



Rebuilding a Community

Celebrating 30 Years of
Pembroke Street Estate
Management Board



I always talk about Pembroke Street because it's one of Plymouth's great success stories. An inspirational story, a story of a community coming together fighting back, fighting hard, believing in their community and succeeding and improving their area for the benefit of generations to come.

Simply true to say, that if Pembroke Street hadn't happened, the way that Devonport has been rebuilt and regenerated wouldn't have happened either.

Tudor Evans, Leader Plymouth City Council

Foreword

When I was Minister for Housing in the 1990's, I visited Plymouth and have vivid memories of the poor conditions of housing in Pembroke Street which formed part of the most deprived council ward in the country at that time. I did what I could at the time to promote regeneration.

The 1994 Right to Manage regulations had formally enshrined the right for council tenants to follow a clear process to take on the management of their housing. It was intended as a means to reinvigorate socially deprived neighbourhoods, led by those who knew what ingredients were needed to improve a neighbourhood, based on their daily lived experience. Alongside the 'Estate Action' regeneration funding programme, it was recognised that good quality, well managed housing is at the core of a sustainable community. Pembroke Street Estate Management Board was one of the first organisations of its kind in the country.

It remains the only tenant management organisation in the south west of England; confirmation that tenant led management is not an easy path to follow and that it requires dedication and determination from residents, but that where it succeeds it can lead to positive outcomes for generations of individuals and families. It is wonderful to know that Pembroke EMB has continued to thrive in the years since I visited and to see it has proved to be a catalyst for further regeneration, having served as a beacon to others by demonstrating what can be achieved through resident led action.

I am enormously impressed and encouraged by the progress that has been made and I hope that in the years ahead we will see Pembroke Street Estate Management Board continue to be a cornerstone of the community. My congratulations to the EMB on their first 30 years.

Lord Young of Cookham CH



Lord George Young visit - November 1992

Introduction



Pembroke street is an amazing place to live. I have called this estate home since 1975. It's a place where we look out for one another, where we come together to celebrate. It's more than a place to live, it's a community. When people move here, they lay down roots. But it wasn't always that way. In the 1980's, Pembroke Street became somewhere you ended up living when you had no other options. In the darkest days, hope was in short supply.

The difference has been the determination of a small group of residents to breath new life into the neighbourhood. And since the Estate Management Board was formed in 1994, we've never looked back. Thousands of people have been a part of the EMB journey over the past 30 years as residents, volunteers, employees, trainees and visitors. These pages capture some of the key moments in the unique story of this amazing organisation. The determination, the dedication, the people and the parties!

Anne Crocker
PEMB Chair

Back to the 80's

The estate was built in the post war period and had been a popular place to live. Pembroke Street rapidly deteriorated in the 1980's to become part of the most deprived council ward in the country. The decline of the naval dockyard saw unemployment rapidly rise and with it followed poor health, crime and social unrest which led to the estate gaining a reputation as a 'no go' area.

Evening Herald, Thursday, August 22, 1991

Poor housing blamed for 'ghetto' label



City 'ghettos' dangers

17 Jan 1991

Drug addicts threaten arson, claim residents



Pembroke Street and Prospect Row residents say they constantly live in fear of attacks on their cars and property in the crime ridden area.

Plymouth Herald, 1991



Back to the 80's

16th March 1991.
 Threats after son beaten up by youths
Family fear fire attack on home

Saturday, May 11, 1990
Aid plea for terrorised mum



Mount Wise hit by a new wave of violence

The Triumph Toledo - or what was left of it after the vandals had been to work



A gang pelted police and firemen with bricks, bottles and railings in the second terrifying ambush in a week on Plymouth's Mount Wise Housing estate.

Plymouth Herald, 1992



Police hurt in savage attack by youth gang



25th Jan 1991
Hooligans stone police at fire scene

Cars gutted as teenage vandals run amok again

Most deprived inner city area in the country

Time for Change

Step forward a small group of Pembroke Street residents determined to see their housing and wider living conditions improve. They teamed up with some key advisors and advocates and targeted Government regeneration funding with a plan to take over the management of their Council housing.



A £6 million renovation scheme was unveiled yesterday to clean up one of Plymouth's most deprived estates and help the residents stamp out crime. By forming the South West's first management co-operative residents of Pembroke Street will be able to apply for a Government grant to help their area.

Plymouth Herald, 1991

^{13th April 1991.} Bid for extra funds to improve housing estate

Residents' ideas will help others

CITY ESTATE BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE



Time for Change

Homes in line for a £6 million overhaul

£6m aid plan for estate approved



Plymouth housing officers were today drawing up multi million pound plans to give one of the city's worst housing black spots in Devonport a major facelift. Those plans will be taken to Housing Minister Sir George Young.

