

Report on the Scope and Implementation of the Environmental Standard of WHQS

Appendix 1: Questions for Local Authority interviews

The Vision:

How does the landlord interpret the Environmental element of the WHQS.

- 1 What does the WHQS environmental standard mean for you and your organisation?
- 2 What are the priorities for your organisation with regards to the environmental standard?
- 3 Do you see the environmental standard as an opportunity to engender 'pride' in a community and its location?
- 4 Is the WHQS environmental standard given the right level of priority:
 - a) as set out in existing WHQS guidance documentation
 - b) within your own organisation
 - c) within partner agencies
 - d) within the local communities'

Involving Tenants:

How does the landlord involve tenants in the process?

- 1 As a landlord do you have any means of involving tenants in identifying and prioritising elements of the environmental standard as they apply to individual communities?
- 2 Have you considered handing responsibility for identifying and prioritising the WHQS environmental standard to interested tenants/residents?
- 3 What do you perceive to be the barriers that would need to be overcome prior to devolving responsibility to tenants for achieving the WHQS environmental standard?
- 4 Is there sufficient scope within your existing plans to enable communities to address environmental issues that goes beyond the traditional landlord/tenant role?
- 5 Can you envisage a situation whereby tenants/community groups are encouraged to set budget limits for environmental works using structured methodology (approved by the landlord in conjunction with WAG)?
- 6 Bearing in mind your active tenants capacities and abilities; what do you believe is level of contribution (Consultative, participative, leading etc) they could make in achieving the standard.

Budgeting:

Ways in which the landlord sets budgets

- 1 When preparing/setting your budgets in order to meet your organisational WHQS responsibilities what priority is given to the environmental standard component?

- 2 At what stage of your budget setting is the environmental standard costed into your calculations?
- 3 Is your environmental improvement budget derived from historic levels or is it set significantly higher in order to drive forward greatly improved environments?
- 4 Does your environmental improvements budget adequately reflect the identified priorities?

Methodology

The planning processes adopted by the Landlord

- 1 What criteria and methodology have you used to identify the key elements of the environmental standard?
- 2 What types of environmental work have you identified as being most important in achieving the standard within the different localities?
- 3 Have you given consideration to developing a toolkit for use by tenants/residents? Is there scope for you to use a toolkit if one was already developed?
- 4 In what ways do you think you can improve your environmental standard works planning, budgeting and implementation systems?

Delivery Structures

The delivery structures for achieving and maintaining the WHQS Environmental standard

- 1 How is your organisation going to carry out the identified environmental works (eg direct labour org, volunteers, contractors etc)?
- 2 How will the process be managed?
- 3 Taking a medium to long term perspective what delivery methods do you feel would ensure that environmental improvements are sustainable for thirty years?
- 4 Has your organisation taken any steps/planned for the long-term impact of maintaining the environmental elements of the WHQS?
- 5 Are you actively looking at developing/have developed long-term, multi-agency partnership working arrangements that reflect local communities' aspirations in the planning and delivery of the WHQS environmental standard?
- 6 How will the environmental standard be embedded within the dept/organisation/Local Authorities work priorities?
- 7 Do tenants have a role to play in the delivery and monitoring elements of achieving the environmental standard?

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Appendix 2: Abstract from the Literature Review - Guidance on Environmental Improvements

As Safe As Houses? Crime and the Built Environment, Residential Developments - Cardiff City Council 2006, 'Tumelty, J.

Learning/Useful Points:

- Summary, principles and application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
- Pointers for lighting, parking, open space design – but more oriented toward design and planning.

Bringing Neighbourhood Centre Stage in Wales – Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Witherden, M., 2006.

Learning/Useful Points:

- Community areas need to be self defining.
- New initiatives need time to work on top of existing ones.
- Issues about taking the community seriously and poor Council performance.
- In relation to Beecham, the value of joint training and dialogue between communities and power holders (rather than functioning in separate forums).

