



Neighbourhood Social Mix: Contrasting Experiences in Four Challenging Neighbourhoods

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Neighbourhood Social Mix: Contrasting Experiences in Four Challenging Neighbourhoods

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1. Introduction

The question of the differential impact of the social and economic composition of the neighbourhood on the experiences and perceptions of households living on low incomes has become well-trodden terrain in both policy analysis and academic debate over the past few years. A variety of studies has been undertaken to assess the existence of ‘neighbourhood effects’ on the social and economic outcomes for residents of relatively deprived areas. Does the spatial concentration of households living in poverty compound their disadvantage? Does living in more mixed communities, whether on the basis of income, employment, tenure or ethnicity, provide more opportunities for poorer residents to find employment, achieve better outcomes at school, and help them climb out of poverty? What is the impact of measures specifically directed at providing greater social and economic diversity at the neighbourhood level, often by introducing programmes to promote more mixed housing tenures?

This paper reflects on such questions through an analysis of some of the qualitative research material gathered from four of the six neighbourhoods covered in the *Living Through Change in Challenging Neighbourhoods* project – *Wensley Fold* near Blackburn town centre, *Oxgangs*, a suburb to the south of Edinburgh city centre, *Hillside*, part of the North Huyton estate in Knowsley and *West Kensington* in the Earls Court area of London. In the other two research areas, West Marsh in Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire and Amlwch in Anglesey, North Wales, respondents made little reference to the changing social mix of the area. There had been no major redevelopment in either of these areas in recent history, which might have prompted out-migration and dispersal of the existing population and the influx of newcomers. There were not proposals for major changes in the future either (unlike West Kensington, as the paper will show). The paper therefore concentrates on the four areas where the changing social and economic profile of the neighbourhood was a salient issue for many of the residents interviewed.

The paper offers a slightly different perspective to many of the studies of neighbourhood effects, by focusing directly on the perceptions and experiences of the residents themselves rather than sifting through changes denoted by a range of local social indicators. We were interested to know how our respondents perceived the impact of different social and ethnic groups on how their neighbourhood had changed, the impact of policy measures designed to alter the residential profile of the areas, and whether local diversity was seen as an asset or a source of conflict. The contrasts between the four neighbourhoods proved to be as illuminating as any similarities, and counsel strongly against any blanket assessments of social mix and neighbourhood sustainability. A more differentiated and nuanced approach is advocated, both in terms of understanding where future research needs to go and in terms of any policy prescriptions that may emerge to promote a ‘mixed communities’ theme.

This analysis offers something of a corrective to explanations that rely solely on the concentration of certain attributes of the resident population at the neighbourhood level or in the degree of connectivity to opportunities outside the neighbourhood. It suggests that a reading of how the neighbourhood is judged to have changed, the perceived level of investment by both long-standing residents and newcomers in the

neighbourhood as an arena for social interaction, and the perceived impact of in- and out-migration over a longer period of time can all help to explain whether the existence of different social and cultural groups in the locality is viewed as a source of tension or of renewal.

The paper is subsequently organised into five chapters. Chapter 2 reviews some of the key findings from previous research undertaken into neighbourhood effects in relatively deprived areas, and the mixed evidence about the impact of social mix on social and economic outcomes. It considers different methodologies that have been adopted and puts forward the case for placing more emphasis on a 'relational' approach to understanding the dynamics of neighbourhood change and its impact on social interactions and perceptions of similarity and difference between different groups in the community. Chapter 3 describes the case study areas and Chapters 4 and 5 examine through in-depth interviews with residents comparisons and contrasts between the four neighbourhoods in terms of personal experiences, the dynamics of change in the neighbourhood and the perceptions of different social or cultural groups. Chapter 6 identifies some emerging conclusions from the research.

2. Social Mix and Neighbourhood Effects

This research was not conceived as a study of social mix, still less as an evaluation of 'mixed communities' programmes. But there was an interest from the outset in how far in-depth qualitative research into experiences of residents living in different neighbourhood contexts was mediated by their social milieu. While all of the areas fall within the lower three deciles in terms of the typical indicators of deprivation, we were also keen to include different social and cultural profiles in the eventual sample of areas.

Two of the criteria for the second stage selection of the neighbourhoods therefore concerned the extent of *diversity* - in terms of the relative homogeneity or heterogeneity of the population (selected in this case on the basis of ethnicity) - and the extent of *connectivity* - in terms of the links with the adjacent environment, and whether the area was nested in a wider environment of relative affluence or of equivalent levels of deprivation (CRESR Research Team, 2009). This has parallels with the distinction between those studies of neighbourhood effects that focus on endogenous processes (within neighbourhood impacts) and those that are more concerned with the impact of external influences (access to opportunity structures). We will return to this distinction later but for the moment we should note that the relative emphasis is also important in terms of policy development and the balance between the distinction (originally drawn by Peter Hall, 1997) between 'outward-looking' measures in area-based policy (of which Housing Market Renewal might be a contemporary example) and 'inward-looking' measures (such as the New Deal for Communities). In this review of previous research and literature we focus on area effects in the field of urban and housing policy.

There is substantial evidence that a negative relationship exists between neighbourhood poverty on one hand and employment opportunities on the other (Galster, 2007), but the extent to which there is a partly causal or merely associational relationship is much more contested. To what extent are existing inequalities resulting from macro scale economic and social configurations exacerbated at neighbourhood level as a result of unequal neighbourhood conditions and resources (Murie and Musterd, 2004)? This is not just a debating point about methodology, measurement and inference. The negative consequences of living in concentrated poverty have been a recurrent concern of urban policy in Europe and North America (Andersson and Musterd, 2005; Berube, 2005; Tunstall and Fenton, 2006). The assumptions of a causal link between spatial concentrations of poverty and negative social and economic outcomes has led to governments adopting a range of measures to promote social mix at the neighbourhood level, for example, through 'mixed tenure' programmes of various kinds, through selective demolition and redevelopment of housing of a different size, type and value, through stimulating the active dispersal of poorer households or through setting aside a proportion of affordable housing in new developments through planning mechanisms.

Much of the recent debate has been conducted with reference to the ever growing number of research studies in the USA, not least in the wake of the Hope VI and Moving to Opportunity (MTO) programmes of the late 1990s and early 2000s, which provided a kind of (imperfect) natural experiment for examining the comparative impacts on poorer residents moving into more affluent areas compared to those who

stay put. However the different social welfare, labour market and urban policy setting (and the absence of voucher programmes akin to MTO) in western European countries has caused several scholars to argue that its applicability to the European experience is quite limited (Friedrichs, 2002; Kearns, 2002; and Musterd, 2002). Even if we therefore confine ourselves to research undertaken north-west Europe, the findings of studies that have been undertaken do not provide much nourishment for the policy enthusiasts for social mix. As Galster (2007: 524) rather delicately puts it, in reviewing research evidence with reference to western European experience of developing mixed communities: *'This policy thrust has not been without its sceptics'*.

A range of research studies have therefore placed doubt on the assumed positive effects of local social mix, certainly in terms of what might be termed the associational benefits of mixing different income or tenure groups together in order to produce an uplift in opportunity and outcome for the more disadvantaged residents (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2000; Atkinson and Kintrea, 2001; Cole and Goodchild, 2001, Friedrichs, 2002; Kearns, 2002; Meen *et al*, 2005; Musterd, 2002; Ostendorf *et al*, 2001). This has however done little to dent the policy commitment to promote social mix. In the past five years in Britain, for example, the Labour government's urban regeneration agenda became more explicitly driven by what might be described as a strategy of achieving 'neighbourhood transformation through dispersal', adopting a decidedly transatlantic tone in its new found enthusiasm to 'deconcentrate poverty' (Lupton and Fuller, 2009). The Mixed Communities Initiative, launched in 2005, is case in point. This has in turn raised new concerns about the consequences of such 'transformation', interpreted as the potential wholesale displacement of households residing in neighbourhoods through 'gentrification' - a process that has incidentally recently reignited academic disputes that had been fairly dormant over the past twenty years (Allen, 2008; Hamnett, 2009; Slater, 2008; Slater, 2009).

It is not clear what the Coalition Government's policy approach towards mixed communities is, but it is likely that some changes in the balance of housing tenure at the local level will be sought. For example, the Centre for Social Justice's report on housing poverty (Centre for Social Justice, 2008) espoused a view that social housing went hand-in-hand with 'broken Britain':

We need urgent steps to secure a wider mix of tenures on social housing estates. A diversity of tenure means a diversity of income and social mix. It is only through this sort of diversity that we might be able to achieve a lasting transformation. Social housing should continue to be used to meet a great range of needs. However, the period in which a tenant finds themselves in social housing must be used to build aspiration, not stifle it. This can mean that, wherever appropriate, social housing is a step on the property ladder, used for shorter periods of time, to help people in a crisis or to overcome homelessness. It should be a dynamic resource, playing a part in helping people to get back on their feet, either by working their way from social tenancy to private tenancy, then to shared equity and finally outright ownership; or through altering the tenants' relationship with the state so that they become, not a tenant, but a part owner.

(Centre for Social Justice, 2008)

This aim has recently been reinforced by the Prime Minister's commitment, announced in August 2010, to reduce the length of social housing tenancies for households entering the sector, to encourage greater mobility and tenure switching if their circumstances change.

The objectives of mixed communities programmes are often implicit rather than crisply stated, and contain an amalgam of expectation, financial pragmatism and modest social engineering. At their fullest, mixed communities are intended to alter

the behaviour of and opportunities for poorer residents, as they benefit from more positive local peer effects and local role models, or develop a wider set of 'loose ties' to assist in informal searched for employment. The presence of more affluent neighbours 'rubs off' on those facing social and economic difficulties, recues postcode and personal stigma, and improves their prospects accordingly.

It is reasonable to suggest that this rather overheated policy objective has been eclipsed by more modest and pragmatic expectations about the potential benefits of local social mix. The mix of properties of different tenures and values, for example, has been important in making the financial equations for 'affordable housing' programmes stack up, and to improve what has become known in policy parlance as the local 'residential offer'; in previously fragile housing markets. A more diverse social and economic profile in a neighbourhood also strengthens support to retain or improve neighbourhood facilities among residents and improve neighbourhood stability. This is similar to the case put by those who argue for more universal rather than selective state provision as a way of capturing middle class support for services that would otherwise become residualised and then diminished.

While some of this scepticism about the effects of social mix has been rather nuanced, a more forthright judgment was provided in Cheshire's (2007) pungent critique, in which he suggested that there was little robust research evidence to support the assumed negative neighbourhood effects of geographical concentrations of poverty. He argued that people would naturally 'self-sift' so they end up in neighbourhoods consisting of people like themselves and that, as the rich (who have choices) can afford living in the best neighbourhood amenity while the poor (who do not) end up with the worst. The policy attempt to produce mixed areas is therefore swimming against an unstoppable tide, without recourse to some drastic social engineering measures (such as forced relocation). 'Specialised' neighbourhoods (those that consist of households within a narrow band of income) may also confer certain labour market benefits. The way to produce greater social equality, Cheshire argues, is through measures that affect the redistribution of income (and one presumes, though it is not mentioned, wealth) - not through artificially trying to prevent neighbourhoods becoming segregated by income. Enforced social mix is, in short, treating the symptoms not the causes of inequality.

As Cheshire himself acknowledges, there are formidable methodological challenges here in trying to measure neighbourhood effects (Lupton, 2003) in order to know that any difference that may emerge can be unequivocally related to the neighbourhood context for those individuals involved. In much of the analysis, emphasis has been placed on the interrogation of large scale data sets than can be tracked through time, such as panel studies (Buck, 2001; McCulloch, 2001) or Census findings, though in the former case it is often difficult to drill down to anything as 'local' as a neighbourhood level. The use of multivariate statistical analysis to track relationships is also not without its problems either: variables that measure individual characteristics may be left 'uncontrolled', therefore affecting the equation between effects and outcomes in ways that cannot be calibrated.

There has also been a skewed reliance in neighbourhood effects research on which social and economic outcomes have been tracked, which tend to focus on employment (because changes along these lines can be measured more readily, and within a finite time scale) and then, to a lesser degree, income and educational attainment (Bramley and Karley, 2007). Other potential benefits (in health status, for example, or quality of life) may either be more difficult to measure or unfold over a longer period of time than would be captured through a longitudinal study.

It is also notable that the ingredients, what is in the mix, are also selectively treated. Considerable research has been undertaken into differences by tenure group and

the impact of mixed schemes, not least because the manipulation of tenure is one of the few policy levers open to policymakers. Studies have been undertaken of mixed income areas, but the discussion of ethnicity has tended to follow a parallel track rather than form part of these debates, with a discrete area of inquiry (and policy) emerging around ethnic residential segregation (Simpson, 2004), shifting patterns of settlement and its relationship to 'community cohesion' (for example, as described by Phillips *et al* (2008) in Oldham and Rochdale). Age and household type are other sources of social mix or segregation although these have also been overlooked in accounting for different processes and outcomes at neighbourhood level.

One is therefore left with an area in which there is a high level of policy interest and a low level of consolidated supporting research evidence (Kleinhans, 2004) - where the reference to measurable attributes of difference is uneven, where the definition of a 'neighbourhood' is itself problematic (not least when scoping the statistical framework), where change over time is difficult to chart, and where issues of causation and attribution present serious analytical obstacles to effective explanation, whether for policy or academic audiences. The consolidated evidence from studies that have been undertaken on the relationship between neighbourhood context and a variety of outcomes, Galster (2007) suggests, defy generalisations. Galster concludes that there is evidence that on balance social mix policies may benefit the disadvantaged, but in doing so they may also incur some costs for the 'advantaged', and that policymakers need to decide if that is a price worth paying.

