CHAPTER THREE:

CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

METHODOLOGY

Scope of the Research

This phase of the research focused on the experience of stakeholders in relation to deprived neighbourhoods. It was intended as a preliminary exercise to explore:

- stakeholders' perceptions of the location and boundaries of priority neighbourhoods and the extent to which these correlated with statistical mapping

- their view of the issues facing these neighbourhoods and similarities and differences in the issues faced

- their understanding of the causes of the problems

- their perspective on possible solutions

These questions relate to Stage Three of the research specification. However, the data gathered also threw light on some of the questions in Stage Four, particularly the interaction between one neighbourhood and another and the leverage of stakeholders over the challenges faced.

Interview Sample

The primary instrument for the research was semi-structured interviews with a range of stakeholders. Thirty-one face to face interviews, involving 37 people, were conducted by the research team. These interviews took place during three visits by the researchers in October and November. The sample was developed with the aim of including a range of perspectives. The following criteria were important in the selection of research participants:

- A fairly even spread across the two local authority districts of Kerrier and Penwith

- The inclusion of town and rural areas

- Representation from statutory, voluntary and community agencies

- The inclusion of different levels of agency or group, *eg* overview or umbrella body; area based agency; neighbourhood level agency, worker or activist

- Inclusion of the various levels of local government, *ie* county, district, town and parish councils

- A reasonable spread of types of organisation in terms of the focus of the agency or group, *eg* regeneration and community development or a more specialised focus, *eg* housing, health, employment, crime, education, community arts

Participants were recruited partly by drawing on other information sources and databases to locate particular agencies and partly by the 'snowball sampling' technique (Arber, 1996). In this case, 'snowball sampling' meant starting with suggestions made by the Research Steering Group and including some members of the Steering Group themselves in the sample. During the first round of interviews, ideas were actively sought from interviewees for extending the sample in particular directions which were not yet well represented.

Of the interviewees, all were white, 18 were women and 19 were men. There was no specific question about Cornish identity but the majority indicated long-standing or lifelong connections with Cornwall. A full list of participating organisations is given in Appendix III.

Community and Voluntary Sector Conference
A significant bonus for this stage of the research was the timing of the community and voluntary sector conference '*Making it Happen*' on 19 November 2001 to explore the involvement of the sector in neighbourhood renewal and the use of the Community Empowerment Fund and the Community Chest. By the time of the conference, the researchers had had the opportunity to interview most of the key players who had planned the conference and a few of the participants. This had provided them with sufficient understanding of the area and the issues in order to build on this knowledge by attendance at the conference. It was also possible to make connections with other people whom it was hoped to interview and fill some of the gaps in terms of geographical areas and specialist issues.

Interview Instrument
Semi-structured interviews were used in the research to ensure consistency across the topics discussed (which related to the research specification), while allowing flexibility in exploring particular perspectives and issues.

The topic guide was discussed at the Research Steering Group meeting on 10 October and is reproduced in Appendix III. There were two slightly differing versions of the guide, one geared towards development, umbrella or specialist organisations, the other towards neighbourhood groups. The topic guide proved a useful tool in a number of ways. Firstly, it ensured consistency of approach between the two researchers. Consistency was also assisted by sharing some interviews and then reviewing them to identify similar and dissimilar factors of approach and style. Secondly, in the earlier interviews, the flexibility of the topic guide enabled the researchers themselves to gain an understanding of the areas, issues, organisations and structures, as experienced by workers and residents. This was important in identifying emerging themes and clarifying issues in greater depth in subsequent interviews.

The guide covered the various topics comprehensively but also facilitated a focus upon specific questions where appropriate. The later questions had sometimes been covered in earlier answers but the guide could be used to check on any omissions. Some interviewees were more interested in seeing the guide themselves than others. It was always introduced to interviewees and available if they wished but the majority

of interviews were conducted flexibly by the interviewer referring as needed to the guide.

Notes were taken during interviews and tape recordings made. Because of the timescale, the notes have been the major source of analysis. An additional source of analysis, reflecting the timescale and logistics of the research, was regular exchange between the researchers about emerging findings which has assisted the identification of common and divergent themes and issues which need further exploration.

Telephone Interviews

The face-to-face interviews were supplemented by 14 telephone interviews between late November 2001 and early January 2002, undertaken by one of the researchers. The topic guide provided a basis for the telephone interviews in most cases and notes were taken. Ten women and four men were interviewed by telephone. This enabled some gaps to be addressed and the range of perspectives to be extended and strengthened, including:

❑ Additional representation from very local groups in both Penwith and Kerrier
❑ Disability and access
❑ Women's issues especially in relation to domestic abuse
❑ Health, especially the relationship between health and community development
❑ Faith groups
❑ Cornish cultural work
❑ Trade Unions

Limitations

The research findings are subject to a number of limitations relating primarily to the timescale of the fieldwork. The scope of the consultation was defined in the research specification as *"a preliminary exercise to gather data about the identification of issues at local neighbourhood level, and local views about possible causes and solutions"*.

The short timescale of the research had implications for the planning and development of the sample. However, despite the time pressures, the cooperation and support which the researchers received from Steering Group members and many other research participants enabled a diverse sample to be put together which included some representation across a number of key dimensions sought. Inevitably, representation of some groups and concerns will be stronger than others.

A related issue was the contemporaneous running of different stages of the research. The statistical mapping of deprivation in order to identify priority neighbourhoods was continuing throughout most of the interview phase and decisions about population thresholds and the most appropriate measurement tools were evolving rather than finalised. This meant that the exploration of research participants' perceptions of priority neighbourhoods ran in parallel with the quantitative analyses and helped inform the selection of deprivation indicators. On the whole, there has

been a very strong connection between the final priority areas as identified by the project Steering Group and the perspectives of respondents.

However, the timescale for the fieldwork did inhibit the inclusion of some individuals in the sample simply because mutual availability could not be arranged in the time. At the interim stage in December 2001, this resulted in some imbalance, for instance, in the representation of regeneration and community development officers in Kerrier and Penwith. Telephone interviewing partially redressed this imbalance. It should also be noted that other interviewees from other levels and types of organisation provided complementary sources of data which also helped to create balance. By the second round of interviews, some consistency was emerging in the data from a range of sources which was reassuring in terms of seeking to include a diversity of perspectives in the research. The attendance of the researchers at the 'Making it Happen' conference gave access to a cross section of perspectives across the community and voluntary sector which also helped to place other findings in context. Finally, the telephone interviews were specifically focused towards identified gaps or under-representation as far as possible.

