estate of the size and density of Pepys.

Although there is still a significant amount of vandalism on the estate, this tends to be confined to fairly small areas, particularly in and around the three tower blocks. Much of the vandalism that does occur tends to be associated with empty properties and the activities of squatters. The concierge and associated security measures currently being introduced in the three tower blocks are aimed at resolving the particular security and management problems in these blocks.

The police sergeant in charge of the local beat team noted that graffiti is not a major problem on the estate, largely due to the council's policy of removing graffiti quickly.

However, personal safety is still considered to be a matter of concern to residents. Housing officers noted that residents feel especially vulnerable at night, particularly in the tower blocks. Despite the relatively low levels of reported violent crime on the estate, housing officers note that physical assaults and suicides are fairly common. Housing officers will only make visits on the estate if they have a radio.

Police officers consider that the housing of *significant* numbers of former psychiatric patients on the estate is causing additional problems. Problems are also caused where young single people have been housed in blocks previously designated as sheltered accommodation for the elderly. The police feel that these problems have been exacerbated by the recent withdrawal of resident wardens from the estate.

Although there is very little reported racial harassment, housing officers have identified racist undercurrents on the estate. Again, this is considered to be a particular problem in the tower blocks, where a large proportion of new tenants are black Africans.

Although there are problems associated with drug abuse and drug dealing on the estate, the problem is not considered to be comparable with those of other neighbouring estates.

## Other outcomes

Although the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit project ended in mid-1986, Lewisham Council has continued to address security concerns as a high priority. In addition to the ongoing programme of phone-entry renewal and door replacement, the Council has maintained a high local management **presence on** the estate.

The chair of the Tenants Association considers that the local repair and caretaking presence, combined with the role of the Pepys Estate Forum has significantly increased the quality of housing maintenance, caretaking and cleaning on the estate.

However, there are real concerns that recent reductions in repair and maintenance budgets, combined with staffing problems at the Neighbourhood Housing Office, are threatening *many* of the achievements on the estate.

Improvements in housing management have been accompanied by the continued development of community facilities on the estate through the Pepys Estate Community Forum and Co-op Pepys.

There is also general agreement that the reasonable levels of co-operation between the local police team, the tenants association and local housing officers has contributed to the improved situation on the estate. Tenants representatives consider that the local policing initiative is effective because it is widely accepted by residents, and because local officers are known to residents, particularly young people.

Housing officers consulted also feel that the policing initiative has been successful. There is regular contact between housing officers and the local beat police officers and close co-operation on crime prevention matters. A clear example of this co-operation is the weekly night-time estate lighting check undertaken by the beat police team. Defective lights are reported to the Tenants Association which then passes the information on to the Housing Department.

## Assessment of evidence

### Evidence of reduced crime problems

This evaluation is based largely on recorded crime statistics gathered between 1983 and 1990. No pre- or post-crime survey data is available. It is therefore not possible to confirm the trends identified by the recorded crime statistics. Similarly, only a limited amount of supporting data on other outcomes, particularly housing management information, is available.

Recorded crime statistics are supplemented by a limited amount of qualitative information. This takes the form of subjective assessments by Council officers and police officers who have worked on the estate for a number of years. The evaluation has also drawn on a very detailed description of residents' views of the estate prior to the implementation of the improvement measures. This description is contained within the *Pepys Estate Improvement Project Estate Profile* and Action Plan (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1982).

The main limitations imposed by the evaluation's reliance on recorded crime statistics are as follows:

- the inability to account for possible variations in reporting levels throughout the period covered by the evaluation;
- the inability to account for crime categories which have low reporting rates, such as sexual harassment and assault and criminal damage;
- the difficulty of identifying non-crime related outcomes of the initiative.

These limitations mean that it is difficult to make confident pronouncements on the size of reductions *for* each crime category.

However, the size of the overall recorded crime reduction, means that it is possible to assert with a reasonable degree of confidence that the estate has had a significant and lasting impact on crime levels. Overall recorded crime figures show a substantial and sustained reduction between 1984 and 1990. Between 1983/84 and 1989/90 overall recorded crime reduced by 52%. at the same time as the size of the estate increased by about a third. This reduction is mirrored in sustained reductions in the rates of burglary and autocrime. Reductions in street crime and beat crime have been less pronounced but largely sustained, although beat crimes increased to pre-1985 levels during 1990.

However, overall crime rates are still well above the national average. In the absence of detailed survey information on levels of *fear* of crime, it is impossible to say *with any* certainty how residents



feel about living in the estate at the moment. However, it would appear that fear of crime is still a major concern, particularly in the high rise blocks.

### **Evidence of Initiative's effect**

largely as a result of the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit and Metropolitan Police initiatives on the estate, the various interventions on the Pepys Estate have been well documented. The detailed documentation of the various initiatives means that external factors can be confidently accounted for and in this case it would appear that these have not played a significant part in the crime reductions.

