Permeability, Access Opportunities and Crime

Despite its failure to give clear guidance, **Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention** *is the first real attempt by the planning system to come to terms with the importance of permeability. Current national and local planning guidance places a significant emphasis on sustainable forms of transport with the aim of encouraging walking, cycling and public transport as alternatives to the private car. However, the Government also now recognises that crime free communities are a crucial component of sustainability. Research and Crime Pattern Analysis shows a direct link between access opportunities and crime. In other words, the way and extent to which people can move around an area has a very significant influence on its likely level of crime. By making a study of the evidence this report attempts to move forward from the polarised positions of "encounter or enclosure" or "cul-de-sacs or streets". We need a movement network and we need to avoid needless vulnerability. It can be done.*

Permeability is the most contentious issue in designing out crime and, to the great frustration of practitioners, guidance has often been completely contradictory. It would be convenient if the subject was of peripheral importance and we could simply ignore it and get on with something else. Unfortunately, no single issue is more important to designing out crime than permeability and the access opportunities it creates. Does *Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention* (hereafter referred to as Safer Places) resolve the problem? Sadly, no is the answer. It is an undoubted step forward, but will it reverse, or even significantly turn, the 'supertanker' of planning guidance, which for more than a decade promoted the idea that more 'connectivity' meant greater sustainability? In our cities it is much more likely to have meant the opposite – premature demolition of crime plagued communities. As the example illustrated immediately below demonstrates, getting this aspect of layout wrong in the inner city is likely to create levels of crime and anti-social behaviour that will be many times the national average.

The above example is featured on page 17 of *Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention.*

A new twenty-one house development (the cul-de-sac on the bottom left) was virtually trouble free in its first six months. The damaging cycle route (running from centre page to top right, adjoining the grassed area) then created a connection between a supermarket and an upper school. The site was transformed into one suffering a burglary rate nine times the national average with equally serious levels of anti-social behaviour. The supermarket car park is shown on the top right. Needless vulnerability results in unsustainable development. Safer Places comments on this connection, *"Ill thought out additions to the movement framework, such as this segregated cycle path through a Bradford housing area, can increase crime."*

The consequences of opening the route, described above, were entirely predictable and entirely preventable. One resident relates how a quiet place to live became a "hellhole". Some might suggest that this is unrepresentative or an isolated incident? In fact, one local authority rights of way section has stated (direct to author) that advice on how to close such routes is the most common enquiry they receive.

One phrase, or buzzword, now dominates planning – 'sustainability'. Where does this come from? A significant influence on the drive for sustainability is a document known as Agenda 21, the end product of the Rio Earth summit of 1992, which requires the creation of developments that do not generate additional pollution or reduce non-renewable resources. One of the main aims of the strategy is to reduce the use of the car by encouraging walking and cycling. Making these more benign forms of movement easier and more convenient will – it is said and hoped – entice people away from using their cars. No evidence has been found to show that people do in fact abandon their cars because of the greater availability of pedestrian routes and it remains a worthy, if one dimensional, aspiration. The problem is that the advocates of increased permeability completely failed to consider the effect on crime. They either chose to ignore the research findings in this area or, more likely, were unaware that they existed. Ironically, this is seriously damaging to the aim of sustainable development – out of control crime rates have frequently been the cause of premature demolition.

A more rounded definition of sustainability is now contained in **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1**, which sets out how the planning system should play a key role in delivering sustainable communities, which includes *"Promoting communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free"*. Safer Places is intended as a companion to PPS1 and points out that, "Safety and security are essential to successful, sustainable communities." Indeed, Keith Hill, Minister for Planning (verbal to author), described designing out the opportunity for crime as "Essential to sustainability." The document acknowledges that for far too long too little attention has been paid by planners and designers to crime issues and that "Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development."

