

**COMMUNITY CONTROL: A
POSITION PAPER**

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Glossary

ALMO	Arms-length management organisation
ARB	Area Review Board
BCHS	Birmingham Cooperative Housing Services
BME	Black and minority ethnic
BRATS	Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme
CCT	Coalfields Community Transport
CCTV	Closed-circuit television
CEDC	Community Education Development Centre
CSCB	Coin Street Community Builders
CV	Curriculum vitae
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service
DTLR	Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions
EMB	Estate Management Board
FCWTG	Federation for Community Work Training Groups
GP	General Practitioner
GROW	Giving Real Opportunities for Women
HART	Hartsholme Association of Residents and Tenants
HAT	Housing Action Trust
LETS	Local Exchange and Trading Scheme
LMA	Local Management Agreement
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
MiDAS	Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
PEP	Priority Estates Project
PETRA	Pinehurst Estate Tenants and Residents Association
QCI	Quality Community Investment
RCH	Redditch Cooperative Homes
RCHA	Resident-controlled housing association
RSO	Residents' Services Organisation
RTP	Rural Transport Partnership
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SSHA	South Shropshire Housing Association
TMO	Tenant Management Organisation
VARG	Vassall Area Regeneration Group
WECH	Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

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1 Introduction

A neighbourhood-based community can be defined as a group of residents who are linked by networks of common interest and who have a shared perception of the identity of the neighbourhood in which they live.

People do not relate to just one community, however, but to a complex personal package or portfolio of community groupings (Crow and Allan, 1994; Chanan et al, 2000, p.5). Communities of interest and identity going beyond the neighbourhood are particularly important for members of minority ethnic groups and people living in remote rural areas. A policy emphasis on neighbourhood-based communities, therefore, runs the risk of discriminating against black and minority ethnic (BME) and rural communities.

Neighbourhood-based communities in Britain are far smaller than the populations governed by local authorities. The Redcliffe-Maud Commission (1969) found that about two-thirds of the respondents to their inquiry were oriented to an area the size of an electoral ward or parish, and this finding has been repeated on numerous occasions (for example, Hedges and Kelly, 1992; Young et al, 1996). Yet in its modernising government agenda, New Labour continues to use 'community' to mean the entire population (or possibly electorate) of a local authority and fails to address the issue of neighbourhood-based communities (Filkin et al, 1999).

Social psychologists such as Dunbar (see Dunbar et al, 1999) have established that communities based on direct interaction alone can sustain only up to about 150 people. The introduction of formal organisations and systems of regulation can enable the development of communities that are larger than this but the potential extent of such development remains unclear.

Community control can be defined as:

‘Any group of people who live in the same neighbourhood or community, share a common interest, and exercise the power to choose, on an informed basis, the content and extent of their involvement in what happens in that neighbourhood or community.’

The larger a community is, the more it has to rely on representatives acting on its behalf rather than on direct participation in decision-making processes. This can lead to community representatives being in control rather than the rank-and-file members of the community. For larger communities, therefore, institutional means have to be devised to ensure that it is the community as a whole that is in control, for example,

by requiring representation from all sections of the community on decision-making bodies, creating mechanisms for genuine accountability of representatives to those whom they represent, and encouraging practical involvement of as many community members as possible.

Whatever control arrangement a community may choose, there will be a tension between it and those forces that the community does not control but which impinge on it. Communities therefore need to have power so that they can hold these forces to *account* for what they do (Somerville, 1998). Typically, this requires changes at different levels of decision-making. Communities need to be active in order to ensure that such changes occur and remain in place. Ideally, accountability to communities should be part of the mainstream culture.

Communities need to be involved or engaged in order to exercise control, but community control is not the same as community involvement or engagement. The crucial difference is that, for community control, people must decide and act democratically about issues of common concern. They must also be in a position to decide what they want to have control over and how much control they want to have.

Both the content and degree of control that a community can choose to exercise varies widely. In terms of content, a community might want to have control over housing management, community safety, community learning, community transport, community assets (land, buildings, etc), community enterprise, community media (newsletter, radio, local ICT network) or any one of a variety of community projects (on childcare, youth activities, leisure and recreation, healthy living, etc). In terms of degree, a community might want, for example, to hold a service provider to account through a formal agreement or take on responsibility for managing a service itself or gain ownership of community assets such as housing or a community centre.

2 The Politics of Community Control

In 2000 the Housing Corporation launched a new policy, which they called 'Communities in Control' (Housing Corporation, 2000, p.2). They want to see a framework 'where residents are able to choose and have as much or as little control as they wish' (p.2) and, to support this, they are providing funding through their Community Training and Enabling (CTE) programme. The aims of CTE grants are to help and encourage residents to take part in making decisions about investment in their housing, and to link housing association initiatives to residents' own priorities (Housing Corporation, 2001, p.7). Specifically, through stock transfer, the Corporation intends to encourage local authorities, emerging stock transfer housing associations and residents to consider options for community housing. The role of CTE grants is to facilitate the consideration of these options by residents and the provision of information, training and support to realise one option or another.

This new policy has to be seen in the context of developments in the politics of community control within government generally. A growing body of research evidence has pointed to the long-term failure of initiatives and programmes directed at communities who have not been in control of the process.

An important issue in the politics of community control is that of whether the agenda should be pursued entirely by voluntary means or should there be an element of compulsion. Arguably, the transfer of assets (housing, land, buildings, etc) to communities by voluntary means is likely to be limited and there is therefore a need for compulsory transfer in certain cases. An example of this was the 'Tenants' Choice' provision under the Housing Act 1988, whereby local authority tenants were given a statutory means to trigger the transfer of their homes to an approved landlord, which could be a body representing the tenants themselves. This provision enabled the enforced transfer of Westminster City Council homes to a resident-controlled housing association, Walerton and Elgin Community Homes. The provision was, however, repealed by the Housing Act 1996. In Scotland, in contrast, the new Land Reform Bill gives rural communities the right to buy sites from landowners for sustainable regeneration and establishes the public's right to roam in the countryside. Crofting communities will acquire rights to buy land from their landlords that include rights to country sports and mineral resources.

There is a growing recognition among policy makers that successful public services cannot be delivered unless the public themselves have more direct control over them. The idea of a 'stakeholder democracy', for example, which New Labour got as far as considering but did not put into practice (Driver and Martell, 1998), means that all services, private as well as public, should be controlled by boards on which all those who have a stake in the service are represented. This vision is not so far away from community control, and indeed Hunt (2002) sees community control as an integral element of a form of stakeholder democracy (one in which the community holds a majority 'stake').

Most literature on community control is concerned with control exercised by groups of social housing tenants. Price Waterhouse (1995), for example, showed that tenant-controlled organisations were more effective at housing management and delivered wider social and community benefits, and this conclusion has been supported by all subsequent reports in this area.

In spite of this finding, evidence suggests that tenant control continues to attract clear support from only a small minority of local housing authorities and housing associations (DETR, 2000a; Aldbourne Associates, 2001; Cole et al, 2001). Findings from these researches suggest that most local authorities and housing associations are not committed to genuinely entering into dialogue with their tenants, let alone encouraging them to consider opting for forms of tenant control. Most recently, the Audit Commission has reported that housing associations are actually reducing the involvement of their tenants in decision-making by forming complex group structures (Audit Commission, 2001), resulting in tenants being represented only on subsidiary committees, away from the main board where key decisions are made.

In contrast to most local authorities and housing associations, the government has long been keen on resident or community involvement in housing and regeneration initiatives (see, for example, DETR, 1998, p.2). In this publication, DETR defined community control as a type of community-based regeneration initiative (CBRI) in which the community set up and ran the initiative themselves, and gave examples of CBRIs as local exchange and trading schemes (LETS), credit unions, cooperative food ventures, development trusts, mutual aid groups, training and job search support

schemes, clubs and societies run on a voluntary basis, community bursaries, and multi-facility community centres.

The government's view is well supported by research. DETR (2000e), for example, reviewed the experience of regeneration on 18 housing estates and found that schemes that did not reflect the wishes of tenants were unlikely to endure and that it was important to involve all tenants in the process, including young people. The researchers concluded that, in order for regeneration to be sustainable, multi-agency long-term commitment was essential, and suggested that this could be progressed through a multi-agency estate agreement specifying levels and standards of a wide range of services (see also Stewart et al, 2002).

The general picture of regeneration initiatives until recent years is perhaps best conveyed by Carley (2000, p.44):

- A proliferation of separate government initiatives and challenge funding regimes, each with different ministerial rules, regulations and participation mechanisms, imposing hidden human and financial costs on local regeneration
- Departmentalism in local authorities and agencies resulting in poor local coordination
- Failure to bend mainstream public expenditure to socially excluded areas
- Failure to develop necessary, multi-faceted regeneration initiatives
- Lack of a strategic city-region perspective to underpin area initiatives.

Carley also cites research by Speak and Graham (2000), showing the steady withdrawal of private sector functions from deprived neighbourhoods, with their replacements, such as credit unions or food cooperatives, not offering the same degree of choice that socially advantaged households take for granted.

A review of regeneration policy over the last 30 years (Wilks-Heeg, 2000) noted that, although there is a powerful consensus that effective regeneration policy requires the 'bending' or re-channelling of mainstream budgets into specific neighbourhoods, attempts to do so have generally foundered (possibly the only exception has been housing renovation policy). Recently, this finding has been supported by the Local Government Association's (2000) interim evaluation of its Pathfinders, which accuses central government departments of lacking real commitment to neighbourhood regeneration in this sense, citing 'little evidence of willingness to grant freedoms and flexibilities' and 'a tightening of the central grip on how funding is spent'. New resources are being provided, but the basic pattern remains one of technical assistance dominated by 'men in suits in parachutes'.

Hastings et al (1996) addressed the issue of what counts as appropriate technical assistance. They suggested that outside organisations can act as catalysts in the regeneration process, by contacting existing local groups and community bodies and explaining what can be done for them. Ranges of options for regeneration can then be explored with the community, and eventually written up in the form, for example, of a 'Residents' Expectations Document'. The 'right approach' to neighbourhood regeneration, therefore, could involve a special form of technical assistance, in which outside professionals provide information to the community and begin to learn about the nature of the community, its problems and its priorities for action. When the

community members feel they have been sufficiently informed (possibly involving a certain amount of training and education), they can then decide whether to continue working with these particular professionals and whether to seek other forms of technical assistance.

Carley et al (2000b) conducted case studies of 27 regeneration partnerships and found only three success stories of community-based regeneration: Greater Pilton in Edinburgh, the Arts Factory in Rhondda, and Community Links in Newham. On the downside, they concluded that regeneration in some areas had simply shifted disadvantaged households elsewhere, concentrating them in rented housing. They noted that, although cities like Manchester and Glasgow were achieving modest economic success, the residents were not all participating in that economic upturn. In areas such as Rhondda Cynon Taff, third or fourth generation unemployment had become a way of life. On Castlemilk estate in Glasgow, after ten years of a flagship partnership initiative, only a third of residents were in employment and 80% of employable residents had no educational qualifications (Carley et al, 2000b, p.47). The partnerships generally made no difference to existing power inequalities: 'There is little recognition that community involvement ought to produce a transfer of power to those currently powerless' (p.50).

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation funded four projects in East London, Liverpool, Teesside and Nottingham, which considered residents' views of the regeneration process. The researchers found a widespread suspicion that devolved power was a myth: too often, residents did not feel in control of events, and felt even less in control of expenditure decisions. Consultation arrangements were often inadequate: residents felt their questions were not answered, their issues not followed up, decisions were made in other forums, and their priorities for everyday issues of service provision and social facilities were ignored in favour of large development activities. Residents felt that they had not had their say despite the existence of traditional arrangements for representation (Kearns, 2000, p.9).

Anastacio et al (2000) also conducted participative research in four case study areas (Aston/Newtown in Birmingham, Barnsley, Greenwich Waterfront and Kings Cross) to find out the views of local residents and community workers on the process of community regeneration. As in other studies, participants perceived their lack of involvement in the policy and resource allocation decisions of mainstream service providers (local authorities, health authorities and education and training providers) as a significant negative issue (p.42). They felt that wider political issues were excluded from the agenda, for example, the effects of neighbourhood regeneration projects on main spending programmes, on neighbouring areas, on housing markets, and on housing policy generally. Both regeneration professionals and community activists remarked that national housing policies currently reinforced the ways in which people with multiple problems became concentrated within particular geographical areas and housing estates (p.32). They also questioned the value of setting up projects that turned out to be unsustainable because of inadequate mechanisms for mainstreaming them. As a result of their negative experiences, many expressed scepticism about the new agendas for community planning. In general, the case studies suggested that the *diversity* of interests within communities was insufficiently recognised, and resources were not systematically allocated to address this diversity: 'Addressing issues of diversity was all too often seen as "difficult", and there were generally inadequate

resources for the intensive outreach work which is often necessary to reach the most under-represented groups. In three of the four case study areas, where there were black and ethnic minority communities, there were major issues to be addressed.’ (p.43)

As with these other studies, research for this report indicated that the main issue for communities was the desire on the part of local people to have more say over what goes on in their neighbourhoods. This came over most strongly, perhaps, in relation to economic, social and environmental concerns. The priority given to specific concerns, however, varied enormously from one area to another.