More fundamentally, any project of this speed and scope will tend to gain access to more powerful voices at the expense of less powerful groups and interests. A range of socially marginal groups were referred to by interviewees (*eg* young people, minority ethnic groups such as Gypsies and Travellers, homeless people, asylum seekers). Some of these groups had strong advocates among interviewees but direct access was not possible given the timescale and nature of the research. Some compensation is sought for this by use of research literature. More generally, the processes of exclusion and division within the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities need to be recognised (Brent, 1997) as a tension within this research and within the process of neighbourhood renewal (JRF, 2000a).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Perspectives on Identifying Deprived Neighbourhoods
Many respondents were ready to identify particular estates, villages or other local areas where their experience indicated the greatest levels of disadvantage. However, other respondents raised a number of issues about identifying neighbourhoods in this way. These will be discussed as a context for the findings about specific neighbourhoods.

Firstly, some participants were concerned that defining and labelling particular areas as 'deprived' feeds into a process of labelling, stigmatisation and lowered expectations which can have a further negative effect on the prospects of an area and undermine other benefits of regeneration (ACU, 1999; JRF, 2000b). In the West Cornish context, this has particular reverberations because of some of the factors underpinning the current levels of economic and social deprivation: the way the industrial history of the area has shaped social and cultural patterns and attitudes; the decline in traditional industries of mining, fishing and agriculture; and geographical peripherality.

Secondly, some participants considered it unhelpful to identify some neighbourhoods rather than others as deprived because they saw the whole area as deprived and in need of renewal.

A third issue raised by some participants was that some areas - which were viewed as experiencing particular problems - were very small and isolated and might not therefore come under the definition of a 'neighbourhood'.

A related issue, which was raised in one form or another by a majority of respondents, was the proximity of poorer areas to more affluent areas and the consequent masking in statistical terms of these smaller pockets of deprivation.

A fifth issue identified by participants was a difference in perception of size of neighbourhood. This finding is presented tentatively because of the limitations of the research discussed above. Some of the overview bodies and regeneration teams tended to present neighbourhoods in terms of whole estates, wards or villages, while some community volunteers and activists at grassroots level tended to define neighbourhoods more narrowly in terms of a particular estate or part of an estate or a settlement which might be adjacent to another village. The closer to neighbourhood level, the smaller the conception of neighbourhood with which people might identify. This was not a uniform difference between residents' activists and agency workers. Some of the latter also identified the issue and, indeed, advocated for support to very small and local projects. However, agency workers were likely also to focus on the resource implications of providing multiple local facilities. They tended to seek solutions such as local provision which could nonetheless provide some complementarity between neighbourhoods and to promote means of increasing cooperation between areas.

Identification of Priority Neighbourhoods
This section lists the neighbourhoods identified in North Kerrier, South Kerrier and Penwith. Many of these were referred to by more than one interviewee. The problems and issues which they were considered to face are discussed in subsequent sections. This stage of the research was not designed to produce a profile of each neighbourhood but to explore interviewee perceptions of such neighbourhoods.

North Kerrier
All three wards of Camborne were referred to and the following more specific neighbourhoods: Pengegon; Parc an Tanyses; Trevu; Rectory Road/Crane Road; Troon, especially Grenville Gardens
Beacon; Tolvaddon; East Pool Park; Central Pool; Guinness Trust estate; Illogan, especially the Churchtown area*;* St Day, Caharrick in Redruth*;* North Redruth – North Close, Murdoch Close, Montague Avenue*;* North Country

South Kerrier
St Keverne; Ruan Minor; Helston – Naval estate; St Johns; Bulwark Road; Coronation Park/ Jubilee Terrace; Porthleven; Lizard village; Manaccan; Helford; More tentatively – Mullion; Constantine; St Day; Stithians

Penwith

The East, West and Central wards of Penzance were referred to and the following more specific neighbourhoods: Treneere estate; Lescudjack; Eastern Green; Newlyn – especially Gwavas estate

Pendeen; Areas of St Just; Heamor; Higher Faughan; Marazion; St Ives; Hayle – Queensway area

With a very few exceptions, these neighbourhoods are included in the clusters defined by the mapping exercise and so there is convergence between these stages of the research.

Problems Faced by Deprived Neighbourhoods

This discussion of issues, problems and solutions is primarily illustrative rather than focused on particular neighbourhoods since similarities and differences were found on a wider scale than local neighbourhoods. A majority of these problems are structural in that they stem from the underlying economic problems of the area and its relationship with the wider national and global economy. The specific Cornish manifestations of some of these problems have been linked in wider debates with a specific form of oppression affecting Cornish people in terms of inequalities between Cornwall and the national economy and within Cornwall between Cornish people and in-migrants (Payton, 1992). For example, inequality within Cornwall - related to a Cornish ethnicity - can be seen as particularly manifest in the housing market (Williams, 1993). On the other hand, the relationship between labour market inequalities and in-migration is more ambiguous (Williams and Champion, 1998).

The major common structural problems which were identified by interviewees were as follows:

1   Employment and skills
   ❑ Lack of permanent jobs, seasonality and insecurity of employment
   ❑ Low wages
   ❑ Falling real income for the most disadvantage groups
   ❑ Skills mismatch in relation to new jobs emerging such as IT

2   Housing and the environment
   ❑ Lack of affordable private housing
   ❑ Impact of incomers and second home owners on house prices
   ❑ Shortage of social housing
   ❑ Adverse impact of tourism on the environment
   ❑ Contamination of some former industrial land

3   Education and training
   ❑ Lack of opportunities for higher education and training
   ❑ Lack of opportunities for young people and associated lack of hope

❏ An outflow of young people from the area arising from the dearth of jobs and higher education opportunities

4   Services and facilities

❏ Poor public transport, particularly between rural centres

❏ Difficulties of access for disabled people

❏ Lack of flexible, accessible transport for disabled people in many areas, and of a central booking system for such transport

❏ Lack of available, flexible and affordable childcare, including a shortage of child minders, and a process of small providers being squeezed out of the market