Changing Neighbourhoods: The Impact of the Light Touch Support in 20 Communities – lessons from the JRF Neighbourhood Programme, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Taylor et al, 2007.

Learning/Useful Points:

- Importance of having neighbourhood based organisations to work through.
- Need for independent support and advice for tenants/residents.
- Flexible and realistic timescales needed to avoid problems of high pace of change and demands on already stressed communities.

Customer Service and Public Engagement in Making the Connections : Building Better Customer Services - Department of Public Services Management, Welsh Assembly Government. 2006.

Learning/Useful Points:

Focused more on ongoing public services and public involvement but with applicable lessons:

- Review of communication and access perspectives of different groups in the population.
- Interest is decision making and monitoring performance, not usually in delivery issues.
- Expectations of sTaf involved: good communication: appropriate language(s) and jargon free; open and positive; not defensive; holistic – responding to issues across department boundaries, the professional doing the bridging not leaving to the user.
- Well trained sTaf, longer retention of sTaf, sTaf representative of the area/ethnic profile – all help.
- People are more interested in engagement with issues closer to home and of immediate impact; more so if the impact seems negative.
- Disabled people need to be involved in plans/changes for access and safety perspectives.

- Wide range of methods wanted to involve different people and groups – at appropriate times.
- Principles of good practice for engagement.

Decent Homes, Decent Spaces’ – Neighbourhoods Green: Peabody Trust

Learning/Useful Points:

- Top 4 liveability issues – MORI poll
- Discussion of social emphasis for choices eg CCTV vs park keepers, and drivers shaping environment.

Case study 2:

- Links between decline of environment and safety issues, requests for transfer, unpopular areas.
- Support elements needed and spin off impact of good environmental improvements.
- Good practice process summary

Case study 3:

- Links to skills and employment development, also to school farms and school education.

Case study 5:

- Examples of local decision making and funding control.
- Permanent administrative and cultural change needed to secure tenants/residents long term ownership

Green Cities and Why We Need Them – New Economics Foundation, Nicholas-Lord, D., 2003

Learning/Useful Points:

- Rationale for green spaces and connecting ‘greenways’.
- Devolving management and budgets to user groups.
- List of developments to green cities.

It’s Our Space, a guide for community groups working to improve public space - CABE, 2006.

Learning/Useful Points:

- Section on different groups and different perceptions of barriers to use.

Participation in anti-poverty and regeneration work and research: Overcoming barriers and creating opportunities – Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Peter Beresford and Martin Hoban

Learning/Useful Points:

Summaries of: factors for success, barriers, and key lessons for participation

Tenant Involvement in Estate Regeneration, Housing Findings Research No 132 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Watson, D., 1994.

Learning/Useful Points:

- Sustainability of improvements linked to social and economic change.
- Direct negotiation with residents needed not via Tenant Participation sTaf.
- Rounded view required of needs and types of improvements eg including community arts.
- A barrier to effectiveness if improvements are limited to what the landlord owns.
- Examples of regeneration developments.

The Community Development Challenge - Department of Community and Local Government, 2006.

Learning/Useful Points:

Ashton Regeneration:

- Bring tenants together to look for solutions.
- Located enthusiasts in each block and supported them to enthuse others and act as linking point with statutory bodies.
- Open spaces should be converted to protected spaces for play and leisure.
- Create ongoing role for residents eg through neighbourhood watch and residents associations.
- Create links between community organisations and forums with longer term overview.

What works in Community Involvement in Area Based Initiatives? Home Office Online Report 53/04, Burton et al., 2004.

Learning/Useful Points:

- List of aims of community involvement, including right of citizenship.
- The importance of local context with list of factors.
- A mix of universal and targeted initiatives is needed to engage hard to reach groups.
- Impact of community involvement on social cohesion and services delivery.
- Support and resources are needed for the long term. Support is needed re community involvement for all participants not just community members.
- Difficulty of quantifying benefits and linking causally with particular forms of involvement.