In ending his evidence review by suggesting various challenges for future quantitative analysis of neighbourhood effects, Galster concludes with this plea:

Finally qualitative methods of various types should continue to probe into the intra-neighbourhood social processes in order to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of effects that transpire when social groups are mixed in neighbourhoods.

(Galster, 2007: 541)

This is echoed by the brief review of the state of neighbourhood effects research given by the Centre for Housing Research (2010) in terms making the case for studies to take a 'qualitative turn':

Despite the advances in modelling techniques, quantitative studies struggle to adequately measure the neighbourhood context on the most relevant spatial scale. Choices are often driven by the availability of administrative data, and not necessarily by an understanding of the neighbourhoods ... it is necessary to take a dynamic view of neighbourhoods focusing on the neighbourhood as a transitory area in constant flux as opposed to treating it as a static object.

(Centre for Housing Research, 2010)

In short, a closer understanding is required of the processes whereby living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood can shape the outlooks and actions of the residents in order to get to grips with the connections between neighbourhood circumstances and individual outcomes across a range of factors – not just employability. A qualitative approach can illuminate sometimes issues that remain in the shade through even the most sophisticated statistical model. There are cases of qualitative research into social mix (Atkinson and Kintrea, 2000). One such study (Pinkster, 2009) has examined different 'causal pathways' of residents living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood in the Hague and concludes that the importance of local social networks can mean that they may gain employment that is not the most 'optimal' choice for them in career terms but makes sense in terms of other aspects of their lives in the neighbourhood.

Evidence was found for various ways in which shared norms, values and social practices among friends and relatives in the area might limit their employment prospects in the long run... unemployment and underemployment are the indirect and often unintended result of socialisation within residents' personal networks with respect to other domains of life such as family life, gender roles and mutual support networks.
(Pinkster, 2009: 8)

Simply put, residents have other priorities in their lives, which then affects their relationship with the labour market. They are not 'inadequately socialised', just socialised to a different beat, a finding that concurs with our own analysis of perceptions about gaining and staying in work among residents across the six research neighbourhoods, especially among those with closer knit family and social networks (Crisp *et al*, 2009). This suggests that the equation being sought between neighbourhood characteristics and certain measurable outcomes (in this case, employment) will need to be nuanced once a closer reading is given to residents' own accounts of the intended outcomes for their actions, rather than those presumed to be primary on their behalf.

Qualitative research can also shed a different light on how 'mix' is perceived by local residents. In their study of mature mixed tenure neighbourhoods, for example, Allen *et al* (2005) found that residents did not have a sense of their area as uniquely diverse, or indeed of any opportunities this may have bestowed on them as a result. The most common descriptor of the areas was as 'just ordinary'. The mix was embedded in the way people lived in the neighbourhood and was not identified as a special asset from which they should benefit. In a similar vein, Savage and colleagues found that respondents in their research were often keen to define themselves as 'ordinary', in order to place themselves outside other signifiers of difference, such as social class (Savage *et al*, 2001). They suggest this is often a defensive device to avoid being labelled in class terms.

Furthermore the extent to which the neighbourhood is the site for significant social interaction (whether 'negative', 'positive' or 'neutral') can also vary widely from one relatively deprived area to the next, as an earlier study from this research programme has indicated (Robinson, 2010).

So how might we best capture from our own research how certain characteristics of place (in this case, the salience of 'social mix') might be incorporated into individual lives, perceptions and outlooks? A promising way forward is signalled in the work of Cummins and colleagues (Cummins *et al*, 2007) in their attempts to situate the influence of 'place' in health research. They contest the assumed duality between 'individual' factors and 'place' factors on health status, signified by 'compositional' and 'contextual' explanations. This has applicability to modes of explanation in neighbourhood effects research. Thus 'compositional' explanations relate to the characteristics of the neighbourhood population and the degree of concentration of 'negative' attributes, such as worklessness, income poverty or single parenthood. The compositional emphasis leads us down the track of assessing endogenous neighbourhood effects (linked to a 'negative socialisation' hypothesis about the influence of neighbourhood effects). This may then embrace peer effects, relative deprivation and role models through which people develop norms and values through which they learn what is right and appropriate through interaction with others in the locality (Briggs, 1997; Wilson, 1987; Wilson, 1997).

'Contextual' explanations refer to the links between neighbourhood conditions and wider social and economic processes. In terms of debates about neighbourhood effects, this links into the 'social isolation' hypothesis which suggests that the (assumed) more localised orientations of residents in disadvantaged areas

compounds their lack of opportunity to find work, for example. The neighbourhood may suffer from negative stereotyping, post code discrimination or the withdrawal of resources (public and private) which prevents them 'getting on'. This in turn resonates with some of the discourses we have tracked about the loss of collective social space and social resources and the decline in third places in some of the research neighbourhoods, as resources have been increasingly directed elsewhere (Hickman, 2010).

Cummins and colleagues call for a 'relational' approach towards understanding the impact of 'place' which explores the tight *interrelationships* between individuals and contexts, rather than positioning them on different sides of a statistical model. This leads to an approach that considers the positive and negative impacts of 'neighbourhood' on individual outcomes and that acknowledges its properties as a dynamic, fluid entity comprising individuals who are mobile daily and over their life course, rather than as a 'fixed entity' of equivalent salience to all who live there. They argue:

It may be just as important for contextual studies to begin to understand not just the lifecourse of individuals, but also the social and economic trajectories of the places they inhabit. Such an approach could also begin to address questions about how the changing composition of an area's population affect the production of place. For example... more attention needs to be paid to the study of how selective migration... affects the health of residents.
(Cummins *et al*, 2007: 1832)

There are difficulties in transferring this approach towards considering the impact of area effects on health directly to an analysis of neighbourhood change. It is more difficult to ascertain a common currency of positive and negative attributes that would constitute a 'decent' neighbourhood than to 'good' health. There are likely to be contrasting accounts of the changes that have occurred in an area, as the following chapters indicate. Nevertheless, we have followed this broad approach in this paper, by eliciting how area characteristics of similarity and difference, of connectivity and conflict, are elicited from studying *narratives of neighbourhood change* given by the respondents, and not least the impact of ongoing in- and out-migration on their own attitudes and experiences. It does not presuppose that these impacts over time will be negative or positive, still less that they will be signified in a consistent manner by residents of the same neighbourhood. In examining the evidence, however, one thing quickly become clear - that the narratives of change differed sharply from one neighbourhood to the next, and that the extent to which diversity was viewed 'positively', 'negatively' or 'neutrally' could not have been 'read off' in advance from examining the statistical differences between the four neighbourhoods.

3. The Four Neighbourhoods

3.1 Introduction

The six case study areas were originally selected to represent different points along a continuum for the three themes of 'cohesion and connectivity' 'diversity' and 'mobility'. The experiences and perceptions of residents in four of the case studies are included in the following two chapters. A variety of methods was used to sift statistically through local authorities that had relevant characteristics, and then smaller areas were chosen as neighbourhoods within the local authorities (the process is described in CRESR Research Team, 2009: Appendix 1). The Hillside area of the North Huyton estate in Knowsley was selected to exemplify an area of deprivation in the midst of wider economic and social deprivation in one of the poorest local authorities in Britain. In contrast, Oxfords, Edinburgh, was selected as an 'island' of deprivation adjacent to some very high value area of the city centre such as Morningside. An 'index of difference' was used to select a neighbourhood with a relatively large white community and a minority ethnic community which were not, as far as could be established beforehand, territorially separated (Wensley Fold, Blackburn). West Kensington was selected as a relatively ethnically diverse urban area with relatively higher rates of population turnover. Appendix 1 describes the different profiles of the four areas according to relevant deprivation indices.

The research areas were not specifically selected to assess the impact of any specific regeneration measures that had been introduced, although all of them had been the focus of social and physical regeneration initiatives to varying degrees over the past decade. Hillside was part of a New Deal for Communities area (launched in 2000 for a ten year period) that had been subject to a major programme of neighbourhood remodelling, with the specific intention of producing a more mixed community (and a more vibrant local housing market) through redevelopment and tenure diversification. It was also a pilot for the government's Mixed Communities Initiative (MCI) programme. Interventions in the other areas were more modest. In the past five years some high rise flats in Oxfords had been demolished and were being replaced by a mix of new housing - rented, for sale and shared ownership.

A small mixed tenure redevelopment had also taken place in three streets in Wensley Fold, to help reduce high housing densities, open up a very tightly structured residential area and provide much needed four and five bedroom accommodation. This had originally been funded by the local authority and housing association, but had latterly received some 'early win' funding from *Elevate*, the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder for East Lancashire.

West Kensington (comprising West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates) was part of the north Fulham NDC and a proportion of the social housing on the estates has been modernised from the Decent Homes programme, together with future plans that originally proposed some modest redevelopment of part of the area. However, as we indicate below, it is now at the heart of a major proposed redevelopment of the whole Earls Court area.

The areas therefore provide an example of a neighbourhood in the midst of a programme explicitly designed to increase social mix, two areas where steps had

been taken to modify the housing stock, diversify tenure and provide a broader range of housing options, and an fourth area in the very tight (London) housing market where some of the housing stock had been improved, but the overall physical structure and tenure balance had changed little.

3.2 Hillside, Knowsley

The research area in North Huyton is known for planning purposes as Hillside and Primalt, but the area as a whole is generally known by residents as Hillside, and this is as the term used for the case study area in this report. The neighbourhoods of Hillside and Primalt make up one-third of North Huyton NDC intervention area (the other areas are Finch House, Fincham, Woolfall North and Woolfall South). These two neighbourhoods, and the wider NDC area, form a part of the collection of inter-war and post-war municipal housing estates that were developed in and around Huyton as 'overspill' from the City of Liverpool slum clearance programmes and the expansion of the Liverpool Docks. The majority of dwellings are two-storey semi-detached and terraced family houses arranged in traditional street patterns, although there are also two tower blocks (one of which has been renovated and the other is now empty). Households in the case study area are predominantly White, with just one per cent of residents from a minority ethnic background, according to the 2001 Census. In August 2009, 9 per cent of the working age population in Hillside was on Job Seekers' Allowance (compared to 7 per cent in Knowsley and 4 per cent nationally), 19 per cent were on Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disability Allowance (compared to 13 per cent and 7 per cent) and 6 per cent were on lone parent Income Support (4 per cent and 2 per cent).

Hillside is bounded by the M57, a dual carriageway (Seth Powell Way) and a park (Alt Park) and is one of the more isolated areas in the wider North Huyton neighbourhood. At the start of the NDC programme, the two sub areas together comprised 1,500 dwellings, of which around 80 per cent were council-owned. The local authority stock was transferred to Knowsley Housing Trust in 2002, and this led on to the production of a masterplan to remodel the area, by extensive demolition, much of it in Hillside, and redevelopment predominantly consisting of housing for sale. The scale of demolition was much greater than had been suggested by an earlier 'visioning' exercise undertaken with residents prior to transfer and the change in priorities caused considerable discontent and protest locally. During the period when the masterplan was being prepared, demolition of properties, many of them void and declared structurally unstable, continued in various streets in the estate. This reinforced the sense of physical isolation in certain parts of the estate with many unused open spaces that had yet to be developed for any purpose. The process of change corresponds to a model of state-led gentrification in which the existing community is fractured in the process of being 'saved', especially where there is a period of prolonged blight while the plans unfold (see Watt, 2008). This process can have a particular impact on local social networks, causing anxiety and isolation, especially for women, as friends and family members move out of the area (Gosling, 2008).

A prolonged period of consultation and revision to the masterplan led to the production of an agreed plan by January 2006 and the commission of a consortium of three developers, Keepmoat plc, Gleeson plc and Lowry Homes. Overall, the masterplan proposed that 1,200 homes should be demolished (of which 700 had already been cleared) and replaced by 1,450 new properties, of which 89 per cent were to be homes for sale, 3 per cent for low cost home ownership and 7 per cent for social renting, on a 'pepper potted' basis. Many of the households had already moved out of the area and many continued to do so, but other stayed put until the option of a new property in the neighbourhood was made available to them. All

residents in properties to be cleared were eventually rehoused, elsewhere on the estate, outside the area or in the new developments, by the beginning of 2010.

The private development of 400 properties in the Hillside part of the estate was, however, suspended in late 2008, as a result of the recession and the consequent difficulties faced by two of the developers involved in the scheme. It only recommenced in early 2010 and this has caused disquiet, both in terms of the delay in rehousing a few of the remaining residents but also in terms of the visual aspects in which this part of the estate has been an empty building site for a year.

The Hillside estate has few public buildings and amenities, and the last remaining post office in the area closed last year. Beechwood Primary School, which was one of three primary schools in the North Huyton area, has also recently closed down. The one public building in Hillside, the 'Hillywood' Community Centre, is well used by a range of local groups, residents and stakeholders. It is staffed by two paid community workers and a small band of (very) dedicated volunteers. There are problems with anti-social behaviour in parts of the estate and reports that drug use and drug dealing had become more prevalent in the past two or three years. There have been continuing problems with the poor environmental quality in the neighbourhood although in the Primalt area, Pennard Field, is seen as a potential amenity for the community. There are no other public amenities in that part of the estate.

