

# Outer Estates

**ON THE EDGE: A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES LOOKING AT HOW HOUSING ESTATES ON THE PERIPHERIES CAN BE TRANSFORMED**



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# Outer Estates

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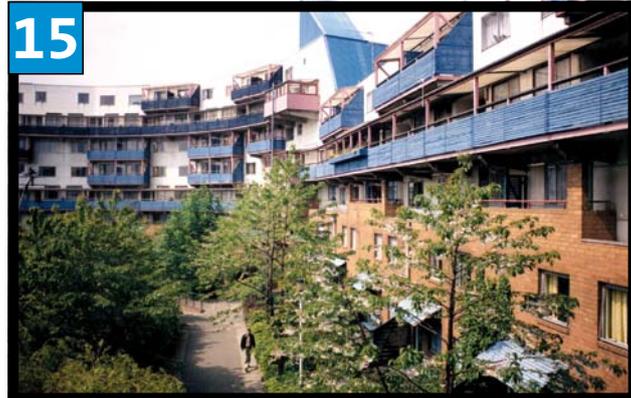
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# Peripheral **visions**

Outer city estates rarely get the attention of those in the inner city. Yet they starkly raise all the key policy issues around regeneration, argue **Jane Foot**, **Davy Jones** and **Martin Yarnit**

Aspley in Nottingham is typical of hundreds of other housing estates – run-down, disconnected, deprived and depressed. Years of regeneration programmes have produced some gains, but it still represents over a quarter of all Nottingham’s benefit dependent households and one tenth of all lone parent income support claimants, while being home to just 6% of its overall population.

What sets Aspley apart from many deprived estates is its size and location. Almost 16,000 people – more than a third of them under 18 – live on two interconnected estates (Broxtowe and Aspley) some three and a half miles from Nottingham city centre.

Large, outer city estates are different from those of the inner city. Often with poor transport links, they are more cut off from the employment and other opportunities offered by the city. And their size makes them more akin to small towns. Take, for example, Hexham and Otley, both with smaller populations, which have their own town

councils. But Aspley is treated as a fraction of Nottingham Council, represented by just three ward councillors, who have to clamour for attention with 57 others across the city.

## NEEDS AND ASSETS

The problem for outer estate towns like Aspley is that their only claim to fame is how badly they do in the deprivation league table. So, despite all the talk about empowerment, engagement and active citizens, the reality is that residents in such disadvantaged areas are stigmatised, defined as deficient and thought incapable of taking charge of their own destiny.

This is the disabling paradox at the heart of regeneration policy, whichever government has been in power. Regeneration policy and practice talks liabilities and needs, but not assets: rarely does it look at the skills, knowledge and resources of local people. Every bid for funding requires a litany of calamity with no questions

Below: Canalside housing in Eldonian Village, and inset, an aerial view of the site

## Margaret Jackson explains how an estate in Liverpool took control of its own destiny

The Eldonian Village has been 30 years in the making. The result is a community enterprise that owns its own assets and employs more than 100 people. In 1977 a slum clearance programme threatened the break up of a long established docklands community, but local people decided to remain together to create a new neighbourhood that is today a model of a sustainable community. The keys to success have been attention to governance and to social, cultural and economic development.

It’s located at the end of the Leeds-Liverpool canal, off Vauxhall Road, a main arterial route out of Liverpool city centre, and close to the northern docks of the city. It is an area that has seen massive economic and

social change over the course of the 20th century, with entire industries rising and declining, and very extensive new housing developments.

The Eldonians originally started as a pressure group to keep the community together in the face of the threat of slum clearance and following the loss of 3,000 jobs at Tate and Lyle in 1981. Their first formal organisation was the Portland Gardens Housing Cooperative, and their second the Eldonian Housing Co-op. Through these organisations they worked with partners including the Housing Corporation and local housing associations to build affordable housing. In the end they used the huge derelict site left vacant by Tate and Lyle to create an urban

village including ‘build for sale’ homes, a village hall, sport facilities, offices, elderly accommodation, a nursery, and offices for the social enterprise that owns and manages the village.

The structure developed in the 1980s comprised interlocking organisations to take forward the comprehensive regeneration of the area with the community at their heart. These included the Eldonian Community Trust, a charity which represents the views of the local community; the Eldonian Community Based Housing Association, which owns and manages 523 properties; and Eldonian Group (originally Eldonian Development Trust), which undertakes development work and creates social business to address social and economic needs and was originally created to provide a delivery



## GET INVOLVED

We're planning a conference and roundtable discussion to debate fresh thinking about outer estates. If you would like to get involved as a contributor or sponsor, contact Austin Macauley, tel: 0114 281 6133, email: austin@newstartmag.co.uk or Martin Yarnit, email: martin.yarnit@virgin.net

Contribute to the debate on outer estates by blogging at [www.newstartmag.co.uk/blog](http://www.newstartmag.co.uk/blog)

about the capacity for self-transformation and what local people can bring to the table. No wonder that local residents are rarely seen as equal partners in transformation.

## REGENERATION AND RECESSION

With public spending cuts and steadily rising unemployment, the situation is set to worsen. The recent National Equality Panel report confirmed our worst fears – the richest 10% of the population are 100 times wealthier than the poorest 10%. Having failed to eradicate inequality or these concentrations of poverty when the going was good, the government now faces an even grimmer challenge – and people living on these outer city estates an even grimmer prospect.

The risk now with long-term unemployment set to grow is that a significant section of our urban population, especially the younger generation, will be cast adrift. Community tensions will rise, engagement with traditional systems of politics and redress will fall. All the priority cross-cutting socio-economic problems such as alcohol misuse and antisocial behaviour will intensify. People who might otherwise make a contribution to society will come to be seen as a drag on development, making their presence felt through their call on the NHS and the criminal justice system.

But it seems that government finds itself in a quandary. The close targeting of new deal for communities (NDC) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has given way to the Working Neighbourhoods Fund and the Future Jobs Fund with their broader local authority wide focus.

The government has taken a step backwards away from integrated, early intervention on small areas, and instead is concentrating on efficiency savings at a local authority-wide level.

## A DIFFERENT PATH

But it doesn't have to be like this, as the examples of Manton (overleaf) and Eldonians (below) prove. With a bit more imagination, less centralised control freakery and more political will, solutions could be developed. The seeds are already there in current national policy trends.

The new national priority of Total Place could enable a focus on outer city estates as places needing the full panoply of holistic solutions. Residents could negotiate their own local area agreement, with all the local service providers, concretised in one of the new annual community contracts.

The cross-party consensus on community engagement might encourage efforts to unleash the potential of local residents to turn these estates round. They could elect their own town council or even a new type of local strategic partnership or local development agency – emulating the most effective NDC programmes – to be accountable for all local services. Participatory budgeting might enable residents to articulate their needs and preferences and to make the key decisions on how to improve their estates. New businesses and social enterprises could focus on retaining locally more of the considerable total spend by residents and service agencies.

And by starting afresh to look at how best to make

vehicle for the regeneration for the area of Vauxhall North Liverpool.

Through this structure the Eldonians worked with partners in the public and private sectors including the Merseyside Development Corporation, Liverpool City Council and the Littlewoods Organisation to develop the village. The Eldonian Group now owns and manages the facilities on site, offers consultancy services and employs over 50 people in a variety of developments and enterprises including childcare, gas servicing and canal rangers.

What is remarkable about this story is not simply the scale of the regeneration but the ambition of the Eldonian pioneers. When they began, 30 years ago, community-led urban regeneration was almost unknown in this country. Today, local people are still in charge.

So what accounts for their success? The Eldonian Village, according

to the HCA Academy, shows certain approaches to be particularly effective:

- ◆ Develop a vision: a clear vision of the ultimate goal must be developed and owned by all those involved.
- ◆ Create projects: funding bodies prefer to allocate resources to an ongoing programme of improvement.
- ◆ A clear focus: strong leadership within the community helps local organisations to stay focused, and to remain determined in the face of setbacks.
- ◆ Be active in local politics: the Eldonians avoided becoming 'victims' of political decisions, by being politically active through their own Ward Party.
- ◆ Enlist professional help: the Eldonians sought the advice and help of professionals who were committed to their cause.
- ◆ Acquire local assets: the Eldonian organisation owns all its houses, the land and the facilities, which gives it significant influence.
- ◆ Initiate partnerships: it is important to be part of networks that lead to investment in the neighbourhood.
- ◆ Take stock: a successful neighbourhood organisation will take stock of where it is going and how well it is doing from time to time.
- ◆ Publicise success: communicating successes helps to attract new stakeholders and to show funders how investment is being well-spent.
- ◆ Knowledge sharing: keep in touch and develop alliance with like-minded organisations, in order to share and learn from other people's experiences.

◆ Margaret Jackson helped to initiate the Eldonian Village and is now an urban regeneration consultant. The Eldonians: [www.eldonians.org.uk](http://www.eldonians.org.uk) and [www.eldoniangroup.com](http://www.eldoniangroup.com)



## Manton: people not projects

Richard Edwards, manager of the neighbourhood management pathfinder Manton Community Alliance, puts its successes down to an approach based on ‘people not projects’. Regeneration has become too much about bricks and mortar when it’s people who make the difference. This belief has helped the pathfinder to increase participation, build social cohesion, mutual respect and confidence and bring about sustainable change by making residents part of the solution.

Manton is an estate of a 7,000 people in Worksop, north Nottinghamshire. It is geographically and socially isolated; an ex-pit village proud of its heritage yet still haunted by what was a divisive coal strike. It’s an estate labelled with a bad reputation which has led to a feeling among the community of being besieged and ignored.

