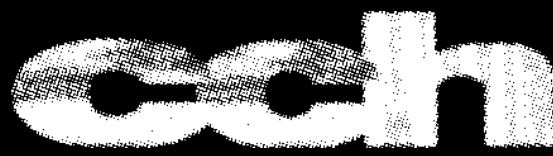


# Tenant Control & Social Exclusion



Confederation of Co-operative Housing

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A report on the ways in which tenant  
control impacts on social exclusion

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**Nic Bliss**

# Acknowledgments

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## CHAPTER 1.

### Introduction: research aims & objectives

The Confederation of Co-operative Housing<sup>1</sup> initiated this research to bring tenant control into the current debate on social exclusion. The researchers set out with the following aims and objectives:

- to identify what tenants and residents involved in tenant controlled organisations consider to be the most important issues in their neighbourhoods
- to assess levels of understanding within tenant controlled organisations about the concept of social exclusion
- to investigate the impact that tenant controlled organisations have on social exclusion.

A fourth objective emerged during the course of the research:

- to consider the relationship between tenant controlled organisations and wider neighbourhood partnership frameworks.

The primary focus was what tenants themselves, many living in areas considered to be particularly deprived, think about the impact of their tenant-controlled organisation has had on social exclusion. The case studies use the tenants' words to describe what tenant-controlled organisations have achieved both for their lives and in the wider community.

## CHAPTER 2.

### A summary of the conclusions

1. Members of tenant-controlled organisations see the key issues facing their community as housing, crime and problems relating to the lack of facilities for young people.
2. They also place a very high value on the sense of community, self-responsibility and well being that their organisations have created.
3. Most of the tenants interviewed did not understand the concept of social exclusion. When the concept was explained to them, all of them said that they do not feel socially excluded. They feel that they are either solving the key issues faced by their community, or that their organisation has given them a sense of control over their neighbourhoods and future that makes other issues irrelevant.
4. All the tenant-controlled organisations studied have had a significant impact on crime and the fear of crime.
5. Only larger tenant-controlled organisations have a significant impact on tackling either unemployment or health issues.
6. All the tenant-controlled organisations in this report score highly against the Social Exclusion's Unit criteria for a good community. All of them - and in particular the smaller ones - have engaged and empowered their communities.
7. The Social Exclusion Unit in its work on neighbourhood renewal has not given enough prominence to the intangible, difficult to measure community and well-being factors, despite these being shown amongst the important priorities for ordinary people.
8. The Social Exclusion Unit has not considered the role and achievements of tenant control in regenerating the most difficult neighbourhoods. This significant omission has undervalued the role of community self-help.
9. Local Strategic Partnerships are strengthened by the involvement of tenant controlled organisations, especially where they are a key driving force.
10. Tenants who are actively involved in tenant controlled or other community organisations may already be stretched and will find it hard to find the voluntary time to get involved with Local Strategic Partnerships.
11. The new Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Social Exclusion Unit and the Active Community Unit should encourage Local Strategic Partnerships to seek out, support and work with local community organisations, such as tenant-controlled organisations, so they can engage directly with communities.

<sup>1</sup> The Confederation of Co-operative Housing is the representative body for housing co-operatives in England & Wales. Set up in 1993, the CCH is a "grass-roots" organisation with a governing body made up of volunteer members of housing co-ops.

## CHAPTER 3.

# Background - the Government's approach to social exclusion

### 3.1 The Social Exclusion Unit - A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal

In September 1998, the Social Exclusion Unit published its strategy for neighbourhood renewal<sup>2</sup>. The report set out a need to *“develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates”*. In his foreword to the report, the Prime Minister recognised that *“Too much has been imposed from above, when experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better. And although there are good examples of rundown neighbourhoods turning themselves around, the lessons haven't been learnt properly.”*

The Social Exclusion Unit has acted on the premise that deprived neighbourhoods suffer disproportionately from poor health, poor educational standards, low employment, high crime rates and lack of popularity and that these disadvantages work against the people who live there and reduce their opportunities for a future.

### 3.2 Policy Action Teams (PATs)

The Social Exclusion Unit report launched 18 Policy Action Teams to focus on particular aspects of living in these difficult neighbourhoods. These teams, co-ordinated by civil servants, invited in a range of housing, regeneration and other practitioners to consider various areas, such as information, housing management, anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood wardens and unpopular housing. The key PATs that relate to the remit of this research are:

#### PAT 4 - Neighbourhood Management

The report of PAT 4 proposed the model of neighbourhood management as a planned co-ordinated approach to tackling the most deprived neighbourhoods, with someone to take overall responsibility at the neighbourhood level to solve problems. It argues that it is at the neighbourhood level *“that local intelligence is best gathered, that community motivation is harnessed and renewal momentum achieved”*<sup>3</sup>.

The report says that the precise mechanism for involving local people is not as important as making sure they are *“genuinely involved in renewal and offered the option of leading it”*. However, it says that whatever mechanism is chosen needs to be able to work both at a strategic level and with the local community within a framework of clear objectives and targets. This framework provides the basis of Local Strategic Partnerships (referred to below).

#### PAT 9 - Community Self-Help

PAT 9 investigated what works in generating community commitment in poor neighbourhoods. Three of its key findings were:

- *“without effective self-help, it is unlikely that any other measures of community regeneration, however well-resourced, will provide long-term solutions to long-term problems”*
- *“community self-help is not something that can be imposed - by definition, this is activity done by local communities, not for or to them”*
- *“community self-help is not a cure for all ills. It can, for instance, supplement public services, and campaign for better public services; it cannot make up for poor public services. It is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a healthy community”*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Bringing Britain Together: a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal” - The Social Exclusion Unit - 1998

<sup>3</sup> “Report of Policy Action Team 4: Neighbourhood management” - DETR - 2000

<sup>4</sup> “Policy Action Team report summaries: a compendium” - The Social Exclusion Unit - 2000

The PAT 9 report also suggested the following principles that go to make a good community:

1. **A learning community**, where people and groups gain knowledge, skills and confidence through community activity.
2. **A fair and just community**, which upholds civic rights and equality of opportunity, and which recognises and celebrates the distinctive features of its cultures.
3. **An active and empowered community**, where people are fully involved and which has strong and varied local organisations and a clear identity and self-confidence.
4. **An influential community**, which is consulted and has a strong voice in decisions which affect its interests.
5. **An economically strong community**, which creates opportunities for work and which retains a high proportion of its wealth.
6. **A caring community**, aware of the needs of its members and in which services are of a good quality and meet these needs.
7. **A green community**, with a healthy and pleasant environment, conserving resources and encouraging awareness of environmental responsibility.
8. **A safe community**, where people do not fear crime, violence or other hazards.
9. **A welcoming community**, which people like, feel happy about and do not wish to leave.
10. **A lasting community**, which is well established and likely to survive.<sup>5</sup>

This report will use these criteria to measure the success of tenant-controlled housing organisations.

### 3.3 The National Strategy Action Plan

In January 2001, the Social Exclusion Unit published its final report - A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan<sup>6</sup> - setting out the government's approach to renewing poor neighbourhoods. This represents a culmination of the work of the PATs and a synthesis of their lessons. In this strategy, it is acknowledged that previous strategies had *"failed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people, or empower them to develop their own solutions"*. The report suggests two mechanisms for turning round the most deprived communities and co-ordinating a multi-faceted empowering response:

- **Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs)** - single bodies that bring together at local level the different parts of the public sector as well as private, voluntary and community sectors so that different initiatives and services support rather than contradict each other
- **Neighbourhood Management** with someone visibly taking responsibility at the sharp end.

Allied to these developments, the government is targeting funds to help local communities in the eighty-eight most deprived districts in the country to participate in LSPs. There are also Community Chest grants to enable local communities to run their own projects within LSPs.

The Social Exclusion Unit anticipates that LSPs will be a *"single coalition of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations"*, and acknowledges that *"it is crucial that the partnership is one of equal players"*. The report puts residents and community groups at the top of the list of organisations to be involved in LSPs. At the same time, however the report suggests that LSPs could be established from existing partnerships, or could be established with the local authority playing the lead formative role. The role for community organisations or tenant-controlled organisations within the LSP is not specified.

<sup>5</sup> "Report of the Policy Action on Community Self-Help" - the Home Office Active Communities Unit - 1999

<sup>6</sup> "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal - National Strategy Action Plan" - The Social Exclusion Unit -2001

## CHAPTER 4.

### Background - the history of tenant control

Early attempts to develop a co-operative and community approach to housing through the establishment of garden cities during the interwar years came to an end at the start of the second world war. The post-war Labour government gave local authorities the responsibility to resolve housing shortages. Unlike parallel developments in Sweden and elsewhere, local authorities gave few opportunities to tenant controlled housing.

However in the 1970s, the then Labour Government created a framework that enabled tenants and prospective tenants to develop ownership par-value housing co-operatives, and this led to the establishment of nearly 450 co-ops by the mid 1980s. Most of these co-operatives were established in the urban areas of London, Liverpool, the Midlands, Manchester and the North-West. In each area, there were distinct reasons why they were established. In some cases, prospective tenants set up housing co-ops to meet particular needs. In some cases, they were set up by younger single people, particularly in areas like London and the South-East characterised by extreme housing need. In some cases, they were set up by agencies working in the field who considered the principles behind them to be important.

