

***“The Houses all Look Posh Now”* - Evaluating the Impact of a Housing Improvement Programme: The Case of Portobello and Belle Vue**

Final Report

February 2011

“The Houses all Look Posh Now” - Evaluating the
Impact of a Housing Improvement Programme:
The Case of Portobello and Belle Vue

Final Report

***Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
Sheffield Hallam University***

*Professor Paul Hickman
Aimée Walshaw
Dr Ed Ferrari
Dr Tony Gore
Ian Wilson*

February 2011

Acknowledgements

This report was produced with the help and assistance of many people and organisations. Particular thanks must go to the following members of Wakefield and District Housing: Paul Wake; Paul Wood, who directed the study in its first year; Sophie Withnall, who managed its final year; and especially, William Jacobsen, who directed it for its last three years.

It was very helpful to share our ideas with the members of the Project Advisory Group: Andy Dalton (Groundwork); Cath Taylor (Wakefield Council); Martyn Gorton (WDH); Sue Hey (WDH); Jean Ashford (Local Management Committee); John Erskine (HCA); Nick O'Conner (Keepmoat plc); Tony Pisacane (WDH); Sally Hinton (West Yorkshire Housing Partnership); Shez Iqbal (Wakefield Council); Emily Ramskill (Groundwork Wakefield); Lee Sugden (WDH), Rachel Willoughby (WDH), and especially, Tony Todd, formerly of the WDH, who managed the study for its first three years.

The study team is grateful to all of the individuals who agreed to be interviewed and share their thoughts with us. We are also indebted to Jude Bennington, for transcribing interviews, and Claire Lynas, Norah Keany Corr, Debra Parr, Arshad Mahmood, Javed Iqbal, Anne Moran, and Sally Martin, who all provided valuable assistance to the study team at various points of the study.

We would also like to thank: our colleagues at CRESR, Emma Smith, Sarah Ward, Ian Chesters, and Louise South, for putting this (and other reports) together; BMG Ltd for conducting the two household surveys; Littlestar for producing the excellent films about the study area; and former members of the team who include Ros Goudie, Ruth Barley, Deborah Platts-Fowler, and especially Rionach Casey who managed the study for 18 months.

Finally, we would also like to express our gratitude to those representatives of key local "stakeholder" organisations who we interviewed and to the many residents in Portobello and Belle Vue who gave up their time to talk to us.

Ed Ferrari, Tony Gore, Paul Hickman, Aimée Walshaw and Ian Wilson.

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Foreword from Wakefield and District Housing (WDH) | i |
| Executive Summary | iii |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.2. Research Objectives | 2 |
| 1.3. The Structure of the Report | 2 |
| SECTION ONE – CONTEXT | 4 |
| 2. Context | 5 |
| 2.1. Introduction | 5 |
| 2.2. The Study Area | 5 |
| 2.3. The Improvement Programme..... | 13 |
| 2.4. Policy Context, Initiatives and Developments in the Study Area | 15 |
| 2.5. The Literature on the Impact of Housing Improvement Programmes..... | 16 |
| 2.6. Summary..... | 17 |
| 3. Research Approach | 19 |
| 3.1. Introduction | 19 |
| 3.2. The Difficulties Associated with Assessing the Impact of Area Based Improvement Programmes..... | 19 |
| 3.3. Research Approach..... | 20 |
| 3.4. Approach to the Presentation of Analysis | 22 |
| 3.5. Summary..... | 22 |
| SECTION TWO – FINDINGS | 24 |
| 4. Enhanced Satisfaction with the Home | 30 |
| 4.1. Introduction | 30 |
| 4.2. Exploring Enhanced Satisfaction with the Home..... | 30 |
| 4.3. A home with modern facilities | 32 |
| 4.4. A warmer home that costs less to heat..... | 36 |
| 4.5. Improved internal decoration | 39 |
| 4.6. A more secure home | 40 |
| 4.7. Satisfaction with the repair of the home..... | 42 |
| 4.8. Exploring housing satisfaction over the course of the study..... | 42 |
| 4.9. Using Logistic Regression Modelling to Further Understand the Key Aspects of the Home and the Improvement Programme..... | 43 |
| 4.10. Summary..... | 47 |
| 5. Enhanced Emotional Well-being | 49 |
| 5.1. Introduction | 49 |
| 5.2. Understanding Enhanced Emotional well-being..... | 50 |
| 5.3. Summary..... | 54 |

