

# OCEAN TENANTS SAY: Don't let Sanctuary get their hands on our estate



## insidehousing

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this week's news, views and jobs  
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Audit Commission warns associations not to get obsessed with development

### Look after your tenants, chief urges

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Housing associations have become so obsessed with building new homes that they are ignoring their core housing management role, the head of the government's housing watchdog has warned.

The Audit Commission's chief inspector of housing Roy Irwin said too many associations 'chase the customers they haven't got and neglect the ones that they have got'.

In an exclusive interview with *Inside Housing*, Mr Irwin said they should concentrate on improving their core business.

The commission was disappointed that not a single housing association had made the highest, three-star rating for housing management, he said.

'The development agenda is really important but good organisations learn how to chew and walk at the same time. They can do both,' he added.

His comments come in the wake of a series of reports that have questioned the fairness of the Audit Commission's inspection regime, particularly towards associations (*Inside Housing*, 19 August).

- Mr Irwin warned that the current

appetite for mergers made poor performing organisations easy targets for takeover bids.

'The stakes of providing services by housing associations over the last three and-a-half years has risen considerably.

'If there is an organisation that is not particularly thriving then you may attract attention of an organisation that is thriving,' he said.

Home Group chief executive Malcolm Levi said he was confident that housing associations would soon prove they could gain the commission's top rating. 'I am sure that the first three-star association will soon be identified. It is undoubtedly true that the Audit Commission helps us to improve our service to tenants which is essentially what we do,' he said.

But housing associations had to balance their management role with the demands of building more homes, he added.

Housing Quality Network chief executive Alistair McIntosh said few housing associations excelled in both housing management and development.

'The skills in development, finance and large-scale voluntary transfer organisation ballots are very different from housing management skills,' he said. It is exceptional to have people who do both well.'

● See interview, pages 16 to 19

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*Inside Housing magazine, 30 September 2005*

Now even the chief inspector of housing at the Audit Commission is criticising Housing Associations for rushing to expand their empires - at the expense of tenants!

Sanctuary is a multi million pound national private company that wants to get its hand on our estate. It's no wonder - the land is worth a fortune.

There are lots of vague promises in the glossy propoganda they churn out but no definite guarantees you can rely on.

**Don't be conned  
VOTE NO  
to transfer!**

