

# 'Sustainable Community' Tenants Definition

*Olympic Regeneration plc*

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SALE**

**Demolishing for the Future**

**London Tenants Federation**

## **'SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY' - GOVERNMENT'S DEFINITION**

The Government's '*Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future, a National Programme of Action*' (Feb '03) set out how it intended to achieve 'sustainable communities for all'.

Government defines sustainable communities as '*places where people want to live and work, now and in the future; that meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.*'

***This does not attempt to define sustainability, does not attempt to define community and displays no understanding of how our communities might be sustained. At best it describes a nice place to visit.***

National, local and regional government and regeneration bodies' have numerous policies relating to 'sustainable communities'. These reflect politicians and professionals ideas of what such a community is and how it might be designed or created.

London tenants have made contributions to consultation on these policies. But they fall short of our own definition. Many work contrary to aims of building sustainable communities.

***Right to buy is becoming a commercial business, breaking up established communities in London.***

***Many who have exercised their right to buy are unable to meet the costs; causing them to move on, breaking up our communities.***

***The Governments rent setting policy makes council housing unaffordable, particularly in its 'more desirable' areas, coercing tenants to move from London.***

***We talk about our 'homes'; professionals and politicians talk of units of 'social housing'.***

***Too many single person homes creates transient communities.***

***Gated communities and CCTV are not solutions to building genuine communities.***

The London Tenants Federation has since defined its own 'Tenants Definition of a Sustainable Community' as '*stable communities that evolve through bottom up solutions, having community spaces and activities accessible to all and homes that meet our needs via good consultation and democratic accountability.*'

If government, national and regional is serious about 'tenant involvement at all levels of decision-making about our homes and communities', they must measure their proposals against tenants' definitions and act accordingly.

## **'SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY' - TENANTS DEFINITION**

### **Communal spaces and activities accessible to all**

- Community centres that are accessible to all within our communities.
- Amenities for young people and support for them to engage.
- Social amenities accessible and inclusive to all residents in an area. (The market determines that too much is inaccessible to those on low incomes or dependent on benefits).
- Well designed, maintained and car-free parks, play and green spaces with activities for children.
- Funding for community initiatives.

### **Homes that meet our needs**

- Well-designed estates – with no nooks and crannies
- Adaptable, 'lifetime homes' – that can change, as peoples needs and family make up changes, accessible to the elderly and disabled.
- Good space standards - equivalent to or higher than Parker Morris.
- Allocations policies that recognise community needs and lack of care for elderly.
- Housing supply to reflect need rather than the market.
- Affordability to be defined as a rent that all tenants can genuinely afford without claiming benefits.
- High standards of management and maintenance of our homes.
- Positive investment in council homes.

### **Good consultation and democratic accountability**

- Democratic and accountable structures that genuinely involve tenants at all levels of decision-making about our homes and communities.
- Local authorities that engage in proper consultation. That means genuine involvement, not information giving sessions after the decisions have already been made.
- Real involvement in decision making from initial ideas to final product – so that all residents have a sense of ownership.
- Government that engages in proper consultation.
- Government that ensures local authorities engage in proper consultation.
- Tenants and residents will remain apathetic until councils and government start to deliver.
- People who live in a community to have full control over what they need.
- All residents to have a sense of ownership of their community – including the widest possible consultation and democratic accountability including young and old, disabled and BME residents
- Residents to be consulted, drive the agenda, own and run the process thereafter.
- Funding to enable residents to represent themselves and govern their own communities.
- Investment in communities to ensure that all can take part.

**LTF**

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