

REPORT – CONSULTATION ON NON-TRADITIONAL HOUSING

1. Introduction

The decision has been taken by Housing & Environmental Services Cabinet Member to assess the sustainability of non-traditional housing in Rotherham. This is in line with the strategy that all future investment in the Borough's housing stock will support the Council's long term objectives of Neighbourhood Renewal. The decision re non-traditional stock was taken following assurances that affected tenants would be consulted and involved in decision making on the future of their properties. This document is a guide for Housing Services staff to follow when consulting with individuals and communities residing in non-traditional properties when establishing their needs and aspirations.

2. Background

2.1 Non Traditional Housing

Rotherham MBC's housing stock consists of a number of non-traditional properties, and the majority were purpose built following the Second World War. At this time that there was a surplus of steel and aluminium production, and an industry in need of diversification. It was these factors that drove the move towards pre-fabrication. As a result, many new varieties of concrete (in both pre-cast and in-situ forms), timber framed and steel framed systems emerged. While most systems were intended to provide long term housing a few were intended as emergency or temporary solutions. Those systems which were constructed as emergency or temporary solutions have been recognised by the Secretary of State and designated under Section 528 and 559 of the Housing Act 1985 (Defective Dwellings) and there are 22 systems. A list of those systems designated as defective dwellings is included in Appendix 1.

2.2 The non-traditional housing within Rotherham's stock occurs in one of the following three scenarios, either:

- a. Estates where the majority of properties have been transferred to a Registered Social Landlord who have refurbished the properties to a 30 year life-span. A small number of properties are owner-occupier, leaseholder or council owned; or
- b. Non-traditional estates that are predominantly owned by the Council, other properties are owner occupier or leaseholder; or
- c. Small numbers of non-traditional properties scattered around traditionally built estates.

2.3 Presently there are, approximately, 1000 non-traditional properties managed by Housing Services consisting of 11 different system types (Appendix 2).

3. Consultation

- 3.1** Open and effective consultation is essential when investigating the sustainability of non-traditional housing. Best practice principles may be gained from the Regeneration Section who have experience of consulting with residents to establish individual and community needs and aspirations. However, there is presently a corporate approach to consultation, which is recognised as a core value within the Councils' Corporate Plan.
- 3.2** Housing Services need to consult with all stakeholders, and in particular residents and Ward Members, regarding all proposals explaining how they might be affected by future action relating to these properties and given time limits in which to expect an outcome.
- 3.3** There is a need to formally notify Council tenants living within non-traditional properties that the Council will be seeking to investigate the future sustainability and possible disinvestment of the non-traditional housing. Rotherham MBC then needs to clarify what repairs will or will not be completed on their property should disposal be the most appropriate course of action. It would be recommended that 'right to repair' and health and safety work is continued and all programmed improvement works should cease, unless there is clear risk of injury.
- 3.4** It would be advisable to cease letting vacant properties immediately, on estates where non-traditional properties exist. There is potentially a relatively short future for these properties if a decision following consultation indicates that the most appropriate course of action is disposal and/or demolition. It is stressful and disruptive for tenants who face losing their homes, so by not letting affected vacant properties the number of affected residents will be minimized.
- 3.5** Rotherham MBC is unable to prevent tenants from submitting an application to 'right to buy' their home, irrespective of whether it is a non-traditional property or not. However, the prospective purchaser needs to be aware of the uncertainty of the estate and the possibility of re-purchasing their home in the future. Also, Rotherham MBC needs to be aware of the entitlement that 'right to buy' applicants and private owners will be eligible to i.e. acquisition (at market value), home loss payments and disturbance allowance. It is imperative that all stakeholders on an estate are kept informed and kept updated regularly of project developments.

4. Consultation Procedure

- 4.1** Housing Services will take the lead role of facilitator to ensure that any consultation that is carried out with residents of non-traditional stock will establish their needs and aspirations, and thus provide a sustainable neighbourhood and community.