3.3 Oxgangs, Edinburgh

Oxgangs is a suburb of Edinburgh, located in the south-west of the city. It is named after an 'oxgang', an ancient Scottish land measure. The development of the area started in the early 1950s; it had previously been mostly farmland and was considered part of the countryside on the fringe of the city. The area consists of large housing schemes, ranging from Edinburgh City Council-owned high rise tower blocks to private bungalows. A large proportion of former council-owned properties in Oxgangs have been bought by tenants under the Right to Buy scheme, and there is now a high demand for what remains of the council housing stock in the area. In August 2009, 6 per cent of the working age population in Oxgangs was on JSA (compared to 3 per cent in Edinburgh) 15 per cent on ESA/IB/SDA (9 per cent) and 3 per cent on IS/LP (2 per cent).

The neighbourhood is well served by a variety of shops, amenities and public facilities. It has two small shopping areas at each end of Oxgangs known to the locals as the 'top' and 'bottom' shops. The top shops (Oxgangs Broadway) are the larger and feature a small convenient store known as 'Denis's', named after the owner of the shop. Other shops in the top area include a newsagent, a hairdresser, and three takeaways. There is also a post office and a pharmacy. The local library is a popular and well resourced hub of the community, and is regularly used for meetings and classes as well as for its wide range of books and IT facilities. Oxgangs has three primary schools, as well as a nearby high school with a very good reputation locally and further afield. Two neighbouring primary schools situated on Oxgangs Green (Comiston and Hunters Tryst) were recently merged and renamed Pentland Primary. Local churches in the area include: Church of Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, a Roman Catholic Church and a recently built Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

In 2003 Edinburgh City Council (in consultation with tenants) took the decision to demolish and redevelop Oxgangs high rise flats, originally known as Comiston Luxury Flats. In April 2005 the long-standing tower block, Capelaw Court, was demolished to make way for new housing. Capelaw was one of three high rise flats

built in Oxgangs Crescent in 1961 and 1962. The other two buildings (Caerketton Court and Allermuir Court) were then demolished in November 2006. The new homes, built on the site of the high rises, were designed in consultation with local people, and provide a mixture of tenures and dwelling types, including provision for the elderly and people with disabilities. The scheme reflected a local desire for 'low rise' housing, coupled with the need to achieve relatively high dwelling densities in the face of high housing demand. Some local residents were initially reluctant about moving into the newly available accommodation because of its location and lay-out, but after the initial disruption the scheme has proved popular. While the early phases of the new development provided opportunities to rehouse existing Oxgangs residents, more recent schemes have attracted households from outside the area.

3.4 Wensley Fold, Blackburn

Wensley Fold is a neighbourhood in Blackburn, a Lancashire town with a population of some 100,000 in 2001, and the administrative centre of the unitary authority of Blackburn and Darwen (population 137,000 in 2001). The neighbourhood is located immediately west of Blackburn town centre. It is bounded to the North by the A677 Preston New Road, to the South by a mixed use retail and industrial area and to the West by a large park. The area has a population of approximately 3,000, occupies a hillside situation and is characterised by rows of parallel terraced houses organised in a compressed grid pattern. Recently, the area has been subject to redevelopment, initiated by the local authority in partnership with a housing association as a Single Regeneration Budget programme, but funded in the later stages by Elevate (now Pennine Lancashire) Housing Market Renewal programme, with a number of terraces being demolished and replaced by new-build double-fronted terrace properties, with more space between each row allowing for gardens and back yards to be developed (the redevelopment was undertaken on one side of the streets and the opposite side was left clear).

In the early stages of the redevelopment a relatively high proportion of long-standing predominantly White residents moved out of Wensley Fold to an adjacent neighbourhood, but this exodus decreased as the redevelopment took place, and it was claimed in one interview that several of those who left now wish to return.,

Blackburn has a long history of immigration, particularly from India and Pakistan, and one in five (21 per cent) of the population in the town were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin by the 2001 Census. In the study area, more than half of the local population were recorded as having a non-White ethnic origin by the 2001 Census, and 51 per cent were recorded as of South Asian ethnic origin. There is a relatively high proportion of professional and skilled workers among the cohort of in-migrants. More recently, Blackburn was a dispersal area for asylum seekers and has received a relatively high level of post-2004 economic in-migration. In August 2009, 8 per cent of the working age population was on JSA (compared to 5 per cent for the Blackburn with Darwen area), 18 per cent were on ESA/IB/SDA (12 per cent) and 4 per cent on LP-IS (3 per cent).

The area has a vibrant local shopping centre, with local fresh food shops specialising in South Asian produce. The Director of Neighbourhoods for the local authority, who was closely involved in the redevelopment of the area, stressed in interview that great emphasis was placed on trying to keep the local shops viable (supported by ERDF funds) during the process of redevelopment when revenues were affected. There are also a number of major supermarket stores on the edge of the area and the town centre is within walking distance. Local community resources include a community centre that runs various training, educational and social activities targeted

at the whole population, and other cafes and community venues, as well as places of worship and parks.

3.5 West Kensington, London

The West Kensington case study area is located in west London, in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. It is within walking distance of Earls Court Exhibition Centre and a number of London Underground stations including West Kensington, West Brompton, and Earls Court. The area is surrounded by several high status neighbourhoods including Chelsea, Baron's Court and Kensington.

The case study area, which comprises 1,800 properties in two social housing estates, West Kensington and Gibbs Green, forms part of a larger neighbourhood which most locals refer to as 'West Kensington'. The neighbourhood is centred on the intersection between North End and Lillie Roads, where most of the area's numerous shops, pubs and cafes are located. The area also has a bustling (semi-permanent) market which is located on Lillie Road. The West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are located in the north of the NDC area on the eastern side of North End Road. The wider West Kensington area is a diverse and mixed income locality and contains some households with above average incomes. In some parts of the area, property prices are very high, with high end properties selling for more than £1.5 million.

65 per cent of households were described as 'white' or 'white other' in the area (78 per cent in Hammersmith and Fulham and 91 per cent in England) and 21 per cent described themselves as 'black' (compared to 11 per cent and 3 per cent respectively). The black and minority ethnic population includes members of Afro-Caribbean, West African and Somali communities. 57 per cent of households on the estates were in the social housing sector, compared to 33 per cent in the borough and 19 per cent nationally, and just 25 per cent were owner-occupiers (compared to 44 per cent and 69 per cent respectively).

The study area is covered by the North Fulham New Deal for Communities programme, and social housing units on the West Kensington and Gibbs Green estates are in the process of being modernised as part of this initiative. The West Kensington estate comprises approximately 1,000 units and was built in the early 1970s. It is a mixed development comprising five tower blocks, low rise flats, maisonettes and some terraced houses. The Gibbs Green estate comprises some 160 flats and maisonettes, built in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The properties are set out in six four storey blocks and one eight storey block, which was due to be replaced by low rise housing and a communal hall under redevelopment proposals.

More recently, the area has been the focus of a controversial plan for an ambitious redevelopment of the wider area, including the nearby Earls Court complex, owned by the developers Capital and Council (Capco), once the 2012 Olympics has finished. An ambitious and politically high profile local authority (Hammersmith and Fulham LB) has expressed interest in including the phased redevelopment of the West Kensington/Gibbs Green estates into this plan. It has undertaken some initial consultation with residents about the scheme, which could involve a new international conference centre, hotels, new transport interchanges, offices and 8,000 units of high value private housing. The redevelopment has been promoted in furtherance of the local authority's objective of 'offering mixed and balanced communities'. This had led to a public campaign, and a petition signed by 80 percent of the residents in opposition to the proposals due to their concerns that they will be displaced, and suspicious of reassurances given by the council that alternative housing would be offered on a 'like-for-like' basis (*Fulham and*

Hammersmith Chronicle 19 February 2010). The recently formed West Kensington and Gibbs Green Residents' Committee has convened a series of public meetings and the proposal has become an issue in the national and local election campaigns. At the time of the interviews covered in this report (May 2009), the proposals for the area were still vague and only known to a relatively small proportion of the residents.

4. Perceptions of Similarities and Differences

This chapter section examines how differences and similarities within the population are denoted in the four case studies, whether differences are seen as problematic, and evidence of neighbourhood change over time.

4.1 Wensley Fold

In Wensley Fold, the key notation of difference was ethnicity, particularly the distinction between 'White' and Asian'. Many respondents made 'them and us' statements, and their description of other people often mentioned ethnicity as the key attribute. Abi's comments below highlight the way in which neighbours were often referred to. The problems encountered by this respondent were similar to those that were experienced in other three case studies, but the specific reference to ethnicity as the key descriptor was unique amongst the four localities:

... it's the littering, rubbish thing that's getting a bit annoying because there's a couple of families... nowt to do with religion but they're Hindus and most of them here are Muslim and yet they... he comes out and does this thing and I think he probably feels a bit out of the area. There's an English couple here, they're still here, I was quite amazed. [...] The two houses on the end of the street, the one on the side there and then two here and they're a family and a half, all the cousins come over from Pakistan and god knows how many there is but they're right rough and the other family have been falling out with them across the road and saying they're really messing up the area and it's going to bring the property values down if you carry on like that, because they leave the bins out at the end. (Abi, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)

There were mixed messages about level of connection and association between Whites and Asians in Wensley Fold. For some residents, there remained a clear divide between the two communities. However, there were also accounts of improving relations and associations between the groups. This view was more prevalent among Asian respondents in our sample.

Some residents, like Kimberley, believed that there was very little interaction between White and Asian residents in the neighbourhood:

I think that's one thing we're noticing about the area, most things go one way, you do it to help others out but actually, not that you're looking to get anything but there's not much coming back the other way. [...] The Asian community keep themselves so separate it's hard to know how they interact between each other. I believe from what I've heard they help each other a lot more than the White people do. Say for instance with loans and stuff I believe that they can get loans of each other without any interest. (Kimberley, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)

Another white respondent, Tracey, also highlighted the divide between the communities:

*... you can see now there's the divide between people. When you first moved in everyone's really friendly but now people talk to you. If they don't want to talk to you they've got their neighbours who they're friends with who they'll talk to all the time and it used to be in a way, round here when they have parties and things, used to bring a bit of food round and stuff and now it's like I'm just stuck here on me own. Nobody seems to bother anymore. It's mostly Asian people round here, there's only me and probably two other people across the road who are White families, and I don't feel segregated because it doesn't bother me but you can tell we're not from an Asian community really like when we're playing with kids and stuff they don't like their kids playing with your kids sometimes.
(Tracey, aged 25-29, Wensley Fold)*

Tracey viewed the lack of integration between whites and Asians in Wensley Fold in terms of the unwillingness on the part of the Asian community:

Here, we don't see a lot of upset here, we have a few families that have moved in that cause a bit of chaos by not keeping the kids under control basically and they're running riot, but I think the biggest thing is the White and the Asians and the Asian people won't mix with the White people.

[Interviewer] So you don't think there's much interaction going on in any form?

*They won't, from what I'm seeing they won't do it. This is just coming in with a fresh pair of eyes from Kent where you haven't got any of this going on and seeing what's going on, they won't mix.
(Tracey, aged 25-29, Wensley Fold)*

There was evidence of some conflict between the White and Asian communities in the locality and generally White residents highlighted differences between the communities as problematic:

*One of the things is the racial abuse, not abuse from Whites towards Muslim people, Asians, but the abuse that Asians actually give out to White people, and I've seen that happening in the area, they are actually quite abusive to White people and they, if it was the other way round there would be such a hoo ha about it and such a stink about it and yet they can be racist towards White people and actually get away with it.
(Kimberley, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)*

For several respondents, the Asian community was perceived as separate and difficult to get to know well. While there were often connections between neighbours and positive encounters on this basis, more integrated friendships were harder to achieve. This was the case for Maureen, a long-standing resident who felt she was more isolated in her community. She perceived that many of the Asian women nearby often spent time together at each other's houses and would assist each other with aspects like shopping and child care - a social network that she felt excluded from, but very similar to what she recalled from her past:

I mean when I first moved in here we had such a lovely community, everybody helped one another. I'm completely isolated now because, don't get me wrong I won't quarrel with the Asians, I can't say I'm racist, I am and I'm not, I think there are far too many of them and they're putting other people at risk because they're taking a lot of the jobs that our people should do. And I think it's completely wrong when they turn round and say 'we won't do those jobs' because the majority of the British people will do the jobs...

[Interviewer]: If you could maybe change something in this area that would really improve your quality of life, something you'd like to see change?

