

5 The Partnership Approach

The previous chapters looked at the origins of the multi-agency partnership approach to urban renewal, and showed how this had come to be seen as appropriate response, not only for city centres and docklands-style developments, but for addressing neighbourhood renewal and social housing problems in many of Britain's least-favoured neighbourhoods. This chapter looks more specifically at five important aspects of the partnership approach to neighbourhood renewal, distilled from the lessons of the case studies and elsewhere. These are:

- the neighbourhood perspective
- the economic benefits of neighbourhood renewal
- the dynamics of the partnership task
- the community role in the partnership
- resources for planning

The neighbourhood perspective

The evidence of the case studies presented in part II is that many people in inner cities retain a strong sense of neighbourhood identification, not always in a completely positive sense, but strong nonetheless. In such inner city neighbourhoods as Sparkbrook, Birmingham, or Queens Cross-Maryhill, Glasgow, this sense of identification has provided a natural focus for a multi-sector, multi-agency approach. The neighbourhood is useful as a unit for development because it represents:

- an historically viable entity;
- a logical geographic unit for problem analysis and response;

- an appropriate level for social and institutional development of community-based groups; and
- an appropriate level for devolution of political power and control over resources, relevant to neighbourhood quality of life.

Although the neighbourhood may intuitively seem a right level for community development, it is a level of social organisation which has been substantially under-represented in the distribution of power and resources in British society. Since the community development approach of the 1960s and early 1970s more or less failed on the ground, and fell into political and theoretical disfavour, neighbourhood approaches have not been the focus of policy, the General Improvement Areas perhaps excepted.

Why work at the neighbourhood level?

If the neighbourhood approach has been less than successful in Britain, why suggest it is a valid approach for urban renewal? The answer derives from our past inability to come to terms with the complexity of socio-economic problems and the options now available for so doing. Certainly single answer or monolithic solutions of any sort from any level of government have proved insufficient to the task of urban and social renewal and, in some cases of neighbourhood demolition and rebuilding, positively detrimental. An appropriate policy response therefore recognises the need for a coherent, nested hierarchy of action at family-neighbourhood-city-region-nation levels. The neighbourhood, in this conception, represents a geographic level of action which must not be ignored in any development programme. Recent analysis of institutional development programmes suggests that ‘horizontal’ integration between departments and agencies working in different sectors must be complemented by ‘vertical’ integration from policy making levels (such as cabinet or DoE) to the level of community action, thus balancing ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches. The neighbourhood is a vital component of any overall approach to national urban renewal.

There is also an increasing acceptance that a main objective of urban renewal must be the reintegration of families with a potential for economic activity from the periphery of the capitalist economic system into the mainstream, from which they are now excluded. This requires the development of confidence and employment skills in the family, best carried out in programmes at the neighbourhood level which can benefit from the self-reinforcement of neighbourhood information networks and in the development of employment opportunities locally. Similarly, many people

unable to be economically active, for example, retired members of the community or mothers with young children, need supportive networks and opportunities for social reintegration, confidence-boosting of their own worth, and general community support. The neighbourhood provides an ideal level for social and voluntary action and participation.

The successful resolution of complex social problems requires more detailed and accurate problem definition than in the past, which in turn allows a finer tuning of policy tools. Each neighbourhood represents a different set of problems and a different balance of resources, human and otherwise. The process of problem definition is the first stage in the development of consensus about what needs to be done by whom; building such consensus is a primary task for partnerships. The neighbourhood is the most appropriate level for analysis of the problem of residential urban renewal and for assessment of the resource balance. For example, there is increasing perception that all of a neighbourhood's housing stock, public, private and voluntary, can serve as a potential resource for neighbourhood renewal. Tenure diversification and community regeneration taken together may be a key to reintegrating problem areas and estates into the urban fabric, both physically and socially.

There is much evidence that the quality of the environment outside the dwelling is an important element of quality of life, and a key factor in regenerating confidence in an area as a place to live, work and invest. The neighbourhood provides the perfect human scale for enhancing environmental quality by traffic control, pedestrian amenity, reduced litter and vandalism, leisure facilities and playgrounds. The quality of the neighbourhood, along with the quality of the home and family life, have been shown to be major determinants of perceived life quality (Carley, 1981). For example, environmental improvements in Glasgow's inner neighbourhoods have produced a marked positive shift in quality of life perceptions (Maclennan and Brailey, 1984).

The peripheral estate as neighbourhood?

In considering the neighbourhood as an appropriate level for problem identification and action, it is reasonable to ask whether this extends to problem peripheral estates. Their relative newness, their deficient designs, and their high turnover rates of residents (20-30 per cent a year) all weigh against neighbourhood identification. On the other hand, their isolation sometimes enforces a sense of place, however negative. The evidence from two Scottish peripheral estates, Drumchapel and Castlemilk, discussed in Part

II, is that they are seen as *groups* of neighbourhoods. Most have a core of residents with a strong sense of neighbourhood identification.

