

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY OPTIONS

The purpose of this section is to illustrate some of the major conclusions and potential broad policy options that the LSP may wish to consider. This report is designed to help the LSP develop an evidence based strategy for neighbourhood renewal, within the framework prescribed by the Government. It is not appropriate to provide detailed anti-poverty advice in this report, however readers with an interest in these matters should refer to the University of Bristol's previous report on *Poverty and Deprivation in West Cornwall in the 1990s* which contains extensive anti-poverty advice specific to the west Cornwall context (Payne *et al*, 1996).

The primary purpose of this report is to provide the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) with the best scientific advice on the location of the poorest areas in west Cornwall at small area level e.g. using areas that are smaller than electoral wards. This required a considerable amount of new research work as no predominantly rural area in the country had previously successfully managed to do this within the neighbourhood renewal framework. Chapter two describes the statistical and geographical Information System (GIS) methods used to achieve the identification of priority areas and chapter three provides details of the consultations undertaken by the research team to validate and expand on the statistical analyses. An index of multiple deprivation was constructed at 1991 Census Enumeration District level using 7 indicators which both reflect the Government's priorities for neighbourhood renewal and the situation in west Cornwall. The indicators used were;

- ❑ Poverty rate (*Income*)
- ❑ Child poverty rate (*Supplementary*)
- ❑ Unemployment rate (*Employment*)
- ❑ Percent of people aged 18 and over with no post school qualifications (*Education*)
- ❑ Limiting Long Term Illness/Disability rate (*Health*)
- ❑ Percent of households with no central heating (*Housing*)
- ❑ Percent of households with no car (*Access to services*)

A statistical GIS technique (Inverse Distance Weighting) was then applied to these data to identify priority areas with high concentrations of need. These priority areas are mainly concentrated in the Camborne, Pool, Redruth area, Penzance area, St Ives area, Hayle area, Newlyn area, Helston area, St Just area, Porthleven area, Hayle & Towans, Troon area and Pendeen areas (see Appendix II for details). However, there is also some evidence of priority need in the Lizard area

The stakeholder consultation found, with the exception of the Lizard area, that the neighbourhoods identified by respondents as deprived matched those which the statistical analyses also identified.

There was widespread agreement on the need to 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 a resounding emphasis on the need for more resources to be focused on local and sustained community development, including youth work. Which should be supported by committed organisational structures which recognise the need for continued work over a period of years and can help the local community get its views heard and responded to at strategic level.

Chapter three and four also looked at the important issue of access to services particularly in the more rural areas. Although Cornwall has slightly greater service provision than other rural areas in England, this does not imply that the *quality* of local services is always adequate to meet local needs. The consultation exercise (Chapter Three) identified significant gaps in local service provision (*eg* in relation to local public transport provision), as well as a need for the modernisation of many community facilities (*eg* village and community halls).

Policy Options

Strong local communities have long been recognised as pivotal in defending the population against the effects of poverty. In the 1930s, Winifred Holtby identified local government as “*in essence the first line of defense thrown up by the community against our common enemies - poverty, sickness, ignorance, isolation, mental derangement and social maladjustment.*” It is a fundamental duty of policy makers, according to Professor Julian Le Grand, to “*be more aware of the distributional consequences of all forms of public policy*”.

The primary challenge for the LSP is to integrate the neighbourhood renewal strategy into a broader-based West Cornish anti-poverty strategy otherwise all that will be achieved is a disjointed set of specific initiatives. The Local Government Anti Poverty Unit argued in the 1990s that:

“The real challenge is to look at, and change as necessary, the whole of local authority activity, in direct relation to the needs of the community it is there to serve. With a focus on the community - both the individual and collective needs - it is logical to respond in an integrated (corporate) way and even more logical to, draw up strategies for action rather than responding in a piecemeal way.”

In 21st Century jargon, what is needed is a ‘joined-up’ strategy not ‘initiative-itis’.

In order to have long term success, neighbourhood renewal must result in an improvement and increase in mainstream services to the priority areas. The NRF strategy must tackle the difficult problem of refocusing and changing mainstream services which are currently being delivered by a wide range of organisations. Neighbourhood renewal action should be integral to mainstream programmes. Many initiatives have been marginalised in the past and have therefore had only a limited success. Although this research did not focus in detail on the relationship of mainstream services to neighbourhood renewal, the consultation identified some difficulties on the part of some key mainstream services to undertake further involvement in partnerships in the face of pressing day-to-day demands. These will need to be addressed at the highest level in these agencies.

Two fundamentals are necessary as foundations for a successful strategy. Firstly, the budget process must be comprehensible to all stakeholders and the general public, to the extent that LSP members are able to evaluate actual and projected spending against community needs. Funding mechanisms need to be understandable if they are to be accessible. Secondly, sound research is essential to inform the targeting and resourcing process, starting with a deprivation profile of the local authority areas (Wheeler 1995). This report and the *Poverty and Deprivation in West Cornwall in the 1990s* (Payne *et al*, 1996) provide the LSP with the necessary deprivation profile of priority areas.

One option the LSP may wish to consider is to use NRF monies to mainly fund revenue expenditure in deprived neighbourhoods. Many of the other area-based anti-poverty funds available in West Cornwall are often mainly for capital projects. However, the effectiveness of a capital project can often be limited if revenue monies are not also available. It might be possible to produce an integrated anti-poverty neighbourhood strategy if NRF funds are spent primarily on people not buildings and money from other sources is used to fund necessary infrastructure work.

In the past, a lot of neighbourhood funding has been concentrated on large scale projects to the detriment of some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods which lacked strong community leadership. The LSP may wish to consider using some NRF funds specifically for smaller scale projects – not all communities want to try to manage a £250,000 project in the first instance.

The key challenge for the LSP is how to provide support for local people and groups so that they can become fully involved in neighbourhood renewal. In particular the neighbourhood renewal strategy will need to address how to support priority neighbourhoods which lack organised groups, how to support small neighbourhood groups and how to promote the involvement of the most marginalised and discriminated groups within communities. Community involvement in neighbourhood renewal needs to aim towards equal partnerships at all levels.