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Area Regeneration in England: is there a Success Formula?

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Area Regeneration in England: is there a Success Formula?

UK governments are currently investing record levels of public funds in regeneration programmes. In England alone – the focus of this study – the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has provided £1.875 billion over the period 2001-2006 to 88 of the most deprived authorities to help them improve public services in their most deprived neighbourhoods and meet key local and national targets for narrowing the gap with the rest of the country. Spending Review 2004 (SR04) made available a further £525m. Given this level of commitment to the economic and social transformation of disadvantaged places and groups, it is hardly surprising that the government should scrutinise the outcomes with special interest.

This study draws on national and local evaluation programmes to attempt to answer several questions

- Can neighbourhoods and localities be transformed as government intends?
- What counts as success?
- What are the success factors?
- What are the implications for public policy in relation to
 - place management
 - social capital ¹
 - lifelong learning?

It is suggested that whilst these essentially local factors are critical in any formula for success, economic factors such as levels of investment and proximity to strong labour markets have tended to be neglected by policymakers and practitioners alike. Low GDP is usually fatal to regeneration.

The study draws on a growing body of evaluation studies in the UK to identify effective practice in regeneration and to isolate success factors. The study represents a deliberate attempt to relate this Hot Topic to previous work for Pascal, to promote the sense of debate and dialogue that is the life force of a virtual network. It draws on the work by Faris, Mowbray and Healy as well as recent work on social capital in the UK by Green and others². It also draws on a considerable body of research on the economies of deprived communities and on sustainable communities including work published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation.³ It also reflects new thinking from the European Union about what makes for successful cities⁴. Finally, it attempts to integrate thinking about sustainable communities with the 3-part Pascal framework: place management, social capital and lifelong learning.

Definitions

We need to be clear about the remit of this paper. Areas, neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and city-regions are all potentially relevant geographical entities but I am going to limit myself to dealing with areas of up to 20,000 population and therefore, in English terms, the equivalent of a small town or the neighbourhood of a city. The reason for this is manageability: larger populations and cities take us into a sphere involving big questions about governance and economics.

¹ In the broader sense argued for by Mowbray in his Hot Topic ie social capital as relevant to public policy as a whole, not simply community development. Healy's questions will be taken as a starting point for this section.

² *South Yorkshire Social Capital Survey* (2003), CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University

³ *Economies of Deprived Communities: synopsis of some recent research* (2005) GFA Consulting for ODPM; *Economic segregation in England: Causes, consequences and policy* (2005) by Geoffrey Meen, Kenneth Gibb, Jennifer Goody, Thomas McGrath and Jane Mackinnon, published for JRF by The Policy Press. *The dynamics of neighbourhood sustainability* by Geoff Green, Mike Grimsley and Bernard Stafford.

⁴ European Evidence Review on Sustainable Communities (2005) ODPM

Literature Survey

Place Management

Place management in the Australian sense of providing 'a framework for councils to engage in continued relationships with community members, stakeholders and partners to achieve mutually agreed aims' has still to find its feet as accepted terminology in the UK.⁵ Its use normally refers to the management of housing estates or shopping centres. However, a similar agenda in England - integrated planning, governance, citizen participation, coordination and delivery of services, infrastructure and maintenance - is represented by the term *Community Strategy*. The 2000 Local Government Act gave local authorities the power to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local community. They now have a statutory duty to prepare, with their partners, a long-term Community Strategy to improve the quality of life in their local area.

A community strategy, according to the Local Government Association, must have four key components:

- a long term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved
- an action plan identifying shorter term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long term outcomes
- a shared commitment to implement the action plan and proposals for doing so
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, and for periodically reviewing the community strategy.⁶

The preparation of such strategies is the responsibility of the *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP), a body usually led by the local authority, set up to promote shared vision, collaboration between public, private and voluntary sectors, and better use of public resources. LSPs exist in most areas of England but are obligatory in the 80+ areas that receive *Neighbourhood Renewal Funding* (NRF) from the government.

The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal announced in 2001, whilst building on predecessor programmes such as the Urban Programme and Single Regeneration Budget, marked a new departure in three ways: programmes were to adopt a comprehensive approach to complex problems; local communities were to be engaged in the search for lasting solutions; and the key focus was to be on improving the delivery of mainstream services. This ethos underpins all the government programmes outlined here. The aim of neighbourhood renewal is 'to arrest the wholesale decline of deprived neighbourhoods, to reverse it, and to prevent it from recurring'.⁷ Success means closing the gap between these areas and the national average. More recently, success has also been defined in terms of sustainable development:

*Only by promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their communities will community strategies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. A community strategy that covers only one of those elements will not suffice; nor will the duty be met by producing three separate strands dealing with economic, social or environmental issues in isolation. A community strategy should cover all three in an integrated way. In developing their strategies, local authorities and their partners should have regard to the government's sustainable development strategy.*⁸

⁵ See the Briefing Note by Anne Malloch at <http://www.obs-pascal.com/docs.php?doc=159>

⁶ Source: Local Government Association <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/blg/compact/commstrat.PDF>

⁷ Cabinet Office (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: a framework for consultation; Executive summary*, p.5

⁸ At: www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_logov_605670-01.hcsp#P9_251

Or, to put it more succinctly in the words of then Communities Minister, David Miliband MP, 'a place you would be proud to call home'.⁹The government's whole approach has now been adopted by the EU including its definition of the 'common goal' of sustainable communities in terms of seven elements:

- housing and the built environment: a quality built and natural environment
- services: a full range of appropriate, accessible, public, private, community and voluntary services
- social and cultural: vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities
- governance: effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership
- transport and connectivity: good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services
- economy: a flourishing and diverse local economy
- environmental: providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way.¹⁰

The government's policy framework was summed up in a report to the EU Informal Meeting on Sustainable Communities:

The ODPM Five Year Plans 'Homes for All' and 'People Places and Prosperity' outline the Government's vision of Sustainable Communities. 'Homes for All' focuses on promoting more choice and affordability in the housing market. It includes measures to improve the supply of housing, including help for first-time buyers and key workers to own a home and help for social tenants to buy a share in their home. 'People, Places and Prosperity' broadens out the Government's approach to Sustainable Communities through the promotion of better governance; strong leadership and the revitalisation of neighbourhoods. The production of two separate but interrelated plans emphasises the need for a holistic approach involving closer links between housing and the development of attractive places that attract the right kind of labour force to make a city economically competitive. It also emphasises the need to continue actions focussed on narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged areas, and people, and the rest of England.¹¹

What of the arrangements for implementation? By 2007, all English local authorities will be responsible for leading a partnership approach, usually through the LSP, to creating *Local Area Agreements* (LAAs). These last are intended to promote more effective joined up or coordinated use of resources through re-alignment or pooling arrangements. They are also intended to streamline the plethora of *Area Based Initiatives* (ABIs) created by successive governments and ministers. Community strategies, and LAAs, which effectively supersede the former, both include agreed targets based on national *Public Service Agreement* (PSA) targets set between the Treasury and service departments. In addition, LSPs in NRF-eligible areas are responsible for meeting *floor targets* that set minimum standards for the area as a whole and individual neighbourhoods. LAAs partners that meet agreed targets are rewarded with additional funds from government.

⁹ At the EU Informal Meeting on Sustainable Communities, Bristol, Dec 2005.

¹⁰As set out in the Egan Review (2004) *Skills for sustainable communities*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. A slightly different eight part list was prepared for the EU event, Bristol, December 2005.

¹¹ ODPM (2005) *European Evidence Review: EU Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities Source Document*, p.5

So, the English equivalent of place management involves currently Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements, PSA and local floor targets, managed by Local Strategic Partnerships. In addition, there are two ABIs focused on place management:

- New Deal for Communities projects funded through NRF are designed to trial comprehensive, community-led solutions to areas suffering high levels of multiple disadvantage. Worklessness, education, health, crime and environment are the issues NDC is expected to tackle. Funding runs for seven to ten years, and typically amounts to £50-60m. for a population of 8000-12000. £2b. has been committed to the 39 projects.¹²
- Neighbourhood Management is 'a process not a project' and involves local communities working with service providers to improve delivery to meet their needs.¹³ Initially, a series of 35 pathfinders or pilots, the approach has been taken up by 140 organisations including housing associations.¹⁴

This account would not be complete without a reference to:

- projects funded under the *Single Regeneration Budget* (SRB), now in their closing stages. Several of the case studies analysed in this report have been funded through SRB. SRB was the forerunner to NRF and foreshadowed the latter's focus on comprehensive solutions to multiple deprivation and on bottom up approaches;
- *Urban Renewal Companies* – a development of the Urban Development Corporations set up by the Conservatives in the mid-80s, URCs assume responsibility for the overall development of whole towns or town centres with a strong focus on physical infrastructure and market-led approaches
- *Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders* (HMRPs) are comparatively new and still to find their feet. They were set up with funding of £500m. early in 2003 to upgrade and refurbish areas of poor housing, to provide long-term solutions, to boost demand and value, and to reverse the exodus of residents.¹⁵

So, that is the complex picture as regards place management in England. I haven't attempted to outline the position in the devolved administrations of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for lack of space. What do we know about its implementation? What are the successes and failures? I intend to answer these questions later in two ways: first, by reference to national evaluations of specific programmes, and then by reviewing the impact of these programmes in specific localities through a series of case studies.

