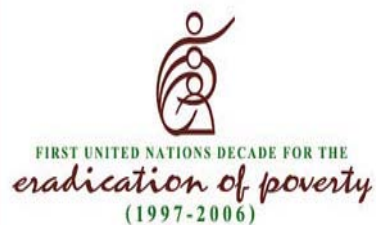


# RURAL PROOFING AND BEST PRACTICE IN NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL

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# CONTENTS

<b>Introduction: Understanding Rural Poverty</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Phase One: Overview of Existing Policies, Targets and Programmes</b>	<b>7</b>
1. What is Rural Proofing?	7
2. The Local Policy Context	10
3. Local Strategies for Neighbourhood Renewal	12
4. Targets and Indicators of Progress	13
4.1 Children, Young People and Adult Education	15
4.2 Community Safety	16
4.3 Health and Well-Being	17
4.4 Housing	17
5. NRF Programme Delivery in West Cornwall	18
5.1 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Expenditure: Apr.2001- Apr.2004	19
5.2 Community Chest & Community Learning Chest Funding	22
5.3 Survey of NRF Projects	26
5.3.1 Introduction	26
5.3.2 Key Findings	27
A. Social, Economic and Cultural Issues	27
B. Who Are Rural Disadvantaged People?	30
C. The Process of Rural Regeneration	31
<b>Phase Two: Lessons from Best Practice and Policy Implications</b>	<b>34</b>
1. Introduction	35
2. Methodology and Analysis	36
3. Presentation and Discussion of Key Findings	37
3.1 Funding Mechanisms	37
3.2 Exchange and Inter-Agency Work	40
3.3 Bottom-Up, Community-Based Development	40
3.4 Service Provision in the West Cornish Context	42
3.5 Diversity and Inclusion	43
3.6 Skills, Leadership and Commitment	44
4. The Case Studies	45
Case Study 1: Curriculum Matters	45
Case Study 2: Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline	46
Case Study 3: Gwinear Village Hall Committee	47
Case Study 4: Home Health Zones	50
Case Study 5: Modern Accessible Midwifery	51
Case Study 6: Museums Education Project and Oral History Project	52
Case Study 7: Nancegollan Youth Club	56
Case Study 8: Pendeen Community Project	58
Case Study 9: Phoenix Project	60
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>62</b>

<i>References</i>	70
<i>Appendices</i>	74
<i>Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire</i>	74
<i>Appendix 2: Interview Topic Guide</i>	79

## INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING RURAL POVERTY

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century poverty remains a major and deep-rooted problem both in the UK and across western industrialised nations. Alongside increasing social polarisation, the spatial concentration of poverty in particular neighbourhoods and on certain estates has also increased, despite a raft of national initiatives aimed at combating poverty since the 1960s. Although such initiatives have generally been targeted at inner city areas and industrial, urban communities, growing levels of poverty can be found in all localities - including rural communities and traditionally 'affluent' areas (*see eg.* Chandola et al., 2000; Chapman et al., 1998). Studies cited in Shucksmith (1990) and Cloke et al. (1994), for example, document the social recomposition of rural communities arising from changes in the rural labour market and resulting in an outflow of young people, in-migration of more affluent households and the subsequent isolation of the rural poor.

However, increasing evidence of poverty and deprivation in 'rural' areas raises a range of challenges for the development of effective area-based rural anti-poverty initiatives. Firstly, as a rule the terminology 'urban' and 'rural' has no fundamental definitional basis (ONS, 1997; SERRL, 2001a). For example, a recent major review of urban and rural definitions commissioned by the DETR identifies ten different approaches currently in use within UK public policy (SERRL, 2001b). A range of measures is available based upon settlement size, population density, land-use, service accessibility, and multivariate classification of household characteristics. The categorisation of urban and rural areas in large measure therefore reflects the approach adopted as well as the choice of spatial units used to measure rurality.

Secondly, the hidden and dispersed nature of poverty in rural areas has often made rural poverty difficult to address through area-based schemes and local anti-poverty initiatives (Shucksmith, 2000). Poverty in rural areas tends to be less concentrated than in urban neighbourhoods with small clusters of deprivation existing alongside more affluent areas. This means that it is difficult to effectively target anti-poverty measures at poor rural households using area-based approaches. The 'rediscovery' of rural poverty in recent years, and an increasing acknowledgement of the problems faced by rural communities, partly reflects the availability of better information at a small area level. The small scale of rural settlements means that pockets of deprivation can be hidden when information is collected at a local authority or even ward level. Taking accounts of the distinctive needs of rural areas in policy development thus involves a commitment to the collection, monitoring and evaluation of spatially disaggregated data if the problem of rural poverty is to be effectively identified and tackled.

Thirdly, the *nature* of deprivation in rural areas also itself differs significantly from that of industrial conurbations and inner-city communities, and this should inform subsequent policy responses. Poor access to jobs and services due to isolation, high transport costs and inadequate public transport is far bigger issues for rural

than large-scale urban communities. Whilst rural areas are generally characterised by lower levels of registered unemployment, there are pockets of high unemployment and other employment disadvantage in rural areas, particularly in isolated locations. The seasonality of work together with low wages and low rates of economic activity, are also major problems for many rural areas.

Similarly, housing deprivation in rural areas is often manifested in increasingly unaffordable housing stock and not simply in its physical dilapidation. The demand for owner-occupied housing is often very high, partly due to new household formation and the tendency towards smaller households, but also as a result of demand from relatively affluent incomers and second-home buyers. However, the supply is often restricted and prices tend to be high, generating problems of affordability and hidden homelessness for those on low incomes. Furthermore, the proportion of social housing to rent is low in rural areas, not only because of right-to-buy sales but also because of historically lower rates of Local Authority and Housing Association provision. This restricts further the choice available to those seeking affordable housing in rural areas.

Clearly, rural areas themselves differ considerably as a result of their unique histories and development. There are marked differences between communities in remote rural areas and those nearer to conurbations. Within rural England as a whole, low incomes, educational deprivation, poor health and unemployment are greater in remoter rural areas than in more accessible 'commuter' areas (Countryside Agency, 2003b). However, the research literature also demonstrates the distinctiveness of rural poverty and the common problems facing low income households in rural areas (*see eg.* Bruce et al., 1995; Chandola et al., 2000; Dunn et al., 1998; Hodge et al., 2000; Martin et al., 2000; Payne et al., 1996, Shucksmith, 2000; Shucksmith et al., 1996). The key features of rural deprivation are summarised in Box 1 (*below*):

### **Box 1: Distinctive Features of Rural Disadvantage**

#### **1. Transport**

- Lack of affordable public transport
- Infrequency of public transport services
- Problems of accessibility for elderly and disabled users
- High proportion of disposable income spent on private transport
- Additional unit costs of goods and services (food, fuel, utilities)

#### **2. Access to services, opportunities and information**

- Difficulties in accessing employment and educational opportunities
- Less provision of basic community services (*eg.* healthcare, education, financial services, cultural and leisure activities)
- Difficulties in accessing information (*eg.* welfare and benefits advice, debt counselling, *etc.*).

#### **3. Housing**

- High cost of housing relative to incomes
- Shortage of social housing provision
- Upward pressure on house prices exerted by second and holiday homes
- Poor state of repair of housing stock (*eg.* damp, inadequate heating, insulation, *etc.*).

#### **4. Income and employment**

- Low wages
- Seasonality of employment
- Longer working hours
- Low rates of economic activity
- Low rates of benefit take-up
- Difficulties in accessing affordable childcare facilities
- Higher cost of living in rural areas.

#### **5. Other**

- Isolation of rural poor in otherwise affluent areas
- Greater stigma attached to poverty in small, rural communities
- Invisibility of rural poverty in area statistics
- Lower per capita public expenditure in many rural areas (Hale, 1997)

Ensuring that local, regional and national policies are audited with respect to their impact in rural areas is at the heart of the rural proofing agenda. Taking account of the distinctive nature and dynamics of poverty in rural areas in the design, delivering and evaluation of anti-poverty initiatives is thus clearly essential if rural deprivation is to be seriously addressed. This report seeks to contribute towards this goal by considering the ways in which area-based regeneration initiatives can take account of the distinctive profile of rural deprivation in the design, delivery and evaluation of anti-poverty interventions. The specific focus here is an investigation of the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Renewal programme as a vehicle for tackling poverty and deprivation in rural West Cornwall.

The research described here comprises two phases. Phase One of this project focuses upon evaluation of the local policy environment of Neighbourhood Renewal policies and programmes in West Cornwall. The research reported here provides an overview of existing programmes, policies, and targets based on documentary analysis, analysis of project data, interviews with LSP members, and a survey of NRF supported projects. Specifically, Phase One considers:

- ❑ The appropriateness of existing targets and methods of evaluation in addressing rural issues and rural disadvantage
- ❑ The adequacy of existing policies in tackling rural deprivation, especially in relation to specific themes (*eg.* health, education, *etc.*) and population sub-groups (*eg.* young people, lone parents, *etc.*)
- ❑ Options for the future development of locally tailored policies for improving the effectiveness of programme monitoring and delivery.

The overall rationale for rural proofing and its application in the context of rural regeneration policy is presented in Section One. Section Two provides a brief overview of the local policy context of Neighbourhood Renewal policies, projects and targets focused upon addressing the needs of less well-off people living in rural areas. Section Three outlines some key principles in the development of local strategies for Neighbourhood Renewal, which are sensitive to the needs and aspirations of rural communities. The development of appropriate targets, programme monitoring, evaluation and indicators of progress in tackling rural poverty are reviewed in Section Four. In Section Five, an analysis of NRF programme delivery is presented, based upon NRF, Community Chest and Community Learning Fund project data, as well as interviews with key LSP members. Finally, Section Six reviews findings from the survey of NRF supported projects.

Phase Two of this project is based upon more detailed investigation of a sample of nine active NRF projects to examine the effectiveness of programme delivery in addressing the needs of disadvantaged rural communities. The evaluation presented here draws upon examples of Best Practice in the delivery of local NRF projects in order to:

- ❑ Identify effective strategies for promoting rural regeneration both in the West Cornish context and in relation to wider rural issues
- ❑ Identify mechanisms for encouraging community involvement in the regeneration process
- ❑ Identify mechanisms for building and sustaining local capacity beyond the completion of the NRF programme

## PHASE ONE: OVERVIEW OF EXISTING POLICIES, TARGETS & PROGRAMMES

### 1. What Is Rural Proofing?

The distinctive nature of rural deprivation raises a number of challenges for regeneration initiatives in rural areas. Firstly, it is essential that existing poverty reduction targets be constructed in ways, which ensure that policies benefit the whole population - including rural areas. The introduction of floor targets is one means of ensuring a geographically equitable approach to combating disadvantage (*see Section 5*). Secondly, demonstrating progress in reducing poverty and disadvantage involves consideration of a range of additional policy options in rural areas to address the distinctive needs of poor people in rural areas. For example, improving the availability of affordable public transport is central to raising labour market participation rates in rural areas, but of somewhat less significance in urban areas. Other policy areas not traditionally considered 'rural issues' nevertheless present a range of distinct challenges for rural policy makers. For example, supporting the needs of ethnic minority citizens, families and communities living in rural areas raises specific issues for rural policy as a result of: the comparative lack of sensitivity to the needs of ethnic minorities from public service providers; relative isolation from support services, self-help and community groups; relative lack of information on services (including translation), and; additional costs in accessing support services (LGA, 2001; Dhalech, 1999).

Programmes, strategies and policies should be therefore be audited in respect of their likely impact for people on low incomes within rural communities. A commitment to 'thinking rural' has been most clearly outlined as a key strategic priority within the UK government's 2000 Rural White Paper, *Our Countryside – The Future* (DETR, 2000). As the 2000 White Paper acknowledges, the impact of government policies on rural communities has not always been fully considered, and they have not always been adjusted to take account of specific rural problems. Systematic assessment of the rural dimension of all government policies as they are developed and implemented nationally, regionally and locally is outlined as a central goal of rural policy development by the 2000 Rural White Paper. Rural proofing therefore involves a commitment to developing and implementing policies in ways which are sensitive to the differential impact of policy in rural areas, and adjust accordingly for the distinctive circumstances of rural communities (DETR, 2000: 158).

At the national level, the 2000 Spending Review (HM Treasury, 2000) outlined a range of mechanisms for improving the development and delivery of policy in rural areas. These measures accord a central role to the Countryside Agency as a 'rural champion', advising Government and its partners across the range of rural issues, conducting research and highlighting, piloting and spreading best practice. The Countryside Agency has an especial responsibility advising policy makers



within central, local and regional government about the rural dimensions of policy development.

The Countryside Agency's rural proofing checklist (Box 2, *below*) is designed to assist policy makers in considering whether policies may have differential impacts in rural areas.

Box 2: Countryside Agency Rural Proofing Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy affect the availability of public and private services?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the policy to be delivered through existing service outlets, such as schools, banks and GP surgeries?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the cost of delivery be higher in rural areas where clients are more widely dispersed or economies of scale are harder to achieve?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy affect travel needs or the ease and cost of travel?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy rely on communicating information to clients?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the policy to be delivered by the private sector or through a public-private partnership?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy rely on infrastructure (eg. broadband ICT, main roads, utilities) for delivery?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy impact on rural businesses, including the self-employed?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy have a particular impact on land-based industries and, therefore, on rural economies and environments?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy affect those on low wages or in part-time or seasonal employment?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the policy to be targeted at the disadvantaged?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy rely on local institutions for delivery?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Does the policy depend on new buildings or development sites?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Is the policy likely to impact on the quality and character of the natural and built rural landscape?</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Will the policy impact on people wishing to reach and use the countryside as a place for recreation and enjoyment?</li></ul>

Source: Countryside Agency ([www.countryside.gov.uk/ruralproofing](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/ruralproofing))

Progress in rural proofing within central government has so far been patchy. There is a specific concern that many central government Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets could be met by improving delivery in *urban* areas alone, potentially at the expense of rural delivery (Countryside Agency, 2003). The first rural PSA has been introduced by DEFRA with the aim of reducing the gap in productivity between the worst performing quartile of rural areas and the English rural median by 2006, and improving the accessibility of services for rural people. As a result of the 2000 Rural White Paper, DEFRA is also charged with monitoring progress towards the new Rural Services Standards (RSS). As in previous years the 2003 RSS focus upon the accessibility of services to rural communities, and in particular: primary health care, post-16 education, public and community transport, access to cash, e-Government information, and the performance of Local Education Authorities (DEFRA, 2003).

### Box 3: Rural Proofing & Sure Start – A Case Study

In collaboration with the DfEE, the Countryside Agency has been working to improve the delivery of Sure Start in rural areas. Changes to Sure Start will make it more suitable for rural communities where children living in poverty are dispersed over a wide geographical area. Earlier research by the Countryside Agency suggested changes to Sure Start criteria to help rural areas participate:

- ❑ Greater flexibility over numbers
- ❑ A broader understanding of the term ‘coherent neighbourhood’
- ❑ Appreciation of the higher per capita cost of providing services for dispersed rural populations
- ❑ Recognition of the low existing service base on which to create new services and facilities.

Source: DETR, 2000: 159.

Whilst progress in rural proofing within central government has been patchy, there has been considerable progress in rural proofing at a regional level and considerable interest at a local level, notably amongst local authorities (Countryside Agency, 2003). Progress in rural proofing amongst Government Offices for the Regions has also been achieved in liaison with a range of regional partners, such as Rural Forums, Regional Development Agencies, Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Learning and Skills Councils, and local authorities. Outputs so far include:

- ❑ Mobile service provision (eg. Connexions advisers, Learning & Skills Councils, UK Online)
- ❑ Developing rural data and research (eg. affordable housing, regional planning)
- ❑ Funding for rural locations (eg. rural crime projects)
- ❑ Use of the internet to deliver policies (eg. Learning & Skills Council, UK Online)
- ❑ Rural initiatives (eg. rural transport initiatives, Learning & Skills Council, access to higher education)
- ❑ Modifying priorities (eg. Regional Development Agency)

However, there is a particular need for the development of rural proofing targets at a local level, for example, through the inclusion of a rural dimension within existing local authority PSA's. Rural proofing is especially pertinent to the goals of Local Strategic Partnerships since engaging with local communities is vital to the effective development and delivery of area-based initiatives. To assist in this goal, the Countryside Agency has developed a checklist to help LSP members to review partnership objectives and procedures to better take account of the needs of rural communities summarised in Box 4 (*below*):

#### Box 4: LSP/Community Strategy Rural Checklist

- Are representatives from organisations, which operate in rural areas involved?
  - Do you have representatives, which reflect the diversity between and within rural communities?
  - Does the LSP have a system to support the membership of less well resourced members?
  - Will the LSP deliver objectives across two tier authority areas?
  - Will the LSP work with parish councils and parish meetings?
  - Does the LSP/Community Strategy assume too much of the voluntary representatives?
  - Are links being made with other strategies, which are relevant to meeting rural needs?
  - Does the LSP/Community Strategy have a strategy for consulting rural communities and minority groups within these communities?
  - Have you considered what skills and resources communities may need to engage in the consultation process?
  - Has the LSP/Community Strategy considered how it is going to inform rural communities?
  - Will people in rural areas have equitable access to services?
- 
- Does the LSP/Community Strategy have a strategy for reaching socially excluded groups and individuals in rural areas?
  - Does the strategy consider the travel requirements for access to and from rural areas?
  - Will the vision address the needs of rural businesses?
  - Is there a vision for sustainable development in the countryside?
  - Does the strategy take account of local character and distinctiveness?
  - Does the strategy provide a framework for the planning, design and management of open green space and the countryside around towns?
  - Is the LSP/Community Strategy monitoring methodology detailed enough to determine the effects of implementation in different geographical areas?