The Government’s neighbourhood renewal strategy aims to improve on the dismal record revealed by research and to place communities at the heart of neighbourhood renewal. It contains a vision that within 10-20 years no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live and it has two long-term goals:

- 1) In all the poorest neighbourhoods (situated in 88 local authority areas), to achieve: lower worklessness, lower crime, better health, better skills, and better housing and physical environment.
- 2) To narrow the gap on these measures between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country. (SEU, 2001, p.8)

Lying behind the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR) is the government’s flagship neighbourhood renewal programme, the New Deal for Communities (NDC), which was launched in 1998, with 17 ‘Pathfinder’ partnerships being allocated funding of £774 million over ten years, and a further 21 partnerships receiving £1,120 million over the ten years from 2001. The partnerships are formed between local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and business, in areas of 1,000-4,000 households across England. Although the initial emphasis of NDC was strongly on improving local services, it was soon recognised that increasing community capacity and adopting an evidence-based approach to delivering change were equally important. As a result, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit is now clear that the key characteristics of NDC are:

- Community involvement and ownership
- Joined up thinking and solutions
- Action based on evidence of what works and what does not
- Long term commitment to deliver real change
- Communities at the heart of change, in partnership with key agencies (DTLR, 2001)

Independent evaluation of the NDC has only just begun (Lipman, 2001) [CHECK]. However, the Action Plan states that the NDC has already started to offer useful ‘lessons learned’, for example:

- It is possible for partnerships whose boards have a majority of community representatives to run a major neighbourhood renewal programme successfully
- Communities and key public agencies must both be involved in renewal programmes
- True community involvement takes time

- If programmes are to deliver change they must focus on delivery and they need people with strong skills in programme management (SEU, 2001, p.23)

Another major new policy development that is relevant to the community control agenda is the idea of a *community strategy*, which comes from the Local Government Act 2000, under which all local authorities have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and to actively involve and engage the community in local decisions towards this end. The government expects local authorities to work with other bodies to develop community strategies setting out the actions that they and their partners will take to discharge this duty. Government guidance suggests that this will require:

- Allowing local communities to articulate their aspirations, needs and priorities
- Coordinating the actions of the local authority, and of public, voluntary and community, and private sector organisations locally
- Refocusing and shaping the existing and future activity of these organisations so that they effectively meet community needs and aspirations (DETR, 2000d, para 8)

The Guidance on community strategies interprets ‘community’ in a wide and open-ended sense, covering both communities of place and communities of interest, and emphasises that communities should be involved in establishing both the long-term vision for the area and shorter term priorities for action (para 42). The Guidance also sees community strategies operating at a number of different geographical levels: from county-wide to individual neighbourhoods (para 83).

Community control appears on the government’s agenda here in two guises:

- 1) Finding ways to let local groups play a bigger role in service delivery
- 2) Allowing communities to play a significant role in decision-making processes

Government publications, however, do not make clear what might be involved in either of these cases. Logically, this should form part of the agenda for local government modernisation. Carley (2000, p.48) suggests four points are relevant here:

- 1) A long-term *vision* for the local authority and its neighbourhoods, with full and open participation, leading to a Community Plan
- 2) A detailed *corporate strategy*, with targets, disaggregated to the neighbourhood level
- 3) A review of local *democratic processes*, especially the roles of backbench councillors, so they feel able to work closely with local community organisations
- 4) *Devolving service delivery* to partner organisations and/or local communities, with a measure of budgetary control and within the framework of Best Value and neighbourhood management.

The government’s agenda therefore seems to be one of increasing emphasis on forms of neighbourhood management. But how does this differ from community control? The NSNR states that neighbourhood management involves devolving power to a single person or neighbourhood institution (SEU, 2001, p.28), who will have overall

responsibility for services at the neighbourhood level, with the necessary tools to get things done – for example, a devolved budget or a service level agreement (SLA) – and commitment from service providers (statutory, voluntary and private).

Power and Bergin (1999) affirm that, for neighbourhood management to work well, there must be a dedicated budget, a senior manager in control locally, immediate security and environmental targets, community involvement and support, and clear responsibility for essential services such as police, schools, housing and health. Taylor (2000) adds that there needs to be targeted assistance from central government.

Duncan and Thomas (2001) argue that the best models for neighbourhood management involve *agreements* between residents and those agencies responsible for delivering services in their neighbourhood. Current prototypes for such agreements include estate agreements, service level agreements and (possibly) estate-based tenant participation compacts. In order to ensure accountability of neighbourhood managers to the community, they also advocate that the majority of neighbourhood board members, and the Chair, should be elected by the community. They cite as an example Royds Community Association, which provides neighbourhood management at three levels: estate services, such as repairs, provided by the Association; contract management for other service providers; and local service agreements with other service providers, such as the police (Duncan and Thomas, 2001, p.62). The only example of neighbourhood management that involves policing, education, childcare, health and employment services as well as housing and estate services is Broadwater Farm (Power and Bergin, 1999, p.25). Duncan and Thomas' argument suggests that, in certain (possibly unusual) circumstances, neighbourhood management can be a form of community control.

Taylor (2000) identifies two approaches to neighbourhood management: a service-led or top-down approach, for example, area coordination initiatives that join up services at a local level; and a community-led or bottom-up approach, for example, tenant management organisations and resident services organisations. According to the argument in this paper, only the latter approach would count as community control. Taylor, however, argues that the two approaches do not have to be mutually exclusive: 'the most effective action is likely to come from strategies which engage effectively at all levels and are able to combine "top-down" and "bottom-up" forces for change' (p.39). Criticising this argument, Wood (2000) points out that the idea of 'someone in charge' conflicts with a community-led approach: 'There needs to be a clear understanding of where the power should lie, and decisions need to be taken by the community about the level of involvement they desire' (p.17). Wood argues that communities can be in control without having to run their own services themselves – for example, through controlling the neighbourhood budget, through power to hire and fire the neighbourhood manager, or through legal rights to determine service quality, exercised through community forums or local area committees (Wood, 2000, p.18).

The neighbourhood management agenda raises many issues, such as resourcing and local politics, none of which appear to have been addressed effectively so far. Arguably, for example, the lessons from the failed neighbourhood management experiments of the 1980s (Islington, Manchester, Tower Hamlets, Lambeth), which were promoted through local politics and foundered on lack of resources and local

political change, have not been learned. Henderson and Salmon (1998, p.12) have argued that, in Islington, power and services were decentralised but a strong central core was retained; people at the local level were represented on high-profile neighbourhood committees, but the committees were mainly consultative, with no control over policy or mainline expenditure (Burns et al, 1994).

Duncan and Thomas (2001, pp.94-5) note how Liverpool City Council's original introduction of neighbourhood management into smaller neighbourhoods of 500-1,000 homes was abandoned in order to fall into line with the NSNR, which follows the NDC model of 4-5,000 homes. The importance of this for community control is that it is unlikely that communities of place would ever be as large as those under the NDC model. There is a tension between the need for neighbourhoods to be large enough for effective service coordination and delivery but small enough to be subject to community control. One way forward might be to adopt a principle of *subsidiarity*, according to which each service or function is devolved to the lowest level possible that is commensurate with the community's own wishes, bearing in mind agreed standards of efficiency and economies of scale. Achieving this ideal, however, is far from easy.

Duncan and Thomas (2001, p.112) foresee a real problem here: 'How much control over service budgets is eventually devolved to neighbourhood level will depend on the determination of service providers to overcome the many obstacles involved and the pressure placed on them to do so by local communities.' The point is that local communities are not generally in a position to place a great deal of pressure on service providers, so everything appears to depend upon the commitment of service providers, especially local authorities. Yet we know already that, in the vast majority of cases, this commitment is lacking, so the prospects for community-controlled neighbourhood management do not look good. Burgess et al (2001, p.xx), for example, point out that many local authorities fear that devolved forms of local governance, based on territorial or cross-cutting measures, will prove more expensive than traditional approaches, introduce an unwieldy level of complexity, and raise expectations that cannot be met from existing budgets. They conclude that 'it is questionable whether all or, indeed, many local authorities will be prepared to take the steps necessary to meet [this] objective' (of devolving decision-making as far as possible to communities/neighbourhoods) (Burgess et al, 2001, p.93). In general, 'there are profound problems in reconciling the complex, multi-faceted problems of territory (regions, cities and neighbourhoods) with the traditional functional, hierarchical organisation of British government' (Burgess et al, 2001, p.26).

The government's ideas on neighbourhood management have already come under fire from its critics. Brickell (2000), for example, has accused it of betraying the radicalism of community empowerment and proposing a system of 'neighbourhoods in committee' (see also Goss, 2001, p.125). The thrust of his criticism is that: 'In practice New Labour thinking focuses more on management than on enterprise, and more on formal representation than on direct practical involvement.' The result is a kaleidoscope of new structures at neighbourhood level that are 'no more than miniature local authorities' when residents have already grown weary of traditional methods of consultation and governance that have 'consistently failed to engage the interest and commitment of local people or to effect real change in their lives'. Instead of the government's proposed local authority domination of neighbourhood renewal

funding and strategic partnerships, Brickell calls for the direct transfer of capital assets and funding streams to community groups. This would certainly have the effect of placing communities at the 'head' and not just the 'heart' of neighbourhood renewal.

3 Processes of Community Control

A number of different but overlapping approaches to community control processes can be identified: housing-based, asset-based, service-based, and the community investment approach.

Housing-based approaches

A housing-based approach to community control could be defined as one where the community control process starts out from the position of residents as tenants or former tenants, who have a specific relationship with a landlord or local authority.

A long-standing example of a housing-based approach to community control is the DTLR s16 Tenant Empowerment Grant programme. Under this programme, local authority tenant groups, following an options study, can choose from among a number of involvement arrangements, including estate agreements, local committees and tenant panels, as well as tenant control (DETR, 2000b). A formally similar approach by a housing association is the 'residents action' approach, developed and tested by Swaythling Housing Society. This puts forward two modular frameworks, one concerned with choices of resident involvement arrangement and the other with choices of resident organisation.

The Housing Corporation's approach to community control, described in the previous section, has been further developed by Bliss and Baker (2001) in what they call 'the *Community Gateway Model*'. Under this model, Bliss and Baker propose that stock transfer housing associations should initiate in all their neighbourhoods a community options study process. This process would present a range of options for community empowerment to residents and would aim to place each community (as defined by residents themselves) onto a road to empowerment at a level at which they felt comfortable (Bliss and Baker, 2001, p.8). A key new feature of the model compared with the s16 options study process leading to tenant control (originally developed for the Right to Manage – see Somerville et al, 1998) is that of developing links between residents and those organisations that have a bearing on the neighbourhood. This means that the community options study process is intended to consider options beyond those of managing housing services. These options could relate to policing, youth work, schools, health programmes, economic regeneration, and involvement in neighbourhood forums and local strategic partnerships (Bliss and Baker, 2001, pp.8-9).

Bliss and Baker propose not only a model *process* of developing resident control but also a specific type of resident control *arrangement* that will be responsible for this process. Essentially, this arrangement is a combination of a par value co-operative and a RCHA – that is, a RCHA where the board is elected by resident members who have purchased a £1 nominal share. This combination allows the Community Gateway Model to enjoy all the benefits of RCHAs in terms of a broader community focus,

effective control of all housing management functions, greater stability, and so on (Gillanders and Blackaby, 1999, pp.55-6) as well as the advantages of par value co-operatives such as mutual support, tax advantages, greater scope for borrowing, and greater opportunity for involvement in a manner fitting with resident aspirations (Gillanders and Blackaby, 1999, p.53).

The Community Gateway Model could form part of a wider practical programme for the mutualisation of public and private services. In Wales, the National Assembly has already developed a community mutual model, according to which housing stock transferring from local authorities will be owned by all of the tenants unless they opt out of share membership (Cobbetts, 2002). This means that all large-scale transfers of council housing in Wales will be to community-owned bodies.

Asset-based approaches

Bliss and Baker (2001, p.10) also see the Community Gateway Model as a possible part of an asset-based approach to community development and neighbourhood regeneration: an approach that sees community control being delivered mainly through the transfer of asset ownership to local communities. They suggest that the ownership of land, for example, could be transferred to neighbourhood Community Land Trusts (HACAS Chapman Hendy, 2002), to enable a broader cross-section of community stakeholders to control the development of local community assets. A Community Land Trust is a community-controlled organisation, which owns the freehold and leases properties to other organisations or people according to a community-oriented agenda.

The asset-based approach to community control is explored further in Hart (2001). In 2000, the Development Trusts Association called for the transfer of £1 billion of income generating assets from public to community ownership over the next five years. DTA (2001) argued that asset transfer projects had the following potential advantages:

- Dealing with vacant land, dereliction or deteriorating property infrastructure in disadvantaged areas
- Creating foci for economic and community enterprise development supported by government special area-based spending programmes
- Supporting strategies to build community capacity to manage assets and deliver services locally with the benefit of an income that the asset provides
- Providing opportunities for long-term joint working and dialogue between statutory agencies, the private sector and people who live and work in disadvantaged areas
- Contributing to community governance and decision-making at local level.

One issue that tends to dominate asset-based approaches is that of *viability*: can the assets being transferred generate surpluses for use by beneficiaries to support community and economic development on a long-term basis? Hart (2001, p.5) points out that recent experience in Housing Action Trusts (HATs) and New Deal for Communities (NDC) programmes suggests that it is possible to achieve such viability only with an *endowment*, because facilities that are most often needed in neighbourhoods (community centres, leisure provision, shops, and so on) are not

viable assets. Endowment can be defined as ‘a transfer in the form of cash or other assets in advance of expenditure, to another party for a defined purpose, with the intention that no further payment should be necessary’ (DETR, 2000c).

Hart (2001, p.8) recommends that the process of investigating and establishing the viability of an asset should be done in partnership with all those with a potential stake in its future: local residents, statutory agencies and service providers, community members/representatives, and voluntary and community organisations.

The Active Community Unit of the Home Office has now taken an interest in possibly providing incentives to encourage local authorities to transfer assets to community groups (Palmer, 2002).

Service-based approaches

A service-based approach to community control can be defined as one where the process of developing community control emphasises the improvement of services to the community, with the community itself being in the driving seat.

Seviour (2000) sets out an example of an organisation-wide service-based model for community control, which could be adopted by any neighbourhood renewal organisation (NRO). According to this model, the housing association (or other NRO) discusses its business plan with resident representatives, and this plan is underpinned by a number of geographically based Community Action Plans. The latter set out a community-based strategic response to wider issues of regeneration within identified neighbourhoods, and are predicated on community audits and consultation, deploying investment programmes that go beyond financial reinvestment in the housing stock (or other assets), connecting performance indicators of the organisation to the community and evaluating change in the context of locally defined priorities. The development of a Community Action Plan is undertaken and monitored by a Quality Circle, where residents form a majority.

This model looks as if it might fall short of resident control because the decision-making body is not controlled by residents. Seviour (2000, p.21) affirms, however, that: ‘Successful and sustainable regeneration is about ownership and governance. It is about local governance structures enabling local people to have a real stake in the most immediate decision-making processes that affect their lives. It is ... about a rethink within mainstream agencies concerned with regeneration. Ultimately, sustainable regeneration is about the legitimised transfer of assets and the transfer of budgetary decisions that develop, redevelop and sustain those assets.’ If the Quality Circles responsible for Community Action Plans are genuine decision-making bodies within the housing association, then this does potentially represent a new form of community control.