- 4.2** Presently there is no clearly defined and understood consultation procedure and this was recently highlighted when a decision was made to assess the sustainability of the Tarran system built non-traditional properties at Maltby. Particularly, lack of adequate preparation by officers to be able to address residents' concerns at meetings has been addressed
- 4.3** Using previous experience of consultation to establish residents' needs and aspirations, the Housing Regeneration team set about producing a timetable for consulting with residents. That procedure is highlighted in Appendix 3 with comments highlighting where improvements can be made to the process.
- 4.4** Having carried out 'one to one' consultation with the Tarran households at Maltby it was established that it was necessary to produce an improved consultation procedure to enable Housing Officers to carry out effective consultation on similar non-traditional housing estates throughout the Borough in line with the Non-Traditional Housing Strategy.
- 4.5** Discussions have taken place with residents of the Maltby Tarran's, Housing Tenant Representatives, Housing Services' Tenant Involvement Unit, the Housing Strategy team and representatives from the Housing Regeneration team to produce a procedure that is inclusive of all parties.
- 4.6** The following is a precis of steps to take to effectively inform and consult with all stakeholders whilst investigating the sustainability of the non-traditional housing stock.
- a. Initially, inform the Consultation Coordinator (Policy & Partnerships) of the intended consultation (refer to Appendix 4 for an example of the information requested by the Corporate Consultation Coordinator).
 - b. Inform Ward Members, Council officers, and especially the Neighbourhood Management Team of the decision. If there is an established TARA, they should also have advance notice and be offered the opportunity to meet key officers beforehand.
 - c. Inform all residents of the Council's decision to investigate sustainability issues within their neighbourhood by newsletter, including a point of contact for any questions (an example of a newsletter is included in Appendix 5).
 - d. Invite all residents by personal letter, highlighting a date, time and venue, for an open meeting, (for involved households only), to be informed of the Council's progress and an opportunity to ask relevant questions (an example is provided in Appendix 6).
 - e. Officers in attendance must be adequately prepared for and anticipate, detailed, and sometimes hostile questioning. They must be familiar with all

the issues, including historical ones, and be able to effectively manage occasionally boisterous meetings, and remain focused on the issue in question. The senior manager at each respective meeting must demonstrate they have considered the conduct of business beforehand. Such meetings often attract legitimate interest from the Press, and officers should therefore have considered a press release before or immediately afterwards, in conjunction with the Council's Press office, and local elected members.

- f. One to one consultation will then be carried out with individual households using a social survey questionnaire to establish individual's needs and aspirations. The Social Survey questionnaire is a document which is used as a tool to enable Housing Officers to be consistent with the questions that are asked of individuals to establish their needs and aspirations. (Appendix 7 shows a Social Survey questionnaire).
 - g. Consultation with Council officers and other key stakeholders to discuss recommendations as highlighted by the social survey questionnaire.
 - h. Feedback to the community following the production of recommendations, via newsletter. A further press release may be considered appropriate at this stage.
 - i. Regular newsletters and open meetings at intervals consistent with progress made, or where specifically requested by residents.
 - j. Feedback from individuals and groups will be requested during the process to ensure that all have an opportunity to contribute to the area-based action.
 - k. Exit interviews to be carried out with all stakeholders to establish where improvements can be made within the procedure.
- 4.7** A Project Schedule has been drawn up showing the time lines relevant to the above stages of the Consultation Procedure which includes seeking approval for the procedure and indicates the time estimated to be taken on each individual stage. It is based on the consultation carried out recently on the Tarran properties at Maltby. (A copy of the Project Schedule is included within Appendix 8).
- 4.8** In addition to the Project Schedule produced by the Housing Regeneration team, Housing Services are awaiting confirmation from other Local Authorities as to whether they are presently using a consultation template which can be adapted for the non-traditional housing within Rotherham Borough. This request has been raised through 'Housemark'. It is recognised that consultation processes should be subject to continuous improvement wherever possible.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1** Housing Services need to consult with all stakeholders, and in particular residents and Ward Members, regarding any proposals explaining how they might be affected by future action relating to non-traditional properties and given time limits in which to expect an outcome.
- 5.2** It is envisaged that the Project Schedule referred to within this report will allow Housing Services to effectively inform and consult with all stakeholders; however, it should be borne in mind that this procedure and associated schedule will require adjustment to meet specific circumstances that become evident dependant upon the area of non-traditional housing that is to be tackled.
- 5.3** The Consultation Procedure itself should be carried out in conjunction with the strategy for non-traditional housing presently being produced by the Housing Strategy Unit.