*I don't think they could. More White neighbours to be honest. More people that you could go to the door. I used to be able to go to the door and talk to everybody, just speak to people. Well now you can't do that, you go out and come in, you can't change it now, what can you do?
(Maureen, aged 65+, Wensley Fold)*

While some respondents in Wensley Fold perceived a 'divided community' along ethnicity lines, there was also evidence from other accounts of greater levels of connection and association between White and Asian residents. The evidence points to three key processes that have brought this about: a) the increasing length of time spent living together, which fostered greater tolerance; b) the arrival of new European migrants to the locality which cemented the Asian community's position as stable and settled; and c) the ethnically mixed occupation of a new housing development which was perceived to have reduced segregation. This was seen to have reduced tensions between the two communities:

*It's a lot more quieter than it used to be, there's not much trouble on the streets now, its quietened down and you've got a lot more community police officers and they are very effective.
(Faizal Hussain, aged 16-24, Wensley Fold)*

In some cases, closer association was linked to the increasing length of time spent living together:

*... there's a lot more cohesion amongst people, before when the Asians moved in it was hard to integrate but now people are just starting to accept that. I'm not saying we're not accepted because we are, my neighbours and stuff they're lovely and I couldn't ask for better neighbours and people on my street have lived there years. You ask them and they won't have one single complaint because we always look out for each other and anything needs doing, taking bins out and stuff like that, they do it. [...] people have started to accept society, you see somebody and you can't make a judgement just like that. You've got to actually judge them by their actions, not on their appearance and I think that's pivotal, and I think that's what it is, they say never judge a book by its cover, you can't say the book's bad because it looks bad or whatever. When you've actually read it then it's a totally different thing, you may have been right, it may have been a bad book but until you've actually read it you can't make a judgement, I think that's what it is, people have accepted that we live in one society and it's a multi cultural society whereby, I think integration has increased. There's a lot of people behind the scenes who have done a lot to make it happen, it's not as simple as that, I'm not saying there's a hundred per cent cohesion 'cause you're always going to get elements of small pockets of people who don't want it happen but I think the majority view in Blackburn is that it's improved a lot and it's happening.
(Faizal Hussain, aged 16-24, Wensley Fold)*

I would say they have improved, because as time goes on, people, I wouldn't say, they haven't forgotten but they've realised, you know like the next generation, I would say that the Muslims, the next generation are not as Islamic if you know what I mean, they're very open, they're very westernised. A lot of people, my own son, he's not very Islamic but he views it as important and respects it but he's, I would say even being an Asian he's very westernised. His mother tongue is all English and I personally like it because I've been brought

*up here, even though I do wear a head scarf but I like my dress ... it's not like a woman can't do this and a woman's not supposed to do this in Islam, you've got that bit of freedom being in a western country and you can come and go as you please. There's not many restrictions and the same with this next generation going, even in the east it's becoming quite modern now and people's views are changing, thoughts are changing [...] I think religion does cause a lot of problems but if you keep religion out of it and generally people want to really unite, really want to be on good terms with each other. No-one wants to have these petty little arguments over things that someone else has done, if they're on TV and they judge you for it thinking 'they're Asian, you're all the same'. They know that we're not all the same.
(Riffat Parveen, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)*

Saima had been in Wensley Fold for three years, and it had taken time to become familiar with her neighbours. Associations with other neighbours who had children of similar ages and attended the same school was an important factor:

*... we didn't first know many of them because they were from different places, it's changed, it changes more because the kids tend to play together, they get out together. [...] the first year it was like in your own way, your own time, not talking to people much but slowly you tend to get to know other people by children, that child goes to the same school as my children and stuff like that and you just get to talk to them and say 'ok I'll help out, take your child to school, pick them up' things like that yeah.
(Saima Mirza, aged 16-24, Wensley Fold)*

While Martha recognised dividing lines between the communities, she did not view it to be problematic. Rather, there were positive aspects for her of 'being White [and] living in a mainly Muslim area':

*I like living here because I have my privacy, nobody impinges on my privacy but I know that my neighbours are neighbourly. I think there is, I think if I was Muslim it would be much more of a community spirit. So being White living in a mainly Muslim area, I don't tend to do that outsider thing because I don't. I think it's a bit of a victim mentality to feel like an outsider but I choose to live here because my privacy is respected and my right to live the way I want to live my life is respected. But I'm not completely part of the community but in lots of ways I quite like that and I've always lived my life slightly on the edge anyway having been a very ardent feminist when I was younger and I've always found that place which is slightly on the fringe anyway. And I like this community because it's a community that looks after each other. There's a lot of respect between families and between people for children's right to play, for people's right to be how they want to be and that's what I like about it but it's not in my face either. A lot of White people that I mix with when I go and play pool and stuff like that think that I'm completely bonkers to enjoy living here and they would advise me to live up Higher Croft or somewhere that I would find quite undesirable 'cause I would find it much more difficult to live in a White working class area where there's a lot of racist attitudes and sexist attitudes. And I've hardly ever witnessed any violence between partners or aggression towards children but I'm pretty sure I would if I was living in a White working class area and I'm the kind of gobby woman that would try and step in. So I'm better off having my privacy respected and I respect other people's privacy.
(Martha, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)*

Quite often, residents who had commented on the lack of interaction between the White and Asian populations, then gave specific accounts of positive connections.

Well there's an Asian lady up there, she's been here quite a long while. I spoke to her the other day and she said 'have you noticed I'm pregnant?' I said 'well yeah I had but I didn't like to say anything' because I know they've been trying for a baby for so long and she used to get quite upset about it and she said 'yeah after twelve years' and I said 'well I'm right chuffed for you'. She said 'yeah I've been meaning to tell you but I hadn't seen you' she lives higher up and actually she's a lovely lady and we have a family across there, they're White but I just say hello to them because they're always fighting and I wouldn't like to live next door to them.

(Maureen, aged 65+, Wensley Fold)

More recently, Wensley Fold has experienced in-migration from EU Accession States. Some associated this with the growth of the private rented sector in Wensley Fold, and often characterised the newcomers as 'passing through' and making very little investment locally. Newcomers were therefore viewed differently by longer-standing residents such as Nusrat Ali and seen as problematic:

You want good neighbours that's all, I've got an English neighbour next door, fine, get on with her really well. I hardly know that one down there because they're always changing. Every six months someone lets that property out.

(Nusrat Ali, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)

The relatively recent arrival of Eastern European workers in the locality was believed to have had a positive effect for the Asian Community. The community itself no longer regarded themselves as the 'newcomers', and many considered that the White community's perception had changed as a result. Martha, for example, recognised the positive effects that new arrivals made to the Asian community's perception of belonging:

I think everybody lives alongside each other really well, much better than in the past. There was a period of time, round about the time when I was last interviewed that it was starting to happen, there was a big influx of Eastern Europeans coming to work so you'd get a lot of houses that are rented out with three or four men living in them and working, going out 6 o'clock in the morning coming home 6 o'clock at night, working and sending money home and then all of a sudden a lot of them disappeared again, went back home, some were settled. What happened in that period of time is that, I think the Asian community here, the Muslim community here, realised that they are established, they're not the visitors or that kind of 'new guys in town'. Suddenly they were an established community and the Poles and Lithuanians, Romanians and Portuguese were the 'new boys or girls in town' so I think it helped the Asian community here to actually feel more identified with Blackburn and just settled. Somehow something has changed and there's less of a barrier between, this is how I sense it anyway, and I know from the other people, there's a White guy that lives across the road and another White guy that lives in the top and then there's some Lithuanians and Latvians that live up at the top and the three of us are very involved. Some of the Asians get their bikes fixed by Gary across the road and they will do anything for anybody and does do quite a lot of community work round here and supported a lot of people and so I think we're a lot closer... The problem would be the language barrier with the Eastern Europeans, what's really changed is the sounds on the street, the sound was always Bengali or Jukati, now it's goodness knows what different languages, the Eastern European different languages. So in that sense we live alongside a lot more variety of people and yet the two communities that were here to start with are happier living alongside each other.

(Martha, aged 35-44, Wensley Fold)

4.2 West Kensington

West Kensington is a more ethnically diverse area than Wensley Fold, and was described by one resident as a series of 'micro communities'. The evidence suggests that, while there were accounts of conflict based on racial/ethnic differences, ethnicity alone was rarely used as a notation of difference. Ethnic diversity was embedded in the community, though the ethnic mix was perceived to have changed over time:

... it's more mixed now than it was when I was growing up but it always was relatively mixed. Certainly I think there's a good mix of different ethnicities. There weren't so many Asian people in this area when I was growing up but there were some but not many. I feel like there are a bit more now, certainly more Arab and African, new Arab and African immigrants in this area than there were before and eastern Europe and so on but there was always a mix. (Waseem Akhram, aged 30-34, West Kensington)

Respondents such as Waseem also perceived West Kensington as an area of tenure and income mix as well as ethnic mix:

... this estate, Gibbs Green estate is 50 per cent leaseholder owned so it's a mix of 50 per cent private, 50 per cent tenant which works pretty well, in fact most of Hammersmith and Fulham is a real mix of really quite affluent people who live just off the tube station and people who are council tenants and so on. (Waseem Akhram, aged 30-34, West Kensington)

However, a key marker of difference, and potential conflict, was age differences. There was some tension between older residents and residents with younger children, and between older and younger people. Changes to the demographic profile of some parts of the estate had occurred. Areas where previously only older people lived were now more mixed, and this had led to conflict (usually relating to noise), and occasional reports of antisocial behaviour.

Young men and boys 'hanging around' were seen as a distinctive and problematic group, while for others such as Zaneb Amim and Leon, the perceived increase in the number of children in the area was a source of frustration:

I see a lot more children playing around when I come back from work which they weren't before, maybe they were babies. [...] Just here, riding bicycles and all the children tend to be a bit rough. ... At one point I think somebody throw something at me, I just looked at them and I just walked on and I said that was really out of order. But they are kids, if they're not brought properly at home, if they're not taught that you can't do that then of course they don't know any better. Or maybe that learning is from home, because learn at home, whatever they do outside they've learnt it at home. (Zaneb Amim, aged 45-64, West Kensington)

The kids round here got older. [...] In terms of West Ken is, you know, if you think about people that everyone knows and the community and the youth of the community and what they're involved in, I think that has changed. [...] There's still a good community energy definitely, that's something that always remains constant, but I just think maybe more kids just do badness. Before you might get a couple of guys who rob or steal or sold drugs but now that's more the norm, I think that. (Leon, aged 25-29, West Kensington)

Several respondents felt increasingly isolated from others in the neighbourhood. Generally, they saw themselves as having little in common with their neighbours, and had social networks that took place outside of the community. Some residents such as Sandra also perceived West Kensington as a place where the community had become more fragmented, disparate and disconnected over time.

Well the neighbours that immediately live in my block don't talk English so we don't talk, they do what they're doing. I don't do it anymore but I used to say 'hi' but they didn't used to respond so I don't speak to them. That's just how it is, I don't know why they're like that at all, that's just how they are. And then the ones around here I wouldn't say I've got bad relationships but I'm just not friendly with these people. [...] Yeah no real interaction at all, but the only interaction is people who know people so people who've been brought up here, they know each other but the people that move in you're kind of on the outside of the other people. [There are] definite cliques where people have been living together for such a long time. There are groups that are always together and looking out for one another.

(Sandra, aged 25-29, West Kensington)

For those residents who had established social networks outside of the neighbourhood, the lack of 'real interaction' with others had less of an impact. However, for those residents whose lives rarely extended beyond the home and neighbourhood, the lack of a 'sense of community' in West Kensington exacerbated their isolation. The balance of responses suggested as a neighbourhood in West Kensington was less bounded and self-contained than the other areas (Robinson, 2010). Many respondents had stressed that one of its more important qualities was the good transport links and ease of access to other parts of London, for work or leisure. There had been little evidence of a closely-knit community from the first round of interviews although that had started to change a little in the wave 2 interviews, as the proposed redevelopment had raised a common consciousness of the place more as a discrete neighbourhood within the wider Earls Court area. Furthermore, some residents believed that parts of the locality had more community spirit than others. This may be partly about the layout of the blocks. Franklin Square, for example was thought to have a strong community.

... round here it's always a community feel, if something's going on in my house neighbours will come out and see if we're all right for example, so I love the fact that it's got a community spirit.

(Cordell, aged 30-34, West Kensington)

Other respondents highlighted the problems they had encountered from 'newcomers' to West Kensington. A clear difference was made between long-standing residents like Anthony, and 'newcomers', who were generally held responsible for the decline of civility in the area:

I'm not happy living here any more. [...] Noise basically and lack of privacy. Inconsiderate and dirty neighbours who'll just leave rubbish lying around and I don't know if you saw the bin on the floor when you came in, that kind of thing, it never used to be like that.

(Anthony, aged 30-34, West Kensington)

Public meetings in the locality to discuss recent speculation about demolition and redevelopment brought people together and highlighted the diversity of people that live in the area, particularly in socio-economic terms. Following one meeting, Sarah had been surprised by the diversity of people living in West Kensington and had more interaction with others:

... it's been a bit of an eye opener going to these meetings because you do meet people who say 'I work in the airport' or 'I work in Slough' and they drive a car or whatever road or train links they've got. [...] there are a few of the people I see around now who I wouldn't necessarily have acknowledged in the street. They don't necessarily know me and I don't know them but now we've seen each other in the meetings we do stop and chat. So in a way yeah, everybody consolidates in times of woe don't they.
(Sarah, aged 45-64, West Kensington)

There was an incipient solidarity that could be actualised by specific events rather than as an ongoing feature of life in the area.

Another 'time of woe' that had had a similar, if more transient, effect was a fire in one of the flats which led to an evacuation of the whole block, so that everyone was suddenly faced with meeting their neighbours, as Saburi explained:

I saw families and then I saw people that I assumed to be in a similar situation to mine like you would have a young man and a young woman and another young man and young woman so it's probably a shared house, maybe two couples living together rather than a family then I would see families and then I would see a mother and a daughter and their dog. Obviously I'm just making assumptions, single parents maybe or young professionals... I suppose there's a bit of a stigma of people living in council estates and certain ideas about people who live in council estates. So it's kind of nice to see that it's not a certain type of people here, like I don't know, single mothers with ten kids or something, I also saw middle aged professional couple coming back from work with their briefcases, obviously again assuming about what they do in life and they're on this estate.
(Saburi, aged 16-24, West Kensington)

4.3 Oxgangs

In Oxgangs, it was very common for residents to view themselves as being 'no different to others'. However there were several signifiers of difference in terms of long-standing residents' views of newcomers, and older people's views of younger people.