The community investment approach

Recently, a new approach to community control has been developed within the housing association movement. This is called ‘community investment’ and has features in common with both asset-based and service-based approaches. Essentially, a community investment approach focuses on the activities that result in a clear return

for communities, a return which can then be reinvested so as to achieve longer-term sustainability. Smith and Paterson (1999) have identified four approaches to community investment:

- 1) The '*good landlord*'. This approach involves investing in communities as part of the housing association's usual duties towards its tenants, e.g. planned maintenance. The return involved is a sustained quality of housing and of the landlord-tenant relationship.
- 2) '*Re-provision*'. Here the aim of investment is to ensure that tenancies are as sustainable as possible, e.g. by meeting tenants' needs based on surveys of tenant satisfaction, etc. The relationship between the association and its tenants is one of professionals towards their clients.
- 3) '*Empowerment*'. Here the emphasis is on partnership with tenants, investing towards mutually agreed goals.
- 4) '*Community development*'. Here the aim is to ensure that *communities* are sustainable.

Andrews (1998), in a survey of housing association tenants for the Housing Corporation, gives some idea of the prospects for community investment in the future. She found that tenants and residents strongly desired to be kept well informed about how their rents were used and to influence the range and types of services provided by their landlord. They had only a limited understanding, however, of how their rent levels were set or how their rent money was spent. They were more willing to pay for 'additional services' where they believed that their rent represented value for money. And generally, they were supportive of community investment activity but believed that it should be funded separately from the rents.

Slatter (2001) found that some housing associations were clearly developing as community investors, increasingly sharing common ground with community investment bodies such as development trusts or enterprise development agencies (co-operative development agencies and Groundwork Trusts). These housing associations were more likely to see themselves as accountable to the communities they served, as social enterprises (with both social and economic objectives) and as possible contributors to the problem of social exclusion through past policies. Slatter lists a wide range of activities undertaken by housing associations as community investment, including getting people into work, tackling anti-social behaviour, developing the role of neighbourhood wardens, using art and sport in regeneration, helping community groups to get resources, working with schools to develop wider action, supporting families, bringing shops back to deprived areas, improving access to financial services, joining up neighbourhood management, and co-ordinating services for young people.

The research on which this paper is based suggests that, in terms of community control, the community investment approach has not developed beyond the funding of small-scale initiatives, as in London & Quadrant's Quality Community Investment (QCI). This is not to say, however, that the approach does not have the potential to produce more far-reaching community control outcomes.

4 Community Control Options

The research revealed a large number of options that communities can pursue in terms of exercising community control. These options can be arranged in a menu whereby community groups of different types can choose institutional forms as appropriate to their needs and aspirations, involving the control of assets of different kinds. In some cases, combinations of options are possible, and single options can also be selected in the context of wider arrangements for support and regulation. The position is further complicated by the fact that the same option can be selected within community control processes of different kinds: housing-based, asset-based or service-based.

1) *Small-scale initiatives*

A small-scale initiative can be defined as an activity involving a small number of volunteers and relating to an individual project or policy decision or specific service to the community. Such an initiative could exist in isolation or in combination with a number of other initiatives or within a wider programme of activities.

The research identified a very large number of such small-scale initiatives. Most of these are concerned with improving services, for example, childcare, gardening, community safety, health improvement, youth activities, cultural activities, and financial inclusion. Activities for children and young people, and community gardening, figured most commonly in the research. There were many other initiatives, however, which could be classified broadly under the heading of community investment, for example, managing a small budget, providing a place for community meetings, use of tenant panels, and forms of community learning.

Examples of service-based initiatives, listed in no particular order, included:

Youth Activity Pendeen. This is a good example of a small initiative for young people. It was set up by young mothers in the village, initially to get play equipment for young children. The mothers concerned had never taken part in any community group before. The children themselves are involved in choosing all the play equipment. The group are now looking at the whole of Pendeen, at different age groups of children, and at providing different kinds of play facilities. They have secured funding from Sure Start for children below five years old, are attempting to get National Lottery funding for provision for older children, and are getting help from Penwith Housing Association for the use of playing fields.

Foster & Three Bells Residents' Association community gardening project. The Association, which covers 200 houses in Darlaston, decided to take over some spare allotments in the area, with £7,500 of funding through the National Tenants Resource Centre from the Gatsby Trust. The money paid for the garden itself and for computers and office equipment linked to the gardening project. There are five plots on the site, two of which are raised for use by disabled people who attend the local day centre. Younger people are now taking an interest in the project, and training is available in how to grow vegetables etc.

Most of the community investment initiatives involved the community gaining control of small budgets or pots of money. For example:

West Sunderland SRB6 Opportunity Block fund. This represents a model of how a community can control a small budget. The fund provides £20,000 per year to local community groups for small-scale projects including carnivals, training, sports kit, and away days for local people. The fund is controlled by a Steering Committee, consisting of 15 local people (three from each of the five estates in West Sunderland) plus an independent Chair. The residents' association in each of the five estates elects two members of the Committee, and the remaining six members are elected by a majority vote of the Committee, in order to secure wider community representation. The Committee sets policy for the fund, in terms of the upper limit of applications, the monitoring of spending, etc. They also determine the structure of a separate Grants Panel, which is responsible for considering applications to the fund and deciding whether or not to approve them. This Panel has five members (one from each of the five estates) plus an independent Chair.

Manningham Housing Association Community Activities Grants. These grants, worth £20,000 per year, are for tenants to organise activities that help to bring together people from different ethnic groups. *London & Quadrant's Quality Community Investment (QCI)* fund operates in a similar way, but on a rather larger scale. Money is made available to community groups for activities that they control directly and are of benefit to the community. Examples of QCI investigated in the research included Chattenden and Kidd Place (Kidd Place is a very small-scale childcare project, and Chattenden is discussed further below). Similarly, *Impact Housing Association* gives a grant to Salterbeck Residents' Association of £5,000 per year for spending on community activities, e.g. jubilee event, mothers and toddlers group.

Partington Housing Association tenants' panel. This is an initiative that is broadly concerned with making the decision-making processes of the housing organisation more democratic. The remit of a panel is to discuss certain issues of concern to residents and make policy recommendations to the housing association, which it commits itself to consider and act upon wherever possible. Each of the panels contains only four or five members, but each also includes two representatives from Community Action, which is an influential tenants' lobbying body in the area. In this small way, the community can exercise some control over the association's decision-making processes, although the association's Board is not actually tenant-controlled.

The research therefore suggests that there is considerable scope for tenants to take control of small-scale initiatives, especially if supported by community investment such as London & Quadrant's QCI. The main issues to consider are: the needs and aspirations of community members, the responsiveness of their landlord, and the availability of sources of funding.

2) *Developing a community centre or shop*

The research found many good examples of how a community can run a community centre. In four cases, the building was owned by the community (Sure Start Lescudjack, Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre, Chattenden, and Walterton and Elgin Community Homes), in four cases it was owned by the local authority

(Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme, Kidd Place, Hartsholme, and Gipsyville), and in two cases it was owned by a housing association (Tennyson Way and Lydbury North). Outright ownership of the building is probably the best option, as it provides greater security for the community and an asset against which to borrow for other projects. Cases where the centre was owned by another body suggested a more uncertain future for the community unless the owners were themselves committed to community control. The research findings therefore provide support for the arguments of those who advocate an asset-based approach to community control.

Cases where the community gained outright ownership of a community building were:

Sure Start Lescudjack. The organisation was set up as a community-controlled Sure Start project, and Penwith Housing Association sold them a building for £1 million to be used as a community centre. Current activities in the centre include childcare, dentistry, health facilities, training rooms, a meeting room, and a community café.

Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre. The community acquired the building with support from Banks of the Wear Housing Association, the land was donated by Sunderland Council, and funding for the purchase came from the National Lottery, European Social Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, the Tudor Trust and Sunderland Council. Banks of the Wear pay for two workers employed at the centre, and the activities they organise include health education (promoting smoking awareness, and disseminating publicity about diabetes and heart disease), general education (English, computing, etc) and community safety (e.g. provision of alarms). One impact of the community centre is that older people are now more involved in the activities of younger people, and have recognised the importance of engaging young people in community affairs. Bangladeshi women are now adopting a more public role in the community, and the community as a whole now has a higher profile locally, regionally and nationally.

Chattenden. Playing the lead role in the Single Regeneration Budget for the area enabled the community to purchase the community centre from Medway Council. Substantial funding for activities in the community centre is provided from SRB, with match funding from London & Quadrant. Services delivered in the centre include education and training (certificated courses, e.g. NVQ Level 3), health (a clinic for babies), childcare (full-time crèche) and unemployment advice. Success in winning SRB funding also facilitated access to further funding, such as for state-of-the-art sports facilities (£100,000 from Sports England) and for computers and internet access (£100,000 from Medway On-Line).

Walterton and Elgin Community Homes (WECH) acquired its own community centre following the transfer of stock from Westminster City Council. This centre contains a purpose-designed play school, and WECH is also helping to fund premises for a new child-minding cooperative, employing four or five local residents as childminders.

Cases where the community building was not owned by the community were:

Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme (BRATS). With the help of SRB funding and support from Thurrock Council who own the building, it has run a community

house for the last four years, with an adjoining community garden. The house lends out equipment of various kinds to residents, it runs a tool hire scheme for lawnmowers, shears, etc, and provides facilities for photocopying and other office work. It assists people with filling in forms, and with holding meetings, including refreshments. Activities carried out in the house include a Local Exchange and Trading Scheme (LETS), a sewing club, and a baby 'weigh and stay' for single mothers to save them having to travel the long distance to the clinic.

Hartsholme. This is similar to BRATS, but without the benefit of SRB funding. It has received support from Lincoln City Council, who own the centre and have made it available to Hartsholme Association of Residents and Tenants (HART) rent-free. However, HART has to raise its own funds for its activities, which include coffee mornings, benefits advice, youth café, a community garden, and general informal support – 'a listening ear'. It raises £800 per week from estate bingo, and people donate things to them, which they sell at auction or an annual gala if they are not needed. They also grow plants from seed and sell them.

Lydbury North. This initiative focused on the control of a community shop. Parish councillors initially approached South Shropshire Housing Association (SSHA) following the closure of the local village shop and post office, and the association identified a difficult-to-let bungalow of its own that would be a suitable replacement. The community mobilised through a series of meetings in the local village hall, organised by SSHA's community involvement officer. Thus, the Lydbury North Community Shop Association was formed and registered as an Industrial and Provident Society, and leased the bungalow from SSHA.

Tennyson Way uses a community house, which is funded by Social Services, the Health Authority, Sanctuary Housing Association, the National Lottery and the Charities Board. From the house, the community runs a bike clinic, two youth groups, a homework club, an after-school club, a Saturday club, and a computer suite. Various courses are delivered from the house through the local community college, and the house is also used by Social Services for supervised contact meetings. The housing association that owns the house, however, intends to return it to its former residential use in the near future.

Gipsyville Multi-purpose Centre, owned by Hull City Council, is SRB-funded, and provides advice and support in health, IT training and facilities, and community development, and offers a managed reception area to local service providers. This is an early SRB project, however (SRB2), and funding has decreased in recent years. The Board that controls the centre has a resident majority, and all members are elected through a local forum, with nominations drawn from regular focus groups held with local people. However, the centre covers a relatively large area, and there appears to be a lack of community organisation at the small neighbourhood level, and a lack of space within the centre to accommodate that organisation should it come into existence.

These examples from our research suggest that a number of lessons can be learned from the experience of those resident groups that have developed community centres or other community buildings. Where substantial funding is available, as in the case of SRB or Sure Start, full ownership of the building clearly represents the best

community control option. In the absence of such funding, however, leasing of the building from a supportive local authority (or perhaps some other supportive body such as a development trust or housing association) may be the best way forward.

3) *Neighbourhood/estate compact/agreement*

The research suggests that the variety of agreements between resident groups and their landlords and service providers has increased since the last comprehensive research on estate agreements was carried out (Steele et al, 1995). A number of possible types of such agreement can now be identified:

- traditional *estate agreements* between tenants and landlord, involving agreed standards of service and priorities for action, e.g. Pinehurst Estate Tenants and Residents Association (2000)
- *neighbourhood agreements*, going beyond traditional estate agreements by involving service standards and action priorities for bodies other than the landlord, e.g. Foxwood Neighbourhood Agreement (Foxwood Community Action Group, no date)
- *neighbourhood tenant participation compacts*, concerned with improved landlord-tenant communications and accountability, e.g. Doxford Park ()

A good example of a housing association estate agreement is Pinehurst Estate Tenants and Residents Association (PETRA)'s 'Pinehurst Involvement Pledge' with its landlord, CDS (Liverpool). This could be recommended to any group of housing association tenants interested in pursuing an estate agreement as a community control option.

Salterbeck provides an interesting model of the process of developing, monitoring and reviewing an estate agreement (between Salterbeck Residents' Association and their landlord, Impact Housing Association). A resident is nominated from each small area (between 15 and 40-50 houses) in the estate, and these area representatives work together on specific tasks relevant for the agreement. A monthly walkabout with the housing officer takes place in each area, which takes 20-25 minutes, and they note any problems and chase them up with the relevant service agencies. When the area representatives have worked on a given task sufficiently, they take it back to a meeting of the Residents' Association for decision.

Possibly the best example of a neighbourhood agreement is that between, on the one hand, Foxwood Community Action Group and, on the other hand, York City Council, three housing associations (Railway, Bradford & Northern, and Joseph Rowntree) and North Yorkshire Police Authority. The agreement with the Council covers not just the housing service but also street cleaning and refuse collection, leisure services, adult education, and benefits advice. A feature of the agreement is that it is made between the community and a number of agency partnerships, brought together for the specific purpose of improving services to the neighbourhood: for example, the Foxwood Economic Partnership, led by the Council's Economic Development Unit. The Action Group itself has been trained in community work skills and runs the Foxwood Community Centre. They won Lottery funding, which paid for a community worker, and they succeeded in bringing together different groups in the community that

previously were at loggerheads. This represents a deeper level of community control than that which exists in traditional estate agreements or community-run centres.

Neighbourhood tenant participation compacts are a more recent innovation, targeted at local housing authorities and following the then Department of Environment, Transport, and the Regions (DETR) policy on tenant participation (DETR, 1999). The compact between South Sunderland Housing Company and Doxford Park Estate Forum is a housing association example of such a compact. It lacks the substance of an estate agreement, but could be a feasible option to pursue for a resident group wanting to establish a clear framework within which to negotiate with its landlord on a number of issues.