| | | |
|--|--|------------|
| 6. | Other Impacts | 56 |
| 6.1. | Introduction | 56 |
| 6.2. | Greater Investment in the Home by Residents | 56 |
| 6.3. | The Changing Role and Use of Home | 58 |
| 6.4. | Summary | 62 |
| 7. | Assessing the Overall Impact of the Programme..... | 64 |
| 7.1. | Introduction | 64 |
| 7.2. | Improved neighbourhood quality of life | 64 |
| 7.3. | Socio-economic problems | 71 |
| 7.4. | Recession | 82 |
| 7.5. | The (Poor) Quality of Property Boundaries, Gardens and Public Spaces in Portobello | 88 |
| 7.6. | Conclusion | 93 |
| 7.7. | Summary | 96 |
| 8. | Residents' Housing Stories | 98 |
| 8.1. | Introduction | 98 |
| 8.2. | Janette's housing story | 99 |
| 8.3. | Lorraine's Housing Story | 101 |
| 8.4. | Coleen's Housing Story | 103 |
| 8.5. | Summary | 106 |
| SECTION THREE – POLICY MESSAGES | | 107 |
| 9. | Conclusions and Policy Implications..... | 108 |
| 9.1. | Introduction | 108 |
| 9.2. | The improvement programme | 108 |
| 9.3. | Summary of findings..... | 109 |
| 9.4. | Policy implications | 110 |
| 9.5. | Summary | 119 |
| Bibliography | | 121 |
| Appendix 1: Statistical Significance and Logistic Regression Modelling Explained. 124 | | |
| A1.1 | Statistical Significance..... | 124 |
| A1.2. | Logistic Regression Modelling | 125 |

Foreword from Wakefield and District Housing (WDH)

In September 2005, WDH launched one of the largest housing refurbishment programmes ever undertaken in the UK. The £700m programme, which was intended to set new standards in home improvement, modernised 31,000 houses to the 'Wakefield Standard', which is higher than the Government's own 'Decent Homes' standard.

As an organisation committed to continual learning and maximising the benefits of its investments, WDH were keen to assess how effective their initiatives had been. There has been very little research that helps to understand the impact of home improvement works on wider socio-economic measures. For this reason in 2006 WDH commissioned CRESR (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research) at Sheffield Hallam University to carry out an evaluation of the housing improvement programme over a four year period. The study focussed on two of WDH's estates, Portobello and Belle Vue, areas which were among the first in Wakefield to see their housing improved.

From the outset, WDH realised that home improvements alone were insufficient to make lasting impacts, and the insight provided by the evaluation confirmed this. In year two they embarked on a wider programme to improve the lifestyles of their tenants and residents through their Smarter Lifestyles initiative. At the close of the evaluation, it is clear that the Wakefield Standard improvement programme in Portobello and Bellevue has contributed significantly to the physical well-being of tenants living there, with improvements including:

- an 11% increase in satisfaction with accommodation
- enhanced emotional well-being of tenants with 79 per cent of tenants now feeling more comfortable in their homes
- greater investment in their homes by residents evidenced by 62 per cent of tenants reporting that they have now spent more money on their homes; and
- expansion of the role and uses of home.

However, WDH recognised early in the study that the physical house modernisation programme would do little to alleviate the underlying socio-economic problems which persist in these areas and are evident through low educational attainment, high levels of antisocial behaviour and increasing levels of worklessness. These problems have been compounded by the current economic climate and the research makes it clear that these issues cannot be resolved by home improvements alone. A co-ordinated and co-operative approach is needed involving all agencies operating in disadvantaged working together in partnership.

Through the improvement programme and research exercise WDH have learned a great deal, such as how to co-ordinate activities to maximise the impact and outcomes from the investment. In WDH's experience, social housing and dealing with increased levels of deprivation go hand in hand. If society is to address the most deprived then it should work collaboratively to maximise the impact from any intervention. WDH, through its Smarter Lifestyles programme and in partnership with residents and other providers, is committed to this. To this end, a model for changing lifestyles to reduce levels of disadvantage has been implemented throughout the Wakefield district. With the emergence of the 'Big Society' agenda and the reduction in public expenditure in disadvantaged areas, WDH believe that social landlords have the opportunity to position themselves in the vanguard of efforts to create a 'Big Society' by placing greater emphasis on fostering and developing the capacities and skills set of communities.