Social Capital

The notion of social capital has increasingly come to inform aspects of public policy in England as it has in Canada, Australia and other countries but, as elsewhere, it is still unclear how precisely the concept can be operationalised. However, this section shows how it is being used in policy formation.

Rather than invent a new definition of social capital for the UK, it was agreed by the Social Capital Working Group that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition be adopted for use across government departments. The definition is as follows: 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups'.¹⁶

¹² See the 2001-05 Evaluation at <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1625> Also see the National Evaluation website at <http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Home.asp>

¹³ See <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=577>

¹⁴ See evaluation at <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=608>

¹⁵ See <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1140019>

¹⁶ Cote, S. and Healy, T. (2001) *The Well-being of Nations: The Role Of Human And Social Capital*, Paris: OECD, p.41

Specialist studies have explored the significance of the concept, for example in relation to education¹⁷ health¹⁸ and gender¹⁹. Some quantitative studies have been able to establish a link between adult learning and social capital. For example, Feinstein and co. are able to demonstrate that taking an academic accredited course increases race tolerance by 94% more than the expected increase for similar adults who took no courses at all.²⁰ This finding is borne out by national data.²¹ The same data also suggest that there are significant links between low levels of social capital and low economic status (living in deprived areas; being unemployed; lacking qualifications). Grenier and Wright argue that 'distributional issues are critical to considering the overall levels of social capital in Britain, and that factors such as inequality and class divisions are important societal factors when assessing social capital...'²² Conversely, the benefits of social capital include lower crime rates, higher business start up rates, higher levels of volunteering, better health. All this might reasonably suggest that the way to build social capital is by investing in neighbourhood renewal so as to change the material circumstances of people's lives.²³

Before plunging into the debate about the policy implications of social capital, it is worth recalling Putnam's dramatic view in *Bowling Alone*: 'Creating (or re-creating) social capital is no simple task. It would be eased by a palpable national crisis, like war or depression or natural disaster'.²⁴ Nonetheless, there are some bold voices, attempting to operationalise what many recognise as a slippery customer in the intellectual firmament.

How to measure is the first question to grapple with, and here the Office for National Statistics has already run what they call a 'harmonised question set' in the 2004 General Household Survey. As Harper and Kelly point out, 'views of the local area (eg local facilities) showed a higher association than selected socio-demographic factors with the social capital variables. Further to this, Blaxter et al (2001) in their review of 40 research studies looking at social capital, found satisfaction with living in an area was associated with high levels of social capital'.²⁵ Similar questions have rapidly become part of the stock in trade of area management baseline studies because they are a useful indication of the social state of health of an area.

There is growing evidence from several policy fields of the value of social capital as a concept in framing area regeneration policy. Mixed tenure housing, for example, as the later case studies show, seems to work better than undiluted social housing, generating a range of benefits, including lower drop out rates from school and higher employment and wage rates, that could be regarded as strengthening bridging social capital.²⁶ Green et al note the association between high levels of social

¹⁷ Field, J. (2005) *Social Capital and Lifelong Learning*, Bristol: Policy Press; Schuller, T. et al (2004) *The Benefits of Learning: The Impact of Learning on Health, Family Life and Social Capital*, Routledge

¹⁸ Green and et al, *South Yorkshire Social Capital Survey* (2003), CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University

¹⁹ Brenda O'Neill and Elisabeth Gidengil (2006) *Gender and Social Capital*, New York: Routledge

²⁰ Feinstein, L. et al (2003) *The Contribution of Adult Learning to Health and Social Capital, The Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No.8*, Institute of Education, London.

²¹ See Haezwindt, P. (2003) *Investing in each other and the community: the role of social capital in Social Trends* (2003), p.22.

²² Grenier, P. and Wright, Karen (2002) *Social capital in Britain: an update and critique of Hall's analysis*, p.1 at

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/pdf/IWP%2014%20Wright%20and%20Grenier.pdf>

²³ Social Trends, p.24.

²⁴ Simon Schuster (2000)

²⁵ Harper, R. and Kelly, M. (2003) *Measuring Social Capital in the UK*, in p5 at

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital/downloads/harmonisation_steve_5.pdf

²⁶ Aldridge, S., Halpern, D. and Fitzpatrick, S (2002) *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, Cabinet Office: Performance and Innovation Unit, April 2002, p.8

http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/seminars/social_capital/socialcapital.pdf

capital and low rates of crime.²⁷ In other words, connections, role models and networks arising from different social groups living in proximity to each other enable low income households to make better connections with public services and the local labour market. Similarly, 'the relationship between parents and their children is important for the development of both bonding and bridging social capital. The available evidence suggests that...helping parents to bond and interact effectively with young infants is important for developing children's self-confidence and building children's capacity to form trusting relationships of their own in later life'.²⁸ This understanding underpins the emergence of the Sure Start early years service as a key policy priority in the UK. Similarly, helping parents and pupils to bond with their schools promotes better attendance and attainment.²⁹

Turning to learning in later life, Healy argues that formal education has brought about a disconnect between the workplace and the community, on the one hand, and schools and colleges on the other.³⁰ He poses a number of questions to help formulate policy antidotes to this problem, for example: 'what role is there for institutions of formal learning to open their doors in the evenings, weekends and out of term times – not just providing more courses and qualifications (important) but facilitating community-led learning and doing innovations...'³¹ In principle, such ideas go with the grain of government policy, which is to widen and deepen participation and to make better use of education plant. A prime example is the extended schools initiative which aims to open schools to the community throughout the day, offering adult learning and childcare. Early evaluation of the initiative points to a social capital gain through the impact on parents: 'Parents also report gaining a greater understanding of the curriculum, putting them in a stronger position to assist with their children's learning'.³²

Citizen participation in delivery is another theme, heavily promoted by ministers.³³ This is part of a developing policy programme about active citizenship and stronger communities led by the Home Office with strong prime ministerial support. It also goes to the heart of neighbourhood regeneration as Ade Kearns notes in a useful review of the field:

Having made the error of referring to disadvantaged areas as 'worst estates' (SEU 1998), the Government now wishes to be positive about all neighbourhoods and communities since they can all be said to have potential in the form of unrealised social capital resources. The language of 'realising social capital assets' is much more in-tune with New Labour's spin on deprivation than its earlier 'combating social exclusion' agenda.³⁴

The agenda for testbed learning communities, the brainchild of the then Skills Minister, Ivan Lewis, brings out clearly the focus on community self-help

²⁷ Op. cit., p.19

²⁸ Aldridge, S., Halpern, D. and Fitzpatrick, S (2002) p.56

²⁹ Lall, M. and Gillborn, D. (2004) *Raising Educational Achievement in Areas of Disadvantage: Lessons from Lewisham and Rochdale*, Research Report 51, New Deal for Communities National Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University at <http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/Documents/Research%20Reports/RR51.pdf>

³⁰ 'On a lighter note: social capital and educational policy: an imaginary conversation' in Duke, C. et al (2005) *Rebalancing the social and the economic: learning partnership and place*, NIACE, p. 90; also at

http://www.obs-pascal.com/resources/tomhealy_may2005.pdf

³¹ Healy – in the web version of his article, op. cit.

³² Cummings, C. et al (2003) *Extended Schools Pathfinder Evaluation: Issues for Local Authorities and Schools*, at <http://www.renewal.net/Documents/RNET/Research/Extendedschoolspathfinder.pdf>

³³ See David Miliband's website: http://www.davidmiliband.info/sarchive/speech06_08.htm Miliband was until recently Minister for Communities.

³⁴ Kearns, Ade (2004) *Social Capital, Regeneration and Urban Policy*, CNR Paper 15 at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/cnrpaperspdf/cnr15pap.pdf>

We can improve educational attainment amongst young people by having better schools, by having better teachers, better head teachers and a more flexible curriculum.