Just over 250 of these co-ops now remain. Many have closed down during the 1990s due to a number of factors, such as the lack of support structures, and an inappropriate regulation framework. Many of those that remain are particularly durable, having continued through changing memberships, and having weathered hostile environments. In common with other small community based housing organisations, fundamental changes wrought by the 1988 Housing Act made it very difficult for ownership housing co-ops to fund growth.

However, the 1990s saw a significant growth in tenant management organisations (TMOs). The 1994 Housing Act gave local authority tenants a statutory Right to Manage through democratic tenant management organisations and continued the "Section 16" funding that had begun in 1986 to train and support tenants to set up TMOs. There are now over 200 TMOs in England, some managing estates of over 1,000 properties in high crime areas.

## CHAPTER 5.

### Background - the research

The most qualitative and important research relating to tenant control was carried out in 1995<sup>7</sup>, on behalf of the then Department of the Environment by city accountants Price Waterhouse. This research confirmed the importance of all forms of tenant control - ownership co-ops and tenant management organisations. It compared the performance of a range of tenant controlled organisations over a three year period with that of comparable local authority and housing association properties and concluded that:

- *"Most .... co-ops outperformed their Local Authority and Housing Association counterparts and provided more effective housing management services with usually better value for money"*
- *Tenant controlled organisations "delivered wider non-quantifiable social and community benefits"*
- *"The most effective organisations were those whose members had greatest control over their housing management, finances and environment."*

Though this remains the only piece of qualitative research into tenant control across social housing in England, there are two other government reports that assess the benefits and success of tenant-controlled organisations. In 1999, the Housing Corporation commissioned the Office of Public Management<sup>8</sup> to review resident controlled housing. They concluded that *"resident control brings clear benefits in terms of better housing management, capacity building and community sustainability"* and that *"the Corporation should continue to recognise co-ops as one aspect of a spectrum of resident involvement."*

In 1998, Dr Peter Somerville at Salford University reviewed tenant management organisations for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. This clearly indicated the success of tenant management, particularly where local authorities support it. The report called for an equivalent programme to facilitate the setting up of TMOs in the housing association sector.<sup>9</sup> Together, these three pieces of research confirm that tenant control in England has proved to be an effective mechanism for delivering housing management and as well as many other community benefits.

The picture of tenant control has been far stronger in Scotland, where over half of the housing association sector is tenant controlled through housing co-ops or tenant-controlled community based housing associations. In 1998, a study carried out by three universities<sup>10</sup> looked at the benefits of community and co-operative ownership in Scotland and concluded that *“although a major programme in Scotland, the approach has not been adopted in England and Wales. The continued success of community ownership argues strongly for the model to be adopted more widely”*.

Despite all the available research indicating the success of tenant control, the Social Exclusion Unit seems to have given it little consideration. Most notably, there is no mention of tenant control in the PAT 9 report, a group charged with investigating community self-help in England. The membership of the PAT 9 group did not include anyone with experience of tenant control. The list of case studies did not include any tenant-controlled organisations. The National Strategy Action Plan does refer to four case studies that are tenant-controlled organisations, although none of the descriptions indicate that they are tenant controlled nor that what they have achieved is due to tenants being in control. In two cases, the tenant-controlled organisation is not even referred to by name, and in three cases, the tenant controlled organisation is not given as the contact<sup>11</sup>.

The lack of reference to tenant control in these case studies and throughout the work of the Social Exclusion Unit cannot be seen as anything but a major omission.

## CHAPTER 6.

### Background - The development of local strategic partnerships

The principle behind Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) is not new. Their development can be traced back to Housing Action Areas that concentrated resources on run down private housing in the 1970s. During the 1980s, City Challenge programmes, Single Regeneration Budget programmes and Housing Action Trusts were mechanisms for channelling both capital and revenue money quickly into deprived areas at the same time as side stepping the bureaucracy of local authorities. These are all publicly accountable bodies with consultation mechanisms. LSPs take this model further as they are intended to take on a full range of responsibilities in regenerating run down areas.

Some of these organisations have been successful in enabling the community and the local services to work well together. However, it is also important to note that these mechanisms have often failed to engage communities effectively. This report suggests the following reasons:

- they often cover areas that are much larger geographically than many people would relate to.
- the professionally driven nature of some programmes sometimes leads ordinary community members to question the limited amount of control they have, become disillusioned and vote with their feet.
- if this happens, it can lead to the representativeness and accountability of even community representatives on such partnerships being called into question.
- even where representatives are genuinely representative, it is often the case that community representatives struggle to get their voices heard when sitting around a table with professional workers who might have a history of not working with local residents.
- in the case of time-limited capital programmes, they have no long term status. Most of their activities cease when the programme comes to an end.

7 “Tenants In Control: an evaluation of tenant-led housing management organisations” - Price Waterhouse 1996

8 “Models of Resident Controlled Housing” - Gillian Gillanders and Bob Blackaby 1999

9 “An assessment of the implementation of the Right to Manage” Somerville, Steele & Hale Salford University 1998

10 Clapham, Kintrea & Kay, 3 university study 1998, first reported in the May 1998 issues of the Journal for Co-operative Studies

11 Appletree Court Tenant Management Co-op is described as a “Tenants Association in Salford” and lists the contact as a member of staff at the City of Salford Precinct Area Housing Office; Homes for Change Housing Co-op is described as a “Mixed Use Scheme in Hulme Manchester” and lists the contact as a member of staff of Moss Side & Hulme Partnership; the contact for Bloomsbury EMB is given as Birmingham City Council’s central housing department; the fourth tenant controlled organisation is Waltham Forest Community Based Housing Association.

## CHAPTER 7.

### Methodology

This research set out to investigate the opinions and views of tenants and residents, living in tenant-controlled housing organisations. Therefore the methodology consisted of three key elements:

- **Interviews with the active members of the tenant-controlled organisations**

Interviews with active members of the tenant controlled organisation were carried out by CCH researchers.

- **Focus groups or individual interviews with randomly selected tenants of the organisation**

*Belgrave Neighbourhood, Burrowes Street, Heath Town, Paddock, Pioneer & Riverside*

Through a door-knocking exercise, an independent fieldworker carried out in-depth interviews with a randomly selected set of ten tenants from each organisation, using a set of questions prepared by the researchers. She also compiled a summary of responses from each organisation, from which the case studies were drawn up.

*Appletree Court*

A CCH researcher interviewed seven tenants individually, who had been randomly invited to meet her by the co-op co-ordinator.

*West Whitlawburn*

A CCH researcher conducted a focus group of six residents who had not been active in the co-op, but had lived in the co-op for many years and had been randomly selected by a member of staff.

*Waltham Forest*

A CCH researcher spoke to six randomly selected tenants who have lived on the Chingford Hall estate for some time but who had not been active in the CBHA who had been invited to attend by the local housing office.

- **Interviews with members of staff and key service providers who have connections with the tenant-controlled organisation**

CCH researchers interviewed various members of staff, representatives of the local police, schools etc. These interviews were either conducted on a face-to-face basis or by telephone.

Questions asked of all parties related to various indices of social exclusion, including crime, employment, health, facilities etc. The random sample tenants were asked questions such as:

- What do you think about living in this area? What are the benefits and disadvantages?
- What impact do you think the tenant-led organisation has had on the area overall?
- What changes have you seen over time?
- What do you understand by the term *social exclusion*?
- Are you or people on your estate socially excluded?
- How is living in the tenant-led organisation different from living elsewhere?

Various statistical and background information was also collected.

## CHAPTER 8.

### Case studies

The case studies were chosen to reflect the diversity of tenant-controlled organisations. Six of the seven English case studies fall within what the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal describes as the 32 most deprived local authority districts. Similarly six out of the seven English case studies are in the top 50 areas of deprivation, in that they meet at least six indices of deprivation. West Whitlawburn is in Scotland and so is not covered by the National Strategy Action Plan.

The case studies are as follows:

	Status <sup>12</sup>	Number of properties	Local Authority	Index of deprivation <sup>13</sup>
Appletree Court TMC	TMC	96	Salford	23
Belgrave Neighbourhood CHA	PVC	333	Leicester	32
Burrowes Street Co-op	TMC	312	Walsall	31
Heath Town EMB	EMB	1192	Wolverhampton	27
Paddock housing Co-op	PVC	33	Walsall	31
Pioneer Housing Co-op & Riverside Housing Co-op	TMC	24 & 29	Redditch	
Waltham Forest CBHA	CBHA	1467	Waltham Forest	22
West Whitlawburn Housing Co-op	PVC	543	Lanarkshire	

<sup>12</sup> TMC - Tenant Management Co-operative; PVC - Par Value ownership co-op; EMB - Estate Management Board; CBHA - Community Based Housing Association

<sup>13</sup> Index of deprivation from the "National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal"



Photo by Paul Herrmann

## A) Appletree Court Tenant Management Co-operative - Salford

### Background

Appletree Court is a sixteen-storey tower block in the heart of Salford with 96 flats, all of which are currently let. Appletree Court Tenant Management Co-operative took over responsibility for lettings, repairs and maintenance in 1994, following a ballot where 92% of the tenants supported the setting up of the TMC. They are currently looking at taking on the responsibility of rent collection and arrears from the Council, and they are also interested in buying the block from the council in the future. The TMC employs a co-ordinator, a gardener and a caretaker.