Source: Countryside Agency, 2003b: 2-7.

## 2. The Local Policy Context

The 2000 Local Government Act reinforces local authorities role as community leaders by giving them a duty to prepare community strategies, specific powers to promote social economic and environmental well being, and by requiring local authorities to develop more participatory political management arrangements. At the county level, a Cornwall-wide community strategy has been formulated, providing a joint framework for the development of localised, 'nested' strategies by local authorities (CCC, 2003). The overall themes, common to both county and local authority level strategies, involve a focus upon three key areas:

- Individual Well Being
- Strong Communities
- Quality Living Environment

Local community strategies for Kerrier (KDC, 2003) and Penwith (PDC, 2003) provide a framework for a wide variety of local, county-wide and regional initiatives. Box 5 (*below*) illustrates the range of initiatives, strategies and projects

focused upon social inclusion and neighbourhood regeneration in the West Cornwall area:

<b>Box 5: Social Inclusion and Neighbourhood Regeneration Initiatives in West Cornwall</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Improvement and Modernisation Plan	<input type="checkbox"/> Crime and Disorder Partnerships
<input type="checkbox"/> South-West Regional Housing Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Vital Villages Initiative
<input type="checkbox"/> Cornwall Action Team for Jobs	<input type="checkbox"/> Sure Start
<input type="checkbox"/> Education Action Zone – CPR Success	<input type="checkbox"/> Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Health Action Zone
<input type="checkbox"/> New Deal	<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Living Initiatives
<input type="checkbox"/> New Deal for Communities	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Action Zones
<input type="checkbox"/> Objective One (Integrated Area Plans)	<input type="checkbox"/> New Opportunities Fund
<input type="checkbox"/> Single Regeneration Budget	<input type="checkbox"/> Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Drug & Alcohol Team
<input type="checkbox"/> Rural Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Cornwall Supporting People Initiative
<input type="checkbox"/> Coastal & Market Towns Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> West Cornwall Rural Transport Partnership

Whilst the above list is not exhaustive it is nonetheless evident that Neighbourhood Renewal is only one aspect of anti-poverty, social inclusion and regeneration work in the area. If rural proofing is going to be effective in ensuring that policies and initiatives are developed in ways that are appropriate to the needs of people living in rural areas, it will therefore also be necessary to review the effectiveness of the existing programmes described above from the viewpoint of rural proofing.

The profusion of local area-based initiatives in recent years raises a number of challenges for the better co-ordination and integration of regeneration initiatives (NRU, 2002). The need for better co-ordination of local anti-poverty work through area-based schemes has an especial relevance to the rural proofing activities of local partnerships. For example, the effectiveness of improved service provision is undermined if geographic inequalities of access are not addressed through better public transport provision, the introduction of outreach and mobile services, etc.

At present, there is little evidence that area-based schemes are operating in ways, which produce complementary benefits and achieve synergy in tackling poverty and neighbourhood decline (REF). Whilst considerable progress has been achieved by WCLSP in encouraging joint-working across the range of participating partnership organisations, there remains scope for improving links between the different major social and economic regeneration initiatives working in the area. If rural proofing at the local level is to be effective it is therefore essential that rural proofing perspectives are mainstreamed across the range of partner agencies, and are integrated across the range of area-based schemes operative in the locality. This has implications both for the organisational structure and working arrangements of existing partnership bodies, and in relation

to encouraging informal networks and boundary-spanning activity across partnerships and regeneration initiatives.

**Conclusions 1.1, 1.2:  
Coordination and joint working**

### 3. Local Strategies for Neighbourhood Renewal

The overall strategy for tackling neighbourhood disadvantage in West Cornwall is summarised in WCT's 'Delivering Together'. This outlines the overall goals within which West Cornwall LSP seeks to demonstrate improvement, and the ways in which performance will be measured. In considering the options for addressing rural poverty and disadvantage within the context of Neighbourhood Renewal the following questions need to be addressed:

#### **Box 6: Key Questions in Appraising Options for Action**

1. What exactly is the problem to be tackled?
2. What outcomes are achievable and by when?
3. How will the option achieve the desired effect?
4. What evidence is there to support this approach?
5. What else needs to happen for this option to work?
6. How much do we need to do to make a difference?
7. How will we know if it is working?
8. What resources will be needed?
9. What will the positive or negative side effects be?
10. Will the benefits outweigh the costs?

Source: Home Office Crime Reduction Unit (2000).

Box 6 (*above*) draws attention to several key aspects of effective rural proofing:

1. Accurate identification of the problems facing rural communities can only be achieved by involving rural communities themselves, for example through village surveys, consultation exercises, village plans, needs assessments, etc. Existing official data sources on outcomes for rural communities are often insufficiently detailed to provide a comprehensive picture of social conditions in rural areas, and may need to be supplemented in ways which give local people a voice in rural regeneration.
2. Evaluating options for tackling the problems of deprived rural areas needs to draw upon the existing evidence base and best practice in order to assess the plausibility of proposed interventions in addressing rural issues.
3. The development of targets and procedures for monitoring the success of initiatives needs to explicitly take account of the impact in rural areas by drawing upon spatially disaggregated data, local knowledge and expertise in order to develop a more accurate picture of rural outcomes (pt.1, *above*).
4. The additional unit costs of interventions in rural areas need to be taken into account in the resourcing of rural regeneration projects in areas where existing organisational capacity and networks may be limited.

Clear mechanisms for evaluating the performance of LSPs and other rural regeneration partnerships is a vital aspect of effective area-based policies. Tackling poverty and neighbourhood disadvantage depends upon a clear identification of the scale of poverty and the forms it takes (for example, in relation to people who are unemployed, older, lone parents, or low waged, etc.). Evaluating the effectiveness of anti-poverty and social inclusion strategies therefore necessitates systematic collection and mapping of indicators of social and economic need, that is, the development of a 'local poverty profile' in order to develop suitable targets for anti-poverty work. The framework for assessing progress in tackling neighbourhood disadvantage is based upon the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's Performance Management Framework, published in September 2003 (NRU, 2003). This specifies three overall areas of evaluation:

- Review of programme delivery
- Review of partnership arrangements
- Review of action plan to improve service delivery

Section 4 (*below*) reviews progress to date in programme delivery in relation to the rural proofing agenda by focusing upon the development of suitable targets and indicators of progress in tackling rural deprivation. Section 5 assesses the extent and nature of Neighbourhood Renewal resources targeted at rural communities.

#### **4. Targets and Indicators of Progress.**

In recent years the emphasis upon 'hard' quantitative targets in much regeneration and anti-poverty work at the local level has been widely challenged (*eg.* Alcock *et al.*, 1999; Thomas & Palfrey, 1996). Such measures are an important tool in evaluating the success of anti-poverty initiatives. Measures such as rates of low income and long-term illness are good *indicators* of underlying concepts such as 'poverty' and 'ill-health'. However, there is a risk that used as policy *targets* they can have distorting effects on underlying commitments to tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion. The importance of process - the way things are done - together with long-term goals, is frequently underestimated. Similarly, the importance of other qualitative indicators of good practice such as equity, empowerment and accessibility are equally important.

**Conclusion 2:**  
**Indicators of good practice**

Developing a better evidence-base for effective rural regeneration thus involves effective strategies for the qualitative evaluation of best practice in area-based interventions, alongside systematic mapping of social indicators. The development of better small-area social and economic profiles of neighbourhoods in West Cornwall highlights the need for better sharing of small-area data collected by partnership bodies for wide variety of statutory and non-statutory purposes. This type of data may be invaluable in determining needs and setting

targets at a geographical scale that is sufficiently detailed to facilitate examination of the rural impacts of existing policies and programmes.

**Conclusion 2.1:  
Better sharing of small-area data**

At the same time, existing data collected by local authorities and statutory agencies for administrative purposes is unlikely to be sufficient to capture the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in rural areas. These sources will need to be supplemented by local survey work and on-going consultation with existing and potential service users and local residents. The importance of involving local residents in the design and delivery of policies to tackle poverty and neighbourhood decline extends also to the identification of the nature and extent of local problems. Less-well off people are the real experts on the nature of the problems facing them. Involving poorer people in the process of identifying local needs, and subsequently in the setting of local targets for action, is thus essential to the effective delivery of anti-poverty strategies.

**Conclusion 4.2, 4.4:  
Involving communities in local poverty profiling**

Concerns about the potentially distorting effect of target also relate to issues of geographical equity. There is an especial concern here that overall measures of progress can mask less positive outcomes in rural areas unless baseline targets for all localities are specified. The higher unit costs of programme delivery in rural areas reinforces the historic urban 'bias' in regeneration initiatives, and emphasise the importance of targets which seek improvement for *all* NRF Priority Areas. Unless targets are sensitive to variations at a small area level, the impact of policies and programmes in rural Priority Areas cannot be assessed. Equally, some indicators are more appropriate for rural areas than others. For example, in rural areas measures of housing quality (*eg.* central heating, damp, *etc.*) are more reliable indicators of housing deprivation than household overcrowding.

**Conclusion 2.2:  
Setting appropriate floor targets**

All LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal funding are required to demonstrate progress in achieving national floor targets as part of central government Public Service Agreements (PSA). In addition to national targets, locally agreed targets are a key part of local Community Strategies. In addressing the key themes of Neighbourhood Renewal in West Cornwall, the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) identifies the following themes and priorities, as detailed in Box 7 (*below*):

**Box 7: West Cornwall LSP Neighbourhood Renewal Themes and Priorities, 2003-04.**

Theme	Priority
<b>Children, young people &amp; adult education</b>	Raising attainment at ages 11, 14, 16 & 19
	Early years education and preventing child poverty
	Changing mainstream provision
	Improving ICT provision and adult skills
<b>Community safety</b>	Developing an improved understanding of crime data
	Working towards improved local liaison and awareness of crime
	Focusing on key aspects of crime reduction
<b>Employment, economy &amp; enterprise</b>	Increasing access to training and education for working age residents
	Increasing economic opportunities for residents and enterprises
<b>Health &amp; well-being</b>	Developing improved understanding of health and well-being
	Raising expectations and promoting health and well-being
	Enabling a multi-agency approach to service access and delivery
<b>Housing</b>	Bringing all social and private housing into decent condition
	Increasing the supply of affordable, quality homes
	Developing an integrated approach to housing provision for vulnerable people

Within each theme the LNRS therefore identifies a number of key priorities and an accompanying set of national and locally agreed targets for action. An integral part of NRU's Performance Management Framework for LSP's is the 'plausibility' of existing project interventions in delivering the agreed targets. The following section therefore considers this issue in relation to each of the above themes, and with reference to the delivery of the NRF programme and wider local services in rural West Cornwall.

#### *4.1 Children, Young People and Adult Education*

PSA targets for the Department of Education and Science focus upon raising levels of academic achievement for young people as measured by performance in Standard Attainment Tests (SAT), GCSEs and participation in higher education. Locally, these targets are supplemented by a commitment to demonstrating greater improvements in the West Cornwall area than are being achieved nationally. This local commitment to raising educational standards needs to be accompanied by a commitment to ensuring geographical equity in the delivery of services if the benefits of rising educational achievement are to be felt across the area as a whole, including schools serving more remote rural communities. In rural areas there are specific issues affecting access to and the delivery of education and training relating to:

- ❑ The size and nature of rural schools
- ❑ Limited curriculum and educational opportunities
- ❑ Low aspirations and poor educational attainment
- ❑ Restricted access to post 16 and further education and training
- ❑ Lack of basic qualifications amongst working age adults



There is an especial concern about the feasibility of sustainable improvement in small rural schools given limited resources and the higher unit costs of interventions. These issues need to be taken into account in relation to the financial support available to smaller schools, in fostering engagement by parents and the wider community in educational initiatives, and maintaining flexibility in rural delivery at a local level.

Alongside a focus upon improvement in overall educational standards, better provision for children with learning difficulties, provision of better quality childcare and early years provision, and spreading innovative practice based upon the experience of Sure Start are key local targets for action. Again, effective rural proofing requires monitoring of outcomes across remote rural communities if there is to be improvement across the board. For example, in addressing problems of access to quality childcare improving the accessibility of childcare for families living in isolated settlements with limited public transport access should be a key priority alongside commitments to improving the overall supply of childcare places. In general, existing targets in this area are currently being met within West Cornwall.

#### *4.2 Community Safety*

Statistically, rural areas including West Cornwall tend to have lower crime rates than urban areas, and rural residents report lower levels of fear of crime than their urban counterparts (Mirlees-Black, 1998). However, rural areas do have crime problems and these are sometimes manifested in different ways in rural areas. For example, in many rural communities problems of drug and alcohol abuse are often hidden, with little acknowledgement of their existence, and few support agencies operating in rural areas (Lawtey & Deane, 2001). Similarly, families from ethnic minorities may be especially isolated in the context of traditional insularity in some rural communities and lack of awareness of racial issues (Dhalech, 1999). The absence of facilities for young people in rural areas, coupled with the ageing population of many rural communities, creates opportunities for inter-generational conflicts.

Moreover, community safety issues in rural areas may also be compounded by other aspects of rural life such as a lack of services, physical isolation and social exclusion (Home Office, 2000). As a result, a greater degree of differentiation in policy solutions is required if the needs of more isolated rural communities are to be addressed. Based upon current best practice, a range of policy options is available (Lawtey & Deane: 2000, 2001):

- ❑ **Rural policing teams** working with wider groups of local people (*eg.* special constables, neighbourhood wardens, parish councils, neighbourhood watch, voluntary groups)
- ❑ **Mobile police stations/CCTV units** which can bring assurance to rural areas

- **Targeted policing initiatives** to tackle specifically ‘rural’ crimes (*eg.* farm-related crime, traffic issues, fly tipping)
- **Awareness raising campaigns** in rural areas (*eg.* domestic violence)

The development of local Community Safety Strategies within West Cornwall (KDC, 2003; PDC, 2002) is an integral part of West Cornwall LSP’s overall community safety strategy. There is a clear acknowledgement here of many of the issue concerns relevant to rural residents as elicited by existing research in the area (*eg.* the Kerrier and Penwith Crime Audits, above). However, there is again a need for better spatially disaggregated data and consequently the development of targets that focus on delivering measurable improvements in all areas, including more remote rural communities.

### 4.3 *Health and Well-Being*

The devolution of much of NHS service planning, delivery and finance to local Primary Care Trusts (PCT) in April 2002 presents opportunities for better addressing the health needs of rural residents since service provision should be better tailored to local needs and priorities. At the same time, this process emphasizes the importance of building research capacity if local PCT’s are to be able to assess and respond to the health needs of people living in rural areas. Since budgetary constraints mean that most services will continue to be located in urban areas of greatest need, it is vital that a full assessment of the impact in rural areas is undertaken (Swindlehurst, 2003; Countryside Agency, 2002).

In West Cornwall extensive work in this area has already been undertaken as part of Health Needs Assessment (Hall & Stuteley, 2003) and this should inform the development of local targets for combating health inequalities. However, as with other policy areas, there is a specific need for the monitoring of impacts within rural communities, and for targets that can be spatially disaggregated in order to assess the geographical equity of existing services and provision.