Oxgangs has experienced tenure diversification via the relatively high take-up of Right-to-Buy (resulting in owner-occupation and private renting) and demolition of the area's high-rise blocks (the 'high-flats') and new housing development with a mix of tenures. Despite this recent process, tenure itself was rarely cited as a difference between oneself and others. Because of the physical similarities of properties, the different areas of tenure did not stand out.

Several residents cited differences according to income, or at least between those who were working and those who were not. For residents who were unemployed, this difference was rarely seen as problematic. Shirley, for example, discussed how her circumstances compared to those of his neighbours:

My immediate neighbours I would say we're probably all about in the same boat, we're all very much about the same. We all shop in the same shops and we're pretty much, they must be much the same.
(Shirley, aged 45-64, Oxgangs)

While she recognised that others had more money, or owned their own homes, this was not seen as an important division, though she did mention what she perceived

as the potential stigma of living in council housing. Comparing herself to people who had jobs, she said:

No I suppose we think we're in a better position at the moment. We don't have jobs to lose. [I've] got a sister and brother in law who live up the road... they were going to be putting a new kitchen in. They're both still working ... they've got to be more careful about what they take on. There's all these houses everywhere at the moment up for sale, now a lot of them are going to let. I've lived in a council house all my life., Some people would probably think 'that's awful, fancy just making do with a council house' but to me it's always been home so I've never been ashamed of that fact.
(Shirley, aged 45-64, Oxgangs)

For some residents like Charlotte who were working, the difference between working or not carried more weight, and several residents referred to younger people as being work-shy – sometimes in comparison with new economic in-migrants who, it was felt, competed better for any work that was available.

... the young ones don't want to work ... because they get job seekers allowance or something and they manage on that and that kind of thing. No-one's ever said that to me directly, that's just word of mouth. But I don't think the youth of today do really want to work. And when you have Eastern Europeans who come into the country and are more than willing to work, but these kids who don't work, will not take (it), and that infuriates me because they want everything handed on a platter, a lot of them. You see them walking about, you see them getting up in the morning and go to job seekers and you occasionally see them doing community service, they just will not work, the majority, I think sometimes. The children coming up and the youth of today have nothing in their minds but trouble, it's mindless trouble, mindless vandalism. I don't think a lot of it's vicious. When they get a bit older I think they'll look back and think.
(Charlotte, aged 45-64, Oxgangs)

In Oxgangs there was a clear perception of difference between long-standing residents and newcomers, and the arrival to what were seen as 'transient' households was viewed negatively. When asked about changes in the neighbourhood between the first and second wave of interviews, Roy commented:

... it's more or less the same people that's here apart from the transient. That's a transient house up the top flat there as well but that's been empty for about three months. People and that come in and stay for two or three months and all that and disappear again and now it's empty again.
(Roy, aged 45-64, Oxgangs)

Newcomers in Oxgangs were viewed negatively in some cases where there was a perception of conflict over resources (discussed in the next chapter) or whether they were judged to be 'taking over', as Betty put it:

... some folk come into the area and think they can take over, so there's been a bit of a clash with the local kids and then new kids coming in, so there'd be a bit more bother so I think it'll take a while before the new ones to get accepted. I'm not a local person, I came into the area 20 odd years ago so it takes a long time to become accepted and new folk are coming in and they're trying to take over and it's not working, they do clash a little bit.
(Betty, aged 35-44, Oxgangs)

There was evidence of problems encountered between younger and older people in Oxfangs. This was particularly the case where the demographic profile of households on certain 'stairs' shifted over time, from predominantly older residents to a mix of older occupants, younger people and families with young children.

Older people complained about problems caused by 'more kids' on the estate, mainly relating to noise, and younger people such as Tina also noted this:

Yeah, we get looks, people on the street pass you. ... The police'll come and they'll speak to us and if something's happened and we're just in the wrong place at the wrong time. We'll get our details and stuff like that so it is pretty bad but now that I've drifted away from my friends I don't really stand about anywhere. I always constantly go somewhere, I never stay in one place and things like that.

(Tina, aged 16-24, Oxfangs)

4.4 Hillside

In Knowsley, the dominant view in the first wave of interviews about the existing make-up of the estate was that it was 'just ordinary', with few differences between the North Huyton estate and other areas. The two main areas of difference noted in the second wave of interviews were: a) between long-standing and more recent residents who have arrived in the past ten years either because Hillside was considered to have become a 'dumping ground' or because the increasing proportion of private rented properties on the estate had attracted transient households, including drug dealers; and b) future tensions between the 'surviving' community in Hillside (that had not left or been allocated property elsewhere during the long process of neighbourhood remodelling) and households due to move into the new low cost home ownership properties, once completed. Both cases illustrate how internal conflicts can be exacerbated during a process of neighbourhood change.

The loss of the long-standing 'community' in recent years been hard difficult for people like Irene who had remained in Hillside:

Well we've lost a lot of our old community now from that time so it's gone from that to, and we've got a lot of people who are the younger ones that are on benefits and that and some of them have never worked and plus the fact it's gone worse because of the drug culture, because what happens, you know when the houses were going down about you, ... the area was just massively run down. ...

Yeah so what happened was the people who owned their houses just couldn't wait to get out and a lot of the drug dealers bought them for £12,000 - living in themselves or they rent them out and they don't care who they put in them. So it's made it ten times worse. So over the life of NDC I would say there's been an increase in the drugs problem and drug dealing and now it's like gun crime and that that we never had before... but I think because the communities have been broken up so they like thought, ... the unlawful ones shall we say, have had a breeding ground because people who knew everybody in their community don't have, you don't know who the people are that are moving into your area so they've actually had the time of their life. Been a breeding ground for them.
(Irene, aged 65+, Hillside)

Irene spoke about how the dispersal of the existing community was associated with the perceived rise in criminality and disruptive behaviour.

Our road, it was a very very close knit community this road. We used to do stuff at weekends involving the kids, we always used to have a party before the kids went back to school in the September, outings and things like that that we'd all collect for all year round. But now things like that don't happen because there's people who've moved into the road that, as I say you've got one who's in [a nearby] property, they've been here twelve months and they've been raided about five, six times. This road, if you speak to Knowsley Council or anyone they will tell you, [this road] was their jewel in the crown. They've always called it that because they didn't have to worry about it because all the residents looked after it. It was kept nice and clean, they never had any problems from noisy neighbours or anything like that or trouble in the road, it was always kept nice. Now people are very very wary... There's two known house burglars, they've been in prison, they've come out, but they've been going for that house so it's made people on the road nervous, they're nervous of going out because they're worried about their houses and that has never ever happened here. (Irene, aged 65+, Hillside)

4.5 Summary

The manner in which similarities and differences between people within neighbourhoods were perceived varied between the four case studies (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Main denotations of difference in the four case studies

Case Study	Differences
Wensley Fold	Ethnicity Newcomers
West Kensington	Newcomers 'micro communities' Age Tenure Socio-economic status
Oxgangs	Newcomers Age Socio-economic status
Hillside	Newcomers Socio-economic

Difference on the basis of ethnicity was the most prevalent narrative in Wensley Fold, where respondents used clear and unambiguous labels for themselves and others: 'the White community' and 'the Asian community'. Recently arrived European economic migrants were similarly labelled 'foreigners', not necessarily in derogatory terms, rather as a label that distinguished them from the two other groups. Having these clearly defined 'labels' in the neighbourhood promoted a 'them and us' narrative, even though residents provided some clear evidence of similarities with their neighbours that bridged ethnic differences - age, financial position, household structure, shared resources (particularly schools, but also new housing development) - and examples of closer association. It is difficult to generalise on whether this difference was invested with conflict.

While the evidence suggests that, generally, South Asian respondents had a more positive view of social mix than white respondents, there had been recent steps towards increased integration. Three key processes brought this about: a) the increasing length of time spent living together, which fostered greater tolerance; b) the arrival of new European migrants to the locality which cemented the Asian community's position as relatively stable and settled; and c) the ethnically mixed occupation of a new housing development which was perceived to have reduced segregation. By contrast, in West Kensington - the most ethnically diverse of the four case studies - ethnicity was rarely regarded as a detonation of difference even though there were racist incidents referred to in some people's accounts of their social interactions. Ethnicity was not mentioned in Hillside and Oxfords.

Respondents in all four case studies made a distinction between themselves as 'long-standing residents' and 'newcomers' who arrived in neighbourhoods via various housing routes (see Chapter 5). In Wensley Fold, Eastern European migrant workers had arrived in greater numbers over the past ten years. There was a perception that they stayed for relatively short periods of time and rarely were involved in neighbourhood activities or established social relationships with longer-standing residents. In Oxfords, some newcomers were perceived to be young and vulnerable, brought with them social problems and were often housed in 'stairs' with older residents, creating some conflict. Several long-standing residents were resentful that newcomers, on occasion, 'over-stepped the mark' in the local community by trying to change the existing nature of Oxfords rather than conform to it.

In West Kensington, a lack of 'community' was apparent, although 'micro-communities' did exist in small areas of the estate. Many believed that high turnover of residents further fragmented these already fragile associations. For residents in Hillside, newcomers were perceived as a threat to the long-standing community. Crime and ASB were thought to have increased as the estate became used as a 'dumping ground'; and new housing proposals that included open market dwellings were viewed as an attempt to disperse the existing community further.

5. Housing and Neighbourhood Change

As shown in Chapter 3, each of the neighbourhoods had been subject to regeneration in the past ten years – most fundamentally in Hillside, to a lesser extent in Oxgangs and Wensley Fold, and with a small planned redevelopment in West Kensington (at least prior to the major proposals for Earls Court being mooted). In this chapter we examine some of the responses to these measures, which were designed in varying degrees to change the social and economic profile of the communities.

5.1. Wensley Fold

The recent new housing development in Wensley Fold, of mixed tenure, three, four and five bedroom properties has been an important factor in local social change. It was associated with an uplift of the physical condition of the locality, and a better perception of the neighbourhood within Blackburn.

Martha attributed an improved perception of the neighbourhood to the new housing development:

... it's an area that I want to live in because of the upgrade. The upgrade has altered the feel of the area. It was always quite a gloomy area. If you drove down this road, there were, you'd get quite a gloomy feel and also that people were here because it was the end of the line. We had problems with prostitution, drugs, and I'm not saying there isn't issues with prostitution and drugs now, there was issues with violence against a telephone box quite often, you don't tend to get that now very often, against shops, you don't tend to get that, the shop keepers seem happier and more established. There's not shops opening and closing as much as there were, so I think there's a general feel of there being a lift in the area, people have a brighter attitude to the area, I certainly do.

(Martha, aged 35-44,)

The opening up of the tight grid pattern through the redevelopment was also considered to have helped with reducing the segregation of different tenures over time, as Sajid Khan noted.

Like the street I live on, it's one street but it has got a barrier. So one side is privately owned and other side is housing association. Before it used to be totally fenced off, which I don't agree with, and the people do mix. So I think that's a better way of structuring a street where we don't segregate the people in housing association with privately owned. I think it makes more tension in the neighbourhood so I think that is a better way. I don't know who did [the new housing development], the council, but I can praise them for that effort the way they designed my street.

(Sajid Khan, aged 30-34)

Faizal also commented on divides between the two major ethnic communities breaking down:

On my street it's a mixed street, there's half Asian and half English and there's other ethnicities as well and I think everyone gets on fine, there's no trouble, nothing. ... Yeah because before there was segregation, you'd get one area where there was all Asians and then you'd get English and you've got other ethnicities and stuff like that but now you see English people moving to Asian areas, Asians moving into English areas and it shows that times are moving forward and the people just learn to live with it, That's what it comes down to, you have to live with it because at the end of the day they're all one and as a nation it's how we cope with this problem, 'cos it is a problem, there are issues, there are still elements of people who won't really accept it, even though they have to, they won't accept it, but there's always hope for the future.
(Faizal Hussain, aged 16-24)

Safah had recently moved in to the new development and believed that there was a greater sense of community than she had previously encountered living in another part of Wensley Fold:

No that's definitely unique in that [new housing area] 'cause Wensley Fold you couldn't get out the door before somebody saying something racist to you ... where we used to live that was it. So definitely, this community is a lot better. You can get out and you won't be worried that you're going to be abused. ... We used to live in part of an area where houses were demolished and blocked out and everything, and over there they'd just take advantage, as soon as they see you coming out they just go in and take whatever they want. And here it's like everybody's looking out for each other, and you go out and you don't even worry if you locked the doors or not, so it's like you're in the same sort of community.
(Safah Mirza, aged 16-24)

The new housing development in Wensley Fold was perceived to have a greater social mix than elsewhere in the locality. It brought about greater interaction between White and Asian residents, and the arrival of 'new people' was viewed positively:

... it's people moving in this neighbourhood because of the new houses that have been built a couple of streets behind. So new residents are coming, people from other towns are now coming in and these houses have just recently been opened to public and been bought so we've got new neighbours. ... I walk past it and stuff like that but they seem nice houses and stuff, people might be all right as well.
(Sabah Khan, aged 35-44)

Sabah Khan also commented positively on the opportunities provided to the local community to influence the planning of the new development:

I think mostly people that are living in that area I think are people that live around in Blackburn somewhere, probably lived here before and wanted to come back so they've took the opportunity, 'cause the houses were built, some were built as council houses and some were built for (the) public so people could buy. So then they opened this project. Initially they had a meeting and a conference and told people about it, so if they wanted to buy a house there and wanted something according to their choice and stuff they could have it built according to how they wanted it.
(Sabah Khan, aged 35-44)

This perception of providing opportunities for choice was not however held by everyone, as Tracey's comments showed. She felt she had to fight hard to get a new property.

