

# **Two for One and One for All?**

**Exploring the potential for integrating the sustainable development  
and social exclusion policy agendas in the UK**

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# 1. Introduction

In January 1999, the University of Westminster allocated funding from its Research Seed Fund to the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University to undertake an exploratory research exercise into the policy interfaces between the Government's newly announced social exclusion programme and its ongoing agenda for sustainable development. The research is located in the wider context of the Modernising Local Government Agenda and the Government's commitment to 'joined-up' policy thinking and action. The primary aim of the research has been to examine the extent to which the rhetoric of policy integration is incorporated at both the conceptual and practical stages of local delivery, in the case of these two potentially complementary policy agendas.

The study was carried out in two phases, phase one, an exploration of potential policy relationships, complementarities and conflicts between social exclusion and sustainable development, through the available literature and policy documentation. The primary aim in phase one was to better understand how national policy is embedded in local delivery programmes, and to investigate what potential (if any) exists for more collaborative working between the two policy areas, at the local level. In order to achieve this aim, two potentially synergetic policy delivery mechanisms were identified as appropriate to represent cross-cutting/over-arching national policy agendas. The first of these is the Government's strategy for sustainable development (DETR, 1999) and the second its commitment to tackling the problems of social exclusion (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). At the policy delivery stage, these strategies were practically interpreted as the local authorities' own programmes for sustainable development co-ordinated under the umbrella of Local Agenda 21 (LA 21), (LGMB, 1993), and the New Deal for Communities (NDC) area-based 'pathfinder' programmes, aimed at encouraging social inclusion. This first phase of the study set the context in which the phase two evidenced-based research could be carried out.

Phase two represented the field-work element of the research, and involved pilot case study exercises with two of the seventeen local authorities that had been selected by the Government to develop NDC 'pathfinders' within their administrative areas. The two case study authorities were selected on the basis of their willingness to work with the University and the inclusion of, in one case, and absence of, in the other, specific sustainability criteria within their outline NDC bids. The aim of these pilot case study exercises was two-fold, firstly to gain a more in depth understanding of the content and scope of the NDC proposals and their potential to encourage social inclusion in the context of the local authorities'

sustainable development strategy. Secondly, it was hoped that the case studies would allow a better understanding of the practical processes necessary for ‘joined-up’ delivery of such programmes and identify any potential barriers to a more holistic and integrated delivery approach at the local level.

The wider policy context for the research is set out in Chapter 2 of this report. Section 2.1 describes the main reported aims of the *cross-cutting policy agenda*. These reports have in turn, led to discussions within the wider policy documentation on how these issues might be addressed within the policy framework. Section 2.2 examines these discussions as they are presented in the growing body of literature that calls for a more holistic or *joined-up* government approach within central and local policy formulation and delivery. In Section 2.3, this shift in policy thinking is set against the backdrop of local Government reform under the *modernising local government* agenda.

Chapter 3 and 4 establish the current policy thinking and action in relation to the two policy areas of sustainable development and social exclusion. Chapter 3 identifies the origins of and key definitions and main themes included in the policy discourses surrounding sustainable development and examined how these have been delivered via the LA21 action programme in the UK. Chapter 4 describes the origins and key concepts of the social exclusion agenda and the role of the Social Exclusion Unit in the context of the NDC local delivery programme.

Having established some basic complementarities between the core principles of sustainable development and the social exclusion agenda in the previous two chapters, Chapter 5 looks for further evidence of the potential for joined-up thinking and action at the local level. From this position, it examines the latest thinking on the practical delivery of NDC programmes resulting from the work of the SEU’s Policy Action Team.

Chapter 6 describes the review of the outline bids that were submitted to the DETR from the first round ‘pathfinder’ areas. Its aim is twofold, to offer an overview the NDC Partnerships and to describe the rationale for the selection of the two pilot case study areas.

Chapter 7 presents the main findings of the case study research and Chapter 8 draws conclusions and offers recommendations for future consideration.

## 2. The Research Context

This research is set against a policy background in which there is a growing recognition that the traditional departmental structure of Government, both centrally and locally, is unsuited to address some of the more complex policy issues as they arise in a contemporary society such as Britain. These are often referred to as *cross-cutting issues* because their successful resolution will require integrated cross-departmental working at both the local and central levels of Government. A number of Government commissioned reports have made initial explorations of the most important cross-cutting issues currently facing Britain today. These are summarised in the following section.

### 2.1 Cross-cutting issues

In January 1999, the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) commissioned two studies to look at the main cross-cutting issues affecting policy. The first, conducted by the School of Public Policy at the University of Birmingham, examined the way in which these issues are handled in the public policy system (DETR, 1999a). The second study, undertaken by the University of the West of England and the Office for Public Management, looked at those issues specifically affecting local government (DETR, 1999b). Both studies focused on the four issues of sustainable development, community safety, disaffected young people and social exclusion, with the local government study also including regeneration, because of their importance and relevance in the current policy agenda and their inherent need to draw on different administrative networks in their delivery. The studies examined the successes and failures of the policy process to deliver each of these individual policy agendas in a holistic or integrated manner. These investigations were carried out through a review of background documents and policy papers and from the evidence of interviews with those people concerned with the development and delivery of policy and case study evidence.

The reports conclude that, while there is significant evidence of cross-departmental working in tackling these issues particularly at the local level, a number of conceptual and organisational barriers still exist. These include:

- Inter-departmental rivalry in central government, resulting in mixed messages reaching local areas and lack of clarity over the desired outcomes;

- Differences in the values and goals of different Departments e.g. sustainable development is interpreted by the Treasury as environmental economics and by the Department of Trade and Industry as the environmental performance of business;
- Failure to share information between Departments and thereby to subject research to integrated conceptual and empirical analysis and to distil this into generally understood or accepted definitions across Departments;
- Weak mechanisms for allowing localities to engage with the centre about the nature of problems or the design of solutions;
- Lack of commitment to an integrated delivery approach because of competition between Departments for scarce resources;
- Despite enthusiasm for the partnership approach, particularly at the local level, the relative infancy of working in this way means that people are still feeling their way and progress can be slow;
- Differences in culture and assumptions between partners can make it difficult to understand each other;
- Some local authorities find it difficult to accept others as equal partners and try to mould them into their way of working;
- Feelings that much of the good work that is undertaken by a Department is ignored by others or lost in the explosion of policy information and best practice guidance that has emerged in recent years.

This body of research offers some useful indicators of the problems that are likely to arise in exploring the potential for joint delivery of the sustainable development and social exclusion policy agendas. However, both reports explore the evidence for cross-departmental working on the basis of each individual policy agenda only, i.e. for social exclusion **or** sustainability. In this way, complementarities **between** the policy content cross-cutting agendas such as sustainable development and social exclusion have been largely overlooked in policy formulation. It could be argued that this gap exists because, although there are now special Units within central Government to ‘champion’ cross-cutting issues e.g. the Social Exclusion Unit, the Sustainable Development Unit, the Regeneration Unit, these still work largely in isolation from each other in the conceptualisation and development of policies. In this way, each Unit draws attention to the need for cross-departmental working in relation to its assigned cross-cutting issue, rather than taking *a whole systems approach* to the need of delivery agents and recipients of policy for a coherent, efficient and integrated delivery framework across all areas of policy. At the local level this whole systems approach is often referred to as a need for *joined-up government*.

## 2.2 Joined-up government

It is difficult to identify a precise date or reference from which it could be said that the notion of *joined-up government* emerges. A number of local authorities with whom we have regular contact, claim that they have for some time been making pleas to central government to co-ordinate the vast quantity and sometimes conflicting White Papers, policy guidance and best practice documentation they receive from across the different government departments. From the perspective of more enlightened local authorities, public policy at the local level cannot afford the inefficiencies of compartmentalised thinking and, in an environment of scarce fiscal resources, must strive to find ways to avoid wasteful overlaps and repetition of past mistakes. These authorities suggest that the present policy rhetoric of joined-up government is merely a top down emulation of an evolving trend within local government in response to local visioning exercises, planning for real days and other community-led activities.

Conversely, the No. 10 Policy Unit attributes the integrated policy approach to the policy-making activities of the central Government and can indeed point to a number of over-arching policy agendas, to confirm this claim. The Modernising Local Government Agenda, the remit of the Social Exclusion Unit (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998) and the new Sustainability Strategy (DETR, 1999c) can all be identified as prime examples of the joined-up government approach.

In other circles, the collaborative efforts of the Department of Transport and the Department of Environment in relation to transport, under the previous administration, (DoE/DoT, 1994) are often used to argue that joined-up policy action predates the present Government. This joined policy working was brought about in recognition that transport and land use are integrally linked and that it is therefore highly desirable to co-ordinate the conceptual thinking and planning activities of the two Departments responsible for their administration.

From wherever it originates, the call for more 'joined-up' policy thinking and action now permeates the documentation and activities of most Departments at both the central and local level of Government (see for example Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000 and the cross-cutting issues documentation *ibid.*). To further promote this approach, in July 1998, the Prime Minister announced to the House of Commons his intention to set up a Centre for Management and Policy Studies. One of the key responsibilities of the Centre is to develop best practice in inter-departmental policy making and delivery and to encourage networks of people in the policy community who can communicate and act across the various Government Departments. If the call is to be heeded, it will fundamentally adjust the way in which policy

is formulated, interpreted, delivered and evaluated and will also demand an entirely different approach to programme funding.

The 'joined-up' approach essentially refers to a cross-departmental resolution of policy issues, whereby problems are identified or 'visioned', and their causes identified. At this stage, the appropriate public departments, service sector and voluntary agencies are brought together to develop partnerships to co-ordinate the efforts of local delivery agents in tackling the root causes of problems identified at the neighbourhood level. It is recommended that this should be done in an integrated manner to ensure that activities maximise benefit, avoid duplication and ensure the eradication of counter-productive policy outcomes. It is the local specific nature of the joined-up government debate that places it most usefully within the *modernising local government agenda*.

### **2.3 The Modernising Local Government Agenda**

The central focus of the *Modern Local Government White Paper* is the need for participative communities that are responsive in promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the people who live in them (DETR, 1998). In addition, local councils will have a duty to ensure best value in the delivery of local services and must place a far greater emphasis on performance indicators and efficiency measures in their policy agendas.

The White Paper identifies three key issues that are of particular relevance to the need for a joined-up policy approach, as follows:

#### **2.3.1 Best Value**

In order to improve the **effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery** by local authorities, the Government has decided to replace Compulsory Competitive Tendering, where cost was the only consideration in the procurement of local services with a duty of *best value*. The White Paper advises that best value should take into account both the cost **and** quality of the services it secures and should help councils address such cross-cutting issues as social exclusion and sustainable development that are beyond the consideration of individual service providers. In this ways, councils are encouraged to evaluate service tenders on the basis of their likely long-term effects on the well-being of the community rather, rather than make on solely short-term economic comparisons. It is noted that,

*“One of the most significant causes of failure to achieve a best value service is the lack of consideration of how resources are used in relation to common objectives”*

(DETR, 1998a. p.64)

Best value also recognises the need to consult with local communities to give them a say about the delivery of services in their area, to understand the ‘cross cutting’ nature of delivery problems and to promote ‘joined-up’ solutions. From this perspective, one of the key principles of best value can also be identified at the core of the Government’s legislative programme, espousing the fundamental principle of community participation at the centre of both the sustainable development and social exclusion agenda, as will be seen in Section 4.1. Best value also offers significant potential for local authority spending decisions to be based not only on the cost-effectiveness of tenders but also on the implications of their delivery outcomes on equity and sustainability.