Instead of pump-priming projects that were not sustainable and did not lead to long-term changes, the pathfinder decided on a ‘social capital model’ of renewal focused on changing behaviour and relationships.

Manton was an engagement wilderness with people seeing no point in getting involved. The pathfinder has worked hard to change this and today over 50% of population are now engaged in some shape or form. In an independent survey, using the Audit Commission’s Place Survey questions, 41% of residents said they felt they could influence what is happening – compared to 30% nationally and 25% across the district as a whole.

One of the keys to success has been participatory budgeting, which has been used for the last three to four years. But instead



Residents work with service providers to clean up an area in Manton

of primarily seeing it as a mechanism for allocating money, Manton uses it to build democratic participation and cohesion. In 2008/9, 13% of people voted – this year it’s expected to increase to 20%. The participatory budgeting priorities are part of a neighbourhood agreement involving the police, primary care trust and district council.

The relationship between residents and providers was very poor, so the pathfinder has worked on improving trust by ensuring services respond to what local people say they want. Now levels of local trust in the police, for example, are the highest in generations.

◆ Details: [www.mantoncommunityalliance.org.uk](http://www.mantoncommunityalliance.org.uk)

### PROJECT MODEL

- ◆ Emphasis on money
- ◆ Short-term solutions; not long-term change
- ◆ Limited influence beyond the project
- ◆ Not sustainable
- ◆ Can create dependency

### SOCIAL CAPITAL MODEL

- ◆ Less dependency
- ◆ Long-term change
- ◆ Influence with responsibility
- ◆ Collective action
- ◆ More social cohesion
- ◆ Customer service approach
- ◆ Community leadership

their estates local, sustainable places, residents could develop solutions based on moving towards low carbon local communities – a local green new deal.

This is not pie in the sky. After all, previous ‘traditional’ top-down approaches have all failed. Sometimes moments of extreme crisis force us to think differently. If the outer city estates are not to spiral into further decline, with all the accompanying socio-economic and environmental problems, it is essential that we engage with their residents to come up with radically different solutions.

### NEXT STEPS

Over the next few issues of *New Start* we will explore alternative models to the current way of looking at deprived estates that draw on ideas about community potential and assets; highlight approaches that are or have been effective in estate transformation; and put outer estate towns on the policy map in their own right, outlining how current policy thinking for local public services needs to be adapted to meet their needs.

The series builds on previous articles – such as Brendan Nevin’s ‘Concentrating on worklessness alone will not revitalise the poorest estates’ (*New Start*, February 2009) – and contributes to *New Start*’s future of regeneration series for 2010. It will reflect the current debates about localism, citizen responsibility, governance,

the role of the state and the potential of new forms of enterprise, co-production and mutualism.

Each month we will look at different aspects of outer estates, posing questions and highlighting case studies of promising practice and eyewitness accounts from local activists and practitioners. The intention is to strike a positive tone with a focus on the potential and assets of estates and their populations while challenging what the government has done and the Conservatives propose. We want to stress but not romanticise bottom-up solutions and point to the essential role of the state, in investment and income distribution.

The articles will pose the need for new forms of governance designed to give a strong voice to residents and to promote asset-based development within a coherent local and sub-regional policy framework. While it will reflect our predilection for sustainability and a more equal society, it will also allow a wide variety of voices to be heard, some of them leaders in the field, others less well known. What should emerge are some effective models of outer estate transformation and how to bring it about.

◆ Martin Yarnit is an independent consultant with an interest in lifelong learning and regeneration; Jane Foot is an independent policy adviser; and Davy Jones is a consultant specialising in community involvement.



**Leading experts examine the needs of peripheral housing estates, beginning with Peter Lee who looks at the changing policy landscape**

In 1997 New Labour identified more than 1,300 'worst estates' where poverty was endemic and social exclusion entrenched. Many were outer estates whose economic and social rationale had changed; the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit and policies such as the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, New Deal for Communities and Sure Start were designed to tackle their inherent problems and reconnect such estates to the mainstream. As we approach a general election we enter a period of reflection on the effectiveness of policies and, in the case of outer estates, what their future rationale might be.

The vast overview of more than 40 years of inequality by John Hills and colleagues in their report of the National Equality Panel is timely and is a document that can be claimed by both main political parties as evidence for continuity (Labour) and change (Conservative). The crucial question, however, is not whether inequality has increased after 13 years of a Labour administration, but what would have been the trend without it? The test is one of additionality and whether urban policy (combined with

Labour's welfare record) has made a difference in altering or ameliorating trends in inequality.

During an election year one only has to listen to politicians to realise that there are only so many concepts that can be transplanted from the social sciences in the name of knowledge transfer and policy development. The causes of poverty have traditionally been viewed as falling into three groups: behavioural, institutional or structural. Old ideas and approaches are rediscovered and possible causal linkages leapt upon as 'eureka' moments, thereby privileging political imperatives. Speaking at the launch of Demos' inquiry into wellbeing, David Cameron commented that the latest research evidence suggested that '...what matters most to a child's life chances is not the wealth of their upbringing but the warmth of their parenting'. And to paraphrase: 'Bad parenting rather than inequality is at the root of deprivation and low social mobility.' Behavioural explanations are, it seems, back at the fore and one only has to extrapolate this mindset to make a best estimate of the trend line of inequality had New Labour never got to No. 10. ▶

## Julia Unwin reflects on what's been learned from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's work in outer estates

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has supported work on outer estates for well over 20 years. As part of JRF's wider interests in neighbourhood deprivation we have studied neighbourhood initiatives under the last two UK administrations and, through three major neighbourhood regeneration programmes (1992-2006), have drawn on material from hundreds of estates across the UK. The work, although touching on policy at all levels, has always been grounded in the lived experience of residents. Lessons from this work include:

### REALLY UNDERSTANDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Understanding the history, social and economic context of each 'outer estate town' is crucial, as is an appreciation of its changing trajectory. Estates that work well during periods of full or even partial employment can alter dramatically during a recession. Some estates can serve as 'transitional areas' for people who seek temporary accommodation, and then move on when the economy and housing markets allow. Other areas may reach a difficult point where they act as little more than neighbourhoods of last resort for very excluded populations. Any remedial actions need to be based on a clear analysis of each neighbourhood, its history and its development.

### COMMUNITY ANCHORS AND ASSETS

During JRF's 2002-6 neighbourhood programme, we worked with 'community anchor' bodies on several large, peripheral estates (E.g. Caia Park, Wrexham; Pilton, Edinburgh; and Castle Vale, Birmingham). The best of these were led by boards of local residents and, funded from a variety of sources, addressed a number of problems: lack of skills and unemployment; trouble with parenting; debt; poor health; antisocial behaviour; building homes; and lack of youth provision. Many bodies have been around for more than a decade and have shown persistence and continuity of a kind that governments can find hard to match with their mistaken emphasis on short-term solutions. The roles of such bodies, and the issues of owning assets, are currently being looked at by JRF's community assets programme.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

Not all estates opt for the leading roles assumed by the largest community anchors. Over the last decade neighbourhood management – often a partnership between local authorities and neighbourhoods – has proved a versatile and effective tool which can be used for confronting challenging issues as well as maintaining improvements and marketing the area. The Eastfield Partnership in Scarborough, which JRF worked with during its neighbourhood programme, tackled a range of work: a ten-year plan and neighbourhood vision for the area; involvement in the development of a nearby business park; overseeing plans for a new housing development; and considering possible town council status for the estate.

### FLEXIBILITY AND RESPONSIVENESS FROM STATUTORY BODIES

However successful estate-based initiatives may be, and however well they involve local residents and their organisations, progress will be difficult to sustain without statutory support. In recent years there has been a period of unparalleled experimentation as local authorities and their partners have assumed greater responsibilities for 'place'. Bradford district is currently building on a successful track record of neighbourhood work. Neighbourhood forums and a new neighbourhood management tool called 'ward officer teams' are now in operation right across the district. This allows for a focus on out-of-town estates, for which Bradford has secured government Connecting Communities funding.

### PERSISTENCE

Building the skills and trust to regenerate large estates and maintain improvements takes time and requires leadership, vision, flexibility and resources. But perhaps the most important ingredients are patience and time. In today's environment when new initiatives are constantly layered over earlier ones, creating this space – or continuity – is an ongoing challenge. It is easiest achieved in localities where good neighbourhood practice has achieved sufficient support, i.e. where experienced practitioners are present at enough levels of governance to ensure that effective working in neighbourhoods can survive changes in funding and even changes of regime.

### VISION AND SUPPORT FROM THE CENTRE

Many JRF publications have stressed the importance of strong support and leadership from government for effective work in neighbourhoods: one such was a summary *Regenerating neighbourhoods*, which although written 12 years ago is still relevant today. Based on lessons from JRF's five-year area regeneration programme, the summary pointed to the advantages that would flow from: a robust national framework which allows local diversity; thinking 'city' and 'neighbourhood' across a range of government policies; and government spelling out how effective neighbourhood working can contribute to competitiveness, cohesion, better governance and sustainability.

There is no question that conditions on outer estates will continue to throw up challenges for government at all levels. Modest resources for work in such areas, in particular those with predominantly white populations, are being made available under the Connecting Communities initiative. In addition, government would do well to continue advocating neighbourhood management. Although the neighbourhood management pathfinders are all drawing to a close, this style of work has been adopted in many local authorities, and it still needs encouragement, for example via LSPs and un-ringfenced funding.