But if we don't have family and parental support, high aspirations and belief in the importance of education then there will be a serious limit to our capacity to achieve transformational change in our society and to make a reality of lifelong learning. So that was the motivation ... underpinning, my belief, that we needed to test out this principle of what learning communities may look like.³⁵

Various writers note recognise the importance of informal networks in building communities and social capital, and the risk of overlooking the ways these operate amongst women and ethnic minorities who tend to invisibility in the eyes of some colour- and gender-blind commentators.³⁶ It is the social capital – 'a greasing agent for the (policy) toolbox' in Healy's memorable phrase - represented by these social ties that sets the social context for learning and provides the social support structures that are so vital to residents in disadvantaged communities, as a number of writers have argued.³⁷

Kearns remarks that the New Labour commitment to capacity building and social capital may be a convenient way of shifting responsibility from government and the economic conditions that give rise to poverty. Clearly a balance has to be struck between the responsibility of government and that of the community. But as Mowbray observes, the state can add to the sum of social capital by promoting social equality through 'the broad range of state policies', and not just through community building measures.³⁸ This suggests the attractive hypothesis for policymakers that balanced social capital (balanced between the three types: bonding, bridging and linking) begets social equality.

Lifelong Learning

This section considers the meaning of lifelong learning in the English context and its relevance to area regeneration. We explore government policy and priorities and assess their impact according to evaluation studies.

Ron Faris, in a very useful account of the evolution of the term lifelong learning, quotes the definition put forward by R. H. Dave, one time Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education:

'a comprehensive concept which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, extended throughout the lifespan of an individual to attain the fullest possible development in personal, social and professional life'.³⁹ For the sake of clarity let us begin by defining what falls under the heading of lifelong learning. I believe that it refers to three elements:

- the education sector – all phases: pre-school, school, further education (FE), higher education (HE), adult including Skills for Life (literacy and numeracy) and English as a Second Language (ESOL)
- workforce development
- learning for governance, citizenship, regeneration and political change.

³⁵ Speech to NIACE conference, 3 December 2003.

³⁶ For example Brenda O'Neill and Elisabeth Gidengil (2006) *Gender and Social Capital*, New York: Routledge

³⁷ Frank Coffield in his introduction to *The necessity of informal learning* (2000), Policy Press, and Policy Research Initiative (2005) *Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool*, Ottawa: Privy Council of the Government of Canada at http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=rp_sc_final2

³⁸ Mowbray, M. (2005) 'Community, the State and social capital assessment', in Duke, C. et al, *Rebalancing the social and economic: learning, partnership and place*, NIACE, p.47.

³⁹ 'Lifelong learning, social capital and place management: a Canadian perspective', p.16 in Duke et al (2005)

The New Labour government elected in May 1997 – ‘very bliss was it in that dawn to be alive’ as Wordsworth put it in The Prelude – began bravely with a commitment to ‘education, education, education’ and to a policy of lifelong learning:

*Our vision of the Learning Age is about more than employment. The development of a culture of learning will help to build a united society, assist in the creation of personal independence, and encourage our creativity and innovation. Learning encompasses basic literacy to advanced scholarship. We learn in many different ways through formal study, reading, watching television, going on a training course, taking an evening class, at work, and from family and friends.*⁴⁰

But when David Blunkett left the Department for Education and Employment and Professor Bob Fryer moved on from the National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning⁴¹, what was left was largely the legacy of previous governments: a front-end loaded approach that focused investment on school and those who progressed at 18+ to higher education, plus a new commitment to early years education. More recently, a Treasury-driven preoccupation with productivity and skills has raised the status of and investment in workplace learning. In that context, the Cinderella sector, further education, has begun to benefit from growing government interest. Less favoured have been adult learning, currently suffering a significant cutback in funding, and learning for governance, citizenship, regeneration and political change.

Schools have been the top educational priority since 1997, with a significant increase in funding overall plus a number of targeted programmes such as Excellence in Cities and a new scheme of self-governing academies to replace failing schools, all aimed at raising attainment in disadvantaged areas. In addition, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has supported a range of educational interventions, many of them focused on schools and their communities, designed to narrow the gap between disadvantaged areas and the national average in England. Similar programmes have been enacted in Wales and Scotland. There has been much debate and arguably less progress in introducing vocational programmes in schools, where the academic route to higher education still reigns supreme.

On the other hand, there has been a step change in the organisation of children’s services. Every Child Matters: Change for Children is a new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. Its aims are broad: Be healthy; Stay safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution; Achieve economic well-being. The new Childcare Bill (introduced to Parliament in November 2005) confirmed the vital role of local authorities as strategic leaders, working in partnership across all sectors to shape the future provision of childcare and delivery of early childhood services, raising quality of provision and improving outcomes for all children. The needs of children and their parents are at the heart of the proposed legislation, with local authorities as the champions of parents and children, ensuring that their views are heard in the planning and delivery of services. The Schools White Paper published in October 2005, continues the theme: ‘All schools will be expected to do more to engage and to listen to parents. They will provide more regular information on progress; will be encouraged to set up Parent Councils to give all parents an opportunity to have their say; and will consider the use of outreach workers to make contact with hard-to-reach parents’.⁴²

Every Child Matters introduces integrated local children’s services, replacing separate local education authorities and children’s social services, with new Children’s Centres and Extended Schools in every

⁴⁰ See text of the Green Paper, *The Learning Age* (DfEE, 1997) at

⁴¹ <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/nagcell/part1.htm>

<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000000654.htm>

⁴² More Choice for Parents and Pupils (Schools White Paper), DfES, October 2005, paragraph 5.30.

area. Children's centres grow out of the experience of Sure Start, a national pilot for pre-school provision that prioritised parental involvement and capacity building, and are being planned alongside the extended childcare offer for 3 and 4 year olds and extended schools. Integrated services for parents will be reshaped to make them accessible to children and families - delivered either in the main centre, in a linked site or setting or even at their home where appropriate - so that professionals move to parents and children, not vice versa. All centres will offer outreach support, especially to isolated and vulnerable families.

The extended schools approach aims to contribute to raising standards and the Every Child Matters objectives as well as other cross government policies such as neighbourhood renewal. Offering a range of extended services and activities should help promote greater parental and community involvement and help to develop a learning culture amongst young people and adults.

The Extended Schools Prospectus⁴³ sets out a core offer of extended services that all primary and secondary schools will provide access to by 2010. The services are: quality childcare 8am-6pm all year round; a varied menu of study support activities including, homework clubs, sports, dance and drama, visits, enterprise and volunteering opportunities; parental support including family learning; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services including speech therapy, child and sexual health and community access to IT, sports and arts facilities and adult learning.

Adult learning has fared less well apart from a notable investment in adult basic skills through the Skills for Life programme. Initiatives targeted at disadvantaged areas and groups have been funded through significant but small scale programmes such as Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities and testbed learning communities. The case for liberal and community adult education has cut little ice with education ministers whose main preoccupation has been the early years and school sectors, improving participation and skill levels in the 14-19 age group and workforce skills. Or rather the social capital line favoured by individual ministers such as Ivan Lewis has never survived their usually abbreviated periods in office. Most of the £9b. annual budget of the funding and planning agency, the Learning and Skills Council, is invested in these two latter activities plus Skills for Life. Additional programmes are funded by the Department of Work and Pensions through the Jobcentre Plus network aimed at reducing benefits dependence and increasing the employment rate.

The political focus on young people's and adult skills and on the further education sector has generated three White Papers in almost as many years and the Treasury-sponsored Leitch review of the nation's medium term skill needs. A major outcome has been government investment in a free entitlement for those who lack them to a level 2 or three qualification, equivalent to GCSE (school leaving certificate) or A level (university entrance certificate), and the creation of a National Employer Training Programme, which provides subsidised brokered and tailor-made training packages.⁴⁴ As report after report has demonstrated, poor skill levels in disadvantaged areas are a major obstacle to finding worthwhile employment.⁴⁵ Paradoxically, on the other hand, research also shows that participation rates in the college sector in deprived areas are above the national average.⁴⁶ Whilst this suggests that colleges perform an important role in upskilling deprived communities, it may also indicate that they have more to do in drawing in the least confident.

There has been interesting but small scale investment in learning for governance, citizenship, regeneration and political change, most of it through neighbourhood renewal (ODPM) and active

⁴³ Download at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/EXSG.pdf>

⁴⁴ Yarnit, M. (2005) *Understanding Learning Brokerage*, LSDA at

⁴⁵ Social Exclusion Unit (2004) *Jobs and Enterprise in Deprived Areas*, p.26

⁴⁶ Taylor, S. and Lisa Doyle (2003) *Learning and Skills for Neighbourhood Renewal*, LSDA, p.46.

communities (Home Office) funding.⁴⁷ Skills for sustainable communities – otherwise known as the Egan review (2004) after its author, Sir John Egan, President of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) – is perhaps the single most important document as far as area regeneration is concerned:⁴⁸

1. It makes sense of the field, providing a usable definition of sustainable community
2. It makes a powerful case for a comprehensive and unified approach to sustainable communities policy with a stronger sense of direction, replacing the existing vague community-planning framework.
3. It argues that local authorities, with their local knowledge, presence and accountability, are best placed to develop a vision for their area in alliance with regional bodies.
4. Finally, it spells out the skills and knowledge required for effective implementation, for distinct groups of practitioners, stressing the need for common generic skills alongside specific technical skills.