In 1998 *Places Streets & Movement: A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32* was published and a new emphasis was given to "The reduction of car use through the provision of local facilities and public transport within walking distance of housing." Increasing the number of connections increases movement options, and the message is clear that any increase in permeability must be good. It is not. Indeed, considerable research and experience over the last thirty years has repeatedly demonstrated that inappropriate permeability can have a disastrous effect on the level of crime within a development. This eighty-page document is astonishingly naïve and was published when enthusiasm for increasing permeability seemed to have no limits. Page forty-six covers 'Security' and is completely at odds with the rest of the document, standing out

like a very sore thumb. Here it states that "Clear and direct routes through an area for all forms of movement are desirable, but should not undermine the defensible space of particular neighbourhoods". It also recommends, "An assessment of potential risks should be made early in the development of the design, in consultation with the local police Architectural Liaison Officer." Despite this warning, it was impossible for planning not to take the message from the other seventy-nine pages that permeability was a very good thing indeed with little, if any, downside.

The introduction of PPG3 saw a significant shift in emphasis in housing policy. Sustainability was to be furthered by increasing the percentage of new housing built on previously developed land and by building at greater densities. The national target is that by 2008, 60% of new housing will be built on brownfield sites. The aim was to reduce the need for greenfield development and, less publicly, to stem the exodus from city to suburb. In day-to-day dealings with planners the sustainability agenda is dominated by one subject – increasing housing density. By developing at higher densities, close to sources of employment and leisure uses, it is hoped that public transport will become more viable and attractive, which is intended to reduce residents' dependency on the private car. Similarly, increasing connections and permeability in general is thought to promote walking and cycling.

Unfortunately, the public have proved very resistant to being parted from their vehicles and when car ownership and use increased the Government's target of reducing car usage was redefined as reducing its rate of growth, with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, pointing out that car ownership rises as society gets richer. Car use and genuine sustainability are serious issues, but they are not be furthered by unevidenced and implausible planning guidance. For example, paragraph 58 of PPG3 tells planners that they should seek greater densities "at places with good public transport accessibility". The logic being that greater density provides more potential customers for public transport, reducing parking provision helps to make room for extra houses and, anyway, people with access to public transport are less likely to need a car. If the theory were sound, this would be a virtuous circle, but reality has an unfortunate way of intruding. In one case, to the bewilderment of the specialist-housing provider, five bedroom houses targeted at larger extended Asian families were allocated one parking place per house. The large number of adults living in this site are somehow deemed to be less likely to need a car because they live within walking distance of a bus route. This is a fantasy. Access to a bus route might conceivably reduce car use on convenient trips to and from the city centre, but the idea that residents won't own a car for longer or more inconvenient journeys, where public transport is much less convenient, is wishful thinking and damaging. Only the poor or deeply committed choose public transport when it is much more convenient to use the car. In some areas the underlying tone of this policy is as dogmatic as it is unrealistic. *These people don't need cars and, if they do own a car, we'll make life as difficult as possible.* People don't own or not own cars to suit planners. The aim of reducing car use by improving public transport has become hopelessly confused with reducing car ownership, which planning simply cannot achieve. What planning can 'achieve' by the deliberate under provision of parking is ugly car littered and blocked streets, tension between neighbours and car crime.

Whilst under provision of parking is causing problems, it is as nothing compared to the controversy and problems caused by footpath connections, links, connectivity and movement, which is summarised by the word that no longer dare speak its name – permeability.

We need to take a balanced approach to this difficult issue, which recognises the clear need for movement with an acceptance that permeability impacts on crime. It is far too easy for the argument to become stereotyped and polarised. It must be stressed that those engaged in designing out crime are not against movement that is appropriate, balanced and planned. The context is very important and the emphasis will change when dealing, for example, with a development linked to the city centre and another that is entirely suburban. Informed, evidence based decisions need to be taken to create a suitable movement network in a way that does not create highly damaging access opportunities for criminals and the anti-social – and which leaves a community permanently vulnerable.