More importantly, the successful regeneration of peripheral estates requires a process by which they are nurtured into neighbourhood status – the healthy community of social cohesiveness and economic activity referred to earlier. There is evidence that such a process is beginning to take effect in Drumchapel and a similar approach is being tried at Castlemilk. Each of these estates have been divided into neighbourhoods based on natural features (a hill top location) or built environment features (a dividing road). For example, within the overall Drumchapel Initiative, the Kingsridge-Cleddans neighbourhood is now setting up its own development corporation to serve neighbourhood interests.

The economic benefits of neighbourhood renewal

Within Europe, only Rotterdam has had an inner city reinvestment programme comparable to Glasgow's. Glasgow's inner neighbourhoods have provided fruitful case material for studies of the economic benefits of neighbourhood renewal. The principal researchers (Maclennan and Brailey, 1984; Maclennan, 1988) note that generally there has been little attention, either in the USA or Europe, to the factors which generate decline, or improvement and reinvestment, in housing and neighbourhoods. Such research as there is focuses on 'the city' or 'the individual' with little in between. The economic literature either assumes an inevitable suburban location for upwardly mobile groups, or has been tainted with an ideological distaste for gentrification and reported in a way to substantiate that point. Similarly (mainly) English research on housing rehabilitation programmes, mindful of the effects of structural changes like deindustrialisation, argues that rehabilitation is no more than a minor palliative resulting in gentrification and displacement. The results of such biased analysis is always pessimistic. Hardly any research tries to understand the casual linkages between poor housing conditions and negative externalities such as lowered visual quality; crime, vandalism and graffiti; increased fire risk, and incidence of illness and divorce.

This accounts for the large gap in our knowledge of the economic impacts of major public investments and area renewal policies, for example, Housing Association Grant, HAAs and GIAs, on private investment decisions and changing demand structures for housing at the neighbourhood level. Maclennan et al. argue that many analyses have been analytically incomplete because they neglected to consider the costs and benefits of rehabilitation which 'spillover' into adjacent housing submarkets and the wider local

economy. They set out to redress these inadequacies by defining housing as an 'expanded' commodity, a notion which allows a convergence between housing and neighbourhood economics.

The Glasgow studies focus on the effect of HAG and HAA investments on private behaviour, based on two kinds of information. First, compatible cross-sectional studies of housing choices in Glasgow in 1976, 1982 and 1985 were undertaken, which allowed examination of how groups of purchasers made different housing and neighbourhood choices over time. Second, there is a geographic record, on a unit basis, of all housing sales and grant-aided reinvestment behaviour in the city.

The conclusions from this research programme are important to any consideration of neighbourhood renewal:

- Effective policies and strategies for housing and neighbourhood renewal must recognise that the activities and investments initiated will have a spillover effect on surrounding areas.
- Housing associations have undertaken a large, concentrated programme of housing and environmental improvement in areas of Glasgow. These areas can be regarded as 'growth poles' in the overall neighbourhood revitalisation process. Total budgets and per unit costs have been high by British standards, but high dwelling quality now prevails in previously rundown neighbourhoods. MacLennan et al find that there has been no displacement or gentrification arising directly from the programme, and there are large positive benefits to adjacent neighbourhoods.
- The Glasgow experience seems to offer hope for English cities such as Liverpool and Birmingham. Clear area strategies need to be developed and the process needs to be generously funded by central government to create these rehabilitation growth poles. The longer term benefits can be substantial. In due course, private developers, prompted by local agencies, respond to replace public by private funding. The Glasgow case studies later in this report set out the conditions which give rise to Glasgow's success in neighbourhood renewal.
- In Glasgow, the restoration of confidence in neighbourhoods has created the precondition for subsequent change. Once the process is started, there are cumulative positive impacts which eventually reduce the ratio of public to private funding and which progressively render past estimates of cross-subsidies pessimistic.

- Private developers returning to vacant sites in Glasgow's older areas pick locations adjacent to completed Housing Action Areas, and, blocks adjacent to HAAs have 75 per cent building society funding of transactions in older dwellings, rather than the 30-40 per cent observed at the onset of the analysis. Positive effects on capital values in adjacent areas arise from both the increased ability to satisfy desired consumption plans, for example for young, employed couples, and because of increased investment in existing structures.
- Increased confidence in the older neighbourhoods, along with supportive actions by Glasgow District Council, has resulted in a major shift in the volume and pattern of new private construction. From 1976 to 1984, there were almost 8,000 new private completions in the city, a sixfold increase in the annual completion rate compared with the decade prior to 1976. There has been a marked shift from greenfield to brownfield development. In 1980, 10 per cent of starts were on brownfield sites, by 1984 this proportion was almost 80 per cent. Approximately half of these dwellings were developed under some form of arrangement with the city council, to re-use land which had lain blighted and unused since 1960s slum clearance.
- Almost all labour inputs for this construction have been hired locally with, between 1974 and 1980, 53 per cent of reconstruction being undertaken by a single locally based builder. Ninety per cent of the schemes, by value, were carried out by firms with a local headquarters.