The study is a unique piece of work, and the lessons learned can be used by successive governments, policy makers and social landlords to inform future investment decisions to

ensure maximum outcomes, lasting impacts and value-for-money are all achieved in our communities.

Key policy messages

- **Tailored services.** It is imperative that all agencies work together in partnership to meet each individual resident's needs
- **Visibility.** It is important that agencies maintain a continuous, visible and meaningful presence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, avoiding brand confusion
- **Big Society.** Housing organisations are key players in enabling local communities to contribute to shaping local services
- **Capacity.** Greater emphasis should be placed on fostering and developing the capacities and skill sets of communities
- **Environment.** The pairing of housing works with wider environmental improvements is key to delivering broader socio-economic change.

WDH hope that the report will be of interest and will be widely used by the sector to inform future work.

Executive Summary

Chapter One - Introduction

Over the last few years, one of the largest stock transfer housing associations in this country, Wakefield and District Housing (WDH), has modernised its housing stock as part of the Decent Homes Programme. It has done so to a standard – the “Wakefield Standard” - beyond that required by this programme. Two of the first areas in the Wakefield borough to see their housing stocks improved were the Portobello and Belle Vue neighbourhoods of inner city Wakefield. The physical environments of these areas have also been improved by WDH, although in Portobello this programme is still ongoing and will not be completed until early 2012.

In December 2006, a team based at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University was commissioned by WDH to evaluate the impact of their work in the two areas over a four year period, and in January 2007 the team began work. This report represents the *principal* and *final* output to emerge from this study which, drawing on a comprehensive data set, provides a robust account of the impact of the improvement programme in Portobello and Belle Vue. In doing so, it provides one of the most detailed and thorough assessments undertaken in the UK of the impact of a housing improvement programme, an area which has not been adequately addressed by research in this country (Walshaw, forthcoming).

The principal research objectives of the study were to:

- assess the impact of the housing regeneration and investment programme on the Portobello and Belle Vue area as a whole
- explore its impact on the distinct neighbourhoods of Portobello and Belle Vue
- examine its impact on distinct population groups within the two neighbourhoods
- assess how Portobello and Belle Vue ‘performs’ relative to other areas in the district and the sub-region
- identify the ‘lessons learnt’ from the Portobello and Belle Vue improvement programme
- disseminate the key lessons learnt from the study across Wakefield and District Housing and, if required, more broadly.

SECTION ONE - CONTEXT

Chapter Two - Context

The area comprises two distinct neighbourhoods: Portobello, a social housing estate; and Belle Vue, a mixed tenure neighbourhood.

Work began on building the Portobello estate, which predominantly comprises “traditional” family houses on a greenfield site on the edge of Wakefield, in the 1930s. Although the estate is only a mile from the centre of Wakefield, it is bounded by a number of (aesthetically attractive) open spaces: Manygates Park; Sandal Castle; Pugneys Country Park and the River Calder. Within the estate itself there are a number of open spaces and it may be described as being relatively green: in addition to the numerous public green spaces within it, its gardens are relatively large.

The area has a small shopping centre which comprises six units. However, at the time of writing only three of these were occupied.

In stark contrast, Belle Vue is relatively well served in terms of shops. The area, which comprises a mixture of property types, has a longer history than Portobello and was once a major centre for mining and engineering. Unlike Portobello, there are relatively few green spaces within the area, although part of the area is bounded by a canal, and it has much higher (property) density than its counterpart. The area is divided by one of the busiest transport arteries in Wakefield: the Doncaster Road. Congestion on this road, and in the area as a whole, hits its peak when the professional rugby league team which is located in the area – the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats – play their home games.

In 2007 it was estimated that the study area had a population of 3,228, which was fairly evenly divided between Portobello and Belle Vue. The area has a significant Black and Minority Ethnic population who are predominantly resident in Belle Vue: Portobello is a largely 'white' area. The largest ethnic group in Belle Vue is 'Asian' and this group accounted for 15.6 per cent of residents in the neighbourhood in 2001. The study area also has a small Polish population, which is predominantly housed in Belle Vue.