The base of the block was previously surrounded by concrete but, since the setting up of the TMC, has been transformed into a garden that grows organic fruit and vegetables, a green house and a duck pond. The garden and a car park are fenced and the gate controlled by a security system. Together these form a buffer to the outside world, and tenants feel secure within it. The TMC has also added to the block by building on a community café and a large conservatory. The conservatory is used by a number of different groups and is open to everyone in the block and neighbours.

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

The key things that tenants on Appletree Court valued were the improvements to the housing service, safety and security, improvements in the environment and the community spirit that had developed through the TMC.

Housing issues and having a sympathetic housing service have been very important to tenants and they report a significant improvement on previous services:

- *"The approach is now very hands on. We now don't have to trouble with the Council, as we know what is going on. The service is friendly; tenants can see people one-to-one."*
- *"When you live on your own, it can be too much trouble to cook a meal. If you have a little problem, you talk to the co-ordinator and then she's on the phone to the doctor."*
- *"People are on call twenty-four hours a day. The staff will do small things for people, holding parcels if they are out or getting in shopping if people are sick as well as arranging repairs as soon as possible. If you have any problems, you don't have to shout and bawl; you just have to talk to them."*

Improvements in the cleanliness of the estate were mentioned, particularly in the stair and lift areas. The TMC's involvement in lettings was also highlighted, in that it had ensured that all the flats are always let and that there is a waiting list for the block. The TMC is in the heart of Salford, where there is a low demand for public sector housing and where tenants have a wide choice of properties.

The majority of tenants discussed the importance of safety and security. *"The main aspect of living here is that it is quite safe. You can leave doors open on this block and know you are safe".* Several tenants mentioned that the TMC has meant that they had been able to develop a sense of trust in others.

Tenants also recognised the value of their community garden and community café. They saw the role these initiatives had played in developing the community on the estate. *"The café is a place where people can communicate. It is somewhere where people can talk"*

#### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The people interviewed did not know the term *social exclusion*, but the majority held the view that no-one on the block needed to feel socially excluded, as there were always activities they could join in. *"If social exclusion is like feeling an outcast, then no one is on this block."* *"We're excluded from the Council, but they are not social."* *"Obviously there are people who are unemployed, but there is not a major problem with social exclusion."* The tenants articulated a powerful image of a cohesive community in the midst of an area of high deprivation, poverty, crime and disadvantage.

#### What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

The TMC has had an impact in many areas that could potentially indicate social exclusion. Crime and the fear of crime have been almost totally eradicated from the estate despite the high crime statistics in the immediate area. The security system, the gardens, and the TMC staff based on the block have all built a strong sense of security. Tenants reported that living there is like being a part of a neighbourhood watch as people always look out for each other - *"I feel very secure. There is no crime on here like on the other blocks where there are drug addicts."* *"You can go away and know that it will be secure. I have a mate who lives nearby and he is scared to go away."* *"Once I am inside the perimeter fence, I feel I'm home. People seem to leave it alone."* *"I can go to the shops and leave the door open. I don't even know whether I have locked it now."*

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The community café serves cheap nutritious meals every day, often using vegetables straight from the garden. Both the café and the garden provide a significant community focus. Tenants that use the centre find it a place where they can talk to other people of different ages, and they recognise that it is something special that other areas do not have.

- *"We've got all this greenness. The other flats have just got concrete to look at; it is nice to look out your window and see green."*
- *"It gives me a lot if I am feeling a little bit down. There is always some one to speak to, always some one worse off than you. We are all nosy guts and that is the best way to be."*
- *"There is no way that you can sit in your flat if you don't want to, there are always people to talk to. This café has made a tremendous difference."*
- *"You can meet people and have a good laugh with them."*

Apart from providing fresh food, the garden is also a place where people can sit in the sun. This is particularly important for elderly tenants who may not go out often and need to feel safe before they can relax. The community centre encourages people out and prevents a sense of isolation, which they otherwise might have in a depressed area like Salford.



Photo by Paul Herrmann

The TMC organises a range of activities, including a savings club, social outings, a local history club, an old people's club, bingo, social evenings and new year's eve parties. These events encourage people from the surrounding area to use the centre, and tenants report that tenants from the wider area are jealous of the facilities that Appletree Court has been able to provide. Canon Wyatt, the rector of St Paul's Church in Salford, has had a relationship with Appletree Court since before the start of the TMC. He held a meeting with David Bellamy from the Conservation Trust at St Paul's that inspired residents to establish the community garden. He assists them in whatever way possible such as bringing twenty tons of compost from Barnsley to help found the garden, putting them in touch with the Arid Lands Initiative from Hebden Bridge.

Canon Wyatt sees the TMC having a very significant impact - *"Appletree Court has the best quality of life of any block of flats in Salford. The TMC attends to the most basic set of problems by providing food, breaking down the isolation of older people and providing a secure environment. There is a pride amongst the people there that means that people invite family and friends there. The TMC has given people a sense of responsibility for their own environment, for their own peace and tranquillity; the residents recognised that nobody was going to do it for them, so they would have to do it for themselves."*

**What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?**

No wider strategic partnership was reported to the researchers.

## B) Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Association - Belgrave, Leicester

Interviewed:

Shantilal Makwana

*Chair*

G Brahmhatt

*Secretary*

Raminik Shanghavi

*Committee member*

Hamir Jesa

*Area Housing Manager, Leicester Housing Association*

### Background

Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Association is a par-value ownership, housing co-op, set up in the 1970s. In 1972, the growth of the Uganda Asian people led to growing demands on the housing stock in the Belgrave area. There was concern that the Local Authority's plans to demolish town houses in the area would displace the local community, and a successful campaign was fought to prevent this. In the wake of this campaign, founder members of the co-op felt that developing a housing co-op would ensure that good quality affordable housing was maintained for people in housing need in the area.

The co-op now has 333 homes, in seven streets in the Belgrave area, housing some 450 people. There are 2 other co-ops in the area, and therefore co-operative housing is a predominant form of housing in the area. There are also high numbers of owner-occupiers, several council and a few housing association properties, most notably in the ownership of Leicester Housing Association, from whom the 3 co-ops buy management services.

In Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Association, 63% of the tenants are of Asian origin and 33% are white. 57% of co-op members are in receipt of housing benefit.

The co-op's properties are adjacent to an area that includes what is known as Leicester's "Golden Mile" - a large number of predominantly jewellery and sari shops, which attract customers from London and Europe. Leicester City Council's plans to invest £4.5 million in road narrowing and other environmental measures to develop the area as a tourist attraction is a key defining point of the local community.



### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

Tenants were primarily concerned about having a good quality home in an area convenient for shops and which allowed them to remain close to their friends and relatives - *"I'm quite happy as I was isolated before and now there are a lot of Asian people nearby"*.

Most tenants defined the advantages of living in a housing co-op, as opposed to local authority or housing association properties, as receiving a better housing service - *"The co-op provides a good, prompt repairs service, whereas the council is slow"* - *"I was previously in a housing association property but I didn't like the area. This area is better and the people are all right. There is a better repairs service here."*

There were very few negative comments about the co-op or the area, but one tenant said *"I have lived in private property and council housing. I get the same things done as with the council. This is the biggest co-op in the country and there is not a high level of tenant involvement."*

With regards the wider area, tenants listed car crime, theft of passports, lack of facilities and employment opportunities for young people as concerns.

### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

Active co-op members interviewed did not have an understanding of the concept of *social exclusion*. As the issue was discussed, they suggested that this might be a problem with particular estates, and referred to the loss of traditional industries in Leicester and Nottingham. They did not consider themselves or their communities to be socially excluded. Indeed it was pointed out that people are moving to the area from London in order to be closer to their own community and *"people do not feel excluded because they are part of the community. They do not feel they are not wanted. People would not want to move from this area, because everything they need is here - their mosques, their temples, food for their cooking, their communities"*.

Nonetheless, Leicester is on the Social Exclusion Unit's list of most deprived areas. It is probable that the Belgrave area, although up and coming by virtue of the Golden Mile, would be considered to be socially excluded in terms of having high percentages of people in upper quartiles of indices of deprivation.

### What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

The co-op is proud of the role that it has played in providing good quality housing to people who need it, and *"the bottom line is housing only"*. The co-op defines this as its area of operations and is realistic that the benefits it provides in areas such as health and its wider community role are in terms of this provision of good quality housing.

In response to crime concerns in the past two years, the co-op had stronger security fitted, and the co-op has a good relationship with social services where it is necessary for them to do so, such as ensuring that social services know the needs of their elderly tenants.

Leicester Housing Association and the Leicester co-ops are also looking at a banking scheme with the Woolwich, which would enable co-op members to open bank accounts without high credit ratings. There used to be a credit union in the area, but it didn't function effectively and closed down.



