

Tenants force housing cuts

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SLASHING cuts have been made in a housing development in Belfast's Markets area because some tenants will not allow the area to be cleared.

Over a third of the planned homes have been temporarily shelved because of these tenants' attitudes, the Housing Executive said today.

"A number of people have refused to move out of these houses to allow the redevelopment to take place," a spokesman added.

The two phases of the project in the Upper and Lower Markets were due to start last June but the

workmen will not move in until the middle of this month.

It was originally planned to build 26 new homes in the Upper Markets but this has now been altered to 21.

It is even worse in the Lower Markets where 57 homes were planned. These have been cut to 30.

The spokesman added: "Many people agreed to move to allow work to begin. They went into mobile homes and now find they have had to endure an extra eight months stay there because of the attitude of other people in the area."

But a spokesman for the

local tenants' association, Mr. Paddy Rafferty, said the Executive's attitude to residents was wrong.

"I believe their approach is wrong. The local people feel they are being shunted around by a big faceless organisation.

"The people don't really know what is going on and although meetings with the executive are held they feel their points of view are not acted on.

"Also it is hard for people to move out of homes they have spent most of their life in. They all have special needs and feel these are not considered by the planners."

Several elderly people are among those who the Executive say have delayed the project and led to the cuts.

One squatter, who also refuses to move, is also blamed.

The Executive spokesman said they all had been offered alternative accommodation until the new homes have been built but have declined.

"They are inflicting unnecessary hardship on the other tenants who have moved," he added. "Their attitude does nothing to help create better conditions for all."



Mr. Paddy Rafferty, chairman of the Markets Tenants' Association.