I fought so hard to get this house because the intention I believe was not to give these houses to White people and families, they wanted an Asian community round here I think, so we were very very lucky to get this but I fought me way to get this, I wasn't backing down so I got this and here we are. (Tracey, aged 25-29)

As in Oxfangs and Hillside, the growth of the private rented sector in Wensley Fold was negatively associated with the changing profile of the local community. Many residents' perceived that the private rented sector had grown in the past five to ten years. This growth was closely associated with the arrival of Eastern European workers over the past decade, and to 'transient' households.

These are all owned and these down here are all rented, but they send their kids down here to play so they don't scratch their cars and mess up their gardens and that's a bit awkward. And they've built all these lovely new houses and people are just letting them rot and there's rubbish everywhere. I'm always ringing council for the amount of rubbish that's left everywhere, It's just a shame that they're building places like this for people to live and they're just wrecking them and nobody's doing anything about it. They should be keeping on top of things. (Tracey, aged 25-29)

However, other residents such as Martha felt that regeneration in Wensley Fold had improved property and management standards:

... on the whole when I think back to what it was like with quite ramshackle housing, poorly maintained, a lot of bad tenants and a lot of bad people who owned the properties who were absent landlords a lot of them. The state of the housing beforehand and after, there is no comparison. I would imagine people still do have issues around here about things that aren't right but on reflection for me it's an upward step, a forward step. It's definitely in the right direction. (Martha, aged 35-44)

The changing profile of neighbourhood was linked to the preservation and embryonic revitalisation of the public realm in the neighbourhood, especially in terms of the shops:

Shopkeepers seem happier and more established. There's not shops opening and closing as much as there were ... People seem to shop and live much easier than they did before, there's a lot more choice. (Martha, aged 35-44)

I suppose it's for the better because we've got some different shops now. (Artur Novotny, aged 45-64)

5.2. West Kensington

The proposals for wholesale clearance of the West Kensington area part of the expansion and redevelopment of the Earl's Court complex were mentioned in Chapter 3 and prompted a range of responses from residents in the second wave of interviews. Some were opposed to demolition and relocation; some were surprised by the proposals, not least given recent investment in the estate by the NDC; some

were relatively neutral, but reticent about moving to a different area; and some said they would be happy to see the estate demolished and be relocated elsewhere.

Waseem made the case against the proposals:

*Yeah people like their homes and I think politicians might look at them and see grotty estates but I think people who live in their homes like them and appreciate them and also would be very worried about what they're going to be left with. These are really nice flats, lots of natural light, every room has a window. I just imagine the kind of things that we'd be [moved to]. They'll say it's better but I just imagine bathrooms with no windows and thinner walls and modern buildings just don't seem to - to put them up a bit quickly.
(Waseem Akhram, aged 30-34)*

There were several instances of anxiety about displacement and the powerlessness of local residents to do much to prevent the plans going through:

*They want professional type people. They don't want people who are living in housing benefit situations.
(Sarah, aged 45-64)*

*This is prime location and they're thinking, 'why do we want the estate people living in there?'
(Nigel, aged 30-34)*

*There's nothing I can do. I don't like it but I don't have the power. The people might say, but when the government has made up its mind that this is what they're going to do.
(Gary, aged 45-64)*

However, not all residents were opposed. In West Kensington, the neighbourhood was not the focal point of family and social networks to the same extent as the other study areas, and the level of neighbourhood attachment was weaker (Robinson, 2010) as Waseem pointed out:

*I guess, I think, this would be anywhere else, this wouldn't be specific to West Kensington, I think that you will always find there are people that just don't seem to place the same sense of value on their surroundings.
(Waseem Akhram, aged 30-34)*

Several residents said they had become disenchanted with the area over time, due to problems such as antisocial behaviour, crime and physical decay. Sarah, for example, was not concerned about leaving the area, but had some reservations about where she might be re-housed:

Well I'm feeling a lot less unhappy than I know other people are having been to these public meetings. The reason for that is I am only a tenant and so long as they house me in a similar property that's suitable for my children and they are promising it would still be this area then I haven't really lost out, I'll basically be getting like for like hopefully. I do know that when they rebuilt homes these days three bedrooms that the third one is not much more than a study, they don't have a garage and we do have these things here. I would miss my garden, I would miss having three good double sized bedrooms that we have here but so long as they promise to provide my family with something like it then I wouldn't really mind as much as other residents. I feel I'm part of the community here, I

know a few of my neighbours, we get along fine, my children are very happy here, but they have talked about rebuilding on the Seagrove Road car park. (Sarah, aged 45-64)

However, if the redevelopment forced Sandra to move further afield.

That would be dreadful for me because my children are growing up here, they're all in schools here and my job is here so I wouldn't really want to be giving myself more problems by having to travel further.

(Sandra, aged 25-29)

On the other hand, Sandra saw the proposed demolition as a potential opportunity to improve her housing prospects.

Yeah they might be knocking it down, that's a positive change. They said after the Olympic Games in 2012 they're considering knocking it down. When I heard that I was over the moon because that means I will move if they do that.

[Interviewer] Will you have a choice in where you move?

Well you always have a choice, it's actually if the council need you to move you're in a good position because you can sit here, they can't come and chuck you out so you can stay until you get what you want. I want a three bedroom house with a garden.

(Sandra, aged 25-29)

Overall, there was considerable anxiety about future housing prospects which overshadowed concerns about whether any sense of community would remain intact or not. The instrumental view that prevailed in many of the discussion about the advantages of living in West Kensington was also evident in responses about the prospect of redevelopment, as the comments of Nigel, who lived in a shared ownership property, indicate:

... yeah because we only own half of this house and the problem with that is if they ask us to move, if they do a compulsory buy we lose the right to half the house. So in theory we lose out. Michael, he's at college at the moment and without my dad and that supporting it god knows, he'd maybe be back inside or summat. The fact of the matter is it's all for the big cats and they'd happily make you think it's in everyone's best interests but it's not. They spend £5 million on a park complex, Norman Park, which is a load of pants. All right it's busy for the kids and that but it's not really. I think they're better off with youth centres and things like that.

(Nigel, aged 30-34)

As in the other case study areas, the growth of the private rented sector in the locality was associated with an increase in transient households:

It's obviously become far more cosmopolitan in the last fifteen years so you've got a reflection of the diversity of London living on the estate. What's also happened is lots of people have realised the value of buying the flats from the council and I would say a lot of them are now rented out privately. ... a lot of these, particularly in this block, there are very few council tenants left in this block, a lot of them are rented out. And of course they rent them out to people who don't care because they're only passing through and this is why it's gone down, this is the decline.

(Anthony, aged 30-34)

One respondent, Christina, suggested that the redevelopment would be a problem for long-standing residents, but exempted herself from this group, as she was looking for a way of getting out of the area after a threat was made to her daughter.

[Interviewer] Do you think it's a good idea to do what they're doing?

It is and it isn't, as I said there's a lot of people that live here and they like it, there's a lot of people that were born here and they're still here. My neighbour at number three she was born in that house so she's thirty nine, so therefore there's people that have been brought up around this area from kids, for them it would be bad.

[Interviewer] Are some people really not happy about it?

No, it doesn't really bother me because I've disconnected myself so much from the area, I've done that deliberately.

(Christina, aged 30-34)

5.3. Oxgangs

Oxgangs' three high rise flats were demolished in 2005/6 and have been replaced by a low rise, mixed tenure development on the edge of the area. Although it is a significant development, it is relatively small in comparison to the neighbourhood as a whole.

While the demolition of the 'high flats' (as they were known locally) was an upheaval for many residents, a number of factors made the redevelopment a more inclusive process, certainly compared to Hillside. Most respondents accepted that standards in the high flats had become unacceptable and irreversible. All were offered a place in the new housing developments; most had been decanted within Oxgangs (some have remained in their decanted home after becoming settled); and residents were involved in the process. Also, attempts were made to retain social networks by housing existing neighbours near each other. Renee, a former resident of the high flats, felt that her social network had not been adversely affected by decanting:

Yes you've still got [the community] because your neighbours are still in the vicinity, there's always somebody that will say 'ok if you've got a problem come and see us'. We've still got that. The only difference is we're dotted all over the place, but we can go to each other.

(Renee, aged 45-64, Oxgangs)

In contrast, Olive and Norma bemoaned the dispersal of the old high flats community, but at the same time Norma reflected on the social problems that had blighted them in their latter days, and Tina also provided a rather more mixed account of the virtues of living in this community:

It didn't matter if you were working or single or a drug addict or ... you were all in the same boat, we all had the same kind of housing, we all had the same problems, so I think that's what made it easier ... everybody's different and it's just not the same.

(Olive, aged 35-44)

I can walk down that street and hardly know a person and you just see them all disappearing and it's quite sad. Even when I go down to the shops people come in and I think 'I don't even know you' and I know we had the blocks of flats and everybody moved out. But this maybe sounds nasty but I really didn't want to know anybody that lived in the blocks of flats, at that stage, because they

were all like ... It was bad, it was really bad but I can see the people that's coming back now and I don't think it's really going to improve much, really not. (Norma, aged 45-64)

It depended, at times it was a really good place ... You could go to someone's door and ask for sugar or something like that, that's why it was called 'Village in the Sky' because they'd all look out for each other, but then at other times you had fights and stabbings and people jumping off balconies and furniture flung off the balconies and stuff like that, but we can look back on it now and laugh. (Tina, aged 16-24)

Oxgangs was perceived to be a popular housing area, with very few void properties. Housing in the locality, therefore, was a scarce resource. This, coupled with the introduction of a choice-based letting (CBL) scheme in Edinburgh has made housing allocations an important issued for many Oxgangs residents.

... the houses aren't here now for people that came, want to come in again. There's not a lot of houses empty in Oxgangs. They tell you when you put in for a house, 'don't even ask for Oxgangs because they're not there'. But there's been a few since. They've let these ones out but the minute they're empty they're full again. (Renee, aged 45-64)

There was a view that CBL extended choice of Oxgangs' housing to people with no previous connection to the area, and it was perceived that this was at the expense of local residents' attempts to get housing. One resident had moved to a flat in Oxgangs temporarily from the high flats. Rather than take up the option to move to the new housing development, she wished to stay in Oxgangs and had to 'bid' for a property under the scheme when she felt she should have been given preferential treatment as a local.

Changes to the social mix in some areas of Oxgangs had led to conflict between different groups and were attributed to changes to housing allocations policies. Several residents, such as Vera, had witnessed changes to the social mix, that placed younger people, and people with specific problems in 'stairs' that were previously only let to older people.

It has changed in certain degrees but I can't actually say why. I mean you used to have to get points when you wanted a council house and this area where I am here, it used to be just for elderly people or retired people. But now we're getting people that actually have got drugs - that one at the far end - and things like that which we don't, we feel there should'ne be put amongst elderly people like that. We can't stop it. ... they're actually putting young druggies and things like that, they're putting them in amongst us as well now. [It's changed in the] last couple of years. You used to get points if you wanted a council house, now it's something you've got to bid against it to get them now which I don't understand that. With me being in Oxgangs House at the time we wanted a three apartment to be honest. We had our name down for twelve years and they turned and said to us we still didn't have enough points to get a three apartment and we were living in a four apartment and at that time we said to them we still want to stay in Oxgangs and they said 'there's a huge waiting list in Oxgangs'. I said 'well I'm already in Oxgangs, you could give me one with two bedrooms in it you can have one with three bedrooms in it' but now it's all changed. (Vera, aged 65+)

There was a marked difference as to how residents viewed the older housing stock and the new housing development. Generally, complaints around housing

allocations to 'non-locals' were made about the older housing stock. Residents were more ambivalent about the take-up by non-locals in the new stock, which was seen as a mixed development that had been designed to re-house people from the high flats and attract some newcomers. However, there were exceptions. Wilma, a long-standing Oxgangs resident who wanted to move to the new developments, felt that local people's access was unfairly restricted.

Negative changes? I would say the new houses that are going up. [They're for] people that were in the [high] flats which is fair enough, but other people that were living in this area, myself included, for fifteen years, and I have a son who's nineteen and a daughter who's fifteen who are still living in the same house and we have no chance of getting [the new] houses which I think ... I'm not the only one that's living in that situation in this area.
(Wilma, aged 35-44)

5.4. Hillside

The planned redevelopment and tenure diversification for Hillside was not viewed positively by several of the residents interviewed. Irene, for example, felt that the new development was a physically separate part of the neighbourhood and not aimed at the interests of the existing community:

I even said this, I said 'what they do is they build these, they'll face out that way so they're more or less sectioned off from the other part of the estate and it's "you get on with it" at that end of the estate'....I think there'll be a split community to be honest for the simple reason that they'll get in their cars, they'll drive off. Unless, especially with it being so close to the motorway. I've said this all along, I said this at the very beginning, that they will get in their cars, get on the motorway and go. So what difference is it really making to this economy? They'll take their children to schools that's outside the area, they'll most probably work outside the area so they'll shop where they work. Because I know by my own daughters, they actually go to the supermarkets nearest where they work but also they go and do a big shop on their way home from work so they don't have to go in and come back out again because they work their time out, because of their child care and stuff like that.
(Irene, aged 65+)

Despite the concerns of several respondents about the impact of the proposed new housing development, there were positive accounts from residents like Conner who moved into a new house, especially as she remained close to former neighbours:

Brilliant, I love it. Everyone who's moved as well is from the street that I've lived in, so it's like the whole street moving to a load of new houses. But it's between people who were KHT, Knowsley and some people own their houses as well, that's a bit different. It's not like a whole estate the way it used to be it's all like council tenants, they're all like home owners and that. [My kids are] having a great time playing out on the street and that, made loads of new friends, there's loads of kids who've moved here, there's about fifteen little boys between the ages of five and ten so they've got plenty of friends here.
(Conner, aged 25-29)

The fact that the new development had been suspended as a result of the economic difficulties facing the developers, leaving empty spaces, was taken by some respondents as visually emblematic of the underlying sense of dispersal, displacement and decline, especially when coupled to the loss of public facilities on the estate over the preceding ten years.

