

Diversity in Deprivation: The Challenge for Housing and Other Professionals

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1. Introduction

This paper derives from a project that is funded by the Housing Corporation and the Gentoo Group, aiming to measure the social and economic impact of housing investment in Sunderland and develop a methodology that can be used by other organisations involved in the delivery of housing and regeneration¹. It reports some of the findings of the first stage of a longitudinal study that will analyse the impact of Gentoo's² investment in the city, particularly the £600 million that are being invested in improving and replacing social housing. However, since the transfer of 36,356 homes from Sunderland City Council to the Sunderland Housing Group (SHG) in 2001, there have been important management and cultural changes within the new housing organisation that must be taken into consideration when looking at SHG/Gentoo's impact on the city. There are new internal processes and activities that affect the way staff work and how they relate both to each other and to their tenants. These changes have also had an impact on the way the organisation relates to other stakeholders in the city and region and, in particular, on the capacity of this housing provider to create partnerships with other organisations in the pursuit of wider social and economic change.

The £600 million investment is therefore one aspect of a wider process of change in the city and its impact can only be judged in this context. The complexity of the inter-relationship of agencies with responsibilities for housing, employment, health, education and crime reduction, means that it is not possible to disentangle relations of cause and effect. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, however, it should be possible to map out and analyse the social relations of change as various combinations of partners act together on different issues in a variety of neighbourhoods in the city.

The project seeks to identify and rationalise a number of spatial units of analysis, such as post codes, output areas, super output areas, housing management areas and city wards, in an attempt to make them meaningful for both city managers and the resident population. Through both stages of the project, the intention is to carry out an analysis of both primary and secondary data at a neighbourhood level, analysing this information in relation to housing management and other objectives that seek to promote the creation of sustainable communities. The sources of secondary data are a number of central, regional and local government agencies, along with management information from Gentoo. A new household survey provides the main statistical source of primary information. This is combined with an interpretive methodology that derives information from key informants and residents, through interviews and focus groups. The intention is to bring the information from this variety of sources into a common spatial structure that can be used by housing providers and their funders. In later stages of the project, updated data will allow a longitudinal analysis of change in the city at the neighbourhood or community level³.

¹ Middleton, A., Murie, A., Loftman, P., Gowland, J. and Smith, E. (2008) *The Social and Economic Impact of Large-scale Housing Investment*, The Governance Foundation, Birmingham City University and the University of Birmingham.

² At the start of this project and through the period of the fieldwork, the Gentoo Group was called the Sunderland Housing Group.

³ For the purposes of this study we assume that communities are defined by social relationships, whether or not they are bounded by space; and neighbourhoods are spatial entities, which may nevertheless be defined differently by different people and organisations at different times. Both are organic and may change over time, but can be defined at a particular point in time. A ward is neither a

For the purposes of this paper, the findings from the exercise of trying to obtain consistent and usable data from various government agencies in Sunderland allow us to say something about what action is required for the development of evidence-based policy for deprived communities. In theory, it should be possible to build a model that takes account of the changes and predicts outcomes at a community or neighbourhood level, but to test the model requires data that can be aggregated for each of the variables into neighbourhoods. This, however, requires that the information on relevant variables is collected in spatial units that are being capable of being aggregated to correspond with defined neighbourhoods.

2 Sustainable Communities and Evidence-based Policy

The 2006 Local Government White Paper⁴ declared the Government's ambition to create strong, safe and prosperous communities throughout England through a new agreement between central government, local government and citizens. The most recent draft policy for consultation⁵ indicates that the key components of the new policy are likely to be:

- a recognition that **every place is different**, with distinctive strengths and needs
- a new approach by central government that creates space for distinctive **local priorities** and **local innovation**
- a commitment to widen and deepen the **involvement of local communities** in shaping their own future
- councils taking on the role of democratically elected **strategic leaders** and conveners of local partnerships in the **wider governance** of their localities
- a focus on **coordinated action** tailored to the distinctive needs and opportunities of each place and its people

There needs to be a broadening of local government's remit – responding to long-term challenges such as public health, climate change and demographic fluctuations, ensuring continued economic prosperity and environmental sustainability, and building strong societies in which people want to live and work. This means:

- a responsibility on councils to provide **strategic and political leadership** and involve the full range of stakeholders in developing and delivering a shared vision for their area
- all key local partners **working together** to address the risks and challenges facing the areas, using their combined resources to best effect

community nor a neighbourhood. Neither are Output Areas (OAs) nor Lower Super Output Areas, but OAs can be aggregated up to correspond with the boundaries of defined communities and neighbourhoods.

⁴ Communities and Local Government (2006) *Strong and Prosperous Communities: Local Government White Paper*, London, CLG

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government (2007) *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance: Draft for Consultation*, London CLG.

- **involving and empowering communities**, acknowledging that services will be improved and communities strengthened only if local people are effectively engaged and empowered, as individuals and through organisations representing them
- through elected local government, **wider and stronger local accountability** for public services and local outcomes, rebuilding trust between citizen and the state.

In the context of nationally set standards and priorities, central Government recognises that any local authority needs to develop policies that are appropriate to its needs. These local priorities will be developed by the local authority and its partners and a concordat will govern the relations between central and local government. This will provide an agreement on the rights and responsibilities of local government, ‘including its responsibilities to provide effective leadership of the local area and to empower local communities’. This represents a new settlement as part of wider reforms of the Governance of Britain⁶ involving collaboration between key local partners who are accountable to citizens and communities.

In her Foreword to *Successful Neighbourhoods: A Good Practice Guide*⁷, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government indicated that:

“This Government has an ambitious vision: to ensure that no-one is disadvantaged by where they live. To bring prosperity and opportunity to every community.....Sometimes [this] can mean working right down at the level of individual neighbourhoods. It is often here that pockets of the most stubborn social and economic problems are encountered – from crime, to anti-social behaviour, to patterns of worklessness”.

Following the Queen’s Speech in November 2007, the Minister said that:

"This Government believes that everyone deserves a place they can be proud to call home, in communities where people have the power to influence those things that matter to them most.....We want to empower citizens to shape their own lives and the services they receive - and one of the most powerful areas for this type of community empowerment is social housing The bills announced today will help us to achieve this: empowering tenants by giving them more say over how their homes are managed and supporting strong communities that bring people together."

In the Foreword to the Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, the Chair of the Commission pointed out that⁸:

“Integration and Cohesion is no longer a special programme or project. It is also not about race, faith or other forms of group status or identity. It is simply about how we all get on and secure benefits that are mutually desirable for our communities and ourselves”

⁶ Ministry of Justice (2007) *Governance of Britain*

⁷ Duncan and Thomas (2007) *Successful Neighbourhoods: A Good Practice Guide*, London, CLG/Housing Corporation, p. 5.

⁸ Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) *Our Shared Future*, London, CIC, p 5

The report shows that deprivation is a key influencer of cohesion but that the complexity of influences ‘means that improving cohesion is about addressing multiple issues at the same time’⁹. It is about ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘targeted interventions’ – multiple local actions and the fair allocation of public services.

The commitment of Government to multi-agency working to create sustainable and cohesive communities is clear, as is their commitment to evidence-based policy. The 1999 White Paper on Modernising Government¹⁰ argued for government policy to be evidence-based and properly evaluated and since then evidence has played a greater part in these activities than had been the case in the past¹¹. At the national level, this has meant putting ‘the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation’¹². Given that not all research is of sufficient quality to inform government policy making, a more systematic approach is thought to be required for searching for and analysing appropriate evidence. We have assumed in this research that if this is true at the national level, it must also be true for local government and the services that local and regional authorities provide. Strategic policy at the local level should be informed by evidence at an appropriate scale, gathered and analysed systematically. However, in a situation where inter-professional collaboration in support of community cohesion and regeneration is being promoted, there are a number of questions about the most appropriate model of social science research, what would constitute evidence and what spatial scale is appropriate for the collation and analysis of information.

In the main research model that has emerged from the Cabinet Office, ‘scientific evidence’ is taken to mean information that is gathered using methods that are empiricist and comparable to ‘normal’ science¹³. However, by putting the methods of natural sciences at the heart of social policy-making, there is the possibility that an essential aspect of all good social science will be overlooked. Researchers also bring experience, expertise, judgement, values, habits and traditions to the selection and interpretation of evidence. Their experience, expertise and judgement will always be important, for social science is necessarily interpretative. These elements will be at the heart of sound social science that takes us beyond the dryness of descriptive statistics. The availability of statistical data at an appropriate scale is important, whether these are from secondary or primary sources, but they are not sufficient for good social scientific evidence that informs policy. Qualitative research methods are an important tool in the social science armoury, particularly when combined with reliable statistical evidence

If evidence is to be gathered for long-term strategic activities that will serve future generations of policy-makers and practitioners at the local level, we should also be looking towards gathering evidence that will serve inter-organisational collaboration, particularly in the fields of health, education, crime and social welfare. The complexities of the interaction of multiple variables in these fields are reasonably well

⁹ Ibid, p.8.