Westminster City Council's Neighbourhood Agreement Compact represents a hybrid of an estate agreement and a neighbourhood tenant participation compact, with possibilities for enhancement into a Foxwood-type neighbourhood agreement. Westminster has negotiated such compacts with several different resident groups in the city. Other resident groups, anywhere in the country, who are interested in developing an agreement of any of the three types listed above would be well advised to consult the Council's 'Step by Step Guide to Producing a Neighbourhood Agreement Compact' published in 2001 (City of Westminster, 2001).

4) Local Management Agreement (LMA)

A Local Management Agreement (LMA) is an agreement between a resident group and their landlord whereby the group takes on responsibility for managing a landlord's service. LMAs have been pioneered by Westminster City Council, and landlord's services that have so far been taken on by resident groups include 'gardening' (maintenance of grassed areas) and cleaning of communal areas. Westminster have recently been developing an on-line guide for residents interested in developing a LMA, called 'Taking Charge: Local Management Agreement Toolkit'. LMAs represent a more flexible alternative to the statutory route of a TMO, and present a realistic community control option for housing association tenants as well as council tenants.

5) Residents' Services Organisation (RSO)

A Residents' Services Organisation (RSO) is an arrangement whereby residents employ their own local labour to provide housing and other services to the community. This therefore involves a more direct control of public services than that achieved by compacts or agreements between tenants and their landlord. PEP have recently published a detailed evaluation of two pilot RSOs: Ore Valley and Stepney (Baker et al, 2002). Our own research looked at Ore Valley RSO, which is the more successful of the two (controlling painting and decorating, landscape maintenance, and playground inspection), and found RSOs in operation at Castle Vale (painting and decorating) and about to become operational in Bloomsbury.

Possibly the most important lesson from residents' experience of RSOs to date is that residents need to have a clear focus, and should not take on responsibilities for which they do not have sufficient capacity. RSOs need to be seen more clearly as a form of social enterprise or community business. The responsibilities of being an employer

and of acting strategically, for example, to win contracts, were particularly novel ones for people living in poorer neighbourhoods.

6) Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) are well understood as a community control option, due to the Right-to-Manage legislation (see Somerville et al, 1998). They are run by management committees, in which tenants form the majority and which are elected by the tenant body. Some TMOs, however, have moved on from the provision of housing management services to taking control of a number of non-housing projects, services and assets.

TMOs can be described as a form of residents' democracy in which the tenants' and residents' elected representatives control the budget for an area and employ their own staff based in the area.

Case study TMOs in the research included: Kensington & Chelsea, Bloomsbury, Beechwood & Ballantyne, Belle Isle, and Heath Town. Kensington & Chelsea TMO is unique in that it is the only local authority-wide TMO. This has advantages in terms of the more extensive support available for community-controlled initiatives (of which the TMO has many), but it also means that small neighbourhood communities risk being placed in a position where they cannot exercise effective control. Kensington & Chelsea resolves this problem by a number of means, in particular through its system of Area Review Boards (ARBs). Each ARB (of which there are seven in all) is composed of representatives from every residents' association in its area, has a delegated budget of £50,000 per year for local community safety and environmental improvement projects, and elects a representative to the main Board of the TMO (on which 11 out of 22 members are tenants) [CHECK WHO ARE THE OTHER 11?]. Residents' associations (of which there are 80 in the borough) also nominate representatives to attend and participate in meetings of the TMO's six sub-committees [COMPOSITION?], through which the business of the TMO is conducted. In addition, for residents who are not members of resident associations, the TMO has annual policy forums or conferences and interest group forums (e.g. a senior citizens' forum, with a budget of £50,000). In these ways, Kensington & Chelsea TMO aims to ensure that as many of its activities as possible are controlled by residents. Its experience also suggests a process of increasing and deepening democratisation, with residents exercising more control at both borough-wide level through incremental control of sub-committees (e.g. residents now control the entire budget for landscaping and grounds maintenance) and at neighbourhood community level through increasing representation in residents' associations. This experience suggests that the risks inevitably associated with a larger and geographically more extensive organisation can be substantially outweighed by the advantages in terms of efficiency and effective support to community groups.

The case of a more standard size TMO such as Bloomsbury (700 properties) tends to provide support for this conclusion. Here the TMO had a number of ambitions for community-controlled projects, such as a RSO, a sports centre, a credit union, a LETS scheme, and an Employment Action Area. Of these, however, only the credit union was operating really successfully. The RSO was not yet up and running, and the LETS scheme and Employment Action Area had not attracted many participants. The

sports centre had started out as being a community-controlled initiative, but ended up with the community acting in an advisory capacity only. This had occurred mainly because the main funder, Sports England, had objected to the TMO being in control of the centre, and Birmingham City Council had not been supportive of it being community-controlled.

Beechwood & Ballantyne Estate Management Board (EMB) felt similarly marginalised and unfairly treated by their local authority landlord (Wirral MBC). They emphasised the importance of a TMO not only having control of its own budget but keeping its bank account separate from that of the local authority. They pointed to the TMO's complete lack of influence on the housing policies of the local authority, for example, on redevelopment, refurbishment, and change of repairs systems. Still, the EMB did run its own college, library, and internet café, and was supported by a development trust, which was responsible for workshops and a social club.

Heath Town EMB appeared to have been rather more successful in developing a wide range of community-controlled activities. These included: a sessional creche; a Parent and Learning scheme; an internet suite; a training kitchen (which can be hired by local residents as well as providing cookery lessons); a community café; various sports activities (football, netball and basketball); health advice (on smoking cessation, healthy living, diabetes testing, and referrals to GPs); and a Crime Office (housing 15 local police officers). These activities, however, were still regarded as essentially outside of the core business of the EMB, which was housing management. They appeared to be an 'add-on', in response to the concerns of local residents, rather than an integral part of the mainstream of TMO activity.

The lessons to be learned from the experience of TMOs, therefore, are:

- Small TMOs that receive little support from their landlord find it difficult to sustain non-housing activities even if, in purely housing management terms, they are more efficient and effective than their landlord was/is
- TMOs with supportive landlords can develop a wide range of successful community-controlled initiatives, but find it difficult to mainstream these activities and may still be placed under pressure to revert to a more traditional housing management role
- Local authority-wide TMOs appear to be in the strongest position to sustain and possibly mainstream community-controlled initiatives of all kinds.

7) Housing cooperative

Broadly speaking, housing cooperatives (apart from tenant management cooperatives, which are a form of TMO) can be divided into two types, co-ownership co-operatives and par value cooperatives.

Co-ownership cooperatives are fully mutual co-operatives run by a management committee elected by the members, in which each member has an equity stake in their dwelling (in some cases, this amounts to a form of shared ownership). They receive a proportion of any increase in the value of their property when they leave but have no right to buy and no entitlement to housing benefit. Rent levels, tenancy agreements and exit payments are all subject to agreement with the Housing Corporation.

In par value co-operatives, members collectively own their own homes, with a nominal financial stake (usually £1). These co-operatives are either:

- a) *Fully mutual*, where all tenants are members and all members are tenants or prospective tenants, and tenants are outside the scope of the secure and assured tenancy regimes; or:
- b) *Non-fully mutual*, where some tenants are not members, some members may not be tenants, and tenants fall within the secure and assured tenancy regimes.

Most par value co-operatives are registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, but may also register with the Housing Corporation.

The research considered housing cooperatives of four very different types. These were Coin Street Community Builders, Redditch Cooperative Homes, Homes for Change, and Meriden Street.

Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB) has a secondary housing cooperative and a series of primary housing cooperatives. Coin Street Secondary Housing Cooperative owns its housing on a 125-year lease from Coin Street Development Trust, which is the non-profit-making arm of CSCB. The primary cooperatives, of which there are currently four, have five-year leases from the secondary cooperative. All the cooperatives, both primary and secondary, are registered with the Housing Corporation. All tenants of the cooperatives (currently 220) are shareholders in CSCB. The company is responsible for a wide range of developments and activities outside of housing, including a summer festival, a leisure centre, and a community learning skills centre.

Redditch Cooperative Homes (RCH) is similar to CSCB in that it consists of an 'umbrella' ownership cooperative developing a series of primary cooperatives and giving each one a seven-year lease. The main lesson in both cases, therefore, is that a structure of primary cooperatives supported by a secondary cooperative can be extremely effective in securing community control of housing over a wider geographical area. Evidence also suggests that the culture of cooperative working leads to a wide range of community-controlled activities. A good example of this in the case of Redditch is the regular meetings that took place between the police's architectural liaison officer and prospective cooperative residents in order to achieve secure by design standards for each new scheme. When the cooperatives were up and running, the liaison officer passed the baton to the local beat sergeant, who then continued meeting with the new residents to discuss community safety issues. Another example is the credit union, which made a presentation to each resident group, showing the advantages of cooperative management. This led to the slogan for each cooperative: 'Designed and built by the tenants, and carpeted by the credit union.'

Homes for Change is a fully mutual housing ownership cooperative set up by Hulme residents who wanted to retain an 'urban lifestyle' within the redeveloped estate. The cooperative is run by monthly general meetings. The coop had been particularly successful in terms of community safety (e.g. no break-ins in ten years, though sited in a high crime area), communications (its own website and intranet), and employment (through Work for Change, a cooperative for the 32 business units

located within the development). Community-controlled activities included cultural and ethical businesses such as a café, greengrocers and a youth theatre.

Meriden Street is a small housing cooperative run by people with learning difficulties, living in what used to be a Social Services hostel. It has ten residents and five full-time staff, and occupies the building on a ten-year lease from Social Services. The cooperative was set up in order to prevent the closure of the hostel and to enable the residents to maintain their institutionalised lifestyle (e.g. routine group meals). Substantial support was necessary in order to achieve this (see below). This shows that community control can be effectively exercised even by people with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Finance, however, continued to be a headache for the organisation.

8) Community-controlled trust/company

Community-controlled trusts or companies go by a number of different names: development trusts, regeneration trusts, cooperative trusts, industrial and provident societies, and companies limited by guarantee. The basic idea of a community-controlled trust or society or company is that the membership of the body is open to all community members and the organisation's Board (or at least a majority of the Board) is elected by the membership. The purpose of such a body can vary but one of the most common aims is to develop community enterprises that will improve the standard of living of community members. Such bodies can also register as charities, provided that the beneficiaries of their activities are not restricted to particular sections of the community.

Community-controlled trusts/companies can operate on a relatively small scale, for example, for the purposes of running a community centre or, on a fairly large scale, covering a number of different neighbourhoods. At a larger scale, the issues of community disempowerment and disenfranchisement discussed earlier can arise, and it is important for the organisation to develop mechanisms to counteract this if it is to remain truly community-controlled. The research also suggests that a general distinction should be made between trusts/companies that are community-controlled and those that are not but are nevertheless supportive of community-controlled activities (the research encountered a number of both types).

The latter are more likely to operate over larger geographical areas: for example, Penwith Community Development Trust operates over the whole Penwith area, and has initiated and continues to support a number of community-controlled projects including Pendeen Community Project; similarly, Merlin Venture operates in the Castle Vale area of Birmingham, and helps community enterprises to become independent, including Fresh Start RSO (tenant decorators).

The research identified the following community-controlled trusts/companies: Village Companies, Loftus Development Trust, AvenQuest Community Regeneration Trust, Sure Start Lescudjack, Lundwood & Mark Bretton Community Partnership, Ibstock Community Enterprises, Eldonian Development Trust, Eldonian Community Trust, Belle Isle Foundation, O-Regen, Royds Community Association, and Coin Street Community Builders.

Village Companies are trading companies with charitable status, registered as Industrial and Provident Societies, companies limited by guarantee, or public liability companies gift-aiding to a charitable arm. They aim to bring the control of regeneration to a local level and provide the community with a vehicle to own and manage assets, and so bring about its own regeneration. Community representatives are in the majority and in control, and they own assets, which could be either housing or major buildings for the delivery of services. The separate incorporation of charity and business arms enables the trading arm to do non-housing work, e.g. running a chip shop, wood coppicing, print works, etc, while the charitable arm can donate money, e.g. for a mini-bus to help the community transport business.

Loftus Development Trust covers a SRB or Sure Start size of area (about 8,000 residents) and attempts to represent the whole of the area by ensuring that all key stakeholders are represented on its Board (business, parish councils, Cleveland Council, etc). However, although membership is free and open to anyone living or working in the area, current membership is only about 250. The main aim of the trust is to build an asset base from which to provide a solid core of revenue income to the community. The trust relies heavily on external funding, in particular from Cleveland Council, but also from European Regional Development Fund and One North East. It raises income by hiring out space in the building it owns to organisations such as Sure Start and Redcar & Cleveland College.

AvenQuest Community Regeneration Trust also covers an area the size of an electoral ward (about 4,000 properties). It is a company limited by guarantee, now registered as a charity. Its Board contains a mix of housing association tenants, mosque representatives, other residents of the ward, representatives from the local college and employment service, and other independents. Unlike Loftus, it owns no physical assets but leases a former shop from a private owner. It is responsible for a number of projects, including the Youth Inclusion Project (working with the hundred most excluded young people in Avenham), a childcare initiative, a waymarking volunteer project (signposting local people to benefits and jobs), a Healthy Living Centre, and courses on Asian textiles and embroidery, on producing a community newsletter, and on healthy activities (diet, exercise, etc). It now employs seven staff. However, it is almost exclusively dependent upon grant funding, and this could be related to its lack of asset ownership. It is also not clear exactly how it facilitates community control at the small neighbourhood level. For example, AvenQuest Homes, with which it works closely and which owns 1,000 homes in the area, is not community-controlled. Similarly, it is not clear how the Trust relates to resident groups within the Asian community.

Sure Start Lescudjack is, as its name suggests, a Sure Start scheme, but one in which the residents decided to form a company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity, for the purpose of controlling the scheme. The scheme covers four distinct neighbourhoods, and membership is open to people who live in the area and are pregnant or have a child below the age of four. The Sure Start Board has two representatives elected from each of the four neighbourhoods, plus four from the wider area. This therefore represents a particular form of control by one interest group within the community, namely parents with young children.

Lundwood & Mark Bretton Community Partnership is a company limited by guarantee, covering two villages and running two community centres. It employs an administrator and a development worker. Its main purpose is regeneration, and it has developed a basic community action plan through community planning days, and identified specific projects to be developed and controlled by the community – for example, a fencing project by young people, various environmental projects, and youth planning days. As a result of the latter, young people said that their priority was for a cycle track, so Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council drew down European funding of £40,000 to provide the track. Young people now also ran a four-week play scheme in the summer for 8-14 year olds. The partnership also ran a very successful annual festival or gala.