6. Recommendations

The recommendation is that a consultation procedure is adopted by Housing Services to assist in tackling the future sustainability of non-traditional housing estates within Rotherham Borough.

Appendix 1

Below is a list of system built non-traditional properties designated as defective under the Housing Act, 1985.

The Housing Defects (Prefabricated Concrete Dwellings) (England and Wales) Designations 1984 (October 31 and November 1, 1984 – Department of the Environment/Welsh Office). The types marked with * are present in Rotherham.

1. Airey *
2. Boot
3. Cornish
4. Dorran
5. Dyke
6. Gregory
7. Myton *
8. Newland
9. Orlit
10. Parkinson
11. Reema Hollow Panel *
12. Schindler and Hawksley SGS
13. Stent
14. Stonecrete
15. Tarran *
16. Underdown
17. Unity and Butterley *
18. Waller
19. Wates
20. Wessex
21. Winget
22. Woolaway

There are non-traditional construction types also present in Rotherham which are not classed as defective. These are:-

1. Finnegan
2. Dorlonko
3. Laing
4. Trusteel
5. Wimpy No Fines

Appendix 2

SUMMARY SHEET FOR NON-TRADITIONAL PROPERTIES

Showing number of properties of each type of structure. These figures have been taken from a run-off in the attribute system, date 21/4/03 and checked with the area offices if any missing.

District Area	System Buildings											Total Non-trad
	Finnegan	Airey	Dorlonco	Reema Hollow	Myton	Unity	Tarran	Laing	Trusteel	Wimpy No Fines	Non-trad Misc.	
1		17		8		35	77				65	202
2		69		24						1	3	97
3		5								96		101
4												0
5			46		83					265		394
6								51				51
7												0
8		34										34
9			30									30
10	7	65		18					2		31	123
Total	7	190	76	50	83	35	77	51	2	362	99	1032

Appendix 3

Case Study – Tarran Non-Traditional Properties, Maltby

The system built Tarran properties are designated a defective dwelling under Section 528 of the Housing Act 1985. These properties were originally erected in concrete panels with asbestos sheet roofing. Defects include the spalling of concrete and the corrosion of the reinforced steelwork. The properties were intended to provide short-term accommodation and are now some 56 years old with no major improvements in the recent past and are now showing signs of the defects associated with this type of non-traditional property.

There are 86 Tarran properties of which 15 are owner occupied and the remaining 72 being council owned. Of these 72 properties, 8 tenants are pursuing a 'right to buy' application. There appears to be a strong commitment from all residents to remain in their properties.

Housing Services have recently decided to investigate the options for the future of the Tarran properties at Maltby following recent issues arising from the Health and Safety of residents i.e. presence of asbestos.

Residents were informed of the advice given by the Council's Health and Safety team to the presence of asbestos within the roof covering of the non-traditional properties via newsletter, public meetings and smaller local group meetings on a regular basis.

The Housing Strategy Unit, with assistance from the Housing Regeneration team, have recently carried out a consultation exercise with the residents of the Tarran properties which has influenced the Project Schedule referred to in this report.

The consultation process used the following summarised format:

- Elected members, officers, TARA reps and residents informed of a public meeting to be held at the Christian Life Centre, Maltby on 23rd March 2004.
- Public meeting gave residents the opportunity to question officers of the Housing Strategy Unit, the Housing Regeneration team and Maltby Housing Office. Housing Services were made aware of the feelings of the community as a whole.
- 'One to one' consultation commenced with individual households in April 2004 to establish individual circumstances, needs and aspirations using the social survey questionnaire. All households were given dates and times convenient with them, and a programme was produced. Consultation was carried out in the homes of the residents.

Generally, the process of consultation has provided the Regeneration team with adequate information, via the social survey questionnaire, to make

recommendations to Cabinet Member and upon approval, to the residents of the Tarran properties.