As part of a broader programme to refurbish its properties, WDH has improved 812 of its properties in Portobello and Belle Vue. WDH has installed central heating, new windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms in all of its properties. Some properties have also had roof replacements and new damp proof courses. The work was undertaken in three phases across the study area: Portobello 1; Portobello 2 and Belle Vue. As the table illustrates, Portobello Phases 1 and 2 were completed in April 2008 while the Belle Vue phase was completed in August 2008.

The broader physical environment in the study area is also being improved with particular attention focusing on open spaces and 'greening' the environment. This work is funded by WDH with Groundwork being employed to undertake the improvements. Most of this activity will be undertaken in Portobello, which has considerably more open space than Belle Vue (the public space improvement programme in Belle Vue has already been completed). The environmental improvement in Portobello, which began in April 2010, will run for two years and will involve seven projects with perhaps the most visible and high profile being the project centred on the shopping area, which involves improvements to shop frontages and the space in front of the shops.

For the first three years of the evaluation part of the study area - Belle Vue - was also home to another policy initiative: the Neighbourhood Management Pilot (NMP) in Agbrigg and Belle Vue, which closed on March 31st 2010. The NMP undertook a number of activities. These included: improving footpaths and ginnels; the creation of a community recycling area; community clean-up events; community impact days; the refurbishment of the William Prince Grove play area; the construction of a 'welcome to Belle Vue' structure on the corner of Doncaster Road/ Elm Street; and the production of community arts work in the form of banners lining key thoroughfares in Belle Vue and Agbrigg.

There have been other policy initiatives in the study area, although these have been on a much smaller (and less formal) scale than the NMP and (especially) the improvement programme. One is worthy of particular mention here - the Portobello Community Forum – as it has been behind a number of key developments within Portobello during the course of the study.

Over the last decade in particular, many academic studies have sought to explore the impact of housing modernisation programmes, yet the literature on the subject is limited in two principal ways. First, because most of it is quantitative in nature, it sheds relatively little light on the impact of the programmes on residents themselves and, to a large degree, their voices are conspicuous by their absence. Second, most studies into the field have tended to be concerned with exploring the impact of modernisation in relation to a specific theme and have not adopted a holistic multi-themed approach to evaluation (Walshaw, 2011).

Chapter Three - Research Approach

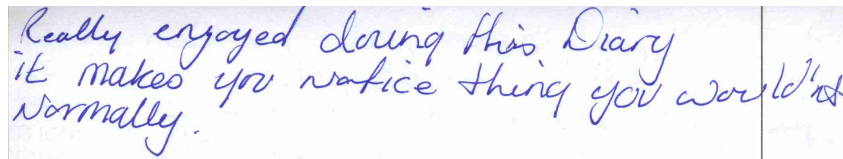
As has been noted by a number of other studies, researchers are confronted by a number of conceptual problems when seeking to highlight and measure the impact of area based regeneration programmes, such as the one undertaken by WDH in Portobello and Belle Vue. While the importance of these problems should not be downplayed, the approach taken to the research by the study team has (to a large degree) negated most of them.

The key features of our approach to the research were:

- in order to minimise the impact of the conceptual challenges associated with impact assessment highlighted above, a **multi-method design** that included numerous research instruments
- **placing residents at the heart of the research process**
- in order to facilitate this, we employed a number of seldom used (in the context of policy evaluations) and “**innovative**” **research instruments** (diary keeping; photography; and film making)
- a recognition that the study area comprised two very **different neighbourhoods**. Wherever possible we treated Portobello and Belle Vue as two discrete study areas
- the emphasis placed on **tracking change at the individual level** in order to maximise the opportunities provided by the length of the study
- a **multi-thematic approach**, which reflects our belief that the impact of housing improvement programmes may not necessarily be confined to the housing domain alone
- in line with the objectives of the *Research Brief*, a particular focus on the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of a **number of population groups** of particular interest to WDH (and ourselves): younger residents; older residents; BME residents; and economically inactive residents
- the importance of highlighting key findings, issues and policy lessons from the study as soon as they emerged. WDH and their partners have responded to many of these. As such, the study may be described as being “**action research**”.

