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Association of Chief Police Officers Crime Prevention Initiatives

An outline of our responsibilities appears at the end of the document. This response reflects the police service view that crime prevention issues are a key component of achieving sustainable communities. The police service contribution to planning issues is outlined in a soon to be published ODPM Guide "Safer Places - The Planning System & Crime Prevention".

For the purposes of this response the terms designing-out crime, crime reduction, crime prevention, crime and disorder and crime analysis are inextricably linked. Depending on the professional background of the user these terms may mean different things or be interchangeable.

Paragraph numbers relate to corresponding question in consultation document.

General approach, leadership and process

1. "Skilling-up" may well be the cheapest approach to achieving this by use of correct direction, modification of existing training, CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and in-house training needs analysis. This however is also a slow process and there is more than enough new legislation, good practice and guidance to fill the limited training time available to busy professionals.

The construction industry related professions are traditionally compartmentalised and where existing systems and relationships appear to work there is a reluctance to change without knowing that the related professional will accept the change and the particular individual/case will not be disadvantaged in terms of decision, policy, contract or cost.

In terms of crime issues, where the construction professional is made aware of the significance and the benefit of taking steps to deal with crime issues - as part of the design, planning, construction, sales and maintenance process - there is usually an acceptance of the validity of the argument. The difficulties arise in getting onto the corporate agenda in competition with the statutory and commercial pressures that take priority.

2. Yes. The local authority should be in a better position to be in contact with local professionals, organisations and the community. They would be aware of the local social and economic profile.

3. Make security of premises, to minimum technical standards, part of Building Regulations. The social housing sector have embraced much of this philosophy, yet the private sector are reluctant on the grounds that they do not want to raise in the mind of the purchaser the fear that the premises are being constructed in high-crime area. There is evidence that for the construction industry this is more to do with cost whilst the public place security and related issues close to the top of their list of priorities.

The length of process can also lead to social and crime/environmental issues falling down the priority list, particularly where a site takes years to process from the outline planning, perhaps through management/ownership changes to final construction.

Professional skills

4. There is a danger of trying to give a common set of cross-profession skills to all parties. Individuals who have busy, detailed professional agendas may find it all too easy to pay lip-service to what appears to them to be lower priority issues. Some essential skills may be lost, but more important the depth and availability of latest information may not be available to all. There is anecdotal evidence that architects are faced with so many "good practices guides" that only those with force of legislation behind them gain attention.

5. There are "security professionals" but these often tend to be technology focused - in some case single technology focused. There is a need for experts able to deal with the breadth of community safety, crime prevention, technology and security management issues. Often the local circumstances

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will demand a blend of these, or a commitment to post construction management of facilities. E.g. Management of CCTV.

6. There are some very effective training modules being developed. The perception is that these are islands of excellence, particularly in the case of crime reduction and training for architects, rather than being widely and easily available.

8. & 9. The introduction of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 set out a clear, logical statement through Section 17 which established that the police and local authority have a duty to take crime prevention into account in all aspects of their work. To underpin this each is to contribute to analysis, strategy and review. In spite of much of this being the subject of previous research and government publications, a significant training and skill development programme had to take place at local authority and related police command level.

Planning authorities were part of that process but whilst many have been beacons, others have been slow. The reaction of some chief police officers has been that without positive response from planning departments and the private sector why should more resources be placed into a subject that by definition produces results over the longer term and has not featured in the short term performance indicators. By raising the profile of the effect of design in the built environment, by requiring the private sector to adopt the principles with some enthusiasm rather than the current reluctance we should start to see results much earlier and thereby encourage greater investment by chief police officers and planners.

12. The police service is a significant component in addressing sustainable communities. Training in crime prevention and designing out crime has been limited to comparatively few professionals training at the Home Office Crime Reduction College. This is soon to be taken over by CENTREX. Whilst the officers have policing experience, the training in designing-out-crime is at the commencement of their new role. There is no provision for continuous professional development or update training in this specialist field. Ideally this should occur after practical involvement and then as part of appreciating the wider issues faced by other professionals.