How does permeability affect crime? Well, increasing permeability **permits** access into areas that would otherwise be viewed as private space and where strangers are rare and conspicuous. The presence of offenders and the anti-social is now **legitimised** and much less likely to be noticed or challenged than would be the case in a development perceived as private. If a connection turns what could be a private site into a public thoroughfare, it allows anonymous and unrestricted opportunity to enter, familiarise, search for vulnerable targets, offend and escape. The importance of this issue is shown in the following table, which comes from Home Office Research Study 207: *The 'Road to Nowhere': The Evidence for Travelling Criminals* (Wiles and Costello 2000).

Target selection: Burglary	
Reason for selection	**(%)**
Chance	63
Passing and looked easy (poor security)	31
Passing and looked easy (unoccupied)	26
Passing and looked easy (isolated/quiet)	26
Had noticed previously	20
Tipped off	17
Passing and looked wealthy	14
Revenge	6
Other	6
Burgled before	3

Note: percentages add up to over 100 because of multiple answers.
Source: Home Office Research Study 207: *'The Road to Nowhere': The Evidence for Travelling Criminals* (Wiles and Costello 2000).

This table was compiled after interviews with convicted burglars. Six of the first seven reasons for target selection relate directly to movement.

The study also highlighted the average distance travelled by criminals to offend. In high crime areas, this is less than 1 mile. Access opportunities within this distance will therefore be a key factor in an area's level of crime.

Six of the first seven reasons listed include, or are directly related to, access and the degree to which the layout permits 'passing'. Clearly a chance or opportunity will be much less likely to be discovered and exploited if offenders are unable to legitimately move through a development. The study again confirms the relatively short distances travelled by criminals to offend, which in high crime areas was found to average less

than a mile. The access opportunities within this distance will be a key factor in the area's level of crime.

A planning officer seeing this site plan for the first time commented, "That meets current DTLR guidance." It does. It also has a burglary rate sixteen times the national average.

The potential advantages of a cul-de-sac are lost by the creation of a highly damaging through route, which has become a well-used shortcut. The route permits and legitimises the presence of passing criminals and the anti-social from an adjacent estate.

Note the two houses (bottom left) which are part of the site but detached from it, creating a sprawling and confused entrance; the communal parking areas; the houses set too far back (top right); and disastrous alleyways running along the rear of the dwellings.

A potentially private, largely self-policing community has become a public thoroughfare dominated by crime and anti-social behaviour. Less than ten years old, the site is in decline. The large building (top, centre) is a nursery abandoned after only eight years.

Wiles and Costello's research strongly confirms earlier work on access by Beavon, Brantingham & Brantingham (1994), which suggested that the majority of property crime occurs within an offender's routine activity and awareness space – the familiar and regularly used areas between home, shops, school and leisure areas. They found an almost perfect correlation between the number of access points into, for example, a street and its rate of burglary. These findings are supported by White (1990) who also found a strong relationship between a neighbourhood's permeability and its burglary rate. *Crime Free Housing* (Poyner and Webb 1991) frequently makes the same link between inappropriate access and crime. They comment, "Where a housing area is not used as a through pedestrian route, it is much better protected." The recent independent evaluations of *Secured by Design* (Pascoe 1999, Armitage 2000) were highly positive, but, significantly, the less successful sites were those where the principles of *Secured by Design* had been compromised in relation to footpaths and access. Indeed, Pascoe's evaluation for the Building Research Establishment recommended that the scheme could be improved by "controlling and reducing access through streets". Further compelling evidence was recently provided by Crime Pattern Analysis of twenty-four sites selected at random (Knowles 2001). Crime and anti-social behaviour were clearly concentrated on through routes and in the permeable layouts.

The British Crime Survey (Budd 1999), regarded by the Government as the most reliable guide to crime, found that houses on main were roads were at more than twice the risk of being successfully burgled than those in a cul-de-sac.