◆ Julia Unwin is director of the Joseph Rowntree



### FIND OUT MORE

Community assets programme, <http://snurl.com/uktji>  
*The importance of the neighbourhood: tackling the implementation gap*, <http://snurl.com/uktj>  
*Regenerating neighbourhoods: creating integrated and sustainable improvements*, <http://snurl.com/uktjs>



Irrespective of what might have been, there is no denying that over the past decade New Labour's urban policy agenda has swung inexorably away from a narrative concerned with poverty and social exclusion to a more economically-driven agenda around competitiveness of urban renaissance, city centre living encompassing the knowledge and creative economy, and housing market renewal. Meanwhile, the financial, economic and spatial logics have been enhanced by the Barker review which sought an expansion of housing numbers to quell house price differentials while encouraging release of land where this enhanced economic development.

So it is important to discern the underlying narrative and the prospects for the future of outer estates, and how we arrive at a new rationale whichever administration is in power come the summer. In a post credit-crunch world there is a rising tide of support for mutualism and cooperatives both from the left and the right, as well as a rediscovery of localism. As Labour touts Lambeth as the John Lewis (partnership) council, the Tories back Barnet as the easyCouncil. Localism and mutualism spell both opportunities and dangers for outer estates.

The 'new normal' for regeneration means embracing a 'more for less' approach which can see the emerging opportunities in a post-carbon economy. Its encouragement could yield imaginative responses in combining post-carbon trading systems. One example might be the promotion of energy saving development trusts: new mutual vehicles funded through the 'rolling up' of potential revenues (and carbon savings) resulting from the setting of feed-in tariffs. This relies on the micro-generation of energy which is clearly a luxury for many hard-pressed households living in outer estates – it is hard enough to put food on the table and keep the kids off the streets. Micro-generation requires investment and coordination of activity. But creating a 'new normal' that identifies the opportunities in a post-carbon economy and works within the grain of the emerging structures would provide a number of solutions to outer estates. It would yield procurement and planning incentives and savings which create jobs and opportunities in a green economy while reducing fuel poverty and increasing disposable incomes.

The danger of mutualism and localism is that the outer estates are held back by both a failure of imagination and a failure of past policies. The emphasis on competitiveness was driven by some rather shaky economic assumptions which yielded only superficial transformation of our city centres. So the rationale for outer estates will need to compete with the legacy of speculative investment and the past decades' misplaced optimism in city centre living-sponsored renaissance. This displaced housing investment away from social housing to 'effective demand' in the city centres, which competed with and held back outer estates. In such a climate the political embrace of mutualism is driven by pragmatism in the face of spending cuts and a squeeze on Treasury funds for regeneration. It will need a leap of imagination and creativity to ensure that the outer estates are not held back further and that the 'eureka' of mutualism and localism does not resign such estates to deal with problems not of their own making, by themselves.

◆ Peter Lee is director of the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at Birmingham Business School, Birmingham University.

## Housing policy has been key to physical improvements on estates over the



The peripheral estates that were developed by local authorities over a 25-year period from the 1950s were the reflection of an optimistic view that planning and state intervention would radically alter the life chances of many working class communities.

On the whole, these estates did improve the quality of housing, but in many cases the life chances of existing residents have not improved at all. There are many complex reasons for this, but principally the main drivers of change have been economic. The new estates were often constructed near to car factories (as in Birmingham), new deep mines (Stoke) or factories relocated through regional selective assistance (Kirkby in Merseyside).

The ensuing decades of economic restructuring have left many of these residential areas without employment nearby, and a spatial and social disconnection with the wider environment within which they are situated.

The plight of these often vast estates became evident in the 1980s, as many practitioners and academics became alerted to

the fact that chronic deprivation existed at scale outside the inner city. This deprivation was compounded by a lack of social and retail facilities. For example, the Easterhouse estate in Glasgow with its initial population of 50,000 had to wait a quarter of a century for a proper medical facility to be constructed. In addition to the mounting unemployment and social isolation, the high density stock of walk-up flats and tower blocks was showing signs of unpopularity with high levels of vacancies and tenancy turnover. In the most marginal cities the peripheral estates had entered crisis and soon became the focus of long-term regeneration efforts.

The programmes of the 1980s focused upon demolishing the worst stock, introducing tenure diversification and attempting to introduce an internal economy to the estates. The economic development was based on the stimulation of community enterprise and training projects, cooperatives and credit unions. While a small number of these initiatives have survived (such as the credit unions in Glasgow), most of the employment projects did not survive the withdrawal of public subsidy during the 1990s.

### Andy Stranack argues for a new breed of bank at the heart of estate regeneration

After graduating from university I worked as a social policy adviser for Croydon Council. At the same time I was undertaking voluntary work at a church youth club on Monks Hill estate. Through this work I realised the policies I was writing for the council were having little effect on people's lives on the estate. In 2001 I gave up my job, sold my house and went to live and work on the estate full-time.

My experiences there have given me a unique insight into why regeneration policies are failing. In particular, I have seen at first hand the gulf of misunderstanding between communities and government in several ways:

1. There is a general fear of the state in most of our deprived communities and a commonly held 'conspiracy theory' that big business and government are working to suppress the poor. This fear is reinforced at a more practical level by residents' generally negative experience of interacting with local or national government. The council is often seen as the enemy trying to 'take the kids away' or 'trying to get residents evicted from their homes'.

2. Some of our most deprived communities have a very mature community structure that repels interference and views outsiders with suspicion. In the past, regeneration projects have relied far too heavily on parachuting in regeneration experts to lead projects. The people who sign up to these projects are often those new or at the fringes of the community. The core families – the real influencers – steer clear of strangers.

3. Too many of the regeneration schemes have been capital based: the concept has been to build a new community facility, get some community involvement and move on. The root cause of deprivation across the UK is chronically low levels of hope, aspiration, self-belief and a small world view. Regeneration should be about people not bricks, and should recognise that real change takes time.

4. The very structure of local authorities encourages empire building, as each department competes for a bigger slice of the budget and to control more services. This culture restricts the desire to share resources with the community and the voluntary sector.

#### SHARED SUCCESS FACTORS

Despite the negative picture set out above, there are organisations that are transforming the communities they are working in. All the projects are effectively targeting deprivation in different ways, but they share some common factors:

- ◆ They are long term in their thinking
- ◆ They are third sector organisations
- ◆ They are working in, or their workers are from, the deprived communities they serve
- ◆ The key concern is people, not bricks and buildings
- ◆ They are often faith based
- ◆ Until recently they have received limited funding from local authorities
- ◆ Key aims are to increase a person's self respect, ambition and world view

From visits to successful grass roots projects in Camberwell and Peckham and discussions with Camila Batmanghelidjh at Kids Company, who has been particularly helpful in listening and honing the solutions below, I have put together some proposals for restructuring our approach to regeneration.

#### COMMUNITY BANK

The main proposal is that every area should have a Community Bank whose aim would be to provide practical and financial support for the voluntary sector. This would help to provide solutions to two problems that affect hard-pressed third sector organisations: lack of resources and poor coordination and communication between them. It would also take account of the difficulty they all experience



## last 25 years. Now it must play a new role, says **Brendan Nevin**

The 1990s brought a new wave of change. The physical restructuring continued, but slowly the focus on community economic development receded and as the decade proceeded the numbers of people exiting the labour market accelerated dramatically. As the new century loomed, in many estates the worklessness rate now approached or exceeded 50% and the official unemployment rate had ceased to be relevant. It was only at the end of the long economic boom in 2007/08 that the government seemed to acknowledge that some locations had never emerged from the economic crisis of the 1980s.

After 25 years of being acknowledged as a major urban problem, what has changed? The worst housing in many locations has now been cleared; the large scale investment in social housing refurbishment has also improved the quality of the remaining stock; and 'right to buy' has had an impact in creating neighbourhood stability. It is clear that while there is still work to do in relation to housing, the main issues now relate to employment, skills, income inequality and deprivation.

**A new approach is needed in relation to peripheral estates and we should learn from the past interventions and not be seduced by**

**the emerging localism debate. The inward-focused community based economic initiatives of the 1980s were not durable solutions. A new policy framework must be people-based but also aim to reintegrate these places back into the mainstream of economic and social activity.**

**Housing policy can reinforce the investment in social capital. For example, in some cases surplus land can be used to generate receipts to invest in social and commercial facilities; current decent homes and PFI schemes in areas which still exhibit poor housing need to be honoured by an incoming government. Given the national capital expenditure position, a focus on competitiveness is unavoidable. The contribution that local housing management can make to stabilising neighbourhoods, while providing the organisational capacity to develop local childcare and community safety schemes, will also help to facilitate the outward-looking focus to renewal initiatives which is essential if we are to learn from history.**

◆ Brendan Nevin is a visiting professor at the Institute of Political and Economic Governance, Manchester University.



with the regulatory requirements that the government insists on in its dealings with the third sector, despite all the talk about compacts. All regeneration funding would be channelled through the Community Banks which would also have a responsibility to attract resources from the private sector. They would be independent of state control, set up as cooperatives or mutual societies and their work would be independently monitored with annual perception surveys of local residents. The banks and their activity would be funded from existing resources.

They would:

- ◆ Map and track the voluntary sector in the local authority area.
- ◆ Provide legal, fundraising, health and safety, human resource functions and capacity building support for grass roots voluntary organisations in their area.
- ◆ Employ a number of community champions living and working full-time in some of the most deprived areas to facilitate and coordinate the voluntary sector in their area, identifying gaps in services and working with the bank to fill the gaps. They would also provide intelligence to the bank on the best areas and organisations to spend regeneration funding on.
- ◆ Be independently monitored with annual 'perception' surveys of residents.