¹⁰ Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government*, London, Cabinet Office

¹¹ Davies, P. (2004) *Is Evidence-based Government Possible?*, Paper presented to Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Washington DC

¹² Davies, *op. cit.* p.3

¹³ Major, L.E. What is evidence-based policy?

understood at a national level, but there is little systematic knowledge of how they interact at a local level and impinge on the lives of people in specific neighbourhoods.

Davies¹⁴ correctly points out that much of the evidence that is used in policy-making is less systematically gathered and appraised than proponents of evidence-based policy would suggest. But what if the evidence exists in different government departments and in different local and regional agencies, but there is no common, agreed method for collating, storing and analysing this information? This appears to be the case for most of the evidence that is relevant for neighbourhood regeneration or any policy that seeks to challenge the 'post-code lottery' below the level of the local authority. A further important question is: whose responsibility is it to gather and evaluate this information? In the North East, regional policy is positive about the Sustainable Communities agenda and the need for collaborative working to deliver it, but no one accepts the responsibility for obtaining or providing the information that is needed to turn this commitment into a reality. We shall argue that the need for evaluation is recognised, but it is always someone else's problem. At the 'sub-regional', or city council, level this is also true.

Social housing is at the heart of the Government's policy for empowered sustainable communities and, in response to the Housing and Regeneration Bill, one of the main aims of the new Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will be to support the creation, regeneration and development of communities. Working with local authorities within strong regional frameworks, the HCA will not only support the empowerment agenda but will also seek to develop more effective forms of investment in communities and create more thriving communities through an integrated approach to investment¹⁵. This paper suggests that there is a good deal of work that remains to be done at regional and local levels with respect to allocating responsibility for implementing, monitoring and evaluating this agenda.

3. The Regional Policy Context: Housing and Sustainable Communities:

In the Regional Economic Strategy (RES),¹⁶ One NorthEast (ONE) promises to offer practical support for people in deprived communities to take up employment opportunities. It says it will work with banks and community organisations to help people from deprived communities to achieve financial inclusion. ONE will also seek to raise excluded people's aspirations and will promote the development of social capital through the promotion of cultural, sporting and volunteering activities, as means of achieving full participation. In particular, equality and diversity will be at the heart of their activities, helping those groups concerned with different dimensions of equality and diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and faith) to work with employers and public sector organisations to achieve inclusive economic growth.

¹⁴ Davies, P. (2004) *Is Evidence-based Government Possible?*, Paper presented to Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Washington DC

¹⁵ Kerslake, Sir R. (2008), Speech at CIH Presidential Dinner, 6 February.

¹⁶ One NorthEast (2006) *Regional Economic Strategy*, Newcastle upon Tyne, ONE.

These aspirations for excluded communities are also expressed in the Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan¹⁷ and they are to be found in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)¹⁸. The 'People' section of the Action Plan concentrates on skills, education and training and it restates the need to 'raise aspirations and achievement', focusing particularly on the most disadvantaged areas and groups and complementing other social and economic regeneration programmes. In response to the 'empowering people to work' and 'reducing welfare dependency' programmes of Central Government, ONE will concentrate on the most deprived urban and rural communities and groups. In recognition that these activities cannot be carried out effectively by action at the regional level alone, the voluntary and community sectors are to be given central roles in delivery. Under the heading of 'Sustainable Communities' in the Section on Quality of Place, it says that¹⁹ :

Local authorities, developers, housebuilders and other partners will work with local communities to offer people attractive places to live, more sustainable lifestyles and a good quality of life. Investment will see the creation of sustainable communities well connected to areas of economic activity, with then right mix of housing that meets the needs of residents and attracts talented people currently outside the region to live here.

A key issue is what is meant by the concept of 'community'. The RSS Locational Strategy emphasises the City Regions as the main drivers of economic development and Sunderland is one of two core areas within the Tyne and Wear City Region (the other being Newcastle). The RSS will support housing, economic and infrastructure investment in these areas in order to deliver sustainable communities²⁰. The concept of community is not defined, but it appears to be referring to cities and towns when it is used in the context of the discussion of the City Region. Not surprisingly, since this is a strategic document about regional spatial policy, it is mainly about delivering at the regional level and, since it was written by planners, it is mainly about land and buildings. However, it does have nine social objectives relating to deprivation, education, housing quality and choice, crime reduction, health improvement, employment and transport. When it goes into more detail on 'Delivering Sustainable Communities', it becomes clear that the issues relating to the social objectives of the Strategy were mainly introduced by the Secretary of State following consultation. That is, much of the social content of the delivering sustainable communities appears to come as an afterthought following criticism. Perhaps because of this, the question of evidence and the consequences for monitoring are not thought through. There is no consideration given as to how the social objectives might be monitored at the neighbourhood level. How are we going to measure the conditions of spatially defined neighbourhoods and monitor the changes that take place in them over time? It would appear that this is assumed to be un-problematical. It is in fact an issue that becomes even more serious when it is proposed that housing professionals and the deliverers of

¹⁷ One NorthEast (2007) *Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan: 2006-2011*, Newcastle upon Tyne, ONE; URSUS (2007) *Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Regional Economic Strategy Action Plan*, Leamington Spa, URSUS Consulting Ltd.

¹⁸ Government Office for the North East (2007) *North East of England Regional Spatial Strategy*, Newcastle, GONE.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.38.

²⁰ GONE (2007) *op. cit.*, p.49.

other services have to work together to achieve the vision set out for sustainable communities.

Both the RES and the RSS are concerned with people and communities that are marginalised from the benefits of economic growth. Delivering sustainable communities is an integral theme of both documents and the need for partnership working is clear, but the concept of community is vague and the question of shared evidence to support inter-agency working at a neighbourhood or local area management level is ignored. In the Regional Housing Strategy, the problem of evidence is recognised, but the responsibility for gathering and analysing it is passed on to others.

The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) indicates that around 90% of the housing that will exist in the region in 2022 is already in place and that the improvement and remodelling of this stock is of fundamental importance for the future of housing in the region²¹. It also says that successful delivery of its strategic objective for the Improvement and Maintenance of Existing Housing is based on community involvement from the outset²². For the creation of sustainable communities, there is need for a holistic approach that integrates housing improvement, design, accessibility and management strategies with community and neighbourhood renewal strategies. The RHS recognises that these community and neighbourhood-based strategies are a priority for residents and tenants and therefore should be a key activity for local authorities. Housing providers have an important role in neighbourhood management and may lead on local community/neighbourhood-based initiatives.

A key strategic objective in the RHS is concerned with meeting specific community and social needs, and this is seen as one of the most challenging to deliver, because of the number of different issues entailed and the number of agencies involved. Crucially, there is acknowledgement that ‘there is currently a lack of evidence of the level and nature of need for some of the groups in this objective’²³. The document argues that local housing needs studies should identify geographical gaps in specialist provision and the needs of specific community groups. Much of the available evidence on specialist housing needs is based on the experience of specialist working with vulnerable groups, but ‘little is supported by robust evidence or research’²⁴.

The North East Housing Board (NEHB) recognises that the pattern of needs is complex and it will inevitably continue to change, but appropriate responses cannot realistically be planned, nor can priorities be decided, without better evidence and cross-service co-ordination at a ‘sub-regional’ level. In order to develop successful approaches to housing the most vulnerable members of the community, sub-regional housing agencies have a leading role in bringing together the expertise of housing providers and other service delivery agencies. The Board will support housing strategy teams to ensure that housing investment and management guidance priorities arising from Supporting People Strategies are properly identified and agreed and that investments are better aligned with health and social service provision²⁵.

²¹ North East Housing Board (NEHB) (2007) *Regional Housing Strategy*, p.65.

²² NEHB (2007) *RHS*, p.72.

²³ RHS, p. 77.

²⁴ RHS, p. 78.

²⁵ RHS, p. 79.

The key targets of the approach include investment to provide housing to meet the priority needs of particular excluded groups, particularly the disabled, returning prisoners, drug and alcohol users, and homeless people across all vulnerable groups. Disadvantaged people and those with erratic lifestyles not only need specialist accommodation but also have particular support needs, often in a number of different inter-related categories. Priorities for vulnerable groups are the maintenance of an adequate supply of social housing, maintaining them in their own homes as long as possible and preventing homelessness. As part of the wider sustainable communities agenda, their specific community and specialist needs need to be considered. Such groups include older people, residents with physical and learning disabilities and people experiencing mental health problems and, where possible, they should be supported to live in their own homes.

This of course raises questions for the Supporting People agenda, which ‘enables the provision of housing related services to help vulnerable people maintain or improve their ability to live independently’. Most of the services target individuals, but resources are often allocated to spatially defined management or administrative areas. For the efficient allocation of these resources, we need to know where the target population lives. If resources are to be allocated geographically, to what spatially defined management areas should they be directed?