### 4.4 *Housing*

Housing needs differ markedly between different types of settlement and across geographic sub-areas. Lower rates of social housing provision in rural areas means that new provision should be a key priority in sustaining the vitality of rural communities. In common with other policy areas, a clear identification of the problems facing communities based upon spatially disaggregated data is a key first step in the rural proofing of local housing strategies. The development of Local Housing Needs Strategies - in consultation with local people, voluntary and community organisations, and representative bodies - is an important means of ensuring that the needs of rural communities, and the voice of poor people living in rural areas, is taken into account in the development of socially inclusive rural housing options (Countryside Agency, 2003).

Integral to this approach is a commitment to community involvement in the identification of key housing problems and development of policy options. Facilitating local involvement, for example, through village housing needs surveys and local consultations is a key aspect of rural advocacy. In West Cornwall the development of Local Housing Needs Strategies is well advanced with existing surveys of housing need in 1996 and 2001 providing baseline information to be up-dated by the forthcoming, NRF-supported 2003 Housing Needs Survey. However, there is a specific need to demonstrate progress in rural areas through the introduction of targets, which are sensitive to variations in outcomes across the urban/rural divide.

## 5. NRF Programme Delivery in West Cornwall

The flexibility of Neighbourhood Renewal and associated funding streams (*eg.* Community Chest, Community Empowerment Fund) makes it well suited to ‘filling in the gaps’ in existing regeneration initiatives which in the past have all too often focused upon large-scale capital projects at the expense of community-focused solutions (SEU, 2001). In order to assess the extent to which local NRF strategies and individual projects are delivering improvements for rural areas, a thematic classification is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions in relation to:

- Key dimensions of delivery identified by the five NRF Themes (employment, housing, health, education, crime)
- Programmes addressing the needs of groups vulnerable to poverty (*eg.* young people, minority ethnic groups, older people, people with disabilities)

However, evaluating the impact of NRF expenditure is far from straightforward, not least because the concept of ‘rurality’ is itself contested. As a rule the terminology ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ has no fundamental definitional basis (ONS, 1997; SERRL, 2001a). A range of measures is available based upon settlement size, population density, land-use, service accessibility, and multivariate classification of household characteristics. The categorisation of urban and rural areas in large measure therefore reflects the approach adopted as well as the choice of spatial units used to measure rurality. At a district-level, the whole of Cornwall is classified as rural by the Countryside Agency, and the ONS Classification of local authorities based upon 2001 Census data defines both Kerrier and Penwith as remote ‘coastal and countryside’ areas (ONS, 2003).

In the context of rural proofing, there clearly is a case therefore for considering the whole of West Cornwall as a rural area, and this is a view reinforced both by consultations with key actors within West Cornwall LSP, and responses to the NRF Project survey (*see below*). At a more practical level, determining the spatial

coverage of NRF project interventions is problematic given existing data limitations. It is also important to acknowledge the extent of urban/rural 'crossovers' in determining the extent to which rural communities benefit from services and facilities located in more urban settings but servicing a wider geographical area.

At the same time, it is clearly also possible to refer to *degrees* of rurality, based on notions of 'accessible' and 'remote' rural areas, or the degree of urban settlement - for example, as with the ONS' ward-level classification (ONS, 2003). Whilst the whole of West Cornwall may be considered broadly rural, the experience of poverty and deprivation in more remote settlements is likely to differ in key respects from that of poor residents of the main population centres (*eg.* Penzance, St. Ives, Hayle, Camborne, Pool, Redruth, Helston), and this should inform subsequent policy responses. Access to mainstream services, information and support are key issues for remote rural communities and the distinctive needs of these areas should be taken into account in the design and delivery of NRF supported projects.

*Methodological Note:* The following sections are based on analysis of data on applications for NRF, Community Chest and Community Learning Chest (CC/CLC) funding in West Cornwall kindly supplied by West Cornwall LSP. In total this analysis covers 64 applications for main budget NRF funding (Apr.2001-Apr.2004), and 256 applications for CC/CLC funding (Jan.2002-Jan.2004). For the purposes of analysis successful applications for NRF funding have been classified by their estimated contribution to each of the five key NRF theme undertaken by West Cornwall LSP Funding Group. On the basis of project descriptions, applications for CC/CLC funding have been classified thematically by the authors using a typology of community and voluntary associations described below.

### **5.1. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Expenditure: Apr.2001-Apr.2004**

Overall, a total of £7.31 million of central government funding has been earmarked for Neighbourhood Renewal within West Cornwall, comprising £4.86 million in Kerrier and £2.45 million in Penwith. Over the period April 2001 to April 2004, a total of £4.77 million has been approved for expenditure on NRF funded projects within the area.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which individual projects focus specifically upon each of the discrete NRF themes (education and skills, employment, housing, health, and crime and safety). Since the goal of Neighbourhood Renewal involves 'joined-up' thinking and a holistic approach to the renewal process (*eg.* SEU: 1998, 2001), most projects will inevitably involve tackling a number of 'linked' social problems. For example, projects focusing primarily upon joblessness ('employment') are likely also to contain a substantial 'education and skills' content delivered for example through job clubs, IT literacy, basic skills education, etc. A realistic strategy for addressing long-term unemployment and

economic inactivity also needs to take account of health-related issues, childcare provision, access to transport, and a myriad of other factors.

In the context of rural service provision and delivery, limited opportunities exist for specialisation by local agencies, community and voluntary groups within small and isolated communities. This makes the distinction between NRF themes especially problematic in more remote rural areas. For these reasons imputations with respect to the five key themes of Neighbourhood Renewal are necessarily provisional and in future will need to be informed by individual project managers' perceptions of the appropriateness of the NRF themes to rural regeneration work. Table 1 (*below*) shows the distribution of NRF main programme funding for local projects by NRF theme to April 2004<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 1: Estimated NRF Expenditure by NRF Theme, Apr.2001-Mar.2004.**

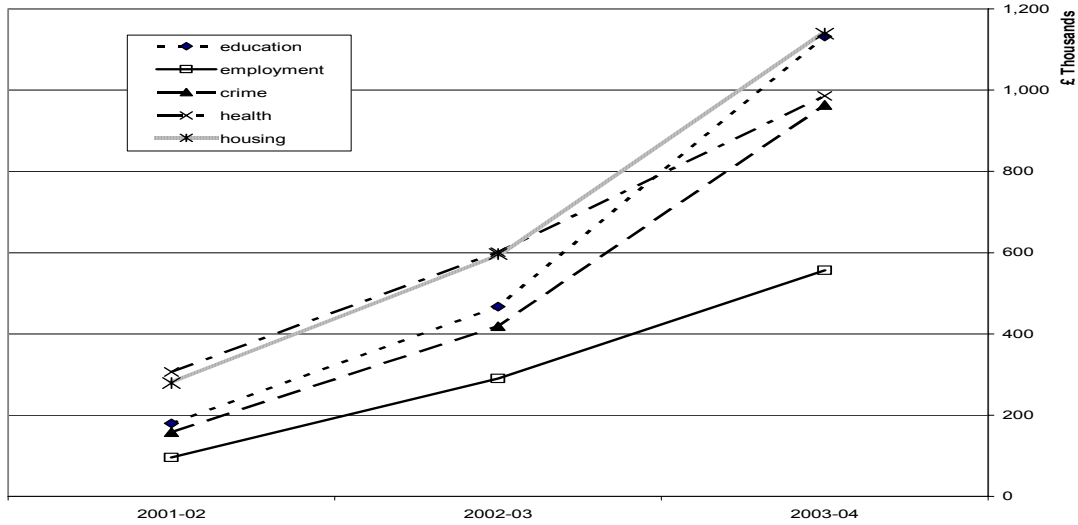
	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>WCLSP %</b>	<b>% UK 2001/02*</b>
Housing	1,138,272	23.9	20.1
Education and skills	1,131,195	23.7	22.1
Health	985,642	20.7	15.4
Crime and safety	963,147	20.2	28.1
Employment	556,657	11.7	15.3
<b>TOTAL (N=62)</b>	<b>4,772,069</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Source: ODPM (2002). *NRF Analysis and Assessment of Statements of Use 2001/2002. Research Report No 2.* Figures quoted above exclude 'management/administration' and 'other' NRF spend.

Table 1 (*above*) shows that of the 62 approved mainstream NRF projects, employment-related projects have attracted proportionately less funding (11.7%) in comparison with other areas – most noticeably housing (23.9%) and education (23.7%). Figure 1 (*below*) shows the way NRF project funding has increased over time across the five themes. Again expenditure on employment-related projects is consistently lower and this gap appears to be widening.

<sup>1</sup> Local projects here includes all completed projects and projects currently in receipt of NRF funding, but not those currently under appraisal or withdrawn for other reasons.

**Figure 1: Total NRF Mainstream Project Funding by Theme, 2001-2004.**



There is a danger that the balance of NRF funding will reflect the profile of existing organisational capacity, in the process reproducing existing disparities and shortfalls in service provision. Areas where existing provision is well developed will then benefit disproportionately from further NRF funding due existing capacity and success in bidding for funds – ‘success follows success’. The survey of NRF demonstrates that, along with poor access to services and transport provision, employment deprivation is a key problem both for West Cornwall as a whole and for more remote rural areas (*see Section 6, below*). It is therefore vital that WCLSP focus future resources upon addressing programme areas where existing provision may be under-developed.

**Conclusion 3.2:  
Tackling employment deprivation**

However, one of the key problems facing rural areas is access to services, especially for poor households who are frequently reliant upon patchy public transport provision. It is clear that programme priorities in rural areas may differ from those of urban areas since the nature of rural deprivation also differs in significant from that of urban areas. If poverty in rural areas is to be tackled effectively it is therefore important that these differences in programme priorities are taken into account within the Neighbourhood Renewal framework. The national framework for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of NRF mainstream funding thus needs to be tailored to meet the needs of rural areas by taking greater account of issues of geographical equity, access to services and transport problems.

**Conclusion 3.1:  
Focusing on transport and access to services**

In addition to the focus upon tackling the key dimensions of neighbourhood disadvantage as outlined above, there is a commitment to monitoring project delivery in relation to the needs of groups disproportionately vulnerable to

poverty and social exclusion – including children and young people, minority ethnic communities, older people, and disabled people. However, progress in monitoring the impact of NRF programme delivery in these areas has been slow. Over the 2002-2004 period whilst one third (34%) of projects involved a specific focus upon children and young people, a far smaller proportion were specifically targeted at the needs of older people (4%) or people with disabilities (2%), and no projects received NRF mainstream funding for work for black and minority ethnic groups<sup>2</sup>. There is clearly a need for improved monitoring of programme delivery in this area.

**Conclusion 3.3:  
Addressing the needs of older  
people, disabled people and  
ethnic minorities**

## **5.2 Community Chest & Community Learning Chest Funding**

### *The Community Learning Fund*

As with the Community Chest, the NRF Community Learning Fund was introduced to support the development needs of groups with limited financial resources. The scheme makes grants of between £50 and £5,000 to community groups and individuals to give them access to the best training, advice and support in relation to neighbourhood renewal. Since the human and financial resources available to groups working in remote rural communities are often especially constrained, the Community Learning Fund is likely to become a key asset in building local ‘capacity to act’ in rural areas. Grants can be used for a range of purposes:

- ❑ Exchange visits to share good practice
- ❑ Journals and reference material on neighbourhood renewal
- ❑ Support for BME groups to help promote social cohesion
- ❑ Training to encourage community and voluntary sector participation in LSP’s
- ❑ IT equipment and training
- ❑ Expenses for conference, seminars and training opportunities

Both Kerrier and Penwith have been identified as priority areas for NRF support, and as such West Cornwall has to date received more than £115,000 Community Learning Chest funding, supporting 52 projects in the area<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Subsequent to this period of analysis, funding for an education project with Gypsies and Travellers was granted (Curriculum Matters, *see Phase 2 Case Study 1*).

<sup>3</sup> Based on material prepared by Sarah Kind, West Cornwall NRF Community Chest Grants Officer

## *The Community Chest*

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Community Chest (CC) is an integral part of the Government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (*eg.* SEU, 2001). The goal of the NRF Community Chest is to provide funding to encourage and support community activity in deprived areas, so that more people may become involved in the regeneration of their communities and neighbourhoods, for example through community self-help and mutual support activity. Grants of £50 to £5,000 are available to community groups to support activities that contribute to the regeneration of an area, tackle social exclusion, and support local community involvement and decision-making. Broadly, this includes projects which:

- Stimulate greater community involvement in local activities
- Improve the management of local community activities and organisations
- Help community groups improve their neighbourhoods
- Look into community roots and cultural heritage
- Support other activities through which local people can take part in local regeneration

West Cornwall has been identified for NRF support through the Community Chest amounting to a total of more than £522,000, supporting 258 projects to date<sup>4</sup>. There are many ways in which local people can participate in neighbourhood renewal and community governance through a wide variety of community and voluntary sector (CVS) organisations, (*eg.* parent and toddler groups, youth clubs, sports clubs, residents associations, community and faith groups, activity-based clubs, etc.). There is no single classification capable of capturing the diversity and fluidity of community engagement and voluntary activity in the UK. Whilst the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (*see* Salaman & Anheier, 1997) has gained wide acceptance as an aid to the cross-national mapping of third sector organizations, their appropriateness at the small area level and especially in relation to remote rural communities is questionable (Edwards et al, 2001). The following typology of Community Chest and Community Learning Chest projects is proposed here:

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<sup>4</sup> Based on material prepared by Sarah Kind, West Cornwall NRF Community Chest Grants Officer



**Box 8: Typology of Community Chest/Community Learning Chest Projects in West Cornwall.**

- ❑ **Childhood and Youth.** For example, parent and toddler groups, after-school clubs, SureStart, youth clubs, youth activities groups.
- ❑ **Health, Welfare and Social Care.** For example, support groups, disability groups, carers groups, health initiatives, welfare rights work.
- ❑ **Village Halls.** Including community centres, memorial halls, etc.
- ❑ **Environmental.** For example, environmental awareness groups, conservation projects, etc.
- ❑ **Sports and Recreation.** Sports clubs, social clubs, etc.
- ❑ **Community Governance.** For example, residents and tenants associations, community forums, town and parish councils, neighbourhood watch.
- ❑ **Creative, Arts and Heritage.** For example, creative arts projects, galleries, arts and media centres, heritage and oral history projects.
- ❑ **Older People.** For example, Social and luncheon clubs, activity groups, support groups.
- ❑ **Community Events.** For example, festivals and community fun-days, local shows, Xmas lights, etc.
- ❑ **Faith-based.**
- ❑ **Other/Not Classified.**

The analyses that follow in this section are based upon data for 256 applications for Community Chest and Community Learning Chest funding submitted for consideration between January 2002 and January 2004.

Table 2 (*below*) shows the overall distribution of applications for Community Chest and Community Learning Chest funding for the period Jan. 2002 until Jan. 2004 (Box 1). Bearing in mind due caution in interpreting such classifications, it is nonetheless evident that projects focused broadly upon children and young people, sports and recreation, creative arts and heritage, and community governance account for nearly two thirds (63%) of combined CC/CLC spending during this period. In comparison projects for older people, health, welfare and social care projects and environmental initiatives have received considerably less support, accounting for just one seventh (14%) of total spending over this period.

**Table 2: Community Chest (CC) and Community Learning Chest (CLC) Funding by Category, Jan. 2002-Jan.2004.**

	All Applications		Successful applications		Success rate
	N	%			
Childhood and youth	89	27	50	20	89
Sports and recreation	40	13	38	16	95
Creative, arts and heritage	47	14	34	14	72
Community governance	43	13	32	13	74
Other	24	7	22	9	92
Health, and social welfare	25	7	16	7	64
Village halls	16	5	14	6	88
Community events	19	6	15	6	79
Older people	11	3	11	5	100
Faith-based	9	3	7	3	78
Environment	8	2	6	2	75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74</b>

Variations in the share of CC/CLC funding available to projects to some extent reflects differential success rates for applications across the themes identified above. More importantly, however, as with mainstream NRF funding the overall balance of funding is also likely to reflect pre-existing imbalances in the distribution of organisational capacity across these categories. If funding is to support anti-poverty objectives effectively it is essential that projects with a clear social inclusion component, for example in relation to health and social care projects, are given appropriate financial support.

Table 3 (*below*) shows the total spend by theme for Community Chest and Community Learning Chest projects over the period, Jan.2002-Jan.2004.