Based on this economic analysis of neighbourhood renewal in Glasgow, there appear to be substantial spillover economic benefits associated with neighbourhood renewal, which have mostly been unaccounted for in policy discussions. The positive effects of investment on adjacent neighbourhoods is now well documented by Maclennan et al, who also note that the positive cumulative economic effects on overall city rehabilitation, though difficult to measure, are not limited to short-term construction employment. Neighbourhood renewal programmes may therefore be expected to create a new environmental context which may facilitate the attraction of mobile capital and, on environmental grounds, increase the investment potential of these areas.

Dynamics of the partnership task

Until recently, inner city housing rehabilitation has been mainly a result of local authority or housing association initiative, together with that of owner occupiers. With the exception of Glasgow, the focus usually has been on

houses or streets, rather than on neighbourhoods as such. This is now changing towards the multi-agency, neighbourhood approach which requires obvious cooperation between agencies and, sometimes, a lead role for one agency.

The tasks of any partnership may include:

Problem analysis - determining the nature and parameters of the neighbourhood renewal task, the assessment of needs and existing resources, and the establishment of neighbourhood socio-economic databases. Problem analysis can sometimes build on good work by local authorities in ward level analysis. The Local Government and Housing Act will impose further responsibilities on local authorities to develop housing quality data bases.

Communication links and the development of consensus - a strong consensus over the nature of the renewal problem among local government departments, community groups, voluntary agencies, housing associations and the private sector needs to be developed as a prelude to action. The importance of building this consensus cannot be underestimated. For example, Solesbury (1987) argues that multi-agency development strategies are dependent on 'the strength of the systems that bind them to a common purpose'.

Engendering confidence - an early and conscious step in the renewal process is to begin to instill confidence in all participants and outsiders that renewal can succeed. This is a prerequisite for encouraging all investment decisions from wholehearted agency participation in terms of staff time and resources to the investment of hard cash by the private sector. Building confidence requires a vision of a better future to be communicated, as in the 'Glasgow's Miles Better' campaign. Similarly, the Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Improvement Agency's role sets out its programme as two-fold: to build morale in the community, and to encourage improvement programmes to regenerate aspects of the local economy.

Renewal strategy and programme - neighbourhood renewal requires a broad strategy approach including an appraisal of neighbourhood trends, needs, strengths and weaknesses leading to an overall plan for implementation. A number of good examples of renewal strategies from the case studies are described in later chapters, with the housing strategy a sub-component of the overall plan. A strategy document and schedule are usually necessary for communication, raising interest, financial applications and promotion in addition to providing a benchmark for assessing implementation. Because of changing circumstances, positive or negative,

strategy documents (or plans) require updating and rewriting every two or three years.

Financial analysis - the enthusiasm of the confidence building process must be matched by innovation in finance. A thorough appraisal reduces risks and makes investment in projects of modest return more attractive. Financial analysis can only be undertaken by an agency with the capability for it. This may seem obvious but as schemes become more complex fewer agencies find they have the human expertise (or software) to tackle the complex, and constantly changing, spreadsheet analysis required.

Agency co-ordination - a great challenge of multi-agency or 'mixed strategy' working is to forge a coherent operational programme among agencies, each of which has its own objectives and its own manner of working, that is, its individual organisational culture. Making different approaches compatible is easier if consensus has been forged and communication channels established. This task is particularly challenging in bringing together public, private and voluntary bodies.

Encouragement of local residents involvement - successful renewal is *by* local residents as well as *for* local residents. Lead agencies need to create a climate, and sometimes organisational mechanisms, by which residents can be involved from the start as equal partners in the development of common objectives, and be prepared to relinquish control to new community organisations as when the time is appropriate. Financial support, without strings, can be a key to pro-active resident involvement. The amounts are generally very small compared to total anticipated costs.

Programme impact assessment - a main analytic limitation to mixed-strategy approaches is that there is a lack of mechanisms for considering the overall effect of joint action on the neighbourhood, and the cumulative effects of those. Providing this analytic framework coupled to a sense of vision is a key role for lead agencies.

Which is the lead agency?

There is nothing in the case studies to suggest that one type of agency or any particular sector, public, private or voluntary, is more appropriate as a lead agency. Neither business, nor central or local government, nor voluntary organisations offer any overwhelming advantage to the lead agency approach. All bring a mixture of advantages and disadvantages. It is helpful therefore to conceive of the lead agency role as one that develops over time, and one which may shift from one agency to another within the partnership as appropriate.

Stage one of an agency role is early problem recognition and an understanding of the problem of one neighbourhood in the context of the city and the urban economy. The broad view of the problem required at this stage suggests that local authorities are well placed to encourage a city-wide or strategic view of the need for urban renewal, to establish the priorities among neighbourhoods, and the potential for partnership housing refurbishment, and tenure diversification as tools of renewal. Here local authorities act as a catalyst; to use their strategic overview to bring together the relevant partners from housing associations, community groups and the private sector, and subsequently to support but not manage implementation.