❏ Insufficient facilities for play, leisure and cultural activities

❏ Shortage of youth workers and youth facilities

❏ In-migration, particularly of retired people and resulting pressure on services

5   Health

❏ Isolation, especially for older widowed and single people and disabled people

❏ Mental health issues especially in relation to isolation, to stigmatisation, and to the concentration of mental health resources in Camborne

❏ Postnatal depression

❏ Long term ill health and shortage of provision for people with long term health problems and impairments

❏ Difficulties of access to local primary health services in some areas both rural and urban (*eg* North Redruth)

❏ Difficulties of access to emergency and specialist health services (major hospital in Truro)

❏ Drug problems, particularly on some estates in Penwith

❏ Alcohol problems

❏ Teenage pregnancies

❏ Lack of accessible and confidential sexual health services

6   Crime and anti-social behaviour

❏ Problems of vandalism and anti-social behaviour experienced by older residents on some estates

❏ A fear of crime which is not in proportion to the incidence of crime

❏ Racism experienced by asylum seekers and by Gypsies and Travellers

Other issues identified by participants, although structural in origin, were also viewed as attitudinal, cultural or behavioural. There is also some overlap with the above list. For instance, drug problems and anti-social behaviour, noted above, have behavioural elements, while most cultural or community issues are strongly related to the socio-economic context. There is also a complex link with issues of Cornish identity, culture and historical experience. Deacon (1993:205) discusses how a declining

industrial base and economic insecurity from the late nineteenth century onwards *"led to a culture of 'making-do' as heroism in the face of grinding day to day hardship became a social virtue"*.

The issues most commonly identified relating to community attitudes and behaviour were:

- ❑ Low aspirations or 'poverty of ambition
- ❑ Lack of awareness of diverse opportunities including job opportunities and apprenticeships
- ❑ Limited horizons and experience in terms of learning from elsewhere within and outside Cornwall
- ❑ Pride of place and pride in Cornish identity given little recognition and limited overt expression
- ❑ Lack of parenting skills
- ❑ Insularity between different villages, estates and neighbourhoods, and lack of willingness to cooperate on larger schemes
- ❑ Decline in community networks and support for some residents
- ❑ Difficulties of involving a wide range of participants in community activity – most projects and groups are sustained by a small group of activists
- ❑ Difficulties recruiting volunteers, exacerbated by the lengthy process of police checks
- ❑ Disproportionate middle class involvement in some activities and groups, *eg* parent-teacher groups, youth forums
- ❑ Mistrust of authorities and feelings of abandonment by services in deprived neighbourhoods
- ❑ Sense of hopelessness felt by front line agency staff as well as residents
- ❑ Limited electoral support for and involvement in town councils

These problems are reflected at an institutional level in the response of agencies and services and in relation to the solution-oriented processes of regeneration and renewal. The West Cornwall area has received funding under a variety of national and European regeneration budgets (see Chapter 1). Clearly this is a major asset, however, this research, which was particularly focused on the renewal of local neighbourhoods, found or confirmed some problems in the way these processes develop and the conditions under which Local Authorities and communities have to respond to them. The issues most commonly identified relating to institutional rules, attitudes and behaviour were:

- ❑ The imbalance in the capital as against the revenue budgets
- ❑ The focus on large scale projects which can leave the more disadvantaged neighbourhoods and groups even further behind
- ❑ Difficulties of obtaining matched funding

- ❑ The complexity, bureaucracy, and lack of transparency of the bidding process, which required time and skills often not available in deprived neighbourhoods, and could divert attention from longer term development

- ❑ Dangers of fragmentation because of the multiplicity of new initiatives and policies

- ❑ Dangers of disillusion and initiative fatigue when consultation and new initiatives do not lead to tangible results for disadvantaged neighbourhoods

- ❑ Insufficient proactivity, cooperation and flexibility on the part of statutory agencies in response to community initiatives

- ❑ The lack of accessible information about new programmes and projects, especially for people who may not take newspapers or listen to local radio news

- ❑ The focus on 'hard' targets, for instance national tests and exams in education, compared to softer targets

- ❑ The lack of, or withdrawal of, community development work focused on long term support to deprived neighbourhoods

- ❑ The lack of focused, sometimes individual support to learn about and access new opportunities

- ❑ Very scarce youth work resources to support young people's personal and social development and their involvement in community activity and decision-making

There was considerable convergence about many of the issues identified by respondents. The great majority of the socio-economic problems listed above were discussed by a majority or all respondents but above all low wages, insecure employment, lack of affordable housing and inadequate transport. There was great consistency in the identification of the structural basis of problems, suggesting a common if often unstated view of the centrality of structural causes related to West Cornwall's economic trajectory and geographical peripherality.

However, some differences of perspective were evident in relation both to structural issues and institutional responses. Rural areas were identified as particularly disadvantaged in terms of lack of facilities and transport and social isolation. Several respondents also spoke of a divide between North and South Kerrier, with North Kerrier being perceived as having gained the greatest share of resources over recent years. Community activity in South Kerrier, although vibrant and resourceful, was seen as insufficiently supported, both in terms of direct funding resources and in terms of other council decisions such as planning permission.

However, the perceived shortcomings of Local Authority support for neighbourhood groups were also a linking theme between North and South Kerrier and Penwith. For example, a residents' group on an estate in Penzance had experienced considerable hurdles in its long-running campaign to create a safer and better resourced environment on the estate. A residents' group in North Redruth was critical of the lack of police response in the area and of the District Council's expectation that estate residents would feel able to use a community centre in another area of the town.

There was also variation in the experience of transport services within the more urban areas. Although some areas felt well served by buses, *eg* North Redruth, some anomalies were evident, *eg* on the Guinness Estate in Pool, the outgoing bus did not return to the estate, causing problems for residents. There also variability in the extent to which buses provided disabled access and there was no unified contact point to book accessible transport.

Other differences emerged in relation to attitudinal, psychological and behavioural factors which reflected different perspectives on neighbourhoods and regeneration. There was a strong consistency from many agency interviewees in identifying low aspirations, limited ambition and, to a lesser extent, lack of parenting skills, as important issues. However, there were also challenges to this dominant view. Thus, some respondents referred to the damaging impact of a culture of blame which implies that local people could have made improvements if they chose. It was argued that the most alienated and marginalised communities may need to be facilitated to express their anger about longstanding experiences of neglect before they can engage more positively with development processes. A more inclusive vision was needed to support development.

