

POLICY ON THE INTEGRATION OF STAFF HOSTELS

1. Introduction

A characteristic model of apartheid legacy has been the construction of hostels in major urban areas in South Africa. This form of housing can be considered one of the most divisive forms of housing that was constructed during the apartheid era. In addition to reinforcing the spatial separation between racial groups it also consciously targeted the separation of families.

The hostels were mainly designed and constructed to accommodate migrant workers, men only, in bleak barrack like buildings. This accommodation offered only the sparsest of facilities, justifying the notion that the men will be living there only on a temporary basis and would return to their families and communities in the 'homelands'.

In Johannesburg this form of housing was very much part of the accommodation that was available. Legislation and practices such as influx control, the migrant labour system, the Group Areas Act, and the establishment of Homelands, governed residential location and land ownership patterns. However in addition to the development of public hostels, employers also had to provide accommodation for migrant labourers recruited from the homelands, and such accommodation was provided by purchasing or building hostels. Since the practice of providing staff accommodation was a legislative requirement it also became a 'Condition of service'.

During the local government transformation and amalgamation processes a report was prepared on the transformation of staff hostels, as part of the iGoli 2002 plan. The report proposed the elimination of unequal housing allowance benefits, as it related to employees living in staff hostels and proposed a business plan for the transformation of staff hostels. In line with this business plan currently there are no new allocations of employees to staff hostels owned by the City. Over the past years some of the original staff hostels were shut down. However, the City still owns the following staff hostels.

Name	Typology
• City Deep	Redevelopment process will yield 900 units
• Van Beek	total number of units (bedrooms and rooms): 202
• Selby	148 rooms
• Anthea (Langlaagte)	280 rooms with 10 beds per room
• Goudrand	44 rooms with approximately 6 beds per room
• Sierra Bravo	16 rooms with 16 beds per room
• Orlando Power	150 rooms with approximately 908 beds
• Klipsruit	148 rooms, with 5-10 beds per room
• Pimville	15 rooms with approximately 6 beds per room
• Henly	10 houses with 2 bedrooms each

- Bushkoppies 85 units in one storey buildings
- Huddle Park accommodate approximately 200 residents
- Cynda accommodate 12 residents
- Marlboro Village 45 freestanding units with 180 beds
- Diepsloot 104 RDP units and emergency accommodation

Although the position on staff hostels had been addressed in the Igoli 2002 plan, it was not possible to implement the various decisions. In addition the lack of policy has led to differentiated products in the hostels that have been developed and an adhoc budgetary process. In 2004 the following 'Broad Strategy Approach to Staff Hostels' was approved:

- "It is proposed that any development that will be done at the hostel should be family units conversion;
- It is proposed that a once off subsidy of R25 800 per employee be allocated to current employees in the staff hostels. The City will be the source of this once-off subsidy;
- It is proposed that the Departments and utilities should continually update the register for the staff living in the staff hostels;
- To curb new entrants into hostels in order to reduce the current numbers and therefore reduce future displaced persons;
- It is proposed that the staff hostels should remain rental accommodation managed by JOSHCO and should the employee retire (or other eventualities including death) from the employ of the City, the Unit should be allocated to the next person on the waiting list;
- It is proposed that funding for the development of staff hostels be secured to ensure the completion of the programme; and
- It is proposed that JOSHCO should take over the role of property management of developed units."

2. Re –development of Staff Hostels:

To date the interventions that have been adopted to redevelop staff hostels include the following:

- In Diepsloot (Northern Works/ Farm), the employees that were living in the original hostel have been relocated to 'RDP' houses that were built in Diepsloot. Currently the hostel is being utilised by the Housing Department in Region A for emergency housing purposes. The City has also initiated the building of 'RDP' units for employees living in the Bushkoppies staff hostel. To date 28 units have been built.
- The Van Beek hostel is being upgraded into 208 family units. The redevelopment of this hostel has been undertaken over a number of phases.