The principal research instruments employed by the study team were:

- **residents’ surveys**. In both 2007 and 2010 the market research company, BMG Ltd surveyed residents in the study area, with more than 500 residents being interviewed on both occasions. Some 157 respondents who were interviewed in 2007 were interviewed again in 2010
- **in-depth resident interviews**. In all, some 95 in-depth interviews were conducted with residents throughout the course of the project, with interviews lasting between thirty minutes to an hour. In order to explore change at the individual level, eight residents were interviewed on a number of occasions during the study so that their stories could be followed over the duration of the project (some of these stories are presented in Chapter Eight)
- **resident diary keeping exercise**. A small number of residents took part in a solicited diary keeping exercise which involved them recording their thoughts, experiences, and feelings over a one week period. The exercise proved a great success and we were able to garner new insights into the study area, insights that would not have been secured from the use of more ‘traditional’ research methods. Our diarists also appeared to find the exercise useful, as the following excerpt, which is one of many contained in the report, illustrates:



Really enjoyed doing this Diary
it makes you notice things you wouldn't
normally.

- **resident photography.** Some fifteen residents took part in a photo novella exercise. This involved them photographing aspects of their lives of interest and/ or importance to them using a disposable camera given to them by the study team, and articulating the significance of photographs
- **resident focus groups.** A number of resident groups were held during the course of the project, some of which were configured by population group and some by theme. Along with the data generated from the diary and photography exercises and resident interviews, the data generated from the resident focus groups was subject to rigorous qualitative data analysis
- **film making.** A community film making company, Littlestar, was employed to make films about the study area *before* and *after* the improvement programme in order to highlight its impact. Thus, in 2007, Littlestar, working very closely with the members of the local community, many of whom received film making training and conducted interviews, made two films about life in the study area; one of which was concerned with Portobello and one with Belle Vue. In 2010, Littlestar returned to the study area to make a film about how it had changed in the eyes of local residents
- **stakeholder interviews.** Throughout the course of the project more than 80 interviews were conducted with representatives from organisations, both public and private, with a 'stake' in Portobello and Belle Vue
- **secondary data collection and analysis.** Consistent with the desire of the study team to adopt a holistic approach to the research process, as noted earlier, it examined data relating to a large number of themes. While the team collected and analysed data throughout the course of the study, it focused its efforts on producing a comprehensive baseline for the study area (in year one) and establishing how this baseline had changed (or not) by the end of the study (in year four).

When writing this report, we were faced with two options about how to present our analysis. We could either present all of it, regardless of whether it highlighted a demonstrable impact of the improvement programme (or not); or could simply concentrate on highlighting that analysis which revealed a tangible and robust programme impact. After consultation with WDH, we decided to adopt the latter approach in order to keep this report a manageable length. **This means that this report focuses solely on those areas where the programme was shown to have an impact and ignores those areas where it appeared that it did not.** As such, it is important to remember that it only showcases a small proportion of the analysis undertaken by the study team.

SECTION TWO – FINDINGS

Introduction to the Section

The key 'headline' impacts of the improvement programme are:

- enhanced resident satisfaction with their homes
- warmer homes that cost less to heat
- enhanced emotional well-being of residents
- greater investment in their homes by residents

- expansion of the role and uses of the home.

Chapter Four - Enhanced Satisfaction with the Home

Given the nature of the improvement programme, enhanced housing satisfaction had to be one its principal objectives and, as noted earlier, it has increased. But, it is important to note that it has increased by a (statistically significant) level – 11 percentage points – well beyond what might have been expected for this type of programme (the percentage of WDH tenants satisfied with their accommodation increased from 77 per cent in 2007 to 88 per cent in 2010). For example, this rate of increase is significantly greater than that experienced in New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas subject to housing improvement programmes.

The key drivers of enhanced satisfaction with accommodation, which are important impacts of the housing improvement programme in their own right, are:

- the high level of tenant satisfaction with kitchens, bathrooms, doors and windows which were installed as part of the improvement programme, which together, were perceived to make homes look “modern”
- warmer homes which cost less to heat
- enhanced satisfaction with the internal decoration of homes
- a greater sense of security within the home brought about by the installation of new doors and windows; and
- enhanced satisfaction with repair of the home.