UK governments have wasted billions of pounds trying to regenerate the most deprived areas because of a lack of understanding nationally and locally of how these communities operate. After years of waste it is time for government to learn from what is working in the third sector and build a new intelligence bridge that has its roots right at the heart of our most deprived communities.

◆ Andy Stranack worked part-time for the Centre for Social Justice until the end of 2009 and is Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Camberwell and Peckham. He works for All Saints Church in Peckham as pastor to the Harris Academy at Peckham.

## Cities across northern Europe are tackling similar problems on peripheral



Despite differences in national cultures and institutions, all the major European cities are facing issues over the future of social housing in a world where traditional industry has disappeared and immigrants have taken the place of the original working class residents who have left the cities for new suburbs. However, countries like Sweden and the Netherlands have performed much better in terms of equality and the various indicators of social malaise, such as teenage pregnancies and alcohol dependency. We could therefore learn a great deal from the different ways they are dealing with peripheral estates.

The pressures to accommodate a growing population along with greater powers for local government led countries like the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany to develop huge estates around their major cities, often system built.

Visiting peripheral estates in different countries, which is made much easier by higher quality public transit systems, I have been

struck by a general sense of order, and of investment in the public realm. Instead of comprehensive development schemes a la UK, with all the social costs involved in dislocated lives, funds are being spent on improving security systems and reducing energy consumption. Action has also been taken to make estates feel less inhuman, for example by using coloured render, and improving the public realm around dwelling entrances.

I was struck by the way in Gothenburg, for example, there is little attempt to make estates self-sufficient. Instead the focus is on connecting them up with facilities, such as a direct bus to the Volvo plant. Indeed when I asked residents in the new town of Almeire to the north of Amsterdam whether they would have liked local shops, they responded that there was no point as buses on reserved carriageways linked them to the town centre in a few minutes, with little time to wait for the next bus.

With a broader range of people qualifying for social housing, and rents related to incomes rather than social need, there does

### Jane Foot explains how an estate in Cornwall turned its fortunes around

In the mid 1990s, the Beacon and Old Hill estate, on the outskirts of Falmouth, was in the depths of despair. For the statutory agencies it was perceived a 'no go' area peopled by a lawless and apathetic community who did not want change. But now it is a flourishing, active and self-managing community, in charge of its own destiny.

How did that happen? The Connecting Communities (C2) approach, or 'community capacity release model', emphasises recognising, valuing and supporting the strengths in the community rather than focusing on needs and deficits.

#### TENANTS PROVIDE THE ENERGY FOR CHANGE

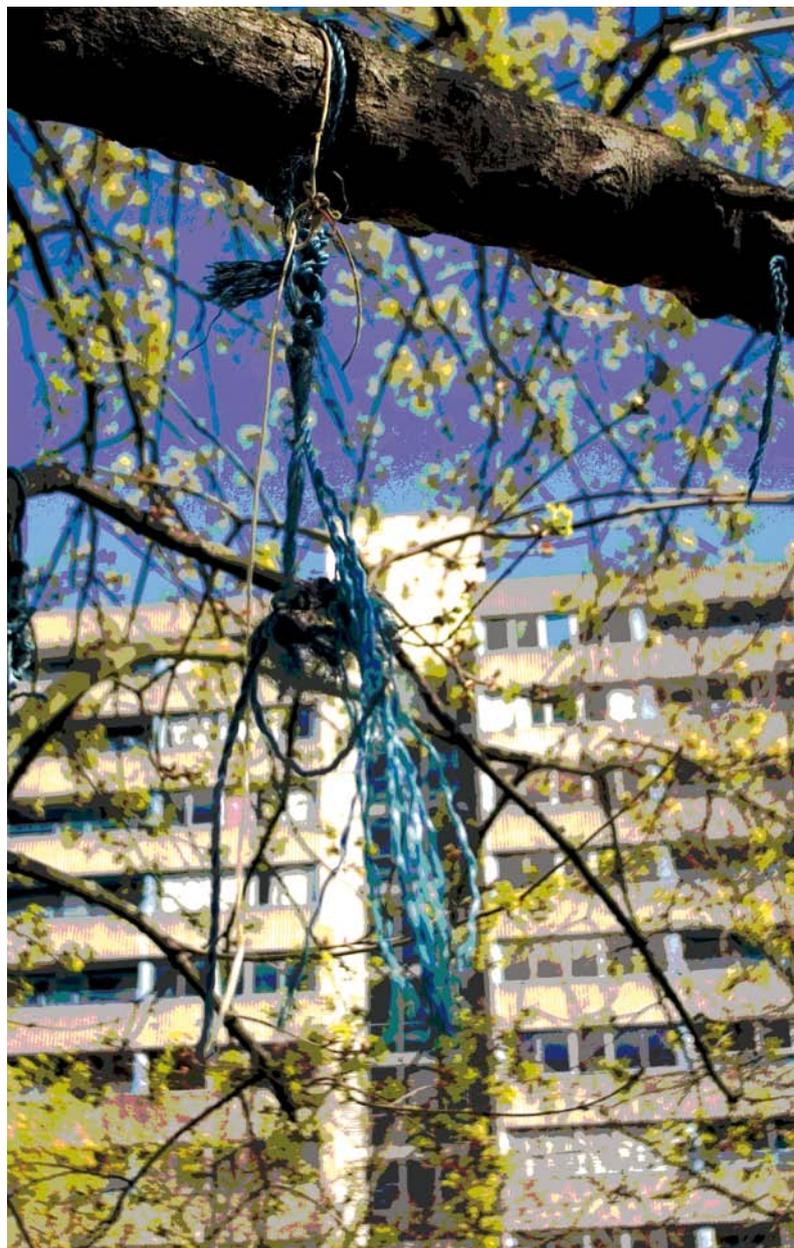
The transformation of Beacon and Old Hill started with two health visitors who were confident that residents, with multi-agency support, could lead and sustain transformative change. Twenty residents were approached but fearing reprisals only five volunteered to take the lead. They knocked on every door for one to one chats, delivered a newsletter and persuaded people to come to 'listening forums'. Word of mouth meant the meetings grew until over 100 people were attending and the agencies were finding out what people wanted.

#### ANGER AS A POSITIVE FORCE FOR CHANGE

At these forums, residents found their collective voice and service providers listened. As Hazel Stuteley, who leads the C2 programme, explains: 'For the first time in many years the community was physically together. At first no one said much, then what started as a trickle turned into a torrent of anger. It was like unleashing a champagne cork, years of pent up anger came pouring out, most of it directed towards the police for not policing and the local government for failing to provide even good enough housing. It was over as quickly as it had begun – suddenly the air was clear and we could move forward.'

#### INVEST TIME IN NETWORKS, VALUES AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Using appreciative inquiry, participative techniques and face to face conversations the health visitors generated energy and a receptive context for change, with both agency staff and tenants starting to believe that change could happen. Small victories and visible differences demonstrated agencies were listening and working on local priorities.



## estates – and there's much to learn from their solutions, says **Nicholas Falk**

seem to be a greater mix of both classes and races than on many UK estates, as far as can be judged from first impressions, although there is no doubt that inequalities in cities have widened, in part due to privatisation.

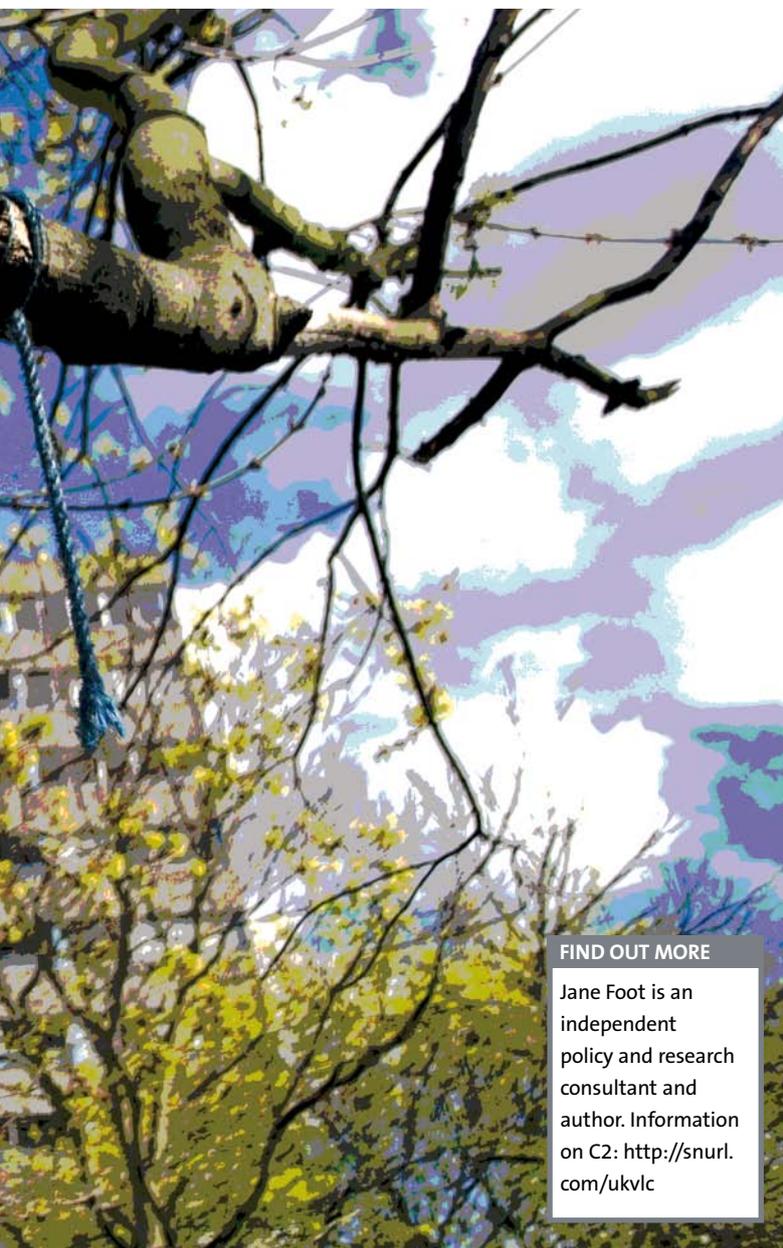
It seems clear – according to articles on the subject in a magazine produced by the European Social Observatory CECODHAS – that as people prefer to live near others like themselves, the ideals of truly mixed communities are not being achieved. In the Netherlands the shooting of two politicians highlighted underlying tensions over how ethnic groups were being integrated. Consequently there have been strong social pressures to give up the idea of multiculturalism.