The question then arises of which local authority department is best placed to take the lead in early stages: housing, planning, environmental services or urban renewal departments are possibilities. In Birmingham the rule of thumb is that neighbourhoods with a majority of council houses are housing department led, those with a majority of private housing are led by the urban renewal division. Decentralised local authorities will also need to decide the roles and relationships between the neighbourhood office and town hall. Whatever the arrangements, all local authority departments, including housing, planning, legal and financial departments, are required to develop a 'corporate' view of the urban renewal approach and to cooperate in its implementation. This is sometimes a substantial challenge, requiring strong leadership from elected members. Another prerequisite is a high level of collaboration, and appropriate division of responsibility, between elected members and officers. These issues are discussed in subsequent chapters.

During early stages of the development process the local authority will not only be engaged in problem definition, but will also be scanning opportunities for fruitful alliance with development agencies to take over the lead role during the crucial later stages of planning and project implementation. Bringing a potential lead agency (or joint venture group) into the process in earlier stages will repay the local authority in assistance in those stages, and human resources development can begin as necessary. The local authority will need to balance the advantages of more widespread consultation with a variety of agencies against the need to establish a productive partnership early, based on mutual trust. Local authorities which tend to treat potential partners as contractors, and the partnership process as tendering for services, may find that they have alienated potential partners and are leaving behind a wake of ill-feeling. An alternative is to commission neighbourhood renewal feasibility studies from a consultant, who may also advise on the appropriate institutional

arrangements for a lead agency. This is the approach of Birmingham's Saltley Strategy.

There are a number of options for lead agencies to take up the role from the local authority: a housing association (or associations) with urban renewal capability, which may be community based or a development trust initiated with the assistance of a secondary association; or a private sector development agency, such as PROBE. Each choice brings a mix of advantages and disadvantages and the wise local authority seeks consultations with a range of players.

Many community based housing associations (CBHAs) have a long history of inner city rehabilitation, and some have evolved into sophisticated multi-purpose agencies intended to meet the needs of urban renewal. A good example is the Shape Housing Association in Birmingham which, in addition to its usual development and management roles, runs a hostel for single homeless people, and an urban renewal sister company providing employment, training, architectural services and a clearance management programme. Shape's definition of itself, adopted in 1988, recognises that the organisation is no longer just a housing association: 'The Shape Group is an experimental inner city agency, a major part of whose programmes involves housing and environmental projects' (Wadhams, 1989b).

Shape is now committed to a programme of experimental projects in an attempt to demonstrate the opportunities for housing associations in neighbourhood renewal for example in the Sparkbrook neighbourhood, discussed in Part II. Half its activity, and more than half its staff of 75 (plus 200 trainees), are working on neighbourhood projects run by Shape Urban Renewal Enterprises (SURE Ltd.), the commercial half of the Group, in cooperation with local residents groups.

Among projects that SURE Ltd. has completed are ones providing buildings for childminder groups, nature trails for schools, refurbishment of a redundant church for the Birmingham Hindu community, and the creation of an employment centre. The Group also runs a garage, metalwork shop and a garden centre as training centres for local unemployed people. Work has started on the conversion of a 30,000 square foot warehouse into a building and training centre, to enable local people to learn DIY skills. Shape is also seeking support from the European Community for a programme to combine building work with training and employment for the long term unemployed, within their own neighbourhood.

Birmingham Friendship Housing Association, also working in Sparkbrook, brings another range of sophisticated social skills to the agency task including

88 staff in a Community Services Department providing mothers, babies and children's projects, mental health and handicap projects and a single homeless project. Shape and Birmingham Friendship have teamed up to form the Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Agency (SNA) to meet the needs of Sparkbrook one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Birmingham, where unemployment is about 40 per cent.

The SNA set itself the following objectives to initiate the continued regeneration of Sparkbrook:

- providing comprehensive repair schemes to 1,200 homes;
- helping low income owners and tenants;
- housing those in greatest need;
- using empty property;
- developing the area for local people;
- using listed building;
- helping local groups;
- building on achievements within the neighbourhood;
- working with the whole community;
- cleaning up the area and creating jobs.

(from *East Sparkbrook: A Neighbourhood Prospectus*)

The Director of Shape (Wadhams, 1989c) has set out criteria for housing association involvement in a lead agency role:

- Detailed local knowledge of the areas in which they intend to seek joint arrangements.
- Detailed knowledge of and involvement with the housing needs of ethnic minorities within these areas.
- A position as major social landlords in the area, enabling them to contribute more effectively to the provision of temporary or permanent rehousing and to manage completed schemes effectively from a local base.
- An ability, through the use of Housing Association Grant for the short-term use of void property, to manage a phased redevelopment programme sensitively.
- An ability to create links with private sector organisations for financial support for owner-occupiers to improve and repair their homes.