The neighbourhood has not improved...all the shops have closed, including the post office. [There are] lots of undeveloped areas, lots of top soil everywhere and lots of problems with kids on the building sites. There are for sale signs everywhere but given the current state of the area and lack of facilities, they are not selling.
(Marie, aged 35-44)

It's [the redevelopment] just all stopped and there hasn't been any work going on in Hillside for the longest time, not that I remember anyway. It's like a big waste ground.
(Kyle, aged 16-24)

We're still living with the open areas that have been cleared of housing and I don't think that's very good for the morale on the estate ... You've got this vast expanse of land where there's nothing. It's just open land, you can't see it, your vision can't penetrate it.
(Barbara, aged 45-64)

The potential neighbourhood transformation that the 'mixed communities' plan aimed to bring to the North Huyton estate remains a rather murky prospect for others living in the neighbourhood as well.

5.5. Summary

In all four areas, recent expansion of private rented sector (PRS) housing was associated with the arrival of newcomers. They were often perceived to be transient (particularly West Kensington and Wensley Fold), and problematic (particularly Oxfords and Hillside). In Wensley Fold, the PRS accommodated many Eastern European migrant workers, many of whom stayed for relatively short periods of time. While this transient population was perceived as problematic (having little stake in the neighbourhood), it affirmed the South Asian communities position within the neighbourhood as a 'long-standing' community – no longer the newcomers. In Hillside, the PRS was perceived to be poorly managed and to have attracted problematic residents, such as drug dealers).

Newcomers also inhabited social sector housing. In Oxfords and Hillside, changes to lettings policies were perceived to have opened-up social housing to 'outsiders', increasing competition for housing resources (Oxfords particularly) and accommodating vulnerable households. The introduction of choice-based lettings in Edinburgh was perceived to have created (unfair) competition between long-standing residents and households from the rest of the City.

Table 5.1 shows that new developments in three of the case study areas (have had different impacts on neighbourhood social mix. The redevelopment of West Kensington is currently only at the proposal stage.

Table 5.1: The impact of new housing development in three case study areas

	Wensley Fold	Oxgangs	Hillside
Physical integration of new housing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sited within n-hood • Aligned with traditional street layout • Integration of different tenures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sited within n-hood • Markedly differing housing types • Integration of different tenures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sited adjacent to existing n-hood • Separation of different tenures
Influence on neighbourhood social mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived to be part of existing n-hood • Attracting residents from outside the n-hood • Closer associations between different ethnic groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived to be part of existing n-hood • Attracting residents from outside the n-hood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived to be separate from n-hood • Development postponed due to recession
Influence on the perception of neighbourhood reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral in long term Negative in short term

New housing developments were much less contested spaces for ‘newcomers’ to occupy. In Oxgangs, for example, respondents were ambivalent about the new housing development being occupied by households new to the area, regarding that as one of its functions. This was in contrast to access to the traditional housing stock, which was highly contested. Similarly, the new housing development in Wensley Fold, which was mixed tenure and attracted households with no previous attachment to the area, was perceived to have that function. However, the experience of Hillside runs contrary to this. Longer-standing residents were wary of new development plans which (they believed) were specifically geared to attracting ‘outsiders’ rather than supporting and benefiting the existing community: and outsiders who would have less investment in the locality (car owning households on the edge of the estate) than those existing households who had moved off during the redevelopment process.

6. Conclusion

The review of some of the previous studies into neighbourhood social mix in Chapter 2 suggested that perceptions and experiences of the changing social, economic and cultural profile of neighbourhoods and different degrees and measures of social mix might profitably be considered by looking at narratives of *neighbourhood change*. We are referring to a continuous and therefore imperceptible process of population turnover, at times jolted by sudden ruptures or step changes, rather than a neat before and after picture that is readily amenable to an evaluation of impact.

In a recent review of research on neighbourhood effects, Galster (2010) has distinguished between what he terms potential casual pathways by which neighbourhood location can affect personal outcomes. He lists fifteen such mechanisms grouped around four themes: social interactive mechanisms (peer effects, social network, completion, social cohesion), environmental mechanisms (impact of poor built environment, toxic exposure); geographical mechanisms (spatial disconnection from job opportunities, poor quality public services) and institutional mechanisms (stigmatisation, operation of local market actors, from fast food chains to drug dealing, extent of local public and private resources etc). Much of the evidence on effects, whether 'positive' 'negative' or 'neutral', is gleaned from quantitative research studies. It is instructive to consider the different impact of these domains in influencing the nature of social mix against the qualitative accounts of neighbourhood change considered in this paper.

Tunstall and Lupton (2009) have suggested that the two main mechanisms by which lower income residents might be expected to benefit from 'exposure' to a more socially mixed neighbourhood are through shared area resources and social interactions. This is confirmed by the foregoing accounts of change in the four research neighbourhoods for this paper. The extent to which the pattern of population change helped to maintain the shared spaces of the case study neighbourhoods emerged as a critical factor in the views of different social or ethnic groups in the locality.

Before offering some reflections on the research material, it should be emphasised that it is not possible to compress the responses into a standard position. There were, for example, often differences between the personal trajectories of respondents and those of the places they lived in. At other times inconsistent or contradictory views were proffered. In other words, there was no such thing as the 'community voice'. A good example is the extent to which respondents felt that greater integration of White and Asian groups has occurred in Wensley Fold, Blackburn. Residents offered differing and, on occasion, ambiguous attitudes - a 'tried and tested' rhetoric about 'them and us', for example, was followed by instances of friendships, associations and the shared use of neighbourhood resources between the groups.

However, relatively clear differences emerged between the four areas. Hillside, for example, was the area most invested with 'narratives of decline' (Watt, 2006) from existing residents, referring back to a previous community marked by solidarity, reciprocity, trust and stability. This sense of community had been eroding for some time prior to the introduction of the masterplan for the area, with a steady exodus of

households leaving over time, but still with strong family and social networks being retained (CRESR Research Team, 2009). The long period of gestation for the masterplan, the continued closure of estate facilities, the postponement of the new private housing development (and a community centre to be provided at the same time) ran alongside the ongoing break-up of the existing community. The arrival of the home owning newcomers was thus being grafted on to a long standing process of dispersal, disruption and loss.

The empty spaces in many parts of the estate reinforced this. The locating of the new development on the periphery of the estate as whole, facing towards the main exit routes and motorway junctions, symbolised for some existing residents a transformation in function of the area as much as uplift of what was there: the development of a dormitory settlement alongside an attenuated residual neighbourhood core.

The dominant narrative for both Oxgangs and Wensley Fold might be termed as one of 'disruption then renewal', where the maintenance or renaissance of local amenities and the preservation of shared social space resulted from partial and relatively small scale redevelopment. The phased programme for Oxgangs had smoothed the process by offering choices in the rehousing of those living in the flats, and the priority given to them, in the new development was reflected in less antagonism to the newcomers who were now buying property there. However, in Oxgangs as in the other areas the process of tenure diversification characterised by the growth of the private rented sector was viewed less favourably, and held to attract anti-social households.

In Wensley Fold, difference was described in terms of ethnicity rather than income or tenure. The dynamics of the relationships between members of the two communities of south Asian and White households prompted a variety of responses, but the out-migration of long standing White residents in the early part of the renewal programme started to decrease and has now stabilised. The new development was seen positively because it helped to broaden housing options through offering different property types (houses for larger families) than available in the existing stock. The recent arrival of eastern European households, mostly in the private rented properties, had affected the social dynamics of the area, but in part by enhancing the status of the south Asian community as a settled group who 'invested' in the neighbourhood in contrast to the (assumed) transient households just passing through.

West Kensington was the most mixed of the areas in terms of income, tenure and ethnicity but this was rarely noted by existing residents. In part this was due to the long standing nature of the mixed communities, not untypically for areas of London, and partly because more of a base than the primary site for work and leisure. The availability of a wide range of facilities in and around the area, and good transport links anyway reinforce this sense of many residents looking 'outwards' rather than having very localised lifestyles. Those who had a more localised perspective, however, often felt isolated and resentful of the newcomers, and felt they had most to lose if any redevelopment took place.

But West Kensington may be on the brink of major changes, of a similar scale to North Huyton. It remains to be seen what effect this may have on what is at present a relatively atomised community, although the signs from the interviews conducted last year were that opposition was strongest on maintaining a precious and relatively advantageous foothold in the London housing market as much as preserving a community intact. Much is therefore likely to rest on what alternative housing offers are made as part of any bid to reduce the scale of residents' opposition to the proposed plans.

How do these different patterns of neighbourhood change intersect with the four domains of neighbourhood effects put forward by Galster? In terms of social interaction effects, the consequences of displacement and dispersal in Hillside, which predated the regeneration programme but had been accelerated by its introduction, were generally considered to have been detrimental to the maintenance of local social networks, especially as the new development had been stalled. In Oxgangs, conflicts were expressed about 'locals' and 'newcomers' in competition over access to existing social housing, but this did not extend to the new development that was now taking place. As the most 'open' of the four neighbourhoods, local social interaction effects were apparently more limited in West Kensington, whereas in Wensley Fold the renaissance of the area had been reflected in more positive views about the heterogeneity of the area and fewer signs of conflict between different groups than before, though this was often nuanced by reference to separate communities in the neighbourhood.

The negative effects of environmental and geographical mechanisms were again most in evidence in Hillside, as the decimation of existing neighbourhood facilities over a longer period of time was now compounded by the cleared sites for new housing remaining idle. The construction of a new community centre is now under way and this might help to mitigate the sense of desolation that pervades much of the area at present. The responses from residents in Hillside also suggested it was more disconnected from the wider labour market than in other areas, especially West Kensington. The renewal of neighbourhood resources was seen as a critical factor in the regeneration of Wensley Fold and, to a more limited extent, in Oxgangs.

In terms of the fourth of Galster's categories, any 'institutional' neighbourhood effects, the impact of recent public sector led intervention has been marked in each of the areas – through the New Deal for Communities in two of the areas, the Single Regeneration Budget and Housing Market Renewal programme in Wensley Fold and the City Council programme for Oxgangs. The strong community leadership provided by elected members and some community activists in Wensley Fold was also cited as an important stabilising factor during the period of redevelopment. It remains to be seen how these areas will fare under the new context of severe public spending restraint. The NDC programme is ending, and local authorities will have few if any resources to devote to area regeneration in the future. Only West Kensington is likely to provide opportunity for significant private sector investment, but this is unlikely to benefit many of the existing residents.

As these neighbourhood narratives continue to unfold, one may discern some rather unsettling lessons about policy initiatives promoted under the banner of mixed communities. The two areas that have been subject to relatively modest interventions without an explicit objective to promote mix, Wensley Fold and Oxgangs, may be in the process of a relatively stable transition to greater neighbourhood diversity (on certain measures) without overt conflict or division between different identifiable groups of residents - even if shared social interaction is not the order of the day. The neighbourhood that has received a battery of measures to promote greater tenure and income diversity, Hillside, may become marked by increasing fragmentation and division. And the community that is ostensibly already relatively mixed on several counts, West Kensington, may be shortly decimated and displaced – due to a plan designed by the Council with the stated aim of producing more 'mixed and balanced' communities' for Hammersmith and Fulham. Not for the first time, one is struck by the gap between intention and outcome in policy measures designed to promote neighbourhood social mix.