However, the Housing Regeneration team in discussion with Housing Tenant Representatives and the Tenant Involvement Unit have clarified that there are a number of improvements that can be made following the Tarran consultation process to ensure that all stakeholders are fully informed and consulted. The improvements are as follows:

- Housing Services should be proactive in its approach to tackling the future sustainability of non-traditional properties rather than be reactive towards the requests of the residents.
- Meetings are to be arranged for residents of the targeted properties only, and questions should be anticipated in advance to enable detailed answers to be given and if not responses to questions (FAQs) should be sent out to all affected residents via newsletter within the week following the public meeting.
- Meetings need to be firmly managed, enabling everyone to participate without certain individuals dominating proceedings. Officers need to be prepared for difficult and sometimes hostile questioning.
- There is a clear need to pro-actively manage the release of information to the Press, and to seek to set the agenda, rather than respond to it.
- The 'one to one' consultation process would benefit from taking a shorter period of time, involving more officers, to minimise rumours spreading throughout the estate as to the questions asked and the appropriate responses to be given.
- A leaflet highlighting the process of consultation and the anticipated future programme (including approximate time periods) should be left with the resident following the completion of the social survey questionnaire.
- On future schemes it would be beneficial to continue with a joint team of Housing Regeneration officer and a local Estate Management officer to cover any questions raised by the residents during the consultation process. Contact telephone numbers to discuss the scheme should be made available to affected residents.

These improvements will be included within an approved Consultation Procedure and the procedure will be adapted to ensure that all stakeholders are effectively informed and consulted on individual areas of non-traditional housing.

Appendix 4

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONSULTATION PLANNING PROTOCOL

FORM 1

- Please complete this form if you are intending to carry out consultation with individuals, communities or groups.
- This form needs to be completed at least *one month* before you plan to begin your consultation.
- This information is required to ensure that you are supported in the consultation process and that all consultation is well planned, co-ordinated and monitored.

Lead Officer Name	Paul Benson
Programme Area and Service Area	H & ES, Housing Services
Designation	Principal Housing Regeneration Officer
Contact Number	4354
Title of Consultation Exercise	The future of the Tarran properties, Maltby
Indicate if other Programme Areas/ Service Areas are involved in this consultation	

1. Explain the reason/ purpose of consultation

(e.g. Best Value review; development of a policy/ strategy, to inform service improvement etc. Indicate whether it is statutory or discretionary)

eg. To develop a strategy for the future of the Tarran properties at Maltby.

2. Explain the aims of the consultation.

(Have you thought about the full range of issues you should consult on? Why consult on some issues and not others? Can you justify your decisions not to consult on certain issues?)

eg. The aim of the consultation exercise is to establish the opinions of the occupants of the Tarran properties re: sustainability and investment.

3. Have you considered whether any consultation already carried out will give you the information you need?

(it may be that outcomes of previous consultations are relevant. This may mean you can focus your consultation on particular issues not covered before. Describe how you are using past consultation)

eg. There appears to be no recent /relevant consultation information available to assist Housing in producing a strategy.

4. Who do you propose to consult with?

(Who are your target groups for this consultation exercise? e.g. the general public, residents of a particular area, users of a particular service. Please describe all.)

eg. The residents of the Tarran properties at Maltby.

5. Please indicate whether there are other target groups who are likely to have an opinion and who may wish to be consulted?

(Have you thought about these? Can you justify your decisions not to consult them?)

eg. Local Ward Councillors will be consulted following the evaluation of the Social Survey.
The Tarran Action Group.
The Lilly Hall Residents Association

6. Will this consultation exercise be conducted in any particular geographical areas/Area Assemblies?

eg. Ward 14 - Maltby
Braithwell Road (59-97), Newlands Avenue (2-52 & 1-59), Chadwick Drive (2-8 & 1-11)

7. Will this consultation be carried out in-house, or be commissioned?

eg. In-house. Carried out jointly by Housing Regeneration and Neighbourhood Housing Officers.

8. How do you propose to consult – what methods will you use?

(Give details of precise methods, sample sizes, how you will approach individuals for focus groups etc. A consultation exercise may involve using a range of methods to target different individuals and groups.)

eg. Consultation will be carried out initially via meeting with TARA (where applicable), a public meeting followed by one to one arranged meetings with all residents in their own home adhering to a social survey questionnaire. Following

the evaluation of the responses further meetings will be arranged with the local action group and the public.