Ibstock Community Enterprises (ICE) was set up in a deprived coalfields community in North West Leicestershire. The community was galvanised into action in 1996 following the closure of the last banking facility in the village. The company was set up within a month and now owns two buildings, one of which functions as their offices and as a community resource centre and houses an ATM and a Building Society Agency. The company is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, and is also a cooperative. Membership is free and open to everyone who lives, works or has an interest in the Parish of Ibstock. Membership is currently 470 (the total population of Ibstock is about 6,000). All thirteen members of the management committee are elected by the membership. The company has three full-time staff and over fifty volunteers. The company has been very successful in securing funding for the regeneration of the area, and controls a number of projects including on training and development, refurbishment of buildings, and management of community woodland. It also supports community activities such as neighbourhood watch and community artists. It derives its own income from rent for the ATM, commission from the Building Society, charging for use of photocopier, fax, computers, office space, and so on, and consultancy work, mainly in community development.

The Eldonian Development Trust is one of a number of organisations, which together make up The Eldonians. It was established in 1987 as a company limited by guarantee with the aim of promoting economic and social regeneration in Vauxhall in Liverpool. It receives core funding from Liverpool City Council and funding for specific projects from Merseyside Development Corporation. The majority of the Board are community representatives. The Trust has established a number of projects including: employment outreach, providing work placements for local unemployed people; a community care initiative, which provides services for older people; and an electronic village hall or resource centre, for the use of the local community.

The Eldonian Community Trust is another of the organisations that make up the Eldonians. It is a community-controlled registered charity that deals with social welfare, community events and activity groups. One of its main achievements has been to establish 'Eldonian House', a purpose-built residential care home with thirty bedspaces. Most of the care home employees are drawn from the local community. Projects in which it has been involved include: setting up self-help schemes; fundraising for summer play schemes and social events; and helping to establish a Credit Union in the Vauxhall area of Liverpool.

Belle Isle Foundation was established in 1995 in response to local concerns about the lack of job opportunities in the area. It is currently funded by the National Lotteries Charities Board and the Neighbourhood Support Fund (from the Department for Education and Skills). Its Board has eleven members: six elected directly by the residents and five nominated by the resident body as a whole. It employs two full-time staff (one trainer and one coordinator) and five part-time staff (trainer, IT specialist, youth worker, and two receptionists). It is based in Belle Isle Foundation Centre, which is owned by Leeds City Council. The Centre offers a variety of facilities including: meeting rooms, office equipment, IT suite, and small workshop units for rent by local businesses. The Foundation is involved in a wide range of projects including: mentoring; a youth forum; a drugs forum; a women's group; in-house training; skills and training audits; a newsletter; and an annual gala. The Foundation has a 'guaranteed job scheme', in which local companies guarantee employment to young people with certain skills, which the Foundation provides. The Foundation also works with local young people who have experienced illness or emotional problems, and has helped to provide hostel accommodation for 16-19 year olds, to set up lone parent groups, and to provide assistance to young people with mental health problems.

Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB) is a cooperative trust as well as being a housing ownership cooperative. It supports a wide range of enterprises (see, for example, Gosling, 2002).

Royds Community Association is a community-controlled company that was formed as a result of a SRB programme, and is an example of large-scale community-controlled regeneration. It has developed its own regeneration expertise, making it into the country's first successful residents' consultancy. It has begun to operate over a wider area, in terms of community development work in South Bradford, and development of an enterprise park (with £4 million funding from Yorkshire Forward). It is also moving into a neighbourhood management role, involving street cleansing and seven other services. It is responsible for building one of the first Healthy Living Centres in England.

Historically, development trusts and companies have not normally been community-controlled, so lessons about community control of such bodies are only just beginning to be learned. Our research suggests that they are an option well worth exploring for residents interested in regenerating their communities and in raising income for community activities. A possible limitation is that in many cases successful trusts/companies appear to require substantial core funding in order to get off the ground (e.g. from SRB, Sure Start, NDC or European funding) and/or substantial continuing support or sponsorship from a parent organisation (e.g. local authority, housing association). Village Companies in particular are funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (a trust that is not community-controlled) and the European Social Fund, and are supported by Leicester Housing Association. After the initial funding, acquisition of physical assets seems to be the key to ensuring sustained community development, empowerment and control. Such organisations also would appear to have great untapped potential for taking on the management of public and private services in their communities, for example, through contracting key services from local authorities.

9) Resident-controlled housing association/company (RCHA)

A resident-controlled housing association (RCHA) can be defined as one where the majority of the association's Board are residents. It should not automatically be assumed, however, that such an organisation is community-controlled. For example, if the association covers a multiplicity of neighbourhoods, there should be provision for representation and involvement at the small neighbourhood level. Board members should also broadly reflect the composition of the communities concerned (see the comments above about larger-scale structures).

The option of a RCHA is one that is most likely to be considered by residents who already have a considerable degree of control over housing services in their area and want to go all the way and exercise complete control. In most cases, residents who have such aspirations will wish to set up a housing cooperative. Following the example of Redditch Cooperative Homes, residents could choose to work with a larger community-controlled developer organisation, itself registered as a housing association. The example of Meriden Street, however, shows that it is not necessary for a housing cooperative to be registered as a housing association, although failure to do so can mean greater financial insecurity for the cooperative. It is not clear from our research in what circumstances a group of residents would actually *want* to opt for a RCHA without being a cooperative.

The examples of RCHAs found in the research were all triggered by large-scale transfers of stock from local authorities. These were Waltherton & Elgin Community Homes (WECH), Beechdale Community Housing Association, Castle Vale Community Housing Association, and Eldonian Community Based Housing Association.

WECH represents the only significant transfer of stock under the so-called 'Tenants' Choice' provisions of the 1988 Housing Act. Setting up as a housing association was seen by residents as the only way to safeguard their homes against an unwanted redevelopment. WECH functions as a cooperative in all but name, with 80% of residents being members of the association, and working through working parties with open membership and meetings. WECH employs a community worker and owns a community centre, and facilitates a number of community-controlled activities.

Beechdale is the largest RCHA in England (2,200 homes). Tenant interest in forming a RCHA to take over what was then council stock was triggered by the decline of the estate and Walsall MBC's perceived failure to invest in it. The association takes a leading role in the Beechdale Regeneration Partnership, whose main aim is to tackle social and environmental issues in partnership with service providers such as the police, the Residents' Association and local credit unions. Partly because of continuing problems with Walsall MBC, the association has ambitions to carry out most local authority functions.

Castle Vale is the only RCHA in the research that was initiated by a housing organisation (Castle Vale HAT) rather than by local residents. HAT tenants, however, played a major role in writing the policies and procedures of the new organisation, and three HAT tenants continue to be nominated to the association's Board by the HAT Tenants and Residents Alliance. Partly due to the original high level of involvement of potential tenants in the work of the association, most of its activities

are community-controlled, although this is becoming more difficult as the association expands in size (currently, it owns 700 properties). It employs its own community development officer and has been responsible for facilitating a number of successful community-controlled enterprises, for example, a RSO (run by tenants of Mercian HA and Castle Vale HAT), a residents' landscaping contractor, and a community transport venture. This has been possible, in part, due to European funding and from an endowment from the HAT.

Eldonian Community Based Housing Association is part of The Eldonians group of companies. It was set up in 1983 in order to oppose the proposed demolition of council flats in this area of Liverpool. It now owns 310 properties in this area and 115 properties on three other sites. It is controlled by a Board of eighteen members (elected by AGM), twelve of whom have to be current or prospective members of the housing association. The association itself is owned by shareholders, who each hold a nominal £1 share. Every person over the age of 18 and living in an association home has the right to become a shareholder. The division of labour set up by The Eldonians between its housing association, the Eldonian Development Trust and the Eldonian Community Trust, enables the association to concentrate on its core housing business without detracting from the other activities of the organisation as a whole.

As with TMOs and housing cooperatives, small RCHAs risk being driven back to their core business of providing housing services. They do not have a landlord whom they can rely on for continued support and development. Even if they become larger, as Beechdale has become or as Castle Vale will do, they may struggle to maintain and expand their community-controlled non-housing activities. The experience of WECH, however, shows that, with substantial core funding over long periods of time (WECH has been going for ten years), considerable progress is possible in terms of community regeneration and empowerment. Further, the experience of The Eldonians (which has been going for nineteen years) shows that non-housing services can be maintained and expanded over the long term by creating suitable sister organisations for the purpose (and a similar point can be made in relation to housing cooperatives by citing the experience of Coin Street Community Builders).

10) Community-controlled partnerships

The research identified a number of arrangements where the community exercised control not by itself but in partnership with other organisations.

Examples of such partnerships included: Vassall Area Regeneration Group (VARG), Sure Start Loftus, Coalfields Community Transport, and Barnet Borough Watch.

The general lesson to be learned from such partnerships is that communities need to work hard to ensure that they are not co-opted into decision-making networks and bodies that are not community-controlled. On the other hand, there are often clear benefits to be gained for the community from participating in such wider networks and partnerships. Each group of residents has to weigh up for itself the various advantages and disadvantages in each case, and come to its own conclusions.

In the case of VARG, the partnership is led by a housing association (Harding), which is committed to a high degree of resident control over the regeneration programme. In

this case, the advantages appear to outweigh the disadvantages by a substantial margin.

In Sure Start Loftus, the partnership offers a deep level of involvement for the Parent Network, ensuring that the Network has an increasing degree of influence over Sure Start activities. This may not actually amount to community control, but it appears to be moving towards a similar type of control to that existing at Sure Start Lescudjak. Again, advantages of participation in the partnership seem to hugely outweigh any disadvantages.

Coalfields Community Transport (CCT) started as a straightforward residents' group in Grimethorpe who wanted to run their own community transport service. They devised an Action Plan and acquired SRB funding for the Grimethorpe Mobility Study, which highlighted the needs of the area – social exclusion, employment and training. They then obtained additional SRB funding for a 12-month pilot scheme, with a minibus being supplied to them by Barnsley Dial-a-Ride. The volunteer drivers were trained up to MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) standard and took people to the shops and to work, etc. The residents' group then wanted to expand the scheme to cover the whole of Barnsley, and applied for funding from the Countryside Agency and the European Regional Development Fund. As a condition of receiving the funding, however, the Countryside Agency required the setting up of a Rural Transport Partnership (the RTP), which took the project out of the direct control of the community. Members of the RTP include representatives from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, parish councils, and commercial bus companies. Coalfields Community Transport now has to report to the RTP every six weeks, and new projects are initiated through community forums that are organised by the RTP (if successful, these projects become community partnerships in their own right). Community control at a small neighbourhood level has therefore been replaced by a more complex system of community influencing on a much wider geographical scale (covering most of rural Barnsley and part of South East Wakefield). However, CCT now has six vehicles, has provided employment for nine local people, worked with over 25 community groups and agencies, and successfully delivered a community transport network in partnership with commercial operators, community organisations and statutory bodies. Once again, the advantages of participating in the partnership would appear to outweigh the disadvantages.

11) Community-controlled learning

A good example of a community-controlled learning initiative is the Tassibee Project. This used faith as a starting point for Mirpuri Punjabi speaking women in Rotherham, with the women meeting every Friday for prayer sessions. The venue for the meeting was funded from a small Healthy Eating grant held by a Local Luncheon Group. Learning about healthy eating and living, and praying together, enabled them to develop confidence and self-esteem, overcoming resistance from their husbands and from community leaders, and learning to act as a group. Their work led to a relationship being established with the health authority, who made a room available in the local health clinic. Merging with the local luncheon club then brought with it a crèche worker and money for lunches. After two years of development, the group turned to GROW (Giving Real Opportunities to Women) to put together an accredited

personal development course. Having passed this course, the women established a steering group for the project, led by Mirpuri Punjabi speakers with an interpreter for non-Punjabi speaking professional women. After five years, there are 40-60 women who regularly attend the Friday prayer sessions, and their skills are in demand from other organisations; some of the women volunteers have moved on to paid employment. This example shows that developing a community-controlled initiative can change the nature of the community itself.

A community-controlled learning project on a larger scale is Royds' Residents' Consultancy. Royds Consultancy comprises a team of six staff, five of whom live in the area, as well as a number of resident directors of the Board of Royds Community Association. Its portfolio includes market research, running elections, executive recruitment, troubleshooting and project management, as well as general help and advice. This consultancy has won a number of major contracts in competition with the top consultancies in the UK.

Partington Housing Association's approach to developing a menu of options with residents is also worth noting. The association looks at all the issues affecting the neighbourhood in which it operates and/or raised by residents themselves in terms of the degree of control that the association itself can exercise over the issue. If they decide that they can exercise total control, they make sure that they put this in their business plan. If their potential control is only partial, they ask themselves and residents what they can contribute towards dealing with the issue. If they come to the conclusion that they are unable to exercise any control at all over the issue, they try to see what influence they can bring to bear on those who do have control. For example, on the issue of community safety, the association in theory has total control over dealing with neighbour nuisance, partial control over the use of CCTV and neighbourhood wardens (in terms of funding for them, the positioning of cameras, and so on), and no control over police presence (since this is regarded by the police as an internal operational matter). This approach means that the association is able to communicate a clear position to its tenants on what it can and cannot do. This enables tenants to negotiate with their landlord on a more informed basis, leading to the possibility of their considering a menu of options for community control.

12) Tenants' jury/panel

A tenants' jury was set up by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council in order to have an independent determination by tenants on the form of investment option that would best suit the future of the Borough. Priority Estates Project (PEP) was selected to steer the process. They advertised widely for volunteers in the local press, on posters, in newsletters, etc. Each applicant was asked to provide a brief curriculum vitae explaining why they were suitable people to serve on such a jury. Many people expressed an interest in serving but, when they realised the amount of commitment needed in terms of their time input, most of them chose only to observe the jury's deliberations. In the end, PEP recruited 14 people, with 8-10 observing on a regular basis (all tenants were entitled to observe). The jury contained a wide spread of ages, employment statuses, and areas of the Borough. In order to ensure the complete independence of the jury, no councillors or officers were allowed to sit on it or observe its activities.