This redevelopment has resulted in the displacement of hostel residents as a result of conversions into family units.

- The City Deep Hostel is currently being developed by JOSHCO. The project consists of the conversion of existing buildings into self-contained rental accommodation, and the construction of new units on the vacant land within the hostel. The project is being implemented in various phases, with the first phase being the conversion of existing hostel buildings and the subsequent phase being the construction of housing units of various sizes and typologies with the intention of creating residential neighbourhoods.

On completion of the redevelopment initiative, it is envisaged that a sustainable living environment encompassing good quality residential development, sport and recreation amenities as well as other basic community facilities, and accessibility to the surrounding urban fabric, will be provided. A residential yield of about 900 units is anticipated.

- In the Antea (Langlaagte) Hostel, JOSHCO has formulated a redevelopment proposal for transforming the hostel into family accommodation. During the 2006/2007 financial year, planning and design work was conducted in preparation for physical commencement of construction in the following financial year (2007/2008)

However in many hostels no interventions for redevelopment have been planned or implemented by the City. In addition there is lack of ongoing maintenance in some of the hostels.

3. National and Provincial Perspective:

The National and Provincial government have adopted programmes to address the redevelopment of public hostels in the country. The objectives of these programmes are to:

- Provide affordable accommodation to those not seeking permanent residence
- Provide rental accommodation for lower income groups
- Integrate hostels into neighbouring communities and the broader environment
- Move away from the apartheid dormitory accommodation
- Address the current living conditions in hostels.

In his opening address to the Gauteng Legislature in 2004, the Premier of Gauteng announced that all hostels in the province would be redeveloped by 2009. This however is an enormous task, as it requires the transformation of traditional dormitory style complexes in hostels and it has been proposed that this date be revised.

Notwithstanding that the focus of the National and Provincial programme is on public hostels, the objectives of their programme is just as critical and applicable to staff hostels as it is to public hostels. In the redevelopment of the staff hostels it is therefore imperative that the City's programme for redevelopment is aligned with the Provincial target date.

This thus requires a coherent approach to responding to staff hostels, noting that the same intervention may not be applicable in all the hostel environments.

4. Objectives

In line with the National and provincial imperatives, the City's objective in the redevelopment of staff hostels is to:

- Provide for the integration of hostels into and with neighbouring communities, where applicable;
- Promote the restructuring off the apartheid city through spatial, structural, social and economic integration;
- Upgrade the hostels from single sex dormitories into affordable accommodation;
- Promote increased densities where possible to optimise well located land and resources;
- Build mixed income housing to integrate communities.

5. Policy Proposals

5.1. 'From staff hostels towards integrated communities':

5.1.1 Renaming of hostels redevelopment programme

Given the negative connotations associated with the name hostel, through its use as a critical 'tool' to destabilise families and communities it is important symbolically to rename the accommodation that is being provided through the redevelopment of the hostels. One of the objectives behind the redevelopment initiatives is the building of communities, which contradicts the original intent of the hostels programme during the apartheid era.

5.1.2 Developing self contained housing units

The single sex dormitory style accommodation provided through the hostels programme could not be sustained, with many females living illegally in hostels as well as in some instances where informal settlements developed adjacent to the hostels, especially around the public hostels.

The redevelopment of the hostels thus needs to provide for self - contained housing units or family units. This approach could thus accommodate both families as well as single people willing to share a communal kitchen and bathroom.

5.1.3 Increasing densities and optimising well located land

A number of the staff hostels are well located close to employment opportunities. Some of them eg. City Deep have additional land available to construct additional housing units on site. In addition during the redevelopment of the hostels increased densities must be promoted where possible, and not the continued construction of the 'RDP' units as already implemented in Diepsloot and Bushkoppies.

Through the increasing of densities, the displacement of hostel residents will be reduced and if possible additional units can be developed.