Another challenge in this context concerns the very high aspirations which were found among the neighbourhood and residents groups interviewed, who had great ambitions for their neighbourhood in terms of developing community spirit and community facilities. However, these aspirations did not always mesh with the perspectives of agencies and Local Authorities who were encouraging greater networking and cooperation between villages and neighbourhoods. This was partly to widen experience and horizons and partly because of the necessity to rationalise resources and to demonstrate partnership in order to attract further resources.

Similarly, divergences from the prevalent view of low parental aspirations and lack of parenting skills were also evident. The experience of one project coordinator was that 'hard to reach' parents were in fact accessing support on a regular basis, interacting well with other parents and participating in the project's services. The coordinator's experience of one estate, identified as problematic by many participants, was that residents were well focused on the needs of their children and active in trying to improve the neighbourhood and facilities for children. A major problem for them was the stigmatisation of the area (JRF, 2000b).

The problem of low levels of involvement in community activity was expressed by a number of respondents. The Report of the Policy Action Team on Community Self-Help (ACU, 1999) identified five types of barriers to community and voluntary activity: motivational, organisational, institutional, political and cultural and economic and all of these are relevant in the West Cornish context. For instance, shortages of childcare and the necessity of juggling multiple jobs, were cited as inhibiting voluntary activity. However, the interview findings, particularly from the agencies and associations working most closely with small localities and groups, indicate that ways of overcoming these barriers are being demonstrated. Several participants commented on the increase in involvement once much needed facilities were provided, for instance, play facilities on an estate which provide a focus for parents and children to come together.

Similarly, a number of local projects, particularly in Penwith, had put on *Planning for Real* events (Neighbourhood Initiatives, 2001) combined with Fun Days to involve the local community and generate participation in planning future changes in the neighbourhood. These events had attracted a good turnout and an enthusiastic response from local people. It should also be noted that other respondents voiced some criticisms of the *Planning for Real* approach for failing to provide a sufficient context for the exercise, for potentially holding down expectations by not providing broader choices and for insufficiently publicising the policy outcomes of these consultations.

Interviewees suggested that the voluntary and community sectors were insufficiently valued in a number of ways. Some respondents indicated that voluntary services, especially in rural areas, could be relied on inappropriately as substitutes for statutory services. Others considered that the contribution of volunteering to personal and social development, supported by appropriate volunteer training programmes, was not adequately recognised. The value of volunteers' time, especially in consultation forums, was not always acknowledged and recompensed. It has been argued elsewhere that volunteers need financial support for their involvement (JRF, 2000c). The research provided evidence that some volunteers and community activists were indeed broadening horizons and drawing on ideas from a wide range of sources, such as *Planning for Real,* earlier cultural traditions, networks inside and outside Cornwall and academic literature to apply to work in local neighbourhoods.

The research did not specifically ask people about their view of Cornish identity and cultural activity and, in many cases, interviewees did not raise these issues spontaneously. This is perhaps not surprising given that the researchers came from outside Cornwall. However, there was some discussion of these issues in face-to-face interviews and the topic was pursued by telephone interview. There was a clear view that Cornish identity is understated and it was suggested that this relates to the historical oppression of the Cornish and continuing disadvantages associated with peripherality, economic decline, inequalities between incomers and local people in the housing market and resultant lowering of self-esteem.

However, organisations involved in promoting social and community development through Cornish cultural activities discussed marked increases in confidence, enthusiasm and commitment of the groups they worked with arising from such activities. These involved reclaiming, regenerating or sustaining different cultural customs associated with Cornish identity, including older Celtic traditions of feast days, music, dancing and language and newer cultural activities of brass bands and rugby football arising from working class industrial traditions (Burton, 1997). Combined with approaches of outreach, oral history, youth and community work and community festivals and events, there was evidence that they have a significant contribution to make to community regeneration, releasing creativity and imagination and enabling expression of pride of place.

More generally, issues of low aspirations and associated lack of skills in communities tended to be discussed in the context of areas which were experiencing considerable problems in terms of lack of jobs and low wages. There are various possible interpretations of these parallel - and sometimes contradictory - perspectives. One is that there may be something of a mismatch between the enthusiasm and expectations

of statutory and voluntary agencies and regeneration workers who are aware of the potential growth of opportunities and the difficulties of local people in gaining a clear view of these opportunities. It seemed that low aspirations had probably been a realistic response to the declining opportunities available in recent decades and, for many, may still be a realistic response. A second possibility is that the strengths and enthusiasm of local people are not perceived by agency workers because of differing agendas about where attention should be focused. A third possibility is that the pride, enthusiasm and energy of local people remains untapped because they have not been sufficiently encouraged by authorities and services.

As noted earlier, there were also a number of community views about lack of responsiveness, flexibility and imagination on the part of statutory services. While interviews were held with some mainstream agencies, the research with agencies was primarily focused on development or specialist agencies with a particular interest in neighbourhood renewal. Within these organisations, a number of actual or potential resources for renewal were evident, including community development experience, new approaches to partnership working, action zone initiatives and a commitment to changing conditions for the most deprived communities. These strengths are summarised below.

There was a particular contribution from a health perspective in terms of the potential for health visitors to engage with very alienated communities which have effectively been abandoned by other agencies or are considered to be 'no-go' areas. Because of their role with all families, health professionals were seen as having credibility with marginalised and excluded communities where other agencies, including community workers in the first instance, may have difficulties operating. This trust can be used to engage with residents' feelings of abandonment and anger, promote renewed confidence and mobilise local people to take the lead in working with their own communities. The process also involves raising awareness among other local agencies to develop more productive partnerships on an equal basis with residents. While some of this experience derives from another part of Cornwall (Thomsett, 2001), it has wider implications and reverberates with some of the issues expressed in Kerrier and Penwith. Similar problems were currently seen as operating on a Gypsy site just across the Kerrier border. In this situation, health workers and workers from a children's charity were still able to access the site and engage effectively with residents.

Strengths and Resources
The previous discussion has highlighted a range of strengths at neighbourhood level which are summarised here. The potential supports available for the regeneration of communities from outside the neighbourhood are also summarised here for ease of reference, although discussion of some of these issues follows in the succeeding section.