1) A home with modern facilities

For many tenants, their enhanced satisfaction with their accommodation could be attributed to the installation of new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors which, combined, had the effect of making their homes feel “modern.”

“I like the kitchen best, particularly the sink because it is nicer than any I’ve had before...the kitchen is definitely easier to use and keep clean.” (Portobello resident, female, year two)

“I think it (the new bathroom) is fantastic I love it. I’ve got an immersion heater and I only need to put it on for two hours an hour or press the boost button and I can have a really hot bath. I like a really hot bath. Before I had that, I’d run it halfway and the water would go cold.” (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

“We really like the wet room. I’m disabled and it makes life so much easier for me. The shower is always hot and I really like the border tiles because we picked them.” (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, male, year three)

2) A warmer home

Another factor contributing to enhanced levels of housing satisfaction amongst WDH tenants is the improved warmth of properties since modernisation, which are perceived to be less expensive to heat.

“Before these windows I had wooden windows. You can feel the difference. These are double glazed. When you have the heat on...it does feel warmer and quieter. It dulls the noise from outside. I could hear the noise from the rugby ground before.” (Belle Vue resident, male, year two)

"Oh, yes, it's a lot warmer for starters...it's the windows and doors. They are airtight and don't let the draughts in like the old ones. And it's the new boiler, too."
(Portobello resident, female, year three)

"When it was done, especially when that cold weather come it were a god send and I thought by gum. It's made a real difference, the central heating, everything, it were a lot warmer." (Portobello resident, male, year four)



Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three

3) Enhanced internal decoration

Nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of WDH tenants thought that the improvement programme had made *'the internal decoration of their property' 'slightly' or 'much better.'* Although the internal decoration of the home was not directly within the remit of the improvement programme, residents did receive a decorating allowance, in the form of vouchers, to make cosmetic improvements to their modernised homes. In the *Second Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2008) we identified that, following completion of the improvement programme, a number of residents had felt inspired to embark on a more comprehensive programme of redecoration, which extended beyond the value of the decorating allowance.

"The improvements have motivated people to go out and buy a pot of paint. It has definitely kick-started some DIY ... People are certainly more house proud now."
(Stakeholder, Portobello, year two)

"I received £180 of vouchers for paint and things which covered two rooms. But I got the whole house done while I was at it." (Female focus group attendee, Belle Vue, year two)

4) A more secure home

Some 70 per cent of WDH tenants surveyed in 2010 felt that the security of their home had improved as a result of the improvement programme. However, it was not an issue that tenants raised unprompted when interviewed, although when probed on the subject, many did acknowledge that they felt more secure in their homes. Residents interviewed in year two of the study, following completion of the improvement programme, began to highlight improved security as a (perhaps unanticipated) benefit of the programme. The installation of new, more robust windows and doors is almost certainly at the root of feelings of greater security amongst residents who have consistently highlighted the relationship between the two since the second year of the study.

"We've seen the police trying to kick one of these doors in and that made me feel secure. They could not get through the door!" (Portobello resident, male, year two)

"It gives you confidence when you close it and lock it up. I feel more safe. It's something I don't have to think about now." (Belle Vue resident, male, year two)

"On a night you couldn't have your windows open or your door open because you can hear every single thing. But since I've had new windows and doors you can just close it out and relax." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

5) Enhanced satisfaction with repair of the home

The percentage of WDH tenants that were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the repair of their accommodation has increased by a statistically significant amount since 2007, rising by 14 percentage points to 81 per cent. These findings are reinforced by data from the longitudinal panel of 158 respondents who were interviewed in the same property in both 2007 and 2010. Increases in those respondents' satisfaction with the repair of their home were statistically significant over the course of the study.

6) Logistic regression modelling

A logistic regression model was used to pinpoint the most important aspects of the home and elements of the improvement programme in terms of their impact on satisfaction with the home. This analysis revealed that good internal decoration is the most important 'predictor' of a WDH tenant being satisfied with their accommodation overall. Other predictors of satisfaction include: having a home with a good bathroom, garden, kitchen, and external appearance; and a home devoid of condensation, damp or mould. Improved kitchen facilities followed by bathroom facilities emerged as the most significant predictors of *'liking the property more'* and reporting that it was *'a better place to live'*.