The influential Dutch report, *Trust in the neighbourhood*, published in 2005, concluded that people in deprived neighbourhoods are disconnected and need to be involved in small scale neighbourhood based networks through social landlords taking the lead. As in 2007 housing associations delivered 42% of the country's 34,000 new homes for sale or rent, the impact of these

proposals could be considerable, given the financial resources of the social landlords and their ability to rent out homes they do not sell. One solution, in Rotterdam, to the weakening of social bonds is the 'social etiquette' programme called Opzooieren – rules developed at block and neighbourhood level for how communal space is managed, starting with street parties.

European estates which feel safe to walk and cycle around and with schools that perform an extended role, as well as a much stronger cooperative tradition in service delivery, are intrinsically more sustainable than our 'open prisons'. If resources were invested in 'bridging social capital' and in making connections, rather than continually tearing places down and rebuilding them, we would achieve infinitely more, even if it meant politicians had fewer photo opportunities.

◆ Nicholas Falk is founder director of regeneration research and consultancy firm Urbed.



### FIND OUT MORE

Jane Foot is an independent policy and research consultant and author. Information on C2: <http://snurl.com/ukvlc>

Actively supporting community led activities and networks rebuilt trust between neighbours and with the agencies. Hazel explains: 'We built up people's self-esteem by leading from behind. We were the enablers. We only take credit for kick-starting it and getting those people to the level of self-confidence and self-belief so that they could carry on.'

### DO WHAT THE COMMUNITY WANTS, NOT WHAT OTHERS THINK THEY WANT

Not only did the community have to feel that things really would change, but they had to believe that the agencies would listen to them about what changes were the most important. The first victory was to win a £2.2m Capital Challenge bid for funds to insulate the houses and put in central heating. The police and housing department then successfully dealt with antisocial behaviour, resulting in a 50% drop in all levels of crime.

### GIVE REAL POWER TO TENANTS

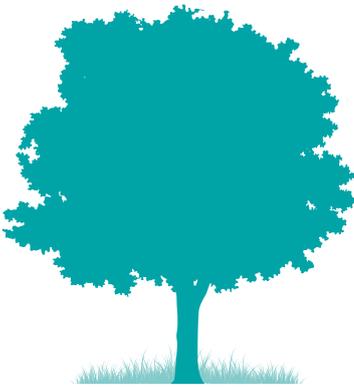
The majority on the Beacon and Old Hill Partnership are residents. They were given control of prioritising the money allocated to heat, clad and insulate their homes. It was up to them to decide – and defend – how the money was used and ensure that it was used fairly and transparently. It showed that residents could be in control. And supporting self-organisation and community strengthening has meant that it is a partnership of equals and experts, which continues as the Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership.

### VISIBLE CHANGE BEGETS CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR

Once there was visible change on the estate, people's behaviours changed in ways that were not 'planned'. Crime rates, exam results, teenage pregnancy, child protection registrations have all improved. People started to come out of their houses and a whole range of community activities got going. Agencies located their services and new facilities on the estate.

### CHANGING THE DYNAMIC RATHER THAN TARGET CHASING.

Geographically and socially isolated estates – like many outer city estates – have their own dynamic and complex interrelationships. Tapping into and releasing that inner dynamism and energy, which is always there, is what leads to transformative self-organisation. One-off target-determined projects do not engage with that dynamic and do not build up the sense that, with support, the community can 'take charge of this place'.



## Open access and bespoke training for the regeneration, social enterprise, and community sectors.



The **New Start Learning Network** has been created to meet the needs of professionals and practitioners working to make places better for people.

Our beneficiaries work in local authorities, housing associations and registered social landlords, regional development agencies, primary care trusts, regeneration partnerships, social enterprises, charities, the private sector, voluntary and community organisations, consultancies, and even think tanks and universities.

Their responsibilities may vary, but all are united by elements of the work they do which includes a focus on

making places better, regeneration, economic development, and social inclusion.

Extensive scoping of our sector has found an increasing discord between the training that is available and current needs. Now New Start - the award winning magazine which has covered learning, best practice, policy analysis and debate for over 11 years - is launching a new network of training and learning provision to meet the urgent need that our readers and our sector tell us they have. New Start itself is a small social enterprise and we understand very well the challenges that our audience need to address in 2010-11.

Our training is different. It's bespoke. It's solution-driven. It's practical. And rather than attempting to achieve an outcome dictated by a CPD requirement, it focuses on the needs of our delegates and is designed to increase your capacity. Our training is interactive - you will be engaged and even challenged throughout the day but you will leave with your own learning needs addressed and with a new capacity and understanding of the course subject matter.

We can run any of our training courses on an in-house basis, or you can book onto one of our open-access courses.

Course title	Delivered by	In house	Open access
Business development: a toolkit to win public sector contracts and work with procurers	Ervine Okuboh	✓	London: 28th October & Sheffield: 10th November
Community newsletters – avoiding the common editorial mistakes; writing news and features	Clare Goff (NS)	✓	
Developing managed workspace and community assets	Chris Prescott	✓	
Dealing with uncertainty and managing risk	Stuart Thompson	✓	Sheffield: 20th October & London: 2nd November
Digital publishing	Siobhan Hanley	✓	
Evaluating your community project	Dr. Margaret Prescott	✓	
Fundraising for community enterprises	Chris Prescott	✓	
How to get your message across – PR and communications	Jill Theobald	✓	Sheffield: 21st October
Marketing and sales for social enterprises	Jamie Veitch (NS)	✓	Sheffield: 19th October
Organisational management for community enterprises	Ervine Okuboh	✓	
Placemaking – an introduction	Julian Dobson (NS)	✓	
Principles of event organisation	Maire McCarthy (NS)	✓	

*“The training [about producing community newsletters] certainly met our requirements, it was good that those delivering the workshops had a clear understanding of the sort of regeneration and community activity that the researchers are involved in and so could see what they were doing and trying to achieve. Good value for money – good supporting materials and thought had gone into preparation.”*

**Andrew Petrie**, Head of Policy and Evaluation, dba Management Consultancy Ltd

To book onto an open-access course or to discuss our in-house course options please call **0114 281 6130** or use the booking form at **[www.nsln.org.uk](http://www.nsln.org.uk)**.



The Byker estate in Newcastle upon Tyne, which could be turned into an eco-estate with the help of £48m of government funding

## What could the future hold for outer estates? **Martin Yarnit** begins with an idea that's emerged from an unlikely source – eco-towns

Better transport links with urban hubs could be part of the solution for some of the smaller outer estates, as they are in Sweden (*New Start*, April 2010), but the question posed by big estates of 5,000 people and over is about purpose and identity. Places like Wythenshawe, south Manchester, are big enough to be towns in their own right, as well as to support a much larger volume of economic activity.

But how do you bring about the process of transformation and what kind of approaches might offer practical solutions?

Here are four striking characteristics of successful turnarounds:

- ◆ time and resources to explore solutions tailored to the needs of each estate
- ◆ engagement of the whole community in developing solutions
- ◆ energetic, clear-sighted leadership by local residents in partnership with key agencies
- ◆ an effective locally-led implementation unit.

It also helps if transformation takes place in a period of economic growth.

This series has pointed to a sophisticated set of mechanisms that can be drawn on to bring about estate transformation. These include participatory budgeting, the power to create parish councils, neighbourhood management, community contracts, plus the lessons drawn from previous experiences such as new deal for communities about how to create local capacity for bringing about change. It also helps that finally all three major political parties have signed up to localism and community engagement.

### **PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS: ECO-TOWNS**

The biggest challenge is recreating an economic base that substitutes jobs and investment in new businesses for benefit and grant dependence, taking account of local conditions and assets. Three years ago, the government presented a brave picture of a new breed of eco-towns that would have warmed the heart of Ebenezer Howard, the

## Inside an eco-town

- ◆ Community-scale heat sources, possibly using combined heat and power plants
- ◆ Charging points for electric cars
- ◆ All homes within ten minutes' walk of frequent public transport and everyday services
- ◆ Parks, playgrounds and gardens to make up 40% of towns
- ◆ Individual homes must achieve 70% carbon savings above current building regulations in terms of heating, hot water and lighting
- ◆ Zero-carbon buildings including shops, restaurants and schools
- ◆ Ensuring a minimum of one job per house can be reached by walking, cycling or public transport to reduce car dependence
- ◆ Car journeys to make up less than half of all journeys
- ◆ Locating homes within ten minutes' walk of frequent public transport and everyday neighbourhood services
- ◆ Homes fitted with smart meters and solar and wind generation. Residents will be able to control the heat and ventilation of their homes at the touch of a button and sell their surplus energy into the grid

### GET INVOLVED

If you would like contribute to the debate on outer estates contact Martin Yarnit, Jane Foot or Davy Jones. Email: [martin.yarnit@virgin.net](mailto:martin.yarnit@virgin.net)

Below: Wythenshawe is an example of an estate ready to take on its own identity and purpose

pioneer of garden towns like Welwyn Garden City. This addressed the key issues of purpose and identity.