Belgrave Neighbourhood also considered a tenants insurance scheme, but could not find a way to make it cost effective, and use local businesses where using them makes good business sense. The co-op also used to run various children's events, but the changing nature of the children in the co-op have meant that these have ceased - *"the young generation is coming up in a different way. They play on the Internet nowadays and send E-mails to New Zealand!"*

The active co-op members spoke of informal communication both in the co-op, through various functions and outings, and outside the co-op - *"our members are an active community, they mix with the community in the area, they are walking and talking with the outside world. They go to meetings with the wider community if there are things happening that affect them".*

Furthermore, active co-op members also have roles within the wider community - i.e. as school governors, through involvement with the Belgrave Association, and in advising other members of the community on a wide range of issues - *"the co-op is a base within the community. Co-op officers often don't realise how much knowledge they have about how systems work, and they pass this information on to others. This has only come about because of their involvement with the co-op."*

Most co-op members have been used to a culture where *"people have not had the privilege to have their say, to raise their issues, to get involved with running the organisation - they are used to officers are officers and tenants are tenants. In our organisation, we say to the officers - we don't want to do it that way, we want it this way. Find the solution. We have a different style."* The co-op culture is also beneficial in that it allows tenants to discuss their concerns in their own language, and Leicester Housing Association officers can then raise these concerns in circumstances where tenants might otherwise feel at a disadvantage due to language and other barriers.



#### **What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?**

The Belgrave Association, representing local businesses, the housing co-ops and housing associations, religious groups, the local police and other community organisations has recently been set up, and members of all the co-ops play a role in this organisation - *"people would know about the co-ops"*. Indeed it was suggested that the co-op has informal links with all the organisations in the area, so much so that if a co-op member had a particular problem, *"we know who to get hold of"*.

The co-op sees the development of the Golden Mile and its surroundings as important for the future of the co-op, because it will mean that the co-op will always be able to let its properties. For this and other reasons, co-op members are active on all levels within the local community.



## C) Burrowes Street Co-operative - Birchills, Walsall

Interviewed:  
Tom Duckhouse                      *Committee member*  
Tom Furnival                         *Secretary*  
Malcolm Walkey                     *Committee member*

### Background

Burrowes Street Co-operative was set up as a tenant management co-operative in the Birchills area of Walsall in 1994, and now manages 312 properties, 283 in Walsall Borough Council flats in tower and low-rise blocks, and in OAP warden-supported bedsits. The co-op also saw the need for more family housing on the estate and arranged for 2 housing associations to develop 29 family houses, which the co-op now manages.

A report on poverty in Walsall, published in 1999, indicates that the Birchills area is one of the “most deprived” areas in the Walsall borough, with at least 5 or 6 indicators of poverty to be found in upper quartiles.<sup>14</sup> Statistically, the 50% of the people on the estate on housing benefit indicates that Burrowes Street suffers from these problems, but it is clear that the work of the co-op has meant that many of the problems associated with social exclusion have not materialised.

From the 1970s onwards, the estate was “riddled with crime”, with a particular car park on the estate being used for anything but parking cars. The active tenants interviewed reported how in the past “if you mentioned Green Lane (what the Burrowes Street area was known as then) to anyone in Walsall, they’d tell you, we don’t want to live round there”. However, one of the random sample tenants reported that “the co-op has done a lot of good - it is one of the best places in Walsall to live”. This confirmed by the co-op having a waiting list of people who want to live on the estate.

Because Walsall town centre is only four minutes walk from Burrowes Street, residents are served by a good range of shopping and other facilities.

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

Nine out of ten of random sample tenants said they liked living in the area and highlighted its proximity to Walsall town centre, and the friendliness and security of the estate as key issues. One tenant referred to the estate as being “a safe haven” and another suggested that the importance of “community spirit - everyone wants to be able to walk out without getting mugged or being asked if you want to buy a bit of smack.”

<sup>14</sup> “A Profile of Poverty & Health in Walsall” - Steve Griffiths - Public Management Associates



Several tenants referred to the problems that the estate suffered from before the setting up of the co-op, and recognised the physical improvements in the repairs service and grounds maintenance that had come about through the setting up of the co-op. The co-op's approach to the housing service is valued by tenants - *"the flat was in good decorative order when I moved in. The flat I'd been offered by the Council stank and so did the whole block"*

The background to the establishment of the co-op was the poor service provided by the local authority - *"People were fed up with the service they were getting from the local authority and we formed a tenants association to try and get our voice heard. We thought by joining together, we'd improve the environment and people's homes, but as a tenants association it was a struggle. Once we started to look at tenant management, people could see a future. It was a case of working together to get things done. There was a lot of scepticism about tenant management at first, both from council staff and from tenants on the estate, but once things started to happen, it snowballed."*

#### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The active tenants interviewed had no understanding of the term *social exclusion*. On explaining the term, they did not feel that either they or residents on the estate are socially excluded, despite the estate being in what would be officially be seen as amongst the most deprived areas of the country. What was more important to active tenants interviewed was their sense of community and well-being - *"we're a community in Burrowes Street. Everyone is welcome here."*



## What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

The co-op set out with a high standard approach to some of the problems that had previously existed on the estate - *"we keep the estate to a high standard and we try to maintain that standard for our tenants"*. In practice, this means that the co-op deals with problems as soon as they arise in the belief that dealing with problems quickly will prevent further problems arising.

This high standard has meant that there have been significant improvements in terms of the delivery of the housing service, such as repairs and rent arrears. The co-op also uses the allocations procedure to ensure that new tenants are aware that local residents care for the estate and will take action to ensure that it is kept to high standards - *"when people come to live on the estate, they know what we're about, because we meet them before they have been allocated a property and they know we're not going to tolerate any nuisance. We make that clear from the start."* Neighbourhood problems are dealt with swiftly, using caretakers to have a chat with tenants initially, although the few examples where legal action has been taken against particular tenants have set an example on the estate.

Similarly, graffiti and other environmental problems are dealt with swiftly, because *"graffiti breeds more graffiti"*.

This high standard and swift response approach has the support of tenants - *"the co-op acts promptly with problem tenants, nuisance and vandalism. Repairs are done very quickly"* - *"if we want a clean Burrowes Street, we've got to help sweep it"*

PC Neil Priestley, the local beat officer from the local Green Lane Police Station confirms that crime has become *"virtually negligible"*. PC Priestley has worked in the area since before the co-op was set up, and he has seen a *"marked improvement in the environment. The way that the estate looks at itself and the way that it presents itself. The locals have established their own city within the borough."* There are still some problems with youths from outside the estate hanging around local shops, but the co-op says that they usually don't stay long *"because they know that the caretaker will be able to call for assistance and committee members will turn up and ask them to leave the estate."* One of the random sample tenants told us that *"the co-op deters crime - volunteers go around the estate and janitors keep an eye on things."*

The co-op also supports the Birchills and Beechdale Credit Union, who run a collection point on the estate, and co-op committee members are on the board of governors for the local school. A wide range of events are run from the co-op's Tenant and Management Resource Centre, and various events at the warden-supported flats - *"it's a palace - they really look after OAPs."*

Eight out of the ten random sample tenants recorded that they had seen a difference in the area since the co-op was set up - *"the area is improving all the time - benches flowers and trees"* - and this was confirmed by the co-op being awarded a Britain in Bloom Subaru trophy in 1999 for *"exceptional community achievement"*.

On the negative side, the random sample tenants mentioned that there aren't many facilities for younger people in the Walsall area, and not many good quality work opportunities in the area (although some of the random sample tenants referred to the co-op advertising job opportunities). Some tenants also referred to the high volume of traffic in the area and the consequent poor air quality.

However, the sense of community on the estate was highlighted by many - *"with the co-op, there is a good sense of community spirit and a sense of belonging. Now I don't feel isolated"* - *"People are more friendly now. We've built a community here at Burrowes Street and with the central base on the estate, people can come in on a daily basis and the service is there. We have achieved this as the TMO, and we're proud of it."*

## What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?

It is clear that Burrowes Street is seen as *"the flagship of the local area"* and committee members play informal and formal roles in the local area - the chair of Burrowes Street is also the Chair of the Birchills Local Committee - Walsall's model of the Local Strategic Partnership. The work of the co-op has enabled its active members to play a leading role in the wider area.

Burrowes Street is also a key member of WATMOS - the Walsall Alliance of Tenant Management Organisations - who are working on establishing an independent tenant controlled Registered Social Landlord to which ownership of the properties of the ten existing tenant management organisations in Walsall will be transferred to if Walsall tenants vote in favour of stock transfer. Burrowes Street committee members see that this ownership will be an important step forward for them - *"we will be in a position to say to our tenants - this is what is happening to your rent"*.



## D) Heath Town Estate Management Board - Heath Town, Wolverhampton

### Interviewed:

Les Whitney

Sue Allen

Norman Wilde

Tim Molton

*Company Secretary*

*Vice Chair and Co-ordinator, the Hope Community*

*Treasurer*

*Chief Executive*

### Background

In the early 1990s, Heath Town had a very poor reputation with a third of its 1192 properties empty, with shops empty and a big lack of any services or facilities. Drugs, prostitution and organised crime were rife on the estate, and one tower block, Alder House, was so bad that Wolverhampton Council refused to allow their staff to go there. The problems were illustrated by "disturbances" in 1992, where, following a drugs raid, the local neighbourhood office and two local pubs were burnt down.

In 1992, Wolverhampton Council, concerned by these problems and the significant deficit made by the estate, gave the local residents association the option of either setting up an EMB, a form of tenant management organisation, or transferring the estate out of council ownership.

Heath Town EMB was set up in 1995. It is clear that tenant control on Heath Town has had a significant effect, although the EMB recognises that they still have significant problems to tackle, not least the third of their properties that still remain vacant (although in 2000, for the first time, the estate's annual tenancy turnover was under a third). Some of the EMB's most significant problems relate to the quality of the stock, which could only be solved by resources that might involve transferring the ownership of the estate to the EMB.