The main focus of the Supporting People programme is getting the right services to vulnerable people, which means that the work of the service providers needs to be co-ordinated, their work needs to be integrated, and the services should be user-focused. The existence of a wide range of vulnerable groups, often with multiple issues in any household, makes it difficult to join up services. People in receipt of care and support in one field of service provision may be at risk, or may have other household members at risk, in another field. For people with chaotic lifestyles, the provision of support can also be chaotic, and this is not helped by a lack of information about where problems and services overlap, and where they do not. The difficulty is often compounded by an unwillingness or inability to share information between organisations or even between departments within an organisation, an issue to which we will return later.

The RHS recognises the problem of the lack of reliable evidence for tackling the needs of vulnerable people and communities, but this problem is passed down to the ‘sub-regional’ level, with a plea for more research. This raises the question as to whether the situation with respect to evidence for neighbourhood or community-based analysis and policy-making is any better at the sub-regional or city level.

4. Sunderland’s Strategy for Housing

Sunderland City Council’s Housing Strategy (SHS)²⁶ says that ‘housing is the cornerstone of any sustainable community’ and an integral part of the Council’s approach to ensure the highest quality of life for residents. At a local level, the

²⁶ Sunderland City Council (2006) *Housing for the Future: A Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2006-2011*, SCC.

strategy promises to ensure that the housing needs and aspirations are identified and resources are spent on meeting local objectives. However, it also recognises that addressing housing issues cannot be done in isolation, for it has to be part of creating sustainable communities. This means working in partnership to achieve shared outcomes around health, social care, education, community safety and the economy. This leads to three major aspirations that involve improving housing to reverse the trend of outward migration, to ensure that sustainable communities are created and to meet the needs of Sunderland's diverse population. The SHS identifies ten priorities to meet these aspirations, including improving the way the City deals with vulnerable people, partnership working and the Respect Agenda.

Dealing with vulnerable people involves working with partner agencies and addressing the Supporting People programme. Partnership working is therefore the key to delivering this and, since the City Council is no longer a housing provider, to the whole of the Strategy. In embracing the Respect Agenda and the council promises to 'tackle crime and anti-social behaviour *in neighbourhoods throughout the City*'²⁷ as a contribution to sustainable communities.

If they are to be strategic, rather than reactive, with respect to supporting vulnerable people and tackling anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods through out the city, what evidence do they have about where support is currently needed and how this commitment will be monitored? One assumes that the 'planning, monitoring and management' model that is used by the Council is appropriate for meeting these aims, which of course imply a focus on current housing supply in vulnerable communities. Since stock transfer in 2001, responsibility for achieving the Council's vision has largely fallen to Gentoo. The SHS identifies their partners as the Sunderland Partnership, the Tyne and Wear Housing Partnership, Sunderland Strategic Housing Partnership, Private Sector Forum and the Registered Social Landlord's Forum. According to the SHS, 'these partnerships have a responsibility to ensure that all priorities are tackled and addressed and that the strategy is monitored and evaluated'. That is, monitoring and evaluation are not the responsibility of the 'sub-regional' City Council. It would appear that housing providers like Gentoo, who participate in most of these partner organisations and have responsibility for the delivery of most of the council's ten priorities, are also at least partly responsible for monitoring and evaluation.

While all levels of government in the region recognise the importance of evidence for the development of strategic policy, it would appear that no one wants to take responsibility for this evidence at a local level. If we are to achieve the delivery of sustainable and cohesive communities, particularly through multi-agency activity where information needs to be shared, there needs to be an agreed protocol in which responsibilities are identified and agreed. A fundamental question for ONE and for the other regional and city agencies that buy into their vision in relation to people living in deprived communities is: how will we know when their aims have been achieved? What evidence will be brought to bear to substantiate any claim that the most excluded residents of the region are participating more in the benefits of economic growth than in the past? What level of spatial analysis will be used to

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.6. Author's Italics.

identify the communities that are to benefit from the resources required? How do you find, identify and target excluded people in deprived communities who by definition are hard to find? The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) can help with this, as can Census data, but this begs further questions: how is this information currently being used to inform policy and, if it is mainly being used for ward-level analysis, how can we reach through to touch the most deprived and excluded communities that exist in both deprived and relatively wealthy wards? These are questions that are appropriate for the public sector organisations that are expected to work together to deliver the services to these communities, particularly those organisations that can influence people's capacity to participate – such as education, health, community safety and housing.

Another assumption that pervades the literature is that individuals and communities want to be 'involved' and 'empowered' in shaping their own futures, including the services they receive. Presumably this will vary from community to community, since 'every place is different'. In addition, what does community cohesion mean in a city that is overwhelmingly white?

5. Social Cohesion in Sunderland

Sunderland is around 97% white and the same is true of social housing in the city. As a result, the social survey we carried out can say very little about the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) experience. In the Citizenship Survey in 2007, 81% of respondents across the country agreed that their local area was a place where people from different backgrounds get on together²⁸. In Sunderland as a whole, 78% responded to the national survey in this way. In our social survey in areas of social housing in Sunderland, 7.6% of people said that all the people in their area were of the same type of background. If these are excluded with the 'don't know' respondents, who were excluded in the national survey, 93% agreed that their neighbourhoods were places where people of different backgrounds got on together. This of course does not mean that there is no problem with social cohesion in Sunderland.

In Hendon, close to the city centre, there is an enclave of mainly Bangladeshi families living in private accommodation, overwhelmingly as home owners. A focus group was held with young people from BME communities who were not Ghetto tenants, regarding the barriers and difficulties they and their families experienced in accessing Ghetto housing and the areas where the RSL's properties are concentrated. Most of the young people from BME backgrounds were of Bangladeshi origin, living in the Hendon and Thornhill areas.

This was also a highly cohesive group. However, all of the BME young people stated that their housing choices and the areas that they were able to live in were affected by personal safety concerns. In many ways, their experience was similar to that of young white people in Sunderland but, in particular, they had a number concerns about being subjected to racist abuse and attack outside of 'their area', particularly from young white males who were referred to as 'chavs'. They had white friends, whom they distinguished from the 'chavs' who abused them and their families.

²⁸ CLG, *2007 Citizenship Survey*, London, Department of Communities and Local Government.

Like the young white people, the focus group of young BME people complained about lack of facilities, but security was their major concern. These concerns were compounded by racism, especially in those parts of central Sunderland surrounding their neighbourhood (the East End and other parts of Hendon) and in areas such as Pallion, Pennywell and Ford. A major difference between the young white and the young Asian experience was that young Asians have taken on the role of defending their elders from racist abuse. They do this, not as victims but as defenders of their community and the elders in that community from the same people who threatened the young white people. It was also the case that the movement of young Asian women within the Hendon area (and across Sunderland as a whole) was particularly curtailed by fears of racist abuse and attack.

The highly cohesive social housing estates of Pallion, Pennywell and the Ford were identified as 'no-go' areas for BME residents to visit or live in. The BME young people stated that they felt that their housing choices were significantly limited by these personal safety concerns. They were only able to identify three areas where they would consider moving to outside of Hendon and their housing choices had not been affected by Gentoo's investment in new housing and modernisation work. They were also not convinced that the investment would change the culture of these areas. The BME young people said that whilst they wanted to mix and interact more with people from other parts of Sunderland, this was limited by the dangers associated with moving outside of their immediate area.

6. Social Networks and Trust

The concept of social capital is one that has become increasingly important in recent years and in the UK it has generated a great deal of interest within Government research and policy fields²⁹. Social capital is thought to be the glue that holds communities together³⁰. The concept has been used extensively in academic and policy discussions about deprived neighbourhoods, particularly where authors have emphasised the importance of community cohesion and empowerment for the regeneration of such neighbourhoods³¹. It has been used to examine issues of social exclusion amongst disadvantaged groups and the growth of social capital is seen as being important for improving the situation of deprived communities³².

The National Strategies for Neighbourhood Renewal launched in England in 2001 and in Scotland in 2002 is underpinned by the idea that an increase in social problems and a decline in social capital go hand in hand³³. Social capital is seen as the foundation on which social stability and a community's ability to help itself is built; and its absence is thought to be a key factor in neighbourhood decline. In neighbourhoods

²⁹ Middleton, A., Murie, A. and Groves, R. (2005) Social Capital and Neighbourhoods that Work, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42. No. 10, pp.1711-1738.

³⁰ Fukuyama, F. (1995) *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, London, Hamish Hamilton; Putnam, R.D. (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press; Putnam, R.D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York, Simon & Schuster.

³¹ Forrest, R. and Kearns, A. (2001) 'Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood', *Urban Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 12, 2125-2143.

³² Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: A Framework for Consultation*, Cabinet Office.

³³ Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *op. cit.*

under stress, it is undermined by the rapid turnover of people, trust is diminished by increased crime and fear of crime and, as deprived neighbourhoods become increasingly cut off from their surrounding neighbourhoods, networks that support people in their search for employment also decline³⁴.

Community cohesion is seen to be based on contact between people, both informally with friends and neighbours in community facilities and more formally through local organisations. A government aim, with the aid of the voluntary and private sectors, is to rebuild social capital in deprived areas as a means of enabling community self-help. The assumptions in the consultation document about social capital led to policies for community empowerment in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy³⁵. The Strategy argues that success can only be achieved if there is community ownership and it is underpinned by policies to simplify funding regimes for the voluntary and community sectors, make more money available for these sectors and institutionalise support for local community networks.