13. There should be training modules to bring about an appreciation of the issues. Where this was done under the Crime & Disorder Act and to a lesser degree for designing out crime there has been a very positive response. Some of the issues generate argument and problems for professionals in planning, law enforcement and construction, so we can hardly expect newly elected members and those from very different backgrounds to have an automatic grasp of the more contentious matters.

Other

14. They are on those issues involving regulation or where cost savings may be made. On issues of crime prevention and designing-out-crime architects will often be aware of the options, only to be vetoed by their clients marketing and/or finance managers.

Outline of ACPO Crime Prevention Initiatives Ltd.:

Entirely owned by the Association of Chief Police Officers to manage and develop at a national level the police Secured by Design project and other projects aimed at reducing crime. Secured by Design brings together the principles of design-against-crime and improvement of physical security of the built environment.

Research indicates that not only are there significant reductions in burglary, street crime and damage, but fear of crime amongst residents is reduced, Previously hard to let properties become desirable with fewer void properties in social housing stock. A better standard of security, including adoption of minimum technical standards, also leads to lower maintenance and damage replacement cost.

The project is operated through approx. 350 specialist Police Architectural Liaison Officers, although in some forces these are combined with other elements of crime reduction. Virtually all work in close

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co-operation with local authority planning officers. The project is referred to in the ODPM Guide Safer Places- The Planning Systems & Crime Prevention (provisional title as at 27/11/03)

There is no objection to the content being used as part of the review process.

London First

London First was set up in 1992 to improve and promote London. We represent 300 of London's largest companies as well as the capital's higher and further education institutions.

Our response is made in the context of representing businesses operating in London, and in our role of inward investment agency for London, promoting London overseas, assisting companies to set up and ensuring London remains a world city.

The issue of planning and the planning system is frequently cited by London First members and inward investors alike as impeding business competitiveness. The shortage of homes and high cost of office space are the result of low supply, constrained by the planning system, and are often cited as competitiveness issues for London.

Following an extensive consultation exercise involving over 80 companies, to advise the Greater London Authority on how they can improve planning in London, we set up an Improving Planning Agenda at London First. This agenda includes initiatives to capture the imagination of children, train development control officers and Chief Planning Officers and promote good planning and improve morale through the London Planning Awards.

Overwhelmingly, business believes that whilst some improvements can be made to the system itself, the major impediment is how it operates. This is largely a problem of a lack of resources and status in planning, with too few planners and planners not being of sufficient calibre and lacking commercial awareness. Planning must be properly resourced, and the importance of planning fully recognised within national, regional and local Government.

Central Government is introducing complexity through its current reforms of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, review of Planning Policy Statements and planning gain reform. Whilst we accept the need to review policy, it is creating enormous burden on the already overstretched planning departments. Some of the extra work having to be done by London planning departments includes; reflecting the adopted London Plan in policy changes and development control decisions, participating in the sub-regional development frameworks, undertaking the housing capacity study, responding to and reflecting supplementary planning guidance and producing retail capacity assessments. All this on top of the day to day development control and policy work.

Key points we would like to highlight from our response are:

The need to retaining business rates locally

Accountability for Councillors

Rationalising the statutory consultee process

Including Planning as part of the school curriculum

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Egan Review of Skills.

General approach, leadership and process

1. We agree that it is not simply 'skilling up', whilst maintaining existing cultures, systems and processes that will achieve the step change envisaged. There needs to be a cultural change within the built environment profession and importantly for those who work with them to empower individuals to do a good job and to promote sustainable development. Leadership is key, but needs to be accompanied by more resource and training.

2. We agree that local authorities must take the lead role since they are democratically accountable. However, this can only work with good leadership at member, chief executive and chief planning

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officer level and it needs to be done in partnership with business, the community and specialist regeneration agencies such as UDC's.

