

## Appendix B

### **Additional Comments from Jon Broome** ***Architect and original resident of a self build project in Lewisham.***

“All developments require lengthy and complex approval procedures, the self-build did nevertheless undergo additional scrutiny; and others to enlarge on the lessons learned, the creation of sustainable communities and skills acquired through the self-build process itself.

Importantly, the self-builders have gained self-confidence and life skills from working together and dealing with the authorities and professionals; the council worked in an enabling role in genuine partnership with the self-builders so that they could achieve their individual aims within the council’s policy objectives.

Small groups of light and airy, comfortable houses have been built with great economy; houses designed and lived in by contented residents who are part of properly sustainable communities; the houses are adaptable and almost all have been improved and extended so that they have an assured long-term future and the residents have a stake in their homes and their immediate neighbourhood.

There are in my view a number of additional advantages to self-build over and above the opportunity for training in construction. Firstly, there are real opportunities to achieve substantially reduced build costs providing that the organization and construction are kept straightforward and self-help labour maximized. In this connection, the costs quoted in the report the committee received at the previous meeting appear to me on the face of it to be high, up to 80% more than I would expect for self-built very energy efficient construction.

Secondly, self-build offers an opportunity to create properly sustainable communities for the future; that is residents with a stake in their homes and the community within which they live occupying energy efficient, individually designed, adaptable homes with an assured long life.

Meanwhile, on the question of training, whilst certified training in construction may be useful to some self-builders, the big benefit lies in the acquisition of life skills and self-confidence from working with others and dealing with the authorities and professionals which comes from taking an active role in the self-build process itself.

On the question of the disadvantages of self-build, extended timescales are rightly highlighted to the committee...but for the wrong reason; training need not extend the timescale if it is undertaken during the planning stages of the project which are often the stages that seem to take the time and if training programmes are tailored to the self-build process. More or less unskilled self-builders working more or less part time with generally fewer resources of plant and tools than a contractor and building to a higher quality than many contractors will never be a quick solution to housing problems.

However, I believe that self-build is a necessary complement to mass housing provision; not everyone wants or is able to build their own home; what is important is that the opportunity to do so should be available for those that recognize the potential benefits of economy, satisfaction and self-confidence that can follow from designing and building your own home within a sustainable community and who are willing to devote the necessary time, effort and energy to the enterprise.”