**Table 3: CC/CLC Grant Funding in West Cornwall by Theme, Jan.2002-Jan.2004.**

	Total Funding		Average per Project	N
	£	%	£	
Children and young people	115,210	22.6	2,304	50
Creative, arts and heritage	81,659	16.0	1,520	34
Sports and recreation	78,338	15.4	2,061	38
Community governance	75,800	14.9	2,369	32
Other	41,405	8.1	2,402	22
Health and welfare	31,845	6.2	2,057	15
Village halls	22,641	4.4	1,617	14
Community events	19,446	3.8	1,296	15
Environmental	13,628	2.7	2,271	6
Faith-based	13,371	2.6	1,910	7
Older people	10,273	2.0	934	11
<b>ALL</b>	<b>510,055</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,487</b>	<b>245</b>

Grant funding is intended to focus upon the most ‘deprived’ neighbourhoods, including smaller pockets of deprivation, and specifically upon the needs of ‘excluded’ or marginalised groups such as minority ethnic groups (including Gypsies and Travellers), refugees, young people, older people, people with disabilities, and faith communities. In a remote rural context there is an especial need for outreach and development work if schemes are to reach the most marginalised groups and smaller areas of rural deprivation. The need for a proactive approach to the promotion of small grants schemes to target groups, and the availability of more intensive one-to-one help from community development workers, is increasingly acknowledged as a key goal in the delivery of community-focused NRF initiatives.

Neighbourhood Renewal funding of community and voluntary sector (CVS) projects thus involves not simply the cultivation of good links with CVS’s, but also successful outreach work to encourage take-up of grant funding, especially for remote rural communities, poor households and disadvantaged social groups. The introduction of ‘locality meetings’ by West Cornwall Community Network is a positive step, which needs to be appropriately supported in relation to the

promotion of information exchange and dissemination of good practice through existing local CVS infrastructure.

**Conclusion 4.3:  
Better support for small voluntary  
organisations**

### **5.3 Survey of NRF Projects**

#### *5.3.1 Introduction*

A survey of NRF-supported projects was undertaken with a view to ascertaining project managers' views about the challenges facing WCLSP in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal in rural areas. Specifically, the survey questionnaire (*see Appendix 1*) sought to address the following themes:

- The overall aims and goals of individual projects, and any obstacles projects had experienced in achieving their objectives
- How overall project aims relate to the key themes of Neighbourhood Renewal, and respondents' perceptions of the adequacy of these themes in a rural context
- The ways in which individual projects address the needs of specific population groups vulnerable to rural poverty, and any obstacles projects had experienced in addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups
- Respondents' perceptions of the key problems facing rural areas, especially for poorer people living in rural areas
- Respondents' perceptions of the main obstacles to improving service delivery for less well-off people living in rural areas

The postal questionnaire was sent to all active and completed NRF-supported projects based upon database information accurate to October 2003. In total, 64 NRF-supported projects were approached by letter in March 2004, and two further follow-up letters were sent in April and May 2004. Of the 64 projects contacted, 47 returned the completed questionnaire, representing an overall response rate of 73%.

#### *5.3.2 Key Findings*

The analyses that follow consider the challenges posed by the rural proofing agenda thematically in terms of a broad distinction between: (a) social, economic and cultural problems experienced by less well-off people living in rural areas (*Section A*); (b) the specific characteristics of social disadvantage in rural areas (*Section B*), and; (c) processual issues in the development and implementation of integrated strategies for addressing rural disadvantage (*Section C*).

## A. Social, Economic and Cultural Issues

The questionnaire asked project managers to assess the extent to which they felt that the NRF themes adequately address the needs of rural communities. Nearly all (98%) respondents considered the key themes identified by Neighbourhood Renewal suitably addressed the needs of rural areas. However, whilst a majority (63%) of respondents felt that the NRF themes addressed the needs of rural areas ‘quite well’, only around one third (35%) of respondents felt that the NRF themes addressed the need of rural areas ‘very well’. This might reflect the fact that the main dimensions of deprivation in rural areas differ in some key respects from urban poverty, and as a result suggest rather different policy solutions.

**Conclusion 3.1:  
Tailoring NRF to meet rural needs**

There was substantial variation in the extent to which respondents viewed the key themes addressed by Neighbourhood Renewal as relevant to goals of their own projects with more than two thirds (68%) of projects viewing education as ‘very important’, compared with rather lower figures in relation to the other individual ‘domains’ of deprivation – health (47%), housing (43%), employment (40%) and crime (33%). Respondents’ perceptions of the main problems facing rural areas, and especially for less well-off people living in rural areas are summarised below in relation to:

- Improving transport provision
- Providing better access to local services
- Encouraging employment and economic development
- Addressing housing deprivation
- Improving education and skills provision
- Changing attitudes and raising awareness

### *Improving Transport Provision*

Improving transport provision in West Cornwall was the most frequently cited priority in addressing disadvantage in rural areas:

***“There is a lack of rural transport infrastructure in West Cornwall making access to services very difficult. What transport there is, is expensive.”***

The need for more accessible, affordable, reliable public transport was identified as vital in overcoming the *isolation* of rural poverty, and of remote rural communities. Addressing the frequently cited shortcomings of existing transport infrastructure was also widely seen as central to effective delivery of a wide range of services, and to the broader participation of ‘excluded’ groups in social, economic and cultural life. Improved access to a wide range of public, commercial and third sector services, advice and support is, therefore, key in addressing ‘poverty of place’ in remote rural communities where local opportunities for the delivery of services, and existing community and economic

infrastructure, are inevitably limited. A range of rural transport policy options were cited, most notably:

- Subsidised or free public transport provision, especially for groups vulnerable to poverty and/or isolation (*eg.* young people, people with disabilities, older people)
- Better integration of public transport provision (routes, times, availability)
- Improvements to transport infrastructure (access, facilities, safety)

#### *Providing Better Access to Local Services*

Strongly related to the need for better public transport provision, was the need for better access to a variety of local public, commercial and voluntary sector services:

***“Greater emphasis could be given to improving the accessibility of services/facilities – rural isolation is a real problem, especially for the elderly and young families”***

***“Services designed to help people are in dispersed locations and tend to be in the main towns. There is not enough outreach work being undertaken to help those most at disadvantage. “***

The dispersed nature of rural communities inevitably means that economies of scale frequently have the effect of undermining equity of access to public services through the concentration of facilities in the major towns. This has the effect of compounding problems of isolation for poorer rural residents, and especially for older people, people with disabilities, and people with limiting illness. A range of policy options were identified:

1. Better outreach and mobile services for vulnerable groups - delivered in community venues, at times that suit services users – for example, through the provision of mobile advice (*eg.* Jobcentres, CAB, benefits take-up campaigns)
2. Greater flexibility and coordination in the use of existing local facilities, for example through multi-agency ‘one-stop shops’, flexible use of amenities (schools, community centres, health clinics)
3. Better access to information and advice for example through free or subsidised access to ICT (*eg.* broadband, freephone advice lines)

#### *Encouraging Employment and Economic Development*

Low incomes and wages were widely cited by respondents as a key problem for rural residents. The need for a diversification of economic development beyond tourism was seen as vital given low rates of pay and seasonality in major sectors of the local economy (tourism, agriculture). A range of options were suggested to stimulate economic development in rural areas:

1. More flexible rural planning and development policies

2. More incentives for rural businesses, for example, through regeneration funding
3. Action to raise wage levels in rural areas, for example, through raising (and enforcing) the UK national minimum wage

### *Addressing Housing Deprivation*

The need for more truly affordable housing provision in the area was consistently emphasised by respondents. Several respondents referred to the need for greater provision of social housing, and to the effects of second-home ownership in inflating property prices in the area.

*Deliver affordable housing in all communities in need...We have high house prices (like everywhere) but low incomes (not everywhere).*

### *Focusing on Health and Wellbeing*

Several respondents referred to health problems as a particular problem in the area, especially in relation to the health effects of isolation and lack of social contact. Others referred to the need for better provision of mobile and outreach services in relation to a range of health services and initiatives (mental health, anti-smoking, obesity, healthy living promotion).

### *Improving Education and Skills Provision*

Respondents referred to the need for:

1. More local skills and knowledge-related services (mobile workshops, libraries, IT sessions, training)
2. The development of a community focus in the approach of local schools in rural areas
3. Better financial support for education and training, for example, through free or subsidised education and training especially for vulnerable groups, and help with childcare and transport costs, *etc*
4. Provision of free training and information in informal local settings

### *Changing Attitudes and Raising Awareness*

Respondents referred to the persistence of attitudes, which are held to have a negative impact on the prospects of tackling rural poverty in West Cornwall:

1. Lack of personal confidence, self-belief and aspirations
2. Stigmatisation of rural poverty coupled with traditions of self-reliance

3. Lack of awareness of opportunities available
4. Parochialism and insularity of some rural communities

*“A lack of aspiration and self-belief, plus insufficient knowledge of opportunities provided elsewhere and lessons that can be learned”*

*“Traditions of self-reliance that see ‘shame’ and ‘blame’ in poverty”*

## **B. Who are Rural Disadvantaged People?**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate to what extent their project focused upon the needs of groups vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion as identified by the NRU – specifically in relation to:

- Children and Young People
- Older People
- Disabled People
- Minority Ethnic Groups

The great majority (85%) of NRF-supported projects surveyed felt that their projects focused specifically upon addressing the needs of children and young people<sup>5</sup>. In comparison, rather fewer projects focused specifically upon addressing the needs of people with disabilities (30%), older people (36%), and minority ethnic groups (15%). This does not necessarily mean that other projects do not have a substantial impact upon the lives and wellbeing of these ‘target groups’, since these groups are generally more vulnerable to rural poverty and therefore may be expected to benefit substantially from *all* mainstream NRF projects. However, further work needs to be undertaken in order to determine whether this is so.

Moreover, many respondents also felt that many other social groups not covered by existing monitoring procedures were also vulnerable to rural poverty and exclusion – young parents, lone parents, unemployed people, people in receipt of means tested benefits, people without access to a car. To this extent, a focus upon the above ‘target groups’ should not preclude the development of a more holistic understanding of rural poverty and exclusion, and the contribution of individual projects in tackling poverty should be evaluated in the context of this wider understanding of the nature and dynamics of rural poverty.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that more than one quarter of respondents (28%) did not answer this question (Q3a). These cases are excluded from consideration here.

### C. The Process of Rural Regeneration

Respondents perceptions of the principle challenges in the development of better rural anti-poverty initiatives are summarised below:

- Better public service funding
- Involving local communities
- Overcoming budget and time constraints
- Developing local capacity
- Improving the funding process
- Making partnership working a reality
- Better targeting of resources
- Focusing on community development
- Developing anti-poverty initiatives

#### *Better Public Service Funding*

Many respondents referred to the additional premium involved in rural service delivery arising from higher unit and marginal costs. Similarly, economies of scale result in a tendency for regeneration and regional economic development to focus upon urban areas at the expense of more remote rural communities. Others referred to the consequences of a lack of integration in service delivery, resulting in duplication of services in already well funded localities. At the same time, the likely corollary is that tight budgetary constraints result in under-funding and lack of investment in other, often more remote, areas.

#### *Involving Local Communities*

The need to involve local people in neighbourhood regeneration, by asking local people what they want and giving them the support and funds to acquire it, is a perspective widely shared by respondents. Typical responses referred to the importance of:

- Finding out the views of ordinary people (not just the ‘usual suspects’)
- Involving local people in decision-making, for example through community development work
- Outreach with client groups to foster engagement with initiatives, especially in more remote areas

*“People need to be consulted about what they feel they need. Not only do facilities need to be provided but the people themselves need to be encouraged to help their own community. This would include learning skills that train them to be able to set up clubs and groups in their local area.”*

*“Accessing young people who will truly benefit from the project can be challenging. The remoteness of some areas means that many young people do not have facilities nearby. Consequently they may not have*



*the opportunity to become associated with a club once the project is completed.”*

### *Addressing Restrictive Budget Constraints*

The overwhelming message from project managers in this survey was of the restrictive nature of existing funding which result in tight delivery timescales and over-stretched local services. Budgetary restrictions often mean that outreach work often in remoter rural areas, is especially affected.

The short-term nature of project funding also raised concerns amongst respondents about the long-term sustainability of improvements beyond the completion of individual projects. The prevalence of short-term funding means that frequently opportunities for integration and strategic thinking in service delivery, and the short-term nature of employment contracts can make it difficult to build up relationships

*“Short term funding which is target driven by a top down approach, should be replaced with longer-term funding for grass roots led initiatives. Community set goals are more likely to be achieved and are more likely to be sustainable.”*

*“Greater awareness raising campaigns of available opportunities and a less bureaucratic system for accessing grants.”*

Many respondents also emphasised the importance of better mainstreaming of existing project work and developing local services, through a real commitment from government to the long-term sustainability of improvements. The perception that greater acknowledgement of the sparsity factor in the allocation of funding in rural areas was also emphasised by several respondents.

### *Developing Local Capacity*

An absence of local physical community infrastructure in rural areas (*eg.* venues, vehicles, accommodation) was considered by many respondents to be a major problem, especially in remoter areas. At the same time, a shortage of local volunteers and know-how, skills and experience presents obstacles to realising the aims of individual projects and to the long-term sustainability of regeneration initiatives.

Revitalising governance structures, which in some cases “can exacerbate rather than address social divisions” was also acknowledged as a priority for some respondents - for example, through changes in working practices, and support for new forums for public involvement in decision-making and community planning.

The above observations emphasise the importance of long-term community development work in rural areas, which can genuinely empower people and communities to have a real say in the regeneration of their communities:

*“Experienced community development workers [are needed] to work with rural communities to facilitate local community empowerment and encourage involvement in neighbourhood renewal from the bottom up.”*

#### *Making Partnership Working a Reality*

Better co-ordination of services through more joint working and the adoption of a multi-agency approach to the delivery of services is now a well established principle of neighbourhood regeneration. Whilst progress is evident in the West Cornwall responses to this survey indicate that there is also room for continued improvement if the long-term goal of mainstreaming innovative anti-poverty approaches is to be achieved. Overcoming institutional boundaries and hierarchies of power between statutory agencies, local authorities and community and voluntary organisations is central to making real partnership working a reality. In a rural context where existing infrastructure is limited, formal governance structures with a focus on regeneration (LSP’s, local authorities, parish councils, etc.) also need to involve more informal, community-based networks based around the local pub, WI, church, etc.

#### *Better Targeting of Resources*

Several respondents drew attention for the need to move away from a top-down approach to the targeting of resources and monitoring of progress. The importance of enabling communities to identify their own needs is thus vital if the distinctive nature of rural poverty is to be genuinely addressed in the development of local anti-poverty initiatives.

*“Many government initiatives are focussed on urban models and as such do not take into account the difficulties involved in working within a rural area. Targets are often about counting numbers, (people trained, jobs created), and in rural areas these may be low in comparison to the amount of funding required (value for money). It takes time to involve people in rural areas, and in a target-driven world this is something that is not taken into account.”*

## PHASE TWO : LESSONS FROM BEST PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### 1. Introduction

The case studies explored in this section were selected by evaluating written information from the LSP and drawing on the knowledge of key participants in Neighbourhood Renewal in West Cornwall. This included findings emerging from Phase One of this project, and attendance at the West Cornwall Together event in January 2004. The projects investigated here were selected to represent a balance between the five NRF themes, between Kerrier and Penwith, between large and small scale projects, between capital and revenue projects and between statutory and voluntary agencies. As noted above, whilst all of West Cornwall can be defined as 'rural', the primary aim here has been to investigate the delivery of NRF expenditure in the region in addressing the needs of 'poor' people in the more remote rural areas, and of more remote neighbourhoods. Some projects were therefore based in towns but serviced wider rural areas. Others were very locally based in small or medium sized villages. All were in receipt of at least some financial support from NRF and associated funding streams (eg. Community Chest). The projects investigated here are outlined in Box 8 (*below*).

#### Box 9: NRF and Community Chest Case Study Projects

- 1. Curriculum Matters** - A multi-funded project designed to develop the capacity of Cornwall Traveller Education Support Service (CTESS) to increase Travellers' educational access, improve delivery of relevant education and promote their achievement and participation. It began work in February 2004
- 2. Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline (DiVA)** – DiVA developed in 2001 from the women's refuge in Penzance, which found it was not meeting the needs of local women. A local helpline in the refuge had no separate quiet space so a separate project and location were sought.
- 3. Gwinear Village Hall Committee** - This Committee has worked to save and renovate a village hall for the community, and to be a base for a range of other projects and developments
- 4. Home Health Zones** – This project brings together different funders to provide energy efficiency and community safety measures to individual homes in local communities.
- 5. Modern Accessible Midwifery** - This local birthing centre with a pool enables mothers to deliver their babies much closer to home. The Neighbourhood Renewal funded room attached to the local birthing centre provides a base for health promotion and education work.
- 6. Museums Education Project and Oral History Project** – These projects are consortium projects for education work linking museums and schools, and oral history work
- 7. Nancegollan Youth Club** - The Youth Club, located in the local village hall, was started in June 2001 by the local Residents Association. The club operates for 2 hours weekly catering for young people between 8 and 18.