### ***2.3.2 The duty of well-being***

Under the modernising agenda, the Local Government Bill 2000 also places a duty on local councils to strike a balance in the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. The Government recommends that in making decisions, councils will need to weigh up policy outcomes in respect of three main aspects of well-being, social, economic and environmental, and if necessary strike a balance between the interests of each to ensure that overall well-being is achieved. The stated intention of this new legislation is to ensure that local councils put sustainable development and social progress at the heart of all their decision-making activities and these core principles to provide a framework within which they perform their existing functions.

In practical terms the duty of well-being is to be delivered through development of a Community Plan, which should identify, in consultation with all sections of the local community, a council’s main delivery programme. The Government recommends that Community Plans should compliment the Local Agenda 21 strategy for sustainable development and where this has not yet been developed can be done so in conjunction with community planning exercises.

### ***2.3.3 Reviving local democracy and community planning***

The call for community-led planning is largely in response to the highly publicised alienation of local people in the political process, characterised by low turnout for local elections, the

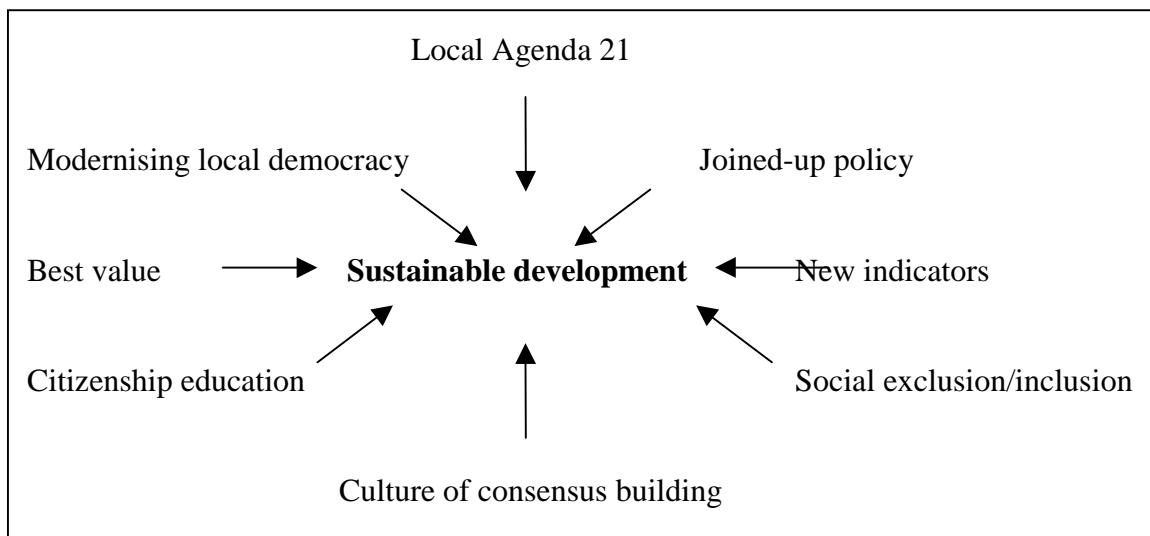
Local Government Bill also provides legislation for new political structures to help local authorities ‘engage with their local communities more effectively’. This legislation will include help for councils to develop their arrangements for participation and consultation through the process of Community Planning. As it will be seen in the following chapter, community participation and local capacity building are also inherent features of the sustainable development and social exclusion agendas.

#### 2.4 *Implications of the new policy agenda*

From this brief overview of the new policy agenda, it is clear that an emphasis on greater policy cohesion across the various government departments is a central theme. By implication, delivery of such an agenda demands that the policies produced by individual departments should be evaluated in order to identify their potential synergies and conflicts. Such an evaluation would need to include consideration of the theoretical basis of each policy agenda, its rhetoric and underlying values and the assumptions about likely outcomes arising from policy implementation

The central aim of this research was to undertake such an evaluation on two areas of policy already identified by the above literature as cross-cutting issues and suited to an integrated delivery approach; namely sustainable development and social exclusion. These separate policy agendas were deemed particularly appropriate for this kind of analysis because the stated aims and objectives of each appear to offer significant potential for joint delivery at the local level.

**Figure 1 – Bringing agendas together (Christie, 1999)**



For example, Christie (1999) has already made the argument that bringing together the panoply of current Government initiatives at the local level highlights a growing policy affinity with a sustainable development agenda (see Figure 1).

Chapters 3 and 4 of this report set out the main content of the sustainable development and social exclusion agendas respectively, as these are identified within the policy documentation, while Chapter 5, sets out the potential for their joint policy development and programme delivery at the level of local government.

### 3. The Sustainable Development Agenda

This chapter identifies the origins of and key definitions and main themes included in the policy discourses surrounding sustainable development and examines how these have been delivered via the LA21 action programme in the UK.

#### 3.1 Background to policies for sustainable development

A logical starting point for an exploration of the main policy aims and objectives of the sustainable development agenda is probably the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment. This brought the industrialised and developing world together for the first time to discuss the rights of people to a healthy and productive environment. A number of meetings and discussions resulted from the Conference in the subsequent ten-year period. Despite this, when the Conference met a second time in 1982 the Brundtland Commission that had been set up to report on progress and achievements since Stockholm, expressed concerns that these goals were not being met. Most notably the Commission confirmed that if the use of natural resources, pollution and poverty continued at their present rate then deterioration in future quality of life could be expected across the globe. In order to halt this decline, the Commission set out the principles of “sustainable development” and recommended that these should be pursued by all member states (WCED, 1987). The following and by now well used definition of sustainable development was offered by the report:

*“development which meets the needs of the present population, in globally equitable ways, without compromising the environment or diminishing the ability for future generations to meet their own needs”*

(WCED, 1987)

Since the publication of the Report, numerous further definitions of sustainability have been put forward. These range from *deep green* policy statements advancing the need to entirely rethink the extent to which human activity should be allowed to impinge upon the natural environment, through to use of the word simply as a catch-phrase meaning little in terms of policy adjustment and implying a *business as usual* approach. For this reason it is difficult to ascertain precisely what would constitute sustainable policy or indeed a sustainable “lifestyle”.

In its consultation paper issued in February 1998 the Government identified sustainable development as concerned with achieving economic growth in the form of higher living standards, while protecting and enhancing the environment and the following four broad objectives were identified:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment;
- prudent use of natural resources; and
- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment

There are a number of sustainability theorists who would argue with this policy content, and in particular the fourth policy objective of high economic growth. However, objectives one to three are broadly in consensus with most sustainable development agenda in their focus on social progress, environmental protection and reduced resource use. It would appear from the policy rhetoric therefore, that Christie's position can be supported, in that the sustainable development agenda indeed adopts a notion of the need to integrate economic, environmental and social considerations in the decision-making process. Concepts of sustainable development also include an emphasis on open-government and local participation in the decision-making process and a focus on the local level of government in order to provoke meaningful attitudinal and behavioural change. More importantly for this study, it is possible to identify from the outset that a notion of social equity, and therefore, by proxy, promotion of policies and programmes that encourage social inclusion, are inherent to the core principles of sustainable development.

In practice, policies to promote sustainable development have been delivered by local councils through the Local Agenda 21 Action Programme, following the recommendations of the Agenda 21 blueprint, initiated by United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

### **3.2 Progress on LA21 at the local level**

Essentially, Agenda 21 is an action plan to implement the main principles and agreements of the Rio Summit. The document is intended to act as guidance for nation states who wish to develop policies and programmes that aim to promote more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development processes. It is not a legally binding agreement however, and governments who sign up are not required to follow each of its

recommendations but rather adopt those that appear most pertinent to their own particular situation.

Four key themes emerge from the blueprint document these are:

- i) environmental protection/reversal of environmental degradation;
- ii) eradication of poverty;
- iii) global partnerships, and
- iv) local participation of all sectors and groups in society.

In addition, there are a number of underlying themes or guiding principles, which include:

- use of a 'bottom-up' approach and the involvement of local communities and NGOs in the policy process;
- open governance and access to information;
- the need for 'cross-cutting' institutions that can act across all areas of policy and;
- the need for complementarity between regulatory approaches and market mechanisms for addressing development and environmental needs

(Grubb et al, 1993).

The document states that while central governments have a major role to play in the promotion of sustainable development, it is local government that is best placed to develop and deliver this policy agenda. Local authorities have been asked to respond with their own Local Agenda 21 Action Programmes.

Since 1995, the UK government has funded the Local Government Management Board (LGMB) to monitor local authorities' progress with the delivery of LA21 in the UK. The research identifies the general extent to which sustainability forms part of the policy agenda within local authorities and also allows some general examination of the degree to which social equity has been incorporated as a policy issue within the delivery aims of the LA21 programme at the local level. To date surveys have been undertaken in 1995 (to review progress in the period 1994/5), 1997 (to review the 1995/6 period) and 1998 (for the period 1996/7). The results of the 1998 survey are not yet available but comparative analysis of the 1995 and 1997 surveys helps to demonstrate some general trends of local authority progress.

In the instance of each survey a database of environmental co-ordinators was used to select the survey group who were asked to respond on behalf of their local authority. Questionnaires were sent to these representatives for all the local authorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (542 in total for 1995, 476 for 1997 and 353 for 1998). In 1995 and 1997 just over half of the local authorities responded (57% and 58% respectively) and there was a 40% response rate in 1998 survey. Respondents were asked whether the local authority is committed to LA21. In the 1995 survey, 71.5% of responding local authorities register themselves as committed, this had risen to 90.6% in 1996. In the 1997 survey, an additional question was asked about the level of the support that the local authority gave to LA21 and found 38.5% of responding authorities strongly committed to the process, while 49.1% offered their more tentative support (Tuxworth, 1997). These figures were confirmed by the Government who stated in February of this year that a third of all local authorities had not yet started on the development of an LA21 strategy (DETR, 1999a).

### **3.3. The eradication of poverty objective**

One of the problems associated with local authorities' slow take-up of the LA21 process has been its non-statutory nature. In July 1997 however, the Prime Minister announced that he wanted all local authorities to adopt LA21 strategies by the year 2000 (UN General Assembly Special Session on the Environment 23/7/97). Even without this legislation however, the case study evidence of this research demonstrated that some local authorities have taken-up LA21 with enthusiasm and have successfully integrated many of the environmental principles of the sustainable development agenda into their strategic policy objectives and delivery programmes.

Nevertheless, as the LGMB survey demonstrated, for many this activity is largely seen as an extension of the existing **environmental policy** work of local councils and in the main, unlikely to include activities relating to the non-environmental aspects of the original Agenda 21 blueprint. One particular area of growing concern among policy experts, is the tendency for the 'eradication of poverty' objective of the Agenda 21 programme to be avoided (or ignored as an issue for 'developing countries' only) within local authorities sustainable development strategies. However, it is generally recognised by policy makers that if sustainable development is to be taken up as a central policy agenda it needs to be seen as more than just a middle-class cause for the worthy (Church et al, 1998). Furthermore, as former Environment Minister Chris Pattern pointed out in 1987,

*“Poverty is one of the most environmentally damaging substances in the world and this does not only refer to those people in the developing nations of the world”.*

The limited research evidence which exists (see Burningham & Thrush, 2000) identifies that those in greatest poverty in the UK are also most likely to suffer the worst effects of environmental damage. The LGMB advise local authorities that poverty is closely related to sustainability in four main ways, as follows:

- poor people are more likely to live in areas where they are exposed to environmental problems and least able to solve them
- poverty is often the cause of unsustainable lifestyles
- the effect of policy instruments to protect the environment may have an unequal adverse effect on those in poverty
- there is a moral inconsistency in ensuring the environmental equity interests of future generations in the absence of equity in the present

In recognition of these links, in their guidance on why and how to prepare an LA21 strategy, the DETR now stress the environmental, economic **and social** aspects of sustainability and recommend that LA 21 programmes should, in addition to protecting the environment, aim to:

- Protect human health and amenity through safe, clean and pleasant environments
- Maximise everyone’s access to the skills and knowledge needed to play a full part in society
- Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision-making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions
- Make opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation readily available to all
- Aim to provide fulfilling occupation for local people, particularly disadvantaged and excluded groups, with their economic strategies
- Improve housing conditions
- Aim to increase the access of local people, especially the less advantaged, to amenities and services with less need to travel

It is this re-emphasis of the social equity aspects of the sustainable development agenda that strongly suggest the potential for joint delivery of LA 21 programmes and those aimed at

addressing social exclusion at the local level. These social exclusion agenda is now set out in the following section.