Chapter Five – Enhanced Emotional Well-being

One of the most important impacts of the improvement programme is that the emotional well-being of WDH tenants has improved. While it is a highly complex concept, and therefore is not easily measured, both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the study team supports this assertion.

- more than three quarters (79 per cent) of WDH tenants reported that the improvements undertaken to their properties had made them feel more *'relaxed'* within them

"I feel so much more relaxed here now because it's just a nicer place to be, you know?" (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)
- more than four out of five (83 per cent) tenants reported that they now felt more *'comfortable'* in their homes. The adjectives *'relaxed'* and *'comfortable'* were frequently used by residents when describing how they felt in their newly modernised homes, alongside other terms, such as *'comfy'* and *'cosy'*, which also had connotations to emotional well-being

"Before it (the respondent's home) was just somewhere where you come and go to bed. It wasn't somewhere you could relax...it's smashing, really nice and cosy. We love spending time in it." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)
- tenants are much more proud of their homes
- tenants feel more safe and secure in their homes with nearly three quarters (73 per cent) reporting this.

Reflecting (in part) residents' enhanced emotional well-being, between years two and three of the study there was a notable change in their emotional attachment to where they lived. More specifically, they increasingly began to refer to their residence as 'home' and not 'house'.

"Well, you just got by. You made the best of things. But the bathroom was a bit drab. It was years and years old. Everything was tired but you made the best of it by keeping it nicely and keeping it clean. That's all you could do." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

"Well, it's more like a proper home now. It feels like home." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

This study is concerned with outcomes of the improvement programme and not with process. However, issues related to process may be behind an important finding to emerge in terms of enhanced emotional well-being: it appeared that it only began to increase in year three of the study after the negative affect of the disruption caused by the improvement programme had dissipated for most residents.

Chapter Six – Other Impacts

The last two 'headline' impacts identified by the study team are: i) tenants are investing more 'resources' in their homes; and, ii) are spending more time within them.

Both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the study reveals that, since the modernisation programme has been completed, tenants are investing more financial resources in their homes. Data generated by the household survey clearly demonstrates this. Some 62 per cent of tenants report that they have spent more money on their home as a result of the improvement programme, whilst 57 per cent report that they would like to do so.

Investment took a number of forms including: employing window cleaners (for the first time); fitting new flooring or carpets; decorating; and improvements to the garden. Not all investment was financial in nature – a number of residents reported that they were now spending more time on housework.

It appears that the key factor driving greater investment in the home is that residents are much more 'proud' of their modernised homes. Four out of five WDH tenants are more 'house proud' as a result of the improvement programme, with 77 per cent reporting that they felt 'more proud of their home.'

"I was proud of what we had done to the house ourselves. But yes, I do feel more proud now. It looks smarter from the outside with the new windows and doors. It's made us think about doing a few things with the garden that we had been putting off." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

"Yeah, we all do (have friends around more often) in the area. You feel you want to be at home more and have friends 'round. I did a barbeque in the summer for the first time so I could show it off." (Belle Vue resident, female, year two)

"I like having people round for coffee now to show it (my house) off." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

Residents are now spending more time in their homes. While WDH participants in the 2010 household survey were not asked to indicate how much time they spend at home, they were asked whether the improvement programme had made them more inclined to do so. Nearly three quarters (72 per cent) replied in the affirmative. And data garnered from the in-depth resident interviews revealed that many did indeed appear to be spending more of their time at home.

A number of (interrelated) factors appear to be behind this trend:

- the creation of warmer and more comfortable homes (as a result of the improvement programme)
- the creation of homes that tenants are proud of (as a result of the improvement programme)
- a declining and poor local 'neighbourhood infrastructure'
- recession
- the existence of close knit social networks in the study area
- (in Portobello) an apparent decline in 'neighbourliness.'

Chapter Seven - Assessing the Overall Impact of the Programme

It appears that the impact of the improvement programme is being diluted by two (inextricably linked and overlapping) issues that are not directly connected to the programme *per se* and 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; and recession. And in Portobello another factor appears to have diluted its impact: the poor quality of the estate's green spaces, property boundaries and gardens.