A prospectus published alongside the 2007 housing green paper suggested: 'Eco-towns are a major opportunity for local authorities, house builders, developers and registered social landlords to come together to build small new towns... they offer an opportunity to design a whole town – business and services as well as homes – to achieve zero-carbon development, and to use this experience to help guide other developments across the country.'

It was an exciting picture of zero-carbon settlements, with full facilities, with 30-50% affordable housing in mixed communities, green infrastructure, extensive community engagement and the whole driven by a local management body (see box). But there was a major catch which turned out to be a serious stumbling block. They had to be new settlements, separate but well linked to adjacent towns and cities, each with a minimum of 5,000 homes. Local government has been up in arms over the suspicion that



## Viewing communities as assets is the way forward. It's as easy as ABCD,



Look at almost any regeneration strategy. The first half describes in detail the deficiencies, problems and needs of the area or estate and its residents. The second half says that these same deficient communities must be 'empowered' to take control of their area or estate.

Leaving aside the fraught issue of what exactly is meant here by empowerment, there is an inconsistency at the heart of this well-trodden policy path. If you have been telling people that they have nothing to offer, where does their energy and self-belief come from to take action? And if regeneration professionals only see the problems, how can they have faith that people can do things for themselves? They are so used to the glass being half empty that they cannot see that the glass is also half full.

The familiar 'deficit' model focuses on the problems, needs and deficiencies in a community. Research documents, needs analysis and deprivation indices lay out in technicolour all the problems and things that are lacking. What is prescribed is more professionals and more services to fill the gaps and fix the problems. Residents as a result often feel they are passive recipients of services that 'don't quite fit' what

they wanted. The outcome for many estates is that the community is demoralised, dependent on external help and disempowered from demanding more or doing things for itself.

### THE ANSWER IS ABCD

Asset based community development (ABCD) starts with a different mindset: communities are not built on the basis of their deficiencies and needs but on the basis of their strengths and self-confidence. ABCD explicitly values and maps the skills, capacity, knowledge, networks and potential in a community. The principle is that 'everybody has something to offer' and 'everybody has something they care enough about to get active'. Communities can lead their own development rather than it being driven by external agencies with their own agendas and targets.

ABCD emphasises door knocking, face-to-face conversations and events that build on the positives. The goal is to draw out the skills, strengths and potential within a community – the assets – and to help people make new connections to each other and to new networks. Voluntary and community groups, faith groups, schools, community centres, local services are also mapped to see how they can build self-confidence and support community building, neighbourliness and

the government intended to by-pass normal planning processes to dump new population centres next to existing settlements and to install unelected managers to run them.

#### LONG-TERM PLAN FOR A GREEN ECONOMIC BASE

The idea has taken a battering and so far only a handful have been approved for development, but meanwhile a new variant has emerged, the eco-estate. The government recently announced a £48m plan for green jobs and investment in the Byker estate, Newcastle upon Tyne. Drawn up by a task force led by Homes and Communities Agency Academy chair Peter Roberts, it envisages a long-term transformation of the estate led by a community trust – providing residents vote in favour of the proposals. The trust would own and manage the estate in perpetuity for the benefit of local residents.

So, what is the relationship between eco-estates, eco-towns and transition towns? All three share a commitment to meeting the targets for carbon reduction. Eco-estates and transition towns are driven by community ownership and initiative, while eco-towns and eco-estates share a serious investment in infrastructure.

For eco-estates to work, careful attention would have to be paid to

- ◆ ensuring there is local support
- ◆ giving them self-government
- ◆ getting the social balance right so they don't become a new version of out-of-town dumps for the poor
- ◆ developing the economic base

This last point is problematic but not impossible. It entails maximising the scope for local jobs and enterprise in locally delivered public services and businesses, as the Marsh Farm Outreach Team in Luton has long advocated.

- ◆ Martin Yarnit is an independent consultant with an interest in lifelong learning and regeneration.

## New thinking: a number of recent developments and publications point the way for eco-estates

*Phoenix cities* (Policy Press 2010), draws on the experience of cities that have been successfully turned around to generate a set of conclusions that could equally apply to big estates, such as special neighbourhood programmes and social enterprise.

*Mass localism* (<http://snurl.com/v69g8>) applies the lessons from Nesta's Big Green Challenge, a local programme for reducing carbon emissions, arguing: 'Instead of assuming that the best solutions need to be determined, prescribed, driven or "authorised" from the centre, policymakers should create more opportunities for communities to develop and deliver their own solutions and to learn from each other.' This approach – of 'people powered public services' – can also be found in the pioneering approach to public service design and delivery by the consultancy Participle.

A broad overview of the potential for social innovation comes in *How to innovate: the tools for social innovation* (Young Foundation for Nesta, 2008), <http://snurl.com/v6978>

The practical implications of this thinking are developed in *Social venturing* (<http://snurl.com/v69gy>), drawing on the experience of initiatives like the Bromley by Bow Centre. An example of these new approaches is the partnership between a community action group in Britain and tea plantation workers in India. The Marsh Farm Outreach Team in Luton is facilitating the development of a brand new estate-based social enterprise called Just Change Marsh Farm, which will distribute a range of goods purchased directly from the Adivasi people of India and other international partners in a 'community to community' trading arrangement.

Finally, in *The cuts won't work* (<http://snurl.com/v69hj>), the Green New Deal Group spells out a plan to revitalise the productive economy and to lay the foundations for low carbon infrastructure entailing the creation of new jobs.

## explains Jane Foot

mutual help. And what they can offer the community to make changes.

It makes use of techniques such as appreciative inquiry and participative appraisal, emphasising what works and what will be empowering. Social capital – the network of linkages within a community and with services – and civil society are key assets for a community to make the most of its own resources and to bring in external resources to support its own vision and priorities.

For many community development workers this is familiar stuff in a new language. But recently community working has come to mean working in a community on externally determined agendas of improving services, meeting targets and managing projects.

Asset based community development and the associated process of asset mapping is being adopted in many parts of the US, Canada, Australia, Holland, Ireland and Uganda. Barack and Michelle Obama both trained in ABCD. Public health services in the UK are also beginning to show interest.

The example of Manton (*New Start*, March 2010) showed an estate that sidestepped the usual pairing of 'problems' and projects. Instead it decided to concentrate on building social capital and changing relationships and behaviours rather than building unsustainable

projects. The C2 projects in Cornwall and Devon (*New Start*, April 2010), using a very similar approach to ABCD, have been equally successful at transforming estates.

ABCD is not an alternative to improved services. Nor does it remove the imperative of investment to tackle the structural causes of poverty and inequality. It is not about leaving people to get on with it on their own. It is about spending time and money on supporting communities to take control. It is about spending decisions in the area being based on what local people define as important. For improvement to be long-lasting and effective, the prerequisites are self-confidence, trust, networks and awareness of local strengths and potential.

And as money gets tight, confident and powerful communities will be in a better position to demand the structural changes they require to improve their quality of life.

- ◆ Jane Foot is an independent policy and research consultant and the author of *A glass half full: how an assets approach can improve community health and wellbeing*, available at <http://snurl.com/vg5vk>  
*An overview of ABCD*, <http://snurl.com/uku5s>  
Manton Community Alliance, [www.mantoncommunityalliance.org.uk](http://www.mantoncommunityalliance.org.uk)

## A resident's view: Glenn Jenkins, Marsh Farm, Luton



The reason Regeneration Plc persistently fails to tackle poverty and exclusion in outer city estates like Marsh Farm is not because we're so hard to reach, but because Regeneration Plc is so hard to breach.

Ten years have now passed since I was first blessed with the opportunity of working together with dozens of my friends and neighbours in Marsh Farm, a dedicated team from regeneration agency Renaisi and some good guys from Luton Council to produce *The Phoenix Rises*. This was our ten-year plan setting out how we would use new deal for communities funding to transform Marsh Farm into 'a pioneering, forward looking, sustainable and capable community which is able to work and enjoy a quality of life that is full of opportunity and optimism'.

The Phoenix document stated that the 'Jewel in Marsh Farm's crown' was the acquisition of a large empty factory which sat in the middle of the estate, for redevelopment into a buzzing neighbourhood hub, providing a base for joined up and more accountable public services, at

least 100 local jobs within a family of new social enterprises and a high quality indoor playground to give our kids a well deserved treat and crucially, to attract people from outside Marsh Farm.

We knew this was never going to be easy, given that our estate had much higher levels of unemployment, crime and social exclusion than the rest of the town, and an ingrained reputation in the local and national press for riots and disorder. Yet, as we now approach the final year of our NDC programme, I can say with absolute certainty that the main problem with regenerating the socioeconomic fabric of communities like Marsh Farm definitely isn't that the local population is 'hard to reach'. Instead, it's the top-down, bureaucratic culture, with its fragmented systems and structures which were imposed on all NDC areas from the word go, which are notoriously 'hard to breach'.

I obviously haven't got anything like the space here to detail the dazzling array of technical, bureaucratic and quasi-legal obstacles which have been put in the way of our attempts to achieve our vision. But I've enough to say we've had to do battle on several fronts, on pretty much

In the 1970s, when policymakers first became interested in the scope of neighbourhood programmes for alleviating social deprivation, the inner city became synonymous with places where government should be combating the most serious levels of deprivation.

