



Housing Act 1957

1957 CHAPTER 56

PART III

CLEARANCE AND RE-DEVELOPMENT

Clearance Areas

42 Power to declare an area to be a clearance area

- (1) Where a local authority, upon consideration of an official representation or other information in their possession, are satisfied as respects any area in their district—
- (a) that the houses in that area are unfit for human habitation, or are by reason of their bad arrangement, or the narrowness or bad arrangement of the streets, dangerous or injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the area, and that the other buildings, if any, in the area are for a like reason dangerous or injurious to the health of the said inhabitants ; and
 - (b) that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in the area is the demolition of all the buildings in the area ;

the authority shall cause that area to be defined on a map in such manner as to exclude from the area any building which is not unfit for human habitation or dangerous or injurious to health and shall pass a resolution declaring the area so defined to be a clearance area, that is to say, an area to be cleared of all buildings in accordance with the subsequent provisions of this Part of this Act:

Provided that, before passing any such resolution, the authority shall satisfy themselves—

- (i) that, in so far as suitable accommodation available for the persons who will be displaced by the clearance of the area does not already exist, the authority can provide, or secure the provision of, such accommodation in advance of the displacements which will from time to time become necessary as the demolition of buildings in the area, or in different parts thereof, proceeds ; and
- (ii) that the resources of the authority are sufficient for the purpose of carrying the resolution into effect.

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- (2) A local authority shall forthwith transmit to the Minister a copy of any resolution passed by them under this section, together with a statement of the number of persons who on a day specified in the statement were occupying the buildings comprised in the clearance area.
- (3) A local authority who have passed a resolution declaring any area to be a clearance area shall, before taking any action under that resolution which will necessitate the displacement of any persons, undertake to carry out or to secure the carrying out of such re-housing operations, if any, within such period as the Minister may consider to be reasonably necessary.

43 Method of dealing with clearance area

- (1) So soon as may be after a local authority have declared any area to be a clearance area, they shall, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of this Part of this Act, proceed to secure the clearance of the area in one or other of the following ways, or partly in one of those ways and partly in the other of them, that is to say—
 - (a) by making one or more orders (in this Act referred to as " clearance orders ") for the demolition of the buildings in the area ; or
 - (b) by purchasing the land comprised in the area and them selves undertaking, or otherwise securing, the demolition of the buildings on that land.
- (2) Where the local authority determine to purchase any land comprised in the area declared by them to be a clearance area, they may purchase also any land which is surrounded by the clearance area and the acquisition of which is reasonably necessary for the purpose of securing a cleared area of convenient shape and dimensions, and any adjoining land the acquisition of which is reasonably necessary for the satisfactory development or use of the cleared area.
- (3) Where the local authority have determined to purchase under this Part of this Act land comprised in, or surrounded by or adjoining, a clearance area they may purchase that land by agreement, or they may be authorised to purchase that land compulsorily by a compulsory purchase order made and submitted to the Minister and confirmed by him in accordance with the provisions of Parts I and II of the Third Schedule to this Act.

The powers conferred by this subsection shall be exercisable notwithstanding that any of the buildings within the clearance area have been demolished since the area was declared to be a clearance area.

- (4) Subject to the provisions of this Part of this Act, an order authorising the compulsory purchase of land comprised in a clearance area shall be submitted to the Minister within six months, and an order authorising the compulsory purchase of land surrounded by or adjoining a clearance area shall be submitted to the Minister within twelve months, after the date of the resolution declaring the area to be a clearance area, or within such longer period as the Minister may, in the circumstances of the particular case, allow.
- (5) The provisions of the Fourth Schedule to this Act shall have effect with respect to the validity and date of operation of a compulsory purchase order made under this section.