Strengths of neighbourhoods and communities:

- ❑ Resilience and self-sufficiency
- ❑ Established family and community networks
- ❑ Pride in very local areas

- ❑ High ambitions for local neighbourhoods
- ❑ Commitment and vision of core activists
- ❑ Potential for personal and social development of volunteering
- ❑ Demonstration of potential for wider involvement through Fun Days, response to small neighbourhood improvements, participation in new projects through outreach
- ❑ Potential for outreach and capacity building once communities and individuals are engaged at a personal level
- ❑ Renewal and development of Cornish cultural activities

Other resources available to neighbourhoods and communities include:

- ❑ Developing commitment of local authorities, health trusts and voluntary agencies
- ❑ Development of voluntary sector infrastructure through forums, networks and umbrella bodies
- ❑ Development of regeneration infrastructure which is beginning to reach out into more deprived neighbourhoods
- ❑ Growth of proactive inter-agency working to promote improved services through a variety of nationally sponsored action zone initiatives
- ❑ Increase in partnership working across agency and sector boundaries and of associated skills and understanding
- ❑ Ongoing improvements in the provision of disabled access to buildings, services, transport and community involvement
- ❑ Initiatives to consult and involve young people
- ❑ The growth of formal and informal training courses available to local residents to promote skills in community work
- ❑ New ideas and perspectives from networking within and outside Cornwall
- ❑ Skills, knowledge and time of some incomers, *eg* retired professional in-migrants

Possible Solutions and Ways Forward

Resources and solutions are linked by a number of issues. One key issue in reducing neighbourhood disadvantage is how poor people and people in poor neighbourhoods can increase their access to resources and generate further resources. A second key issue is how the involvement of communities in neighbourhood renewal can be promoted. This section focuses on these issues and seeks to identify the types and levels of resources available for promoting community involvement in neighbourhood renewal and for assisting community members as key stakeholders to increase their leverage over the challenges they face.

There are a number of theoretical and empirical considerations in relation to community involvement which provide a context for this research. One of these is a range of approaches to understanding the complexity of the term 'community' (Mayo, 1994) and the diversity of groups and interests included in any one 'community' (Hoggett, 1997). Many writers discuss the tendency for more powerful interests to

dominate at neighbourhood level as well as other levels of interaction and for this to be reflected in consultation and participation mechanisms (*eg* Burns and Taylor, 2000; Chanan *et al*, 1999). For more disadvantaged people, the obstacles to inclusive participation and involvement are greater (ACU, 1999; Burns and Taylor, 2000).

Chanan *et al* (1999) identify a variety of roles which are relevant to the community in renewal and regeneration programmes: beneficiaries of programmes and services; consultees and representatives; a source of community activity; deliverers of parts of the programme; and long-term partners. This research has touched on all these roles but the analysis here is primarily of community activity, the community as consultees and representatives and as long-term partners, rather than on the receipt of or provision of services.

There are different levels of organisation and development available to promote community involvement, including involvement in neighbourhood renewal. Firstly, there is the level of coordination, support and advocacy for the sector as a whole. Community groups and small voluntary organisations require the support of a network or of umbrella organisations to promote the exchange of information, provide training and support in relation to funding, facilitate the formation of new links and projects and advocate on behalf of the sector (Burton and Taylor, 1991; Chanan *et al*, 1999). There were a number of important resources of this type in both Penwith and Kerrier although they were at different stages of development.

In Penwith, Interlink provides many of the liaison, information and support functions for 300 groups. It is not a decision-making group and, therefore, does not seek to represent the sector. However, the Penwith Community Development Trust promotes and supports new developments, for instance, through a new training project Instep and seems to provide informal representation for the sector. The Kerrier Information Exchange which is part of Kerrier Healthy Towns Project fulfils a similar function for North Kerrier. However, this does not currently extend to South Kerrier.

Other bodies are also involved in providing a common forum and a more general voice for the sector. The Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) was inaugurated in 1993. A wide spectrum of interests is involved, which is a strength as well as creating challenges. It involves 154 groups and has taken an active role in raising awareness and promoting the interests of the sector generally. The Forum has established an accountable and transparent system for selecting representatives of the sector on a variety of partnership bodies.

In terms of development work, the role of Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CNC) is also significant. As a resident-led organisation, building on a community consultation exercise, it has adopted a community development approach in social housing estates across a wide geographical area. CNC has clearly identified the need for increased community development support with and for local residents. It has established a training programme involving an NVQ in Sustainable Communities to assist local residents to expand existing roles or take on new ones.

Probably the most important development - in terms of coordination and representation for the sector - is the consortium which was formed specifically to engage with neighbourhood renewal and promote the involvement of the sector in its

decision making mechanisms and processes. The *Making it Happen* conference in November 2001 was a milestone in this journey. The recommendations from it included:

- ❑ Mechanisms for representation on the Local Strategic Partnership which reflected the strength and the diversity of the sector
- ❑ The importance of decision-making timescales accommodating the development processes involved in community representation, rather than seeing these as an add-on function
- ❑ The need to strengthen and finance existing networks and infrastructures which can support these processes

By the time of the Local Strategic Partnership conference in January 2002, these broad recommendations had been firmed up into concrete proposals building on existing structures.

Interviewees also referred to a range of other networks and forums of a more specialist nature linking interest communities, such as the Cornwall Disability Forum, developing youth forums, the Domestic Violence Forum and Churches Together in Cornwall. It was not possible to explore the work of these groups and their interconnections in depth, however, their existence suggested that if they can be linked in to the overall consultation mechanisms, they would increase the potential to promote more inclusive involvement of minority and marginalised interests.

At an intermediate geographical level, especially in towns, a different set of linking mechanisms have developed, partly around regeneration and Objective 1 programmes. The work of town forums has been considered in this research but not explored in depth. The development of the Community Forum Network, with an advice and support function for groups seeking funding, has potential for meeting some of the problems experienced at local level in relation to the complexity and inaccessibility of funding.