- An ability to include employment opportunities and construction training schemes at each stage of any project.
- A willingness to consider schemes in a wider neighbourhood context and to identify ways of enhancing the popularity of any adjacent local authority blocks and maisonettes.
- A capacity to develop innovative cross subsidy funding proposals for joint agencies, to maximise methods by which agencies may bring in extra revenue resources by specific commercial activities.
- In addition to a proven development capacity for social housing to rent, for shared ownership and housing for sale, to research levels of special needs in each area and to devise and implement projects to meet them.

Such agency approaches as SNA in Sparkbrook mark an innovative development in housing association activity in inner cities, and possible way forward for many neighbourhoods. The advantages are:

Community-based associations are not hampered by party political stalemate, have short lines of communication and can act quickly. They can assemble resources for smaller scale local action programmes in a way more problematic for local authorities. The successful housing association agency projects may prove to be more adept at co-ordinating investment from the Housing Corporation, the Training Commission, from banks and building societies, and linking this to the resources the local authority itself may be willing to provide. They may too, be able to help target assistance to local small business development in inner city areas (Wadhams, 1989b, p.28).

The case study of Birmingham in Part II describes in more detail the work of the Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Agency, and the chapter on Scotland describes the work of community-based housing associations in Glasgow.

Making use of experience: the secondary housing association

A second option for a development agency is to call on the services of an experienced housing association to act as a secondary to new community based associations or a community development trust. The secondary association may be a large national or regional housing association in its own right, or one of the 11 agencies which act as secondaries, mainly to co-ops, and manage no stock themselves. Broadly, secondaries provide expertise in three main areas: the development of human skills; the design, construction and management of housing; and dealing with funding bodies, principally local authorities and the Housing Corporation.

A few experienced secondary organisations are now extending their range of services beyond housing into neighbourhood renewal, and there is considerable scope for more activity of this kind. In particular, the use of secondaries enables substantial knowledge transfer from experienced to less experienced urban renewal/housing associations. The secondary association, acting as consultant or development agency, may also recommend to the local authority a range of options for proceeding. For example, for an area of Glasgow's Drumchapel peripheral estate, the run-down and isolated Kingsridge-Cleddans neighbourhood, the housing department called on the United Kingdom Housing Trust (UKHT) to assess ways of moving forward in rehabilitation. After a substantial consultation process with the community, UKHT has recommended the establishment of a Kingsridge-Cleddans Development Corporation (KCDC).

The possible arrangements for administration and function of KCDC are outlined by UKHT (1988). KCDC would be managed by a board and individual aspects by sub-committees. The members of the board would be chosen from Glasgow District Council (GDC), Strathclyde Regional Council, the wider Strathclyde community, a KCDC full-time tenant representative group, and the parent body. No one section would have control. Under present legislative proposals, GDC would be limited to no more than 20 per cent of the membership. Using its asset base, newly acquired from GDC, and that of the parent body, KCDC would raise funds to support the improvement and redevelopment programme. Funds would come from private sources commensurate with KCDC's chargeable assets, and from grants or low cost loans from public sector agencies. KCDC, to create a balanced community, would refurbish and reconstruct existing buildings and build new housing for rent, sale and shared ownership. The development corporation would also be responsible for improving and creating the infrastructure - new roads, sewers, etc and would carry out environmental work within the area to create a pleasant place in which to live. It would create new or converted properties for retail and other commercial units within the area. Other functions of KCDC might include: property and environmental development, monitoring capital spending relating to development, developing alternative tenures (shared ownership, cooperatives, special needs), supervising the provision of social and recreational facilities, and policy development for the KCDC.

There are other examples of the use of the secondary associations approach. For example, Birmingham Friendship has been assisting the development of a new, ethnic minority association, Mashriq, in the Saltley area, nearby to Sparkbrook. This area is likely to be a designated Renewal Area under the

new HLG legislation. In another example, North Housing, the largest association in the country, regularly sponsors tenant ownership cooperatives. A recent development is for the Edgeways cooperative in Grove Hill, Middlesbrough.

The use of a secondary association as lead agency is an approach that offers many advantages to combined housing/urban renewal developments as it allows transfer of development expertise and financial analysis capability from larger associations to smaller, community based associations and cooperatives, and combines big association 'clout' with local sensitivity and responsiveness.

The private development agency

A new type of organisation has recently appeared which undertakes the lead agency role as a private sector function. One example is PROBE (Partnership Renewal of the Built Environment), a joint company formed by the Nationwide Anglia and Halifax Building Societies and the Lovell Construction Group. Their backing includes an unlimited revolving financial facility for development funding.