8. **Pendeen Community Project** - a community-based development project working to regenerate Pendeen and its surrounding villages
9. **Phoenix Project** - a Fire Service project for young people aged 13 to 17 experiencing educational or social difficulties or at risk of offending. It comprises 5 day courses in firefighting

## 2. Methodology and Analysis

Documentation related to each project was gathered from LSP sources, project websites and related literature. Each project was visited for between half and one day. Semi structured interviews based broadly on a topic guide (see Appendix 2) were held with managers, key workers and/or volunteers in each project. Interviews or informal discussions were also held with a range of other stakeholders, either during the visits or subsequently by telephone. These included:

- Individual project users (Curriculum Matters, Nancegollan, Pendeen, Phoenix)
- Other agencies, local groups and community leaders using or linking with the project (Curriculum Matters, Gwinear, Home Health, Museums Education, Modern Accessible Midwifery, Nancegollan, Pendeen, Phoenix)
- Management committee/steering group members (Gwinear, Home Health, Pendeen)
- NRF and community regeneration workers supporting the projects

In some of the projects the visits also enabled observation or participant observation of key activities (Nancegollan, Pendeen, Phoenix).

Some projects were nearing completion, while the majority had already completed one phase. Others were in the early stages (Curriculum Matters, Home Health 3), or building activities on major capital investment (Modern Accessible Midwifery), or on a small but significant equipment grant (Nancegollan). It must be emphasised that this study was not designed as a formal, systematic evaluation although some evaluative material was available, and the visits enabled some conclusions to be drawn on the aims and activities of each project. The focus here is upon the identification of key themes and issues in the regeneration of poor rural areas, and upon the kinds of practice that could most usefully be built upon in tackling rural poverty both in West Cornwall and elsewhere.

Each project yielded a wealth of valuable information about the characteristics of the areas served, the history, aims and funding of projects, recent successes and difficulties, and - above all - the way local people and agencies have worked together with energy, vision and commitment in the regeneration of rural Cornwall. Whilst each project could merit a fuller report in its own right, the purpose of this research is to identify key issues and challenges in ensuring that the needs of less well-off people living in rural areas are addressed by Neighbourhood Renewal and other area-based regeneration programmes. In

order to focus on lessons of best practice and areas for further development, more schematic profiles of the projects have been presented. Although these vignettes follow a broad pattern the findings presented here are essentially illustrative, not least because the focus and scale of NRF supported projects varies greatly.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion of Key Findings**

Analysis of each project was undertaken with the aim of capturing any themes that could illuminate best practice in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal and rural regeneration projects more generally. This stage of analysis enabled themes to be explored from different angles based upon the unique experiences and challenges facing individual projects. Some of these are discussed in this section, specifically in relation to:

- ❑ Funding mechanisms
- ❑ Exchange and inter-agency working
- ❑ Bottom up community based development
- ❑ Service provision in the West Cornish context
- ❑ Diversity and inclusion
- ❑ Skills, leadership and commitment

Where appropriate, links are made to specific case studies, which illustrate these themes and more general issues arising from the conduct of this research.

#### **3.1 Funding Mechanisms**

A number of aspects of the NRF funding process were identified that can assist regeneration in rural areas:

- ❑ **The flexibility and speed of response.** The flexibility, lack of bureaucracy and speed of response of the Community Chest and Community Empowerment Fund are crucial for the development of small rural projects (e.g. Nancegollan Youth Club). One example is the willingness of the funders to amend details of applications and provide supplementary information via telephone calls rather than sending the application back.
- ❑ **Importance of locally based community development.** The significance of locally based community development workers who can assist small isolated groups to access resources and work in partnership with Community Chest/Empowerment Fund cannot be overestimated (Nancegollan). Groups can move on to great achievements with such support in forming committees and progressing their objectives (Gwinear Village Hall Project).

- **Flexibility of NRF funding.** NRF funding was in some cases fortuitously well timed, but also allowed other work to be built on (Pendeen Community Project) and gaps to be filled (Home Health Zones). Combining different funding streams was therefore facilitated by the flexibility of NRF.
- **Importance of research, policy and funding expertise.** A valuable impact was made by research and policy officers (Modern Accessible Midwifery) and professional bid writers such as the one based in Cornwall County Council (Curriculum Matters), and in some smaller organisations (Community Energy Plus/Home Health Zones). There are clear benefits of access to a policy/funding person, who can locate funding streams, research and prepare bids in consultation with projects and services, coordinate use of different funds and put them together. However the costs are relatively high for smaller organisations (Home Health). Intermediate organisations and networks, such as West Cornwall Community Network, provide a crucial role in assisting access to funding knowledge. In some cases smaller organisations are fortunate to have workers who can combine these research and entrepreneurial skills with good community development practice (Pendeen Community Project).

**Conclusion 4.3:**  
**Better support for small voluntary organisations**

The research also identified a number of areas for development of funding policies and processes:

- **Information, advice and support for smaller organisations.** There may be a gap for smaller/intermediate organisations who cannot put so much time into fundraising and do not have the services of a professional bid writer or access to a community worker. The Community Chest workers provide valuable support but need to work in continued partnership with more local development workers in order for their support not to be spread too thinly in some areas.
- **Continuity of community work support.** Community development workers are important as continuing support for all smaller groups, although the nature of this support will change as a group's experience and knowledge increase. Those that have developed strongly still need regular information about funding opportunities and deadlines if new opportunities are not to be lost (Gwinear Village Hall Committee). This is particularly important in more isolated rural areas.

**Conclusion 4.3:**  
**Better support for small voluntary organisations**

- ❑ **Higher costs of service delivery.** There are high costs of funding services and projects for dispersed rural populations in order to provide equal access to services (Modern Accessible Midwifery; Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline [DiVA]). Coordination of activities is important but cannot obviate higher relative costs.

**Conclusion 3.1:  
Addressing higher costs in rural areas**

- ❑ **Conflicting Timescales.** There have been delays to the start of some projects that create problems and undermine positive development work. Where there are complicated partnerships it causes additional difficulties if the funder delays agreement, as many sources of funding need to be coincided (Home Health Zones). Similarly groundwork with local communities and groups to prepare for projects is undermined by delays (Home Health Zones). In some cases, particularly affecting children, time scales are crucial. One cohort of Traveller children could no longer be supported to assist integration in school because of funding delays (Curriculum Matters).
- ❑ **Sustainability of improvements.** Sustainability is an issue that is experienced differently by different projects, depending on the availability of mainstream core funding. Some projects have been able to move from demonstrating their worth to attracting core funding (Phoenix Project). Several projects have an excellent track record in successfully attracting diverse sources of funding at very different levels of funding (e.g. Home Health, Pendeen, Gwinear). However, others where core funding is either not generally available (domestic violence) or does not fit current core targets and priorities (Museums Education Project) have greater difficulty in building in sustainability, or may find it impossible, despite very successfully addressing aspects of rural poverty.

**Conclusion 4.7:  
Sustainability of project funding**

- ❑ **Conservation.** It was thought by some to be easier to obtain funding for major refurbishment or rebuilding than for ongoing repairs, and this raised issues about the contribution of regeneration funds, including NRF, to conservation.

### **3.2 Exchange and Inter-Agency Work**

In all regeneration work inter-agency liaison and community networking are key factors. The research found that there is an additional premium on cooperation between agencies and projects in rural areas on several levels and between these levels:

- ❑ Very local cooperation and networks (Pendeen, Home Health)

- ❑ Interagency work between agencies, projects and services in the local communities (DiVA, Home Health, Pendeen)
- ❑ Regional/ county wide partnership groups delivering services in cooperation with local communities (Home Health)
- ❑ Links and mutual learning with similar projects in other parts of England (Phoenix Project, Home Health)
- ❑ Links, sharing of lessons, and use of resources from outside the UK (Pendeen, Home Health)
- ❑ Complicated partnerships can be more sensitive to funding delays, which in turn may undermine development work, cooperation and community trust (Home Health).

<p><b>Conclusion 1.3:</b>  <b>Exchange and mutual learning</b></p>
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### **3.3 Bottom-Up, Community-Based Development**

The importance of community based development support was a theme identified in our earlier research in Cornwall (Cemlyn, Fahmy & Gordon, 2002) and its importance is reinforced by this study.

- ❑ **Significance of personal engagement.** In rural areas there is additional value in individual engagement to assist people and groups to increase confidence, skills and participation. Each community is different and it is important to be responsive to these differences. In Cornwall many communities have suffered the loss of traditional industries that have previously shaped community identity (e.g. Gwinear, Pendeen). New ways of connecting and rebuilding confidence and skills need time and very local knowledge and responsiveness (Oral History Project). Courses and projects offered ‘off the shelf’ without this preparation and ongoing connection will not thrive so well, but the research demonstrated how careful local adaptation and introduction of nationally or regionally available courses and programmes could enable them to flourish within the community (Pendeen). Projects and programmes need to adapt to local conditions (Home Health).
- ❑ **Networks in the community and voluntary sectors.** A strength of West Cornwall is the strong development over several years of community networks, now come together in West Cornwall Community Network, that supports very local groups in accessing information and funding, and enables larger groups to tap into existing networks and consultation mechanisms, to the benefit of projects and of the community (Nancegollan, Home Health).

<p><b>Conclusion 1.2:</b>  <b>Encouraging boundary spanning</b></p>
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- **Community dynamics, difference and visibility.** Development work at local level needs to be sensitive to the dynamics of communities. All communities have differences and divisions, but in small rural communities these can be more visible and less easy to avoid. There is evidence of a great deal of energetic local activity, community spirit and cooperation. However historic and current divisions based on housing tenure, income, and local connections persist and have to be worked with by activists and community workers. In some cases established local leaders can be seen as exerting undue influence and inhibit other local people from developing their voice. A clear vision of the importance of participation and skilled promotion of involvement by community workers can help the community move forward to a more dynamic situation (Pendeen). Local activists who bridge potential divisions within communities by involvement in different bodies or sections can make a significant contribution to productive partnerships and regeneration (Nancegollan).
- **Cornish connections.** Another dimension of community difference is length of connection with Cornwall. The indications from this study are that activists come from across the spectrum in terms of Cornish connections (Gwinear; Nancegollan; Pendeen). Some are long standing residents. Some have moved to Cornwall some years previously. Some have moved away and returned. Some may be incomers with specific skills. The deciding factor in people's acceptance would seem to be their willingness to engage with the community on equal terms, leading to inclusive community activities and initiatives.
- **Development work with organisations and services.** Development work is important for organisations and professionals in rural areas as well as for local people. Professionals and organisations also need a chance to develop their voice, engage more fully with local issues and plan for the future. The Museums Education Project evolved from such development work with small museums to provide a springboard for locally based innovation.

### **3.4 Service Provision in the West Cornish Context**

Services and projects need to respond to rural disadvantage as outlined in previous reports (refs). Some specific issues emerge from this research to illuminate the process of service provision in rural areas.

- **Higher unit costs in rural areas.** There can be high relative costs in rural areas because of dispersed populations. For example accessible birthing facilities, which can promote health equality at the very beginning of life, cost more to provide to a rural area because of lower usage (Modern Accessible Midwifery).

<b>Conclusion 3.1:</b>
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### Addressing higher costs in rural areas

- **High transport costs.** Transport costs are very important to many projects. For example costs to take children on trips are higher for small schools (Museums Education Project). Volunteers' transport costs are higher (DiVA). Lack of public transport generates additional problems for people in rural areas, exacerbating the isolation and exclusion that the projects are aiming to combat. For example the bus service to Nancegollan, where residents in social housing experience many disadvantages and social problems, was about to be withdrawn during the research because it was not profitable, making life even more difficult for the young people and their families in the village.

### Conclusion 3.1: Focusing on transport

- **Limited experiences for rural children.** Rural children can have very limited experiences with few trips away from their village or area. Small schools also provide access to only a limited number of teachers. Promoting access to other resources and experiences to enrich their work in school is very valuable, and increases attainment and parental involvement. However, promoting access to such educational experiences for disadvantaged children can have high costs, as for the Museums Education Project. This project also works to make science accessible to children and to their teachers and was seen as greatly enriching the curriculum and the children's experience in the schools it served, but its future is uncertain.
- **Small numbers of young people in rural villages.** This makes the provision of adequate youth facilities difficult. Committed activist and projects can only make a start on meeting the need, and in some places numbers of young people will be too low for any effective group provision. Without youth services, disadvantaged young people are likely to experience further problems. Mobile and outreach services can go some way to addressing these needs.
- **Isolation of older people.** This is a particular issue for those who have been recently bereaved, and especially in more remote rural areas. Responses include schemes to enable them to make positive use of local memories and also make links across the generations, for example with schools (Oral History Project); helpline and outreach services such as DiVA; and partnership between Age Concern and Home Health Zones to assist the access of older people to energy efficiency and community safety measures in their homes.
- **Importance of personal and community engagement and adaptation to local conditions.** Working in more isolated rural areas enhances the premium on personal and community engagement and adaptation to local

conditions in order to deliver services successfully. Home Health Zones 3 is planning work in the Lizard on this basis. Pendeen Community Project had made personal engagement a central plank of the work.

- **Geographical peripherality.** West Cornwall, and Penzance in particular, are seen as the ‘end of the line’ for people from elsewhere who hope to find solutions to their problems such as domestic violence. However, the hoped for escape from difficulties is unlikely to be straightforward. This trend has implications for local health, education and social services (DiVA, Museums Education Project).

### **3.5 Diversity and Inclusion**

These themes permeate regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal. The research identified some specific manifestations in the Cornish context.

- **Taking pride in Cornish identity.** Cornish people themselves can feel excluded and projects can assist people to take pride in Cornish identity, history and culture. This pride can be inclusive of all, rather than being limited to certain groups (Museums Education Service).
- **Promoting inclusion for minority groups.** Specific minority groups (*eg.* Gypsies and Travellers), need to be given further attention within all mainstream services and projects. Within education, NRF is being used alongside other funding streams to develop much needed work with schools to promote Traveller inclusion and attainment (Curriculum Matters). This highlights the importance of mainstreaming work on inclusion and anti-racism. Some groups continue to be excluded even from aspects of regeneration. For example NRF was said not be able to fund projects on unauthorised encampments, although nationally over 20% of Travellers are homeless because they have no authorised site. Sure Start areas do not cover Traveller sites in Cornwall. Energy efficiency measures are seen as problematic to apply to Gypsy caravans.
- **Gender and disadvantage in rural areas.** Gender issues permeate service provision in Cornwall as elsewhere. Gender interacts with age, poverty and exclusion to create particular pressures for women and girls. Some projects have a specific focus. DiVA highlighted additional disadvantages and vulnerabilities for poorer women in rural areas who experience problems. It demonstrated the importance of adapted provision to ensure anonymity and access to services for women experiencing abuse, and the higher costs of doing so. The positive contribution of women to regeneration and good practice in rural areas was also strongly illustrated by this research. Several of the projects had strong female leadership, from professionals and activists. Others had given less attention to this dimension.

- **Promoting access for disabled people.** This research did not focus on any specific disability projects. However promoting access for disabled people in Cornwall, as elsewhere, is a statutory requirement. In terms of physical access, several of the projects visited were wheelchair accessible, but there are many other aspects of accessibility that could put a strain on small budgets.

### **3.6 Skills, Leadership and Commitment**

In all development work there is found an important place for individual and professional commitment, lobbying, vision and skills. This had many manifestations in this research, which made clear the added value of such leadership in rural areas to change practices and attitudes, and generate links, networks and opportunities. Such leadership is important within agencies and professions as well as within the community.

- **Importance of advocacy.** The contribution of professional and worker activism in breaking down barriers needs to be given a clearer place in regeneration. The birthing unit at Helston was preceded by a history of activism by midwives promoting the needs of less well off local women in rural areas (Modern Accessible Midwifery). In some situations the voice of frontline workers may need to be heard more clearly.
- **New combinations of skills.** Creative projects bring together combinations of existing skills in new ways to foster regeneration and development, and there were plenty of examples in this research, for example entrepreneurial and community development skills (Pendeen Community Project), teaching and heritage skills (Museums Education Project), firefighting and groupwork with young people (Phoenix Project).
- **Valuing the contribution of volunteers.** There were dedicated individual volunteers in the communities and projects: for example operating with very scarce resources to provide services for disadvantaged young people (Nancegollan); working tirelessly to raise funds for their village hall and promote local activities (Gwinear); planned a co-ordinated programme of new projects for different sections of the community (Pendeen): providing support to very vulnerable women (DiVA). The interplay between professional and voluntary activity (including political involvement) can also be a key factor in regeneration, where individuals draw on the strengths of both to create new ventures (Phoenix Project).
- **Importance of community-based development work.** Some smaller projects commented on the difficulties of involving more disadvantaged families (Gwinear, Nancegollan). This highlights the importance of

community based development work to foster engagement, confidence and participation (Pendeen).