The Egan review is not the first attempt to spell out the skills required for sustainable communities. The Rogers report of the Urban Task Force proposed the creation of regional centres of excellence (RCEs), although these have been slow to come into operation.⁴⁹ *The learning curve* (2002) spelt out the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's ambitious plan for developing the skills and knowledge required for neighbourhood renewal, involving politicians, policy-makers, administrators and residents but its focus excluded most of the population who do not live in neighbourhood renewal areas.⁵⁰

Egan's approach is refreshing. Like *The learning curve*, his review emphasises that upskilling the professionals in isolation will not work. The behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of everyone involved need to change. That means learning a mix of professional and generic skills. He defines three groups of people who need appropriate skills to contribute to the development:

- built environment professionals: implementers such as planners and architects, decision-makers such as local authority members and officers, and 'influencers' such as leaders of community and voluntary organisations
- associated occupations: those who make an important contribution but are not involved full time in creating sustainable communities eg educators
- those with a legitimate interest but not employed full time in the sector eg students and school children.

A new national Academy for Sustainable Communities has been set up to plug the skills gap.

Does all this amount to a policy of lifelong learning, and one that can help to revive the fortunes of disadvantaged areas? Critics of government policy would argue that its principal shortcomings are the over-dependence on the school-university route at the expense of vocational programmes,

⁴⁷ Reorganisation of departmental responsibilities in May 2006 has brought together much of this activity in a new Department of Communities and Local Government.

⁴⁸ Egan review (2004). *Skills for sustainable communities*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. See also Yarnit, M. (2004) *Regeneration and all that: learning and skills and sustainability*, LSDA from which this section is excerpted.

⁴⁹ Rogers report (1999). *Towards an urban renaissance*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

⁵⁰ ODPM/NRU (2002) *The learning curve: developing skills and knowledge for neighbourhood renewal*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

especially those offered by further education, the utilitarian emphasis on employment skills at the expense of learning for personal and community development, the doomed to fail dependence on employer voluntarism in workplace learning, and the over-reliance on formal learning and qualification-bearing courses at the expense of informal and practical learning.⁵¹

Impact

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, so what contribution have these policies and programmes made to the success of area regeneration. A review of the whole field of lifelong learning is a major undertaking so I choose instead to focus on early years education and schools.

First results from the flagship early years strategy, Sure Start, have depressed expectations about the long-term impact on children and families in deprived communities. Although it is too early in the life of the programme to say much with any certainty, there are signs that Sure Start is not producing the desired result.⁵² But this may reflect the research design which looks at area effects rather than following the impact on families that are known to use Sure Start services. It may also reflect programme implementation, with local services being absorbed by some families at the expense of those most in need.⁵³ A further stage in the research, once children reach three years, may provide more reliable evidence of impact.

Primary and secondary schools in deprived areas have benefited from the Excellence in Cities programme which provides a package of initiatives including learning mentors, the gifted and talented scheme designed to stretch able children, and high-tech city learning centres. The evidence is that modest gains in attainment and attendance have been generated, mainly amongst medium to high ability pupils, in schools in disadvantaged areas, at the cost of £120 per head.⁵⁴

Academies are relaunched or new secondary schools run by trusts rather than local authorities. The aim is to drive up standards in disadvantaged areas. The Government plans to open 200 academies by 2010, at an average cost each of £27m., with £2m. of that provided by private sponsors such as businesses, faith groups and universities. The influence sponsorship buys coupled with the exclusion of local authorities has made this programme highly controversial. It is too soon to report on the effectiveness of the academies but first results, based on 14 schools suggest that they do slightly better than their predecessors on the key indicator of 5 A*-C grade GCSEs, the school leaving certificate. On the other hand, the social profile of this cohort of schools had changed, with fewer poor children. However, it is important to note that there have been some notable successes in a short period of time.⁵⁵ Bristol Academy, for example, has increased its GCSE score from 33% to 52% from 2004 to 2005, surpassing the Bristol average, almost equalling the England average and eliminating the qualifications gap between black and minority ethnic children and white children. Its predecessor school achieved 24% in its final year.

⁵¹ For a relentless critique, see Coffield, F. (1997). *Nine Learning Fallacies and Their Replacement by a National Strategy for Lifelong Learning. A National Strategy for Lifelong Learning*. F. Coffield. Newcastle, School of Education, Communication and language Sciences, University of Newcastle: 1-35. See also Coffield, F. (2000) *The Necessity of Informal Learning*, Bristol: The Policy Press. For a useful survey see Field, J. (2005) 'Social capital and lifelong learning', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, at www.infed.org/lifelonglearning/social_capital_and_lifelong_learning.htm.

⁵² <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/NESS2005FR013.pdf>

⁵³ See <http://education.guardian.co.uk/earlyyears/story/0,,1654720,00.html>

⁵⁴ Machin, S. et al (2005) *Excellence In Cities: Evaluation Of An Education Policy In Disadvantaged Areas*, National Foundation for Educational Research, p.32, at <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/downloadable/EICFinalreport.PDF>

See also <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/pdfs/nfernews2005/07taggart.pdf>

⁵⁵ 'City Academies: What's the Verdict?' in *Regeneration and Renewal*, 7 April 2006, p.21-2

Although there have been some notable local successes, involving areas such as Birmingham where there has been a significant improvement in pupil attainment, or Tower Hamlets where children's attainment in the poor Bangladeshi community has also improved, the return on public investment in schooling through the programmes set out above and others has been slow to translate itself into an upward trend. An important exception seems to be the Increased Flexibility programme, offering more vocational options in schools and colleges, resulting in improved staying on rates (80% into further education) even if the impact on attainment was more mixed.⁵⁶ In addition, it is clear that there are some smaller scale interventions which are making a difference in disadvantaged areas including parent-school link programmes such as Amber in Nottingham or the emotional literacy support schemes used to effect in primary schools in Southampton and Leicester.⁵⁷

The reasons for the stubborn under-performance of schools in deprived areas are complex. To argue as some do that the problem is ultimately poverty and inequality is part of the explanation. It is also probably the case that the current model of schooling – one which is essentially Victorian in its nature – is obsolete. But it may also be true that the insights from social capital theory are being applied too slowly. School improvement strategies, with their narrow technical focus on management and pedagogy, are gradually being augmented by a broader view of the place of the school in the community and a better understanding of the relationship between children, parents and schools in poor areas. Extended or full-service schools, parental involvement and learning mentor schemes are examples of interventions that reflect social capital theory, especially the importance of shared norms and networks, designed to narrow the gulf between educational professionals and working class families. It is not too fanciful to argue that 'Social capital may prove to be the single most important variable to impact educational achievement...'⁵⁸

Context

Before we examine the case studies for what they can tell us about success and failure in area management, it is well to consider the general findings from some key studies in this field. In that connection, it is important to be clear about the context. Here there are three main points to note. First, the current political focus on area regeneration is unprecedented in the UK in its comprehensiveness and the scale of investment. It involves a vast cross-government effort led by a newly created Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) led by a Secretary of State who is also Cabinet Minister for Women. The Department's remit includes housing, urban regeneration, planning and local government as well as community cohesion and equality.⁵⁹ Second, there is a new awareness in government of the importance of the overall economic context to area regeneration, and the positive role to be played by powerful city-regions. Although rising living standards are no guarantee that area-based programmes to tackle disadvantage will be successful, rising unemployment and economic stagnation or recession spell doom for such attempts. Third, linked to this is a growing understanding on the part of policymakers and academics of the way that social exclusion acts as a brake on economic performance and social mobility.⁶⁰

It needs to be borne in mind that poverty in Britain has increased considerably in the last twenty years, and that the income gap continues to widen.⁶¹ Child poverty is higher in Britain than in all but five countries in the European Union, a legacy of rapid de-industrialisation and the geographical

⁵⁶ See <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR668.pdf>

⁵⁷ See reviews at www.martinyarnitassociates.com

⁵⁸ *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper* (2002), Performance and Innovation Unit, Cabinet Office, quoted in Faris, op. cit., p.29

⁵⁹ See the Prime Minister's letter to Ruth Kelly, 9 May 2006 at <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1165650>