Having set up the jury, PEP trained them on all housing matters, took them on a tour of the borough to familiarise them with all the different housing areas, and gave them access to all Council records. After three months of this training, the jury sat in a small country house and called a variety of witnesses to be interviewed: council officers (from housing and finance), local politicians, the three MPs for Barnsley, UNISON, treasury experts from the University of Bristol, members of the Community Housing Task Force at the DTLR, people from various local authorities experienced in transferring stock and in setting up arms-length management organisations (ALMOs) such as Derby City Council, Manchester City Council and Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, and representatives from pressure groups such as Defend Council Housing. They then looked at possible gaps in their knowledge and called for more information. After two months of this, they produced a detailed report on the possible options for Barnsley, setting out the pros and cons of each option, and making recommendations (agreed by 12 of the jury members, with 2 dissenting). Their preference was to stay with the Council but they realised that this was not practicable so they recommended that the Council should explore the ALMO option. The Council accepted this recommendation and have made a bid to DTLR to set up an ALMO in 2003/4.

The tenants' jury continues to meet, working alongside the tenants' federation, jointly working with the Council and trade unions on the ALMO bid. They have requested the re-appointment of PEP, which the Council have now done.

This option is completely different from any of the other community control options considered in this paper, but it does comply with the definition of community control set out at the beginning, and it could be used by a housing association as well as a local authority (as in this case) to decide on important matters of policy and strategy. It relies almost completely, however, on the initiative being taken by the housing organisation.

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In the research, groups of residents who were more concerned about housing and environmental issues tended to be more likely to pursue options with their landlords such as neighbourhood agreements or tenant management. Those who gave higher priority to issues of community safety were likely to form groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and to press for greater control over policing. Those who were more interested in improving provision for children and young people were likely to attach greater importance to gaining some control over youth services and controlling suitable premises for youth activities. Those who were more concerned about social isolation tended to favour community control of multi-purpose community centres and the provision of community transport. Finally, those whose main priority was to tackle poverty and unemployment were likely to advocate setting up bodies such as development and regeneration trusts, to generate income and jobs for local people and to provide important economic and financial services currently lacking in the area.

5 What Works in Community Control

The research contains a number of useful lessons about what works in community control. By far the most important finding is that what works is *community ownership*

of projects that meet community needs. Specifically, what produces effective community control is a combination of some (not necessarily all) of the following:

- 1) Persistent and tireless resident activists, able to adapt to different roles, e.g. campaigning, supporting, managing
- 2) A substantial level of resources, e.g. Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), New Deal for Communities (NDC), Sure Start
- 3) Sustained support from a specialist agency, e.g. Priority Estates Project (PEP), Birmingham Cooperative Housing Services (BCHS), Councils for Voluntary Service (CVSs), the Community Education Development Centre (CEDC), the Federation of Community Work Training Groups (FCWTG)
- 4) Effective leadership from a housing association (in some cases)
- 5) Positive support or (paradoxically) negative reaction from a local authority (in some cases)
- 6) Inclusiveness of resident mobilisation, organisation, and empowerment both within and beyond the community
- 7) Early decision by the community on its preferred institutional arrangement (in some cases)
- 8) Development of self-sustaining mechanisms, e.g. income-generating community enterprises.

1) The quality of community activists

It is possible to make some general comments about community activists on the basis of the 18 interviewed and the information supplied about their groups and the achievements of those groups.

First, the activists had all lived in their neighbourhoods for considerable periods of time, in some cases for all their lives. They were considerably knowledgeable about their areas and had clear and definite ideas about how the problems in those areas should be solved and about their role and that of their community in solving those problems. In most cases, they had struggled with these problems for some years and had achieved solutions that were at least acceptable to their communities. They had had to lobby hard for funding, for political attention, for technical advice and support, for training, for premises, for control of physical assets (a building, a shop, a community garden, etc), and for improved public services generally (housing, transport, policing, childcare, etc). Their key qualities were long-term commitment to their communities and tenacity against all odds.

2) The level of resources

Of the 56 case study communities, at least fourteen had received substantial resources from government programmes. The main programmes involved were City Challenge (Lundwood and Mark Bretton Community Partnership), Single Regeneration Budget (Royds Community Association, Loftus Development Trust, Coalfields Community Transport, Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme, and Ore Valley Residents Services Organisation), Sure Start (Sure Start Loftus, Lescudjack Sure Start, and Pendeen Community Project), Health Action Zones (Pendeen Community Project), New Deal for Communities (East Brighton and Shoreditch Our Way), and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust (Village Companies Project). In every case, the

allocation of the resources appears to have been crucial to the development of successful community-controlled initiatives.

Of these community-controlled initiatives, possibly the most outstanding were Royds Community Association, where the residents had full control of the SRB funding for the area, and the Village Companies Project, where Leicester Housing Association were initially given £430,000 by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to set up a series of community-controlled companies. Royds credited the SRB with providing the impetus for the development of much of their current expertise. The SRB had distributed economic development grants for small companies generally, and specifically for residents to start up companies of their own. This had stimulated the formation of a virtuous circle that had resulted in the creation of 750 jobs, a successful residents' consultancy, and the development of a new enterprise park with £4 million worth of funding from Yorkshire Forward. In the case of the Village Companies Project, the initial investment from the Coalfields Regeneration Trust has been followed by substantial investment from Leicester Housing Association into housing repairs and refurbishment in the Meden Valley area, and the new Village Companies are attracting extensive funding from a number of sources, including local authorities and the European Social Fund (£200,000).

The New Deal for Communities initiatives are also of major importance, in that they involve an average budget of £50 million for each of the 39 initiatives. Shoreditch Our Way is perhaps comparable with Royds in the extent of its comprehensive community control of the funding programme, as also in its fierce independence from the local authority. Both are forging ahead across a wide range of community-controlled activities, which would not have been possible without the substantial financial support.

Similarly, the Sure Start initiatives are well-funded, and this money has been spent largely on employing staff to deliver services that have been agreed with communities to be a priority. In the case of Sure Start Lescudjack, these staff are employed by a company controlled by residents themselves. Without the funding from Sure Start, it is clear that these community-controlled initiatives could not have got off the ground.

With the other SRB-funded initiatives, the amount of funding was generally smaller (but not in every case), and the SRB itself was not under the control of the community. These initiatives, however, were more specific and less wide-ranging. In general, they related to only a small part of the SRB area. The level of funding was nevertheless significant, and not just on this smaller scale. For example, in the case of the Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme, the regeneration project involved £600,000 worth of SRB funding, and this had acted as a basis for attracting funding from other sources such as the Home Office and the local authority, resulting in a large number of community-controlled projects.

3) Specialist agency support

The research revealed a variety of forms of specialist support to community groups, which appear to have been crucial for the development of community-controlled initiatives. In some cases, this support needed to be continued almost indefinitely. The main forms of support were:

- the provision of valuable information and advice, especially about the nature of community control options and how these might be exercised by the community;
- training, education and development of community activists;
- administrative assistance, e.g. office equipment and ICT;
- specialist community development and community work support, e.g. on community learning and community organising; and:
- development and evaluation of specific community control pilots, e.g. on Resident Services Organisations (RSOs) (supported by PEP).

In the case of Redditch Cooperative Homes (RCH), for example, Birmingham Cooperative Housing Services (BCHS) has provided sustained support for community control since 1997. BCHS was key to developing the structure for RCH as a secondary cooperative, to devising RCH's strategy for growth, and to providing housing services until RCH were ready to do this themselves. BCHS also played an important role in training and developing the members of the new cooperatives.

At Meriden Street, it was clear that crucial support was provided by Coventry Citizens' Advocacy, which is a voluntary organisation committed to working on behalf of disadvantaged groups. Citizens' Advocacy helped the residents to form a committee and develop to the stage where they felt able to take on a ten-year lease of the building in which they lived. Other organisations providing important support included Values into Action (a support organisation for people with learning difficulties), who supplied a tenant participation officer to work with the residents in developing their cooperative. Coventry Cooperative Development Agency were also heavily involved throughout the process. At a later stage, Coventry Social Services contributed substantially.

Another example of specialist support was that provided by Priory Campus in the case of Lundwood and Mark Bretton Community Partnership. This was a multi-agency building, originally used as the flagship project for Barnsley City Challenge, and its main function was to provide conference and training facilities and office space. Because of its prestige, Priory Campus was able to kick-start the Partnership and ensure that it was community-run (rather than council-controlled), and it also helped the community draw down European funding for a paid administrator and to develop the Partnership.

A further example comes from Lydbury North Community Shop Association, who received invaluable advice and assistance from the Countryside Agency's village shop consultant, which enabled them to run the community shop and post office. The Countryside Agency advised on such matters as shop layout, business planning, budget management, and sources of funding.

A final example is the support provided by Community Development Trusts or Community Regeneration Trusts, who initiate and maintain a variety of community-controlled projects. For example, Penwith Community Development Trust was responsible for setting up Pendeen Community Project and continues to employ the Project's only paid worker.

4) Housing association leadership

Housing association leadership was an important factor in possibly as many as 18 of the 56 case studies. Such leadership was particularly crucial in the cases of Accord (for Redditch Cooperative Homes), Leicester (for Village Companies), Castle Vale (for its RSO), Bentilee (for community wardens), Partington (for the community options process), Sunderland Housing Group (for Doxford Park local compact), Collingwood (for Avenquest Community Regeneration Trust), Penwith (for Pendeen Community Project), Harding (for Vassall Area Regeneration Group - VARG), Banks of the Wear (for Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre), London & Quadrant (for Quality Community Investment), South Shropshire (for Lydbury North Community Shop Association), Threshold Tenant Trust (for Armoury Way), Impact (for Salterbeck's estate agreement and grant aid), and Manningham (for community activities grants).

In the case of Redditch Cooperative Homes, its development would not have been possible without the commitment and direct funding from Accord HA, to the extent of £1.6 million. In other cases, the community-controlled initiatives were the direct responsibility of housing associations, for example, Bentilee's community wardens, Doxford Park's local compact, London & Quadrant's Quality Community Investment projects, Salterbeck's estate agreement and community funding, and Manningham's community activities grants. In yet other cases, the housing association was indirectly responsible for creating the community-controlled initiative – for example, by setting up a community-run trust (e.g. Avenquest, Pendeen), providing crucial development support (e.g. Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre, Lydbury North Community Shop), or in other ways driving the organisation responsible for the initiative(s) (e.g. VARG, Armoury Way). Similarly, the Village Companies Project was set up by Leicester Housing Association, and the association continues to play a key role in the Meden Valley area in terms of housing and community development.

5) Local authority support/challenge

Local authority support was a major factor in at least ten of the case studies. The authorities involved were Redditch Borough Council (for Redditch Cooperative Homes), London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (for Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation), Westminster City Council (for local management agreements and neighbourhood compacts), London Borough of Barnet (for Barnet Borough Watch), Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (for tenant juries and Coalfields Community Transport), York City Council (for Foxwood Neighbourhood Agreement), Lincoln City Council (for Hartsholme Community Centre), North West Leicestershire Council (for Ibstock Community Enterprises), Bristol City Council (for residents' consultancy), and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (for community learning projects).

Arguably, in at least another six cases, lack of cooperation or downright opposition or obstructiveness from the local authority had acted as a stimulus to the community to unite in resistance and become more assertive of its independence. In certain circumstances, therefore, the negative attitude of an authority towards community control could be associated with positive effects for a community. Conversely, it has to be recognised that, in theory, an authority with a positive approach to community

control could end up by creating resident dependence on it, though we found no particular evidence of this. We think it is more likely that most community groups that succeeded in spite of their negative local authorities would have progressed even further and/or faster if those authorities had been supportive.

The ways in which local authorities provided support for community control varied enormously. For example, both councillors and chief officers of Redditch BC provided important political and strategic support, giving priority to the principle of cooperative housing development and making land available for such development. Other authorities, such as Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster, were supportive of Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) in particular, and were interested in exploring how the TMO model of community control could be extended, for example, in terms of taking control of non-housing activities or becoming more independent of the local authority. Westminster in particular were developing a range of community control options in response to tenants' wishes and needs. These options included neighbourhood compacts, tenants' halls (where TMOs run their own community rooms), and local management agreements. Similar options were being promoted by other authorities (e.g. York, Lincoln). Other authorities were supporting community control through community learning (e.g. Bristol, Rotherham). North West Leicestershire supported Ibstock Community Enterprises through specific regeneration and land transfer projects. Barnet provided administrative support to coordinate and regulate community-run neighbourhood watch initiatives. Finally, Barnsley has supported a number of pioneering initiatives in community control, which would not otherwise have come into existence, such as community transport and resident control of a decision-making process (over stock transfer).

6) Community inclusiveness

The most successful community-controlled initiatives are striking in terms of the trouble they take to ensure that all sections of the community are included in moving the agenda forward and in decision-making processes. At Homes for Change, all decisions are taken by a meeting of the community as a whole, and all residents are involved in the preparatory work for these meetings. This arrangement is practicable, however, only in the case of very small communities. Beyond a certain size, new mechanisms are required in order to ensure that the community does not become dominated by a clique or faction, or become biased against certain minority groups, or become less open to the world outside the community. The research suggests a number of lessons that can be learned here.

Most community groups in the research adopted an 'opt in' membership rule, whereby newcomers to the community were invited to take up membership of the group (residents' association, estate forum, community association, cooperative, regeneration trust, or whatever). Doxford Park and Chattenden, however, both used an 'opt out' rule, according to which residents were automatically members of the group unless they signed to say that they did not want to be members. This served to ensure that a higher proportion of the community would be signed-up members. However, this mechanism can be used only where membership of the group is free, and does not apply, for example, to companies limited by guarantee or Industrial and Provident Societies, where members normally have to pay for a £1 share in the company/society.

Another common feature of the community groups in the research (including housing associations) is a distinction between meetings of the membership as a whole and meetings of a 'core group' or steering group or executive/management committee or Board. The usual procedure is to have an annual general meeting of the members, at which the Board is elected. More inclusive groups hold general meetings much more frequently than once a year (every six weeks in the case of Doxford Park), with consistently high attendance (from 50 to over 100, out of a total of 800 households in Doxford Park). Inclusiveness is also demonstrated in the methods used to promote high attendance at general meetings and to ensure that the composition of the Board is a fair reflection of the membership. For example, in one project, the project manager took great pains to ensure that the steering group did not consist of the 'usual suspects' but included people whose interests were not usually represented. Residents were asked to nominate people who did not normally serve on committees but who could make a useful contribution, especially younger people and people living in different parts of the area. The process resulted in some conflict with the local elite, members of which failed to secure any nominations, but the consequence was a more inclusive community group.