PROBE sees its role as an enabler, to organise, finance and implement the process of urban regeneration. It argues that successful regeneration entails the full involvement of the local community, both business and residents, and the creation of employment opportunities as well as the redevelopment or refurbishment of buildings. The scope of operation is thus broader than that of a conventional consultant or developer, and in its annual report (1988) PROBE describes itself as a 'commercial organisation with a highly developed social conscience'. As PROBE's two building society shareholders are probably among the most socially-oriented and innovative in the country, this claim is probably more than a simple marketing expedient. It is possible that PROBE's commitment will be reflected in low profit margins, compared to alternative options.

PROBE's partnership approach to urban renewal is defined as follows:

The sustained collaborative effort between agencies of central and local government and the private sector in which each of the partners contributes both in the planning of projects and programmes and also in the provision of financial, managerial and technical resources to implement those plans.

PROBE's renewal programme outline is instructive:

- Establish the causes of problems and dereliction and the opportunities for reversing these.

- Careful consultation with existing residents to establish their circumstances, needs and aspirations in housing, employment and environment.
- View a study area in context with its surroundings rather than in isolation.
- Identify a broad strategic framework for a complete study area, but identify sub-sites within the framework for which can be produced specific proposals.
- Identify sources of investment for each specific proposal.
- Identify early successes which can be achieved in order to establish commitment to an area and to retain the support and involvement of residents.

To date, PROBE have been involved in about 17 projects including an area based initiative in Blackburn (reported later) and regeneration of council estates including the establishment of an estate development trust in one instance, and major tenant designed refurbishment and mixed tenure development in another. More recent PROBE projects include an area plan study for a neighbourhood in West Accrington, home to 4,200 people, and a similar study of mixed housing, industry and commercial renewal in Stockport.

The community role in the partnership

Early definitions of partnerships or joint ventures tended to exclude the existing residents of a renewal area or an estate. Often things tended to be done to them or they were decanted to clear buildings and property for more lucrative recycling. At best they got 'managed clearance'.

The situation is changing. Local authority decentralisation, especially by housing departments, the rise of tenant management co-ops (TMCs) and ownership co-ops, and the success of CBHAs in inner Glasgow, have all contributed to the recognition that involving tenants or residents in the neighbourhood renewal process is socially and economically productive. Local residents are now asserting their right to be involved in decisions which undoubtedly affect their lives. It is now understood that genuine neighbourhood renewal is impossible without the active involvement of the local community. In cases of best practice in neighbourhood renewal, existing residents play an important role that encourages a climate in which their own confidence and initiative can grow.

Involvement in housing development and management is an important first step, and community-based housing associations and housing cooperatives have played an important role in this regard. But it is also recognised that development must proceed simultaneously on a number of fronts: environmental improvements, retail development, health projects, small business development, and employment and training initiatives must go together with the housing initiatives to engender the necessary level of confidence for projects to 'gel'. Small-scale, timid or isolated approaches, not based on a neighbourhood perspective involving residents, risk being overwhelmed by the remaining problems and do not offer good value for money.

Basic principles of community involvement

A number of principles underlie the notion that the community should be a full partners in neighbourhood renewal. These have been adapted in part from a framework for community planning developed by Hall (1989) for the Town and Country Planning Association.

Definition - Community involvement is an enabling process whereby policies, and financial and administrative mechanisms, enable communities to directly influence, improve or create their own local environment and meet local needs.

Power - Community involvement is about devolving power to communities, if they want it and to meet their own needs to improve their environment in their own way, provided that it does not run counter to the needs of the wider community. Central and local government will need to delegate functions locally. Democracy implies that people have the power to initiate ideas and local services themselves.

Human scale - Community involvement focuses on human needs met by solutions which work at a human scale. Because people spend most of their time in the home, in the neighbourhood and in the workplace, considerations of human scale should have first priority in these areas.

Resources - Community involvement is intended to harness the community's own untapped resources, such as local knowledge, spare time, unused or underdeveloped skills, unused land, buildings or equipment. It provides an incentive for local knowledge and local resources to be applied, because local people know it is going to be useful to their own community. Conversely, to encourage community self development, both local and central government must relinquish some of the purse strings, and the locus of decisions, to community based voluntary organisations.

Participation - Community involvement is a means of involving more people in the neighbourhood renewal process. It fosters a collective community will to protect and look after the local environment, the benefits of which then 'spillover' beyond the locality. The ambition of community involvement should be to leave in place organisations of the community itself, which will assure continuity and maintenance of services, and control the running of their community.

Good decisions - Community involvement can help public agencies to avoid the mistakes of the past. High rise flats and peripheral estates might never have been built if there had been effective community based planning. Many old neighbourhoods might have been rehabilitated instead of demolished.

Linkage of levels - Neighbourhood organisations, though specifically focused on local communities and neighbourhoods, can also contribute to strategic planning and larger scale development decisions. Cumulative knowledge of the kinds of environment that people want at the local level can beneficially influence planning policies for cities, the urban regions, the countryside areas and the country as a whole. By making these kinds of linkages, and delegating power at appropriate levels in society, the tension is resolved between insensitive and inefficient 'top-down' planning and unprofessional 'bottom-up' planning. This is a balanced action approach (Wadhams, 1989a).

