

Large housing estates in the United Kingdom

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RESTATE



Influences for transformation of housing estates - Birmingham

The Central Estates in Birmingham, is an area encompassing five distinct housing estates. Here the interplay between policy interventions or lack of and the levels of physical decay led to resident action in the 1990's.

Within the poster we want to show some of the reasons and the drivers behind change on this particular estate.

Legacy of problems

One of the key problems on large scale estates in the UK, arises when maintenance and necessary repair work is not undertaken swiftly, as a result, neighbourhoods suffer from decaying housing, a lack of investment in the housing stock, and a general feeling of neglect.

The Central Estates were in the 1960s seen as the way forward for social housing in the city with the Queen attending the opening of the estate. Whilst the housing design in the Central Estates, was innovative, the layout and construction methods used, provided problems of its own.

For forty Since the estates construction, the stock had received no modernisation or planned maintenance for forty years. Both the interior and the exterior of properties needed attention. Neglect by the local authority had led to a stage where housing was perceived to be unfit for habitation and the area's reputation was negative.

The general problems here were the same as those seen in other neglected areas. However, the key driver for change here was the residents themselves.



Planning produced by the Birmingham Public Works department c 1940s, illustrating the planned redevelopment of the Bath Row (Lee Bank) area. Source: picture courtesy of the Birmingham Central Reference Library, Photographic Collection, WKE1 10



The Queen officially opening the estate in the sixties



View of the high rise blocks overlooking the city



The central road network dissecting the estate

Resident action

In 1996 residents took matters into their own hands when they felt that their concerns about deteriorating housing stock weren't being acted on. Staging sit-ins and roof top protests they ensured that their stories were brought to a national audience.



Long term regeneration regime

City officials sat down with residents to work out a plan for the future of this area, examining how to bring in real economic and social investment. In 1998 residents voted with a clear majority (62.1%) to transfer stock to an independent, charitable social landlord. In 1999 Optima received 2800 homes in a stock transfer from Birmingham City Council. £50 million of extra money was also received from the government.



The Sentinel Tower blocks (two of the highest residential towers in Europe at 31 floors each) prior to refurbishment



The two towers post refurbishment. New CCTV, concierge and green spaces surround the blocks



Resident engagement

Resident involvement on the board of directors ensures residents have a real say in what happens on their estate. Optima has developed a commitment to its tenants and residents to engage and empower tenants via long term community activities.



Effects of resident action: Redevelopment

The consequences of the regeneration programme, have led to a programme of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the estates. The poor housing conditions, badly laid out estates and problems related to the lack of maintenance are being replaced as 1500 homes are being improved, 1200 unsatisfactory homes demolished and 650 new homes are being built.



The plans for the redevelopment of the five estates.