However, this research would suggest that Heath Town EMB has laid the groundwork for building a successful and sustainable community, and the response of tenants to the research would suggest that the development of facilities and activities on the estate has had a wider positive effect than simply for those that use them.

The key factors that appear to have enabled this to happen have been:

- the size and impact of the estate in the wider area
- the depths of the problems at the outset (implying that the local authority had almost given up and that they would have been prepared to try almost any other solution)
- the ability of the EMB to cut through the rigid local authority frameworks
- the vision and determination of the EMB and their chief executive and staff, and their commitment to trying new solutions

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

Eight out of the ten random sample tenants interviewed liked living in the area and one resident said *"I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. Its building itself into a proper little village with all the facilities. My friends think I am mad, but I think Heath Town is up and coming."*

Tenants still recorded problems - crime, the stigma attached to the area, the limited range of local shops, some housing difficulties - and one tenant interviewed was not clear about who runs the EMB, but most recognised that they could get involved if they wanted to, that they had the opportunity to have *"more of a say and more control over what happens"*, and that there was *"generally a more sympathetic service"*.

Seven out of the ten random sample tenants felt that the EMB had made a difference to the area (the remainder not offering an opinion). Comments offered included that *"people are more trusting now"*, *"the outlook has changed"*, *"there are more positive attitudes"* and specifically reference was made to a *"cleaner, smarter area"* to an *"improved shopping precinct and facilities"* and to *"people working together more"*.



### What did EMB board members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

Heath Town has been marked by all the classic symptoms of social exclusion. Over half the estate are in receipt of benefit, it has the worse incidence of coronary disease in the borough and there is a strong fear of crime.

EMB representatives spoke of large numbers of residents having "low self-worth", the difficulties of getting some residents past their front doors and of "postcode exclusion".

The EMB has focussed on removing barriers to residents' "achieving their personal vocational fulfilment", and feel that they have addressed many of the reasons why residents potentially couldn't get involved with the various activities that have been set up. Tim Molton, the EMB's Chief Executive suggested that "we have addressed many of the problems. We've now got everything within arm's length here. Access is no problem, and everything is free or heavily subsidised. The onus is now on the residents. We need moral regeneration now, base education in "right - there's a bit that you've got to do now". We have to try and win hearts and minds."

EMB representatives were realistic about the scale of the problems that they still need to tackle. They estimated that only twenty to thirty percent of local residents were in some way engaged with the various facilities. Still with a high transitory population of single men, and still with a reputation that deters women and families, the EMB estimates that their resident "market" is perhaps only as high as forty percent of their tenants.

### What impact has the EMB had on social exclusion?

Apart from tackling the poor housing service on the estate, the EMB has focussed on giving residents reasons to remain on the estate. The EMB's achievements have included:

- developing a sports centre and a floodlit sports pitch on the estate
- setting up a "cop shop" in the shopping precinct - a police sector headquarters from where 17 police officers will operate
- setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme and developing CCTV
- filling the shops in the precinct, either with commercial shops or with projects set up through the EMB
- developing a "whole continuum of employment and training support" through the establishment of an employment resource centre; creating a "culture of going out to work"
- developing partnerships with local businesses and employers



- supporting the local Park Heath Credit Union
- working to keep the Long Leys Primary School open on the estate - a falling number of children has threatened the existence of the school. The work the EMB has done to stabilise turnover may prevent the school's closure. Paul Treacy, the Headteacher said, "they've been very supportive. We have a small budget and they have helped us out financially where they can. The EMB has representatives on the governing body and we have a good two-way relationship with them."
- developing an asylum seekers support programme to assist in tackling the estate's turnover
- seconding Allan Jones, Heath Town's Healthy Living Co-ordinator onto the estate. Allan suggested that "the EMB has been instrumental in the visualisation of health in a wider context on the estate, so that it is co-ordinated throughout other services."
- working with the Hope Community Initiative - a family resource centre - to do outreach for parenting and other skills
- assisting the establishment of a food co-operative

The EMB is now planning to take over the management of the community centre, which, under the council's management recorded only 80 hours of use annually. The EMB intends using it as a base for a community café, for health workers and to provide facilities for elderly people and to establish other community activities.

### What is the relationship between the EMB and any wider strategic partnership?

The EMB have played a leading role, alongside 2 other neighbouring tenant management organisations, in establishing PUSH, Heath Town's neighbourhood partnership organisation, that brings together local community representatives and voluntary and statutory bodies. Because of the three tenant management organisations, PUSH is the best organised, well motivated and resourced of Wolverhampton's network of thirteen such neighbourhood organisations.



## E) Paddock Housing Co-operative - Chuckery, Walsall

Interviewed:

Janet Jeffries

Chair

Margaret Cope

Treasurer

### Background

Paddock Housing Co-op is a par-value ownership housing co-op with 33 properties, split across 6 sites, all within walking distance of each other, in the Chuckery area of Walsall. It was set up to house families from neighbouring local authority tower blocks, managed by Chuckery Tenant Management Co-operative, with whom Paddock still has a nominations arrangement. Its original membership was drawn from seven tenants who responded to a leaflet circulated in 1984 by the neighbourhood officer for the area.

Paddock achieved registration with the Housing Corporation in 1989, shortly before members moved into the co-op's first houses. Members interviewed recall that, despite good levels of support from Walsall Council, the "Housing Corporation was harder to convince."

The active tenants describe the Chuckery area as being "in parts very high class, in the middle a nice set of houses, and in parts little pockets of an experimental nature where you wouldn't want to walk late at night." The Chuckery area does not feature as a "deprived area" in a report on poverty in Walsall published in 1999.<sup>15</sup>

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

Nine out of the ten random sample tenants said that they liked living in the area, with its proximity to Walsall town centre, good local schools and the strength of the community being given as the most common reasons.

Few common points were made about negative points, but comments about "kids hanging around" featured a few times, and eight out of ten thought that facilities for young people in the local area and in Walsall in general were poor. There was some concern about high levels of burglaries in the area, but seven out of ten thought that the co-op effectively deterred crime.

Most respondents did not have any views on employment issues, but of those that did, the general feeling was that there were only very limited low-paid poor quality opportunities locally. Similarly there was little awareness of local health issues, but drugs, obesity, teenage pregnancy, pollution and pigeons were all raised. The most important issues for respondents were the fact that the co-op had enabled the building of good quality homes on derelict land, and that the co-op has a strong sense of community - "I was in a flat for 12 years and now I have a house. I feel lucky because it's a nice area and I've made a lot of friends."

### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

Active co-op members initially thought that the term *social exclusion* referred to homelessness. On explaining the concept, they said that they don't see themselves as being socially excluded, and that the co-op does not exclude anyone from being involved with it. However, they suggested that *"in general life, people seem to be held down - people are not encouraged by the benefits system and other things to get up and go."*

### What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

Generally the co-op sees itself as too small to directly achieve much in areas such as employment, health and financial exclusion. Similarly, the co-op would like to be able to provide facilities for young people in the area, but has no access to locations or resources to do much.

However, perhaps there are three key areas in which the co-op has had a significant impact on its members:

- through providing a first class housing service - *"the co-op property is well maintained and its well run. It's a good service."*
- through the development of the community, illustrated by the following quotes from the random sample tenants:

*"I feel part of a large organisation but its still friendly. It's a close knit community which I like"*

*"There is much more of a community, everyone gets together. I can ring someone up for help and get things done."*

*"In the flats, I didn't see anyone and now this has changed. I have a house and garden and my daughter has made a lot of friends and we have street barbeques."*

*"In the flats I was very lonely. Now I'm not. Recently when I was taken into hospital, the neighbours looked after my son, visited me in hospital and brought food round. It takes the worry away."*

*"When we were in the tower blocks, none of us knew each other, although we'd lived there for 4 or 5 years. Now I've got some good friends. You look out for your neighbour, knowing that your neighbour will look out for you. And the children all know that they can knock on any door, and people will look after each other's kids as if they were their own. They've been brought up with it. A lot of places have lost the idea of how to look out for people."*



- through capacity building. The active tenants we interviewed related stories of how particular individuals had been able to develop their potential through their involvement with the co-op, such as: *"What was x when she came to the co-op? She was a young single parent family with no idea what to do with her life. She would barely speak to anyone. In the co-op, we encouraged her to come out of herself and get involved. When we heard of a job vacancy, we told her to fill in an application form, telling her you never know until you've tried. She got the job - now she's got her own house, she's got a good job, she's got responsibilities"*. The active tenants particularly stressed the importance of the effect of *"learning through practicalities"* on the development of confidence, and how members are sometimes frightened to take on particular tasks, but with encouragement and support easily learn.



**What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?**

The active co-op members interviewed spoke of being involved in a range of activities in the wider area, on an informal basis - *“we try to get involved, if we know of anything going on, we do something about it”* - and on a formal basis (eg. through the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme). Their impression was that because Paddock had been there for some time, and because the Council and others know of their active involvement, they are always keen to involve them in various community initiatives - *“we are their little star, they are aware of us when they want a good example. Because we’ve been doing this for so long, people expect us to be leaders for the whole area, but we can’t stretch ourselves any further.”*

The Chuckery Local Committee, established in 2000, is currently leading discussions on the establishment of a *“Healthy Living Centre”* in the area. However, Paddock’s view of this project is different from the Local Committee’s in that they see the need for the development of a local comparatively informal community centre, whereas the Local Committee want to establish a building run by health service and other professionals. Despite Paddock offering to apply for funding to assist in the development of the centre, and offering to jointly run it, it would appear that the Local Committee intend to run it as a professionally run centre. Chuckery Local Committee’s first newsletter makes no mention of either Paddock Housing Co-operative or Chuckery Tenant Management Co-op, despite them both being key players in the local community. Similarly the co-op reports that when the Local Committee was setting up a Safer Estates Agreement, Paddock asked to be involved with it, but their involvement was refused on the grounds that the organisation was too small. Paddock’s perception of this is that they were excluded because they are a volunteer organisation.