**Conclusion 4.6:  
Encouraging community  
development approaches**

Overall in West Cornwall the level of commitment, energy and vision is impressive.

## 4. The Case Studies

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### CASE STUDY 1: CURRICULUM MATTERS

#### *Background and Location*

Gypsy and Traveller children nationally and in Cornwall can experience difficulties accessing school, receiving a culturally inclusive curriculum, and achieving their potential. In 2003-2004 357 Traveller children were known to CTESS. Of these 127 did not access education. Their attainment levels at Key Stages 1,2 and 3 were way below county and national levels. While there are Travellers elsewhere in Cornwall, two Traveller sites link with Kerrier schools. For a combination of reasons including high mobility, there had been particular problems for children from the more rural site in accessing secondary school. CTESS has existed since 1993, but with three advisory teachers to work throughout Cornwall.

#### *The Project*

Five schools in Kerrier, with over 90 Traveller children on roll, were targeted in the NFR part of the project. Part-time workers –entitled Cultural Diversity Support Workers (CDSW)– were appointed to work with two primary and two secondary schools to provide learning and pastoral support for children. A part-time Education Welfare Officer (EWO) works with schools and families to improve relationships and attendance. While new for CTESS, other Traveller Education Services have had EWOs for many years. And a part-time Curriculum Development Advisory Teacher works with schools to promote equal opportunities, a more culturally relevant and flexible curriculum for Travellers, associated resources, and liaison with parents. Outreach work by the CTESS coordinator resulted in Gypsy/Travellers filling three of the four CDSW posts. While very positive, this had generated further equality issues, for example the dress code for staff. The project work builds on previous work of CTESS but focuses more support in schools, and provides an increased level of community/school liaison and of curriculum development. Other funding will support posts working with 14 to 19 years olds not in school, and the provision of learning resources.

#### *Activities*

The project was at an early stage, and schools were adjusting to the new staffing resources. One rural primary school with 22 Traveller pupils considered that work so far undertaken with CTESS support had encouraged Traveller parents and children to feel more comfortable in the school, reduced resentment and

antagonism felt by settled parents, and assisted a cultural shift in the school towards greater inclusion. The new project would enable them to shift the focus towards attainment, assisted by a more flexible national curriculum policy, and to develop learning resources for Traveller children when they travel with their families.

### ***Funding and Resources.***

NRF funded the four support workers, EWO and advisory teacher (£146,147). CTESS appreciated the input of the County's grant adviser in preparing the bid. However delays in agreeing the funding meant one cohort of Traveller children could no longer be worked with. It is hoped that the CDSW and EWO posts would be continued after the project by schools, while the advisory teacher's work should have achieved improved curriculum, policies and resources. The Learning and Skills Council also funded two learning mentors for the 14 to 19 age range. And the Children's Fund provided resources and training to use them (£17,500) e.g. the Chrysalis package to promote achievable challenges and build self-esteem.

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## **CASE STUDY 2: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE HELPLINE (DIVA)**

### ***Rural Issues***

Any women experiencing domestic violence (mental, emotional, financial, sexual or physical abuse) can face many other practical and emotional difficulties, including low self-esteem and mental health problems. In rural areas they can face additional problems, because both anonymity and access to services are more difficult.

### ***Activities***

DIVA activities have three strands. A telephone helpline; outreach support to women; and counselling. It has two part-time staff, one manages the project and the counselling, another manages the helpline and outreach. Counselling and outreach are mainly provided by volunteers, who are also supported by the refuge's volunteer coordinator. The helpline is open 10-3 each weekday covering Kerrier and Penwith. It takes 30 new cases a month, from town and country areas, although the workload is tripled by follow up work which is not transparent to funders:

**Outreach:** After contacting the helpline, some women meet an outreach volunteer. Risk assessments are undertaken by the helpline coordinator, but

meetings never take place in homes, which in remote villages can be very visible – so alternatives include cafes, churches, GP surgeries, Sure Start. Volunteer support includes helping them manage a crisis, move on and out, access housing, benefit, legal and court services, and emotional support. All aspects of outreach are underpinned by networking and interagency liaison.

**Counselling:** Referrals for counselling come from many sources including the refuge, Sure Start, health visitors, police and self-referrals. Counselling is offered for 26 weeks, and an average of 34 women receive the service at one time, with more on a waiting list. Group counselling is harder to provide because members are so dispersed, though women have expressed the need for groups for young women, women with children in the court system, and sexual abuse. Transport and other costs are higher in rural areas.

**Advertising:** This is a key aspect of the project to promote access in rural areas. It includes a painted bus, posters, stickers, leaflets, beer mats, match boxes, funding from Community Safety, and liaison with liaison with councils, health and other agencies for distribution. The DIVA support group involving refuge, church, police and health representatives plays a key role.

**Volunteering:** Volunteers represent a very significant resource of time, skills and commitment to the agency. Some have experienced domestic abuse themselves and want to ‘give back’. The refuge runs a 9 week training course for volunteers on the helpline and outreach, and provides ongoing support. Counselling volunteers have at least a first year counselling diploma, and receive up to 30 hours individual and group supervision in the project.

### ***Resources and Funding***

The helpline was first funded by Opportunities for Volunteering between 2001 and 2003 at £40,000 per annum. When this ended Neighbourhood Renewal funding was obtained for a year, and then a further two years from 2002 to 2004. The project/counselling manager’s post was funded by the Paul Getty Foundation until October 2004. The project lives on a financial knife edge, reflecting the difficulties of refuges nationally, which are not core funded. Costs of transport for volunteers and clients (e.g. taxis) and dispersed venues can be very high in rural areas, but are central to the provision of services. Many women contacting the project have minimal financial resources of their own.

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### **CASE STUDY 3: Gwinear Village Hall Project.**

#### ***Location***

The parish of Gwinear consists of a series of small farming and former mining villages in Penwith south of Hayle: Churchtown, Carnhell Green, Reawla and



Wall. A train station assisted distribution of local produce, but the line was closed in the early 1960s. Additional house building including social housing took place during the 1980s but little community support was provided. There are now minimal local job opportunities apart from those in farming and people have to commute to Camborne, Truro, Hayle or Penzance. Those with jobs may be working long hours that prevent community involvement. There is an infrequent bus service, a monthly mobile library visit, some mobile shops, a weekly medical visit, a post office and a primary school serving the four villages. However the post office is threatened, there is no bank, permanent vicar or doctor, and very little else. There are no other facilities for young people. The refurbishment of the hall for community use was therefore of great importance.

### ***The Village Hall***

The stone hall was solidly built in 1893 as a Church school in one of the Gwinear villages: Churchtown. The school closed in 1931 and it became the church hall. It fell into disrepair, was decreasingly used and liable to be sold for private accommodation. Local people came together, formed a committee, and were eventually able to negotiate taking over the lease from the Church for community use under the Albermarle scheme on a rent of £100 per year.

### ***The Village Hall Project***

The committee went on to acquire charity status in 2000, commissioned a structural survey of the hall, held further public consultation meetings, and launched an active fundraising drive. This included both local events and investigation of grant aid possibilities. A significant step was a community survey of all local residents to identify the level of support for the project, the range of activities of interest, and potential volunteers. Despite a very short timescale (2 weeks) a 41% return rate was achieved, 100% support for the project expressed, and a clear picture of people's needs and interests produced. Notable features of this survey were the use of very local representatives to encourage participation, and the professional presentation of the results. The committee has a core of six very committed local people with a range of skills and experience including building work, landscaping design, IT, fundraising and report writing. There is wider but less active membership by representatives of other groups. Some committee members also belong to other local groups and committees such as the Parish Council. While most committee members have longstanding personal or family connections with the area, some have themselves come to live there more recently. Initial concerns about attracting people to the hall from all four villages have not been born out. However while the project has generated great support, the committee found that some groups such as pensioners and young families in

social housing were harder to involve. The survey identified interest in youth and young children's activities, but the specific location of the hall and the limited numbers of young people in the area had inhibited development of youth activities. There were plans for play facilities in another of the villages.

### ***Activities***

A major partner in the village hall is the local playgroup, Busy Bodies Pre-School. This group originated some years ago using other venues including a private house. Since moving to the renovated hall it has been able to extend its sessions to 5 a week. 22 children aged 2.5 to 4.5 years from all four villages are registered. The Hall has enabled the Pre-School to develop much improved facilities for the children, supported by Sure Start. It has gained a grant of £18,554 from Portheyl Sure Start for internal work (£4,186) and external work (£14,368) to develop a secure outdoor play area for the children. Other regular activities include keep fit, embroidery and gardening classes, and rental for social functions and parties. Local groups are charged £7.50 a session while private parties pay £25-£30. There are ambitious plans for further refurbishment of the hall including the roof, and for the improvement of the surrounding space, including the pre-school area, with the aim of making an attractive public open space.

### ***Funding and Resources***

A community regeneration officer in Penwith had played an important role helping the committee to form and develop its work in 2000. The disappointment of a failed lottery bid set them back, but a more realistic estimate of costs, and support from the Community Chest had enabled the project to move forward again. £...was received from the Community Chest towards refurbishment of the hall including removal of the stage, reduction and redesign of the kitchen area, creation of a small conference room, and two accessible toilets. Matched funded was provided by Gwinear-Gwithian Parish Council. A further £12,000 was received in 2004 towards blinds and an external noticeboard. There were some ways in which the committee could still benefit from community development worker support currently, for example giving information in relation to the timing of funding bids. The committee had lost the chance for Community Chest funding of a community Easter Egg Hunt because the application was submitted too late. Such funding could then have enabled proceeds of the event to be put towards further repair of the hall.

## **CASE STUDY 4: HOME HEALTH ZONES**

### ***Location and Background***

The Project has had several phases starting with a pilot in Pendeen village (mainly private stock) and Pengegon estate in Camborne (mainly social housing) in 2002-2003; phase 2, Kerrier Home Health, in Redruth, Camborne and Porthleven in 2003-2004; and a third phase, West Cornwall Home Health, in 5 zones of Penwith including more remote villages on the Lizard peninsular, and 2 zones in Kerrier. Affordability of housing is a significant issue for Cornish communities. It is a damp and windy county, in which salt air and wind causes damage to buildings. The quality of building work is variable, and many homes are damp and draughty with no insulation.

### ***Organisation***

This project is a very productive but complicated partnership. It is based at Community Energy Plus at Camborne, and has 3 workers. It is promoted through the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP) involving 50 organisations including councils, housing associations, community and residents groups, and utility companies.

### ***Activities and Methods***

The work in designated zones is characterised by a bottom up approach, trawling for and linking with existing community groups, setting up a network of community organisations, visiting them and providing information packs and training, wide ranging publicity, and engaging with community events to become known in the area. Referrals are then taken through local agencies e.g. GP surgeries, local Age Concern groups. The requirements of the building work e.g. disruption to homes, clearing of lofts, puts a premium on a good 'public face' for the project and contractors. In addition to home improvements, local organisations are also advised on energy saving for existing or refurbished buildings (e.g. Pendeen Parish Members Institute). Further developments would include increased liaison with Social Services, health visitors and police. In the more isolated rural areas of phase 3 the scheme would be further adapted to engage in even more personal contact, home visits and local networking.

### ***Funding***

NRF funded the pilot at £100,000, phase 2 at £205,000, and phase 3 at £100,000. A key issue is the combination of different funding sources. Energy efficiency measures (e.g. insulation) on RSL properties is part funded by the housing

association and part by British Gas; staff costs came from Community Action for Energy (CAfE) for the pilot project; British Gas funds crime prevention measures in some areas (door bars, spy holes); SRB provided £500,000 for phase 3. NRF was seen as helping to 'fill in the gaps' to make the project inclusive, e.g. of owner occupiers, and the funding process had improved. The earlier phases experienced considerable delays in agreeing the funding, taking up much staff time responding to queries, leading to some partners having to withdraw, and problems with the process of community based communication and networking. Some delays persist with SRB and district councils. There is a gap in funding for energy efficiency for organisations. Funding sustainability was being actively addressed, for example through collaboration in the delivery of councils' Public Service Agreement energy targets.

### ***Evaluations***

The project has attracted much attention and been adopted as best practice elsewhere. Evaluation by CAfE highlighted key success factors as the bottom up, community based, networking approach to include more difficult to reach households; including all householders and housing types; linking funding sources and committed partner organisations; using a single multi-agency logo (CSEP); completing the work quickly; and developing local solutions to rural housing issues (e.g. no gas supply).

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## **CASE STUDY 5: MODERN ACCESSIBLE MIDWIFERY**

### ***Background***

Birth, pre-birth and post birth experiences are significant for health in later life. For women in Kerrier and Penwith, the nearest maternity unit is at Treliske Hospital in Truro, ...miles away. This can be disadvantageous for poorer women in rural areas with limited access to transport. Access to a birthing pool is national policy, and recommended by NICE as part of a strategy to reduce caesarians. However hiring a pool is impossible for many poorer women, since it costs £160, is needed from 37 weeks, and can be too large and heavy for many properties. Midwives are a key source of information for mothers, but choices offered have to be realistically available for them.

Midwives were influential in the plans for the unit. In West Cornwall midwives had been active in lobbying for local facilities for women, on a par with a unit in St Austell, the nearest birthing pool. This included a march protesting about a much earlier closure of a unit in Penzance; and a meeting of all local midwives in St Ives in 2000 that generated a list of proposals and led to a large scale

consultation with local women. A key finding was that women wanted facilities near their homes. Focus groups subsequently indicated that women wanted a range of choices, clearly including local birth and a pool. A public health specialist was assigned to develop the project, and was key to the NRF application.

### ***Aims and Activities***

The aim of the birthing unit and the additional room is to reduce health inequalities: by improving experiences for mothers and children at the beginning of life; by increasing choice for local women; by providing access to a birthing pool; and by providing local facilities for ante-natal classes, smoking cessation and breastfeeding support sessions, building on the work of Sure Start Trevu and linking with Sure Start in the Lizard. The additional room will enable the unit to become a familiar part of midwifery and health visiting services for pregnant and newly delivered mothers.

The unit opened in February 2004. There had been considerable interest from women visiting the unit and the birthing pool. 17 births had taken place there by the end of April, with mothers greatly valuing the experience. During the summer of 2004 a health visitor started a twice monthly drop in service for breastfeeding support in the community room. This was starting slowly. However as a capital project the unit provides a foundation for future development work by health personnel for women and babies before, during and after birth, which can be significant for health in later life.

### ***Funding***

NHS modernisation funds of £166,000 provided the birthing unit and pool. £50,000 NRF funds enabled the additional room to be built. There can be high relative costs in addressing inequalities in rural areas, because of distances and lower rates of use of facilities. The health visitor's work and resources for the breastfeeding project are provided by New Opportunities Funding.

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## **CASE STUDY 6: MUSEUMS EDUCATION PROJECT AND ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

The two Museums projects are consortium projects for education work linking museums and schools, and oral history work.

## **CASE STUDY 6A: MUSEUMS EDUCATION PROJECT**

The Museums Education Project funds a consortium of three local museums in Penwith (Porthcurno Museum of Submarine Telegraphy, Geevor Tin Mine Museum and the Penzance Lighthouse Centre) for an education worker to work with primary schools in making the museums more accessible to children and enriching their curriculum.

### ***History and Background***

A museums and heritage officer in Penwith consulted local museums about the gaps in their service and their aspirations, and found that all wanted to work more with the community. This approach would support the community in strengthening its sense of its own identity, and enhance local support for the museum. They were encouraged to work together to develop the project. Local oral history work at Geevor and Porthcurno also developed from this initiative.

Children in more remote rural areas face a range of disadvantages and limitations on their experience, because of low parental incomes, restricted horizons, lack of transport, play and youth facilities, small schools with limited numbers of teachers, and higher relative transport costs for trips. In towns children can also experience great deprivation and similarly limited experiences, such as children at a Penzance school, a high proportion of whom have special needs such as speech and language development difficulties. Some children rarely go beyond their village or estate, and do not have access to their local heritage.