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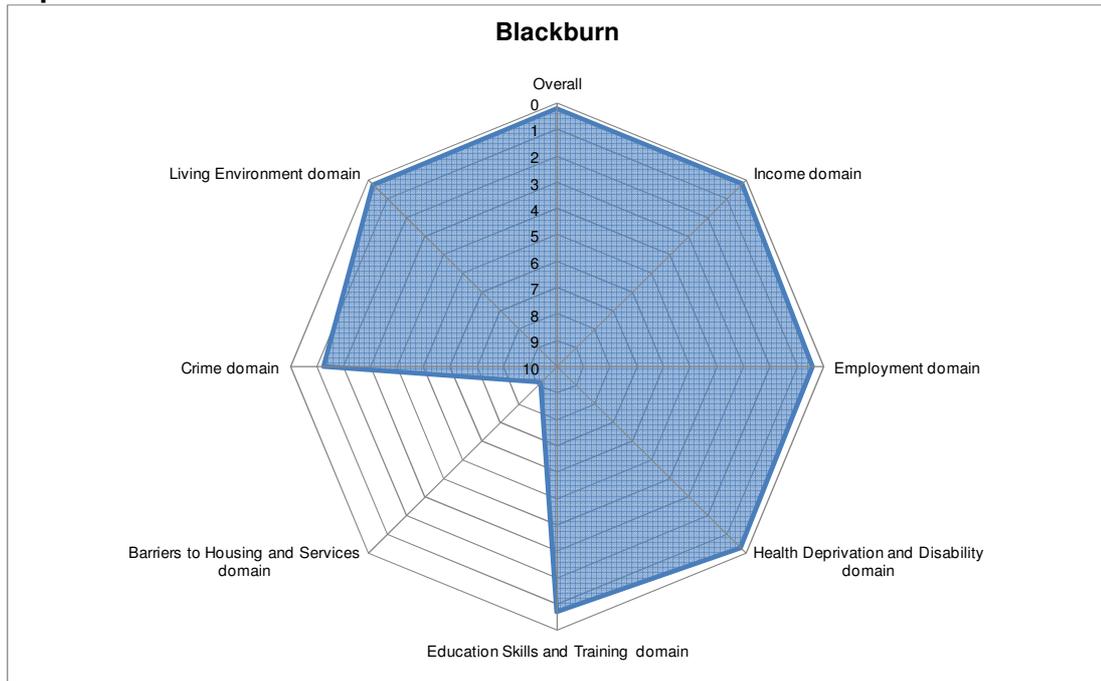
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Appendix 1: Index of Multiple Deprivation Scores in the Four Case Studies

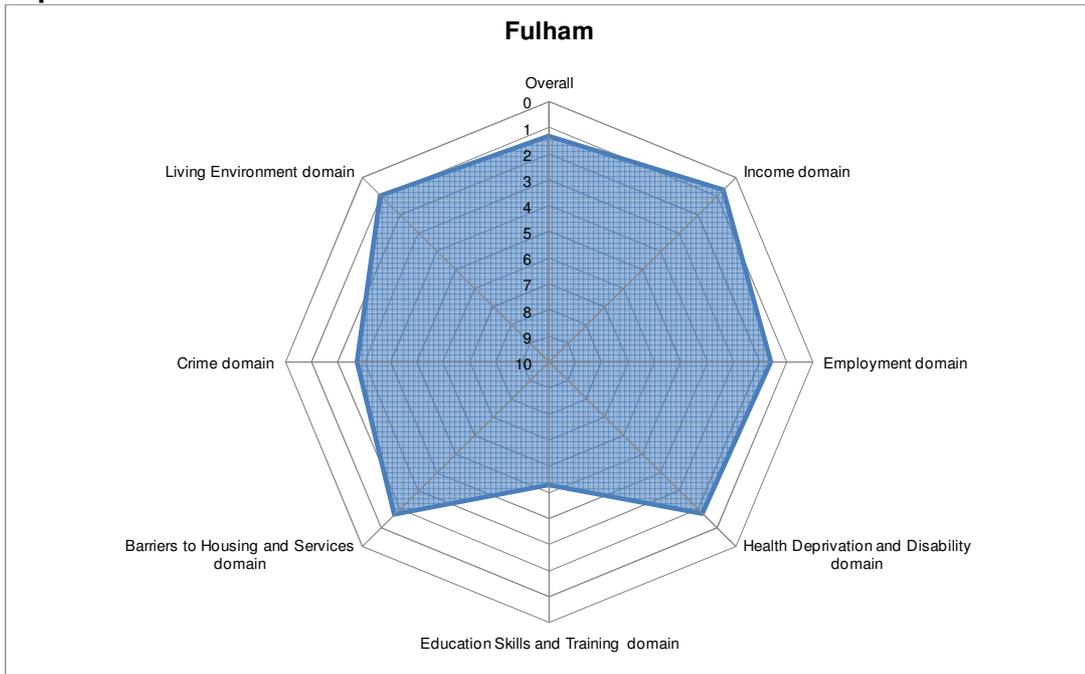
Figure A1: Wensley Fold Case Study on the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation



Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

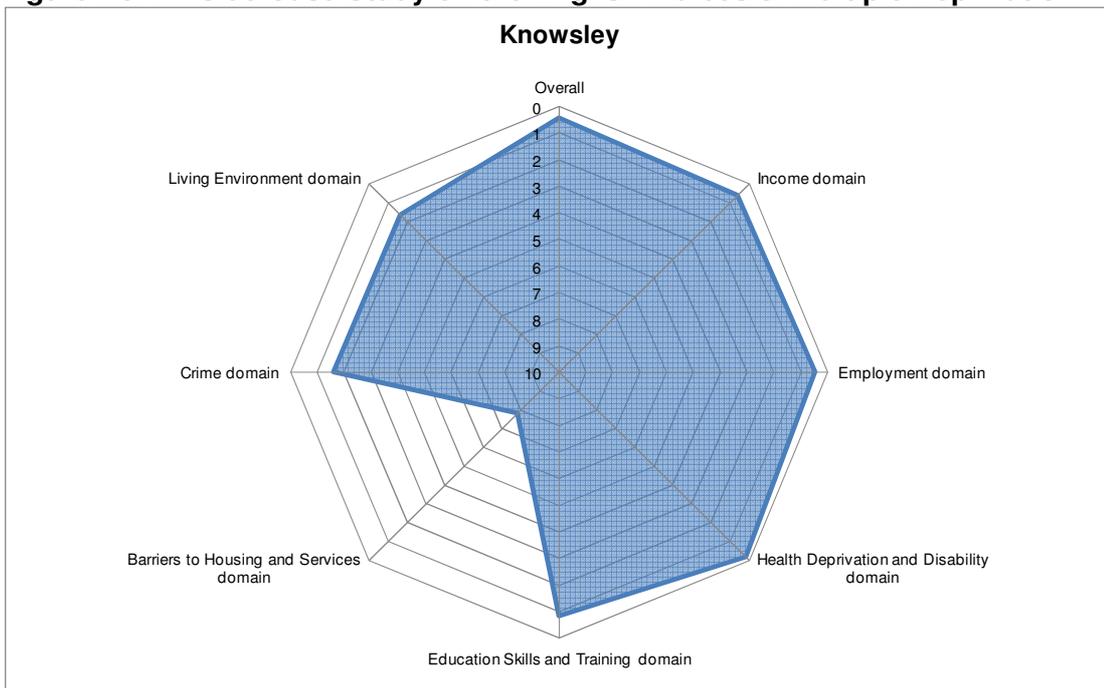
This figure displays the case studies position on the 2007 English Indices of Multiple Deprivation: in terms of Overall deprivation and by Domain. The 0 to 10 axes refers to the decile position; 0 is the most deprived and 10 the least deprived on that indicator. A position between 0 and 1 for example means that the case study is in the most deprived decile.

Figure A2: West Kensington Case Study on the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation



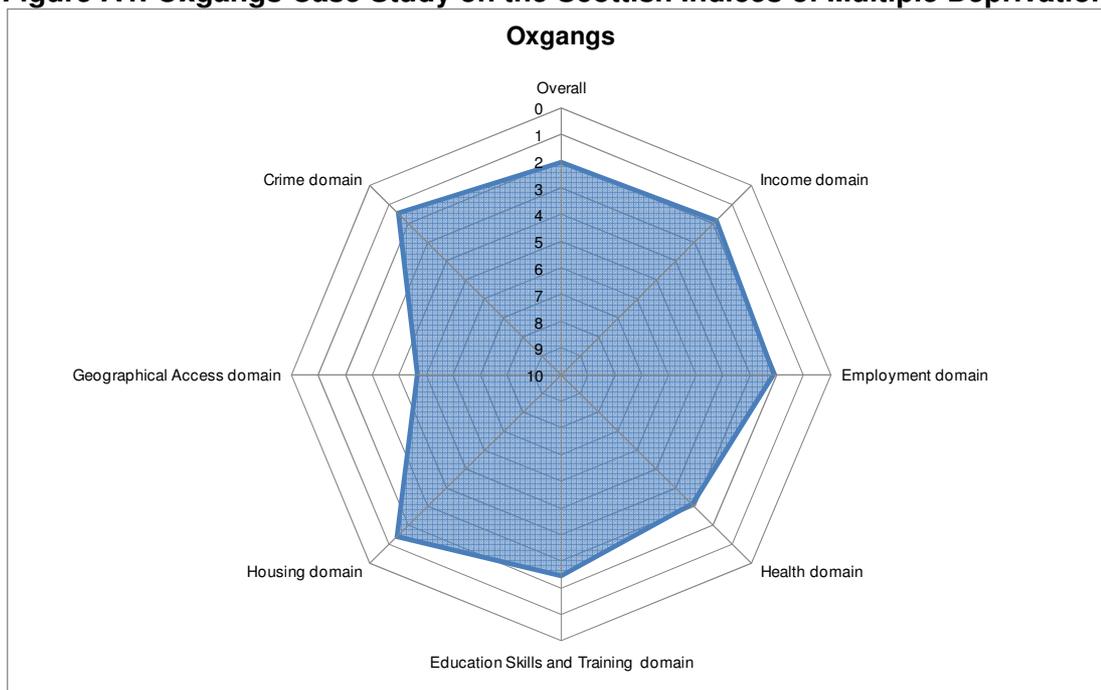
Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

Figure A3: Hillside Case Study on the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation



Source: English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

Figure A4: Oxgangs Case Study on the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation



Source: Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2009

The English Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007: The Domains

1. Income Deprivation Domain

The purpose of this domain is to capture the proportion of the population experiencing income deprivation in an area. This is done by looking at the numbers of people who are receiving or are dependent on benefits related to income or tax credits.

2. Employment Deprivation Domain

This domain measures employment deprivation conceptualised as involuntary exclusion of the working age population from the labour market.

3. Health Deprivation and Disability Domain

This domain measures rates of poor health, early mortality and disability in an area and covers the entire age range.

4. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain

This domain captures the extent of deprivation in terms of education, skills and training in a local area. The indicators are structured into two sub domains: one relating to education deprivation for children/young people in the area, and one relating to lack of skills and qualifications among a sub-set of the working age adult population.

5. Barriers to Housing and Services Domain

The purpose of this domain is to measure barriers to housing and key local services. The indicators are structured into two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers', and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing, such as affordability.

6. Crime Domain

This domain measures the rate of recorded crime for four major crime types, representing the risk of personal and material victimisation at a small area level.

7. The Living Environment Deprivation Domain

This domain focuses on deprivation with respect to the characteristics of the living environment. It comprises two sub-domains: the 'indoors' living environment which measures the quality of housing, and the 'outdoors' living environment which contains two measures about air quality and road traffic accidents.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2009: The Domains

1. Employment Domain

The employment domain identifies the proportion of people from the resident working age population who are unemployed or who are not involved in the labour market due to ill-health or disability.

2. Income Domain

The income domain identifies areas where there are concentrations of individuals and families living on low incomes. This is done by looking at the numbers of people, both adult and children, who are receiving or are dependent on benefits related to income or tax credits.

3. Health Domain

The health domain identifies areas with a higher than expected level of ill-health or mortality for the age-sex profile of the population.

4. Education Domain

The education domain includes indicators that measure both outcomes of education deprivation, such as children and adults with a lack of qualifications, and causes of education deprivation such as absenteeism and lack of progression to further and higher education.

5. Geographical Access Domain

The access domain is intended to capture the issues of financial cost, time and inconvenience of having to travel to access basic services. This domain differs from the other domains as it consists of two sub-domains. One looks at public transport times to services and the other looks at drive times. This attempts to account for the fact that not everyone will have access to a car and so may be dependent on public transport. The domain measures aspects of access deprivation that are relevant to all people as it is important to be able to access key services in rural and urban areas.

6. Crime Domain

The SIMD crime domain measures the rate of recorded SIMD crime at small area level using 2007/08 recorded crime data and is based on five indicators of broad crime types: crimes of violence; domestic house breaking; vandalism; drug offences; and minor assault. The indicators used were chosen on the basis of 1) relevance to impact on the local neighbourhood and 2) the availability of data. The crime domain score is a sum of the recorded crimes in each of the indicators and is referred to as 'SIMD crime' rather than total crime, as it does not include all recorded crimes.

7. Housing Domain

The SIMD housing domain is intended to focus on the inadequacy of housing and to cover the suitability and physical condition of housing. The housing domain contains indicators that are based on the proportion of the household population that experience overcrowding or are without central heating.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007: The Domains

1. Income Deprivation Domain

The purpose of this domain is to capture the proportion of the population experiencing income deprivation in an area. This is done by looking at the numbers of people who are receiving or are dependent on benefits related to income or tax credits.

2. Employment Deprivation Domain

This domain measures employment deprivation conceptualised as involuntary exclusion of the working age population from the labour market.

3. Health Deprivation and Disability Domain

This domain measures rates of poor health, mortality, cancer and low birth weight in an area.

4. Education, Skills and Training Deprivation Domain

This domain captures the extent of deprivation in terms of education, skills and training in a local area. The indicators are structured to capture Key stage attainment, absence rates, not entering higher education and no qualifications among a sub-set of the working age adult population.

5. Housing Domain

The purpose of this domain is to measure housing deprivation as measured by lack of central heating and overcrowding

6. The Physical Environment Domain

This domain focuses on deprivation with respect to the characteristics of the Physical Environment. It contains measures of flood risk, proximity to waste disposal and industrial sites and two measures about air quality.

7. The Geographic Access to Services Domain

The access domain is intended to capture the issues of financial cost, time and inconvenience of having to travel to access basic services. The domain measures aspects of access deprivation that are relevant to all people as it is important to be able to access key services in rural and urban areas.

8. Crime Domain

This domain comprises of police recorded crime; youth offending; adult offending and fire incidents.