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44 Clearance orders: general provisions

- (1) Where as respects any area declared by them to be a clearance area a local authority determine to order any buildings in the area to be demolished, they shall make and submit to the Minister, for confirmation by him, a clearance order ordering the demolition of each of those buildings.
- (2) The provisions of the Fifth Schedule to this Act shall have effect with respect to the making, submission and confirmation of a clearance order, and the provisions of the Fourth Schedule to this Act shall have effect with respect to the validity and date of operation of such an order.
- (3) When a clearance order has become operative, the owner or owners of any building to which the order applies shall demolish that building before the expiration of six weeks from the date on which the building is required by the order to be vacated or, if it is not vacated until after that date, before the expiration of six weeks from the date on which it is vacated or, in either case, before the expiration of such longer period as in the circumstances the local authority may deem reasonable ; and, if the building is not demolished before the expiration of that period, the local authority shall enter and demolish the building and sell the materials thereof.
- (4) The provisions of subsections (2) to (5) of section twenty-three of this Act shall apply in relation to any expenses incurred by the authority under the last foregoing subsection and to any surplus remaining in the hands of the authority as they apply in relation to any expenses or surplus in a case where a house is demolished in pursuance of a demolition order made under Part II of this Act, with the substitution of references to the building demolished under this section for references to the house demolished under the said section twenty-three.
- (5) When a clearance order has become operative, no land to which the order applies shall be used for building purposes, or otherwise developed, except subject to such restrictions and conditions, if any, as the local authority may think fit to impose:

Provided that an owner who is aggrieved by a restriction or condition so imposed on the user of his land, or by a subsequent refusal of the authority to cancel or modify any such restriction or condition, may at any time appeal to the Minister, who shall make such order in the matter as he thinks proper, and the Minister's decision shall be final.
- (6) A person who commences, or causes to be commenced, any work in contravention of a restriction or condition imposed under the last foregoing subsection shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding forty shillings, and to a further fine not exceeding ten pounds in respect of each day during which the work exists in such a form and state as to contravene the restriction or condition.
- (7) The provisions of section twenty-five of this Act relating to the cleansing of houses from vermin shall have effect in relation to a house to which a clearance order applies as they have effect in relation to a building to which a demolition order made under Part II of this Act applies, with the substitution, for the reference to the date on which the demolition order is made, of a reference to the date on which the clearance order is confirmed, and, for the reference to subsection (1) of section twenty-three of this Act, of a reference to subsection (3) of this section.
- (8) In the provisions of this Act relating to buildings included in an area to which a clearance order applies, references to a building shall include references to a hut, tent, caravan or other temporary or movable form of shelter which is used for human habitation and has been in the same enclosure for a period of two years next

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before action is taken under those provisions, and the reference to development in subsection (5) of this section includes a reference to the erection or placing on land of a hut, tent, caravan or other temporary or movable form of shelter.

45 Clearance orders: recovery of possession of buildings to be demolished

- (1) A clearance order shall fix by reference to the date on which it becomes operative the period, not being less than twenty-eight days from that date, within which the local authority require the buildings in the area to be vacated for the purposes of demolition, and for that purpose may fix different periods as respects different buildings.
- (2) Where a clearance order has become operative, the local authority shall serve on the occupier of any building, or any part of any building, to which the order relates a notice—
 - (a) stating the effect of the order, and
 - (b) specifying the date by which the order requires the building to be vacated, and
 - (c) requiring him to quit the building before the said date or before the expiration of twenty-eight days from the service of the notice, whichever may be the later.
- (3) If at any time after the date on which the notice requires the building to be vacated any person is in occupation of the building, or of any part thereof, the local authority or any owner of the building may make complaint to a magistrates' court and thereupon the court shall by its warrant in the form set out in the Schedule to the Small Tenements Recovery Act, 1838, or in a form to the like effect, order vacant possession of the building, or of the part thereof, to be given to the complainant within such period not being less than two weeks nor more than four weeks as the court may determine.
- (4) Any expenses incurred by a local authority under this section in obtaining possession of any building or of any part of a building may be recovered by them from the owner, or from any of the owners, of that building summarily as a civil debt.
- (5) Any person who, knowing that a clearance order has become operative and applies to a building, enters into occupation of that building, or of any part thereof, after the date by which the order requires that building to be vacated, or permits any other person to enter into such occupation after that date, shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds and to a further fine of five pounds for every day, or part of a day, on which the occupation continues after conviction.
- (6) Nothing in the Rent Acts shall be deemed to affect the provisions of this section relating to the obtaining possession of a building.

46 Clearance orders: temporary retention of houses let to local authorities

- (1) The following provisions of this section shall have effect, in the case of a house on land in a clearance area which does not belong to the local authority, where the authority are of opinion that the house is or can be rendered capable of providing accommodation of a standard which is adequate for the time being, and that the house ought not to be demolished for the time being but ought to be retained for temporary use for housing purposes.
- (2) Subject to the next following subsection, the local authority may include in any clearance order made by them and applying to the house a provision that the demolition of the house in pursuance of the order is to be postponed until the authority determine that the house is no longer required for use for housing purposes ; and if such a

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provision is included, the order shall not fix a period for the vacation of the house as required by subsection (1) of the last foregoing section.