## F) Riverside Housing Co-operative & Pioneer Housing Co-operative - Redditch

### Interviewed:

Jeanette Rhodes	<i>Repairs Officer, Pioneer Housing Co-op</i>
Sue Howes	<i>Secretary, Pioneer Housing Co-op</i>
Hazel Surdo	<i>Treasurer, Pioneer Housing Co-op</i>
Lindsay Griffin	<i>Rent Officer, Riverside Housing Co-op</i>
Sasha Haining	<i>Repairs Officer &amp; Finance Team, Riverside Housing Co-op</i>

### Background

Riverside Housing Co-op and Pioneer Housing Co-op are 2 of the co-ops that form the wider Redditch Co-operative Homes (RCH) development in Redditch, a comparatively small market town ten miles south of Birmingham. RCH was a partnership between Redditch Borough Council (who decided in 1998 to develop a co-operative housing strategy), Birmingham Co-operative Housing Services (an agency that provides support services to housing co-ops) and Accord Housing Association (who developed the homes, brought in loan funding and cross-subsidised the scheme). The intended structure is that the primary housing co-ops will lease the properties from RCH (and possibly buy services from them), and RCH will have a head lease from Accord Housing Association. However, there have been technical difficulties with this structure, and currently the primary co-ops are tenant management co-operatives with Accord Housing Association.

Pioneer Housing Co-op was established in 1999 with 24 properties, and Riverside Housing Co-op in 2000 with 29 properties.

Membership of the co-ops was drawn from Redditch Borough Council's housing waiting list, where all applicants for housing were offered the opportunity to attend training sessions to be involved in the co-op during 1998. Successful applicants were measured primarily on their need for housing, but also on their willingness to be involved with the co-ops.

A particular feature of the Redditch area is the comparatively high young population and this has been reflected in the 70% of under 35 year olds in the co-ops' memberships.

The co-ops were established on small pockets of available land in the centre of Redditch. The areas are comparatively desirable, although one co-op adjoins a large council estate. There were significant concerns prior to development amongst the local communities about the use of the land for housing, and particularly in one co-op, the tenants have had to do some work to build links with the wider community.





### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

The key issues mentioned by the random tenant sample were:

- the communities created through the establishment of the co-op
- the convenient location of the co-ops (within walking distance of Redditch Town Centre)
- problems with young people hanging around in the area and a lack of facilities for young people
- difficulties relating to the design of the properties

Several also mentioned that the lack of good job opportunities in the Redditch area, but many felt that their work in the co-op would assist them in gaining skills for employment.

### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The co-ops did not see themselves or their members as being socially excluded because of their proximity to Redditch Town Centre, because the co-ops are located in comparatively good areas, and because of the communities that they had created - "if someone wanted to get somewhere, one of the others would take them there".

Once the concept of social exclusion was explained to them, co-op members interviewed considered that individuals are responsible for their own circumstances, but that the community nature of the co-op could assist individuals - "you can get access to things if you push yourself forward. You need to have a bit of get up and go. The co-op will help with that because we are looking for ways to improve our area and to improve ourselves." Because of this, one co-op member (a 17 year old who had previously been registered as homeless) suggested that the creation of community is as important than providing assistance to individuals - "I don't think the government's idea of social exclusion is our co-op's idea of social exclusion. We're into developing a strong social group, and they're on about doing things on an individual basis."

Another co-op member, previously a council tenant, felt that some individuals could never be helped out of social exclusion - "there are people on council estates who do not want to better themselves. They'll be there forever. They don't want to make their homes nice. They don't look after their gardens. They don't care about anything. I don't think there's anything you can do about that."

### What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

One co-op suggested that they were too small and young to have had an influence on wider issues than housing and the environment. However, particularly in Riverside Housing Co-op, members were keen to have an informal influence over their local circumstances, through developing a mutually supportive relationship with the local school and a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for the wider area.

Most tenants thought that the areas had low crime levels, but most thought that the co-ops would have an effect on keeping them low - "we all look out for each other - we can influence things through a sense of community." This view was supported by WPC Taryn Green, the Crime Risk Manager for Redditch B Police Division. Taryn had been involved with the co-ops from before the homes were built, when she had advised on making the developments secure by design. She said that the "ethos of ownership and territorial control" and the co-ops' "stake in the ownership of where they live" is "brilliant". Her only concern was that the land on which the co-op homes were built were "leftovers", but she looked forward to seeing how the co-ops develop.

Where the majority of those interviewed felt that the co-ops had the greatest impact over their lives appears to have been in creating strong communities (although surprisingly Pioneer Housing Co-op were concerned that only between one-third and two-thirds of their membership regularly attends meetings) and a sense of ownership and responsibility for the area:

- *"Its one way of keeping the old social neighbourhoods alive - living together, having to do things together, it generates a community spirit. I enjoy being involved. Its nice to gain other people's confidence that you can do things."*
- *"Its made a lot of difference to me. Previously I was in a rough area in a council flat and now I am in a nice area with a house and garden. My sister lives nearby and I knew everyone before I moved in."*
- *"Previously I lived with my family so this is my first place. Now I have friends here, so I am not alone".*

- *"Its like owning your own home"*
- *"Because we are all interested in where we live, we tend to be more supportive of each other. Where I used to live before I never used to speak to any of my neighbours. We tend to look out for each other, for the property and the area, like one big family."*
- *"When I was offered a chance to go on the training course to get a home in the co-op, I was ecstatic. I'd go through it all again. Having a say on how our homes were built - I stood in my home when it was half built and I thought this feels like home. Its a real pleasure going to meetings, having a say in how our homes are run, catching up with the gossip, meeting your neighbours. I think it's the best thing that Redditch has ever done."*

### What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?

No reference was made to any wider strategic representative organisation in the areas.



## G) Waltham Forest Community Based Housing Association – Waltham Forest

Jackie Preston, *Chair, Waltham Forest Community Based Housing Association*  
Five active tenants  
Six randomly selected tenants

### Background

Waltham Forest Community Based Housing Association (CBHA) is a new housing association with a majority of tenants on its board. The CBHA was set up in 1996 to take ownership of new homes built on four large system built estates in Waltham Forest by the Waltham Forest Housing Action Trust. The CBHA was also the vehicle by which private finance could be raised to add to the Housing Action Trust's funding in the redevelopment of the estate. Its large asset base put it in a stronger financial position. The residents will have a choice of whether their homes will be owned by the CBHA or the Council in the summer of 2001, before the Housing Action Trust winds up in March 2002.

Before the Housing Action Trust was established, the four estates were "very run down, dirty and depressed" and marked by a high turnover - "moving vans coming and going and tenants just leaving their flats and walking away". The design of the Chingford Hall estate - which meant that even long-term residents sometimes got lost - its maintenance and its general fabric were all very poor. The estate attracted trouble, with burnt out cars a regular feature in the underground car park. Whilst the Chingford Hall estate had been considered desirable until the late 1960s, by the 1980s the estate had become stigmatised:

- "people used to gasp when you mentioned the name Chingford Hall estate"
- "people didn't have a choice of properties, and felt they could only move off in a box"

- "I remember getting the offer on Chingford Hall and crying. It was a grey mass of blocks, a concrete jungle"
- "you couldn't get things delivered when you lived in the tower block. You'd have to meet the pizza man downstairs. Some doctors wouldn't take you on their lists. The milkman refused to deliver"

Three suicides and the death of a child who fell from a tower block in 1985 brought the feeling of discontent on the estate to a head. "There was a slow seething below the surface, like a volcano waiting to go off and then it did. When a refurbishment scheme was offered and then withdrawn, the outrage and indignation spilled out." The comments of the tenants emphasised the significant impact the Housing Action Trust has had on their lives. With only two phases of the refurbishment work remaining to be done, the environment of the Chingford Hall estate has substantially changed. Tenants report that "we got a big part of what was promised".

While the CBHA manages properties across the four sites of the Housing Action Trust, the tenants clearly identify with the Chingford Hall estate rather than identifying with the other CBHA estates.

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

The random sample tenants value the improvements in the design of their new homes - "we love being able to walk straight out our front doors, rather than getting lost on the estate". The homes "are much better insulated and you can control your own heating system". Tenants also reported that the CBHA's standard of service was high and it provides good, clear literature: "every time I get in touch about repairs and complaints, it is dealt with very quickly - I want to put in a word of praise", "they couldn't do enough for us when we moved"

Tenants also valued the improvements to the environment - the gardens, trees and open spaces. 'It has a village atmosphere as there is only one way off and one way onto the estate'. However, there was a range of comments on the lack of facilities for young people:

- "young people stand in our doorway every night. You have to be brave to pass young people if they are high. If you complain, it takes a long time before there is any action"
- "the youth service is very selective and only work with small numbers. The Youth Centre opens when it feels like it"
- "There was a youth survey, but nothing emerges or is delivered. Things start and stop. There is no interest."
- "the children are very, very difficult to deal with, the parents throw them out and they have no place to go".
- "the young people are not really involved with the CBHA, they don't really want to be".