Plymouth Herald, 1991



Housing scheme gets the go-ahead

Rundown flats to get £6m revamp



The old becomes the new

The residents secured a multi million pound Government regeneration grant to enable the estate to be completely transformed. The scheme was entirely resident led and designed, supported by key advisors. It included ground breaking elements such as 'Secured by Design' where the potential for criminal activity is reduced through the use of open plan visible areas and improved lighting.

Other elements included a focus on energy efficiency, drastically reducing the carbon footprint of buildings years before this became mainstream thinking. The use of vibrant colour in the choice of building materials and the introduction of resident designed public art along with a diverse planting scheme which included a central boulevard of trees, helped to transform the estate from grey and drab into a warm and welcoming oasis.

Another key element was the demolition of neighbouring Clowance Street flats which had become a focal point for much of the criminal activity. The flats would later be replaced by new build housing, the start of the wider regeneration of the neighbourhood which the Pembroke Street scheme initiated.



Once one of the most run-down estates in the country, the 13 four storey blocks are now nearing the end of a major £6 million facelift.

Plymouth Herald, 1995



The old becomes the new

“People power was the force behind a pioneering initiative which has seen Pembroke Street flats rise phoenix-like from the ashes of a post-war estate plagued by crime, poverty and unemployment.”

Plymouth Herald, 1993



Flats scheme triumph for people power



The old becomes the new

Brought back from the brink



PAGE 22
Evening Herald, Reading, October 26, 2007

THEN

■ Ten years ago Pembroke Street, in Devonport, was renowned as one of the city's roughest estates. Ridden with crime, many of its residents were too frightened to go out. But thanks to the formation of a new residents' group and the securing of £5m in government funding, the area has been given a new lease of life.

PHIL STONEHAM reports.

NOW

REPORTER PHIL STONEHAM
PHOTOGRAPHER GUY LAWRENCE
STYLING JANE WILSON
HAIR ANDREW WILSON
MAKEUP JANE WILSON
PROP STYLING JANE WILSON
SET DESIGN JANE WILSON
PROP STYLING JANE WILSON
SET DESIGN JANE WILSON

How we cleaned up the estate from hell

A DECADE ago, Pembroke Street in Devonport looked like the estate that hell. Crime was rife to the point that many of its residents were too frightened to go out. The sight of police officers chasing a group of young boys playing football in the street was a common sight. The estate was a place of fear and despair.

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The Estate Management Board begins

As the physical regeneration of the estate took shape, a partnership agreement was signed between the City Council and the residents who became the founding directors of a new not for profit company. Pembroke Street Estate Management Board Ltd was established and began to manage the Pembroke Street flats.

The EMB staff team was entirely comprised of residents who had completed training to fulfil their new roles. The agreement saw the EMB receive an annual budget to carry out all aspects of management and maintenance of the estate including tenancy management, void properties, allocations, cleaning, repairs and grounds maintenance. The resident board members are in the majority on the board and supported by co-opted members including City Council housing officers and Councillors.

The success of the regeneration programme and the formation of the EMB led to visits from Government Ministers, the national media and academics.

Tenants' teamwork puts new life into city estate



People living in council flats at Pembroke Street in Mount Wise are transforming what was once one of the city's most unpopular estates into an example of what self help and determination can achieve.

Plymouth Herald, 1994

The Estate Management Board begins

Residents group shows way to inner-city change



Pembroke Street is now run by an estate management board, with 13 seats occupied by residents and the rest by councillors and officials.

Plymouth Herald, 1994



The Estate Management Board begins



“Tenant-run housing has not only stood the test of time, it stands as a testament to the ability of tenants to take charge of their destiny. They show that tenants of all ages and backgrounds can have the determination and capability to improve not only the quality and value of money of housing services, but the quality of life for local communities.”

Marianne Hood, Housing Consultant, 2012

I tried as the local MP in the 1980s and 90s to support residents in their efforts to regenerate the Pembroke estate and later the Devonport area more generally. It taught me that the key to regenerating areas lies with the driving force coming from the residents themselves aided by professionals but not by professionals imposing their views from above.

To this day – long after my time as an MP I feel a close personal connection to the residents and the area and I deeply admire the consistent efforts made over many years both to maintain and improve facilities for everyone.”

Baroness Fookes DBE, 2022



Investing in people

Alongside the physical transformation of the properties, a community arts programme was devised, along with ground breaking employment and training initiatives, youth work and well-being activities for all ages.