A distinguished American researcher and writer on crime and the environment (Taylor 2002) summarised:

"Neighbourhood permeability is a case in point. I pick this case because it is one of the community-level design features most reliably linked to crime rates, and the connections operate consistently in the same direction across studies: more permeability, more crime. Several studies across several decades link neighbourhood property crime rates with permeability versus inaccessibility of neighbourhood layout. Neighbourhoods with smaller streets or more one-way streets or fewer entrance streets or with more turnings have lower property crime rates. . . . Recognition that permeability creates a liability for residents is clearly one of the driving forces toward more gated communities in the United States." One in six Americans live in gated communities. Unfortunately, there is a growing trend towards such communities in this country (approximately 1,000 exist, most built since 1995). This potentially divisive trend will only be stemmed if confidence is restored by the avoidance of needless vulnerability.

As a result of their research, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has fully adopted defensible space guidelines, supported by most States' development agencies. Indeed, HUD published *Defensible Space: Deterring Crime and Building Community,* written by the then Department Secretary (minister) Henry G. Cisneros (1995). He describes how *"In Atlanta, Georgia, and Richmond, Virginia, neighbourhoods that are harder to drive through (narrow streets, one way streets, few straight thoroughfares) have significantly less crime than those that are more permeable. In St. Louis, Missouri, private streets have much lower levels of criminal activity than adjacent blocks with similar housing types."*

Much nearer to home, a recently completed evaluation of design risk factors and crime in West Yorkshire (Armitage, forthcoming) again found that cul-de-sacs are at lower risk of victimisation, unless they are 'leaky', i.e. with a footpath exit (also in *Safer Places*, page 88). Armitage examined the individual environmental factors which are associated with crime prone homes. The four factors which revealed the strongest association with victimisation were:

1. **Maintenance** – signs of desertion, disrepair, litter and graffiti.
2. **Permeability** – the presence of footpaths linking the estate to shops or a maze of other footpaths and having 6 or more pedestrians passing through the estate within a three minute garden.
3. **Access** – having a gate leading from a footpath into the rear garden.
4. **Routine awareness space** – Increasing likelihood of living within the routine awareness space of potential offenders.

In short, the three most significant design factors were different expressions of permeability and access. Point 4 confirmed the earlier work of Beavon, Brantingham & Brantingham (1994) and Wiles and Costello (2000), described above. Armitage's earlier evaluation of *Secured by Design* (2000) *established that "crime is less likely to occur within estates which have been built to this standard"*, which confirmed the findings of two earlier evaluations (Pascoe and Brown 1999).

Safety and security are clearly essential to the aims of PPG3 – people will not walk in an environment where they feel intimidated or unsafe. Creating a sustainable movement network therefore involves much more than placing a number of connections through a new development. Careful thought needs to be given to how these connections will be used and the likely crime implications.

A successful balance is achievable if decisions are based on evidence rather than assumptions, which have often been found to be wrong. For example, the idea that 'activity' and 'eyes on the street' in themselves prevent crime has been widely promoted as a plausible way of reconciling movement and crime. Unfortunately, the idea is not supported by research and is contradicted by Crime Pattern Analysis and the large body of evidence referred to in this article. It is a notion that would surprise many city centre police officers where 'eyes on the street' are present in abundance along with many types of crime.

The idea can be traced back to Jane Jacobs, a New York journalist,' whose influential book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). It a deeply nostalgic, observational work and is completely lacking in evidence or evaluation. It is seminal in making the link between design and crime but should be read with considerable caution, with one respected reviewer (Herbert Gans) commenting on publication that she had got as much wrong as she had got right. Jacobs, then living in Greenwich Village, New York, makes it clear that she is a lover of great dense cities, which is perfectly reasonable, and made a crucial and almost entirely forgotten observation: *"I hope no reader will try to transfer my observations into guides as to what goes on in towns, or little cities, or in suburbs which still are suburban. Towns, suburbs and even little cities are totally different organism from great cities. We are in enough trouble already from trying to understand big cities in terms of the behavior, and imagined behavior, of towns. To try to understand towns in terms of big cities will only compound confusion."* Unfortunately, that is precisely what has happened. Another statement by Jacobs is apposite: *"Too build city districts that are custom made for easy crime is idiotic. Yet that is what we do."*