- (3) A local authority shall not include in a clearance order such a provision as is mentioned in the last foregoing subsection unless they have acquired, or are satisfied that by the time the clearance order becomes operative they will have acquired, such rights under a tenancy of the house as will enable them to retain the house for use for housing purposes until they determine that it is no longer required for such use and to deal with it in all respects as if it were a house on land in a clearance area belonging to them.
- (4) In relation to a house to which a clearance order applies with such a provision as is mentioned in subsection (2) of this section—
 - (a) subsection (3) of section forty-four of this Act shall have effect with the substitution for the period therein referred to of such a period not less than six weeks as may, in a notice served by the local authority on the owner or owners of the house as soon as they determine that the house is no longer required for use for housing purposes, be specified as the period within which the authority require the house to be demolished ; and
 - (b) the last foregoing section shall not apply until the local authority determine that the house is no longer required for such use as aforesaid and shall then have effect with the substitution for references to the date by which the order requires the house to be vacated of references to the date of the authority's notice under the foregoing paragraph.
- (5) In respect of any houses retained by a local authority under this section for temporary use for housing purposes, the authority shall have the like powers as they have in respect of houses provided under Part V of this Act, and section six of this Act shall not apply to a contract for the letting by a local authority of any such house.

47 Treatment of land acquired by local authority

- (1) Subject to the provisions of the next following section, a local authority who have under this Part of this Act purchased any land comprised in, or surrounded by, or adjoining, a clearance area shall, so soon as may be, cause every building thereon to be vacated and shall deal with that land in one or other of the following ways, or partly in one of these ways and partly in the other of them, that is to say—
 - (a) they shall demolish every building thereon before the expiration of six weeks from the date on which it is vacated, or before the expiration of such longer period as in the circumstances they deem reasonable, and thereafter may sell or let the land subject to such restrictions and conditions, if any, as they think fit, or may, subject to the approval of the Minister, and subject to the like restrictions as are contained in section one hundred and sixty-three of the Local Government Act, 1933, with respect to the appropriation of land by local authorities under that section, appropriate the land for any purpose for which they are authorised to acquire land ; or
 - (b) they shall, so soon as may be, sell or let the land subject to a condition that the buildings thereon shall be demolished forthwith and subject to such restrictions and other conditions, if any, as they think fit:

Provided that, in lieu of selling the land, the authority may, where the owner of other land (being land which the local authority have power to acquire) is willing to take the land in exchange for that other land, exchange it for that other land, either with or without paying or receiving money for equality of exchange, and in relation to any

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such exchange the like provisions shall have effect as respects the land to be given in exchange by the local authority as have effect by virtue of the foregoing provisions of this section as respects land sold thereunder.

- (2) Land sold, exchanged or leased under this section shall be sold, exchanged or leased at the best price, for the best consideration or for the best rent that can reasonably be obtained having regard to any restriction or condition imposed.
- (3) For the purposes of this section " sale " includes sale in consideration of a chief rent, rentcharge or other similar periodical payment and " sell" has a corresponding meaning.

48 Temporary retention of unfit houses acquired by local authority

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part of this Act a local authority by whom an area has been declared to be a clearance area may postpone, for such period as may be determined by the authority, the demolition of any houses on land purchased by or belonging to the authority within that area, being houses which in the opinion of the authority are or can be rendered capable of providing accommodation of a standard which is adequate for the time being, and may carry out such works as may from time to time be required for rendering or keeping such houses capable of providing such accommodation as aforesaid pending their demolition.
- (2) Where the demolition of any houses in a clearance area is postponed under the foregoing subsection, the local authority may also postpone the taking of any proceedings under section forty-three of this Act in respect of any buildings (other than houses) within that area; and the provisions of subsection (4) of that section as to the time within which compulsory purchase orders may be submitted shall not apply to the purchase of any land in the area, other than houses, or to the purchase of any land surrounded by or adjoining the area.
- (3) Where a local authority are satisfied, in the case of a house on land purchased by or belonging to them within a clearance area, not being a house retained by them for temporary use for housing purposes, that—
 - (a) it is required for the support of a house which is so retained, or
 - (b) there is some other special reason why it should not be demolished for the time being, and the reason is connected with the exercise of the authority's powers under subsection (1) of this section in relation to the clearance area,
 then, notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Part of this Act the authority may retain the house for the time being and shall not be required to demolish it so long as, in the case mentioned in paragraph (a) of this subsection, it is required for the purpose therein referred to, or, in any other case, the said powers are being exercised by the authority in relation to that area.
- (4) In respect of any houses retained by a local authority under this section for temporary use for housing purposes the local authority shall have the like powers as they have in respect of houses provided under Part V of this Act and section six of this Act shall not apply to a contract for the letting by a local authority of any such houses.