All designed to tackle the chronic social issues brought about by years of decline and lack of investment, with a long-term aim of rebuilding a sense of community.

Children tuck in at street party as elders recall past

As well as improving living conditions and security, the Estate Action programme is also revitalising the community. Almost half the residents are single parent families and around 75 per cent are unemployed so training and job creation are an essential part of the package.



Plymouth Herald 1994

Memories of Devonport in the blitz



Unemployment was as bad a problem as housing, so a skills and employment project was set up to help tackle the problem. Some 16 people from the estate have been taken on to learn building trades as part of the scheme.

Plymouth Herald, 1994



Investing in people



LOTTERY CELEBRATION: Sherie Hart, Sébhán McCullough and Becky Willid hold up lottery cheque in front of celebrating youth club members.
Photo: Peter Jones (2008/10)
Youth club hits the lottery jackpot



Poverty is at the root of the problems facing many public housing estates today. But, despite a negative public image, there are substantial energies and skills amongst residents on most estates. These offer a significant resource for regeneration.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1995



Developing new services

The early work investing in training for local people led to the creation of a number of projects and services and also generated employment in the form of construction jobs, site security, cleaning and housing management and maintenance roles with the newly formed company. Pilot projects and services developed into more ambitious and sustainable enterprises including grounds maintenance contract work with other housing providers, youth work, accredited training for young people and after school provision for children with special needs.

On a national level, the EMB became part of the Guide Neighbourhood network, funded by the Home Office to provide advice and guidance to other groups looking to replicate aspects of the EMB's work in their own neighbourhoods. Alongside other leading TMO's from across the UK, the programme ran for three years.



The Guide Neighbourhoods programme has been such an important project, and another step on our journey to put communities in control.

This report makes it clear that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary feats, that neighbourhoods can be made into safe, stable places where people want to live and bring up their families, and that what works in one area can often be replicated in another.

Hazel Blears, former Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, 2007



Developing new services



The Guide Neighbourhoods Programme
by Residents for Residents

NATIONAL
National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations
Housing Justice / Regenerate

- Seedley & Langworth Trust Salford
- Eldonian Group Liverpool
- Include Neighbourhood Regeneration Liverpool
- Burrowes Street WATMOS Walsall
- Balsall Heath Forum Birmingham
- Witton Lodge Community Association Birmingham
- Castle Vale Community Housing Association Birmingham
- Pembroke Street EMB Plymouth
- Royds Community Association Bradford
- Stubbin Neighbourhood Association Sheffield
- Goedwin Development Trust Hull
- Leicester North West Community Forum Leicester
- Neighbours4U Medway
- Poplar HARCA London

**ESTATE'S
EXAMPLE
SET TO BE
FOLLOWED**

Developing new services

BBC grant gives kids club a boost



TMOs are an example of resident-run and user-led services that have been active in communities for decades. They manage a range of housing, and some non-housing services.

**Rachel Newton,
Urban Forum, 2012**



Developing new services

The project is a clear example of empowerment. Members of the residents association have gained enormously in knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence.

Dick Watson, Community Technical Aid Consultant, 1994



Youth club wins an award for its community role

“What was evident from the visit to Pembroke estate was their harmonious relationship with their tenants, and the positive impact their management of the estate had had in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour.”

Tom Johnston, Locality, 2015



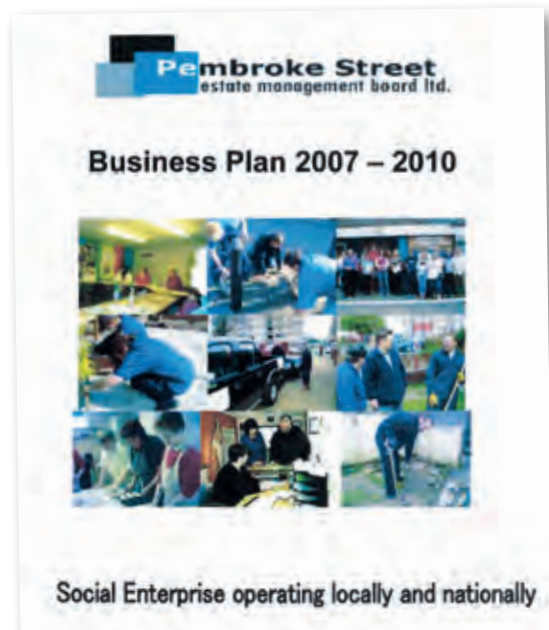
Developing new services

BBC grant gives kids club a boost



"Pembroke Street EMB provides just the service that any deprived area needs. For the last 15 years, I have lived in Easterhouse, Glasgow, the sixth most deprived constituency in Britain. The lesson is the same. A locally run project is a source of strength to a neighbourhood."