The local authorities' view is often a short term one, but in order to provide sustainable communities it is necessary to take a long term view. This vision can come from a whole host of areas, from UDC's, regional government, the private sector to members. Some of the most successful examples of regeneration involve entrepreneurs working closely with good quality leaders from the local authority to achieve a common aim.

It is not reasonable to expect local authorities to be resourced up at all times to deal with major projects. It may be appropriate for groups of boroughs to pool their planning departments sub-regionally to make the best use of resources and specialisms to deal with major planning applications as well as sub-regional development frameworks.

Planning fees for major applications should be increased to meet the cost of dealing with them effectively. This increased income should be ring-fenced in planning departments as additional to existing resources.

3a. Officers should enter into more pre-negotiation discussion where appropriate and involve members in these discussions. A positive attitude towards development from central and local government would facilitate development.

The system is getting more complex due to the number of different types of agencies that have to be consulted and there is often a huge overlap in their roles. We should look to a rationalisation of the statutory consultee process and clarifying the weight of each consultee.

Lastly, local resistance to development should not be underestimated. We do not believe that the huge amount of consultation in the new plan-making process will resolve this. It is an inevitable part of the planning system and is a factor of the context within which a planning application is judged. This should be resolved through the weight accorded to local issues balanced with wider borough, sub regional and regional needs, when assessing planning applications. The importance of producing growth housing supply, employment and local facilities needs to be emphasised in PPS's, RSS's and Local Development Frameworks.

3b. The London Plan, when published, will go some way to providing greater uniformity across different planning authorities within London. A standard planning application form will also help. Assisting struggling boroughs, to achieve targets and provide a more user friendly system would be a positive step. Targets should be related to plan delivery as well as applications so that certainty is provided when applications are submitted.

3c. Fundamentally, decision makers need to see the benefit in making positive decisions. If elected members can show tangible benefits of growth for their local community (the voters), then proposals for development projects will be considered much more positively. The way to provide these 'tangible benefits' is by retaining the business rates locally to a greater extent than proposed under the modest Local Authority Growth Incentive Programme. A borough like Westminster retains less than 10% of the total rate income. Boroughs should be able to directly benefit from the rate revenue generated by development in their area.

By training elected members more effectively, decisions will be made on stronger planning grounds and those involved in the process will feel more empowered to work with others to produce the best results.

Professional skills

4. Design, an understanding of urban regeneration and a better understanding of the commercial aspects and risks of development are some of the areas that are not taught enough in further education as part of planning courses.

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6a. Undergraduate courses need to be more vocational and should also include practical design and training on the drivers of development. CPD should be more easily accessible and supported by all employers, large or small. Work experience during training would be seen as beneficial, both in the public and private sectors.

6b. No -too simplistic and homogenised

6c. The educational institutions should adapt their courses with help from bodies such as the RTPI, RIBA and RICS, although these bodies need to work at being more inclusive to be really effective. Employers in the public and private sectors should have some input into skills lacking in potential employees.

7. The role of the RTPI needs to be addressed. It should provide an advisory and supporting role, but also be a promotional body for planners. There should also be more focus on CPD and cross-sector discussions/meetings with surveyors and architects.

8. There is a shortage of planners both in the public and private sectors. There is a high proportion of temporary staff used in London Boroughs since full-time staff cannot be found. Private sector planning consultants are also finding that there is a lack of people with the appropriate skills. This problem is set to get worse with Planning Schools closing due to lack of interest (Strathclyde, Nottingham and Westminster undergraduate course).

9. Lack of awareness within schools - the profession lacks glamour and opportunity and needs to be promoted in schools and universities as an attractive career where people can make a difference and follow a career path. Including planning in the citizenship curriculum at schools would be a very positive move in making young people aware of their local environment and how they can influence change. There should be a requirement for the planning profession in all its parts to bring the importance of the profession into schools.

Better pay and opportunities for public sector planners is paramount. Also, delivering sustainable communities is not just being about design and architecture but about balancing different objectives whilst producing the best result and taking into account the community's views etc which is the key role of the planner.