9. Have you identified the need to consult with hard to reach groups?

(Under-represented groups may include people with disabilities, young people, or black and minority ethnic communities.)

eg. All individual residents are given the opportunity to have their say as meetings are to be carried out at their home address. Issues re: language, or learning difficulties will be addressed where appropriate. The local press may also be utilised by way of press releases

10. How do you propose to consult hard to reach groups – what methods will you use?

eg. Face to face using a social survey questionnaire.

11. How will you address any barriers that prevent people from taking part in consultation?

(e.g. travel to public meetings, childcare arrangements, interpreters and signers, hearing loops etc.)

eg. Housing will do their utmost to ensure that everybody is given the opportunity to comment on the future of their community and/or neighbourhood.

11. Approximately what sample size will you using to conduct your consultation exercise?

eg. 86 properties (approximately 170 people)

12. Which political priorities does your consultation exercise link to?

(There are nine priorities for RMBC which can be found at the back of this form. Please write in the numbers of any the priorities that you feel your consultation exercise is contributing to)

eg. 2, 3, 5, 6 & 8

13. How are you going to analyse the results?

Have you considered the need for ICT support to analyse questionnaire responses? How will

you analyse the outcomes from focus groups or in-depth interviews?

eg. The information will be analysed by the number of responses. The responses received from the social survey questionnaire will be used to determine the next stage of the process where there will be a further need for consultation.

14. How are you going to feed back to those you have consulted?

Feedback is an important part of the process. What methods will you use to provide feedback to all those who participated in the consultation exercise?

eg. Following evaluation and in-house discussions a further public meeting will be organised to feedback the responses and the responses will also be included within a newsletter distributed to all residents of the Tarran properties. Use of the Council's website will be examined.

15. How are you planning to disseminate the outcome within the Council and externally to the general public, interested groups and organisations?

eg. Following in-house discussions, the decision will be reported to Cabinet Member and then disseminated externally via meetings with the public, Tarran Action Group and Lilly Hall Residents Association as well as through the publication of a newsletter. Use of the Council's website will also be considered.

16. Timescales.

(Please give *start date, period for fieldwork, timescales for analysis, reporting and feedback, and *end date.) * It is essential that you include the start and end date of your exercise

eg. Consultation will begin with a public meeting on 23rd March 2004. One to one consultation will be carried out in April and will take a period of four weeks. Following individual consultation, a meeting will be arranged with the Tarran Action Group and a public meeting will be arranged in June (approximately) to inform and discuss the way forward.

17. How will you evaluate the consultation?

(How will you know that you have got the consultation right? e.g. numbers participating, extent to which consultation informs decisions etc.)

eg. Every resident will be individually visited to give their comments.
The social survey questionnaire will inform Housing Services of individuals wishes.

18. Do you require any specific advice or support in relation to this consultation?

(e.g. help with designing questionnaires or advice on consulting with under-represented groups)

eg. Nothing presently but we will bear this in mind in the future depending on the feedback from the one to one consultation exercise.

19. Is there any Member involvement in your consultation exercise?

eg. Ward Councillors and Cabinet Member will be involved in and informed of the consultation exercise, and invited to comment at all stages.

20. Please give a detailed cost breakdown for the consultation.

(please cost all elements of the consultation process – contact the Consultation Co-ordinator if you need help with identifying costs)

eg. Detail	Cost
Hiring of Hall	£100
Production of questionnaire	£20
Officer time	

**Please send this form to:
Emma Heyes, Consultation Co-ordinator, Policy and Partnerships Service,
Eric Manns Building**

<i>For office use only</i>	
Ref number:	
Form received:	
Discussion date:	
Outcome:	
Authorised:	
Date:	

Appendix 5

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Housing and Environmental Services**

NEWSLETTER

To all residents of Tarran properties on Braithwell Road, Chadwick Drive and Newland Avenue

The Future of Tarran type properties - The next steps

Dear Resident

Housing Services' priority over the last year has been to ensure the health and safety of residents in the area whilst the options for the future are considered.

This has allowed us the time to undertake the necessary assessment of the work that would be required to give the properties a sustainable long-term future, and identify the cost of carrying out such work.

This has taken some time to finalise and we appreciate the patience and understanding of residents during this time. We have now completed gathering the information and analysed the investment requirements. This information has now been reported to a full meeting of the Council.