The fieldwork interviews suggested the existence of an active community and voluntary sector across the area but some limits in relation to overall co-ordination. Paradoxically, this also reflects a strength of the sector, namely the independence and resourcefulness of community groups building on a very local sense of neighbourhood. Additionally, there is also an element of competitiveness which can be a motivational strength but may also damage some groups at the expense of others, limit mutual learning from different experiences and make the generation of shared resources more difficult. Addressing perceptions of neglect of the voluntary and community sector by local authorities will be important in demonstrating the value attached to communities' achievements and in encouraging increased confidence in entering partnerships with other groups and with the authorities. As a result, greater sharing and coordination may become possible. Managing these creative tensions is an important challenge for neighbourhood renewal.

At local level, despite the various problems which have been identified as facing disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there was evidence of considerable community activity. During the (short) period of fieldwork the researchers learnt about a number

of very local groups and were able to make contact with some of these. The 'snowball' method of making contact and developing a sample was particularly important here, since these are not groups with a high profile or a significant success record in the competition for funds. Some were residents' groups but there were also cultural groups, health groups, faith based groups and planning groups.

Those groups who were contacted during the research or which were discussed by other respondents, indicated a remarkable level of resourcefulness, resilience and perseverance, sometimes over many years. They may well be an insufficiently tapped resource but one which could be actively promoted in the process of neighbourhood renewal. In order to increase their contribution, they will need increased support in terms of information, access to decision-making and practical acknowledgement of their concerns in the form of shifts in agency policies and practices and funding of local projects and facilities. In turn, they may be able to facilitate a much higher level of involvement in their neighbourhoods and in wider programmes. The process of recognition and provision of support could help to overcome some of the barriers to participation identified in the PAT report on self-help, for instance, the motivational barriers of lack of hope and confidence and the political barrier of adverse labelling of communities (ACU, 1999). In some neighbourhoods, faith-based groups were the foremost community support and the only ones providing facilities but considered the inclusive nature of their work was insufficiently recognised by Local Authorities.

A powerful and consistent case was made by many agencies and groups for community-led development that would respond to community definitions of need, build on and develop residents' own aspirations, skills and knowledge and provide a channel for local views to make themselves heard at strategic level. Such development was seen as being able to provide the driving force in promoting change and fostering community and inter-agency partnerships. This was a major theme of all of the umbrella and development agencies and of a number of other more specialised statutory and voluntary agencies. The slow pace of such community development in many cases needed to be recognised.

Several respondents identified a decline in community development support in recent years, as regeneration activity was focused away from local development onto funding of large scale, economically orientated projects and wealthier areas. Moreover, both development agencies and more specialised projects all emphasised that community development needed to work with people at a very personal level. This included one-to-one working to engage with people's own agendas, listen to their concerns, provide support and assist them to access a wider range of opportunities. Leafleting and newspaper and radio advertisements would often not reach people in the most deprived communities, whereas personal contact and word of mouth were more effective. Counteracting decline, neglect and a culture of hopelessness and blame required forms of engagement which could connect with and build on people's own experiences, needs and strengths.

The development agencies in the community and voluntary sector were also concerned that the understanding of community development needed to be reclaimed. The use of the term was seen as having been distorted, partly by the increasing emphasis on economic regeneration at the cost of social regeneration and partly by the shift of focus away from grass roots groups. Community development workers

needed to be supported by an organisation which is able to commit itself to this approach and, in turn, to provide a vehicle for community issues to be expressed and responded to at strategic level. Investment in development work of this nature emerged as a significant area where neighbourhood renewal could both promote a more sustained and community based vision and momentum and help fill in the gaps left by other regeneration programmes at the very local level.

As well as greater support for the least resourced community groups, an increase in community development support at local level was seen as addressing the issue of lack of any organisation in neighbourhoods. Assisting local activists to come together to develop groups and activities on the issues they identify is a key skill in community development (Mayo, 1994; Popple, 1995; Taylor, 1994). Although there are active groups in some neighbourhoods in both Penwith and Kerrier, others currently lack any kind of residents' association. Also, where there *are* groups, they are seeking to be more widely supported.

If community involvement is to progress, therefore, resources need to be applied to the various levels of community organisation to assist capacity building. The Community Empowerment Fund will be an important resource to assist representation and involvement by the community and voluntary sector, while the Community Chest will assist some local groups. However, neither of these will obviate the need for more sustained support for development, which facilitates the slow and complex processes involved.

However, it is not just the 'community' which needs to change and develop. Statutory partners also need to change attitudes and give up some of their power (Chanan *et al*, 1999). Different agencies will have different contributions to make depending on the area but all statutory agencies need to embrace change on a par with the change expected in communities. The importance of training for statutory as well as community partners in any process of community or service user involvement has been highlighted in various research studies (JRF, 1999).

The statutory sector does embrace a number of inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Area Child Protection Committee and the Special Needs Accommodation Panel. However, these are not widely inclusive of the voluntary and community sectors. Moreover, the research found that some of the services responding most frequently to disadvantage, such as health and social services, find any diversion of staff resources from front line services towards wider partnership bodies to be almost impossible to manage. One possibility discussed in this connection was a form of outreach - not just to communities but also to these hard pressed services - so that they might at least participate via an intermediary in the development of partnership mechanisms which can more effectively link statutory, voluntary and community effort. However, active involvement in neighbourhood renewal will require management commitment from these services.

A way forward which was discussed by a number of respondents (although disputed by others) was the development of a process of neighbourhood management whereby all services for a particular neighbourhood would be linked and the coordination of change in mainstream services promoted. This was suggested in various forms, from 'one stop shops' to outreach services which facilitate a more integrated access. Both

Government guidance (DETR, 2000) and research studies (JRF, 2000d) point to a range of possible models which could be adapted to local circumstances.

Inclusive Approaches to Involving the Community

All communities are diverse and all will have complex dynamics (Anastacio *et al*, 2000; Burns and Taylor, 2000). Some elements of this diversity in West Cornwall have been referred to in this report as the research sought perspectives on issues of inclusion or exclusion at regional and local levels. This section aims to highlight some particular aspects, none of which could be adequately explored during the period of fieldwork but which are offered here as pointers for future planning.