## **4. The Social Exclusion Agenda**

### **4.1 The concept of social exclusion**

The term 'social exclusion' was initially derived from the 1980 French socialist policy agenda. This recognised that failure to secure the 'insertion' of certain groups on the periphery of French society into the mainstream political and economic agenda would lead to social fracture and ultimately undermine France's economic competitiveness and national sovereignty (Manipour, Cars & Allen, 1998). A key concept of social exclusion is its 'relationally', in that it is conceptualised as a phenomenon arising from a set of inter-relational processes, originating from fundamental structural changes within society. This 'restructuring' results in systematically induced changes to the social order and the creation of new social boundaries. Certain groups are prevented from forming the new kinds of social relationships that have become essential to realising full participation in the new social structure.

Social exclusion therefore relates specifically to the values, processes and actions of agencies, organisations and institutions within a society, which have the effect of systematically excluding certain individuals, groups or communities from the benefits of their policy decisions and practices. The implication is therefore that the responsibility for securing greater inclusion and social cohesion primarily rests with these agencies, organisations and institutions.

The focus of the social exclusion agenda is both practical and moral. From a practical point of view, governments must identify ways in which they can successfully intervene to ensure greater participation by and inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups within society. Morally, there is a decision to be made over the type of behaviour and values that should be valorised within that society and the extent to which individual, groups and communities should be protected against certain prevalent negative values which could disadvantage them, such as racism, sexism, homophobia.

In 1993, the Commission of the European Communities published an action programme to tackle the problems of social exclusion across the European Communities. Within the programme there is a recognition that social exclusion is manifests in different ways between countries, in different cities and within cities and that in some instances social exclusion and physical segregation are synonymous whereas in others a more fine-grained pattern of differentiation between conditions in geographical areas exists. The programmes instigated by

the different EC nation states to tackle social exclusion have therefore been varied but the main policy focus has tended to concentrate on the same broad areas of policy delivery namely, employment, education, housing, health and other public services.

In August 1997, the UK government announced its intention to set up a unit to tackle the multiple problems that it could identify as arising from social exclusion in this country. The government describes social exclusion as what happens to individuals or areas suffering from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing conditions, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998).

#### **4.2 The role of the Social Exclusion Unit**

The main stated aims of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) are to:

- improve understanding of the key characteristics of social exclusion and the impact of government policies on it;
- promote solutions to the problems associated with social exclusion by encouraging co-operation across departments, disseminating best practice and making recommendations for changes in policies, machinery or delivery mechanisms, where necessary.

One of the first issues the Unit was instructed to report on was that of tackling social exclusion on Britain's *worst estates*. This was in recognition that many of the problems experienced by traditionally excluded groups and individuals, such as those encountered by those on low incomes, the elderly, ethnic minorities and lone parents, are exacerbated by gaps in the policy and service delivery system at the local level. The focus of the initial investigation was to look at ways to tackle the problems of worklessness, poor health, high rates of crime, low educational standards and a poor physical environment on these estates. The Unit announced that these policy objectives would be further developed through a programme of local delivery within seventeen 'pathfinder' areas. The programme is referred to as the *New Deal for Communities* (NDCs) and is co-ordinated within the DETR by the NDC Unit.

#### **4.3 New Deal for Communities**

Using the 1998 Index of Local Deprivation (London Research Centre, 1998), the DETR identified those local authorities in which the concentration, level and extent of deprivation

were greatest. These authorities were then invited to identify particular neighbourhoods in their boundaries where deprivation was particularly prevalent but a local capacity for change was also present. These neighbourhoods were then given six months to develop outline bids, in partnership with the local community and other local agencies active in the area, scoping a concentrated, ten-year programme of policy intervention to tackle social exclusion in these areas. From these outline bids, seventeen “pathfinder” or pilot neighbourhoods were selected and £800m set-aside for their immediate development over the next three years.

In their guidance to the NDC Partnerships (DETR, 1999), the DETR advise that each area programme should prioritise the delivery of the four core outcomes as identified by the SEU, namely:

- tackling worklessness
- improving health
- tackling crime
- raising educational standards

In addition programmes could also chose to target where appropriate, other outcomes with a primary focus relating to any of the following areas of policy delivery:

- a better physical environment
- better neighbourhood management
- better local services
- better facilities for access to arts, sports, and leisure
- building the capacity of the local community
- tackling racial disadvantage
- encouraging enterprise

Sustainable development is not a core stated aim of the NDC programme. However, Appendix D of the guidance does recommend that delivery programmes must take account of the need to ensure that the main principles of sustainable development are followed. It is important to note at this stage that many of the NDC pathfinder areas are identified as suffering from a poor physical environment. This would suggest that the potential for environmental gain is significant. Moreover, regeneration strategies tend by their very nature to suggest significant increase in local economic activity and there is evidence to suggest that this may have the potential to conflict with the environmental protection aspects of sustainable development. If therefore, NDC programmes are to be successfully delivered

within the remit of the Government's own wider *joined-up* policy agenda, it is important to look at ways in which revitalisation of the local area, the promotion of social inclusion and sustainable development can be brought together through the delivery process. It is also clear that local communities themselves could derive considerable additional benefits and/or *best value* by addressing the potential for synergies and/or conflicts between the sustainable development and social exclusion agendas, in the context of NDC delivery programmes.

The following chapter explores the further evidence for such synergies in the LA21 and NDC policy documentation and from the practical experiences of environmental and anti-poverty activists working with communities at the local level. The chapter also evaluates potential areas of conflicts between policies and programmes aimed at joint delivery in this way.

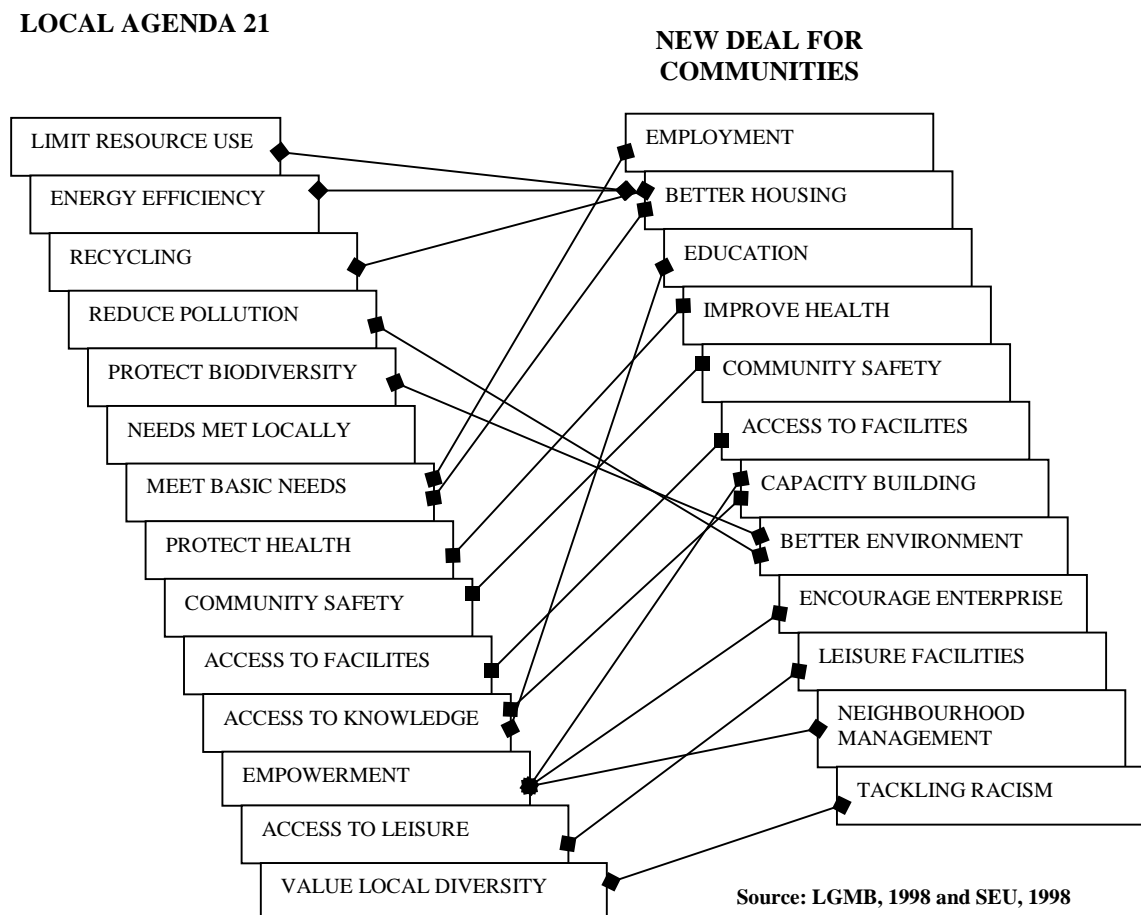
## 5. Exploring the potential for policy synergies and conflicts

Having established some basic complementarities between the core principles of sustainable development and the social exclusion agenda, this chapter looks for further evidence of the potential for joined-up thinking and action at the local level, via within the LA21 and NDC policy agendas.

### 5.1 Synergies in policy content

The Local Government Management Board has for some years been involved in promoting best practice in the development and delivery of LA 21. In recent guidance on the subject, it has identified fourteen key themes that should be included in local programme delivery. Figure 2 below identifies these alongside the key aims and objectives for the NDC 'pathfinder' areas and draws out the main synergies in the policy content of the two agenda areas.

**Figure 2: Core synergies in policy content of LA21 and NDC**



It can be seen from the diagram that in some instances the policy aims of the two strategies are identical. In this respect it is noted that the aims to improve health, community safety and access to facilities are common to both programmes. In other instances the policy aim of one agenda may fulfil the objectives of the other, for example the aim of the sustainable development agenda to “value local diversity” could be one way to “tackle racism”, an aim of the social exclusion agenda. Similarly, encouraging local communities to develop their own enterprise initiatives or be responsible for their own neighbourhood management, as detailed in the aims of the social exclusion agenda would be likely to result in the empowerment of that community, an aim of the sustainable development agenda.

Some of the links in the diagram may appear to represent a less obvious connection. This is where the research has identified the potential for aims of both agendas to be realised through a single set of practical measures. For example, the sustainable development agenda has the aim to improve energy efficiency, this could be practically achieved through the provision of better housing for low income groups through the NDC programme. This would have a multi-benefit or value-added effect in that firstly, poor condition housing is usually concentrated in low-income areas and tends to be the least energy-efficient and so environmental gains are likely to be greater by concentrating physical improvements on houses in these areas. Secondly, those experiencing the worst effects of fuel poverty such as the elderly, lone parents and low-income groups who stand to gain the most from more energy-efficient housing are concentrated in these areas. There would also be considerable additional related health benefits arising from such an initiative. These links in the practical delivery of the two agendas are more fully explained in the Section 5.3.

Despite similarities in the aims the two agendas, there are also tensions and conflicts that have the potential for one agenda to undermine or minimise positive policy outcomes of the other. For example, it is possible the LA21 imperative to protect biodiversity could come into potential conflict with the NDC programme where limited areas of green space are threatened by land use development. Similarly, the core feature of employment creation in the NDC programme could result in a willingness to attract employment activities into the area that are, for a variety of reasons, incompatible with the sustainability principles of LA21.