49 Provisions with respect to property originally belonging to a local authority

A local authority may include in a clearance area any land belonging to them which they might have included in such an area if it had not belonged to them, and where any land of the authority is included in a clearance area or, being land surrounded

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by or adjoining a clearance area, might have been purchased by the authority under subsection (2) of section forty-three of this Act had it not previously been acquired by them, the provisions of this Act shall apply in relation to that land as if it had been purchased by the authority as being land comprised in the clearance area or, as the case may be, as being land surrounded by or adjoining the clearance area:

Provided that the foregoing provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of any land belonging to the local authority being dwellings which were acquired by them on or after the first day of July, nineteen hundred and twenty-five, in such circumstances that the provisions of paragraph 1 of the Ninth Schedule to this Act (or of any enactment reproduced in that paragraph) took effect in relation thereto.

50 Arrangements where acquisition of land in a clearance area found to be unnecessary

Where a local authority have submitted to the Minister an order for the compulsory purchase of land in a clearance area, and the Minister, on an application for an authorisation under this section being made to him by the owner or owners of the land and the authority, is satisfied that the owner or owners of the land, with the concurrence of any mortgagee thereof, agree to the demolition of the buildings thereon and that the authority can secure the proper clearance of the area without acquiring the land, the Minister may—

- (a) in a case where the order has not been confirmed, authorise the authority to submit, forthwith and without any previous publication or service, a clearance order with respect to the buildings, and upon their so doing may modify the compulsory purchase order by excluding the land therefrom and confirm the clearance order without causing an inquiry or hearing to be held ; or
- (b) in a case where the compulsory purchase order has been confirmed but the land has not become vested in the authority, authorise them to discontinue proceedings for the purchase of the land on their being satisfied that such covenants have been or will be entered into by all necessary parties as may be requisite for securing that the buildings shall be demolished in like manner, and the land become subject to the like restrictions and conditions, as if the authority had dealt with the land in accordance with the provisions of section forty-seven of this Act.

51 Power of local authority to purchase cleared land which owners have failed to re-develop

- (1) Where land has been cleared of buildings in accordance with a clearance order, the local authority may, at any time after the expiration of eighteen months from the date on which the order became operative, by resolution determine to purchase any part of that land which at the date of the passing of their resolution has not been, or is not in process of being, used for building purposes or otherwise developed by the owner thereof in accordance with plans approved by the authority and any restrictions or conditions imposed under subsection (5) of section forty-four of this Act.
- (2) Where a local authority have determined to purchase land under this section, they may purchase that land by agreement or they may be authorised to purchase that land compulsorily by a compulsory purchase order made and submitted to the Minister and confirmed by him in accordance with the provisions of Parts I and II of the Third Schedule to this Act.

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- (3) An order authorising the compulsory purchase of land for the purposes of this section shall be submitted to the Minister within three months after the date of the passing of the resolution to purchase.
- (4) The provisions of the Fourth Schedule to this Act shall have effect with respect to the validity and date of operation of a compulsory purchase order made under this section.
- (5) A local authority shall deal with any land purchased by them under this section by sale, letting, or appropriation in accordance with the provisions of section forty-seven of this Act.

52 Local authority for clearance areas in London

Within a metropolitan borough both the London County Council and the council of the borough shall be local authorities for the purposes of the provisions of this Part of this Act relating to clearance areas:

Provided that where an official representation relating to not more than ten houses is made to the London County Council, the London County Council shall, unless they consider that the area should be dealt with by them as a clearance area, forward the representation to the borough council concerned.