Beginning the community involvement process

In Britain the idea of genuine community involvement is a fairly revolutionary notion, and the process may be difficult to implement. It often begins with housing, as people take control over the management and sometimes ownership of their houses and flats by cooperative ventures and estate management boards, and as more housing associations understand the benefits to be had from active tenant groups. The recent Priority Estates Project report on tenant management cooperatives demonstrates that council tenants, regardless of socio-economic or racial background, can successfully and effectively manage their own homes, with faster repairs, reduced void levels and lower rent arrears the results (Power, 1988). Such TMCs are being encouraged by many enlightened local authorities and are a good first step in the process of positive community involvement. Other tenants choose the ownership cooperative approach, discussed below.

Community based housing associations traditionally foster much of their support locally, and many have good records of community involvement.

Larger national and regional associations have a patchier record, and are not traditionally known for high levels of tenant involvement. Platt (1987) for example, reports that only a quarter of housing associations have active tenant associations, even though tenant involvement is proven to lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. They suggest that many associations feel 'our housing is so well managed that our tenants aren't interested in getting involved', but argue that the real reason is that a role for tenants is greeted with fear and suspicion by staff. Some larger associations share a tendency to over-bureaucracy with some local authorities. But Platt reports exceptions, including the largest of associations, North Housing:

North has been clear and persistent in fostering tenant organisations and a committee member has made them his special responsibility.

North's commitment to community involvement is reflected in the Northborne Street, Newcastle case study, where North carefully nurtured back towards health a small local community shattered by dereliction, planning blight and anti-social behaviour. North is also to be commended for commissioning MacLennan et al. (1989) to conduct an independent survey of over 1,500 of their tenants, who reported high levels of satisfaction with most aspects of their housing. But only 27 per cent were aware of North's tenants organisations and only 6 per cent had ever attended a meeting!

Clearly the question of the potential for greater tenant participation in the affairs of larger housing associations requires further study. It may be unreasonable to expect higher levels of participation from a majority of relatively satisfied tenants, who may reasonably choose not to attend tenant meetings. If, however, large associations are to be involved in neighbourhood renewal, as opposed to simple stock transfer and management, they will need to think carefully about the need for genuine partnerships with community based organisations, including CBHAs. To do this they may need to strengthen or even initiate community development skills within a more traditional housing development and management structure.

The role of information in community involvement

Information is a valuable commodity and, even in democratic societies, governments tend to hold on to it or to dole it out in dribs and drabs to suit purposes of limiting debate and enlarging the powerbase. This is no more than a restatement of the fact that 'information is power'. If neighbourhood renewal is about decentralisation of power and resources, then decentralisation of information must be an element of the process.

All community involvement begins with a flow of information to people about the options available to them, to begin the process of taking informed decisions. The fast pace of change in housing, and the bewildering array of possibilities (block transfer, pick a landlord, TMCs, changing rent levels, security of tenure) suggest that nothing constructive is possible without ensuring that the flow of information to tenants/residents is equivalent to that available to central and local government and prospective landlords.

The pioneering Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) for Scotland, set up in 1980, provides information to tenants and runs training programmes. This is a necessary first step for assisting tenants to learn from each other about the intricacies of participation. However the TPAS for England, set up in 1988, has only nine staff, and can be expected to provide only a back-up service to assist direct local authority and other agency encouragement and funding of resident participation. Other organisations which can provide advice direct to residents are the National Federation of Housing Cooperatives and Scottish Federation of Housing Cooperatives (on TMCs, ownership co-ops, housing association management coops), the Priority Estates Project (estate management boards) and some secondary housing associations (on co-ops and community based housing associations). Other organisations are proposed, for example, a Tenants Resource and Information Service, to be funded by Shelter, local government organisations and possibly a charitable trust.

These are all useful initiatives, but given the magnitude of the changes occurring in housing, and the pressing need for neighbourhood renewal, the following points are suggested.

- Neighbourhood renewal is predicated on free and fair information exchange.
- The magnitude of change in housing suggests substantial funds will need to be allocated for information services.
- Existing efforts are helpful but patchy and not consistent with the magnitude of effort required.
- Tenants/residents faced with the possibility of new housing association and private landlords, as well as those interested in becoming landlords, require advice services and the funds to engage consultants. The opportunity to engage consultancy services sophisticated enough to untangle housing and financial options should not be sole prerogative of governments and large housing organisations, but also of tenants, residents and community groups.

- Residents groups also representing owner-occupiers engaged in neighbourhood renewal will require advice and consultancy, particularly within the new Renewal Areas and wherever clearance or group repairs schemes are possible. The success of RAs may depend on adequate advisory services.

Community economic and social participation

In addition to housing and environmental matters, the success of neighbourhood renewal is also dependent on drawing people with potential for economic activity back into the mainstream of economic life and, for those many people unable to participate in economic activity, providing options for increasing social participation.