Professor Bob Holman,
Anti-poverty activist, 2002



TRAINING: Maintenance project to cover wider patch

Housing repair is growth area



Developing new services



**Shaping
the look
of city's
future**

A new deal



The pioneering work on Pembroke Street led to others seeing the potential for change and improvement. The EMB had always wanted to see the regeneration extend to other estates. Securing a substantial Lottery grant enabled the creation of a community arts and events space called the Greenlink.

The EMB was also a key partner in the 'Action Planning' project which created a vision for regenerating Devonport. Tony Blair visited Pembroke Street in 1996 to see the Pembroke Street transformation for himself. The following year he became Prime Minister as Labour swept to power promising a 'New Deal' for the country. Part of that commitment was to invest substantial and long-term funding in the most deprived neighbourhoods. Devonport was chosen as one of the Neighbourhoods to receive the funding, with the 'Action Planning' vision document proving to be a key factor.

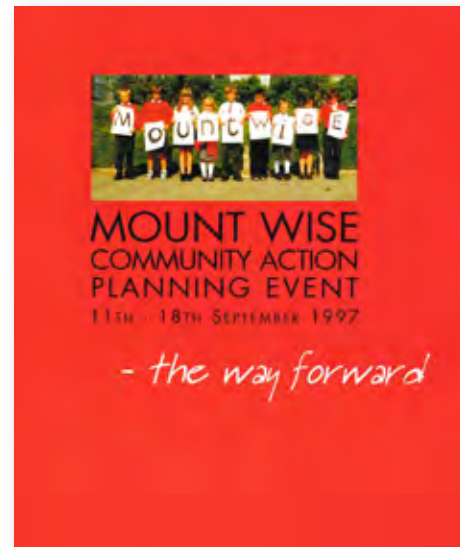
Substantial demolition work took place with new housing springing up all over Devonport. The former 'south yard' enclave was finally released by the Ministry of Defence back into the community having been taken into Government hands as part of a post war extension of the Dockyard in the 1950's. Alongside new housing, a new sports centre, an NHS dental training facility and health centre was built and the Devonport Guildhall was brought back into use.

The EMB was one of the organisations to receive investment to enable an expansion of its youth and community work and its training and estate repairs and maintenance contract work.



BLAIR FAVOURS CITY'S GROWTH

A new deal



£70m scheme lands planning accolade
HOMES PLAN WINS AWARD



Project to be split between two sites
GO-AHEAD FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

A new deal



History was due to be made in Devonport today as the first section of the South Yard was to be demolished. A 10 metre stretch of the barrier which has split Devonport for more than 50 years was to be pulled down by developers Redrow Homes.

Plymouth Herald, 2007



FLATS ARE FLATTENED

JUST GET US OUT OF HERE!

Picture: PENNY CROSS
 You can order these photos, and others taken, visit www.abc.co.uk
 Alternatively, call in if you can't visit
 Shop at Stratford office,
 or phone 7412200

FLAT DEMOLITION shows just how much the demolition operation has taken the North. The right: Wally Cross, who has been in the town for 40 years, looking on as the first brick is being taken from the wall. Right: (clockwise from top) the first demolition of the structure. And: the city centre only.

DEMOLITION experts have revealed... (The following text is partially obscured and difficult to read in the image.)

10-metre stretch is pulled down in Devonport **START OF YARD WALL DEMOLITION**

Community connections - looking to the future



The core role of the EMB is to provide a high quality resident led housing management service which is both effective and responsive, with the broader aim of promoting the development of a sustainable community; a place where residents can call home and feel part of a community.

The EMB is there to facilitate connections between people, with projects and services which address common challenges and help them to build resilience and achieve fulfilling lives. And to make early interventions where problems occur before they become unmanageable.

Over the next few pages, a selection of photos highlight the range of ways this has been achieved. In 2024, the EMB was pleased to complete the conversion of two buildings on the Pembroke Street estate. These modern facilities will provide a space for more community connections to be made into the future for all age groups, continuing the work that began way back in the 1980's.

The EMB is also working with Plymouth City Council and Plymouth Community Homes to build new homes on nearby Clowance Street, enabling more people to benefit from the EMB's local housing management service.



Community connections - looking to the future



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Community connections - looking to the future





with thanks to our partners and funders