Surveys of properties have identified that the following work would be required :-

- Removal of asbestos and re-roofing of all properties.
- Repairing damage to concrete corner posts and concrete reinforcement.
- Repair or replacement of any decaying structural timbers.
- Provision of new brick cladding.
- Completion of all necessary works to achieve the Decent Homes standard including replacement bathrooms and kitchens and the upgrading or replacement of central heating.

You will appreciate that the cost of undertaking all this work would be substantial.

We fully appreciate the strong sense of community that exists within the area and are committed to ensuring that residents who occupy the Tarran properties play a full and active role in determining the future of the area.

It is our intention therefore, to put together a consultation timetable, inform all residents of the current position and invite you to consider with us the future of the estate in light of the above findings and agree the way forward. This will involve meeting residents as a group and, most importantly, visiting every individual resident to obtain their views and identify their future requirements.

This process will begin on 15th March 2004 when we will publish the dates for the consultation timetable and this will hopefully give you the ability to participate. We look forward to working with local residents to achieve a sustainable future for the area and it's community.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or queries regarding the future of your home, your Regeneration Team, led by Paul Benson, can be contacted on (01709) 822289.

Cllr Sue Ellis
Cabinet Member
Housing & Environmental Services.

Appendix 6

Housing and Environmental Services

Chesterton Road, Eastwood Trading Estate, Rotherham, S65 1SZ

Direct Line: 01709 822289

Fax: 01709 822222

Email: Helen.Bows@rotherham.gov.uk

My Reference: HB/NB Please ask for: Helen Bows Date: 12th March 2004

The Occupier
34 Newland Avenue
Maltby
Rotherham
S66 8AJ.

Dear Resident

Re: The future of Tarran Housing, Maltby

I am writing to advise you of a Public Meeting that will be taking place on Tuesday 23rd March 2004, to discuss the future of the Tarran properties at Maltby. Councillor Robinson will be chairing the meeting at The Christian Life Centre, High Street, Maltby 6.00pm – 8.00pm.

Your individual consultation will take place on Tuesday 13th April 2004 at 10.15am at your home. If is not convenient please contact Nicola Brooks on the above telephone number to rearrange another appointment.

In the meantime please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Bows
Housing Regeneration Officer
Housing Services

Appendix 7

SOCIAL SURVEY

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. Any information, which is published, will not identify individuals or families. All information is stored on computer and is covered by the Data Protection Act. **Please write your answer or tick all boxes that apply.**

1. Name

2. Address

3. Phone number

4. Are you?

A Council Tenant

An Owner Occupier

A Private Tenant

5. How long have lived :

In the area?

Years

Months

At this address?

Years

Months

6. How many people live in your house and how old are they?

	Age					
	0-10	11-16	17-20	21-60	61-75	75+
Male						
Female						

7. How would you describe:

The Local area

Good

Fair

Poor

Bad

The street where you live

Good

Fair

Poor

Bad

Your House

Good

Fair

Poor

Bad

8. How satisfied are you with the following local facilities:

Please go to next page

	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad		Good	Fair	Poor	Bad
Schools					Parks				
Shops					Open spaces				
Sports Facilities					Play facilities				
Libraries					Footpaths				
Churches					Street Lighting				
Doctors Surgeries					Refuse Collection				
Advice Centre					Street Cleaning				
Police					Pest Control				

9. What do you most like about your home and the area? (please state)

10. What do you most dislike about your home and the area and what could be done to improve it? (please state if not mentioned previously)

11. Do you feel safe and secure in your home?

Yes

Please go to next page

12. Do you want to stay here?

13. You realise that doing nothing is not an option, so what would you like Council to do with the properties/area?

14. Would you be prepared to move out if extensive works had to be carried out?

15. If redevelopment is the only option, where would you consider living

On a temporary basis

On a permanent basis

16. Type of Accommodation required

17. Comments eg pets, mobility problems, special requirements, etc.

Please go to next page

18. Would you want to come back as;

A tenant

Owner occupier

Shared ownership

19. Are there any other things that you wish us to know?

This survey was completed on: (please state date) _____

By

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire

The results will be analysed and forwarded to you shortly