Beyond a certain size, even the two-tier AGM/Board-type structure becomes too unwieldy for effective control by communities. This is because the elected Board becomes too far removed from its constituency, the membership becomes disempowered, and an increasing number of communities become included within the constituency. The research identified a number of community-controlled organisations that operated across whole local authority areas or even several such areas, covering many different communities. Examples included: Redditch Cooperative Homes, the Village Companies Project, Community Pride, Kensington & Chelsea TMO, Barnet Borough Watch, and Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre. Other organisations, while operating in areas smaller than that of a local authority, nevertheless covered multiple neighbourhoods and could give rise to similar problems of representation and disempowerment. These included SRB and NDC areas such as Royds, Lundwood & Mark Bretton, East Brighton NDC, and Shoreditch Our Way, but also AvenQuest, Coalfields Community Transport, Coin Street, and Vassall Area Regeneration Group (VARG).

The community-controlled initiatives in the research used a number of means for resolving or avoiding this problem and thereby ensuring effective community control within a trans-neighbourhood structure:

- *The geographically more extensive organisations act as supports for more local community-controlled activities.* So, for example, both Coin Street Community Builders and Redditch Cooperative Homes act as secondary cooperatives in relation to the community-controlled primary cooperatives that they set up. Similarly, Leicester Housing Association sets up community-controlled village companies, which are then developed to operate independently. Community Pride strives to support a cross-community gathering across Manchester, which will then allocate community empowerment funding for initiatives controlled by local community groups. Barnet Borough Watch, itself community-controlled, supports local neighbourhood watch initiatives. East Brighton NDC supports community-

controlled facilities such as the Valley Social Centre, and AvenQuest Trust also supports a wide range of community-controlled activities. Similarly, Shoreditch Our Way supports numerous community-controlled projects, including a youth forum, a multi-agency centre, a peer education project, and a community transport project. VARG also supports a wide range of community-controlled and neighbourhood management activities.

- *The organisation broadens and deepens its democratic arrangements and processes.* For example, Community Pride aims to use a process of participatory budgeting (see Appendix 2), representing a deeper level of engagement by the community in decision-making activity. Barnet Borough Watch is directly elected entirely by local neighbourhood watch groups. Kensington & Chelsea TMO looks like it has a more traditional two-tier structure, with a tenant-majority Board elected by AGM, but it also has seven Area Review Boards (ARBs), on which all residents' associations are represented, with each ARB electing a representative to the main Board; and for residents more directly, there are annual forums/conferences on specific policy issues and for specific interest groups. Royds consists of three separate communities or 'urban villages', and the association has attempted to retain and reinforce these identities through its activities. Lundwood & Mark Bretton has tried to operate in a similar way in relation to its two constituent villages. Shoreditch Our Way has created a panoply of democratic arrangements, including panels, task groups and forums, all of which are community-controlled. In the case of Coalfields Community Transport, community-controlled projects are initiated through community forums set up specifically for the purpose; some of these projects have the potential to develop into formal community-controlled partnerships, with Coalfields Community Transport acting as an umbrella or home for all the different initiatives. VARG is a tenant-controlled multi-agency partnership, whose Board members include all resident and interest groups in the area (including community, faith, youth and business interests), three housing associations, Lambeth Council, the police, and the health authority; VARG has not only a Board but a Forum, which meets three times a year, is open to all who live or work in the area, and makes proposals and recommendations to the Board.

7) *Institutional focus*

In some cases, although community control existed at the level of a small neighbourhood, effective community control beyond that neighbourhood had not been achieved. One important factor that appeared to relate to a larger scale of community control was an early strategic decision by the community on its preferred institutional arrangement, agreed by the relevant strategic authorities. Coin Street Community Builders, Redditch Cooperative Homes, the Village Companies Project, Royds Community Association, Kensington & Chelsea TMO, AvenQuest Community Regeneration Trust, and Shoreditch Our Way, are all examples of relatively large-scale community-controlled arrangements where early decisions were taken to adopt a particular form of community control (for example, housing ownership cooperative, community-controlled company, TMO, community-controlled trust, community-controlled NDC). This could help to explain why these initiatives have been particularly successful in generating new community-controlled projects.

The same argument could, however, help to explain the effectiveness of community control at the small neighbourhood level. The examples of The Eldonians, Homes for Change, Meriden Street Housing Cooperative, Doxford Park Estate Forum, Foxwood Community Action Group, Pendeen Community Project, Broadway Residents and Tenants Scheme (BRATS), Chattenden Centre Community Project, Hartsholme Community Centre, Lydbury North Community Shop Association, Walterton & Elgin Community Homes (WECH), Istock Community Enterprises (ICE), Heath Town Estate Management Board, and Beechdale Community Housing Association, all support the argument that an early and firm decision by the community on the institutional arrangement that it wants to adopt tends to promote effective community control, so focusing on a preferred model has distinct advantages for a community.

8) Self-sustaining mechanisms

A number of case studies provide concrete evidence on how community-controlled enterprises and other mechanisms can enable communities to be substantially self-supporting. Broadly, communities can gain ownership of physical assets, which can then be used for income-generating activities or which can themselves be a source of income by being hired out to other organisations. Alternatively, communities can develop their own skills, projects and services and use them for the direct benefit of the community or hire them out to other organisations. Or they can take over existing services, run them more efficiently, and use any surpluses to meet community needs or develop more community enterprise.

Examples of the above are: Coin Street and The Eldonians (ownership of land and buildings, control of regeneration, control of services and community development), the Village Companies Project (ownership of physical assets), Royds (residents' consultancy), Homes for Change (providing homes and jobs), Sure Start Loftus (controlling services and physical assets), AvenQuest Trust (control of services), Pendeen (community development), Lescudjack Sure Start (control of services), Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre (community development), BRATS (control of services and physical assets), Chattenden (control of services and community centre), Hartsholme (community development), Lydbury North (control of shop), WECH (community development), Heath Town (control of homes and community development), Belle Isle Foundation (control of training and employment services), and O-Regen.

6 Community Cohesion Issues I: Ethnic Communities

Amin and Thrift (1995) have suggested that successful local governance (as required for community control) depends on 'institutional thickness', which involves:

- A plethora of civil organisations
- A high level of social interaction among different social groups
- Coalitions crossing individual interests
- A strong sense of common purpose

This finding suggests a yardstick by which concerted action can be achieved in areas where there exists a plurality of communities, in particular a plurality of ethnic communities. Essentially, the different ethnic communities have to be well organised

both within themselves and across to other ethnic groups, have a high degree of interaction, and have a strong sense of common purpose (e.g. through a sense of shared interest in an area).

Allen and Cars (2001) studied ten neighbourhoods in eight different European countries and found that they had the *potential* to generate institutional thickness because of their social diversity, but existing local social dynamics tended to generate division rather than interaction out of this diversity, so that cross-cutting networks and coalitions did not form. Regeneration policies failed to address this issue because the social relations that conditioned the administrative and institutional actors in the neighbourhoods were distinctly mono-cultural, rooted in the dominant or host culture. Cultural diversity was seen by administrators as a problem, because people did not behave as expected, rather than as a potential source of ideas for resolving the issues that arise in the course of managing a shared existence in space.

Allen and Cars (2001, pp.2199-2200) also provide an interesting explanation of why community participation arrangements in their case studies were generally very weak:

- They involved only the most concerned and established residents, who were then seen as perhaps not representative
- The forums were the product of intense interdepartmental bargaining, so no single agency had a specific interest in developing and supporting them in ways that would allow them to articulate effective demands that would change the pattern of vertically divided resource allocations to neighbourhoods
- For each agency, maintaining the opacity of its structures was more important than transparency to residents, because the latter was also transparency to other agencies and therefore a source of vulnerability in interdepartmental bargaining for resources. This further delegitimised the resident representatives, because the latter were unable to 'deliver' much but were associated with the faceless 'them' and were envied/distrusted because of their enhanced local status
- In such circumstances, the only reasonably stable interagency view of residents is as a relatively homogeneous group characterised by 'multiple disadvantage', in order to avoid privileging or prioritising specific agencies or social groups within the neighbourhood. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to deal with social and cultural diversity.

As an alternative to the 'bleak picture' they paint, and drawing on the work of Parekh (2000), Allen and Cars (2001, pp.2206-7) recommend the following:

- Neighbourhood governance mechanisms must be designed from the bottom up in order to take account of the specific cultural groups living and working in the area. There can be no one specific model of best practice.
- Governance arrangements should be expected to evolve over time, as multi-cultural understandings develop
- Outcome is more important than output in assessing the adequacy of neighbourhood governance mechanisms – there is a need for institutional space for experimentation, learning from mistakes and from one another
- New kinds of strategic and practical institutional capacities are required to support multicultural neighbourhood governance

- There is a need to distinguish between conflicts that need to be resolved in order to promote multi-cultural governance and those with which we can all live.

These ideas can be used to evaluate some of the findings in our research. At least five case studies in the research had substantial numbers of black and minority ethnic people living in their areas. These were AvenQuest, VARG, Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre, Community Pride, Shoreditch Our Way, and Heath Town. The case studies are therefore broadly reflective of the ethnic composition of the population in England. Specific issues for black and minority ethnic (BME) communities highlighted by the research were:

1) The different geographical scope of BME communities

Many BME communities are spread over wider areas than the small neighbourhoods that are the typical focus of community-controlled initiatives. For example, in the case of the Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre, the community served by the centre is spread over the whole of Sunderland, although it is more concentrated in the Hendon area, where the Centre is situated. This wider scope of community can be regarded as a positive characteristic, in that it reduces the likelihood of ghettoisation, but it can also be associated with a certain degree of fragmentation and social isolation. The largest BME communities live in London, but tend to be spread over large areas of inner London and a few areas of outer London. For example, the Somali community in London is spread over the boroughs of Ealing, Brent, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Haringey, Hackney, Islington and Camden. This makes community control more difficult, but not impossible. For example, SAHIL Housing Association is trying to focus initiatives on East London and West London, where its two offices are situated and which are reasonably accessible to all Somalis in London. The experience of Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre, however, suggests that community transport initiatives may well be relevant for bringing the community together in order to exercise effective community control.

2) Cross-tenure and cross-community working

The wider geographical scope of BME communities has implications for cross-community working at the small neighbourhood level, and the research found a number of examples of community-controlled initiatives of this nature. Community Pride was clearly committed to such cross-community working, through its development of a cross-community gathering to administer the Community Empowerment Fund. Shoreditch Our Way had developed a peer education project for the Turkish community, to ensure their representation in the NDC's decision-making processes. Heath Town worked with a number of organisations, which were controlled by BME groups (Windrush) and by asylum seekers (the Association for the Relief of Refugees in Wolverhampton), and most of which appeared to cut across ethnic community divides. And Manningham Housing Association provided Community Activities Grants, worth £20,000 per year, for tenants to organise activities that helped to bring together people from different ethnic groups.

It is important to stress that developing community-controlled initiatives on behalf of one community does not exclude the possibility of cross-community working at some

point. Sunderland Bangladeshi Community Centre and SAHIL HA, for example, both aim to cater for their own particular communities, but may also be quite prepared to work constructively with other communities. Again, it may well be in the interests of their own communities to do so, in order to prevent ghettoisation.

AvenQuest and VARG both brought different communities together at a larger neighbourhood level. In the case of AvenQuest, the issue of cross-community working was also an issue of cross-tenure working, because the Asian community lived mainly in old, owner-occupied terraced housing, while the white community lived mainly in former council housing. Both organisations were taking great care to ensure that their composition and activities reflected the balance of their ethnic populations, but it was not clear, in either of these cases, what specific initiatives were being developed to achieve effective community control across ethnic boundaries.

3) Role of BME-led housing associations

The research included two BME-led housing associations: Manningham and SAHIL. Interestingly, however, neither of these organisations could strictly be described as community-controlled. Manningham was clearly a community-based organisation, and used a range of measures to ensure that residents were involved in their work. They took cross-community working most seriously.

The research therefore suggests that BME-led associations could play an important role in bridging divides between communities at the small neighbourhood level. This is a significant finding, in the light of the various reports (Denham, Cattle, Ritchie, Clarke) on the riots last year in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, and the subsequent rise in support for the British National Party in some of these areas. At present, however, these housing associations (e.g. Manningham in Bradford or Aksa in Oldham) are tiny and lack the resources to take on such wider social responsibilities.

4) Social exclusion and community fragmentation and division

This is an issue for most BME communities. The Somali community, for example, is fragmented not only in terms of area of residence, but in terms of the different regions of Somalia from which community members originate and in terms of when they first arrived in this country (from current refugees to those who came up to eighty years ago). In some cases, considerable community development work is required before community control can become a realistic possibility. Community learning projects can therefore be very important for the communities concerned. The Tassibee Project in Rotherham is an example of such a project, and has been described above.

7 Community Cohesion Issues II: Rural Communities

The research covered at least eight rural areas: the Meden Valley (Village Companies Project), Loftus, Barnsley rural (Coalfields Community Transport), Lundwood & Mark Bretton, Pendeen, Lescudjack, Lydbury North, and Ibstock. The following issues were identified in those areas:

1) Loss of community facilities

Loss of accessible and affordable facilities was a major issue in the case of Barnsley rural (poor and expensive bus service), Lydbury North (loss of village shop and post office), and Ibstock (loss of ATM). These losses acted as the trigger for community action that resulted in new community-controlled initiatives (community transport, community shop, and community enterprise). Ironically, therefore, events that were clearly damaging to the community functioned as a catalyst for positive community developments. These few successes, however, have to be placed alongside the much larger number of cases (not covered by the research) where the disappearance of similar facilities has not been followed by new community provision. There is an issue here, therefore, as to how best to support communities to enable them to undertake such provision and, beyond that, how to ensure that such disappearance does not occur in the first place. The Countryside Agency has an important role to play here, as it did in the case of Lydbury North.

2) Poverty and lack of employment

Poverty and unemployment were major issues in nearly all of the rural areas in the research. These included areas where coal mines had closed (the Meden Valley, Barnsley rural, Lundwood & Mark Bretton, and Ibstock), Cornwall (Pendeen and Lescudjack), and Cleveland (Loftus). This helped to explain the emphasis in these areas on income-generating activities, especially the setting up of community enterprises such as Village Companies and development/regeneration trusts. In some cases, such as Ibstock Community Enterprise, income generation had been particularly successful. The issue here therefore is perhaps how other communities can learn from the experience of Ibstock.

3) Social isolation

In remoter rural communities, there were issues, not only of lack of community facilities, but of isolation from neighbours and from means of access to essential services. These appear to have been particular issues in the cases of Barnsley rural and Pendeen. The main ways of tackling these issues found in the research were the provision of community transport (in Barnsley) and the use of a meeting place such as a parish hall for a variety of community activities (in Pendeen).