Further advisory services in these areas will certainly be necessary to underpin the role of employment and training in neighbourhood renewal. For example, the unemployment rate among tenants of North Housing Association is three times the national average. Similarly unemployment in neighbourhoods such as Drumchapel, and others in the case studies, are invariably two to three times the national average.

Partnerships are addressing problems of high unemployment by:

- providing direct employment, training and counselling services;
- liaising with employment services, training agencies and other voluntary organisations;
- attracting inward investment and employment opportunities;
- organising repairs and maintenance services, security services, and building construction services to internalise the benefits of economic activity in neighbourhoods;
- establishing non-profit community trusts to provide a vehicle for donations and the management of community facilities;
- providing community business premises and small business counselling; and
- promoting the development of community enterprises.

There is considerable potential for community enterprises to produce tangible immediate benefits and to serve as a stepping stone to re-integration into the economic mainstream. Community enterprises are legally constituted businesses providing goods and services on a commercial basis, but with profits and assets of the enterprises geared to the community and not to private

interests ((McArthur and McGregor, 1989). Their control vested in local people; the enterprise is usually run by a volunteer Board of Directors elected by, and accountable to, local residents. Finally they have a range of socially-oriented goals in addition to economic ones. Their underlying ethos concentrates on reducing the poverty and disadvantage faced by certain communities.

The three main areas of commercial activity provided by community enterprises are retailing, the provision of industrial property in the form of managed workspaces, and various services. Retailing activities includes cafes, food co-ops and supermarkets, as well as the sale of craft or recycled goods. Service activities include painting and decorating, security, contract cleaning, hairdressing, laundry services and local banking services and the supply of low-cost credit through community credit unions. Other activities include construction and environmental work, often in competition with other businesses in the wider urban area.

In addition to generating confidence and new skills, provision of direct employment is a main benefit of community enterprise. Other means of promoting employment and business activity must also be sought if neighbourhood renewal is to succeed, and expenditure on housing and neighbourhood renewal could be used for this purpose. For example, the Housing Corporation spends £950 million per year, most going to housing associations. In spending this, associations employ thousands of staff nationally on management and maintenance, and underwrite substantial levels of employment in the building trades industry. There may be opportunities for using the leverage provided by these expenditures to promote training, employment and small business activity for local residents. Equally tenants and residents, in the increasing numbers of negotiations with housing associations as possible landlords, are entitled to ask what economic benefits will remain in, or accrue to, the local neighbourhood as a result of development activity. As described earlier, some housing associations are already active in employment training and placement. Finally, although central government steadfastly refuses to countenance the affirmative action or contract compliance approaches used so successfully in the USA to generate employment for minorities, housing associations are under no such constraints. Housing associations are legally able to put into contracts clauses requiring the employment of a certain percentage of local labour, or the input of training schemes.

Other kinds of community activity will be important to people who are not, or cannot be, economically active. Among North Housing Association's

tenant households for example, 65 per cent did not contain anyone in paid employment, and 25 per cent were of elderly people. A broad range of services may be useful including drop-in centres for elderly people and carers, mental health and mental handicap services, children and mothers' services, and others. The recent announcement of the implementation of parts of the Griffiths' report, which places the responsibility for community care firmly with local authorities and voluntary organisations, may increase potential for productive liaison in this area.

Resources for planning

Because neighbourhood renewal often involves complex development plans, financial and social arrangements, and hopefully a substantial amount of community involvement, early or 'up-front' planning may require considerable resource inputs of time and money. Adequate investment at this stage of the process may be crucial to the success of neighbourhood renewal. Partners often willingly provide these resources in the expectation of a return on their investment, economic or social, and build in these costs or accept them as overheads. But if neighbourhood renewal is to proceed at a pace which will make a difference, more consideration may need to be given to direct funding of the planning stage.

So far the tendency of central agencies is to fund development, rather than planning. But it may be necessary in future to set aside earmarked funds for planning, whether by local authorities, housing associations, private development agencies, or for consultants' work. Unfortunately local authorities are finding it increasingly difficult to find such funds, and their own staff are hard pressed to find time to address the details of planning for neighbourhood renewal. This situation can only mean that more planning functions will be devolved to housing associations or private agencies, if they are carried out at all. The situation is likely to become worse rather than better under the Local Government and Housing Act, as a detailed area report on demographic and housing conditions by each local authority is a requirement. This database is a reasonable precondition for efficient use of Renewal Area funding, but will entail substantial expense for local authorities not already collecting this kind of information.

Similarly the substantial co-ordination required among agencies will also entail expense. A lesson from the case studies is that successful neighbourhood renewal cannot be fashioned in a top-down manner, and that the best solutions to neighbourhood problems come from local knowledge – something which starts by walking the streets and estates. The financial

implication is that each Renewal Area will require detailed planning in its own right. The cost-efficiency and success of the Renewal Area policy will depend therefore on the quality of that planning, which will cost money and will involve expertise. Encouraging the necessary degree of neighbourhood involvement may also require funding.