Housing Tenure

Social housing predominates in many deprived areas but some interviewees commented that the residents of privately rented accommodation could be even more disadvantaged for a variety of reasons, including the greater age and poorer repair of the properties and the increased isolation of the tenants. The *Kerrier Housing Needs Survey* found that, of the accommodation considered 'unsatisfactory' by respondents for the needs of everyone living there, 33% in urban sub-areas and 15% in rural sub-areas was privately rented. Figures for 'unsatisfactory' owner-occupied property in rural sub-areas were even higher (John Herington Associates, 2001). A number of interviewees and participants in the two conferences attended during the research period, stressed the importance of including both private tenants and owner-occupiers in residents' associations and other community development activities.

Disability and Access

Disabled people, as elsewhere, face great obstacles to participation, in the form of non-inclusive attitudes, lack of access to buildings, transport and communication within meetings. Some authorities were seen as needing to make considerable improvement in this area and make progress in implementing the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 but others and the community and voluntary sector were seen as making progress on access issues.

Gender

Poor women face multiple disadvantages and women subject to violence are likely to experience further deprivations of income, housing and self-esteem. Refuges and support organisations can provide opportunities to rebuild confidence and skills through mutual support with other women (Hague and Malos, 1993). In turn, this can enable women to become involved in and contribute to their communities. However, such services are under-resourced in Kerrier and Penwith and there is no generally accessible women's centre.

Cornish Identity

In the view of some interviewees, Cornish people are themselves an oppressed minority ethnic group. This report has considered some of the specifically Cornish dimensions of poverty and deprivation and inequalities experienced by Cornish people. The activities of some community and cultural groups are underpinned by an aim of restoring pride in Cornwall and creatively exploring the various dimensions of Cornish identity and culture. The groups of this kind which were interviewed for this research adopted an inclusive approach to working with the whole community regardless of origin and made an important contribution to renewal.

Minority Ethnic Groups

Other minority ethnic groups within Cornwall also received attention from interviewees. One such group was Gypsies and Travellers, both on site and in housing in estates or villages. In both situations, they experience hostility and discrimination and are often actively excluded from local communities. This reflects their experience throughout the UK (Kenrick and Clark, 1999; Morris and Clements, 1999). Gypsy/Traveller children are settled in various schools in the area, although one such school is under threat of closure. Gypsies who have moved into housing often find that their cultural needs are ignored, as if their ethnicity and culture were only associated with travelling (Cemlyn, 2000; Thomas and Campbell, 1992). Because of the hostility, the Traveller Education Service reported that many Gypsies seek to hide their identity and refrain from any overt activities to celebrate and develop their culture. Contradictions abound in the legal and administrative treatment of Gypsy and Traveller ethnicity, for instance, both Romany Gypsies and Irish Travellers are covered as ethnic groups by the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000*. However, they are often invisible in ethnic monitoring and in the Census (Morris, 1999) and in studies of minority ethnic groups (*eg* SEU, 2000).

There was also some discussion of the needs of black, mixed parentage and other minority ethnic children in predominantly white areas and the importance of supportive work to promote inclusion. National research shows that dual heritage children are disproportionately represented amongst vulnerable children and more likely to receive state care than other children, including black children (Boushel, 1996). Children (and adults) need community protection from racism as from other forms of abuse. Self-protection is promoted by the development of a positive identity which, for mixed parentage or dual heritage children, can be complex and is a dynamic and changing process (Katz, 1996). A research study for the Commission for Racial Equality in 1993 found that minority ethnic groups in the South West experienced marked levels of racism and isolation but that their presence and experiences were often ignored by authorities and little support was offered (Jay, 1992). There were also references in the research to asylum seekers who have been dispersed to the South West (Audit Commission, 2000; Garvie, 2001) whose needs may be hidden or ignored.

Incomers

From a different perspective, a community strength which may perhaps be overlooked is the potential contribution of incomers to voluntary and community activity. Overwhelmingly, incomers were presented as part of a problem during this research but it is not a development over which control can easily be exercised and it may be helpful to identify more of the resources which they also represent. One interview clearly demonstrated the skills knowledge and enthusiasm which retired incomers may have to assist the promotion of community groups and developments. Another unexplored area may be the fundraising contribution represented by incomers either through activity or donation.

Young People

The potential contribution of young people also needs to be further considered. This was a section of the population which many respondents referred to as marginalised within communities. In work with young people, despite a generalised lack of youth

work resources, there are developing initiatives in Kerrier and Penwith to promote involvement, including the promotion of youth forums, the beginning of work to link community based youth forums and school councils and the planning of a young people's regeneration conference. A wide range of mechanisms to promote involvement has been found to be valuable elsewhere (JRF, 1998; SEU, 2000).

Other research has found positive benefits in youth forums but also some difficulties and highlighted the need for a clear sense of purpose, engagement with adult decision-makers and wider decision-making structures and the development of democratic structures of accountability (JRF, 1998; Doy *et al*, 2001). Considerable support is needed to promote youth involvement, which needs greater resources than for equivalent adult processes and structures (JRF, 1998), may take some years to bear results and needs community development as well as youth work input (Doy *et al*, 2001). The provision of mobile facilities has been found advantageous in rural areas and there may be a need to combine referral with self-referral if 'harder to reach' young people are to be included (Doy *et al*, 2001). Young people from minority ethnic groups are additionally disadvantaged in terms of involvement and further measures are needed (SEU, 2000). Some of the community activities in Kerrier and Penwith, discussed during fieldwork for this research, focused on children's involvement as well as that of young people and the importance of this area of work is also highlighted in the literature (Henderson, 1995; Speak, 2000).

CONCLUSION

This was a preliminary community consultation. Its speed and scope have limited its extent and depth, however, with the assistance of the Research Steering Group and research participants, it has been possible to include a range of perspectives across various dimensions: geographical; rural - urban; statutory - voluntary and community; neighbourhood, district or county level; and focus of activity or service, *eg* health, housing, arts, education. The research was contemporaneous with developments within the Local Strategic Partnership and particularly in relation to the participation of the voluntary and community sector, as expressed in the community conference in November 2001 and the LSP conference in January 2002. Findings from interviews about ideas and strategies for development were therefore tested and taken further by developments in practice.

This preliminary consultation found, with one exception, that the neighbourhoods identified by respondents as deprived matched those which the statistical analyses have also identified. In terms of the problems faced by priority neighbourhoods, the research found a significant degree of consensus on major issues relating to the Neighbourhood Renewal themes of employment, housing, health, education and crime, and about their underlying socio-economic causes.