## **5.2 The potential for integrated policy formulation**

A review of case study literature has also identified further ways in which the two policy agenda could be integrated at the stage of policy formulation and strategy development. The literature served to establish that both the LA21 and NDC programmes tend towards an

evidence-based process, involving continuous consultation with and the participation of the local community and community partnerships at the stage of policy and strategy development. In many authorities, development of an LA21 strategy significantly predates the social exclusion/community planning agenda and stand to derive considerable benefit from dissemination of the experiences of LA21 officers and best practice examples in the practical development and delivery of these new programmes.

Secondly, it was found that in some instances local authorities have been made keenly aware of the particular needs of areas of deprivation and the worst-off members of their local community, through the consultation processes that LA21 stimulates. In some authorities data on local attitudes to an area and or relevant environmental, economic and social data had already been collected for the purposes of monitoring progress on LA21 and this was then available for the NDC area to draw upon in developing its bid. Indeed, a few authorities had already made the links between poverty and sustainability in their LA21 strategies and visioning documents and some were even monitoring the wider equity implications of these policies and programmes on vulnerable and excluded groups in their areas.

This implies that where LA21 strategies have not yet been developed there is considerable potential for joint data collection and community consultations, planning and visioning exercises between the two policy areas. This approach also has the potential to assist authorities in securing better value for money and to build more joined-up programmes at the point of delivery. Furthermore, joined-up policy development may help to prevent the kind of ‘survey fatigue’ often described by both council officers and the local community itself.

However, a note of caution is necessary at this stage. It must be remembered that the evidence collected through LA21 consultation exercises in the past has tended to be biased towards certain sectors of the community and certain issues, e.g. environment, and is often, at best, patchy. As a result of this, the interests of particular groups (e.g. middle class and elderly residents) have sometimes taken on greater importance than would have been the case if a more representative sample of opinions had been collected. It is generally the poorer and less empowered members of a community that do not participate in these exercises and for this reason, **joint consultation exercises that fail to specifically target vulnerable and excluded will be insufficient to the task.**

### 5.3 Potential synergies in policy delivery

The documented evidence strongly suggests that there is further scope for the integration of sustainability and social exclusion agendas within local authorities at the policy delivery stage. The following provide examples, but not an exhaustive list, of some of these potential initiatives:

1) energy efficiency  $\longleftrightarrow$  heat poverty

The 1995 Home Energy Conservation Act (DoE, 1996) requires local authorities to draw up strategies to increase residential energy efficiency in their areas by thirty per cent in the next 10-15 years. Most of the NDC programmes involve refurbishment of properties and yet do not specifically refer to including energy efficiency measures within these. However, including high specifications for insulation, double-glazing and use of passive solar energy would not only significantly improve the energy efficiency of properties but also help to reduce fuel bills for the high concentrations of low-income and elderly residents living in these areas.

For example, in 1997 Carrick District Council set up the Beacon Energy Action Area, which is a three-year project to improve domestic energy efficiency following its district-wide stock condition survey and research into poverty and deprivation undertaken on the council's behalf by the University of Bristol. These surveys, together with evidence from the health authority, demonstrated a clear link between poverty, high incidences of asthma and other respiratory diseases and inadequate domestic heating. The project has been funded by the Capital Challenge funding and Housing Revenue Account funding and covers 1080 houses and flats, approximately 55% of which are in council ownership. So far, it has improved the domestic efficiency of 469 properties in the area through a combination of insulation and heating improvements, on a worst first basis and provided £400,000 in grants to private sector households suffering from heat poverty. The project has involved the community from the outset, and also provided local people with training in committee skills, budgeting and project planning.

2) recycling/reuse  $\longleftrightarrow$  job creation

The Western Partnership for Sustainable Development (WPSD) is co-ordinating Employment Zone initiatives to get the long-term unemployed in Bristol back into work. As part of this initiative WPSD have established a recycling centre, which collects and refurbishes unwanted furniture and then sells it on cheaply to people on low incomes living in the area. Encouraging



Despite this potential, a recent survey of LETS organisations in the UK (Williams, 1999), has identified that many people on welfare benefits are reluctant to become involved in LETS activities because they fear a backlash from the benefits and tax authorities if they trade. This is because under the current legislation time given to LETS schemes is seen as time when job-seekers are unavailable for work and LETS credits are treated as deductible income. This anomaly will clearly need to be addressed through adjustments to the benefits legislative structure, if LETS and Time Money are to be successfully promoted in poorer communities.

4) Community Finance Schemes  $\longleftrightarrow$  improved access to finance for poorer communities

Community Finance Schemes, e.g. Credit Unions, have recently been promoted by organisations such as the New Economics Foundation as a more sustainable and equitable means of providing access to and control of low cost credit and capital at the local level. They can also be used to help community enterprises and business ventures to get off the ground and in this way, may help improve the employment opportunities of socially excluded groups if targeted at New Deal communities and offered in conjunction with LETS schemes. Some experts have cautioned that credit unions are very slow to develop and this would need to be reflected in any NDC proposals (Jones, 1998).

5) Green Transport Plans  $\longleftrightarrow$  improved public transport & local accessibility

As part of their Local Transport Plans (DETR, 1999d), local authorities are encouraged to develop Green Transport Plans in their areas. In practice, these include measures to improve public transport services, cycling and walking facilities and to local employment, leisure facilities and other local service outlets. One of the features of social exclusion is poor access to adequate facilities due to the lack of a car, inadequate public transport services and declining provision of local services. By focusing Green Transport Plans in these areas - basing them on neighbourhoods and not just major trip attractions - then this physical exclusion could be ameliorated. A demonstration of this is included in the new EU MOST project, in a residential area of Nottingham, helping to give people environmentally and economically sustainable access to employment.

An example of an initiative where policies to deliver sustainable transport are being closely linked with those to tackle social exclusion, can be found in rural Durham. Here, the County Council has highlighted links between transport and social exclusion, particularly in the

former mining villages and is aiming to develop rural bus services in partnership with transport operators to alleviate some of the accessibility problems of these communities. £592,000 has been targeted at five areas over a three-year period and this money will also be used to raise people's travel awareness, address local people's concerns about transport safety and security and improve disabled access to public transport services. In urban areas, complementary air quality strategies will also help to reduce the high incidences of asthma and heart disease often concentrated amongst the population in these areas.

#### **5.4 The view of the NDC Unit**

In an interview with an officer from the NDC Unit, which is located within the Regeneration Unit at the DETR, it was established that although the Department's guidelines to NDC Partnerships do include passing reference to sustainable development this does not represent an inherent underpinning philosophy for the programme. The officer pointed out that one of the problems with sustainable development is that it means different things to different people and is therefore a confusing concept to get across.

It was stated that although the ethos of sustainable development is not at the forefront of the NDC programme, it is the Unit's intention that the role of community involvement in the NDC Partnerships is to ensure that the regeneration is sustainable, in the sense that it is long-lasting and directly benefits local people. The interview identified that a number of Policy Action Teams (PATs) had been visiting the NDC areas over the period of a year, using them as test-beds for innovative ideas.

Some of the PATS, in particular the Community Self-help Team, had focused on local environmental projects and initiatives as a way of building community capacity and encouraging local enterprise. These reports were to be made available over the following months and it would be possible for NDC Partnerships to pick-up on the ideas they are putting forward and write them in to their main delivery programmes. However, the position of the Unit is that the content of NDC Delivery Plans is left up to the Partnerships themselves and they will not be forced to include any of the methods or measures for promoting social inclusion outlined in the PAT reports.

The officer noted that, on the whole, the environmental content of Delivery Plans to date was limited and primarily focused on open spaces and the problems of decontaminated land. When specifically asked whether the Delivery Plans the Unit had received to date appeared to make the link between environmental, economic and social well-being, the response was in

the negative. This was not considered as a particular oversight or problem as project evaluation is not anticipated on this basis. It will be up to the individual Partnerships to derive their own outcome measures in relation to the four target areas of improved health and educational attainment and reduced unemployment and incidence of crime.

## **5.5 Social Exclusion Unit Policy Action Team reports**

Eighteen Policy Action Teams were appointed by the SEU in 1998, with a remit to spend approximately twelve months examining practical ways to address the problems of socially excluded neighbourhoods. Their investigations would be used to make recommendations to NDC Partnerships on how best to develop programmes in their local areas.

Each of the teams comprised ministers and officers drawn from across relevant policy areas (e.g. Departments of Trade and Industry, Social Security, Education and Employment, Environment, Transport and the Regions and Health and the Cabinet Office, the Home Office, HM Treasury). It was hoped that cross-departmental working would encourage joined-up thinking and help to ensure that policy gaps and conflicts between the different agendas of each Department would be identified. People working outside central government in a variety of sectors were also recruited to each team (e.g. local government, the business community, the voluntary sector, the police, probation services, Area Health Authorities etc.) to ensure a broad spectrum of views and experiences were brought to the work.

All eighteen reports have now been published, PATs 1, 2, 3 and 9 are reviewed below as the most directly relevant to this research.

**PAT 1: Jobs** (DfEE, 2000a), recognises the potential for organisations such as the Environment Task Force and the Groundwork Trust to provide an intermediate labour market for the long-term unemployed in NDC areas, whilst also substituting demand deficiencies in the local area with this public employment. Washing machine and cooker refurbishment and their sell on to low-income groups is offered as an example of this. It also recommends that local people could be involved in construction jobs provided through Government funded refurbishment projects that goes on in local area.

**PAT 2: Skills** (DfEEb), emphasises the need for ‘first-rung’ training provision that is fun, relevant to their everyday lives and also offers the potential to save money and to engage people in the notion of ‘lifelong learning’. DIY and cooking skills are given a particular mention as examples of such an approach.

PAT 1: Jobs (DfEE, 2000a) and PAT 2: Skills (DfEE, 2000b), have both noted the potential role of ‘grassroots’ community initiatives such as LETS in providing long-term unemployed people with the skills and confidence to re-involve themselves in formal employment activities.

**PAT 3: Business** (HM Treasury, 1999) also sees the potential for such initiatives to encourage the type of local enterprises that serve the immediate needs of the local community whilst also retaining high proportions of their financial transactions in the local economy.

**PAT 9: Community Self-help** is probably the most noteworthy to date in this respect, however, places sustainable development at its heart and identifies community-self help initiatives at the core of the NDC programme. The report states that,

*“Without effective self-help, it is unlikely that any other measures of community regeneration, however well resourced, will provide long-term solutions to long-term problems”*

(Home Office, 1999)

It is pointed out that self-help is not only a means to an end but an end in itself and that successful models of self-help are diverse and spurred by a wide range of factors. The report warns that self-help projects are usually unsuccessful if imposed on a community by outside agencies. Ten key characteristics of a good and well-functioning community are offered by the report, as follows:

- a learning community - where people and groups gain knowledge, skills and confidence through community activity;
- a fair and just community - which upholds civic rights and equality of opportunity and which recognises and celebrates the distinctive features of cultures;
- an active and empowered community –where people are fully involved and which has strong and varied local organisations and a clear identity and self-confidence;
- an influential community – which is consulted and has a strong voice in decisions which affect its interests;
- an economically strong community – which creates opportunities for work and which retains a high proportion of its wealth; a caring community – aware of the needs of its members and in which services are of good quality and meet these needs;

- a green community – with a healthy and pleasant environment, conserving resources and encouraging awareness of environmental responsibility;
- a safe community – where people do not fear crime, violence or other hazards;
- a welcoming community – which people feel happy about and do not wish to leave;
- a lasting community – which is well established and likely to survive.