⁶⁰ Parkinson, M. et al (2006) *State of the English Cities*, ODPM, Volume 2, p.139

⁶¹ Grenier and Wright, op. cit., p.23

concentration of poverty through housing and benefit policies that cut many off from the mainstream of economic opportunity. At 24%, it is five times higher than in Denmark and Finland. According to a parliamentary report on child poverty, 'the proportion of workless households doubled from less than 10% in the mid 1970s to nearly 20% in 1996 – the rate is currently just under 16%, and for households with children is 15%'.⁶² A further contributory factor is the rapid growth in the number of lone parent households, where almost one quarter of children live. Four in five (79%) children in households where no adult is working were in income poverty. In addition, much child poverty reflects low pay.⁶³ Child poverty, which has increased three-fold in the last 25 years, is both a major symptom of inequality and a major obstacle to overcoming it, generating a cycle of disadvantage with enormous costs for health, education and criminal justice.⁶⁴ Not surprisingly, the rise of poverty and income inequality has had a negative impact on trust which has fallen according to social surveys, alongside a parallel deterioration in public health in many communities.⁶⁵

Area Regeneration: the Findings

There is a fast growing body of evidence about the success or otherwise of area regeneration policies as applied to neighbourhoods, cities and regions. In this section, we review the key findings from this literature. A useful and provocative starting point is *Finding Out What Works*, the report of an Anglo-American attempt to understand complex, community-based initiatives.⁶⁶ Rather than producing a more or less familiar list of success factors, this study points instead to the difficulties and conundrums involved in assessing health, employment and other initiatives. For example, it identifies as a common stumbling block to a shared view the differences between politicians and communities about the importance of local involvement in planning and evaluation. It also suggests that short-term political considerations sometimes over-ride the need for considered assessments. Frequently operating under intense political pressure, policymakers are sometimes compelled to take initiatives for which the evidence-base is shaky. A key recommendation is that 'More efforts should be made to promote shared learning and organisational change at national and local levels'. (p.xiv)

A growing feature of public policy is the emphasis on learning from regeneration, hence the decision to create the Academy for Sustainable Communities to ensure that there is a supply of the necessary skills and to establish a knowledge management strategy. This is also a major focus of the growing EU collaboration on urban policy. Learning and sharing knowledge is certainly a contributory factor to the success of the case studies set out later.

Perhaps the most significant single analysis of the mechanisms of area regeneration is the report from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Improving the prospects of people living in areas of multiple deprivation in England* (2005). This offers a global view of what has gone wrong and what the government intends to do, laying bare the interlocking drivers of area deprivation. It argues for a linked three strand strategy to overcome the cycle of decline:

⁶² House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee (2004) *Child Poverty in the UK*, HC 85-1 at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmworpen/85/85.pdf>

⁶³ Monitoring poverty and social exclusion (2005) by Guy Palmer et al, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

⁶⁴ The rise in poverty has gone alongside a rise in the proportion of people of working age (16-64) active in the labour market, and to some extent has been offset by it. But many of the people entering the labour market do so on the lowest rung, often in part-time and low-paid employment.

⁶⁵ Aldridge, S., Halpern, D. and Fitzpatrick, S (2002) *Social Capital: A Discussion Paper*, Cabinet Office: Performance and Innovation Unit, p.39; Wilkinson, R. G. (2005) *The Impact of Inequality: How to make sick societies healthier*, London: Routledge.

⁶⁶ Anna Coote, Jessica Allen and David Woodhead (2004) *Finding Out What Works: understanding complex, community-based initiatives*, King's Fund policy paper.

- Economic revitalisation, with a strong focus on business investment
- Community stabilisation
- Improvement of public services.

In doing so it provides an over-arching framework that makes sense of the crowded and confused picture of government regeneration policy and mechanisms including Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders, New Deal for Communities, the promotion of active communities and community cohesion, Local Strategic Partnerships, Neighbourhood Management, the Northern Way and many more. The studies of cities and city-regions by Parkinson and others operate on a broader canvas than *Improving the prospects* but essentially confirm its analysis. *The State of the English Cities* (ODPM 2006) is focused on the pre-conditions for success for European cities but makes a number of points that have a bearing on area regeneration.

Parkinson and his colleagues maintain that:

1. Needs and opportunities must be linked strategically otherwise poor people will miss out on growth opportunities.

A simple illustration of the imperative to link needs and opportunities stems from the fact that the UK employment rate for Non-Whites is only 59 per cent compared with 76 per cent for Whites. Black and ethnic minorities live disproportionately in cities and currently make up about 8 per cent of the UK population. They will account for half of the growth in people of working age over the next decade. It is therefore important, for both economic and social reasons, that employment, training, anti-discrimination and other equal opportunities policies are brought together and focused more on cities than they have been in the past.

2. Mainstream matters most, in other words, it is vital to get mainstream services to work well and not to be distracted by peripheral funding streams.

3. Fewer more strategic interventions: Parkinson joins the growing chorus of urban specialists pressing for city-regions as the most effective scale for making local economies operate better.⁶⁷ A prime example of the proposed approach is the Northern Way, a plan to bridge the economic output gap between the northern English regions and the rest of the UK within the next 25 years. A major focus will be on upskilling all those involved in the delivery of sustainable communities in line with Egan's proposals.

The Case Studies

Success in area regeneration has proved elusive in England but there are some notable examples that have a lot to tell us about what works in area regeneration.

The case studies were selected on the basis of several criteria:

1. The scheme covered a large neighbourhood or housing estate – they range in size from around 9,000 (Castle Vale) to 70,000 population (Manor and Castle)
2. They had won a national award
3. They had made a transformational difference to their area
4. Information and data on them were readily available.

The Eldonians, Liverpool

*BURA Award for Outstanding Contribution to Urban Regeneration 1996*⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Parkinson 2006, vol. 2, p.139

⁶⁸ BURA, the British Urban Regeneration Association, was formed in 1990 to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, experience and information for the emerging regeneration sector. Titles and

The Eldonians was established in 1987 by a group of local residents to lead the redevelopment of a run-down dockland area in Liverpool and to provide affordable housing. It is a company limited by guarantee. Its work focuses on enterprise and job creation, improving access to employment and sustainability. Its achievements include attracting major external investment, contributing to improvements in the physical environment, and to the skill levels and employment opportunities of local people.

The closure of the Tate & Lyle sugar refinery led to the opportunity to redevelop this derelict site close to Liverpool's waterfront. The Eldonian Housing Co-operative was formed and built 145 new homes in 1989. This became the largest new build co-operative in Europe. The gaining of Housing Association status in 1990 enabled the site to be extended by a further 150 homes. The addition of community facilities has enabled an attractive, vibrant and safe environment to be created, which has become known as the Eldonian Village.

The Eldonians have established a vehicle to enable the community to participate fully in the regeneration of the area, based upon three separately constituted bodies. These are the Eldonian Community Trust Limited, with overall ownership and over 600 members, the Eldonian Community-Based Housing Association Limited, responsible for housing development and housing management, and the Eldonian Group Limited, a development trust responsible for the wider economic regeneration of the area and the development and management of subsidiary community-based businesses.

Key to the success of the project has been the engagement of the expertise of professionals and key agencies alongside the residents, and a clear vision for sustainability through community-based enterprise.⁶⁹

Royds Community Association (RCA), Bradford

BURA Community Regeneration Award 2004

RCA is a social enterprise, a charity and a company limited by guarantee. It provides a range of services for several South Bradford housing estates including advice on welfare benefits and debt, an environment programme, healthy living, employment outreach and community development. The Royds was originally a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) scheme serving 4500 households, awarded £31 million and funded for seven years from 1995. The scheme is and always has been resident-led and the Board of Directors, which is made up entirely of volunteers, is the accountable body. Royds CA's Board of Directors comprises twenty two members, the majority consisting of twelve elected residents, four from each of the three estates. The Leader of the local authority nominates three Councillors, who must receive Board approval before they are received on to the Board. The remaining 7 directors are known as institutional directors, and they are drawn from Keepmoat plc, a local construction company, Brunel Housing Association, local schools and churches, the police, the health authority and other local stakeholders. It employs a staff team of 22.

In addition to the resident majority on the Board, there are regular community consultations as part of the regeneration programme. This has been achieved through such means as roadshows and one-to-one home interviews.

Although previously focused on the housing renewal programme on the estates, the community association has now diversified, providing a range of other services under community control. It has

criteria of awards have changed since the early 90s. See BURA website for details:

<http://www.bura.org.uk/main/content.htm>

⁶⁹ See http://www.regenerate-uk.org/downloads/4_liverpool.pdf

used Single Regeneration Budget funds to create around 750 local jobs and helped establish a number of community businesses. It has also led to the development of a major new enterprise park, to create local jobs; the development and management of a healthy living centre, to provide new health services on one of the estate; a neighbourhood planning programme, in partnership with Bradford Vision, the local strategic partnership, which includes a pilot neighbourhood management programme.