### ***Aims, Activities and Methods of Work***

The project aims to break down barriers to learning and enthuse the children, helping them to see science as part of their lives, by making it fun and removing any testing or fear of failure. The project fosters cultural inclusion, a sense of pride in themselves and their communities.

The worker has a combination of skills and experience as a special needs teacher, a museums education worker, and a science enthusiast. In contrast to regular museums education work where children come in for one off sessions, there are very close links to the schools, with the visit to the museum being part of a specially designed programme of work. Museum artefacts can be taken into schools for preparation or follow up work. As the National Curriculum has become more flexible, topics can better reflect local needs. Up to a term's work might be linked to a museum visit. Parents also become involved, influenced by their children's enjoyment. For example a visit to Geevor Tin Mine led to children writing stories of tinnerns and knockers, constructing working models of mine shafts, displaying drawings, learning a traditional tinner's dance and developing their own dance. Much work is with special schools and each child's and group's

needs are ascertained. The concentration on science, seen as being ‘about how we live now’, also characterises the project. Primary teachers rarely have a science background, so they can also gain confidence in this area and go through a learning process, supported by teachers’ packs.

### ***Funding***

This consortium project was funded by NRF from March 2002 at £ 28,000, but began in August of that year. The original thinking was that sustainability would be achieved through the museums taking on the costs of the project, but their situation means this can be problematic. Porthcurno, which is funded by Cable and Wireless, can provide a further year’s funding, but the other museums have been unable to contribute and the future is uncertain, particularly for funding the coordinator’s salary. To achieve the project’s aims and achieve a high quality of work with the children takes considerable preparation time, and schools cannot meet more than a fraction of the cost. An application has been made to NRF to fund transport for the schools for two years, and the County Council and the South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council have funded a six week project creating internet resources for teachers. However no funding is available beyond 2005 for the coordinator’s salary, which is key to the project. The short term nature of NRF funding is questionable where core funding is unavailable, and a two year project may take a year to develop.

### ***Evaluations***

The regular evaluations of the project demonstrate that children have more relevant material, are more enthused to learn, gain skills, confidence and an enhanced sense of local identity, and achieve better results.

Children: *“I really enjoyed my visit to Porthcurno museum. It was really exciting learning about electricity especially when you made that sort of mini lightning bolt appear...but the thing I think I enjoyed the most was writing with a Victorian pen.” “Thank you for letting us come to the museum...I found out that sharks can sense electricity so when they put the cable in the sea, the shark tried to eat the cable. I really enjoyed the visits”.*

Headteacher in Penzance: *“ As a school we have benefited enormously from this service...We now base our whole school half termly planning around the visits we make....We find the local studies elements of our visits particularly valuable as we are keen to instil in the children a sense of pride in and identity with their unique Cornish heritage. This way of working benefits the children and has contributed in large measure to improving standards evidenced by our last SATS results.*

A headteacher of a small rural school similarly commented on the positive educational impact on children and on parents, the skilful adaptation to different age groups, and the central importance of transport provision. *‘To be involved with these people is a most wonderful experience’*

A museum director saw the worker as the interface between the museum and people who would not usually access it. Access was seen in terms of physical access with transport as a crucial resource; access to scientific knowledge; and access to a cultural resource that is part of their heritage; all mediated through enjoyment. *'Because it is science it needs to be explained. If children come in a school party without that explanation, they might be put off...[The worker] can take our complex and offputting area and make it accessible and interesting.'*

## **CASE STUDY 6B: ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

The Oral History Project works with older people in rural areas exploring their memories of the locality through recording, photos and artifacts, with part-time workers based at Porthcurno museum and Geevor museum in Pendeen. This case study focuses on the work in Pendeen.

### ***Background***

The project arose from the same consortium development as the Museums Education Project, and there are links between the two projects. Older people in rural areas can experience a range of disadvantages. They often live in very isolated areas without access to public transport. Where there are village bus routes these are frequently discontinued outside the summer tourist period. Those in farming may have moved out of the family home to smaller bungalows, often after bereavement, and if the deceased partner was the only driver, the isolation of the surviving partner can become more acute. Older women are more likely to be in this situation. Because of lack of employment opportunities, children may have moved away leaving parents without effective social support networks. In small rural villages where there are limited or non-existent facilities for young people, tensions can also arise between the generations.

### ***Aims and Activities***

There are both cultural and social aims. The project visits older people in their individual homes, in local Age Concern groups, or in care homes, providing a social lifeline for very vulnerable people, as well as reminiscence work. It also preserves and makes available for the community, through displays and exhibitions, the histories of mining and daily life in the area. Emigration, for instance from Pendeen to the Sudan, and immigration from e.g. Poland and Italy, are explored, enabling the community to increase its understanding of its very local and of its international history.

Links are being developed between the work with children and the work with older people in a cross-generational project. This would involve children interviewing older people, for instance in a local care home, and older people



bringing oral history into schools. The project is intended to provide learning opportunities for the children, validation, interest and opportunities for reflection for the older adults, and increased mutual understanding between the generations.

### ***Funding and resources***

The Pendeen Oral History project has been funded at just under £20,000 by NRF from 2002 to 2004. Of this, the coordinator's salary at 15 hours a week was £5000 per annum (reflecting low local wage levels). At the end of this period further NRF funding was not granted, however the Geevor Museum agreed to take over the funding of the project and the coordinator's post. For this project sustainability has therefore been achieved. Volunteer resources have been significant including retired and younger people, increasing the project's scope while providing social and skills opportunities for the volunteers.

The foundations for cross-generational work have been funded by Creative Partnerships. Resources were provided for an initial workshop. Subsequently a grant of £2500 enabled the development of a week long art and geography curriculum development workshop with four schools, inspired by the memories recorded and the oral history exhibition. There are further plans to build on this work.

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## **CASE STUDY 7: NANCEGOLLEN YOUTH CLUB.**

### ***Location and Background***

Nancegollan is a small village with no shop, pub, post office, or bus service (discontinued June 2004). Primary children walk 2.5 miles to school along a road. There is older owner occupied housing and a social housing estate of 30 dwellings with a residents association, and some social separation between the two groups. Although a play park is being developed through community action, there is nothing currently for young people on the estate but the weekly youth club. They and their families experience a range of difficulties including unemployment, fragmented families, being out of school, and are involved with Connexions, youth service, police and social services. Most have lived there for many years.

The Youth Club was started in June 2001 by Nancegollan Residents Association, using the village hall, a former Methodist church. Two volunteers (one a more recent arrival to the village) developed a wish list of equipment with the young people and obtained funding from Community Chest. But in December 2002 one founder member moved away and the hall was closed for renovation, so the club closed. The cheque was returned. Support from a community regeneration worker resulted in a new volunteer through Cornwall Volunteer Agency, to join the remaining activist (who is also on the Village Hall committee). Community Chest

kept the grant until the hall reopened in September 2003, when the club was relaunched as an independent group, to children's acclaim.

### ***Activities***

The club uses a large hall and two smaller rooms and operates for 2 hours weekly catering for young people between 8 and 18. Younger children can come if accompanied by their parents. However parents are not much involved. Most young people are from the social housing in the village with a few from other villages. 25 young people are registered, with an average attendance of 12-14. The equipment includes computers (in constant use), printer, scanner, karaoke, TV, playstation, table tennis and air hockey, some of which are rotated. Some activities are organised, some self-directed. There was a Christmas trip to Plymouth. The leaders' hopes include organising other trips, involving more adults, and ideally running a second weekly session. They thought the children were communicating and working together better.

### ***Funding and Resources***

The club started in 2001 with £50 from the Residents Association, and £50 from the Parish Council, now paid annually. The Community Chest equipment grant totalled £3159.99, with a more recent grant of £300 for books. A cupboard was built by the local volunteer's son. Sure Start are putting in a phone line so there will be internet access, and have purchased a lap top and printer for village use. Insurance is paid by the youth service and the youth service officer from Pool provides some support (periodic visits, a termly forum of local youth clubs, and funding for the Plymouth trip). The Volunteer Agency pays the volunteer's expenses up to £250 a year. A weekly tuck shop raises a little and the children are charged 50p each to attend. However since the hall reopened the club the rent has doubled to £10 a session. The club does not get a revenue grant, and running costs for 2 hours a week are a struggle. Nonetheless the volunteers praised Community Chest as simple, user friendly, quick and non-bureaucratic. The support of the community regeneration worker had been significant in helping the group constitute itself, access Community Chest funding, and overcome problems to restart in 2003.

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## **CASE STUDY 8: PENDEEN COMMUNITY PROJECT**

### ***Background***

Pendeen was home to Geevor tin mine until it closed in 1993, devastating the village. The mine was the major employer and dominated village life. It has a school, church, pub and (precariously) a shop but few jobs, and community buildings had fallen into decline. There is a population of 2000 over a 5 mile radius. From 2000 to 2002 there was a Health Action Zone project in the village, taking a holistic approach to the reduction of health inequalities. As a pilot project it worked on community development principles to consult the community about their needs and aspirations, including an audit of community groups and buildings. The HAZ worker brought the groups together to discuss the community's needs and plans collectively. There were no preconceived ideas of what developments were needed. Instead the emphasis was on assisting local people to gain a voice, rather than endorsing existing village power structures. The NRF funded project from 2002 to 2004 build on this groundwork, with the same project coordinator continuing in post.

### ***Activities and Methods***

The focus has been on assisting Pendeen to develop its own ideas and take them forward. There has been an emphasis on personal engagement and informal ways of working. Having the coordinator or administrator available in the project office was also important to provide regular support and response. From a wide ranging project, two areas are highlighted here. One of these is training courses and events, the other is community planning, reflecting individual and community capacity building. The HAZ had identified training needs and NRF provided computer equipment in the project. A local training group offered low key opportunities for people to start using computers, providing informal guidance or online programmes as required. Another resource was the Pacific Institute's 'Steps' programme on decision-making and positive thinking. The coordinator's approach was to undertake any course herself first so that she could engage people from personal experience. With these and other programmes such as food hygiene, first aid and self-defence, over 30 courses with 444 participants ran between 2002 and 2004, 21 people gained IT certificates, up to 20 obtained jobs. Village venues were always used, which mostly meant fundraising to run the course locally. Fundraising and drawing in new resources such as Sure Start have been central to the work.

The building of people's skills, confidence and self-esteem went together with developing, sharing and coordinating plans for community regeneration, creating a virtual cycle out of previous negativity, and restoring lost contacts and friendships. As the NRF project came to an end, three 'Priority Initiatives' were being

promoted and funds raised: Pendeen Parish Members Institute was taking forward the support and training offered by the project in a planned new purpose built building nearby; Youth Activities Pendeen was planning much needed youth facilities; and the Pre-School project had a new building and play equipment in one of the school playgrounds already in the pipeline, part funded by Sure Start. Giving people time for such developments over 4 years has been crucial in an area with few opportunities.

### ***Funding and Resources***

Since March 2002 the project has been part funded by NRF, granting £63,000, with part funding by SRB. A range of other resources have been attracted to the project and generated within the community, as outlined in the last section. NRF was well suited to this project in its timing and application. The project had already enabled the community to identify its own targets so realistic targets could be set.

### ***Views of the Project***

This is a highly respected project within and outside Pendeen. Two local quotes sum up its achievements. “This community project has done so much for this village, every village should have one”. “The whole dynamics of the village changed. People realised that the village won’t die because the mine has closed, it’s the people that make the village”.

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## **CASE STUDY 9: THE PHOENIX PROJECT**

### ***History and Location***

In 2000 the Chief Fire Officer chaired a Community Safety meeting in Taunton where the Newcastle Fire Service presented their Phoenix Project. The CFO asked Jack Aitken, a firefighter with 30 years experience, to set up a similar scheme in Cornwall. Jack's community experience was also significant. He had been a councillor and mayor of Penzance, where he set up an annual summer Sports Week for young people. It was his task to establish the project, raise the funds and build a team. This included 3 core staff and a seconded member from each fire station where the courses take place. This is a Cornwall wide project. Courses take place each month in different fire stations. Children from outlying areas are brought in by minibus to some courses.

### ***Aims and Activities***

The Phoenix Project is 'a multi-agency scheme aimed at encouraging teamwork, leadership, citizenship and confidence building'. 'The intention is to use serving Fire Officers to provide role models for young people by directing their energy in more positive ways and helping them become ambassadors who will help to spread community safety messages'. Young people are referred by Education (69%), Social Services, youth organisations e.g. Dreadnought, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions or the Police. Up to 10 young people join each course. Participants are interviewed beforehand, and mentored again at 3, 6 and 12 months after the programme. The project hopes to strengthen the links with teachers in future, and start some work in primary schools see: <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/fire/youth/phoenix.htm>

All of the activities e.g. hose running, manual handling, using breathing apparatus, are used as the basis for drawing out wider lessons in communication, teamwork, and leadership. Explanation and engagement characterise the style of work, and the week ends with individual interviews, which promote self-assessment, model trust and respect, and visibly boost self-esteem. It could be of added value if roles in the team challenge traditional gender roles.

### ***Funding and Resources***

Neighbourhood Renewal provided £276,000 for 2002-2004, while the County Council allocated £111,000. During the research future funding from the Education Department was in the pipeline, ensuring sustainability.

## *Evaluations*

Nationally the Cornwall Phoenix project is now operating as a flagship project for other Fire Brigades setting up similar courses. Locally the project has been very positively evaluated by children, parents, headteachers and other referring agencies. However some questions remain about measuring its longer term individual impact and its relative costs.

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## CONCLUSIONS

This research has implications both for the operation of Neighbourhood Renewal within West Cornwall, and for the design and delivery of rural regeneration initiatives nationally. This section will therefore focus upon specific recommendations pertaining to the work of West Cornwall LSP, before considering the more general implications for the operation of Neighbourhood Renewal across rural areas in the UK.

### A. Conclusions for West Cornwall LSP

#### A1. **Mainstreaming, Coordination and Joint-Working.**

Neighbourhood Renewal in West Cornwall has been a significant driver in ensuring better joint-working between service providers and in encouraging greater integration in the development of policies to tackle rural poverty. However, there are opportunities for further progress specifically in relation to:

**1.1 Rural proofing interlocking area-based initiatives (ABIs).** Clearly, Neighbourhood Renewal is only one amongst many ABIs and it is therefore important to ensure that rural proofing policies are co-ordinated both at the strategic level in terms of the development of local and regional strategies, and in terms of the delivery of regeneration across the range of partnership mechanisms.

**1.2 Encouraging boundary-spanning behaviour.** Boundary crossing activity is very important in a rural context in establishing effective inter-agency working given the constraints upon both physical and human resources. Opportunities for further development in this respect could be achieved through greater use of formal secondments and other informal arrangements.

**1.3 Exchange and mutual learning between community and statutory sectors.** The West Cornwall Community Network was frequently cited in the case studies as a valuable source of information, support, exchange and development. There may be gains for statutory agencies in further considering what lessons may be available from this and other models of flexible, permeable interchange mechanisms in the community sector.

**1.4 Encouraging greater flexibility in service provision.** One advantage of greater coordination and integration of service provision for rural areas is in the development of multi-agency provision which makes effective use of the limited infrastructure available in rural communities for example through better use of informal, community-based resources (village halls, churches, WI, pubs, etc.) to deliver a range of local services.

**1.5 Avoidance of undue delay and bureaucracy in administration of funding.** While there have been recent improvements in the administration of NRF funding in West Cornwall, some case studies illustrated how delays in funding projects could undermine other benefits of joint working, community development and access of disadvantaged groups to mainstream services. The Community Chest and Community Empowerment Fund were able to illustrate best practice in this respect.

**1.6 Securing mainstream funding.** In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the benefits brought about through NRF funding, there is a need to refocus NRF spending to place more emphasis upon evaluating the effectiveness of projects (*see below*). However, on its own this is unlikely to be effective without a genuine commitment from statutory services to continued support and long-term resourcing for effective and innovative means of delivering services and addressing needs.

**1.7 Greater flexibility and inclusivity in relation to sustainability.** Some projects that are successful in addressing aspects of rural poverty through imaginative approaches are currently either marginal to mainstream concerns, or straddle different domains in terms of possible mainstream funding sources, or are sponsored initially by less well resourced and powerful agencies. Greater flexibility and boundary-spanning behaviour is needed to support the continuation of those projects that are successful in tackling aspects of rural poverty but are vulnerable to closure when NRF funding ceases.