It is immediately apparent from this list that goals for a good community are almost identical in both sentiment and form to those for a sustainable community as identified by the Agenda 21 Blueprint in 1990. Furthermore, many of the best practice examples of how local people might become engaged in self-help initiatives offered in the PAT 9 report focus on environmentally based community activities. These include:

- a community centre to provide green criteria jobs and training in construction;
- a community café run by volunteers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds using fresh produce from their own allotments;
- a LETS scheme with a focus on health;
- reclamation of an area of derelict land for use as allotments and a wildlife area;
- a community run enterprise agency providing among other locally based employment opportunities, jobs in coppicing, gardening and woodland management;
- replacement of a barren green lawn around a tower block with allotments, an orchard, a wildlife area and a small woodland copse;
- a group of elderly Asian men and women growing vegetables to provide a service of cheap, organic food to Asian families in the area.;
- a garden tools lending library run by local young people as part of a “Training for Work” programme.

However, it is important to note that not all the PATs have made connections between their remit area and the implications for sustainable development. Some that could have been expected to identify linked objectives with the Government’s sustainable development strategy, such as perhaps the additional opportunity to reduce the need to travel by providing better local shopping facilities and financial services (e.g. PAT 13: Shopping (DoH, 1999) and PAT 14: Financial Services (HM Treasury, 1999)), failed to do so.

The following chapters examine the extent to which communities themselves are taking up the notion of joint delivery between sustainable development and community self-help in the context of the NDC Partnerships. To this end, Chapter 6 offers a review of the outline bids submitted to the DETR in 1999 by the first round of NDC Partnerships. Chapter 7 reports on

the key finding of case study exercises in two different NDC areas and Chapter 8 presents the main conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence of this research.

## **6. Review of NDC Outline Bids and pilot case study selection**

In order to evaluate the extent to which policy synergies between sustainable development and social exclusion were being picked up by NDC Partnerships, the research undertook a full review of the outline bids that were submitted to the DETR from the first round ‘pathfinder’ areas. An additional aim of the review was to select two pilot case study areas suitable for further ‘evidence-based’ research.

It is important to note that at the time of the review the PATs had not submitted their reports. For this reason, it was anticipated that evidence of joint delivery with LA21 or other environmental/sustainable development programmes and strategies, if any, would be likely to result from a more ‘grassroots’ realisation of complementarity, rather than from Government guidance itself. On this basis, it was expected that best practice in one neighbourhood or policy area would not necessarily be filtered to other Partnerships. It was therefore, hoped that the case studies would serve to encourage dissemination of information between NDC areas, in this respect, and also encourage the NDC Unit towards a fuller and more defined recognition of the principles of sustainable development in their guidance to NDC Partnerships.

The following section provides a brief overview of the main content of each of the outline proposals we were able to obtain.

### **6.1 The evidence of outline bids**

In all, thirteen outline bids were received from the seventeen ‘pathfinder’ Partnerships from which they were requested. The bids followed a standard format as laid down by the NDC Unit, which involved detailing the following:

- the name of the NDC Partnership and details concerning its management and organisational structure and accountability;
- the name and description of the lead organisation for the stage 1 bid and a contact name and address;
- a brief description of the neighbourhood or community chosen in the district;
- justification for the choice of this area;
- details of the deprivation issues faced by people in the area;
- opportunities and challenges for the NDC programme;
- visions and objectives for the community;

- a strategic framework for the area and details of key programme strategies, the spending programme and an anticipated time-scale for delivery of the overall NDC programme;
- details of existing delivery structures in the area.

The review identified that the areas covered by the programmes differed significantly in nature, some comprising housing estates isolated on the periphery of main urban centres, other located in quite close proximity to town centre activities but excluded from these by significant physical and/or cultural barriers. Although some of the areas described display high concentrations of social housing, this is in no means the general case, and many of the NDC areas have roughly equal mixes of social and privately owned housing.

The housing stock ranges in date and design from pre-1900 terrace housing, through 1960/70s high rise blocks, to the present day with some areas comprised almost entirely of the same housing type (usually council rented stock), whilst others are represented by a combination of housing types. Most bids identify properties as in urgent need of physical repair (some classified as unfit for human habitation), and generally unpopular with local residents. This is signified by high levels of voids and a rapid turnover of residents, many of whom have identified through surveys and visioning exercises that they would like to leave the area in which they live, if the opportunity arose. The unpopularity of many of the NDC areas is added to by shortages of local facilities such as shops, GP services and banks and high levels of crime that is often drug related. It is important to note, however, that despite these problems some of the bids identified a strong sense of community and commitment to the local area amongst their resident population.

Not surprisingly, poverty and deprivation are identified as a predominating feature of the lives of many of the residents living in the NDC areas. All the bids identified a significantly higher prevalence of unemployment amongst residents than either their own local averages or the national average (ranging between 23-10% compared with 5% national average). In two of the areas more than half the adult residents were found to be in receipt of Income Support and most bids identified high levels of benefit dependency in their areas. Lack of appropriate work-related skills in the resident population was also often mentioned as a primary excluding factor, within the bids.

The low educational attainment of pupils in local schools was also a feature of all the NDC areas, with all those sixteen year-olds attaining five GCSEs at grades A-C ranging between 12% and 24% averages, compared with a national average of 46%. Poor health was also identified as a general problem in the resident populations of these areas, with many areas

displaying higher adult and infant mortality rates and higher incidence of cancer and heart related illnesses than the national average.

Of the thirteen outline bids reviewed, three areas identified high concentrations of ethnic minorities as living within the NDC area (42% Newham, 38% Bradford and 17% Newcastle). However, the particular problems of ethnic minority groups were also identified in other bid areas including Leicester, Bristol and Sandwell. A number of bids identified higher than average concentrations of young people as a specific problem of their area, of particular note were Brighton (40% under 24 years), Birmingham (42% under 24 years) and Sandwell (52% under 35 years). The Brighton (20%), Bristol (28%) and Hackney (10%) NDCs identified a higher than average number of lone parents as a particular problem of their areas. Conversely, one of the problems facing the Bristol NDC was identified as a higher than usual number of elderly people concentrated in the area (32%).

Table 1 provides a summary of provisional strategies and initiatives for tackling social exclusion in the NDC areas as detailed in the thirteen outline bids. It was identified that all thirteen intend initiatives to encourage increased employment activity amongst the resident population either through job creation in the local area and/or through enterprise and training initiatives.

**Table 1: Key strategies and initiatives of NDC programmes**

NDC DISTRICT	E M P L O Y M E N T	E D U C A T I O N	C R I M E	H E A L T H	H O U S I N G	N. M A N A G E M E N T	E N V I R O N M E N T	T R A N S P O R T	F A C I L I T I E S	R E C R E A T I O N	Y O U T H	R A C I S M	C O M M U N I T Y
BIRMINGHAM	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*
BRADFORD	*	*			*		*	*	*	*	*	*	
BRIGHTON	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
BRISTOL	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*
LB HACKNEY	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*
LEICESTER	*			*	*		*	*				*	*
MANCHESTER	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
MIDDLESBROUGH	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
NEWCASTLE	*	*	*		*		*	*	*		*	*	*
LB NEWHAM	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*
NOTTINGHAM	*	*	*	*	*		*		*	*		*	
LB SOUTHWARK	*	*	*	*	*	*	*				*		*
SANDWELL	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Measures to improve housing conditions are also a stated intention of all thirteen NDC Partnerships, this despite clear guidance from the NDC Unit that bids should primarily focus on the four core areas of employment, education, health and crime. It should be noted,

however that the majority of funding for housing renewal is being sought elsewhere and that only minor repair programmes rely on the NDC funding mechanism. It was also noted that initiatives to promote healthy lifestyles, improve educational attainment and reduce crime and fear of crime and promote community safety are indeed a feature of most outline bids. Of more interest to the research, it was noted that environmental enhancement schemes, measures to improve the use of open space and programmes to improve public transport services and cycling and walking facilities are also popularly stated intentions within the bids. However, while seven of the bids do mention sustainability and/or sustainable development, this is not an overtly stated objective for most NDC areas.

For example, the outline bid for the Barton Hill NDC Bristol identifies that a Sustainability Audit had been used to identify core issues for the area. A visit to Bristol's New Deal for Employment Partnership (WSPD) had also shown the local council and local environmental organisations working together to identify environmentally sustainable employment for local people (see Section 5.3). Despite this evidence, and Bristol City Council's strong commitment to the promotion of sustainable development through its local corporate strategies and a track record in adhering to this approach through a number of practical delivery programmes, the NDC outline bid made little reference to the application of such an approach.

Only the Bradford, Brighton, Middlesbrough, Leicester and Newcastle bids mentioned specific initiatives that offer the opportunity for direct links between environmental enhancement/protection and social inclusion. The Bradford NDC aims for less air pollution from cars through traffic management improvements and better public transport and wants to introduce more recycling initiatives into the area. The Leicester NDC also aims to tackle air pollution and this will in part be brought about through the introduction of community transport initiatives. The Brighton Partnership is making links between economic and environmental regeneration in East Brighton through its ongoing European funded URBAN project. This aims to encourage sustainable routes to local regeneration and includes the introduction of LETS and Credit Unions as a way to promote this. Newcastle also wants to develop a more sustainable approach to regeneration and find ways to integrate social, economic and environmental initiatives. The programme involves development of a green agenda for the West Gate area, which will include energy efficiency initiatives and promoting transport alternatives to the car.

However, the Middlesbrough NDC is by far the most extensive and far-reaching in its identification of environmental and social improvement linked initiatives. Like Brighton, it also aims to promote LETS and Credit Unions, but seeks to do this as part of a strategic aim

to improve health and living standards. It will also be looking at ways to establish local providers of goods and services and introduce heat and energy conservation initiatives under this strategic objective. Under its Housing and Investment strategy, the NDC Partnership will be working to create local ownership of the physical environment, in part facilitated by a local initiative fund for residents to make small-scale environmental improvements to the area and promote sustainability. A comprehensive greening programme will also form a prominent part of this strategy. Finally, the Middlesbrough Partnership has identified a strategic aim to improve access to the local area with the introduction of safe pedestrian and cycle forming an essential part of this strategy.

## **6.2 Selection of pilot case study Partnerships**

While the information gathered through the review of outline bids offered some basic indications of the stated programme intentions of the thirteen Partnerships it covered, it is clear that it does not represent a comprehensive analysis of their main aims and objectives or the motivations behind these. For this reason, it was decided that two pilot case study partnerships should be chosen in order to allow fuller investigation of both programme content as this was developing for inclusion in NDC Delivery Plans and the processes involved in identifying the key aims and objectives of the programme. As the main focus for the research was on evidence of synergies between the promotion of sustainable development and social inclusion, it was decided to include one partnership with no evidence of this and one with an emphasis on such an approach. In addition, NDC partnerships had to be willing to participate in such an exercise. The London Borough of Southwark was approached as the example of an outline bid that made no reference to sustainable development and Middlesbrough as the example of where joint policy initiatives were being heavily promoted within the bid.

## **7. The Case Study Research**

This chapter presents the main findings of two pilot case study exercises. It recognised that the evidence that is presented is limited in its scope and the conclusions drawn are as such is not in any way intended to be representative. It is hoped that in the future the work can be built upon with further case study examples.

### **7.1 Aims and objectives for case studies**

A first aim of the case study research was to explore in detail the initiatives that were being developed for NDC Delivery Plans by the two Partnerships for evidence of joined-up thinking in relationship to sustainable development and or joint working with LA21 strategies. A second aim was to monitor the processes by which ideas for such joint thought and/or working were being introduced in the context of Delivery Plan formulation.