Other achievements include

- In 1995 Royds area had a burglary rate of 138 per 1000 population, this has been reduced by 82 per cent
- Over 400 jobs created for local residents through SRB intervention
- Over 300 residents have gained formal training qualifications
- Over 35 unemployed residents assisted into self-employment with on-going advice and support
- Over 35 local businesses have been developed through grant funding
- Over 1,400 homes have been totally refurbished
- Over 300 residents have been assisted and supported into voluntary work
- Over 2,000 children have been supported through reading recovery and homework clubs

Royds CA is seen by Government as a model for future regeneration initiatives. The Association's fixed assets generate income which will make it sustainable in the longer term. The Social Action Plan involves outside agencies using mainstream funding, which means that this work will continue when the SRB runs out in 2002. Royds' economic strategy has increased the employment prospects of residents and fostered social and commercial enterprises which are economically sustainable.

RCA's strengths are the development of a mixed tenure housing area, community involvement in planning and delivering services, working with the local authority and mainstream service providers, neighbourhood management, setting up and running an enterprise park, social enterprise and regeneration consultancy.⁷⁰ Royds CA has committed itself to creating a sustainable community where local residents are actively involved in identifying their future needs and have the motivation and resources needed to achieve their goals.

Manor and Castle Development Trust, Sheffield

BURA Community Regeneration Award 1997⁷¹

BURA Best Practice in Regeneration 2001

The Manor and Castle Development Trust, a non-profit making company limited by guarantee, is a community-based organisation which focuses on an area that extends to the south east of Sheffield city centre. A Board of Directors, drawn equally from the private and public sectors and the local community, manages the Trust. Manor Estate was constructed as a model housing estate in the

⁷⁰ <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cr/CASereport11.pdf> p.15

⁷¹ To be considered for recognition within the Awards for Community Regeneration, nominations should demonstrate that projects fulfil the following criteria. They should:

- Be inspired by the community;
- Contribute to the raising of community spirit and improve the quality of life of local people;
- Be viable and sustainable in the longer term;
- Be accountable and responsive to local stakeholders;
- Address local needs identified by the local community; and
- Demonstrate a proven track record of success.

1920s but by the late 1970s was suffering from construction faults and high unemployment with the closures in the steel industry. The neighbourhoods have a high ranking against the Indices of Local Deprivation. It covers a population of 70,000.

Formed in 1997 for the specific purpose of delivering an SRB Round 3 programme, the Trust inherited experience from a long period of development and experimentation in the previous 15 years. It has managed to share and adapt this experience on behalf of new projects and adjacent neighbourhoods. The Trust became the accountable body – eligible to handle public funding in place of a public body such as a local authority - for the programme in 1999.

The main role of the Trust is to cascade the benefits of experience since 1980 to the new adjoining areas of Wybourn and Park and to continue its work on behalf of Manor. The aim is to achieve sustainable regeneration in the area by maximising funding opportunities and developing a mixed economy through a community-based approach. It promotes and manages a wide range of projects in seven programme areas, namely, health, housing, community, business, young people, environment and education and training.

The Trust is responsible for initiating, advising on and supporting projects worth £130m over a ten-year period and for developing initiatives beyond the SRB lifespan. The Trust has made an immediate economic contribution through job creation (218 jobs), new floorspace (over 19,000 square feet of business premises) and training schemes (over 1,000 have achieved qualifications) but, as important, has a long term perspective.

They now have a turnover of £12m per annum and they are developing an asset base following the transfer of land from the City Council, currently valued at £4.2m and generating an income of £280k. This is expected to increase to £21m by 2004. The Trust's successful track record in managing funds has led to an approach by the City Council to take over management of the neighbouring SRB2 area.

The Trust has been instrumental in the establishment of the South Sheffield Partnership, a local strategic partnership that will have representatives on Sheffield First, the local strategic partnership. They have also spawned and continue to support a range of community-based organisations such as the Manor Development Company, Sheffield Rebuild and the Manor Training and Resource Centre. The Trust is involved as an active member of Regen School which trains community activists in effective regeneration practice throughout the country.

The Trust has developed a sophisticated *Social Inclusion Strategy* which has been widely recognised as good practice by the Planning Exchange and Government.

Beacons, East Manchester

Area Regeneration, Waterways Renaissance Award, 2006 (Ancoats Village)

East Manchester is an area with high levels of unemployment, long term structural decline, high crime, poor health, poor facilities, poor housing and high levels of negative equity. 60% of employment in the area was lost from 1975 to 1985 and 52% of households were on benefits.

The area was prioritised for regeneration funding and a partnership was set up between the council, local communities, the North West Development Agency and English Partnerships to develop and coordinate the regeneration programme through Sure Start, New Deal, Education Action Zone, two rounds of SRB, and Beacons New Deal for Communities.

Local targets include raising educational attainment above the city average, creating a new town centre, doubling the population, and building up to 12,500 new homes.

A crucial aspect of the programme is community engagement. Listening to people's concerns and getting them involved was seen as key to securing the long term future of the area. The Beacons board has a majority of community representatives: six out of twelve with four from public agencies, one each from local businesses and the voluntary sector. Alongside this there is a resident's forum, representing resident associations, and a public agencies forum made up of chief executives, set up to take the lead in ensuring that services are relevant and accountable to local people, and in securing organisational and cultural change.

There was an initial emphasis on strengthening and building tenant and resident groups by creating a resident liaison team. This quadrupled the number of associations over five years and provided a strong basis for participation. The team currently supports resident representatives who have taken on new responsibilities and those who are participating in a pilot training project leading to a qualification in community involvement.

The Beacons has a Crime and Community Safety programme that has provided staff to co-ordinate responses to community concerns. Community conferences have been held involving residents, councillors and young people to discuss the issue. This has enabled the work of youth services, police, the Beacons' youth intervention officer and neighbour nuisance teams to be co-ordinated and targeted more effectively. An environmental team supports residents in developing ideas about environmental projects. The ideas are delivered through Community Link officers and there is support for residents in maintaining and managing their projects. Support includes providing training in grounds maintenance, filling in funding applications and linking residents to the police and neighbour nuisance team to overcome any anti-social behaviour problems. Projects have included community gardens, play spaces, derelict land improvements, community events and recycling. These have helped residents feel more confident and regain ownership of open spaces.

A social inclusion toolkit, developed to help service providers examine their provision and identify how to make it more accessible to the community, has been adopted for all council services. A regeneration apprenticeship programme has been set up to enable residents acquire skills and qualifications leading to jobs in the sector.

Outcomes

- In the past year juvenile nuisance in the area is down by 28%, criminal damage by 38%, burglary by 44% and vehicle theft by 47%
- Good practice in regeneration and renewal has been developed and shared with other regeneration programmes
- Police boundaries are being redrawn with assistance from the Beacons' Community Safety Manager to reflect ward boundaries.

Involving people is a local strength that is key to ensuring the long term regeneration of an area. The commitment to engagement has spurred service delivers to examine how they can be more accessible to the community. Continuous support for residents has enabled them not only to increase their confidence but also to develop skills that will enable to contribute to the long term future of the area.

Castle Vale, Birmingham

BURA Best Practice in Regeneration Award 2000

Castle Vale Housing Action Trust (CVHAT) was established in 1993 after a tenant/leaseholders' ballot saw 92% in favour of a transfer, and the estate formally transferred from Birmingham City Council to the HAT in 1994. Its objective was to improve housing and general living conditions in Castle Vale, 6 miles north-east of Birmingham, following 30 years of physical, social and economic decline.

Home to around 9,000 people, Castle Vale is one of the largest post-war estates in Birmingham, comprising around 4,000 homes across an area of 1.5 square miles.

Six Housing Action Trusts (HATs) were set up under the provisions of the Housing Act 1988 to regenerate some of the most deprived local authority estates in England. HATs are non-departmental public bodies, each managed by a board appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister. The boards include residents elected as representatives of the estates and members of the local authority.

Like the other HATs, CVHAT had a finite lifespan and closed on 31 March 2005, at which point its assets and undertakings passed to English Partnerships, the residuary body for HATs. English Partnerships will ensure that the outstanding work is completed in accordance with agreed programmes. A new body, Castle Vale Community Housing Association (CVCHA) with a board comprising 15 voluntary members, eight of whom are local tenants, has taken over responsibility for 2,400 tenanted and 300 leasehold properties and also delivers Castle Vale's Community Safety Strategy in partnership with the local police and other agencies. It runs health, environment, youth services and has a community building, the Sanctuary, that houses social and health care services for local people. CVCHA started out as Castle Vale Housing Trust and joined with two local housing associations to form a community housing association. Resident involvement has been the hallmark of the last ten years.