4) Lack of access to external support

Possibly as a result of their isolated location, some rural communities were lacking access to forms of external support. Such support seems to be essential for resolving all of the rural issues listed above. On the basis of the research findings, development/regeneration trusts or other forms of community enterprise set up specifically for the purpose of providing such support seemed to be most effective in producing community-controlled initiatives, attracting external funding, generating income internally, and overcoming social isolation. In two cases (Village Companies and Penwith Community Development Trust), a housing association had been instrumental in the creation and continued support of such community enterprises (Leicester and Penwith housing associations, respectively). In two other cases (Lescudjack and Loftus), it had been Sure Start that had played a key support role.

8 Conclusion

This paper has outlined the position with regard to community control in England today. The picture is a complex and varied one, with many interesting and innovative developments. The literature identifies a number of approaches to community control - housing-based, asset-based, service-based, community investment, etc – but it is not clear that this typology is adequate to make sense of many of the initiatives now being developed. The literature also points to a number of community control options but our research shows that the list of possible options is much longer than that previously envisaged. For example, options have tended to be classified in terms of types of arrangement that tenants or residents wish to develop but our research suggests that it may be more appropriate to consider them in terms of the aims and objectives of the groups of people involved (which may or may not aspire to a specific type of arrangement).

Community control processes

What is currently lacking is a clearly defined process whereby people living in the same area or community, and sharing a common interest, can determine for themselves how things are organised in that area or community and what involvement (if any) they should have in that organisation. Local authorities and other statutory bodies, and even the new ‘neighbourhood-based’ organisations such as New Deal for Communities, generally operate at a level that is remote from the area with which residents identify, so there is a need to create democratic structures at a small neighbourhood level in order to deliver real community control. We need a new process that will create new democratic arrangements.

The Community Gateway Model has been proposed by the Confederation of Cooperative Housing as an example of such a process. Essentially, this relies on housing associations carrying out community options studies so that residents can choose their own form of democratic development. Clearly, similar options studies could be carried out by local authorities in relation to their own tenants, and the model can be extended to include the selection of options by groups of owner-occupiers.

These extensions of the model, however, will require new government policy and possibly legislation. The community strategies envisaged by current policy, for example, are concerned predominantly with community consultation and service improvement, not with devolution of power or community control. Similarly, neighbourhood management looks more like a top-down imposition of ‘joined-up working’ in an externally defined and relatively large neighbourhood than a bottom-up movement of concerted action in a self-defined relatively smaller neighbourhood community. The government is increasingly placing communities at the heart of its regeneration policies but not necessarily at the head. This is in spite of the huge volume of evidence indicating that neighbourhood renewal is not sustainable unless local people do have control over the processes involved.

Community control options

The community control options identified by the research cannot be easily fitted into any neat typology (but for a provisional attempt to do so, see Table 1). For example, the report has listed one option as ‘small-scale initiatives’ but, strictly speaking, a number of different community control options could be spelled out here: control of a small budget for community activities, providing a small-scale community service, and improving community representation on bodies making decisions that affect the community. Further research would no doubt identify many more small-scale community control options.

Similarly, developing a community centre or community shop can occur in a number of different ways. Purchasing or renting a centre could be described as two separate options, and the research suggests that purchasing is usually more advisable if community control is to be sustained in the long term. Option selection here is determined largely by the availability of funding for the community group.

Again, with regard to neighbourhood or estate compacts/agreements, the research suggests that a number of different options exist. For convenience, these have been reduced to three: landlord-based service agreements, service agreements going beyond landlord’s services, and landlord-tenant agreements relating to tenant participation. Conceivably, however, many more options could be identified that would fit under this broad heading.

Local management agreements, residents’ services organisations and tenant management organisations can all be described as arrangements where a group of tenants and/or residents take on responsibility for managing landlords’ services. In this case, therefore, three separate options can be regarded as variations on the same theme, which is that of tenant/resident management. The differences between them are that LMAs are voluntary while TMOs are statutory, and RSOs are specifically concerned with the management of direct labour. Some TMOs have gone on to take control of a number of non-housing projects, assets and services.

Housing cooperatives are arrangements where the tenants or residents collectively own their own homes. Here again there are actually several different options: co-ownership or par value, fully or not fully mutual. The research also identified larger-scale arrangements where a so-called ‘secondary’ cooperative acts as a ‘parent’ and continuing support for a number of ‘primary’ cooperatives. Housing cooperatives may or may not be registered as housing associations.

The research identified a wide variety of community-controlled trusts or companies. These were generally concerned with asset development, economic revival and community regeneration, and many were registered as charities. Some have been very successful, notably The Eldonians, Coin Street Community Builders, Ibstock Community Enterprises, and Royds Community Association. The research suggests that there is a huge untapped potential for community control here, subject to the provision of substantial start-up funding to the community-controlled organisation and subsequent asset acquisition.

Another option for residents is to set up their own (non-cooperative) housing association. This enables them to control new housing development in their area (among other things), which they might not be able to do as a housing cooperative.

The research suggested that a resident-controlled housing association could be an element of a wider community-controlled group of organisations (as in the case of The Eldonians) and/or could be a means to exert greater pressure on a local authority (e.g. Beechdale). Such an association could also be a useful vehicle for community investment activity (e.g. WECH, Castle Vale).

Residents can also opt to exercise control in partnership with other organisations. This option can be more problematic because of the usual weakness of local community organisations in comparison with national and regional bodies, local authorities, etc. (including statutory area-based initiatives such as New Deal for Communities and Sure Start). Each group of residents therefore has to balance the benefits to be gained from participating in such a partnership against the risks of losing its independence to a body that may not be community-controlled. The research suggests that each case has to be looked at on its own merits.

Community-controlled initiatives concerned with community learning appear to fall into a different category from other community control options. They range from small-scale community education projects, in which residents develop at their own pace and in ways of their own choosing (e.g. the Tassibee Project), to the development of nation-wide consultancies such as Royds, in which residents acquire a range of skills that are then made available to other community groups. Community learning can also be promoted and supported by housing associations, for example, as part of a community investment approach by which residents learn about the possibility and practicability of a community options study process (e.g. Partington HA). Community learning of the latter kind could be an important precondition for the development of community control more generally, ensuring that the choices that residents make are appropriately and sufficiently informed.

Finally, the option of a tenants' panel or jury is also quite different from the other community control options. The idea here is one of a specific new form of democratic decision-making in which tenants or residents comprise at least the majority of the decision-making body. Insofar as the remit of the body is concerned with issues affecting the community that is represented by the members of the body, then this would appear to be an example of community control. In view of the problems of representation involved, however (e.g. recruitment, inclusiveness, training, commitment required, etc), this does not seem to be a sustainable option for community control, but may be suitable for one-off decisions and on-going community consultation only.

Community Control Option	Possible Sub-Options
Small-scale initiative	Delivering a community service Controlling a community budget Improving community representation
Developing a community centre or shop	Purchasing the centre/shop Renting the centre/shop
Neighbourhood/estate compact/agreement	Landlord-based service agreement Service agreement beyond landlord's services Landlord-tenant agreement on tenant participation
Tenant/resident management	Local management agreement Residents' services organisation Tenant management organisation
Housing cooperative	Co-ownership cooperative Par value cooperative: fully or not fully mutual Primary or secondary cooperative
Community-controlled trust/company	
Resident-controlled housing association	
Community-controlled partnership	
Community learning project	
Tenants'/residents' jury/panel	

Table 1: Community Control Options

What works in community control

Since community control is a relatively new phenomenon, the issue of what works in community control is only just emerging. Our conclusions on this issue, therefore, have to be treated as highly provisional.

First, community control is not possible without the existence of at least a small number of local people who are very strongly committed to the areas in which they live and who have the energy and skills needed to turn the idea of community control into a reality.

Second, although substantial funding is not absolutely essential for community control in every case, it is clear that in the absence of such funding very few community-controlled initiatives of any major importance will ever see the light of day. Many community-controlled initiatives are capable of becoming self-supporting and/or of providing better value for money than that offered by current arrangements, but in many cases they need high levels of public subsidy in order to get off the ground.

Third, the need for on-going specialist support to community-controlled initiatives cannot be exaggerated. Much of this expertise already exists but is not currently placed in the service of community control. Initially, such support could be provided free by statutory and voluntary organisations, as well as by volunteers, but, as an initiative becomes self-supporting or shows itself to represent comparatively better

value for money, it should be able to pay for external assistance from its own funds. Few of the case studies in the research, however, had reached this stage of development.

Fourth, because of the emphasis of the research, it was found that housing associations in particular could play an effective leadership role in developing and supporting community-controlled initiatives, including setting up community-controlled trusts and driving community-controlled partnerships. The community investment approach towards community control is specifically identified with housing associations.

Fifth, the research found that local authorities could be crucial in pioneering and supporting community-controlled initiatives on a long-term basis but they were almost as often associated with an antipathy towards community control. Ironically, this antipathy in some cases stimulated a movement towards community control by helping to create strong resistance from the residents concerned. The full potential of local authorities to promote community control of all kinds has hardly begun to be explored but there seems little doubt that it is very considerable.

Sixth, the research makes clear that the most successful community-controlled initiatives (successful in terms of service improvement, neighbourhood regeneration, economic development, better quality of life, or whatever) are those that are most inclusive of all sections of the community. For a community-controlled organisation, an 'opt out' membership rule is preferable to an 'opt in' one, core group members should be openly elected by the membership of the organisation as a whole, and care should be taken to ensure that the core group membership does not consist only of the 'usual suspects'. Beyond the level of a small neighbourhood, problems of core group remoteness and unrepresentativeness can be addressed or avoided in two ways: by ensuring that the geographically more extensive organisations act as supports for more local community-controlled activities (for example, in the way that secondary cooperatives support primary ones); and by broadening and deepening the community organisation's democratic arrangements and processes (for example, through the creation of democratic forums on different scales, integral to the organisation's main decision-making processes, and explicitly including all the different community and interest groups in the area). Many of these arrangements and processes are highly innovative, and there is scope for substantial further development in this field.

Seventh, the research suggested that effective community control requires, in addition to some of the above factors such as funding and specialist support, an early strategic decision to opt for a particular community control arrangement such as a housing cooperative, a form of tenant management, or a community-controlled company or trust. It appears that groups of residents who experience difficulty in making up their collective minds (i.e. they cannot agree among themselves about which option to pursue) are in danger of not achieving community control at all.

Finally, the research shows that community-controlled organisations can and have become self-supporting in a number of ways: by acquiring income-generating assets; by developing their own productive skills, projects and services; and by taking over existing services and running them better.

Community cohesion

The research throws light on the new community cohesion agenda in a number of ways. Perhaps most importantly, the success of an emphasis on inclusivity suggests that good practice in community control involves contributing towards community cohesion. Community-controlled initiatives that do not include all sections of the community in which they operate are not only likely to be less successful or effective in their own terms, but are also less likely to contribute towards community cohesion – indeed, they could be divisive.

Different ethnic communities tend to operate on different geographical scales and, in some cases, live in different tenures, so it is important for each ethnic community to recognise this and build cross-community bridges appropriately. The research suggests that a suitable model would be something like the multi-tier structure discussed in connection with larger community-controlled organisations, with fully democratic arrangements being created at each tier. So, for example, a minority ethnic community operating on a local authority-wide level would have its main decision-making body at this level, with appropriate arrangements at lower levels for liaison with local majority ethnic (and other minority ethnic) communities. However, the research found pitifully few examples of anything that in practice approximates to this ideal model. Cross-community working and cross-tenure working were generally conspicuous by their absence.

The research suggested that BME-led housing associations could play a significant role in breaking down barriers between different ethnic communities but unfortunately this possibility has not been recognised by the various reports on community cohesion (Denham, Cattle, Ritchie, Clarke). There has been a tendency to assume that BME-led housing associations have some kind of separatist agenda when in fact they do far more for the integration of different ethnic communities than most white housing associations (e.g. compare the performance of Manningham in Bradford or Aksa in Oldham with that of some, though not all, of the larger associations operating in the same areas).

Social exclusion is a major issue affecting some BME and rural communities, and an increasing number of urban white working class communities. The research suggests that far more effort needs to be put into the development of these communities before community control can become a realistic possibility. Many of these communities have suffered from decades of economic and political neglect, which will require further decades to remedy. Major issues of community learning, access to appropriate services, structural economic decline, low demand for housing, community transport, community safety, and access to wider geographical and political support networks, are only just beginning to be addressed.

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Appendix 1: The Research

The research on which this report is based was commissioned by the Confederation of Cooperative Housing and the Housing Corporation. Its main aim was to find a wide range of examples of community control in the field and to identify elements of good practice from the experience of these examples, which can be used to inform a good practice guide for RSL tenants and residents who might be interested in developing community control options.

The primary research was conducted in two main stages:

- Interviews with people of key or strategic importance for the community control agenda
- Fieldwork interviews with participants in community-controlled initiatives.

27 'key players' were interviewed originally, and 63 additional ones were later contacted, who provided further information about community-controlled initiatives and/or recommended further useful contacts. In all, therefore, 90 key players were interviewed.

A total of 104 people were interviewed in the fieldwork programme. They worked for a variety of organisations (see Table 2):

Type of Organisation	Number of Interviewees
Housing association	33
Resident group	18
Community association/network	9
Local authority	9
NDC	7
Housing ownership cooperative	5
TMO	5
Development trust	5
Sure Start	2
RSO	1
Other support agency/consultant	9
Other volunteer	1
Total	104

Table 2: Type of Organisation in Fieldwork Programme

On the basis of the fieldwork interviews, at least 56 possible case studies were identified.

Appendix 2: Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting is a means by which residents can exercise control over how money is spent in their areas. Each community identifies a range of issues where money needs to be spent, and then each participating community member attaches a priority to each issue (numbered from 1 at the lowest to 5 at the highest). The total

numbers given for each issue are then used to determine the proportions of the budget to be allocated to dealing with that issue. This process can be aggregated at a wider geographical scale by means of a cross-community gathering involving community representatives of different kinds, and targeted to the most deprived communities. The method is now being used by Community Pride to distribute the Community Empowerment Fund for Manchester, and may in future be used to distribute Manchester's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The cross-community gathering functions as a kind of Manchester-wide parliament, where policy is made concerning the overall rules of the budgeting system and the process whereby participation is to take place.