### **7.2 Case study methodology**

The case studies involved the following methodological approach:

- Further analysis of the Local Development Plans, Community Plans, LA21 strategies, anti-poverty strategies and the NDC phase one and two bids, to allow authorities' strategies in each of these policy areas to be identified and mapped in relation to each other within the New Deal area;
- A trawl of any other policy initiatives affecting the NDC areas that might be relevant to, assist in delivery of and/or act as a barrier to joined-up policy delivery in these areas;
- Semi-structured in-depth interviews with Environmental and NDC co-ordinators and interviews and/or focus groups with other representatives from programme Partnership, to explore ideologies, policy interpretations, scope for and barriers to policy integration at the development and delivery stages;
- Attendance at a number of NDC Steering Group meetings and Open Days in each of the case study areas to allow observation of the pertinence and relevance of these broad policy areas from the perspective of the community itself.

### **7.3 Description of case study areas**

This section offers a brief description of the baseline characteristics of each of the selected NDC case study areas and describes the background approach of the two case study authorities to sustainable development. The intention is to provide a basic context for the main analysis of case study evidence that follows.

#### **7.3.1 *Aylesbury Plus, London Borough of Southwark***

The Aylesbury Estate is the main focus of LB Southwark's NDC bid. It is situated in South East London just off the Walworth Road, a main shopping centre for people living in the local area. The Government has identified Southwark as the fourth most deprived borough in the country and the Aylesbury Estate is one of the poorest areas in Southwark, with unemployment, low educational attainment, crime rates and poor health all significantly higher than the borough average. The area also suffers from a poor physical environment and has a generally negative reputation. Housing in the area is entirely made-up of early 1970s, local authority- rented accommodation organised in blocks, many of which are high-rise and in a poor state of repair. The community heating system serving all properties on the estate is in an advanced state of decay, the lifts are often out of service and lighting both within the blocks and on surrounding walkways is often poor or non-existent, adding to residents' fears about their personal security.

Although residents have recently benefited from the refurbishment of the local health centre and pharmacy located on the ground floor of one of the main blocks, other facilities are generally not provided for in the immediate neighbourhood. There is a small row of poorly stocked local shops, a post office and launderette near to the Estate, but otherwise residents, many of whom are elderly, must rely on shops in the Walworth Road, approximately a ten-minute walk away. A busy secondary road passes through the area, serving local bus routes that link the area to the Elephant and Castle Tube Station. The route is heavily congested at most times of the day and night, causing air pollution and road safety problems for anyone attempting to use it for cycling or walking purposes, as well as significant delays for buses. Most residents do not own cars and therefore rely on these infrequent bus services for all trips out of the immediate area.

There are a number of distinct communities of interest living in the Aylesbury Plus area, most notably a significant number of elderly residents who have been there since the blocks were

first built. There is also a significant ethnic minority population, in the main comprised of black British, Afro-Caribbean, African, Asian and Irish groups. Although long-term unemployment is high amongst the resident population, a survey of local residents demonstrated that many of those who are long-term benefit-dependent do not actually qualify for New Deal for Employment because they claim on the grounds of long-term sickness, single-parent status or have reached the age of retirement. Nevertheless, the skills base of the local population is low and many school leavers fail to secure employment on the basis of their poor educational attainment.

Although one local primary school in the NDC area is achieving some of the best SATs results in the borough, this is not seen to benefit children in the immediate catchment area of the school. Truancy and school exclusions are a further problem amongst older children attending the local Secondary School. High levels of youth crime and disaffection is generally identified as problematic for the area, with drug dealing and drug dependency seen as the route cause of many petty-thefts.

### ***7.3.2 The Whinney Banks, West Middlesbrough***

The West Middlesborough NDC Area adjoins the town centre at its northern edge, but a number of busy main roads separate it from local facilities such as shops and schools. The area is predominantly residential with some commercial land uses to its northern end and a number of vacant sites with the potential for development within its boundaries. The housing primarily comprises a combination of 1890-1900 terraced housing with no back gardens and unsafe alleyways, 1930s owner occupied properties, 1920-30s council housing estates, and 1970s houses and flats. The concentration of housing in poor physical condition is at the lower end of the private rented sector, where transient and vulnerable groups and students tend to be accommodated and in the cheaper end of the owner occupied market. There are also a high number of voids within the local authority rented stock.

Crime and anti-social behaviour constantly feature amongst the greatest concerns of people living and working in the area, parts of which are well known for drug dealing and prostitution. Nevertheless, community commitment to taking an active role in the control of their neighbourhood is strong and there is an opportunity to build on a number of smaller regeneration initiatives that have already been carried out in the area.

Unemployment in the area is high, with 14% of people registered in October 1998, compared with a borough average of 10%. Added to this, the number of households on Income Support

living in the area is also significantly higher than the borough average, 43% compared with 29%. The impact of low income on children brought up in the area is of particular concern; over half of are growing up in families dependent on Income Support, 11% of which are in single-parent households. The tendency for this situation to worsen is strong, as the number of teenage pregnancies in the area is double the national average. Educational attainment amongst the resident population is also low, only 12% of pupils gained five GCSEs or more at A-C grades in 1998. Two of the four primary schools in the area are under special measures.

#### **7.4 Approaches to sustainable development and LA21**

Interviews with key policy officers in the Environment Departments of the two local authorities served to establish that both have a relatively long history in actively promoting sustainable development at the local level. The Unit of Environment, Development and Education (EDE) was established within the LB Southwark in 1995, responsible for ensuring sustainable policy development across the council at the strategic level. Their first task was to develop an Environmental Statement, which was endorsed by the council, in November 1996. Following from this, in 1997 an Environmental Education Policy was also ratified. Over the past two years, the main focus has been on integrating the principles of sustainable development across all areas of policy.

Southwark has now developed 12 Corporate Strategies covering each of the council's key areas of policy delivery (Transport, Regeneration, Health, Education etc), one of which is Environment, forming the main bases of their Business Plan over the next 5-7 years. EDE has been heavily involved in influencing these strategies in the recognition of the new duty on local authorities to balance the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas and the need to tackle social exclusion whilst ensuring the delivery of Best Value. The council sees sustainable development as "*the spine going through these policies*" and as a consequence all strategies are taking on board a sustainable development agenda.

Middlesbrough was designated an Environment City in 1992 and since this time the Council has worked in collaboration with the Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC) partnership to find a more environmentally friendly way to manage their city. Initially, the focus of activity tended to be solely on bringing environmental priorities into the Council's Plans, as this was the remit for all environmental cities at that time. However, Unitary status in 1995 presented an opportunity for the council to adopt a fresh approach and take on board the broader remit of the LA21 programme.

The council has established an Environment Directorate, as one of its four Corporate Directorates, to actively promote sustainable development across all aspects of council policy. Workshops were held with members, in conjunction with MEC, to develop a new Environmental Strategy, building the principles of sustainable development into all core functions of council delivery. It is currently updating this strategy in line with the LA21 Action Programme developed by a series of MEC Specialist Working Groups.

Although responsibility for promoting LA21 has been largely devolved to MEC, the council has continued to work closely with the partnership, funding 2.5 posts in staff secondments to them including the Director's post, the LA21 Officer post and the Community Liaison Officer post. In return, 2 members of MEC staff work within the council's offices awareness raising and promoting best practise within the council's own activities.

Developing indicators of sustainability, target setting and evaluation of delivery performance against these indicators and targets has played an important part in the promotion of sustainable development in the case of both Middlesbrough and Southwark. Both have been involved in the European LITMUS (Local Indicators Towards Monitoring Urban Sustainability) project to develop measurable indicators of sustainable development and Middlesbrough has also acted as one of the CLIP Task Force (Central-Local Government Information Partnership) pilot projects, testing the viability of collecting reliable data for the government's thirteen headline Quality of Life indicators.

Both authorities have also been concerned to gauge the concerns and priorities of local people in relation to their sustainable development agendas and have undertaken a series of surveys and consultations with borough residents at the neighbourhood level, in order to determine these. In each case, these surveys identified that priorities and concerns for residents differ in different parts of their boroughs and that many people, particularly those living in poorer parts of the borough, are less concerned with strictly environmental issues, tend towards greater social concerns. In both instances, survey evidence has been used to develop locally relevant action programmes at the neighbourhood level, in relation to sustainable development. As a result, health lifestyle, lifelong learning, community capacity building and wealth creation projects are now a regular feature of the sustainable development programmes of both boroughs.

In the interviews, officers were asked to detail practical examples, outside of the NDC bid, of where environmental projects were being specifically aimed at alleviating social exclusion or where social inclusion initiatives would also deliver environmental gains.

Southwark identified four ongoing initiatives falling under this description as follows:

- Affordable Warmth Action Plan - this will train health visitors to identify fuel poverty and provide the necessary improvements through energy-saving measures, cutting fuel bills for those on low incomes whilst also reducing resource consumption and energy loss from domestic buildings;
- Energy-efficient social housing - working with a social housing provider to build 20 energy-efficient homes. Residents are being encouraged to monitor their own energy and water consumption in relation to different appliances to encourage behaviour change;
- Community Champions – on poor estates in the Peckham area of the borough, community champions have been identified to bring forward new ways to engage people on low incomes in environmental initiatives;
- Elephant Links (SRB 5) – providing job opportunities and training unemployed people in the environmental sector, particularly recycling and energy-efficiency.

Middlesbrough identified three key projects in which the links between environmental and social gains were being promoted as part of the Teeside HAZ:

- New Start for the Millennium – involving among other things a lifestyle audit which will feed back into the LA21 Action Programme;
- The Health Eating Project – looking at alternative ways for low income families to secure affordable and nutritious food, including an allotments project;
- Healthy Homes – focusing on indoor air quality in relation to health.

Officers in both authorities stressed the importance they placed on taking the social and equity aspects of the sustainable development agenda forward in low-income areas and focusing on quality of life issues to engage communities in the environmental agenda. Both also remarked on the difficulties they faced in engaging poorer communities in environmental concerns.

The interviews with Environmental Officers served to demonstrate a practical commitment to the promotion of sustainable development exists within both authorities. They also identified that many of the policy links between environmental and social progress were not only already recognised by officers but also being delivered through other projects and programmes in which they have been actively involved.

## **7.5 Evidence of an integrated policy approach**

The following sections draw on evidence from a further round of interviews with local authority officers, in this instance those responsible for co-ordinating New Deal for Communities in each of the case study areas. They also consider information gathered from a review of the minutes of Steering Group (Southwark) and Task Group (Middlesbrough) meetings held over the period of the Delivery Plan development process, informal discussions over a period of a month with 3 residents involved in developing the Aylesbury Plus bid and a two-hour informal group discussion with 4 residents involved in the West Middlesbrough bid.

### **7.5.1 Aylesbury Plus**

In exploring the case study evidence for links in policy thinking and action between sustainable development and social inclusion in delivery of the Aylesbury Plus NDC a number of more general points with indirect relevance to this issue were noted. Firstly, one of the key issues to emerge from both the interview and the documented evidence was that the legacy of the previous unsuccessful Estate Renewal Challenge Fund (ERCF) bid was having a huge influence on the content and direction of the NDC bid. Officers explained that local residents had been heavily consulted and involved in the preparation of the preparation of this earlier bid, which had, by the nature of the ERCF fund, been largely centred on estate renewal. Having ‘visioned’ and fully supported the idea of mass demolition as a panacea for the problems of the estate, residents and officers alike seemed to find it difficult to imagine an alternative approach. Both were convinced that the problems of the Aylesbury Estate could not be resolved whilst it remained in its present physical form.

Indeed, trade-offs between estate renewal and other aspects of the NDC programme became a recurring theme throughout the fieldwork exercises, with estate renewal and physical regeneration being seen as an essential pre-requisite of the wider remit of the NDC programme. Officers felt that local people would only become more open to introduction of the broader employment/health/education remit of NDC and other areas of council delivery such as environment and transport once the estate had been redeveloped.