Neighbourhoods are defined not only as spatial territories but also as 'a series of overlapping social networks'³⁶ and neighbourhoods vary by the form and content of their social networks. It is argued that if communities are low in social cohesion, they are unable to take advantage of opportunities when they arise. Although there is 'no agreement as to what, specifically, constitutes social capital',³⁷ Putnam's definition is widely used: it describes 'features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions'³⁸. Although we have debated the value of this definition elsewhere³⁹, it is a useful starting point for considering the extent of social capital and social cohesion in Sunderland.

There are thought to be three types of social capital: bonding, bridging and linking. The strong ties connecting family members, neighbours, close friends, and business associates are normally referred to as *bonding social capital*. *Bridging social capital* implies horizontal connections to people with broadly comparable economic status and political power and is measured by the extent to which residents join organisations with people like themselves. *Linking social capital*, consists of the vertical ties between poor people and people in positions of influence in formal organisations (such as local authorities, health authorities, RSLs, banks and the police).

If social capital is essential for social cohesion and for sustainable communities, to what extent is it present in the neighbourhoods in Sunderland that are managed by Gentoo? The household survey asked the residents of the Gentoo management areas a number of questions that allow us to analyse this. However, in order to understand the

³⁴ See also Communities Scotland (2002) *Community Regeneration and Neighbourhood Renewal: A Review of the Evidence*, Communities Scotland Research Department Report Number 5, Edinburgh.

³⁵ Social Exclusion Unit (2001) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*, Cabinet Office.

³⁶ Forrest and Kearns, *op. cit.*, 2130.

³⁷ Temkin and Rhoe, 1998, Social Capital and Neighbourhood Stability: an Empirical Investigation, *Housing Policy Debate*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, p. 63.

³⁸ Putnam (1993), *op. cit.*, p. 169.

³⁹ Middleton, A., Murie, A. and Groves, R. (2005) Social Capital and Neighbourhoods that Work, *Urban Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 10, pp.1711-1738.

relative importance of the results and to put them in a wider context, it is worth looking at them in relation to responses to the same questions in another RSL management area. To contextualise the Sunderland survey, therefore, we will compare them with answers received from residents of the area managed by the Bournville Village Trust (BVT) in Birmingham. This part of Birmingham is a desirable and stable neighbourhood with good quality housing in an attractive environment. The BVT area also has a number of different social and economic characteristics that are different from the study area in Sunderland and it is thought to be a ‘neighbourhood that works’⁴⁰ so the comparison should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, with these caveats in mind, it is a useful comparator.

Ways of measuring *bonding* social capital are to ask the extent to which people know their neighbours, feel lonely or isolated or have relatives living in the same area. The survey showed that the people of Sunderland do not suffer from feelings of loneliness or isolation (Table 1). In fact, they are less likely to show these symptoms than the residents of the Bournville Estate⁴¹.

The striking thing about the people we interviewed in Sunderland was the relatively high proportion of residents who had family living nearby. Two thirds said they had relatives living in the area, compared to just over one third in Bournville. In contrast, only 41% said they knew quite a lot or almost all their neighbours to have a chat with. In the area managed by the Bournville Village Trust, 49% said they knew a quite a lot or almost all their neighbours but only 37% said they had family living in the area. There is therefore a relatively low level of social networks in Sunderland beyond the family. This would indicate that the Gentoo and BVT areas exhibit different types of

Table 1

a. How many Neighbours do you know well enough to have a chat with?

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
None	48	4.0	31	3.1
One or two	318	26.5	175	17.5
A few	339	28.2	304	30.4
Quite a lot	290	24.1	305	30.4
Almost all	206	17.1	186	18.6
	1201	99.9	1001	100.0

b. Feeling Lonely or Isolated

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	77	6.4	93	9.3

⁴⁰ Groves, R., Middleton, A., Murie, A. and Broughton, K. (2003) *Neighbourhoods That Work: A Study of the Bournville Estate, Birmingham*, Bristol, Policy Press.

⁴¹ Since these household surveys were carried out at different times in different estates in two different cities, it is not strictly correct to carry out Chi-square tests to compare the results from the two areas, even although the two samples were random and the questions were the same. However, had the results come from the same sampling frame, this result would have been significant with a p-value of 0.0128. All other results in this section would have been significant at the 0.0001 level.

No	1111	92.5	902	90.1
Don't Know	13	1.1	6	0.6
	1201	100	1001	100

c. Relatives living in the area

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	797	66.3	373	37.3
No	404	33.7	628	62.7
	1201	100	1001	100

bonding social capital. Since the Gentoo residents are less likely to exhibit feelings of loneliness or isolation, it would appear that this may be the consequence of different type of social interactions. The family is much more important in Sunderland and neighbourliness is more important in Bournville.

When we asked questions relating to *bridging* social capital, concerning membership of civic organisations, we discovered that the residents of the housing areas managed by Gentoo were much less likely to join these organisations, either within the city or beyond. The fact that only two per cent of those interviewed were members of residents or tenants associations compares with 28% in the BVT management area (Table 2). In addition, 15% of people in Bournville were members of organisations within their neighbourhood and 23% were members of others that met elsewhere in Birmingham. In this question, 'Bournville' was replaced by 'Sunderland' but we have to remember that Bournville is only a small part of Birmingham. We might therefore expect that, when we ask about membership in Sunderland, this would correspond more closely to asking a question in Bournville about membership of organisations inside *and* outside of Bournville. The area covered in the former is much larger than the Bournville estate. When comparing responses in Sunderland and Bournville, therefore, we should expect to find a higher level of membership in the former. The opposite is the case and the difference between the two management areas is quite marked. There are much lower levels of bridging social capital in the Gentoo management area.

When we looked at *linking* social capital, by focussing on the relationship between residents and the managers of housing, the comparison with Bournville is once again interesting. When asked if they thought residents have enough influence over the management of their housing, a very high proportion in Sunderland (56%) said they did not know (Table 3). In Bournville, only 37% said they did not know and residents in this estate were much more likely to say either yes or no than those in Sunderland. The fact that the same question was asked in both places suggests that it may have been less meaningful for the people of Sunderland. Influencing housing management is perhaps not something they are used to and it may not be something they aspire to. When asked if they would like a bigger say, only 7% said that they would, compared to 25% in Bournville.

As we have seen, the Government's housing and sustainable communities agenda places great emphasis on 'empowering citizens to shape their own lives and the

services they receive – and one of the most powerful vehicles for this type of community empowerment is social housing⁴². They want to empower tenants ‘by giving them more say over how their homes are managed and supporting strong communities that bring people together’⁴³ but it would appear that in Sunderland there is very little demand for this. Gentoo are extremely active in consulting tenants using a variety of methods. In addition, around 93% of respondents in our social survey indicated that they were satisfied with their homes and 94% were satisfied with their local environment. Gentoo may, in fact have reached the limits of participation for the quality of service that they offer. If tenants are satisfied with their homes, the environment and the management of both, why would they need empowering?

Table 2

a. Member of Resident or Tenant Association

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	22	1.8	109	10.9
No	1179	98.2	892	89.1
	1201	100.0	1001	100

b. Member of other Organisations in Sunderland or Bournville

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	50	4.1	146	14.6
No	1151	95.9	855	85.4
	1201	100.0	1001	100

c. Member of Organisations outside Sunderland or Bournville

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	6	0.5	227	22.6
No	1195	99.5	774	77.4
	1201	100.0	1001	100

Table 3

a. Do residents have enough influence over SHG Management?

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%

⁴² Press release from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government following the Queen’s Speech in November 2007.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Yes	324	27.0	371	37.0
No	209	17.4	264	26.4
DK	668	55.6	366	36.6
	1201	100	1001	100

b. Would you like a bigger say?

	Sunderland		Bournville	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	86	7.2	248	24.8
No	1115	92.8	753	75.2
	1201	100	1001	100

Flying in the face of government policy for sustainable communities and community empowerment, these are deprived communities that are low in social capital and they are not interested in further empowerment. This does not mean, of course, that they are not interested in ensuring that public services are delivered to them. If they do not want the responsibility for the delivery of these services, that duty remains clearly with the providers; that is, with the government agencies that are expected to work together in these communities. This brings us back to the problem of evidence that would underpin inter-agency working and evaluation.

7. Secondary Data and Neighbourhood Analysis

We have noted that there is a lack of a strategic approach to responsibilities for neighbourhood-level statistics that could be shared among the different agencies who deliver services concerned with social and economic well-being. There are also practical difficulties associated with neighbourhood level spatial analysis. These difficulties do not refer to the technologies and techniques for spatial analysis, for these are fairly well developed. Nor do they refer to indicators quality of life and well-being, for the Government has identified around 200 of these. The problems are mainly the result of a lack of coherence around the administrative and spatial boundaries used by government agencies, the low priority given to collecting and using neighbourhood statistics and a lack of willingness to share what little information is available.