The flaws and limitations of 'eyes on the street' are highlighted by Oscar Newman who refers to the infamous murder of a woman in New York witnessed by over 100 people none of whom intervened or even telephoned the police, a far from isolated example. Newman elaborated (e-mail to author 5.2.03):

"Natural surveillance" is not automatically created by high density environments. This is the same battle I had with Jane Jacobs a few decades ago. Unless the grounds around a dwelling are assigned to specific families (or small groups of families) and are understood as belonging to them, those families will not take care of these areas or screen them for activities these families determine as acceptable. There are many incidents of dozens of people simultaneously witnessing a crime (robbery, rape, assault) in a "public" area adjacent to there dwelling without even calling the police. Assign that same area to specific families and they will guard it as their own and control the activity within it. Surveillance that operates to control crime is not an automatic by-product of high density or adjacent roads – in fact high density, and adjacent roads without territorial definition can work to increase crime, as you have found."

More seriously, where implemented as a primary means of crime prevention, contrary to *Safer Places* (page 24), the theory has produced serious and predictable problems. The very large scale investment in the regeneration of Hulme, Manchester, was based on New Urbanist design principles, which seek to maximise permeability, relying on 'eyes on the street' to prevent crime, in a layout that significantly moves the residential design balance from private to public (directly contrary to the principles of defensible space). Unfortunately, despite considerable investment, Crime Pattern Analysis has a burglary rate three-and-a-half times the national average (2002-2004). In stark contrast,

Safer Places (pages 58 & 59) contains a case study of a regeneration scheme in Bradford that has produced massive and sustainable burglary reductions because its redesign was informed by evidence. This included The British Crime Survey, Crime Pattern Analysis (crimes mapped on site plans), thirty years of criminology, some produced here, and the evaluations of *Secured by Design.*

The research confirms that inappropriate access will provide the criminal with an ideal opportunity to enter additional areas, familiarise themselves with the layout, search for vulnerable targets, offend and escape. Giving offenders a reason to pass through an estate not only increases their familiarity with the area, but also provides them with an excuse to be present where they would otherwise have no legitimate reason to be. Levels of anti-social behaviour will also be correspondingly high in layouts that reduce residential influence. It is easily overlooked that every additional route further divides and separates available pedestrian movement, which makes it more difficult for existing routes to be busy, safe and desirable.

Needless access points increase an offender's awareness space and therefore increase the opportunity for offending. Conversely, where a development does not form part of a through route, it is likely to be perceived as belonging solely to residents and visitors which discourages casual intrusion by non residents and increases community influence, ownership and informal social control. In the latter situation defensible space extends, to some degree, from the house boundaries all the way to the development entrance and provides residents with a safer and more sustainable community. This is particularly important for families. Research (Newman 1980) has shown that streets perceived as more private in nature fostered greater social interaction and ownership. In contrast, a survey of children living in the very public streets in Hulme, Manchester (SURF Centre 2002), found that many schoolchildren felt unsafe outside their immediate homes. A sensible balance has to be achieved, but the advantages to residents and their children of a safer layout are very considerable and should not be discarded unnecessarily.

The implications for design are clear and yet widely ignored. Why? Well, it is highly unlikely that any of the research mentioned has been read by highway engineers, architects or planners, despite its importance to their work. This vitally important research remains within the domain of the Home Office, criminologists and a few crime prevention specialists, which has resulted in much needless crime. Before the publication of Safer Places, the connection between permeability and crime was an unspoken heresy to planning guidance. The then DTLR discussed permeability solely in relation to promoting the movement network, without any meaningful reference to the serious implications for crime. For example, *Better Places to Live: By Design. A Companion Guide to PPG3* (in many respects a good document) describes safety and security as "of fundamental importance", yet has virtually nothing to say about crime or security in the section on creating a movement framework, with permeability presented as an indisputable benefit with no downside. The DTLR view was that crime can be deterred if roads and footpaths are well overlooked, which, as the evidence shows, is rarely, if ever, sufficient on its own. Natural surveillance is indeed very important, but it does not prevent offenders moving around an area and searching for targets, nor does it deter groups of youths circulating through a neighbourhood during the evening, which is likely to result in the sort of nuisance and anti-social behaviour that generates fear of crime and deters the public from the street.