5.1.4 Allocations

Currently in some hostels there are a number of vacant beds or units. This is as a result of the decision implemented by the City that there would be no further allocations of employees to the staff hostels.

It is therefore proposed that once redeveloped any vacant units will be allocated to applicants from other communities in the City requiring accommodation (as per the JOSHCO housing allocations policy). In this way the existing hostel residents and community will be integrated with other households requiring similar accommodation.

5.2. Management and Redevelopment

Currently the management of the staff hostels is being undertaken by the Housing Department, with JOSHCO managing City Deep Hostel and Antea Hostel and in the process of taking over the management of some of the other hostels. It is proposed that eventually all the current staff hostels that can be redeveloped will be managed by JOSHCO.

In this regard JOSHCO has already undertaken preliminary investigations of the staff hostels to identify some of the problems as well as opportunities that maybe possible.

Addressing the redevelopment of the staff hostels has been part of the iGoli 2002 plan, however to date the redevelopment programme has not had a significant impact, with the programme being implemented on an adhoc basis given both capacity and budgetary constraints, as well as the lack of appropriate policies.

It is proposed that in order to comply with the Provincial timeframes and targets an overall plan for the redevelopment of the staff hostels is developed. This plan will be costed and once approved will be budgeted for annually by the City, thus preventing the current ad hoc approach to staff hostel redevelopment.

In addition to building housing JOSHCO is also concerned about building communities. Merely allocating households to the redeveloped project will not result in integrated and sustainable communities. It will be important for JOSHCO to also play a facilitative role after the physical redevelopment is completed, and initiate programmes that contribute to the building of sustainable communities.

5.3 Rentals

In line with the intention of the City to implement market related rentals on certain Council owned rental stock, such rentals will be charged on the current staff hostels. It is proposed that as of the 1st July 2007, market related rentals would be charged to all municipal entities and departments that have staff accommodated in the hostels. Currently the Housing Department pays for repairs and maintenance, administrative costs, assessment rates, refuse, sewage and water and all these costs are currently not being recouped through the rentals currently charged at staff hostels.

It is also proposed that the Housing Department signs lease agreements with the ~~municipal entities and departments regarding the units that have been allocated to their employees.~~ Once the hostels have been redeveloped and are managed by JOSHCO would consider the option of signing lease agreements with the municipal entities or directly with the tenant as is their current practice.

There has also been anecdotal evidence that some of the employees living in the staff hostels have accommodation elsewhere, and maybe benefiting twice from the City's employee housing scheme. In addition, there are some households living in the staff hostels who may no longer be employed by the City. They have alternate employment or have retired from Council employ. In the latter instance (where the former employee is currently employed) market related rentals would be charged. However where the tenant is retired the options of rent relief, cost recovery rentals or rightsizing will be considered.

As part of the redevelopment of hostels, individual metering for water and electricity will be implemented. This initiative should streamline the rental administrative and collection process, minimise current costs to the City, as well ensure that tenants benefit from the City's tariff policy (with free water and electricity).

5.4 'RDP' units and tenure options

As indicated employees living in some of the staff hostels have been allocated to 'RDP' houses that have been built and funded by the City, the assumption being that these houses will be transferred to them. However given government's housing subsidy policy the employees cannot receive a 'free' house given their income. It is important that such situations are rectified so as to ensure equity in terms of the housing benefit that employees receive.

As part of the hostels redevelopment programme the housing units developed will be for rental. However should current residents of staff hostels want ownership as a form of tenure, they will be offered such housing products in other mixed housing developments in line with the allocation criteria applicable for such a development.

5.5. Emergency housing accommodation

Currently the original hostel in Diepsloot is being utilised as emergency accommodation by the Housing Department located in Region A. It is proposed that should feasibilities indicate that it is not possible to redevelop the staff hostels as integrated affordable accommodation as proposed in 5.1, the affected hostels be converted into emergency housing accommodation.