Tenants were clear at the start of the HAT that they wanted it to address a wider agenda than just the redevelopment of the housing - "we wanted something sustainable, we wanted to do something to address the long term social problems. It felt like we had a blank cheque and I think we used government money very effectively and very well". The active tenants felt that the community is very strong - "there was a strong tenant base at the start and people have come and gone within that group. The Housing Action Trust offered a huge amount of training to tenants representatives." The active tenants also feel that the community is strengthened because the CBHA tenant board members are elected and therefore "you answer to the people who live around you. This means that if people are cross about something, they will pull the Board member up in the street."

The tenant board member was concerned that "the danger is that the community may be becoming tired. A large number of people are dropping out of community activities as they do not see the point any more as some issues are less urgent. The CBHA is good at dealing with some issues but has gained some new issues it needs to address. The CBHA perhaps was more active a few years ago."

These concerns were reiterated by the random sample tenants:

- Several tenants commented that the community has been weakened because people seem to see less of each other - "something changes in people once they get inside their new homes. We see a lot less of each other and the community is weak. People are more involved in their own lives and own families"
- tenants are concerned about the future ownership and management of their estate and whether the negotiated assured tenancy agreements will guarantee their rights.
- tenants also questioned the role that they will have in decision-making - tenants on the Chingford Hall estate are concerned that their concerns are not dealt with by the CBHA - at local consultative meetings - "matters arising from the previous minutes take so much time as things have not been done" "it's consultation not negotiation. No one sees you as responsible".
- tenants are concerned that community facilities are not appropriate for the needs of the community - "the community centre has its gym but this is really for the wider area. It is a development *in* rather than *of* the community. It has been put on a business standing. It is about sustainability as a business but it is not a community centre. It is not a place where you can create a space."
- some tenants were concerned that a great deal about the future has already been decided - "one gets a feeling that there a lot going on behind the scenes and that it is all planned".

### What did CBHA tenant board members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The tenant board member interviewed saw the term social exclusion as "a term to use to chase funders, the new label put at the top of the government's agenda. It's not a term that people deal with every day. People are the same here as anywhere else, they just have fewer opportunities. Creating more opportunities for residents has been the ethos behind the HAT and the CBHA."

### What impact has the CBHA had on social exclusion?

As it is the Housing Action Trust that currently has the remit to address issues relating to social exclusion on the Chingford Hall estate, it is too early to assess the impact that tenant control through the CBHA has specifically had on social exclusion.

The Housing Action Trust placed community development at the heart of its agenda – “it was committed to replacing any community centre we had lost with one that was better than the original”. The HAT set up O-Regen, a development trust that provides community services on each of the four estates. This trust is managed by a partnership of local agencies including the Council, the CBHA, the local tenants’ federation and the Waltham Forest Voluntary Action.

A key part of O-Regen’s work has been to stimulate opportunities in training and employment, through careers guidance programmes, training for employment, work placements for young people in local businesses, incentives for local people to start businesses in new shop units as well as work in the building work itself. O-Regen is the delivery mechanism for the New Deal in Waltham Forest through the Careers Advice and Placement Project (CAAP). Since 1993-4, CAPP has helped over 2,600 residents into jobs or training. It is estimated that between 1994 and 1998, 186 residents have taken up a total of 217 jobs on site and contractors have exceeded the 20% local labour target by 5%-10%. 16 tenant-run and locally based businesses have started across the CBHA, which employ over 60 residents.

However, tenants are concerned about the continuation of these opportunities after the HAT comes to an end, and feel that very few lead to permanent, long-term jobs. Tenants were also concerned that high rents in the new CBHA homes will encourage people to stay on benefits rather than look for work.

Tenants reported that the “level of crime has gone right down and they are lower than for an average residential street”, because the estate is better lit and more open with a clear distinction between public and private space. The new design of the estate mean that people know their next door neighbours and there is less fear of crime. However, there was concern that there is not a very high police presence on the estate and that vandalism has not stopped.

Dr Garwood, a local General Practitioner on the Chingford Hall estate, previously had a caseload that consisted of frequent intervention with the Council Housing Department to tackle various health problems caused by the condition of the properties. He recognises that the new homes built by the Housing Action Trust have had a marked effect on the health and well being of residents.



### What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?

O-Regen is the wider strategic partnership across the four CBHA estates and the CBHA is represented on the board of management of O-Regen. However, the active tenants were concerned that their relationship with the CBHA is dependent on the HAT. They had a clear understanding of what the HAT had achieved and how it had met its initial promises, but some expressed concern that the CBHA will not deliver when the HAT finishes – “The CBHA only does what it does because the HAT makes it. The HAT makes sure that it delivers on its promises”.





## H) West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative - Lanarkshire

Interviewees:

The full committee of the housing co-operative

Billy Hunter	Chair
Isabel Dunsmuir	Secretary
Paul Farrell	Director

### Background

The 543 flats that make up West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative were transferred to it in 1989 from Glasgow City Council, although the co-op is now in Lanarkshire. Before the co-op started, the estate experienced a lot of crime: *"you couldn't walk across the estate at night, taxi drivers wouldn't come here"*, a poor quality housing service *"Glasgow City Council couldn't do all the repairs"* and all the consequent problems of social exclusion. People who could, moved off the estate and large numbers of properties couldn't be let.

The co-op was set up with an agenda to *"to provide high quality housing at rents that people in housing need can afford, and to regenerate the physical, social and economic structure of West Whitlawburn"*. The co-op sees that it has built a community, where people *"work as a big family to try and help each other"*. They reported that they had to struggle against apathy in building this community, but that *"once tenants started to see something happening, they started to believe in it"*.

A key measure of the success of the co-op has been that people who moved off now want to move back and there is a waiting list to get onto the estate. The co-op sees the wide range of residents involved in diverse social events and other activities on the estate as a measure of the success that they have achieved in engaging the community – *"the difference between before and after - I can't even explain it in words, it's like night and day"*.

### What did tenants consider to be important to them?

The focus group particularly saw crime and the fear of crime as a key issue – “security is what people wanted first and foremost” and valued the improvement in housing services - ‘the standard of services is higher now than with the Council, yet the Council seems to charge higher rent’ ‘When we have a repair, we just phone and it is sorted right away. With Glasgow, we had to wait three weeks.’ Several members of the focus group referred to the remoteness and impersonality of the services provided by Glasgow City Council - “the Council used to make decisions, but did not have to live with the consequences” “before with the Council, we had caretakers. They finished at 6pm and that was that. They were no help, none at all. They were like little generals”.

The focus group recognised the improvements in the relationship between tenants and landlord under the co-op - “with the co-op you are a person, with Glasgow City Council you were just a number. With the co-operative, you feel like a person and you are treated like a person. The housing team has a genuine interest in their job. There hasn’t been anything that I couldn’t come down and discuss with the staff ” “with the co-op, what they said they were going to do, they’ve done and they keep you up to date. You are not left in the dark”.

The improvements in the service have been confirmed by a survey carried out in 2000, conducted for the co-op by an independent research agency. This survey showed that 83% of residents thought the overall quality of services provided by the co-op was good or very good; 76% saw their homes and the housing service as good value for money; 71% thought that the neighbourhood was good or very good and 92% of respondents found reporting a repair easy.

### What did co-op members understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The active co-op members were dismissive of the term social exclusion – “we were tackling social exclusion long before they came up with it; the government got the ideas from us”. They did not see co-op members as being excluded because of the strength of the community that they have built, and because the co-op does not exclude anyone – “we have created a social environment that everyone can be involved in and our whole ethos is to include everyone. Our community centre and everything is for the wider community.”



### What impact has the co-op had on social exclusion?

The co-op has taken an approach that has impacted on all areas of life on West Whitlawburn. The early priorities - to refurbish homes and improve the housing service and security for residents - have meant that the “tenants feel very secure in their homes. There is a 24 hour concierge system covering all the high-rise properties, and community alarms for vulnerable people”. The co-op has a good relationship with the local police, and crime rates have dropped to almost negligible figures now – “I feel a lot safer. It may be just an illusion at night, but I feel as though I am being watched, even going into the lift. It is great for young girls they do not need to be worried about being harassed by an ex-partner”.

The Bonus Ball Resource Centre, set up by the co-op through national lottery funding, lies at the heart of the estate, from which a large number of community activities take place – “the community centre is always, always busy” – such as a fitness centre, a healthy eating café – “the café is a great thing; you can go and get a meal if you are not cooking” - a newsletter, two youth clubs, a senior citizens exercise club, a mother and toddler club, a fruit-selling operation and a junior gardening club. The co-op has run the community centre on the basis that “if local people have a plan to do something and its legal, we’ll support it”. The co-op has future plans to set up an agency to help young people find housing, to set up a food co-op and to develop a local health service facility.

A significant part of the co-op’s work has been directed at various initiatives to improve health on the estate. Apart from physical improvements to properties to address damp, the fitness suite, the café and the proposed food co-op are aimed at addressing the underlying issues in local people’s health. The value of the co-op’s self-help approach to tackling health issues was recognised in 2000 by the Scottish Parliament when they chose to launch their White Paper “Towards a Healthier Scotland” from the Bonus Ball Resource Centre.