From this position, a lack of policies and initiatives to support the interests of sustainable development was identified by officers as less to do with an oversight on the part of the NDC Delivery Team and more an issue of timing. However, discussions with residents themselves suggest that this interpretation of their position was largely unfounded.

Another general problem raised by officers was that of limited time resources. This was identified in relation to:

- a) the time period allocated by the DETR for development of the bid;
- b) the number of officers available to work full-time on bid within the designated development Team given the scale and complexity of the task;
- c) the time and commitment required from local people involved in the bidding process with no resources to compensate them for their time;
- d) the need for officers drawn in from other Departments to take time out of their regular work-load in order to contribute their expertise and experience to plan development (e.g. Education, Health) etc.

The interview identified that the Aylesbury Team had found it difficult to call upon the time resources of officers in other parts of the Council unless they could identify the need for their contribution to **a particular aspect** of policy delivery. As noted in the previous sections, the NDC Unit had not specifically identified sustainable development as a named policy area within their policy guidance notes on a par with Health, Education, Crime etc. As a consequence of this, it was seen as difficult to fully involve, in the bid development process, officers' working on environment quality, transport, air quality and waste management and other policy areas not specifically pin-pointed in the DETR guidance. Not surprisingly, they had therefore become sidelined issues in the Delivery Plan itself.

The previous section has already identified that LB Southwark has experience in developing and securing funding for estate renewal projects firmly grounded in the principles of sustainable development. The question arose as to why this policy thinking was not being transferred to the NDC bid. The problem appeared to largely arise from the professional knowledge base and enthusiasm of the particular officers involved in individual bids.

In the LB Southwark, as in many local authorities, individual Departments are responsible for their particular policy area and answerable, for funding purposes, to a corresponding Department within central Government. Each Department tends to operate in relative isolation to deliver a set of strategic objectives and see their policy delivery function in relation to the policy remit of their corresponding Government Department. In this context, a local authority department is unlikely to take on the responsibility for delivering programmes which fall outside of the policy remit of its own Department, particularly as funding may not be forthcoming for such efforts through these traditional channels. For example, the Education Department would not tend to identify a role for itself in raising health or

environmental awareness. In this respect, cross-cutting issues such as sustainable development fall outside the direct policy remit of most local officers, unless they are specifically requested to address them by central Government. As a result, they often do not gain practical experience of, or perceive the necessity for, incorporating sustainability at the core of the policies and programmes they develop. This is demonstrated by the Southwark interviews, where the NDC bid was essentially co-ordinated by officers from its Housing Department, whose professional base did not include experience with developing sustainable regeneration policies and programmes and who do not have a central Government remit to secure environmental gain from their policy activities. It would, therefore, appear that in large part the opportunity to tackle social problems through environmental projects (and vice versa) had simply been missed because such an approach does not form part of the knowledge base of the individual officers working on developing the bid

This lack of experience in engaging with the delivery of the sustainability agenda, together with the problem of time constraints also partly explains the tendency for issues and concerns relating to sustainable development and the environment to be sidelined when raised by residents at Steering Group meetings. One resident representative in particular had raised concerns over issues relating to sustainable development on several occasions, but felt that she had been largely ignored. Further probing of the situation in discussions with residents and resident representatives made it unclear whether this sidelining was more to do with the officer perceptions of the status of resident representatives and their concerns, and/or the specific resident in question, or their perceptions of the actual importance of sustainable development within the bid.

The NDC Team Project Officer did recognise that the physical condition of the Aylesbury Estate is a problem and that this might contribute to problems of crime (*“the dark walkways”*) and poor physical health (*“heavy traffic roaring through the area and constant congestion on the main road through the area”*), whilst more generally adding to the *“estate from hell”* image of the area. However, the officer referred to transport and environment issues as being *“sque*

Discussions with residents outside of the Steering Group meetings, served to re-emphasise officer concerns about the condition of the physical environment, such as pollution from traffic, the desire for allotments for residents to grow their own food and access to and use of open green space. One resident also expressed concern that *“sustainable development is not being written into the Delivery Plan from the outset”*.

This, among other experiences, may have contributed to the feelings expressed in discussions with residents that they did not have “*real control*” over the content of the Delivery Plan and that neither specific environmental concerns or wider community empowerment issues were being considered seriously by “*the professionals*”.

When asked directly in an interview why the Delivery Plan was not seeming to address these local concerns, the NDC officer explained that in general environmental issues such as pollution and poor use of open space were “*often out of the hands of the local authority to mitigate*”. A second reason given was that a suitable forum had not yet been established for “*selling*” the concept of sustainable development to the residents.

The interview with an officer from LB Southwark’s EDE Unit had identified that, in fact, a waste recycling scheme is proposed on the Aylesbury Estate and that this projects is also aimed at securing local employment. The EDE team are also promoting energy savings ideas on the Estate, such a Community Heating System that can feed electricity back into the national grid. However, the officers promoting these schemes also expressed concern that such projects have the potential to become quite contentious, particularly as the existing Community Heating System on the Aylesbury Estate is a major source of current complaint to the Council.

It would appear that fear of raising negative reactions from residents was a primary concern of officers in this respect. There was a general sentiment that the open nature of Steering Group meetings, with regular attendance by representatives from the Government Office for London and DETR, suggested a potential to lose the bid if the Group failed to present a united front. On this basis, it was felt that contentious issues should be generally avoided at Steering Group meetings. On the whole, the approach of the professionals was to first secure the required funding whilst ensuring sufficient flexibility in the bid to allow incorporation of specific issues and concerns at the delivery stage.

It transpired that some strategies for sustainable development were eventually included in the Delivery Plan, as part of the Community Empowerment section of the bid. In frustration at the general lack of interest in community self-help projects and the accompanying minimisation of effort put towards their development by the paid professionals developing the Plan, the resident representatives decided in the last week before its submission, to take over this section of the bid. In this way, two vital but side-lined aspects of the programme, both struggling for funding with other ‘competing’ policy delivery areas considered more important to the success of the bid by the professionals (such education and training and

employment), were brought together. In this way the community managed to ‘claw back’ funding for some projects with the triple (but often overlapping) outcomes aims of community empowerment, social inclusion and sustainable development at their core.

This was possible because, once in the hands of this resident group and with the assistance of some local environmental and community activists, it was quickly identified that many of the practical initiatives aimed at securing community empowerment also required an aspect of self-sufficiency and independence from main-stream delivery agents. For example, one of the first ideas for encouraging participation put forward by residents was the provision of space for allotments. It was felt that this would encourage people to be more active work, and bring young and older people on the estate more closely together. Growing their own food would in turn would encourage healthier eating and as well as relieving some of the budget constraints on low-income groups and might even help local enterprise as some people could sell their produce at the local market or to local traders.

However, a number of resident representatives considered the Community Empowerment aspect of the bid to be vastly under-funded in comparison to the other sections, despite the fact that they felt it was probably the most important part of it. There was anxiety that this tendency to marginalize community capacity-building initiatives in the programme would remain a feature of the delivery stage of the NDC programme. Some residents felt that it was not in the Council’s interest to empower local people too much as they might start to take over and wouldn’t be so ready to being pushed around.

### **7.5.2 *Whinney Banks***

In contrast to the sentiments of the LB Southwark officers that NDC on the Aylesbury Estate represented the next in a long line of bids to carry out a long overdue refurbishment programme, the team co-ordinating NDC on the Whinney Banks estate in West Middlesbrough expressed the view that this was a unique opportunity to take a completely fresh approach to area-based regeneration. Officers in Middlesbrough Council claimed that the reorganisation of council departments, following Unitary status two years previously, had already led to them adopting a more thematic and cross-cutting approach to policy conceptualisation and programme development. They felt that until the advent of NDC their more integrated approach to problem solving was difficult to bring forward because it was not reflected in the structure of central Government project funding. For this reason, although a number of projects currently funded as part of the wider Teeside HAZ and local SRB

initiatives had already attempted to bring together different aspects of community service provision, they felt that NDC offered the first direct mandate for their own policy agenda.

Again in contrast to the Southwark case study, officers and local residents expressed the view that physical renewal of the Whinney Banks area was not a fundamental requirement for its successful regeneration. However, some demolition work had been a part of the bid and interviews demonstrated that even this minor restructuring has led to considerable controversy between different resident factions and between residents and council officers in recent months, regarding the precise extent of the demolition that is necessary.

It appeared from the residents' discussion group that their main concerns centred around the "waste" of the proposed demolition. One of the older residents told us,

*"Well, to tell you the truth I can't understand why they want to knock them down. I mean they're good solid houses, they're not like the houses they build now."*

It appeared from the conversation that ensued that a considerable number of public buildings had also been pulled down in the area and there was a definite sentiment amongst the group that the demolition was largely unnecessary and took away from the character of the area.

*"The Newport Club got demolished, it was a brand new club, a beautiful place and they pulled it down"*

*"The Rosebury [pub] has closed, now that's got character and it's just getting razed to the ground...People are sick of seeing buildings being knocked down that's got character, that look nice, that's good solid buildings because what is the point of knocking down to build a new one!"*

Officers agreed that there is minimal benefit to be gained from knocking down perfectly serviceable housing only to replace them for the sake of an image make-over. As a number of residents pointed out, the physical fabric of housing in the area is not the main issue. the physical fabric of housing in the area is not the main issue as many of the older properties with less amenities are still occupied, whilst some of the newer housing association properties are boarded up and/or hard to let.

Clearly, the waste that both officers and residents referred to was more to do with financial resources and effort than an environmental waste of resources, nevertheless there was a

inherently conservationist aspect to their responses to demolition that one felt could be built upon to encourage reuse of buildings and building materials. However, the protectionist attitudes of residents to the built environment did not extend to green spaces on the estate or the natural environment. One of the architects had done a mock-up of the refurbished estate that included plans for a 27 hectare park with a natural wildlife area. The residents made it clear to me that they were not in favour of the park. I was told,

*“We didn’t need the trees or anything, we’ve got enough”*

*“What you’ve got to remember is we’ve got Westbourne Park, which is more or less exactly over the road”*

*“And there’s a lot of land that isn’t used”*

It seemed that one of the reasons the residents I spoke to were so against the idea of more open space in the area was that much of that which already existed on the estate is left unmanaged, to the extent that the natural environment is regarded more of a problem and an eyesore than an asset. Residents referred to the poor physical condition of a number of areas of open space including the *“sodden field where Heckers Avenue used to be”* the old allotments and the local cemetery. Residents felt that many of the problems of maintaining areas of open and public space would be resolved if park keepers could be reintroduced, not only would they manage the land itself but could also *“keep an eye on the kids and stop them breaking the place up”*.

Unlike the LB Southwark NDC, the issues of crime and community safety in the Middlesbrough NDC area represent a core focus for resident’s concern. Once the issue of vandalism were raised tales of vandalism, car and property theft, drug abuse and drugs trafficking and the problem of private landlords moving prostitutes into the area were numerous. In relation to this, discussions of environmental issues were primarily concentrated on the more general degradation of the physical fabric of the area that accompanied such activities. It was felt that any attempt to improve or renew the area would be wasted unless these underlying issues were addressed.

However, the negative impact of transport was raised as a key area of environmental concern. There was a strong conviction amongst residents that the initial construction A66 and A19 trunk roads, the West Lane, and subsequent road-widening had served to blight the whole area, causing severance of one estate towards the north of the NDC area and presenting a

considerable barrier to the town centre and newly created retail park. Residents identified the main problem as largely arising from the parts of the A66 that are raised on a level with their houses. People in the properties bordering this section of the road suffer noise and air pollution from the traffic using these roads, for which many had never been compensated because of they are council tenants and thereby do not qualify. Residents and officers recognise that it will be impossible to tackle the negative environmental legacy of the decision to build these roads through their community through the NDC programme. The emphasis of the Development Plan is therefore on ameliorating these negative environmental and social impacts of this on the quality of life of people in the area.