Castle Vale was one of Birmingham's largest post-war high rise estates, built to take the families displaced from the clearance of the inner city and quickly suffering from a variety of economic and social problems. By the late 1980s it was an area with a very poor reputation thanks to high crime rates, poor health, high unemployment, poor education, poor housing, poor environment and a lack of local facilities. Discussions took place between residents, the council and the government and these led to the founding of the Castle Vale Housing Action Trust (HAT), the forerunner of the CVCHA. The economic and community development programme has been both very successful and cost effective in reducing local unemployment from over 26 per cent to less than five per cent. Part of this success hinged on securing over £93 million of private sector investment, helping 1,400 residents to access jobs and providing nearly 3,500 bespoke training places.

From the beginning the Trust adopted a holistic agenda, realising that tackling anti-social behaviour, unemployment and ill-health were key to achieving a comprehensive solution to the problems of the area. The Trust learnt early on that involving and empowering the residents was pivotal, and it was therefore a pioneer of community-led regeneration. Typical of that approach is the work with young people through a Youth Inclusion Panel, and the Health Village.

The Panel employs two outreach youth workers paid for by the police. It supports young people who have started to act anti-socially, changing their behaviour through family support and diverting them into positive activities. It has also helped young people to develop communication and leadership skills by participating in community arts events. A Health Village has been developed in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, with modern facilities and services such as minor operations and children's mental health care. The village hosts 11 voluntary organisations. The multi-agency approach has also been applied to the development of an early years drugs education programme.

An endowment trust fund has been set up, and a neighbourhood manager appointed to carry on the work.

Outcomes

- Unemployment was 8% above the city average and is now 3% below it
- 1461 jobs created
- Life expectancy rates were seven years below the West Midlands average and are now average for infants and adults
- Castle Vale was one of only two areas of Birmingham where residents' fear of crime dropped from 1999-2002
- Applications for housing from outside the area have almost doubled in the past two years. There is now a waiting list of 1,600
- Rates of GCSE passes more than doubled from 1995-2003

Overview

These five areas have established themselves as models for area regeneration. Their strengths in governance and leadership, community involvement, holistic strategy, the development of mixed tenure housing and strategies for sustainability seem to be the basis of their success.

Governance and Leadership

These five examples of successful regeneration represent in effect a partnership between local residents, key agencies and advisers. Finding the right structure to make this partnership work is vital. A company limited by guarantee is probably the most effective way to allow residents to participate in, and even exercise control over, major decisions about their neighbourhood. It also protects the individual residents concerned from liability, while retaining the ability to involve a range of other stakeholders in the board of the company. The Royds, and Manor and Castle, have both used this model.

The researchers found that residents' perceptions were transformed where there was a majority of residents on the board of a governance structure, as in the Royds example. The Royds experience also illustrated the fact that other stakeholders needed to be involved in order to ensure that residents had access to appropriate advice, guidance and expertise. In this case, a local builder and an architect, who were seen as being independent and supportive, were invited to join the board.

An effective working relationship between the residents and the professionals is essential. In the case of Castle Vale and The Royds, professionals with a gift and commitment to resident empowerment have facilitated the development of a shared vision, the bedrock of successful regeneration.

Involvement

Community involvement is essential to successful area regeneration for good practical reasons:

- it aids social cohesion through its developmental or educational effect on individuals and hence on society; and it fosters social capital;
- it makes a difference to the planning and delivery of public services and aids decision making processes; further, decisions are more likely to be effective and are accorded legitimacy since they reflect the interests of those who participated in the process of decision-making; and
- it is a right that is justified on the grounds of due process, irrespective of outcome, and that demonstrates the exercise of citizenship rights and obligations.⁷²

⁷² Burton, P. et al (2004) *What works in community involvement in area-based initiatives? A systematic review of the literature*, Home Office on-line report 53/04, p.16 at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/rdsolr5304.pdf>

Getting it right is not easy and involves intensive work that sometimes goes against the grain of government timescales and decision-making processes. The work of the Manor Castle Development Trust on the Manor estate in Sheffield is nationally well known for its achievements in resident involvement. However, one research team encountered alienation among some residents on the estate:

There was also a perception that while a small number of residents were engaged in active participation with the Trust, others have been left behind by the regeneration process. This finding merely emphasised the long-term difficulty of turning round neighbourhoods which have suffered years of deprivation and poverty. Even the most laudable attempts to make progress could be regarded with suspicion and hostility unless truly 'owned' by a wide proportion of local residents.⁷³

One way forward is through direct elections to a local board on which residents are the majority, plus regular and inclusive consultation events, coupled with the involvement of all key stakeholders in management arrangements – this is the approach adopted by East Manchester and the Royds.

Holistic strategy

Although all five examples are built around housing developments, they have all grasped the importance of a holistic approach that recognises

- The linkages between poor housing and other social problems
- The importance of improving the entire range of services needed by a neighbourhood or small town, including employment, education, health and the environment
- Making areas attractive and liveable, so they become a draw for better off, usually younger families, and private investors

In these respects, the five have pioneered the government's approach to sustainable communities, through comprehensive area development. This approach is in marked contrast to some models of community development favoured in the US which prioritise investment and deregulation at the expense of inclusion. However, American emphases on stimulating the regenerative power of market forces, do pose interesting questions for supporters of the European welfarist tradition.⁷⁴

Mixed tenure housing

Housing improvement has been central to the five case studies. In every case, finding a balance between different forms of tenure and types of residents has been critical. A recent study identified a number of common success factors in the development of mixed tenure housing areas, central to which is resident involvement.⁷⁵ It was found that this is best achieved through a legally constituted organisation with strong resident leadership and direct accountability to residents from all types of tenure. Eight case studies were analysed in depth including The Royds and Manor Castle Trust. Key factors included governance, involvement and partnership, as well as estate design and funding.

Sustainability

Sustainability has been aided in all cases by

⁷³ *Approaches to community governance: Models for mixed tenure communities (2005)* by Martin Knox with David Alcock, Anna Roderick and John Iles, is published for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation by The Policy Press. See summary at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/KNOWLEDGE/findings/housing/n102.asp>

⁷⁴ See, for example, Grogan, P. and Proscio, T. (2000) *Comeback Cities*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press and the response from Brad Lander at <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/114/bookreview.html>

⁷⁵ Knox et al, op.cit.

- A buoyant regional economy and access to jobs and investment
- Development of an asset base
- Creation of local enterprises.

It is clear that large scale investment is required to kickstart and sustain area regeneration, and that it is vital to be able to draw in private sector finance.⁷⁶ Castle Vale and East Manchester have both benefited from major investment programmes, with £93m. of private sector investment for the Birmingham estate and the re-development of East Manchester including the building of a new SportCity for the Commonwealth Games. The Eldonians, RCA and Manor and Castle have all prioritised the creation of local industrial estates and new enterprises. For Manor and Castle the building of an asset base has been central to its strategy for sustainability.

Conclusions and Implications for Policy

Area Regeneration

Making housing and employment central is a vital plank in successful area regeneration but it is important to recognise that trickle down doesn't work as a study of local economies demonstrates.⁷⁷ These areas need to be reconnected to the wider labour market:

*All the case studies '...demonstrate that the economic problems which beset deprived local economies are rooted within processes operating at wider sub-regional, regional, national and global scales,' and the legacies of the particular sectors that dominated locally remain crucial to understanding current attitudes to work. In a number of the areas examined, the researchers encountered depressed aspirations '...emanating from limited experience of employment extending across generations.'*⁷⁸

In other words, they need rather more linking social capital to counteract the isolating and sometimes goal-depressing effect of bonding social capital.

A growing consensus is emerging around the need to integrate area regeneration strategies within broader regional or city-regional growth strategies, as one recent study argues:

*Integrating neighbourhood renewal strategies with economic development strategies at district, sub-regional and regional levels requires closer institutional links between neighbourhood partnerships, LSPs and RDAs [Regional Development Agencies].*⁷⁹

One way of doing that could be to link RDAs to Local Area Agreements through the economic development bloc.⁸⁰ The case studies point to the importance of strong partnerships between regeneration areas, local authorities and other public bodies, especially those with planning and funding responsibilities such as RDAs.

⁷⁶ *Economic segregation in England: causes, consequences and policy* (2005) by Geoffrey Meen et al, published by Policy Press for Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁷⁷ GFA Consulting (n/d) *The Economies of Deprived Neighbourhoods*, p.3. Their case studies are not the group analysed above.