The co-op has also set up a youth committee on the estate – *“if you target fourteen to seventeen year olds now, they’ll take on the responsibility of running the estate when they’re in their twenties”*. The youth committee is run from the community centre, and the group has its own budget to spend. The co-op supports the local credit union, and pays for a weekly welfare rights advisor. It also supports local football teams, sponsors local people to get higher education, and gives donations to residents who have had bereavements. The co-op has also done a significant amount of work on providing disability adaptations and has people who are trained to provide confidential advice and support to those suffering from domestic violence.

The co-op employs thirty-five members of staff and the community centre eighteen. Many of these members of staff are local residents. The co-op won an award for health at work, which particularly recognised the staff satisfaction, health and continuity as a measure of the health of the community and the co-op itself.

Bill Bonnar, the local community worker on the estate, is clear that *“the housing co-op has improved the quality of the environment and has built a sense of community into the area by supporting the community centre. The co-op encourages involvement. The tenants do not simply see themselves as customers but have a sense of ownership of the place. On comparable council estates, the population is atomised and the place where they live has no sense of identity.”*

The value of the work that the co-op does in the non-housing arena was recognised by the focus group – *“If you compare the co-op to where other people live, what they’ve got is just a flat. Outside our houses, we have all these other things.”*

### What is the relationship between the co-op and any wider strategic partnership?

The co-op is a key strategic organisation and has had a major impact on the wider area. Although tenants from neighbouring estates initially saw the co-op as a threat, they are now envious of the improvements and facilities enjoyed by tenants on West Whitlawburn. A petition by one of the neighbouring estates for West Whitlawburn Housing Co-op to extend its boundary to include them has sparked a lively debate. Bill Bonner suggested that *“it would make more sense to expand the quality of the existing properties and to build in more facilities”* and the co-op has set an upper expansion limit of 2000 properties. The co-op is concerned that any further expansion would lead to the co-op forgetting its original purpose – *“expansion raises its ugly head every now and again. If the organisation becomes big, then it will attract people who are not interested in community development, people who just want the money. As a voluntary committee we are against people being paid for being on the committee. It is quite simple, either you are voluntary or you are not. If there are professional people sitting on the board then you are in trouble as they bring politics. The co-op wants to look at people.”*

## CHAPTER 9.

### Conclusions

#### 9.1 What did tenants consider to be important to them?

The common and tangible themes that emerged from the interviews with active tenants and the random sample tenants were housing and crime. Tenants placed highest value on having a good quality home to live in and a safe and secure environment. Problems relating to a lack of support for young people, and consequent groups of young people hanging around, were also mentioned in several areas.

In the larger case studies, employment and health issues were also issues for the active tenants and staff, but very few random sample tenants in any area saw these as important issues, although there was concern that any available employment was generally poorly paid. Several tenants expressed the view that advice and support on employment and wider issues was available, and that it was the responsibility of individuals to seek it out.

What was also critically important to many tenants interviewed was the intangible sense of community and well being that had been achieved through the establishment of their tenant-controlled organisation. Respondents also valued the ability to “*have their say*”. This was generally more marked in the smaller tenant controlled organisations. Several interviewees talked about not being alone, about being part of a community, about having support from neighbours when it was needed. Several active tenants spoke of the confidence and self-assurance they themselves individually or the whole community had gained from being involved with the tenant-controlled organisation, as well as the value of the training they had received.

#### 9.2 What did tenant controlled organisations understand of the concept of social exclusion?

The active tenants in the tenant-controlled organisations we spoke to rarely knew or understood the term *social exclusion*. A common response was to say that “*we don't exclude anyone here*”.

Even when the social exclusion concept was explained, tenants did not match the concept to their own experience. Despite six out of the seven English case studies falling within what the Social Exclusion Unit defines as the most deprived communities (with at least six high indices of deprivation), tenants did not see themselves or their communities as being socially excluded. Some almost found the suggestion offensive.

This was perhaps primarily for two reasons:

- they had either solved or were on the way to solving the problems in their neighbourhoods that were important to them and their communities
- the tenant-led organisation had given them a sense of control and power over their circumstances, neighbourhoods and future that made other issues irrelevant.

The two areas that the tenant controlled organisations did not score highly on were under the headings “*an economically strong community*” and “*a green community*”. This is primarily because of the definitions that PAT 9 gave for these. In fact, most of the tenant-controlled organisations were economically very strong, because they had used available resources well. Many of the case studies had healthy surpluses that they could then use in ways determined by their communities. However, part of PAT 9's definition of an economically strong community is one that creates new opportunities for work.

Similarly, we did not feel that many of the tenant controlled organisations qualified under PAT 9's definition of a green community - “*a healthy and pleasant environment, conserving resources and encouraging awareness of environmental responsibility*”, although most have created “*a pleasant environment*”.

In every other area, the tenant controlled organisations scored extremely well. These case studies need to be taken in context. Very few communities in England and Wales would currently score well on many of these indicators and particularly not many of the communities in areas with high indices of deprivation.

### 9.3 What impact did the tenant-controlled organisations have on social exclusion?

All of the tenant-controlled organisations had had a significant impact on crime in their areas. In some cases, the effects were very pronounced - the transformation of their area from high-crime areas with very poor reputations where no one wanted to live to areas with next to no crime at all with waiting lists. In other cases, the effects were not as dramatic because the area had not deteriorated before the start of the organisation.

The majority of the case studies significantly had links with a credit union in their area - probably because the local community approach of credit unions sits comfortably with the ethos of the tenant controlled organisation.

Only the larger tenant controlled organisations and those set up in areas where the local authority had more or less withdrawn from solving local problems, were successfully helping people into employment through formal means. Smaller tenant controlled organisations did not have the resources to take on this sort of work and did not see it as part of their remit.

However, the smaller tenant controlled organisations spoke of their organisation giving individuals training, confidence, motivation and a feeling that they were part of society. Some gave us examples of people who had been able to find employment because of this. Even where the large tenant controlled organisations were providing training and employment opportunities, they spoke of the key battle being getting individuals past their front door and into the "work culture".

Again, only the larger tenant controlled organisations were active in areas relating to improving health, although even the smaller co-ops saw that changes in the environment and physical security improvements had had an impact on tenants health and sense of well being.

The most marked impact that the tenant controlled organisations - in particular the smaller ones - had had on tackling social exclusion was in terms of building community and the general level of community engagement. Based on the research, each case study according to the criteria developed by PAT 9 to assess a good community (see section 3.2 above). The results are shown below:

	Appletree Court	Belgrave Neighbourhood	Burrowes Street	Heath Town	Paddock	Pioneer & Riverside	Waltham Forest	West Whitleyburn
A learning community	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
A fair & just community	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
An active & empowered community	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
An influential community	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
An economically strong community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓✓	✓✓
A caring community	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
A green community	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
A safe community	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
A welcoming community	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓
A lasting community	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓

(Two ticks represent where it was thought that the criteria had been met; one tick represents where it was thought that the organisation had partly met the criteria or was on the way to achieving it; blank represents that the organisation had not met this criterion)

#### 9.4 the relationship between tenant controlled organisations and wider strategic partnerships

The relationships that exist between the tenant controlled organisations that we examined and wider strategic partnerships were mixed. In some cases, the larger tenant controlled organisations either were the wider strategic partnership or they were a leading force within it. In these cases, the wider strategic partnership was often much stronger because of the involvement of the tenant controlled organisation.

However, in the case of one of the smaller tenant controlled organisations, there appeared to be some conflict between the tenant controlled organisation and the wider strategic partnership, both in terms of what each organisation thought was required and the culture of each organisation.

## CHAPTER 10. Policy implications

**10.1** This research shows that the intangible and difficult to measure benefits of community and a sense of well being are amongst the most important priorities of local people and contribute to their feeling a part of an inclusive community. These benefits need to form a key part of any initiative to tackle social exclusion. The research also shows that the development of self-worth and self-motivation is a necessary and important part of tackling social exclusion.

**10.2** The failure of the Social Exclusion Unit to consider the role of tenant controlled organisations is wasting a major opportunity to develop its wider objectives. Indeed, this research indicates that PAT 9's third conclusion - that *"community self-help is not a cure for all ills .... it cannot make up for poor public services"* is at least partially wrong. Tenant control, particularly where TMOs have taken over the management of their neighbourhoods from the local authority, have shown that community self-help can and does make up for a significant proportion of poor public services.

This research shows that giving ordinary people opportunities to establish local community controlled organisations - including housing co-ops and tenant management organisations - needs to be central to the work of Social Exclusion Unit and Active Community Unit programmes.

**10.3** Local Strategic Partnerships offer real advantages in run down neighbourhoods by focussing resources and diverse interests, but their success will depend on how well they engage with the ordinary people who live in the neighbourhood. A key part of that will be how they relate to already existing local community organisations, such as residents associations and tenant controlled organisations. These groups already operate at a level that is defined by the local community and at which ordinary people in that community engage with, whereas wider strategic partnerships may work over a much larger area.

Tenant-controlled organisations represent the results of activity by ordinary people who have an ambition for their area. They set agendas and develop at a pace that will suit the development of the local community and in geographical areas that they define as their neighbourhood. Local Strategic Partnerships will be most effective where they harness rather than come into conflict with them.