Since crime statistics were gathered specifically to monitor crime reductions on the Pepys Estate, no control data for similar estates is available. Although crime figures are available for the Milton Court Estate in Deptford, this estate is also the subject of a local policing initiative, together with major security improvements. As a result it would not represent a suitable control estate.

The 30% increase in the number of dwellings covered by the Pepys Estate police beat since 1982 suggests that it is extremely unlikely that the reduction in the recorded crime rate can be attributed to demographic factors. On the contrary, the increased population of the estate would be expected to work against a significant crime reduction.

However, apart from recorded crime statistics, very little data is available on either crime related or non-crime related outcomes. Given the very substantial investment in security, housing management and policing by the local authority and the Metropolitan Police over the past eight years, the lack of any systematic monitoring is disappointing.

It is particularly important that efforts are made to effectively evaluate the impact of the current package of security improvements, notably the concierge and surveillance initiatives in the three tower blocks and the walkway removals in the medium rise blocks. Lewisham Council has plans to monitor the effects of the new management and security arrangements in Aragon tower using local management information and regular meetings with tenants. If successful, similar schemes will be introduced in the two remaining tower blocks, Eddystone and Daubeny towers.

It is also proposed to monitor the effects of the walkway removals in the two low-rise blocks, Bence and Clement. However, it is proposed that monitoring will take the form of regular resident consultations, rather than a systematic analysis of the incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour.

### **Evidence of effect of individual measures**

It was possible to make some links between crime reduction and the timing of specific interventions. Although it is not possible to completely disentangle the impact of individual interventions, it is possible to draw some broad conclusions. The most significant of these is the fact that the main reduction in crime levels coincided with the implementation of physical security improvements, changes in management practice and the deployment of large numbers of staff and contractors on the estate. It seems reasonable to conclude that the localised management initiatives introduced by the Housing Department (not fully established until after the crime rate began to fall) and by the police (not established until burglary rates began to fall) contributed to the maintenance of consistently lower crime levels throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

### **Evidence of permanence**

The nine year monitoring period allows fairly confident conclusions to be drawn about the permanence of any crime reductions. The monitoring period covers the year prior to the start of the initiative and the six years following the initial crime reduction.

### **Evidence of replicability**

Since 1982, over £12 million has been spent on estate improvements — £4.2 million by the GLC and around £8 million by Lewisham Council. While most of this expenditure has related to structural repairs to, and upgrading of, the tower blocks, a significant proportion has related to the introduction of security measures.

It is clear that the original access control systems introduced by the GLC were a failure, resulting in significant capital and revenue costs to Lewisham Council. The clear failure of this element of the improvement programme makes the crime reductions brought about by other

Interventions even more impressive. Since 1986, more effective access control measures have been introduced into the medium rise blocks. The current improvements being developed for the tower blocks aim to ensure that the particular security and management problems experienced in these *blocks* will be addressed.

However, unless effective monitoring arrangements are developed, ideally involving pre- and post-implementation surveys, it will not be possible to thoroughly evaluate either the success of the improvements or their cost effectiveness.

On the basis of available information on the physical and social composition of Pepys Estate, and the improvements carried out to date, there would appear to be no significant features of the initiative which would reduce its potential for implementation on other comparable estates.

Questions remain, however, *over* the attitude of the Metropolitan Police to the ongoing cost of intensive policing. Whilst Deptford sub-division has shown its commitment by supporting the Pepys Estate scheme for over six years, and by replicating the scheme on two other estates, the question of its permanence has been raised at regular intervals. Elsewhere in the Metropolitan Police, little interest appears to have been shown in the scheme. The additional costs involved — the estate has a team of six officers where two had been deployed before at an extra cost of just over £100,000 per annum — may be a disincentive. No attempt has been made to assess any savings in police time which may have accrued from lower crime levels. For instance, the Northumbria Police cost of crith'è model (Bailey and Lynch, 1988), which is generally thought to underestimate the costs of police time, would produce a saving of over £29,000 (at 1988 prices) from the 186 fewer recorded burglaries in 1989/90 compared with 1983/84 and over 656,000 from 314 fewer recorded motor vehicle crimes. There appears to be a strong case for a cost effectiveness study of the Pepys policing initiative.

## Postscript

The Neighbourhood Policing Project on the estate was closed in late 1992 as part of local re-organisation under the Metropolitan Police's *sector policing* initiative. Although fears have been expressed by the Tenants Association and Neighbourhood Policing Project staff about the possible repercussions for estate crime levels (see Department of the Environment, 1993), it is still too early to assess the impact of this change. Recorded crime levels do appear to have increased. For instance, the total number of recorded crimes increased by 15% in 1992/93, when compared with 1991/92 (see Table 1). However, this followed a drop of 12% in recorded crime levels in 1991/92, compared with 1990/91. Therefore, little can be read into the latest fluctuation in crime levels.

A further Estate Action programme of physical improvements, including window and door replacement, *was* being introduced in late 1993, together with a Community Refurbishment Scheme.

### Source material:

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