⁷⁸ GFA, p.6

⁷⁹ GFA, p.17; Parkinson, op.cit., John Adams (*Towards Full Employment*, IPPR, 2005)

⁸⁰ See comments by Tom O'Riordain of Yorkshire Forward in *Regeneration and Renewal*, 19 May 2006.

Lifelong Learning

There is a vital trick to be learned in regeneration, and that is how to enable residents to make better use of public services and how to bring their influence to bear to improve services. Consequently, it is not enough to make learning and skills more widely available in disadvantaged communities. People have to learn *for themselves* that skills and qualifications can make a difference for them. These two forms of lifelong learning are equally essential: learning how to shape one's future and that of one's community, and gaining formal qualifications. These are lessons that the case study areas have had to learn for themselves. Some of the techniques they have developed have helped to shape new policies and programmes. Two good examples of this are the testbed learning communities and Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC).

The 2003 Skills White Paper proposed the creation of learning communities to test ways to

*strengthen the capability of communities to develop their collective base of skills (7.18) and to show how we can link up the activities and budgets which currently support the RDA role in helping all communities in their region gain access to economic opportunities, the LSC role in widening participation in learning, and the Local Strategic Partnership role in tackling the connected root causes of community disadvantage.*⁸¹

The testbeds are best viewed as a member of a fast-growing family of local initiatives for skills, learning and employment, or LISLEs⁸² for short. These have come about as a means of improving the local delivery of mainstream services and as a way of reducing the gap between disadvantaged areas and the national average, valued for their bottom-up perspective on service delivery and their ability to create inclusive partnerships of providers and voluntary and community organisations.

Testbeds are not the first attempt by government at joining up educational provision and making its benefits accessible to all. Spending on such projects through SRB, NRF and other funds amounted to several hundreds of millions over the last decade. Indeed, their roots can be found in the experience of the case study areas and many other examples of local area regeneration. What is different in this case is the quest for a new model - or models - of local service delivery for learning, skills and employment based on partnership, collaboration and community engagement, linked to local strategic planning.

Active Learning for Active Citizenship (ALAC) aims to enable people to gain the confidence, know-how and skills to engage with public bodies and influence services and to develop their own careers. From 2004 to 2005, ALAC tested a range of learning programmes that have helped people become more active and empowered in their communities. The pilots, involving over 1,300 participants, were carried out in seven regional hubs: the Black Country, Greater Manchester, Lincolnshire, London, the South West, South Yorkshire, and Tees Valley. They have been hosted by organisations including the Workers' Educational Association in Sheffield, Exeter Council for Voluntary Service, and London Civic Forum.

Active Learning for Active Citizenship is part of the government's 'Together We Can' action plan to involve people more in the decisions that affect their communities. Twelve government departments are participating in 'Together We Can' including DCLG, the lead department, and DfES. Education Minister Bill Rammell tellingly makes the point that 'Greater participation brings greater community cohesion and social justice and is a win-win for everyone'.⁸³

⁸¹ Quoted in Yarnit, M. (2006) *Building Local Initiatives for Learning Skills and Employment: testbed learning communities reviewed*, NIACE.

⁸² Rhymes with aisles.

⁸³ DCLG press release 16 May 2006.

A focus of ALAC is to prepare local residents to take leadership roles in community organisations and public services such as Sure Start, the very roles that their counterparts in the five case study areas have learned to carry out, often by trial and error. Northern College, one of the participating institutions in the ALAC pilot, has also provided learning programmes for the Manor and Castle Development Trust.

An evaluation report highlights some of the gains from the pilot programme:

- 292 people have gained accredited qualifications, from Open College qualifications to university level credits.
- At least 286 have gone on to further or higher education and training. Some have gone on to train as trainers and some have encouraged their family members, friends and colleagues to study too.
- 161 have progressed into employment or have gained new jobs through ALAC. One participant, who had been out of work and on disability benefits for 10 years managed to move from her previous career in clerical work into a managerial role.
- Individuals and groups have become more organised and involved in structured grassroots community activity - for example becoming involved in supporting young people who are representatives on committees in understanding their roles.
- People have learnt about governance structures, including the roles and responsibilities of elected officials from local to EU level and about how to communicate with them. Some have become involved themselves, for example in Community Forums, as school governors or on Patients' Forums.⁸⁴

Initiatives such as the testbeds and ALAC have demonstrated their value and offer a viable model, but they need to be replicated on a grand scale if lifelong learning is going to be a driver for area regeneration.

Social Capital

The tendency in regeneration literature is to ignore or marginalise the issues that are hard to quantify. Perhaps this reflects a traditional preoccupation with the economics of property and physical infrastructure. But it is striking that, at least implicitly, social capital emerges as a keen issue in successful area regeneration. The development of the capacity of a leadership to operate effectively has been central in every case, often despite the value differences between residents and professionals. Partnership-building is a form of bonding social capital.

There has also been the important issue of bonding between residents and their leaders, which has caused problems in the Manor and Castle area. There is also the question of creating a sustainable relationship between mainstream service providers and local programme managers that puts a premium on the generation of linking social capital. It is striking that these sorts of considerations are becoming mainstream, no longer the preserve of academics and policy-makers. An important part of local government policy is now driven by the aim of strengthening social capital through devolution. Miliband again:

*however important it is to improve education, health and community safety through investment and reform of public services, it is not enough; real transformation depends on changing the expectations, aspirations and norms within the community.*⁸⁵

⁸⁴ At

http://www.togetherwecan.info/files/downloads/active_citizenship/alac/ALAC%20Report_A4.pdf

⁸⁵ *The Politics of Community* - Speech by David Miliband on 24 October 2005

Finally

Let us return to the questions with which we began this Hot Topic. Can disadvantaged communities be transformed? The five case studies represented here have made an effective start on a new path; several of them may well have broken the cycle of disadvantage for good, or at least for the foreseeable future. A key feature in the turn-around has been the voice and vision of local residents. To this extent it is right to be optimistic that we know how to make regeneration work. Of course there are provisos, and the biggest one is that the UK has enjoyed an unbroken spell of growth with a steadily climbing graph of economic activity since the early 90s.

What are the secrets of successful regeneration? We identified five factors - governance and leadership, community involvement, holistic strategy, the development of mixed tenure housing, and strategies for sustainability - as critical to these and other area regeneration programmes. But what of social capital and lifelong learning; where do they come in, and what is their contribution? It is a striking feature of current regeneration policy in England that social capital has come to be seen as an indispensable element, even though nobody really knows how it is generated. To take a scientific parallel, are we witnessing the frustrations that attended the demise of alchemy, or are we seeing the first steps towards an understanding of how electricity is made? Bacon or Faraday: you choose.

In relation to lifelong learning we seem to be on safer ground. Good schools improve the liveability of an area and provide a platform from which young people can gain higher qualifications and wrench themselves out of the cyclical grip of exclusion and poverty. It is still not precisely clear how a level 2 or 3 qualifications contributes to greater competitiveness but there is no doubt that it is a passport to higher earnings. Effective early years services are also important in improving life chances. Parts of government have been slower to grasp the impact of learning and skills for neighbourhood renewal, even though the official mantra since 1997 has been about empowering local people. Considering the importance of this aspect of lifelong learning, it is surprising that it is still far from being mainstreamed. Yet, in all the cases we considered earlier, it was indispensable to success. There is a clear message here, for government, for all governments.

About the author

Martin Yarnit specialises in the links between lifelong learning, employment and urban regeneration. He is a Neighbourhood Renewal Adviser to the NRU on Education and Worklessness. He is a joint director of Martin Yarnit Associates with Liz Cousins.

Recent projects include work on school performance in Nottingham , Manchester, and Bristol; evaluation of learning networks in South Wales and Swindon, advising DfES on testbed learning communities and running a series of seminars for the Sheffield vocom network on lifelong learning and neighbourhood renewal. He has recently designed a framework for recognising resident achievement in regeneration for GO West Midlands.

He is the author of *Building Local Initiatives for Learning, Skills and Employment:: testbed learning communities reviewed* (NIACE 2006) and *Towns, Cities and Regions in the Learning Age: a survey of learning communities* (LGA 2000). He has spoken at events organised by the Canadian, Australian and Catalan Governments. Other clients include NIACE, LSDA, regional Government Offices, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations.

He was the prime mover behind Adult Learners Week and devised a proposal for Education Action Zones that appeared in Labour's 1997 Manifesto. He was a founder of Sheffield the Learning City and chaired the Learning City Network in 1997-8. From 1997-2000 he managed Sheffield City Council's New Deal activities and acted as a technical adviser to the Objective 1 Education and Employment and e-learning programmes.

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