10. There is a need to build awareness of planning within schools, rather than rebranding. Highlighting areas that will be of interest to them is the obvious way forward i.e. design, environmental issues and the local environment.

11. No - as discussed above in 3 and 4. Also, the lack of accountability of members must be stressed in relation to training and knowledge. It is paramount that members take their responsibility seriously given this lack of accountability and make decisions with full knowledge of all aspects of planning.

13. Members in local authorities should be offered training, and it should be compulsory, since planning is a technical subject that they are by and large not trained in. However, it is also important to accept that what is driving members is often not planning decisions but political ambition. Retaining business rates locally will provide members with a focus to deliver growth.

Other

14. The development industry is generally informed although joint private/public sector training would be beneficial. In terms of commitment there is still some way to go.

Timing and format of responses

15. We are happy for our response to be used as long as it is within the context it has been written.

16. No

Metropolitan Police, Sir Ian Blair QPM

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues raised by your Review into the skills needed by built environment professionals to help deliver the vision and aims set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan: Building for the Future.

Clearly, the police service has a significant interest in the development of sustainable communities, particularly in relation to their cohesiveness, stability and safety. Insofar as these dimensions of sustainability are impacted upon by the built environment, we have what might be described as a niche role in the issues under consideration by your Review. While the views I express here are my own, I believe they are largely in accord with those of other senior colleagues across the service.

In recent years, the police service has become increasingly involved, at both local and strategic levels, in major regeneration initiatives such as New Deal for Communities and now Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Such involvement has taken place incrementally and often without specific consideration being given either to the cultural or training implications of the various agencies being brought together to deliver initiatives in the context of high public expectation and significant financial investment. Added to this, the necessary and important involvement of non-professionals - the local residents and representatives who make up each local community - creates additional complexities for which many of those involved are formally unprepared.

There are, however, some opportunities for joint skills development and training of which your Review may wish to take account.

The first such opportunity relates to the new Police Skills and Standards Organisation (PSSO), which has responsibility for the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for the police service. It has recently published standards in relation to community safety issues which focus specifically on determining priorities, planning, implementing and evaluating action to address problems of community safety and social inclusion. It seems appropriate that this could provide a framework within which formal skills development and training for police officers in this context could take place. Secondly, at a more strategic level, the development and adoption of National Occupational Standards for built environment professionals featuring community safety as a key theme would seem to me to be a sound investment for the future.

The third area of opportunity is provided by the statutory relationships and responsibilities set out in the Crime and Disorder Act. This legislation mandates the creation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) which are co-terminous with local authority (and usually police command unit) boundaries. The core CDRP membership is prescribed to include a comprehensive list of delivery agencies, including other emergency services, health and education professionals. The Act also requires local authorities to place community safety at the heart of all the services they provide to local residents, not just those which most obviously involve the provision of physically secure environments.

I would suggest that CDRPs in particular, and the provisions of the Act in general, should be considered as the route through which built environment professionals could be brought together with the police and other service providers to maximise opportunities for developing sustainable communities, whether new or existing.

In broader terms, there is also the role we need to play in the wider town and country planning arena. Clearly there is a need for the provision of new and expanded police buildings and infrastructure to serve communities. We see the increased use of Section 106 Agreements and the inclusion of such items in the new tariff arrangements as critical. Our own construction and property professionals, in Property Services, are playing a full part in this work as well as ensuring their own skills are developed to meet the challenges.

Finally, the development of national codes and guidance for the police service in matters of policy and good practice is now the responsibility of the new National Centre for Policing Excellence (NCPE).

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The initial programme of work is currently being drawn up its new head, Sir David Phillips, in consultation with chief police officers and the Home Office. There may be opportunities here for your Review to ensure that links are made between your area and NCPE in developing core issues of mutual interest in improving community cohesion, sustainability and safety.

I do believe that the subject matter of your Review is an important one for the success of what, in many senses, is a common endeavour for built environment professionals and the police service: the need for communities to be both safe and sustainable. I hope my views and suggestions provide some material which you will find it useful to explore further as your work develops.