It was in the inner city, it was assumed, that government would find populations living at highest residential densities, in sub-standard rented housing in unattractive physical environments, suffering from structural employment decline and from low levels of educational attainment. Few people at that time could have forecast the extent to which the locus of disadvantage would increasingly shift to large peripheral social housing estates in the country's largest provincial cities.

The *Liverpool inner area study*, one of three funded by the Department of the Environment in the early 1970s, pioneered the use of cluster analysis techniques to create a typology of local neighbourhoods, based on their demographic characteristics. These clusters were linked to administrative records to identify differences in the extent and manifestation of social disadvantage in different types of community.

In recent years commercial companies such as Experian and CACI have applied similar statistical methods to the entire country. The growing number of social surveys whose results can be linked to these classifications now make it possible to compare differences in the form of deprivation in a much more detailed and comprehensive manner than was the case in the 1970s.

Experian's Mosaic classification, for example, differentiates three types of postcode, common in low rise peripheral municipal estates described under the label 'municipal dependency', which experience particularly high levels of social deprivation.

'Families on benefits', 1.21% of UK households, is a cluster which has an exceptionally high proportion of households with children, many of them single parent households with no employed adult and no access to a car. Very few of these children live with both their natural parents. Such estates are often more common in relatively prosperous cities which lack a tradition of building social housing and where housing departments can only find accommodation for families in great need, such as the Blackbird Leys estate in Oxford and Whitehawk in Brighton.

The type 'low horizons', with 2.64% of households, consists of postcodes in slightly less disadvantaged neighbourhoods but which are mostly located in very large municipal housing schemes characterised by an almost complete absence of self-employed people. In these estates

## Who lives on outer estates? Richard Webber looks at what the evidence tells us

children suffer particularly from poverty of experience and of imagination and from a lack of exposure to the stimulus of different cultures.

It was this particular type which characterised the types of community described in the research report *Aspiration and attainment amongst young people in deprived communities* produced by the DCLG in December 2008.

While these two types are most common on the periphery of large provincial cities, 'ex industrial legacy', with 2.86% of households, is a cluster which is more common in ex-mining areas and is characterised by higher levels of occupational qualification but by poor access to jobs other than in manufacturing, ill health, high levels of disability and unemployment.

The general group 'municipal dependency', to which these clusters belong, manifests a culture which is heavily reliant on the state for education, health and policing but also for transport, housing and social services. Though most neighbourhoods consist of two-storey family housing in spacious plots, fewer people have exercised their right to buy than in Experian's Mosaic group 'blue collar enterprise', which incorporates estates that most better off tenants tended to be living in.

More typical of the inner city are types within the general group 'welfare borderline', containing a higher proportion of single persons, elderly and other childless households. Most residents in this group live in flats or maisonettes. They typically live in smaller developments which share shops, schools and public transport with other population groups such as students, young professionals living in multi-occupied Victorian terraces and middle class families who have re-colonised the more architecturally distinguished older terraces of the inner city.

Though the two groups are broadly similar in terms of income and social economic status, survey data shows a number of key differences.

The inner city estates of 'welfare borderline' are very much more diverse than the outer estates, having a much larger presence of young, educated single people, willing to put up with the privations of living

a daily basis, throughout the whole journey. Protecting, preserving and developing the original 'community led' vision spelt out in the Phoenix Rises, to stop it being replaced by a top-down 'community fed' plan which emerged soon after the funding had landed on the estate, became a way of life for local people who were committed to achieving the vision.

To make things worse, the plan being pushed onto residents was a completely disastrous one, devoid of any strategic vision whatsoever, and would have been far more beneficial to the short-term interests of property developers than to the long-term interests of local people. Our large neighbourhood hub on the factory site was to be replaced by a much smaller building on a different site, with largely private housing built on our factory site instead.

However, despite an aggressive and concerted campaign by powerful vested interests in the town to force this agenda on to our new deal table (driven mainly on their behalf by a stream of interim consultants who were forced upon the trust at the cost of several millions of pounds), residents fought back, with more than 1,000 signing petitions and dozens more

taking part in a series of public demonstrations, eventually forcing the trust to hold a referendum on the two options. When the referendum resulted in a resounding 64% in favour of the Phoenix Rises plan, the 'community fed' agenda was left dead in the water, and the community led foundations we needed to build if we are to achieve our vision were put firmly in place.

So now, thanks to the feasibility and flexible intelligence of the Phoenix Rises plan, and of course the vision, persistence and commitment of local people, we believe we are well on the way to laying the foundations for a genuinely sustainable community on Marsh Farm, with locally produced food, energy and jobs replacing years of dependency, frustration and economic gloom.

So it's been hard to breach for sure, but the prize can be a working example of a genuinely sustainable community, that will breach the barrier once and for all.

◆ Glenn Jenkins is chair of Marsh Farm Outreach, a cooperative of resident volunteers.



on such estates for the benefit of being close to work. There are many more members of ethnic minority communities, more of whom are self-employed and who may be more concerned for children to perform well at school, as is evidenced by their superior results on key stage tests, especially by older pupils. Residents are much more likely to be self-employed or company directors or enrolled in adult courses. A much higher proportion of adults read newspapers and magazines more commonly associated with the middle classes. They are also much more likely to be supporters of charities, to be concerned about climate change and to have an attachment to the countryside.

In terms of social cohesion it is noticeable that residents on peripheral estates are far more likely to fear attack from people they know by contrast with residents in inner city estates who are more fearful of attack from strangers. Vandalism, graffiti and the forms of antisocial behaviour that are associated with young adults are more acutely felt on the peripheral estates where drugs and poor parental discipline are more likely to be cited as a major cause of crime. Studies have shown that a very high proportion of perpetrators of crime live on these estates and that partners, friends and neighbours are often their victims.

By contrast residents in inner city estates are much more likely to be admitted to hospital for depression, for mental illness and for self-harm. Aggression turns inwards and residents are more likely to live outside formal family structures. This poses a risk both to individuals and the wider community, one which is unlikely to be ameliorated by neighbourhood based welfare or environmental improvement schemes. Racism is a more common source of fear in these neighbourhoods which culturally are much more diverse.

In summary it could be argued there are four critical factors which cause disadvantage to be so persistent on peripheral estates. The first is the size of the child population, which contributes to a state of fear and anxiety and which causes those who can leave to do so. The second is the sheer size of many of these estates, which results in many residents having little or no daily encounter with social groups who have been successful. The third is the greater tendency towards downward social mobility, by contrast with the experience of groups recently arrived in Britain from abroad, for many of whom that in itself is a sign of upward mobility. The fourth is the poor accessibility to local jobs.

◆ Richard Webber is managing director of the consultancy Originsinfo.

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# OUTER ESTATES MUST LOOK WITHIN TO MOVE FORWARD



**Martin Yarnit, Jane Foot and Davy Jones consider where the debate on outer estates should go next**

For the last five months, *New Start* has run a series of articles about outer city estates. With the final contributions in this month's edition, and the election of a new government, it's time to look at what it all amounts to and where we go next.

Our aim has been two-fold:

1. To explore the particular nature of outer city estates – especially compared to inner city neighbourhoods – and therefore the different mix of potential solutions to the problems they face
2. To raise their profile in the debate about the future shape of regeneration and localism so that it takes account of their specific needs.

We have brought a variety of minds and perspectives to bear on an issue that has lost political salience over the last 15 years and we now want to focus the discussion to generate a coherent approach and set of proposals that could form the basis for pilot programmes of support and intervention leading to lasting improvement. To that end, early in September, in collaboration with *New Start* and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, we are bringing together a group of residents, practitioners and policymakers for a round table discussion. Alongside this we'll be exploring the possibility of a research project to pinpoint the nature and scale of the problems facing outer city estates as well as their potential assets.

The round table will cover several related areas, including how to:

- ◆ Strengthen the self-belief and capacity for action of their residents so they create the networks and social capital necessary to support a positive and productive culture, rather than inward-looking negativity
- ◆ Create more effective forms of local leadership and governance rooted in social networks and how to support active collaboration between community and agencies
- ◆ Generate higher household incomes, strengthen local entrepreneurialism and reconnect outer city estates to mainstream economic, social and cultural activity
- ◆ Break down the isolation of outer city estates while exploiting the competitive advantage of their location and their environment
- ◆ Improve the quality of local services, exploiting the potential for joined-up whole system responses.

The results will be published in the October edition of *New Start* and soon after we will be holding a national seminar to discuss the proposals. Round table participants will be asked to take into account the Seven Principles for Regeneration (*New Start*, April 2010) and in particular the five questions that gave rise to them:

1. Why do we need regeneration? What is regeneration policy and funding trying to do that mainstream

Above: community improvement work on the Manton estate in Nottinghamshire illustrates how local leadership can be crucial to the success of peripheral estates

## Davy Jones imagines what life could be like on an estate in 2020

It was good to be back. Claire got off the high-speed coach service that connected Cranthorpe estate to nearby towns. Years before she dreaded coming back to the boredom, isolation and hopelessness of her life there.

A decade ago, after the big recession, Cranthorpe had seemed bleaker than ever. A sink estate, everyone wanted out: no work, no facilities, no school or nursery for her daughter Joanna. Every social problem going – you name it, Cranthorpe had it. Hard to believe the difference now.

Claire recalled the scrappy leaflet on the notice board that, in retrospect she realised, had changed everything – Total Place and Cranthorpe estate – she had no idea what it was on about, and certainly had no intention of going along to yet another pointless meeting, but the telly was on the blink – the old communal aerial again...