There were divergent views on some other issues arising from different experiences. Some of these were substantive issues, such as greater transport problems and fewer funding resources in rural as against urban areas. Others related to more to perceptual issues and could be broadly divided into views of community attitudes and behaviour and views of authority/agency attitudes and behaviour. Interestingly, some of the negative views of both 'parties' were similar, for instance, focusing too narrowly,

having low aspirations and insufficient imagination and a lack of willingness to change and experiment with new opportunities and ways of doing things. These negative views were not a uniform picture and there was also plenty of evidence of residents and agency workers reaching out to each other, bridging gaps and being willing to learn and develop in partnership. The research findings themselves have reflected a number of challenges and critiques to any culture of blame, while clearly identifying the need for change. Remedies to the mismatch of expectations between agencies and communities have suggested themselves in the form of enhanced communication with local communities and increased development support.

There were varying views of the advantages and disadvantages of other regeneration programmes. The various initiatives represent both opportunities and potential dangers of further fragmenting and dividing communities. Clearly, the programmes are having a positive impact in many ways but the focus of this research on the most disadvantaged and often very small neighbourhoods highlighted a number of ways in which some programmes can increase inequalities for the most deprived neighbourhoods. These were identified by officials as well as residents and concern the focus on large capital projects involving complex applications and matched funding; the potential for fragmentation because of a multiplicity of initiatives; and possible disillusion if tangible results are not seen following consultations. Anastacio *et al* (2000:41-42) refer to a form of:

> "*'social Darwinism'…as those who are able [to] develop knowledge and skills to negotiate the guidelines and procedures of regeneration funding 'win out' over smaller or less experienced groups (particularly unfunded groups with no paid staff or professional support workers)*"

Such considerations apply even more to neighbourhoods without any form of organised community group.

There was considerable convergence about ways forward for involving local people in neighbourhood renewal and ensuring that resources are focused on the most deprived neighbourhoods. Enthusiasm, commitment and energy for these tasks were very much in evidence. There was also a rich though patchy foundation in terms of the diversity of community and consultation activities across the area which need to be validated and built upon.

There was a resounding emphasis on the need for more resources to be focused on local and sustained community development, including youth work. These need to be supported by committed organisational structures which recognise the need for a sustained pace and can assist in providing a vehicle for community views to be heard and responded to at strategic level.

The role of health in providing the initial liaison and springboard for development in some of the most disadvantaged communities - because of the trust and access to all families which their role involves - was an important addition to this debate.

In the most disadvantaged communities, a very local and personal level of liaison and communication is also needed. This message from the research applied both to

capacity building in communities and to the promotion of access to existing services and employment and training opportunities.

Community development can provide support to neighbourhoods which are currently lacking formal local organisation in order to assist local networks and groups to develop in response to local needs. It can also assist the smallest and least resourced groups to begin to access information, funding and wider networks and opportunities.

As a complement to the larger funding programmes, accessible funding schemes need to be developed which do not require complex procedures and matched funding. This can assist small projects which, in turn, can begin to make tangible improvements in communities and promote further engagement.

Community involvement in neighbourhood renewal needs to aim towards equal partnerships at all levels. Both statutory and community partners need opportunities for training and skill development for this partnership work. High levels of commitment and imagination were being demonstrated in the pursuit of this task during the research period. However, the timescales imposed by Government deadlines may conflict with the requirements for sustained locally-led development and partners will need to be alert to these potential tensions. Research elsewhere has shown that community representatives can become the focus of conflicting pressures *"being squeezed between community expectations, on the one hand, and, in practice, not being listened to on the board, on the other"* (Anastacio *et al*, 2000:23). There can be tensions between *"a first generation of community leaders, recruited at speed to legitimate a regeneration bid, and a second generation, who emerge as a result of local capacity building"* (JRF, 2000c:1). Short cuts to identifying community 'representatives' can lead to disregard of a diversity of views and experiences within communities and further stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Mayo, 1997.) Representation needs to be a dynamic process responsive to changing needs and developments.

Some elements of the diversity present within West Cornish communities have been discussed earlier. Development support and consultation mechanisms will need to pay particular heed to these issues and specific support put in place to promote the involvement of the most marginalised groups. Some attention is already being given to increasing the participation of young people in regeneration but other marginalised or minority groups may become further excluded if the process of neighbourhood renewal does not specifically address their needs. The positive contribution of some groups and agencies may also be overlooked if not specifically included, for example, Cornish cultural groups, faith groups and trades unions.

This stage of the research has not focused in detail on the relationship of mainstream services to neighbourhood renewal but the process will be jeopardised without their active commitment. Some difficulties were found on the part of some key agencies to undertake further involvement in partnerships in the face of pressing day-to-day demands. This will need to be addressed at the highest level in these agencies.

While this research involved a preliminary community consultation, a full community consultation or community profile would involve a very different exercise. Hawtin *et al* (1994) distinguish between needs assessments, community consultations, social

audits and community profiles. They suggest that a community profile involves three elements of being more comprehensive of community life than an agency based needs assessment; of covering needs and resources, being similar in this to a social audit; and of involving the community.   They present community consultations as being more usually related to proposals for action which have already been developed. In practice, terminology varies and elements of the different models indicated here are likely to be drawn on in any one exercise.

A model which is helpful in linking community profiling with community development strategies is outlined by Burton (1993) in which a community profile is characterised by being based in the local community and by the active participation of the community in planning and developing the profile, setting aims and objectives for action and evaluating the outcome.   It is argued that this approach to community profiling can be geared to identifying needs, allocating resources, encouraging participation, achieving greater collaboration between the community and agencies and promoting personal and professional development.   This study showed that a number of approaches to community consultation have been undertaken in Kerrier and Penwith, variously prioritising needs assessment, consultation, community involvement and capacity building.   These include the Fun Day approaches to consultation and surveys by Penwith Community Development Trust (2001) and Penwith Housing Association (1999). Any future community-based profiling exercise needs to build on such initiatives.

An overall conclusion from this stage of the research is that neighbourhood renewal could have a key role to play - in the context of other funding programmes and services, in providing development work and promoting linking mechanisms which are based at a very local level. These could build towards strategic perspectives from the bottom up, drawing on the insights of the community and voluntary sector and reaching out to the diversity of communities, to promote sustainable partnerships with the statutory sector.