In the course of the study, the key issues that emerged for the future of evidence-based policy for neighbourhood regeneration were:

- The lack of coherence in the administrative boundaries used by public sector organisations;
- The different spatial units of analysis used by government agencies
- The unavailability of information at the lowest levels, such as postcodes or output areas.

Throughout the project, we have been gathering information on health, education, crime, employment and housing management. We wanted to be able to compare the changes that had taken place since 2001. However, the information we have been

interested in is in a number of different formats. The data is gathered and presented by different organisations on the basis of:

- a. Post codes [e.g. Education statistics]
- b. Output Areas (OAs) (plus lower, middle and upper super-output areas)[e.g. 2001 Census data, recent health data, crime data]
- c. Leaf codes [representing Sunderland Housing Group/Gentoo's management patches]
- d. Wards [all of the above can be aggregated to pre and post 2004 ward level].

Ward level data appeared to be the easiest data to obtain. However, ward data do have limitations for use in this project, as the ward boundaries in Sunderland changed quite considerably in 2004. This has created a number of problems:

- For those who have switched to using 2004 ward boundaries, any comparison at ward level between 2001 and 2006 is meaningless.
- Ward boundaries changed in 2004 but at the beginning of the project, most authorities still appeared to be using old ward boundaries for analysis.
- The ward boundaries are, in any case, too crude for our purposes. Meaningful housing management areas, like estates, often lie across ward boundaries.
- Census data was gathered on the basis of enumeration district (EDs) before 2001. Some authorities did not change to OAs until later.
- Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are not co-terminus with housing management areas and they cannot be aggregated up to allow a fit with housing management information.
- The Output Area boundaries and aggregated data for Super Output Areas (SOAs) are not co-terminus with 2004 wards.
- Census data, gathered in 2001, is not only already seven years out of date but is also presented in terms of 1982 wards by some agencies⁴⁴.

These are some of the issues that housing organisations such as Gentoo have to confront when they are trying to gather and analyse evidence that will inform their social and physical investment strategies. However, within housing organisations there is also a need for more institutional control over spatial information in order to address the Sustainable Communities agenda:

- Within Gentoo, the investment data was not held in the same spatial format as other housing management information.
- Gentoo management data has been difficult to link to the other data because of the way it is gathered and stored. For example, all addresses are post-coded, but post codes are not always recorded by staff or used in their internal analysis.

For the RSL, however, the internal inconsistencies can be dealt with and this is already happening. The difficulties with the external data could be much more problematical if they are to be involved in monitoring and evaluation.

⁴⁴ Ref: Public Health reports;

When collecting data from all of the agencies, there were difficulties in obtaining information that was useful for neighbourhood analysis. Most of the data was not available at the lowest levels, such as postcode or Output Area levels. Many agencies and organisations approached needed to carry out substantial amounts of work to get their data down to this level, which suggests that they do not work with small area data.

A major issue was the difficulty in identifying who exactly holds large-scale data sets and management data within the organisation. In many cases, once the request for certain types of data had been put to the agency, there was a long gap before they came back to us. When the requested data was produced it often did not match the request at all. It was patchy, was presented at the wrong spatial level and had no relation to the organisation's area management structure.

Understandably, many organisations expressed concern about how we would use the data. After much explanation about the purpose of the project and who we were carrying out the work for, data was passed over to us but with the caveat that we did not put it into the public domain. Some of the hold-ups and reluctance that we experienced while collecting secondary data may be attributable to this problem.

8. The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG)

CLG, with the support of the Oxford Consultancy for Social Inclusion, provide a large number of datasets for Neighbourhood Renewal⁴⁵. These include Census data, which are available at OA and LSOA levels, and Indices of Deprivation (IMD) at the LSOA level. Even although the Census is out of date, these are important sources, to which we shall return in a moment. In Table 4, we can see the themes that are covered by the CLG data and, in the second column, the number of data sets that are available.

Table 4

CLG Data for Neighbourhood Renewal

	Total No. of data sets	Periodic sub- district data sets	Sources and spatial units
Population	89	6	LSOA; MSOA
Deprivation & Low Income	87	5	All DWP* LSOA (2004 only, otherwise 2003 ward)
Employment & Enterprise	155	36	16 DWP LSOA; 18 ONS MSOA
Education & Skills	177	5	1998 Ward; 2003 ward; 3 LSOA
Health	197	3	2 DWP; 2003 ward
Housing	69	4	OA; Postcode; 2003 ward; MSOA
Crime & Community Safety	83	2	LSOA; MSOA
Liveability	82	13	11 MSOA; 2003 ward; 1 LSOA
Ethnicity & Diversity	65	5	3 DWP LSOA one yr only and 2003 ward; 2 MSOA;
Disability	43	3	All DWP LSOA
Children & Young Adults	193	7	1998 ward; 2003 wards; 4 LSOA; 1 MSOA

⁴⁵ www.data4nr.net

* All DWP data are available at the LSOA level for one year only (2004). For other years, the smallest geographical unit is the obsolete 2003 ward.

In the third column, we can see the number of sub-district datasets for which information is available at several points in time. The Census and IMD information is excluded from this column. For monitoring and evaluation purposes at the neighbourhood level, periodic sub-district data are needed and the geographic unit should be small enough to allow data to be aggregated and approximated to neighbourhood boundaries and the local management areas of service providers. For only two themes are there more than 10% of the data sets that meet the criteria of being sub-district and periodic. If we look at the final column, however, it becomes clear that very few of these are suitable for neighbourhood monitoring and evaluation:

- Many of them refer to defunct ward boundaries.
- Many are at the Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) level, which cut across neighbourhood boundaries and local management areas and are therefore too large to be useful.
- Many of them rely on the same DWP data, which is available at the LSOA level for one year only and otherwise can only be analysed for obsolete wards.
- Even LSOA level data is too crude for neighbourhood analysis, although local knowledge can sometimes provide useful approximations of geographical fit.
- There is no coherence in the geographical levels between the themes and, therefore, in the spatial information gathered by different agencies.

Most of the Government's Neighbourhood Statistics are, in fact, quite inadequate for their intended purpose. The data is not available at a level that allows aggregation to neighbourhood boundaries and the quality of information for different geographical levels varies considerably.

The Census data will be useful in four years' time, if we return to complete the project and compare the 2001 and 2011 results. The information contained in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation for Sunderland can also be useful. In the next section, we can demonstrate some of what can be done with this data, but the section also points to the limitations of the data, particularly if inter-agency working is expected. The overall indicator combines a number of indicators that cover income, employment, health and disability, education, skills training, and access to housing services. We would argue that focussed inter-agency working requires an analysis of these disaggregated indicators at a neighbourhood level.

9. The Use of Indices of Multiple Deprivation

It is generally accepted that there are pockets of poverty in affluent local authorities all round the country and that analyses that focus on well-being at the district or local authority level ignore concentrations of deprivation at the neighbourhood scale. Similarly, where ward level analyses of deprivation are carried out, pockets of poverty in wards that are mainly affluent are hidden from sight. Even within deprived wards, the neighbourhoods with high levels of unemployment may not be the same as the

ones with age-related health problems. In order to be able to identify and treat localised areas of deprivation, it is important to be able to carry out analysis at the level of neighbourhoods. The way that statistics are gathered, however, still makes this extremely difficult.

The presentation of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) has improved since 2000, when the analysis was carried out at the ward level⁴⁶. In 2000, there was only one ward in Sunderland (Southwick) that was in the bottom 10% of the most deprived wards in England and another three (South Hylton, Thorney Close and Town End Farm) that were in the bottom 20%. However, the old ward of Grindon, which lay above the bottom quartile in 2000, contained significant areas of deprivation in the Pennywell Estate.

In 2004, Sunderland was ranked the 22nd worst local authority in England for deprivation⁴⁷. This placed it in the bottom 7% of authorities. The data is now available at the level of the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) and the IMD data show that there were 51 LSOAs in the bottom 10% of LSOAs in England. Three of the city's LSOAs were in the bottom 0.5%, four were in the worst 1% and 25 were in the worst 5%⁴⁸. Of the four worst areas, two of them were within Southwick, the worst ward in 2000, but the other two LSOAs were in wards that did not appear in the bottom 20% of the most deprived wards in the country (Thornholme and Central). Of the worst 10 LSOAs in Sunderland in 2004, only 5 were located within the four worst wards as they were defined in 2000⁴⁹. The most likely explanation for this is that the ward level analysis is not picking up significant concentrations of deprivation. The ward is therefore a highly unreliable spatial unit for identifying where action on deprivation should be targeted⁵⁰.

Following changes to ward boundaries in 2004, there were 188 LSOAs and 25 wards in Sunderland. This study is focussed on the 16 wards that are covered by the Central, North and South management areas of Gento. Within this area, we looked more closely at the LSOAs that fell within the most deprived 1000 LSOAs in England. There were 12 LSOAs in Sunderland that were in the worst 1000, which meant that they were within the 3% most deprived in the country. Eleven of them were within the study area⁵¹.