She was cynical – everyone was after all those years of ‘regeneration’ programmes that made no real difference. But this had been different. Outsiders had not just come in with their programmes; they had really supported local people to see they were the ones with the strengths, ideas and the right to turn the estate round.

All those early conversations on the doorstep the school gates and in the shops and pubs, had opened everyone’s eyes to what they could do with their skills and abilities. The open events and social evenings had created friendships and networks that had been invaluable in setting up the development trust that had led the later changes on the estate.

### CRANTHORPE NOW

Claire was eventually elected on to the new Cranthorpe Community Council. It had taken years to persuade all the authorities that the people who lived there should run the estate. It seemed revolutionary to suggest it. But now, run it they did!

They controlled services previously run by the council, the police, fire and health services and a host of other agencies – some she had never heard of before let alone realised how much they did and spent on her behalf.

But now local people decided how it should be spent. Participatory budgeting, they called it. All Claire previously knew about Brazil was their football team and carnival. It seemed like they had other good ideas too. Every year, residents from every block on the massive estate met to discuss what their priorities were for spending their community’s money.

They had already fully participated in and signed off their three-year Cranthorpe Community Plan so most of the debate was about how best

to achieve those goals. Each year the numbers involved in these debates had gone up. At first it was just the ‘usual suspects’ but as everyone had seen how the meetings really did get things done, so more and more people had realised it was worth the effort.

That was the first thing the community insisted on – that those living on the estate should take charge. Everything was changed from bottom to top. They had argued that ‘their place’ was the estate, rather than how local officials always defined it. Eventually, even the primary care trust reluctantly joined the council, police and fire services in centring their local work round the estate.

More of the services employed local people, which made them much more approachable as well as providing good jobs – even some of the young people had stayed living there and had careers. Residents then insisted on electing a new form of community council to run all the local services using parish council powers.

The second thing was to invest in renovating the derelict old community centre. It was a struggle to get the council to hand it over at all. But now it had become the hub for all the community activity on the estate, and it housed a ‘one stop shop’ for all local services. Young and old alike also used it for a dazzling variety of events and functions. There was even a twice a week cinema and the sports facilities had expanded to include outdoor basketball and five-a-side football. There was a hub for workshops and small shops, managed directly by those who worked in them, and a small community garden where volunteers organised the growing and selling of vegetables.

The third thing they had done was to broker the investment in the high-speed coach network connecting the estate to every aspect of the outside world. It was obvious that without such regular services to the nearby towns and all they had to offer, residents would continue to feel cut off.

There were still some facilities they didn’t have on the estate like a secondary school (Claire was working on that...) but there was now a primary school and sufficient nursery places with staff trained and living on the estate. That was crucial to allow Claire and other parents to play a full part in running the estate.

Perhaps most important of all, everyone on the estate seemed happier now. Every week there was something new happening such as the new evening classes in the community centre. Crime, graffiti and antisocial behaviour had drastically reduced and there was real pride in the local community at their achievements. Perhaps, Claire thought, they should take over running the whole country...

programmes are not doing or can’t do?

2. Do we need a new narrative of moral regeneration to inspire people to take action, rather than a technocratic approach that fails to do so? Shouldn’t regeneration have a stronger sense of what it means in terms of people’s lives?

3. What role should the state have in the context of regeneration? Has there been too much government involvement and government spending?

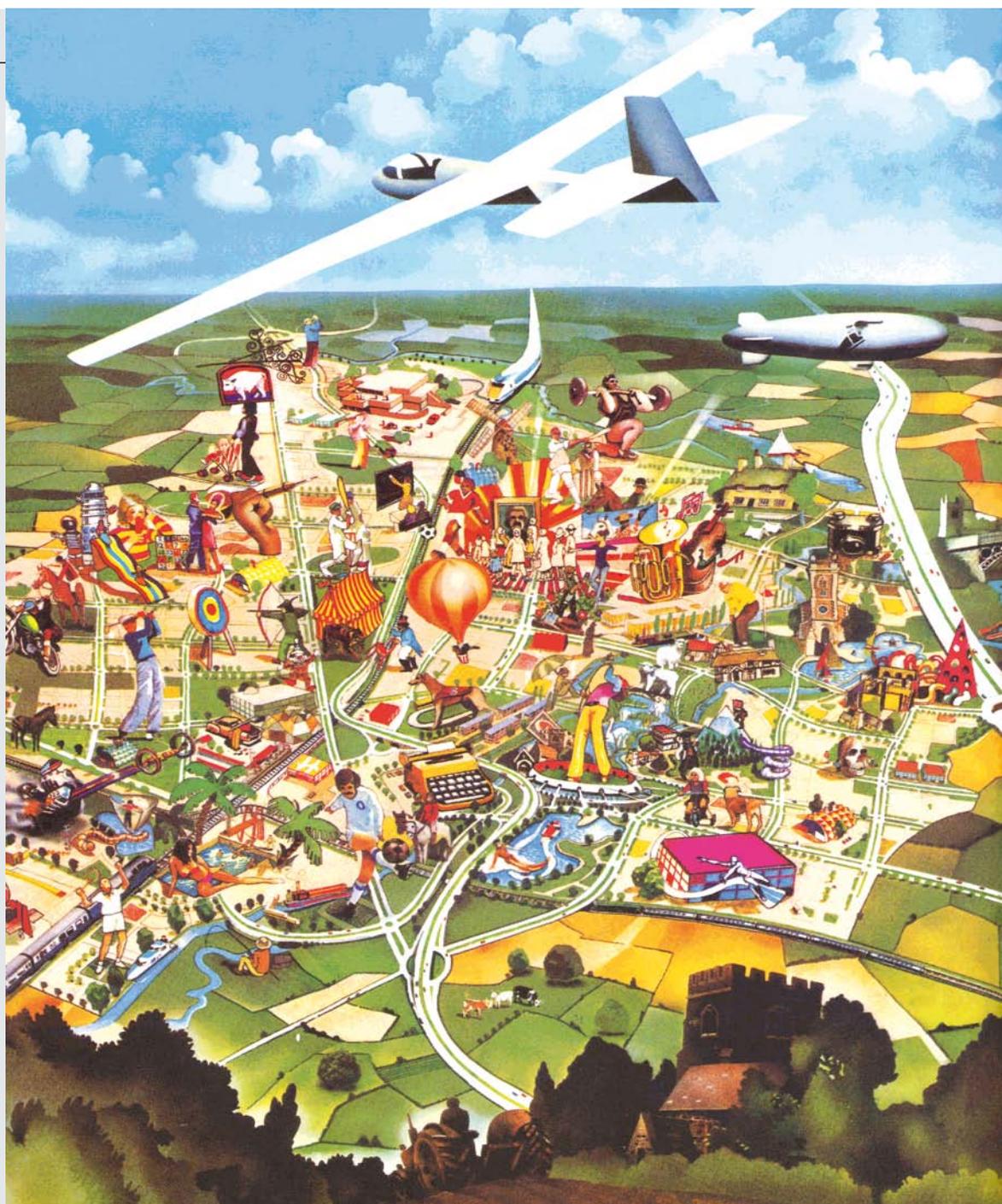
4. Which areas actually require intervention? Have we got the resources for the kind of broad programmes of the past ten years such as neighbourhood renewal? Are some areas that get regeneration funds already fit for purpose or on the way to becoming gentrified?

5. What should we do about areas that appear resistant to regeneration? Is there a case for managed decline?

We do not intend to explore these questions in depth

now but we would, as the authors of the series, like to give some indications of our own thinking. Outer city estates came into being to house the labour required by manufacturing and extractive industries which have since fallen into a 30-year long spell of serious decline, creating poverty and unemployment. Often reliant on a single employer or industry, their decline has cut off residents from employment – while new industries are either out of reach or fail to provide well-paid and skilled jobs.

Housing and benefits regimes have further helped to create a significant grouping of millions of people cut off from the wellsprings of prosperity, with low aspirations, poor services and governance. The Mosaic classification suggests that as many as 3.46 million people live on outer city estates. Often they suffer postcode discrimination which creates barriers to employment and compounds



Left: an image of estate life utopia dating back to 1978 – but what will it really look like in 2020?

their sense of isolation and defensiveness.

To add to the problems, outer city estates rarely have adequate governance arrangements that can provide leadership and vision. Some of these places are as big as small towns and yet are typically represented by two or three councillors, often uninfluential backbenchers.

Politically, these outer estates are the forgotten appendages of whichever city or district they find themselves in by an accident of history. Some have effective local partnerships or development agencies but many have no levers for raising themselves up. If they are to be properly heard in the corridors of power, the people who live there need to develop strong voices and power.

#### SO WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

In part, the solution is about a tailored and fair deal from

mainstream programmes and applying the lessons from neighbourhood management – but we believe that this will not be enough.

There need to be additional interventions which devolve power and money to local residents and their organisations; and use whole systems approaches, including possibly Total Place, to ensure residents can mobilise all the available resources to break the cycle of neglect and decline.

Above all, this series has strengthened our view that the prerequisite of transformation is local people leading and governing their own communities.

◆ Martin Yarnit is an independent consultant with an interest in lifelong learning and regeneration, Jane Foot is an independent policy and research consultant and Davy Jones is a consultant specialising in community involvement.

#### GET INVOLVED

The authors of this series would like to know what you think of the questions posed, the solutions that have been aired since March and where the outer estates debate should go next. Email your comments to: [martin.yarnit@virgin.net](mailto:martin.yarnit@virgin.net)