Radburn: a well-intentioned attempt to separate people from cars. Originating from the United States in the 1920s, this open plan layout was still being built until the 1970s. Unfortunately, and predictably, 'open plan' proved open to abuse.

Cars are isolated from owners; the public realm abuts private space; the large amount of communal green space lacks ownership, purpose and influence; the layout is ludicrously permeable, providing offenders with complete anonymity and opportunity to wonder around, familiarising, searching for vulnerable targets, offending and escaping.

Burglary, car crime and anti-social behaviour thrived in a layout that denied residents any control over their environment. At what point is a stranger's presence inappropriate, suspicious or challengeable? In such a situation residents quickly lose confidence, whilst offenders become ever bolder and contemptuous. The design has unintentionally taken control from residents and handed it into the hands of the anti-social.

There is a clear need for public roads and routes. However, as Crime Pattern Analysis and the British Crime Survey illustrate, houses situated on main roads or through routes are likely to suffer more crime because their defensible space begins only at the house boundaries. Conversely, where a development does not form part of a through route, it is likely to be perceived as belonging solely to residents and visitors, which strongly discourages casual intrusion by non-residents. The more private nature of the site reduces anonymity and increases residents' sense of ownership, which, in turn, increases community influence and informal social control. Defensible space is, to some degree, extended from the house boundaries all the way to the development entrance. The sizeable reduction in the presence of strangers provides a further enormous advantage for residents: knowing and being able to identify one's neighbours. A stranger entering such an area is much more conspicuous. A potential offender now loses his anonymity, is out of place, uncomfortable and exposed. He has no justification for 'being there', which gives residents much more confidence in their right to challenge people, or if necessary call the Police. A small-scale example

is the cul-de-sac, but the principle can be extended to much bigger developments, particularly if they have a single entrance.

A last point concerning the "active, vibrant public streets" advocated by New Urbanism. The largest example of this movement's work is the Hulme regeneration in Manchester. Some people will be attracted to this type of environment. However, it is inherently vulnerable and the New Urbanists might equally wish to concede that many people, particularly families, would much prefer to live in a quiet, private development where they know their neighbours and feel it safe to allow children out of the house. As the companion guide to PPG3 says, "People should always come first."

Where possible, access should be restricted to as few routes as possible, and should be designed to serve the development rather than facilitating through traffic.

The complete absence of defensible space.

A network of linked footpaths directly abutting dwellings allows unrestricted opportunity to enter, familiarise, search for vulnerable targets, offend and escape. Residents, deprived of any means of influencing and informally controlling their environment, suffered from crime and continual nuisance.

Footpaths should not run along the rear or side of back gardens, nor provide access to them.

Places, Streets & Movement rightly recommends, "Routes that are overlooked and busy. If separate footpaths or cycle tracks form part of a layout they should be on routes which generate high levels of movement and should be as short as possible. Long, indirect pedestrian and cycle links may feel threatening for users, and may provide escape routes for criminals" (page 46).

Footpaths that are separate from roadways should, wherever possible, be avoided. They are, on most occasions, very difficult to reconcile with the advice given above. It is also largely forgotten that when new alternative routes are created, they further divide and separate the available pedestrian movement, which makes it more difficult for existing routes to be busy, safe and desirable. In addition, without very great care, such routes often provide a damaging opportunity to enter, familiarise, search for vulnerable targets, offend and escape.

Footpaths should be wide, clear of hiding places, busy, overlooked by dwellings, well lit and should follow a direct route.

Any shrubs planted next to footpaths need maintenance to ensure that they do not begin to impede natural surveillance or create hiding places. The mature growth height of planting should be a maximum of one metre.

There will be occasions when strategically placed bollards or staggered cycle bars are required to prevent motor vehicles and cyclists from using footpaths.