Because there was no attempt to match wards with Census units of analysis in 2004, three of these LSOAs cut across ward boundaries⁵². These worst patches of deprivation are within the current wards of Southwick, Hendon, Millfield/ Pallion, Sandhill, Redhill and Hendon/St Michaels.

⁴⁶ Spreadsheet IMD1. This spreadsheet is available on CDROM.

⁴⁷ Spreadsheet IMD2. This spreadsheet is available on CDROM.

⁴⁸ All percentages rounded to one decimal point. Spreadsheet IMD3. This spreadsheet is available on CDROM.

⁴⁹ It is possible, but highly unlikely, that the situation in these wards changed over time and there is no reason to believe that the changes in the way deprivation was measured can account for this.

⁵⁰ This is an matter that should be of interest to local authorities, but it raises a number of political issues that we will not discuss in this paper.

⁵¹ LSOA E01008746 is in Hetton. See spreadsheet IMD4. This spreadsheet is available on CDROM.

⁵² This raises a question about LSOA boundaries for the Census in 2011: will the boundaries be changed to make them fit with the 2004 wards, will they be retained to make longitudinal analysis possible, or will an algorithm be written to allow both of these possibilities?

There are two other levels of analysis of the LSOAs that can be carried out below the level of the ward. These are the neighbourhood and the Gentoo management area (identified by a Leaf Code) (IMD4).

1. The use of the LSOAs for neighbourhood level analysis remains problematical. Most of the LSOAs cover more than one neighbourhood (IMD5). For example, the 6th and 7th worst LSOAs cover both Ford and Pennywell estates; the 9th includes parts of Thorney Close, Springwell and Humbledon, and Humbledon is hardly a deprived part of Sunderland; and the 10th covers areas within both Springwell and Thorney Close.
2. If we drop down a level from these wider neighbourhoods to Gentoo management areas, the disjuncture between the spatial unit that is used to analyse multiple deprivation and the geographical area that is used to deliver services that might address deprivation, is even more apparent. The 9th worst LSOA in Sunderland, within the ward of Sandhill and including parts of Thorney Close, Springwell and Humbledon, contains parts of the geography covered by the management areas of Thorney close 2 and 3, Springwell and Humbledon, but not Thorney Close 1 and 4⁵³.

The LSOA is a better spatial unit than the ward for analysing IMD data when trying to get evidence for neighbourhood policy, but it still not good enough. In the 11 most deprived parts of Sunderland, two of the LSOAs involve four Gentoo Management Areas and a further four LSOAs are covered by three Management Areas.

It could be argued that the Management Areas should be brought into line with the LSOAs, but this would not be advisable. The management areas are meaningful for both housing officers and residents. If the IMD data were available at the Output Area (OA) level, it could be aggregated up to Management Areas and Estates, which would be more meaningful for policy purposes. There are between four and seven OAs in each LSOA. Matching OAs and Leaf codes still leaves some minor overlapping boundaries, but these can be accommodated by slightly changing the boundaries of Leaf Code areas or by allocating OAs to the leaf codes that contain the largest number of properties within the OA. With some minor adjustment, based on local knowledge, the gains in evidence about neighbourhood and housing management areas would be substantial.

That said, the evidence at LSOA level is not useless. It is better than what was available previously and it indicates the following (IMD4):

- a. The most deprived part of Sunderland falls within the Southwick Management Area of the Southwick Estate (Leaf code 241). This area is in the bottom 0.3% of LSOAs in the country.
- b. The second most deprived LSOA constitutes part of the East End and Central Hendon (Leaf Codes 111 and 112).
- c. The third most deprived area is clearly within the East End (Leaf Code A111).

⁵³ Since carrying out this analysis it has become clear that the area covered by Thorney Close 4 has been redistributed to other Gentoo Leaf Codes.

- d. The fourth most deprived area is the Marley Potts Estate (leaf Code A242).
- e. All of the above are in the most deprived one per cent of LSOAs in the country.
- f. The neighbourhoods and management areas indicated in IMD4 constitute some of the most severely deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

The above overall scores, however, are made up of constituent elements which do not score evenly. This is significant for collaborating agencies that might form local partnerships to tackle related aspects of deprivation in any neighbourhood.

- a. The worst overall area, in Southwick (Leaf Code A241), does not come out worst in any of the constituent parts. It is second in income, health and young person's education; 3rd in income deprivation affecting children; 4th in both employment and education; and 6th in crime. The spread of indicators clearly make this an area for multi-agency collaboration.
- b. The East End (Leaf Code A111) is spread over three LSOAs, sharing two of them with Central Hendon and South Hendon.
 - i. In the LSOA that contains part of East End but no other management area, the third worst overall in the city, we find the worst results for income and employment, second worst for income deprivation affecting both young and older people and third worst for health, education and the young person's education sub-domain.
 - ii. In the LSOA it shares with Central Hendon Management Area (A112), the second worst LSOA in the city, it is worst for crime and income deprivation affecting older people and second worst for employment.
 - iii. In the LSOA it shares with South Hendon, only its results for employment appear in the bottom 10.
 - iv. The East End area of the city, close to the employment hub of the city centre, is an area in crisis, with particular problems of, paradoxically, employment and income, as well as health, education and crime. The deprivation is affecting both young and older people.
 - v. This is also an area that is crying out for multi-agency working

The same need for multi-agency working can be said of Lower Pennywell North, High Ford and Marley Potts (ranking 4th, 6th and 7th in Sunderland), although they do not appear in the top ten for crime; and health problems do not figure as highly in Lower Pennywell North and High Ford. The lower down the ranking one goes, the more specialised the help that is needed. The need for a range of inter-agency partnerships becomes less clear.

In the Central, North and South Companies, there are key wards within which Sunderland's deprivation is concentrated, but within these wards there are census tracts within which there is severe deprivation:

- a. Hendon (LSOAs ranked 2, 3 and 12)
- b. Southwick (LSOAs ranked 1, 4 and 5)
- c. Millfield/Pallion (LSOAs ranked 6 and 7)
- d. Sandhill (LSOAs ranked 9 and 10)
- e. Redhill (LSOA ranked 11)

Having identified where the deprivation exists and given that some indicators are more important in some areas than others, we have to recognise, of course, that not all of these issues can be treated at a neighbourhood level alone. Some aspects of deprivation can be treated locally, some at the level of the city and the region.

- a. Income and employment deprivation can be tackled both city-wide, through investment, and locally through education and training. (Combined, these account for 45% of the IMD score)
- b. Health and disability can be tackled both locally (prevention) and more widely (care) in the city and region. (13.5% of the score)
- c. Education, skills and training can be tackled through schools and colleges, and through the home. (13.5%)
- d. Barriers to Housing and Services are not a major problem in the study area. None of the LSOAs in Sunderland are in the bottom 5000 in the country and only 8 are in the bottom 10,000. (This counts for 9.3% of the IMD score)
- e. Crime can be tackled locally (there are three LSOAs in the bottom 100 and 12 in the bottom 1000) (9.3% of the score)
- f. The environment can be tackled both strategically and locally (9.3% of the score)

However, for most of these we need to know more details at the local level, in order to plan for the type of health care that will be needed at the local level, to judge the level of anti-crime resources that are needed for crime prevention, or to assess the educational needs of households with children who are being failed by the education system.

10. Local Agency data in Sunderland and the North East

In order to acquire more socio economic data, contact was made with a data provision agency in the North East called Tyne and Wear Research and Information (TWRI). Sunderland City Council uses this organisation to acquire statistics on their behalf and so it seemed logical to approach them to fill in the gaps. Their website does provide some data and there is a tool available to probe their databases but this is only available to the local authorities in the area and not to the general public. Initially, a request for different types of data was sent to TWRI but unfortunately they were

unable to provide very little of what was asked for. Towards the end of this phase of the project, TWRI did allow us to look at the information they hold, on condition that it is treated as confidential. However, we shall return to this in a moment to look at what could have been done with the 2001 census data, had we been able to access it.

Contact was also made to Sunderland City Council in attempt to gather data economic data such as employment/unemployment figures. They were extremely unhelpful and unable to pass on any information at all - most of the information they use apparently comes from NOMIS and National Statistics and the implication was that we could visit these websites and obtain the information ourselves. As we have indicated, this information is inadequate for neighbourhood analysis. In general, up-to date data such as the 2006 figures for population, gender, age, ethnicity and employment just did not exist or was not freely available.

Crime Data

Information on recorded crime proved to be the easiest to obtain. Gentoo already had a contact within the City Council who could provide them with crime statistics. This contact was able to provide us with the majority of the data needed and at the level required. The only data not to be collected was Output Area data for 2001 – it was not readily available although the reasons for this are not clear. Data was provided at Ward level for 2001 but this is not without its problems – as the ward boundaries changed in 2004 this data is hard to reconcile with data then produced for years after 2004. The Council also raised concerns about how this data would be used. The data was only supplied on the proviso that it was not reproduced in the public domain.

We eventually agreed with Tyne & Wear Research and Information that they would produce information for Gentoo's management areas, based on Gentoo's Management Areas (Leaf Codes).

