

Good afternoon everyone..my name is Linda McNeil and with me are Linda Whaley, Charlotte McNeil and Patricia Billbrough and we represent the Woodbridge Tenants and residents association.of Beckett park.

When the above estate was built, some 40 years ago, it was one of the most sought after council estates to live on. It consists of 249 homes of which 63 are privately owned. They are known as the 5M houses and are system built.

For years repairs to these houses were deferred because there was no clear policy on what should be done with them. In 2004,after years of uncertainty it was decided that something should be done as the estate was beginning to resemble a slum and still does in certain areas.

Following much 'prodding' by local councillors and our association, three alternatives were proposed....

**demolition and rebuilding
full repair
or major renovation**

After approximately a year of consultation it was decided to go for refurbishment with owner/occupiers given the option of buying into the scheme which a few have done already.

Another consultation took place in which a 'pilot' block of 6 houses was begun with pitched roofs and insulation.

After this, another consultation took place where residents were given the opportunity of looking at materials and colour schemes and concerns of owner occupiers were raised again. The ALMO then took the decision to begin another group of houses with everything included except for the 'pitched' roofs which were deemed too costly. Flat roofs were decided on and so were done.....30 houses were finished and what a difference they have made to this part of the

estate.

At the very beginning of the 5M project we were told that the money was available from the government and this money was 'ring fenced', in other words protected, not to be used anywhere else. Concern was expressed but everyone believed and trusted the ALMO.....now we wish we hadn't.

As recently as May 2008 we received a splendid newsletter about the progress on the scheme and a meeting was called in July 2008 to describe the progress.

Now in 2009, more than 4 years since the original discussions took place, we have been handed the news that the money is not available and therefore the refurbishment will stop.

We are now told by the ALMO that 'decency' work only will be done which, in our view, is neither practical nor economic.....in other words some people will get bathrooms/kitchens done, some won't, and in some cases the tenant will be forced to choose which one of these they want done.

This is not good enough.....

At a meeting organised by Woodbridge Tenants and Residents Association on the 9th March 2009, it was agreed to start a campaign to state our case and to try and have this decision changed, our aim being to restart the refurbishment work on the 5M houses as promised years ago.....a strategy was agreed....

a petition for all concerned residents to sign, which is in progress.

a deputation to the council.

a press release with photographs.

a letter to our MP.. John Battle.

letters to various councillors and individual letters to board members.

a letter to WNW homes to leave the building site 'in situ' in the hope the work will continue when the funding returns.

Some residents feel that if the site compound is removed the work will never be completed.

We ask the council, as the strategic landlord, to use its powers to make WNW honour its commitment, made more than 4 years ago, and demand an explanation of why the 'ring-fenced' money was 'spirited' away and that we need not worry that, once planning permission came through, there would be no further delay.

Of course we all believed the ALMO once again.

We ask the council to deliver us from this decision and the incompetence of WNW homes. Some tenants have said that they will hold back their rent in protest...(we have told them not to do this). We hope to avoid the situation where tenants who have had their houses completely finished, feel unnecessarily privileged.....and therefore stop any ill-feeling amongst tenants.

We will carry on the fight until we have a satisfactory conclusion and all tenants are satisfied.

Thank you.