Given that issues of sustainable development or environmental protection/enhancement did not emerge as a primary concern from resident discussions, officers were asked during interviews to explain how the promotion of sustainable development emerged as such a strong core objective within the Plan. It was explained that this had evolved from a conscious effort on the part of the Council's own Environment Team from the inception of the bid. A commitment to the principles of sustainable development had arisen from reorganisation of the Council's own structure and now filtered into all its projects and programmes.

In the case of the NDC bid, the Council had worked with consultants from Forum for the Future to develop a framework that would allow a sustainability appraisal of all the projects options recommended for inclusion in the Delivery Plan. In the early stages of the setting up the West Middlesbrough NDC, the Council had set up 12 Task Force groups to develop project ideas for inclusion in the Delivery Plan. Each Task Force comprised council officers, residents and representatives from local businesses and other partner organisations, the majority of the which were also resident led. The leaders of these Task forces were then trained in use of the Sustainability Appraisal Framework and asked to apply its criteria in project option appraisals. Some, but not all Task Forces, had undertaken this process in the development of project options and it was felt that this had generally helped to raise awareness of issues relating to sustainable development more widely amongst those groups and thus enhanced the profile of projects with a strong sustainability content and whilst also serving to sift out projects which might undermine the overall sustainability of the NDC area.

From the evidence of Task Force minutes, however, it was possible to identify that there was also some desire to promote projects with an environmental content coming from the residents themselves. In particular, one resident had submitted a 'community manifesto' a number of the Task Force groups proposing projects with an environmental/sustainability content. These included suggestions for a community-based food growing, reuse of empty

properties for community functions, a waste disposal manager, a food co-op shop run by members of the community, a building and maintenance co-operative and a recycling project to provide local employment. It was unclear from either the minutes or interviews, the extent to which these suggestions had influenced the content of the Delivery Plan, however, some of these do feature in the NDC programme as it was approved.

Inevitably, the group charged with developing projects in the Housing and Environment Task Force were seen from the minutes to be most frequently discussing issues of environmental protection and social progress in their meetings. The main projects put forward focused on improving housing conditions to improve health, reuse of derelict land to promote business and enterprise, the greening of open spaces and removal of derelict properties and transport and accessibility. In relation to the latter, the group felt that the provision of community transport, upgraded foot and cycle paths and improvements to local shopping facilities would go a considerable way to improving the environmental quality whilst also addressing the physical exclusion and isolation many people living on the estate experience.

However, the minutes from other Task Force meetings identified that making common sense policy links between environmental and social concerns predated the PAT 9 report making such recommendations and also that these links were not exclusive to the Housing and Environment Group. For example, the Task Force concerned with Improving Health and Living Standards recognised that the need for healthy and affordable food could in part be promoted through a community gardening project and had also made the links between fuel poverty and affordable warmth as a health issue.

In our discussions, residents were asked to specifically comment on the projects that had been included in the bid, which link environmental and social concerns, in particular the Environment Trust Fund referred to in the interviews with officers and proposals to introduce LETS and Credit Unions. Officers had identified the Environment Trust Fund as a way for the community to make applications for small amounts of money for environmental initiatives, the example that was given was that of tree-planting. Discussions with residents identified, as has already been seen that tree-planting was way off their own agenda for the area. They saw the Fund as a way to, *“mend fences, and concrete over grass verges that are ploughed up by car parking on central reservations.”*

However, residents in the groups did offer their general support for the principle to encourage community-based projects in the area and were in favour of ideas for community transport, resident food co-ops, LETS and Credit Unions. They were asked whether they themselves

would be participating in such initiatives and if so what they saw as the benefits arising from their involvement and if not why not. All the residents in the group said that that they themselves would probably not get involved and that such initiatives had largely been included in the bid because of,

*“a few people interested in these ideas when the Delivery Plan was being put together in the early days but they have dropped away now”.*

When asked why they are unwilling to participate in such projects, the concern was raised that community run facilities could not be relied upon in the longer-term,

*“People will be all enthusiastic to start with but then they might loose interest and the estate will be back where we started, without any facilities”.*

There was also the suggestion that anything involving money, such as a Credit Union or a community managed fund was subject to corruption. Some of the older residents could remember the tally-man knocking on the door demanding payment for loans which couldn't be met and that such initiatives could spiral out of control. For these reasons, residents felt that any such activities should supplement rather than replace more traditional forms of provision and should be subject to regular scrutiny.

It was also pointed out that areas had been set aside for allotments and community green spaces in the past were now dilapidated and used as places to dump waste and that projects to restore them were not tackling the main issues, crime and vandalism. There was a strong view that all the community-based environmental projects included in the Delivery Plan would be unlikely to prove effective in the long-term if based solely on voluntary activity and left unsupervised. It was also felt that, while these projects might provide a hook for engaging people and/or serve to supplement other activities, they would be insufficient in themselves to turn around the problems of the area. In this respect, sustainable development tended to be seen by residents as an add-on rather than a core objective of the NDC programme.

Attempts to draw the residents in the group out further in relation to both *“environment”* and *“sustainable development”* met with limited success in relation to the research interest at hand. Apart from the environmental concerns about traffic raised earlier, in line with numerous other studies looking at this issue, the residents identified their main environmental concerns as dog mess, litter and graffiti. They did, however, connect with the futurity debate and were highly concerned that anything that was achieved by the NDC programme should be

“sustainable” in as much as it would not only benefit this generation but also future generations. I was told by one resident,

*“It’s the children I’m doing it for, it’s too late for me really but if things are better for them that’s all I care about”*

Whilst all the residents in the group could see the need to balance economic decision-making with the social needs of the area, the environmental impact of such activities was not a consideration and the term “sustainable development” was generally taken to refer to long-lived or inter-generational change.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

The Government recommends that the multiple problems of Britain's *worst estates* can only be addressed if local authorities and other delivery agencies work in co-operation with each other and local communities themselves to identify and develop comprehensive, integrated and long-term solutions to social exclusion. Recent legislative developments in relation to local government, namely the Local Government Bill 2000, echo this new inclusiveness and further suggest that the policies and programmes targeted at the regeneration of these estates should aim to bring into balance their economic, social and environmental well-being. Furthermore, the Government has now replaced the old CCT funding system with a duty of Best Value, which emphasises the importance not only of the cost but also the quality of service delivery in these areas.

Although sustainable development is not a core stated objective of the New Deal for Communities programme, designed specifically to tackle social exclusion in some of the worst effected areas of the UK, the research has identified a number of overlaps and complementarities between the sustainable development and social exclusion agenda. This report has argued that if these are realised in the delivery of NDC and other similar community-based regeneration programmes, there is the potential to maximise and thereby gain additional value from the social, economic and environmental benefits they accrue. It has also noted that despite the similarities between the two agendas, failure to fully recognise conflicting elements between them may serve to fundamentally undermine programme outcomes. Furthermore, the research evidence suggests that even given the scale of investment and long time-scales of the NDC programmes, those responsible for their delivery will still feel financially and time constrained. In this respect, projects that are able to deliver against multiple local objectives may also relieve some of these pressures.

To this end, the research has identified through a review of policy guidance notes, best practice documentation and other relevant literature, some of the potentials for developing joint delivery programmes. It has then explored whether the potential for such joint delivery is recognised, or indeed practicable in context of two case study New Deal for Communities areas from the first round of outline bids that had been submitted to the DETR by the seventeen pathfinder areas.

A review of outline bid submissions served to demonstrate that sustainable development was not an overtly stated objective in the majority of outline bids and only five of the seventeen

mentioned specific projects spanning sustainability and social inclusion objectives. The case studies also demonstrated a high degree of variation in the extent to which the two partnerships were engaging with, and acting upon, the Government's sustainable development agenda, in context of their NDC Delivery Plans. For example, consideration of the sustainability implications of projects and proposals was a clearly identifiable aspect of programme development and project appraisal in the Middlesbrough NDC, whilst entirely missing from the programme development process in the Southwark NDC. These variations in the level of engagement with the issues of sustainable development appeared to be largely due to the past experience of individual officers involved in the bid development and/or the ability to transfer policy knowledge between officers in different departments during the period of bid development, although limited time resources were also cited as a considerable barrier to any such co-operation.

**It is recommended that if the overall profile of sustainable development is to be given greater prominence within NDC programmes and officer inexperience in engaging with the sustainability agenda in the context of developing NDC programmes rectified, there is a need for more specific and detailed Government guidance on the subject. This should be made available to bid co-ordinators alongside the existing guidance notes on developing bids and should specifically address how partnerships ensure sufficient recognition of the need to balance social, economic and environmental well-being in the NDC areas.**

**It is also recommended that, given the level of increased economic activity that is likely to arise from the regeneration of in these areas, all NDC Delivery Plans become subject to a statutory Sustainability Appraisal. This could follow a similar model to that devised by Forum for the Future in relation to the Middlesbrough NDC bid. Projects which would tend to secure economic or social gains at the expense of the environment or future sustainability of the area should be eliminated from the NDC programme on the basis of these appraisals.**

One of the second issues to emerge from the case studies in relation to an integrated agenda was that of project suitability and the need to ground ideas for projects in the particular circumstances and experiences of residents themselves. For example, the Aylesbury residents were not generally in support of EDE officers plans for a Community Heating System, despite its energy and money-saving potential because of their past negative experiences with the estates heating system. Similarly they were wary of ideas for recycling bins to be placed on tower-block balconies, not because they did not wish to recycle but for fear that they would

be set on fire. In the Middlesbrough case study, residents were not particularly supportive of plans to convert waste land to allotments largely because their past experience suggested that these would quickly fall into disuse and add to waste-dumping and problems of arson already prevalent on the Whinney Banks estate.

One of the most interesting issues to emerge from the case studies, however, was that the Aylesbury residents, who had tended to be denied the opportunity to engage with the sustainable development debate in the context of the NDC Delivery Plan, immediately saw the potential to maximise benefits and minimise costs through joint policy delivery in the context of the regeneration of their area and were enthusiastic about the possibility of including such projects in the bid. However, on the whole, despite the documented evidence and officer assertions to suggest that the Middlesbrough bid was grounded from the outset in the principles of sustainable development, discussions with residents indicated less enthusiasm towards these projects than was anticipated by the research.

Clearly, the problem of matching projects to the needs, capabilities and aspirations of local people is a crucial one in engaging their participation. Discussions with residents in both of the case study areas suggest a level of scepticism regarding the ability of local authorities to deliver the NDC programme and suspicions in relation to their actual intentions. These are people who have rarely been treated fairly by any of the systems and/or institutions with which they have attempted to engage. In considering the case study data in hindsight, the largest influencing factor in residents willingness to embrace projects offering integrated economic, social and environmental gains seemed to be most closely associated with whether the local authority had been active in promoting its take-up. Residents in both NDCs tended to see officers as out for themselves, money-grabbing and out-of-touch with what was really needed in the area. There was a genuine feeling from the residents that had been involved in developing Delivery Plans that the professionals did not really want communities to become fully empowered because this would mean that they lost control of them.

**It is recommended that there should be greater recognition of schemes and initiatives that *balanced* rather than *trade between* economic, social and environmental gains in all regeneration programmes. However, in the light of the above comments, such projects are more likely to receive community support if they are introduced from the outset by agencies and organisations independent from the local authority. Practical demonstration of similar projects and initiatives running in other areas often helps to trigger community and officer enthusiasm for including such initiatives in regeneration**

**programmes but this may be lost over time, especially where those initiating such ideas are no longer involved in the programme.**

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