Education Data

There is a large amount of education data available on the DfeS website that details performance on a school-by-school basis at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. This, however, measures the performance of schools not individuals or communities. Further information is needed on individual pupils – and the local Education Authority generally holds this on a post-code basis. There are data protection issues around issuing data at post-code level, but this information could be aggregated up to Output Area level and linked to other information through this spatial unit of analysis.

The City Council Education office was contacted and it was agreed that work could be done to get the data we needed. However, as it was extra work for an employee to fit around their other work, it has meant that it took a long time to receive any data from them. When it arrived, it was not what we thought we had agreed.

School performance can improve, but what happens to those pupils who continue to fail? It is perfectly possible, and indeed highly likely, that as schools improve their performance this will be done on the basis of their best pupils, with significant numbers being left behind and greater inequality being created within schools. If the home is a factor in educational performance and if in the future resources are to be

made available to tackle this, what are the family circumstances of failing pupils and where are they living? At the moment, we do not know.

We tried several other routes to obtain this information, through the Local Strategic partnership, two departments of the City Council and the Tyne and Wear Research and Information office (TWRI) only to discover that it was not made available to other departments within the City Council or to TWRI. The information exists and it could be useful for policy analysis, but it cannot be obtained.

Health Data

The main issue with health data was identifying who within the Health Authority held large-scale data sets on the kinds of data we needed. The NHS is a huge organisation and with more six health care providers operating within the Sunderland area. Finding the correct person to approach proved to be extremely difficult. The Teaching PCT was approached first and the general Communications team were approached. From then on, we were passed between 3 employees in the organisation until eventually it was agreed that the Information Services team could help us out in getting some of the primary and secondary care data sets. On the face of it, it looked like the Health service did not really know themselves who could provide important data on the running of the service.

In 2002, a report carried out for ONE⁵⁴ pointed out that important information systems in the Region were not organised in a way that easily facilitated the type of analysis presented in the report or could easily inform NHS participation in a more active and informed economic role in the region. Having identified these limitations, the report said that the various agencies now had a better understanding of these challenges and were considering how such data could be collected, used to address cross-cutting issues and provide a firm basis for future regional and sub-regional developments. As far as we could see, there was no evidence of this having happened.

When contact was eventually established with the Information Services team, it emerged that the service was undergoing a reorganisation and that there were limited staff resources to undertake our request. It was made clear that not all the information we had requested would be made available to us and, when we eventually received the data requested from the PCT, it was of little use - it was not at the correct level, was patchy and did not make sense.

As we required both Primary / Secondary care data and Public Health data we had to deal with these separately - the PCT did not hold Public Health information. In order to get some Public Health data, the North East Public Health Observatory based at Durham University was approached. They agreed to provide the data needed but again to get the data to the lowest level possible - Lower Super Output Area in this case - they would have to carry out a substantial amount of work and would have to charge for it. We paid for some information but this was of limited use.

Health is an area where prevention is becoming more important and, therefore, action in the community will become more relevant. In order to look a little more closely at

⁵⁴ ONE (2002) HAD Report.

some of these issues we will consider some of the strategic policy issues that arise from an ageing population that is distributed unevenly in space and has unequal access to resources. We would argue that the issues that arise in this analysis will also be relevant for collaborative relations between other service providers.

11. Housing, Health and Social Services for an Aging Population

The Prime Minister recently announced that ‘The NHS of the future will do more than just treat patients who are ill – it will be an NHS offering prevention as well ... the NHS of the future will be one of patient power, patients engaged and taking greater control over their own health and their healthcare too’⁵⁵. He offered a vision of the NHS based on prevention rather than cure.

Prevention, however, implies more integration with other non-health carers and providers of other services. Both prevention and care will increasingly take place in the community and professionals from different agencies will need to share information if there is to be effective collaboration. It is not just health professionals who provide care for the elderly, but we might expect that there will be limits to what information on individual patients can be passed around from one agency to another. However, some information sharing is necessary if rational strategic decisions about resource allocations are to take place. With increasing care in the community, there needs to be some common understanding about how communities and neighbourhoods are defined. Some of the issues that are raised by this can be seen by looking at the aging population in different estates in Sunderland.

A major issue in the future will be older people living longer in the community, with slowly deteriorating health. Despite the efforts of the Supporting People programme to provide services to residents with care and support needs, across the region there is a shortfall in the units required for older people and a proportionately larger shortfall for people with mental health problems, learning disabilities and other vulnerabilities⁵⁶. It is recognised that the providers of Social Housing, Health Care and Social Services will need to work closely together to meet the needs of this segment of the population, much more than in the past. A key objective of the NEHB is to promote good management and targeted housing investment to address community and social needs, including an aging population and the needs of minority communities, but there is little indication as to how this will be done in practice and little evidence about where these vulnerable groups were located. This information is clearly needed for such targeted support.

Addressing these issues implies not only an alignment of resource allocation policies at a strategic level but also an implementation plan at the local or neighbourhood level. There are, however, informational and organisational barriers that need to be overcome:

- Front-line professional in all three services will know where most of the elderly live and will interact with them as cases become known to them

⁵⁵ *The Guardian*, 8.1.08)

⁵⁶ NEHB (2005) *A New Housing Strategy for the North East*, p. 20

- This information does not always rise up the information hierarchy of complex organisations, to reach the levels where decisions about resources are being made.
- There is a strategic issue about how the limited resources of organisations get distributed. Front-line professional will also be in competition for these resources and often it will be those who make themselves heard who will gain access to them.
- There is also a strategic issues about how the different organisation work together to deal with different aspects of the needs of the elderly.
- In order to tackle these strategic issues, reliable information needs to be available to the key decision-makers.

We should not assume that statistical information, usually gathered for other purposes, will in itself be sufficient to inform this decision-making. Reliable secondary data at the right geographical level, however, is fundamental for informing any debate about resource allocation.

If we focus on three key estates, where deprivation was amongst the highest in Sunderland, one in each of the Company Areas, we can see that there was considerable variation in the numbers of the elderly in each estate (Table 5). This tells us something about the future demand for health-care and social services in each of these estates. It also suggests that the greatest demand may be in the estate with less social housing than the other two. However, if we dig down further, we can see that there are even wider differences within the estates than between them.

Table 5

Proportion of the population who were 65 years and older in three deprived estates, 2001

	% Male	%Female	% Living in Social Housing
Pennywell	11.1	14.7	62.9
Southwick	17.3	21.2	55.0
Thorney Close	13.0	16.0	67.8

In Pennywell, which is made up of 5 output areas (OAs), there are three output areas where more than 20% of males are 65 and over and two where less than 5% are in this age cohort (Table 6). For females, the aggregated figures are composed of similarly disparate results. The same pattern can be found in the other two estates.

Housing, health and social services professional on the ground will most likely know about these concentrations and be able to explain the reasons for them, along with the issues that arise in their day-to-day interactions with older people. The high visibility of areas where older people are concentrated is more likely to lead to clear strategies for supporting them. The extremely high concentrations of older people in Hahnemann Court, for example, where between 84% and 87% were living in social housing in 2001 (depending on which OA they belong to), have led Gentoo to focus on the special needs of these residents. From the focus groups and interviews, it is

clear that the effect of this effort has been to greatly improve the experience of tenants living in Hahnemann Court. However, it is outside areas such as this that there are strategic issues for senior managers to consider.

Table 6

Proportion of the population in selected Output Areas who were 65 years and older, 2001

	Output Area	% Male	% Female	% Living in Social Housing	Leaf Code	LC Patch
Pennywell	FF14	23.2	32.7	69.6	A154	Petersfield L. Pennywell
	FF18	20.3	22.9	3.9	A141	S/N? L. Pennywell
	FS03	20.0	20.4	46.7	A141	S/N?
	FF09	3.7	7.4	81.5	A142	H. Ford 1
	FF19	3.3	5.1	72.5	A161	Grindon 1
Southwick	FC03	33.8	38.5	76.3	A242	Marley Potts
	FC14	61.5	72.0	84.4	A244	Hahnemann Ct
	FC16	46.3	50.8	86.8	A244	Hahnemann Ct
	FC12	5.2	4.2	80.1	A241	Southwick
	FC18	4.4	4.3	69.2	A251	Bond Cl./NR
	FT17	4.6	4.9	78.8	A242	Marley Potts
	FT19	5.5	3.9	91.1	A242	Marley Potts
	Thorney Cl. ⁵⁷	FU13	18.3	18.4	62.9	A363
	FU12	18.2	28.4	68.8	A362	Thorney Cl. 1
	FU16	17.9	17.6	57.0	A362	Thorney Cl. 1
	FU35	7.0	26.6	45.8	A362	Thorney Cl. 1
	FU23	7.1	7.1	68.2	A365	Thorney Cl. 4
	FU17	6.7	12.3	60.6	A365	Thorney Cl. 4

Providers of key services should wish to know where there are higher than average concentrations of older residents or where, on the basis of population projections, we might expect higher than average concentrations in the future. The distribution of older people by gender is also uneven across the city. In Thorney Close, for example, there appears to be generally less concentration of older residents than in the other two areas and this will also be true in 2011, but in one patch in particular there appears to be a very high proportion of elderly women.