Features that encourage loitering or help to create fear of crime, for example, pedestrian-subways, should be avoided. Where this is not possible, risk should be reduced by careful design: "where pedestrian subways cannot be avoided they should be as short and wide as possible and open onto spaces which are readily supervised by passing traffic and pedestrians" (Poyner 1983). Circular 5/94 *Planning out Crime* contains further guidance on this subject (section 27).

Alleyways and snickets were originally designed to allow coal and other deliveries to be made at the rear of dwellings. Refuse collectors also used them to empty rubbish bins stored at the rear. Many years ago, when burglary was much rarer, this was not a concern. However, today they create two separate and serious problems: firstly, they provide burglars with easy, concealed and unchallengeable access to the vulnerable rear of dwellings – massively increasing the risk of burglary. Secondly, they create wholly unsuitable footpaths that completely contravene guidance on the creation of safe routes (wide, busy, overlooked, direct etc.). Instead, they are enclosed, narrow, anonymous, create hiding places, are poorly overlooked and infrequently used. Would anyone feel safe using such a route at night?

Alleyways are now synonymous with crime, fear of crime, litter and anti-social behaviour (see the example below). Residents, instinctively recognising the connection between such routes and their problems, have often sought to close them – and very substantial reductions in crime have followed their closure. Circular 5/94 *Planning out Crime* states, "The security of premises can be reduced where a footpath or alleyway provides unrestricted access to the rear," which now looks like a considerable understatement. Crime Prevention guidance has since been written to assist residents in this process (Beckford and Cogan 2000). Indeed, a number of Government funded Burglary Reduction Initiatives are closing or otherwise dealing with the problems caused by such routes. Home Office briefing note 2/01 (Johnson and Loxley 2001) reports on practical lessons from these projects. Two of the five case studies from *Burglary Prevention: Early Lessons from the Crime Reduction Programme* (Tilley, Pease, Hough and Brown 1999) feature problems specifically arising from alleyways – and a third with related problems from a Radburn layout. *Tackling Drug Use in Rented Housing: A Good Practice Guide* (Robinson and Flemen 2002), jointly produced by the DTLR and Home Office, states that removing alleyways *"can improve the physical appearance of an area and make it safer for residents".* Despite this wealth of evidence and experience alleyways are still occasionally encountered in plans for new developments.

Some developers have sought to justify the continued use of alleyways by quoting *Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing*, which, amongst other things, seeks to promote greater housing density. However, PPG3 also promotes sustainability and good design, which are incompatible with alleyways, and states (paragraph 56): *"Local planning authorities should adopt policies which promote design and layouts which are safe and take account of public health, crime prevention and community safety considerations."* *Better Places to Live: By Design. A Companion Guide to PPG3*

(DTLR 2001) specifically states that alleyways *"raise serious issues in terms of safety and security,"* which is unusually forthright for this type of document. The position is clear: alleyways and similar routes are wholly unsuitable in a modern development.
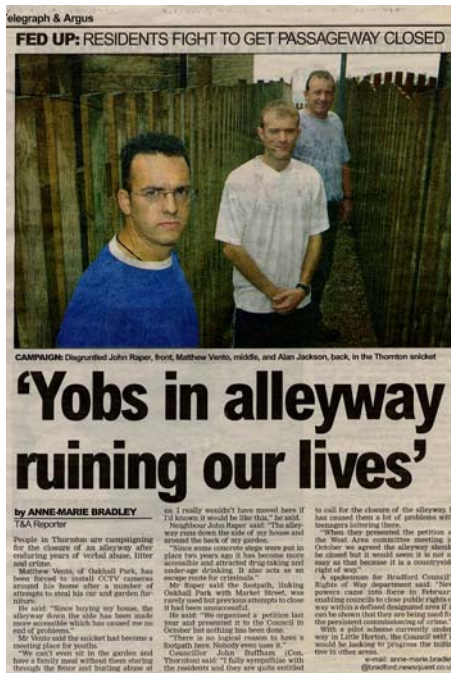
Typical examples of the serious problems caused to people by the presence of alleyways. The local authority is left with the time consuming and expensive task of seeking alleyway closures.

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