## **A2. Identifying and Targeting Need**

West Cornwall has made excellent use of small-area data in order to determine the extent of poverty in smaller, rural communities where pockets of deprivation can sometimes be hidden within larger areas of relative affluence. However, there is room for further improvement in the identification of need, specifically in relation to the need for:

**2.1 Better sharing of small-area data.** Currently, a range of statutory organisations, including local authorities, health authorities, social services, etc., collect information which may be invaluable in determining needs at the small-area level and identifying targets for rural areas. Since accurate identification of the problem is essential to developing effective solutions, better use of such data by partner organisations is needed, whilst also ensuring client confidentiality is maintained.

**2.2 Establishing effective floor targets for programme delivery.** There is always some tension between effectiveness and efficiency in determining local targets, where the most cost-effective (efficient) strategies tend to focus upon addressing the needs of people living in the main towns (ie. Penzance, Camborne,



Redruth). Whilst there clearly is a balance to be struck here, at present most locally determined targets could be achieved without a requirement for demonstrable improvements in the circumstances of poor households living in more remote areas. Establishing effective floor targets involves a commitment to ensuring that positive outcomes are sought in *all* deprived areas, including smaller, rural communities to be evaluated on the basis of high quality small area data and analysis.

### **A3. Evaluating the Effectiveness of NRF Policies**

In general, the NRF framework is an effective vehicle for addressing the needs of disadvantaged rural communities and a great deal has been achieved in a relatively short time frame. However, there are opportunities for further progress at the strategic level in relation both to addressing the needs of less well off people in rural areas thematically, and in terms of addressing the needs of those groups most at risk of poverty. Specifically there is a need for:

**3.1 Focusing upon transport, access to services and higher unit costs in rural areas.** There is a need for some refocusing of NRF expenditure in order to address the needs of less well-off rural communities that are not currently prioritised within the NRF framework, especially in relation to transport, access to services and higher unit costs. The case studies illustrated the higher costs of funding services and providing access for dispersed rural populations. Such refocusing could be achieved through greater investment in subsidised public transport, better use of mobile service provision, outreach services, multi-agency ‘one-stop shops’, free local information (ie. Web-based, Freephone). Much of this work is already in progress but could be considerably extended and further integrated within existing mainstream service provision (*see 1.6 above*).

**3.2 Tackling employment deprivation.** Inevitably, the current balance of NRF project funding reflects the contours of organisational concentration in the region, so that programme areas where existing provision is relatively advanced tend to benefit from additional funding. There is therefore a need to re-focus expenditure in order to prioritise areas in which NRF expenditure in West Cornwall is currently more limited and in which current organisational capacity may be weaker. Clearly, this approach should be based upon a comprehensive understanding of the distribution of grant funding in West Cornwall, both thematically and geographically, to ensure that the flexibility of NRF funding can be used effectively to ‘plug the gaps’ in existing grant provision in the region. As has already been noted (*see 1.1 above*) an effective rural proofing strategy for the region therefore needs to consider how the various regeneration initiatives interact in delivering sustainable benefits for the region.

**3.3 Addressing the needs of older people, ethnic minorities and disabled people.** As with the NRF themes there is also a tendency for ‘success to follow success’ in bidding processes in relation to addressing the needs of key population

target groups through Neighbourhood Renewal. There is therefore a need for a re-focusing of expenditure to address the needs of older people, ethnic minorities and disabled people living in rural areas who can be especially vulnerable to isolation in rural communities, and who may fall outside even those funding schemes and projects that are designed to address disadvantage and exclusion. There is a specific need to develop capacity through community development approaches and Community Chest funding to ensure that such groups are not marginalised within larger bidding processes.

#### **A4. Improving and Monitoring the Effectiveness of NRF Funding**

Overall Neighbourhood Renewal is proving to be an effective vehicle for tackling rural disadvantage in West Cornwall. However, there is room for further improvement in the monitoring of programme effectiveness, specifically in relation to the need for:

**4.1 Evaluation of the geographical equity of provision.** An emphasis upon evaluating the effectiveness of rural delivery should be an integral aspect of the governance framework for Neighbourhood Renewal in rural (or partly rural) areas, for example, through the introduction of a 'rural delivery taskforce' within the LSP structure. This could be an effective means of co-ordinating the collection of relevant baseline data, monitoring the effectiveness of programme delivery in rural areas, and ensuring that all targets and policies are fully assessed for their impact in rural communities.

**4.2 Better information on NRF spending both geographically and in relation to target groups.** If Neighbourhood Renewal is to be an effective vehicle for community regeneration in rural areas there is a pressing need for better information about how resources are being directed both geographically at a small area level and in determining who are the main beneficiaries of these services. As with the evaluation of outcomes (*see 4.4, below*) this can be achieved through survey work with user groups and community development based facilitation.

**4.3 Increasing fund-raising information and support for small voluntary organisations.** It is likely that the range and effectiveness of service delivery in rural areas can be extended and improved by increasing the availability of fund-raising information and support to small organisations across rural areas.

**4.4 Better information on rural outcomes.** The effectiveness of NRF supported projects in addressing the needs of rural service users needs to be assessed through better monitoring by projects of service usage for client groups living in remoter areas, for example through the use of user surveys, user forums, etc.

**4.5 Encouraging rural community involvement.** Continued development is needed to promote improved mechanisms for rural community involvement in order to determine effectiveness of rural service delivery, for example, through greater use of community development approaches that are resourced to be consistent, sustained and available across remote rural areas.

**4.6 Encouraging community development approaches.** Greater recognition needs to be accorded to the holistic benefits of community-focused work. The effectiveness of small-scale community development work, which can snowball and bypass large-scale community and voluntary organisations needs to be acknowledged and accommodated within the governance structures of rural LSP's.

**4.7 Sustainability of funding and project development.** At the same time, budgetary constraints and short-term nature of project funding in rural areas undermines the sustainability of benefits. This needs to be addressed both through better funding of small-scale community development and other initiatives, the mainstreaming of successful approaches to community regeneration by statutory service providers, and greater flexibility and inclusivity in relation to sustained funding (*see Section 1 above*)

## **B. Wider Policy Implications**

Overall, Neighbourhood Renewal in West Cornwall is proving to be an effective vehicle for the regeneration of rural areas, both in facilitating a community-based approach to addressing neighbourhood decline, and in bringing together a wide range of statutory and community and voluntary sector bodies to address the underlying structural problems facing the region. In the past there has been a tendency for regeneration initiatives to focus upon large-scale 'flagship' economic regeneration projects that have often been limited in their capacity to generate sustainable quality employment for local people, and have done little to address the isolation and lack of power experienced by less well-off people living in rural areas.

Local initiatives alone cannot provide solutions without the type of basic structural changes at the national and international levels necessary to eliminate poverty. However, the flexibility of Neighbourhood Renewal means that NRF funding can be used to 'plug the gaps' in existing grant provision and mainstream service provision. This is an especially important consideration in rural areas where existing local capacity may be limited, and where more isolated rural communities are often overlooked by other funding programmes. Community-focused regeneration is in many respects both an effective and efficient approach to regeneration in rural areas. Effective because an emphasis upon community development and community participation in regeneration initiatives means that the voices of more remote communities, and of more disadvantaged groups, are

more likely to be heard in determining priorities, and in the design and delivery of services. The use of relatively small grants to support a diverse range of community projects is also an efficient strategy for rural regeneration where local ownership of regeneration initiatives can achieve a ‘snowballing’ effect, in the process helping to ensure long-term sustainability of improvements.

At the same time, Neighbourhood Renewal in West Cornwall has proved to be extremely effective in facilitating joined-up thinking via the LSP structures by a wide range of statutory, local authority and community and voluntary sector bodies. The development of an inter-agency approach to neighbourhood regeneration is especially pertinent in rural areas where isolation and limited local capacity means that service providers need to work collaboratively in order to ensure that rural residents are able to access services, for example through one-stop shops, mobile provision, etc.

A number of statutory services have given strong support to working through the West Cornwall Together LSP to help facilitate neighbourhood renewal in rural areas. The government may wish to consider if the successful community based approach of the Fire Service and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary could be adopted more widely in other parts of England.

The success of the West Cornwall Together LSP has also demonstrated how effective municipal authorities can be when they co-operate to achieve common aims. Both Kerrier and Penwith District Councils have managed to suppress their rivalries and work together closely at both ‘political’ and ‘administrative’ levels to the mutual benefit of the populations they serve. Both urban and rural authorities would benefit from this example of good practice. For example, if Bristol and South Gloucestershire, or Manchester and Salford, could achieve a similar degree of co-operation as Kerrier and Penwith virtually everyone would benefit. Joint budgetary arrangements (where spending requires co-operation) might be one mechanism to achieve such a result – the West Cornwall Together LSP entered into such an arrangement voluntarily.

This research nonetheless raises a number of challenges for the further development of Neighbourhood Renewal in rural areas, and for regeneration work in rural communities more generally. In particular, the nature of deprivation in rural areas needs to be addressed in relation to the Neighbourhood Renewal framework through greater recognition of the importance of transport and access to services as drivers of rural regeneration, and a greater acknowledgement of the higher unit costs of both living costs and service delivery in rural areas. These observations have implications both for the identification of priority areas for Neighbourhood Renewal funding, and for the criteria used to evaluate programme performance by NRF partnerships.

Firstly, in rural areas the identification of areas with significant concentrations of poverty needs to be undertaken at the small-area level (*ie.* at Census output area level) in order that significant pockets of sometimes intense deprivation in rural

areas are not hidden within wider areas of relative affluence. Deprived areas are currently being identified using the IMD at Super Output Area level, unfortunately Super Output Areas are simply too large to identify pockets of sometimes intense rural deprivation which exist in areas like West Cornwall.

Secondly, whilst access to local services has been taken into account in the construction of official deprivation indices in recent years, this has not informed the monitoring and evaluation procedures which NRF partnerships are required to use. However, it is evident that both access to services and the availability of low cost public transport are significant determinants of neighbourhood deprivation in rural communities. Without tackling these issues it is unlikely that the positive outcomes generated by Neighbourhood Renewal will be experienced by less well-off households living in more remote rural areas.

Thirdly, considerably emphasis has (correctly) been placed by the government on tackling the problems of child poverty. However, in many rural areas the isolation and poverty of elderly people is also of considerable concern. This and other research (*eg.* Bramley et al., 2000) has demonstrated that elderly people often do not receive all the welfare benefits to which they are entitled, particularly in rural areas where both 'rich' and 'poor' people live in the same community. Unfortunately, whilst the DWP has done some good outreach work amongst younger populations in rural areas, little or no outreach work amongst elderly people in rural areas is currently in progress, and the DWP is often unrepresented at LSP meetings in rural areas. A comprehensive rural proofing strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal should include outreach work by the DWP to help elderly (and disabled) people in rural areas to receive the welfare benefits they are entitled to. The DWP knows the name and address of every pensioner in the UK so such a strategy should be feasible to implement.

Finally, this research has implications for the governance structure of rural regeneration. Mainstreaming of rural proofing perspectives across partner bodies is vital to the management and delivery of social renewal in rural areas. If rural proofing commitments are to be effective they must become an integral part of the routine activities and priorities of Local Strategic Partnerships. A requirement for all partnership bodies to identify the implications of their work for rural areas is one means of achieving this goal and, as such, has implications for the organisational structures of LSPs operating in rural or mixed urban/rural areas – for example, through the creation of a working group to monitor the effectiveness of NRF programme delivery in rural areas.

NRF and regeneration programmes generally have developed primarily in the urban context. This research has demonstrated that NRF can work well in rural areas and for rural communities and a range of benefits have been discussed. However further changes to the development, design and delivery of national and local strategies and programmes are needed if the full potential of NRF and other regeneration initiatives are to be realised for rural areas.

These changes relate to the level at which deprivation information is collected and analysed; the routine incorporation of rural dimensions in NRF monitoring and evaluation frameworks; mainstreaming of rural proofing perspectives throughout LSPs and the key provider agencies involved; a refocusing of NRF strategy and expenditure towards under-represented thematic areas including transport, and under-represented disadvantaged and minority groups; and greater recognition of the very significant contribution of community development approaches and consistent and sustained resourcing of such approaches in rural areas.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire



## Rural Proofing and Best Practice in Neighbourhood Renewal

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL  
Townsend Centre  
for International  
Poverty Research

### ***NRF Projects Questionnaire – March 2004***

#### **NRF PROJECT DETAILS**

Project Title:

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Q1a Is this project wholly funded by NRF? (*Please circle*) Yes No

Q1b (If 'no' at Q1a.) Approximately what proportion of total project funding is provided by NRF? (*Please tick*)

Less than 25%       25% to 50%       51 to 75%       More than 75%

Q1c (If 'no' at Q1a.) What other sources of funding are currently committed to this project? (*Please tick*)

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority | <input type="checkbox"/> County Council     | <input type="checkbox"/> Central Govt Department      | <input type="checkbox"/> Single Regeneration Budget |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Objective One   | <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Care Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Action Zone           | <input type="checkbox"/> European Structural Funds  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Assoc.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Action Zone        | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Authority           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Police          | <input type="checkbox"/> Job Centre Plus    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please list</i> ) |   |

#### **ABOUT YOUR PROJECT**

Q2a What are the overall goals of this project? (*Describe below*)

Q2b How does this project seek to achieve these goals? (*Describe below*)

Q2c What are the main obstacles in achieving these goals? (*Describe below*)

Q2d NRF addresses five key themes: employment & economy; crime; education & skills; health; housing & physical environment. Please indicate below how relevant they are to the goals of your project.

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important
Employment & economy				
Crime				
Education & skills				
Health				
Housing & physical environment				

Q2e To what extent do you feel the NRF Themes address the needs of rural communities? (*Please tick*)  
 Very well       Quite well       Not very well       Not at all well

Q2f Are there any other problems facing rural communities not covered by the above NRF themes (*Describe below*)

## TARGET GROUPS

Q3a Does your project focus *specifically* upon any of the following groups? (*Please tick all that apply*)

- Children/young people    Ethnic minority groups    People with disabilities    Elderly people

Q3b If applicable, please outline below the ways in which your projects seeks to meet the needs of the above groups (*Describe below*)

Q3c Are there any other groups that in your experience are especially vulnerable to rural disadvantage? (*Please list*)

Q3d What are the main obstacles to meeting the needs of disadvantaged people in rural areas? (*Describe below*)

## RURAL PROOFING

Q4a What are the three main things that could be done to improve the quality of life for people in rural areas of Cornwall? (*List below*)

- 1.
  
- 2.

3.

Q4b What are the three main things that could be done to improve the quality of life for less well-off people in rural Cornwall? (*List below*)

1.

2.

3.

Q4c What are the main three obstacles to the delivery of better local services for less well-off people in rural areas? (*List below*)

1.

2.

3.

Q4d How could the delivery of local services to address rural poverty be improved? (*Describe below*)

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. If you would like to find out more about this project please contact:

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## Appendix 2: Interview Topic Guide

### **Rural Proofing and Best Practice in Neighbourhood Renewal**

**Sarah Cemlyn, Eldin Fahmy & Dave Gordon  
University of Bristol**

#### **Topic guide for projects in Phase 2**

##### **1. Nature of project**

- 1) Aims and activities
- 2) Structure of project – management, workers, volunteers
- 3) Funding of project – NRF and other sources
- 4) How well does the NRF funding process meet the needs of the project/ rural needs
- 5) Area covered by project
- 6) Population, groups covered by project
- 7) Aspects of deprivation/ poverty addressed by project
- 8) Groups which might not easily access the project

##### **2. Rural needs and rural regeneration**

- 1) Do you see this as a rural project? How do you understand 'rural'? –  
Could explore issues re low wages, seasonality – of jobs and influx of seasonal labour, access to services, small communities, transport, tourism/ holiday-makers, decline in services in winter
- 2) Are there particular issues about meeting needs/providing services in rural areas?
- 3) How does the project contribute to regeneration/ improving opportunities and resources for deprived rural areas, and less well off people in rural areas?



- 4) Do you see these strategies for regeneration as specific to this area or this population group, or do you think they have wider relevance?

### 3. Community involvement

- 1) In what ways is the community involved in the project?
- 2) What are the key processes for involving the community/ specific groups in the community
- 3) How does the project encourage wider involvement in regeneration processes?
- 4) Are some groups harder to reach or more excluded from these processes?

### 4. Building and sustaining local capacity

- 1) How can the project be continued beyond NRF?
- 2) Can the project become part of mainstream services?
- 3) How does the project help to build local capacity beyond NRF?

### 5. Outcomes of project

- 1) What are the major achievements of the project?
- 2) How has the project benefited particular service users or groups of service users?
- 3) What problems have been encountered in delivering these services and benefits?
- 4) What further needs has the project identified?

### 6. Best practice

- 1) What do you think 'best practice' is? What else might they do if resources were not a problem?