⁵⁷ Thorney Close 4 no longer exists but at the time of the analysis, Gento records had not been updated. Consequently we have used Thorney Close 4 in this section of the report.

A key issue is the extent to which partnership working across organisations needs to focus on particular locations, but not on others. For decisions to be made about this and for targeted inter-professional long-term strategic responses to be effective, spatially defined information needs to be available at the lowest management level within the organisations concerned. The geographies of these management levels will be different in different organisations but we should expect the building blocks to be the same (OAs for example) and for the areas to be meaningful for customers/clients as well as the service delivery agencies.

For strategic responses, population projections can be made based on age cohorts in 2001 and local knowledge about the type of accommodation that is available locally. This type of analysis allows planners to identify concentrations of people at risk and it allows organisations to move beyond personal perceptions of professionals who are competing with each other in the allocation of resources.

The question now arises as to how these different geographies can be brought together so that rational and effective resource allocation can take place.

12. Overcoming Secondary Data Problems

In the report for the Housing Corporation and Gentoo, we have developed a method that will allow us to link Gentoo's leaf codes and neighbourhood management data to OAs and post-coded external data. This information is contained in a number of electronic spreadsheets and the key elements are summarised as:

- Spatial Units for all three areas
- Leaf Codes and OAs for selected estates
- Leaf codes, OAs, LSOAs and 2004 wards for all Neighbourhoods
- Summary education profile for Selected Estates
- Sample profiles for Leaf Codes

Spatial Units for all three areas

This spreadsheet contains the following information for every property owned by Gentoo in the study area:

- a. The Company Area (Central, North, South)
- b. 1982 ward
- c. 2004 Ward
- d. Local Authority code
- e. Output Area
- f. Leaf Code
- g. Leaf code Name
- h. Property code
- i. Address
- j. Post Code
- k. Neighbourhood
- l. Whether in Renewal Area
- m. Whether New Build or not

If information on management, social or economic indicators is available for any of these spatial units of analysis, it can be attached to this spreadsheet and analysed at other spatial levels. Ideally, the basic building block for all information would be the Output Area.

Leaf Codes and OAs for selected estates

In this spreadsheet, key neighbourhoods in Sunderland have been selected and their Output Areas codes attached to them. All the census OA codes for each management patch have been attached to the leaf codes and these can be aggregated up for key estates. We have done this for 10 estates, but it can be done for any estate or neighbourhood in the Gentoo management area.

Leaf codes, OAs, LSOAs and 2004 wards for all Neighbourhoods

In this case, we have added the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that correspond to each Leaf Code. Some of the LSOAs cover more than one Leaf Code but if data is only available at the LSOA level, as is the case with health data and Indices of Multiple Deprivation, approximate data can still be collated at the Leaf Code level. This is less accurate than data that is aggregated up from OAs directly to Leaf Codes, but it provides a useful proxy. It gives a more accurate reading for neighbourhoods than the current use of ward data. There is some overlap between LSOAs and Neighbourhoods but it is less frequent than LSOA/Leaf Code overlaps.

Summary Education Profile for Selected Estates

Using the above spreadsheets, we have been able to produce social and economic profiles for neighbourhoods and housing management areas. The Tyne and Wear Research and Information Office (TWRI) allowed us temporary access to their Area Profiler2 database⁵⁸ to test the model. For reasons of constraints on access to the TWRI information⁵⁹ we have been unable to make full use of the database. However, using their 2001 Census information, we have produced an education profile for people living in Pennywell as a demonstration of what can be done.

In addition to education, using TWRI's Area Profiler2 it is possible to produce neighbourhood profiles for crime, the economy, household structure, social profiles and simple profiles. We have produced profiles using these basic Census indicators for Pennywell, Southwick and Thorney Close, but these cannot be released into the public domain for reasons of confidentiality.

We also paid TWRI to produce maps of crime figures for 2006 for each of Gentoo's Leaf Codes and we shall return to this in a moment.

Sample profiles for Leaf Codes

⁵⁸ www.newcastle.gov.uk/twri

⁵⁹ Access is restricted to the five local authorities who support TWRI.

Area Profiler2 allows the same type of profiles to be created for Gentoo's leaf codes and these can be aggregated up in whatever combination is thought to be appropriate. Again, as an example of what can be done, the spreadsheet shows the education profile for the area covered by Leaf Code A111 in 2001. After the next census in 2011, the changes in the profiles of Gentoo's management areas in the inter-censal period can be calculated and these can be analysed in the context of the investment that has taken place in each area, in term of both finance and human resources.

The use of these spreadsheets for the collaborative delivery of services where they are most needed, however, requires that there is usable and relevant data available at one of the geographical levels. As suggested above, there will be constraints on what can be shared and planners need to take account of data protection issues. However, at levels above post codes, it should be possible to preserve confidentiality.

13. How the model would work

As we have suggested above, other than the out-of-date census information, the only reliable information that is available in the region for neighbourhood level analysis are the crime data. We have seen that other researchers have had similar problems as ourselves when trying to access health data and, in the course of this investigation, we discovered that existing education data is not even shared between departments in the City Council. It is also not made available to TWRI, who have had the same problems as ourselves. Sunderland is a member and funder of TWRI, but they are apparently not the only member organisation who is reluctant to provide data. There is a general problem across the region.

In order to demonstrate what the model would do if we had been able to access the data, we contracted TWRI to map the crime data for Sunderland for 2006 to the Gentoo management areas, as identified by Leaf Codes. This involved identifying the incidence of a number of recorded crimes in each Output Area and aggregating these up to the management areas⁶⁰. TWRI then produced maps that recorded the various levels of crime for Gentoo management areas across the study area.

Offences in five Gentoo management areas account for 59% of all recorded crime in the city. As an organisation concerned with safety in the community but operating with limited resources for this purpose, collaboration with the police over the safety of their vulnerable tenants in these neighbourhoods would be a priority. The model can also identify who are the vulnerable groups, in this case mainly the elderly if we discount the young people who come into the city centre at the weekends and are the most likely to suffer from violence against the person.

Given the ready availability of the crime statistics, these figures may not tell the police or those people connected with the Safer Sunderland partnership anything new. More importantly, what they point to is a model that would be useful for Gentoo and other collaborating agencies for identifying critical locations for a broad range of

⁶⁰ For data protection purposes, where there were less than five incidents under any crime heading, the exact number was not identified. In a few cases, Output Areas cut across management area boundaries and therefore appeared under two leaf codes. We identified the total number of Gentoo households in these OAs and how many of them were located in each management area. The OA was allocated to the management area where the largest number of households fell.

quality of life indicators, including unemployment levels, health standards, social care needs, skill levels and education qualifications. If similar information was made available for these indicators, it could be mapped in a similar way, identifying the critical areas for intervention by collaborating agencies.

14. Conclusion

In the regional development and housing documents of Sunderland and the north East Region, there is a clear commitment to the Government's agendas for sustainable, empowered and cohesive communities. There is little clarity, however, about whose responsibility it is to gather, analyse, monitor and evaluate the information that would support these agendas and measure the impact of related activities. There is also a lack of evidence that would support analyses at the neighbourhood level and it would appear that no one has taken responsibility for gathering and collating this information.

Social cohesion in Sunderland is mainly based on the family, rather than relations between neighbours, and this is true of both white and Bangladeshi communities. Bridging and linking social capital are low across the areas of social housing in the city, there are high levels of satisfaction with housing and the environment and there is very little demand for further empowerment. This puts the responsibility for the delivery of services clearly with the providers. If these service providers are expected to work together in deprived communities, this implies sharing evidence that will underpin inter-agency working.

This sharing of evidence is extremely difficult because of the lack of coherence in the administrative boundaries, the different geographical units of analysis that are used by different agencies, the unavailability of information at neighbourhood level, and the unwillingness of some departments and organisations to share even within their own organisations. Central Government's statistics have improved considerably over recent years but CLG's Neighbourhood Statistics are inadequate for the analysis of neighbourhood change.

The current format of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation is superior to what was available previously, but LSOAs cut across wards and local housing management areas. They will also undoubtedly not be co-terminus with the local management areas of other service providers. Ward level analysis hides significant pockets of deprivation and focusing on LSOAs allows us to burrow down below this. It does not, however, allow a focus on neighbourhoods and communities.

Within LSOAs where there are high levels of overall deprivation, there is variation in the distribution of the constituent elements of that deprivation. This implies different levels of resources and different combinations of agencies in different neighbourhoods. This further implies the need to share current information in a coherent format. This is not possible at the present time. Consequently, the Government's objectives for their sustainable and cohesive communities agendas may result in no more than good intentions.

This project has created a model that can bring together the information that is needed for the creation of sustainable and cohesive communities. Considerable work remains to be done on it but, based on Gentoo's housing management areas, it offers the potential for local mapping of quality of life indicators and the rational distribution of resources.