However, it is important to note that although the area does have a number of deep rooted socio-economic problems, in one part of it - Belle Vue – neighbourhood quality of life has improved over the last three years, a trend which can be attributed principally to work of the NMP, through the improvements it has made to parks and open spaces in the area.

The persistence of the study area's socio-economic problems was highlighted in both the *Second* and *Third Annual Review Reports* (CRESR, 2008; CRESR, 2009) and there is little sign of these problems abating. Indeed, at the time of writing, the study area remained very much a deprived area, with deprivation being greatest in Portobello.

The relative deprivation of the study area was reflected in the data garnered by the study team in relation to the following domains: income; employment; health; educational attainment and skills; crime; 'barriers to housing and services' and 'the living environment'; and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Three of the biggest problems relating to anti-social behaviour in the study area were concerned with the activities of the gangs that were reported to exist in the area. 'Teenagers hanging around the streets'; 'vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property'; and 'disturbance from crowds and gangs of hooliganism' were cited as being problems by 57, 42, and 29 per cent, respectively, of residents. These problems appeared to be more acute in Portobello where the anti-social behaviour of gangs was an issue that was highlighted in many of the in-depth resident interviews conducted by the study team. The most prominent (and visible) gang in Portobello are the 'Bella Crew', who congregate outside its shopping area. The study team interviewed eight members of the crew and the chapter highlighted some of the key issues to emerge from these interviews.


| | |
|--|--------|
| Monday 30th July | Photos |
| 1. Activities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you do today? (Please remember to include your feelings about what you did) | |
| For example, places you went to, people you met, things you did. | |
| <p>My mum and I took my dog Sandy for a walk. We went first to the Phillip Bennet's memorial garden (this was done by the kids of Portobello in memory of Phillip who died age 12 from meningitis). I like it here as you can see for miles, even as far as the Enlymoor mark. We then went to the field to let Sandy have a run.</p> <p>One thing I don't like about Portobello is the vandalism, I've taken a photo of the phone box near us covered in paint and the door ripped off. Also Jacque came round.</p> | |
| 2. Your thoughts on today as a whole | |
| Thinking about your day was it a good, bad or okay day? | |
| <p>Why do you think this?</p> | |
| Continue on the back of the page, if necessary | |
|  | |
| <p>I took this photo because I don't like the vandalism which takes place around Portobello, the doors here have been ripped off and paint had been thrown over it.</p> | |

Photo novella participant and diarist, Portobello, male, year one

Several residents believed that the increase in ASB had been a key factor in the closure of the local chip shop outlet and there was a sense that, for some residents, the area outside the shops had become an area to avoid. Furthermore, many residents, particularly elderly ones, appeared to be increasingly reluctant to use Portobello's local shops:

"There are thugs drinking around the shops and people aren't go to the shops. My neighbour gets her windows broken every week and egg thrown at the house just because she has a disability and so does her son. You hear people saying all the time that they won't go to the shops. The police are always down there." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

Data collected by the study team reveals that the recession has had an adverse effect on the study area and its residents and, in doing so, diluted the overall impact of the improvement programme. It has done so in two ways. First, it appears that it has exacerbated (some of)

its existing socio-economic problems, such as worklessness and anti-social behaviour. Second, a corollary of declining household income levels brought about by job losses and reduced working hours as a result of the economic downturn, has been that residents now have less financial resources to spend on their homes.

There was a consensus amongst both residents and stakeholders that the inadequacy of the physical environment in Portobello is undermining the impact of the improvement programme there. Both groups expressed concern about the poor quality of its open spaces, property boundaries and gardens. However, it is important to note that many of the open spaces within the estate are being improved by a WDH funded environmental improvement currently being undertaken by Groundwork, which is due to be completed in April 2012. Furthermore, in the last year WDH has installed high quality property boundaries in one part of the estate.

Most WDH tenants feel that the improvement programme has had a positive impact on the study area in a number of respects. However, there was some confusion amongst them about who had funded the programme, with many being unaware that WDH had funded it.

Chapter Eight - Residents' Housing Stories

This chapter presents the housing 'stories' of three long standing WDH tenants in the study area, Janette, Lorraine and Coleen, whose circumstances, experiences, perceptions and attitudes have been tracked closely since the study began in 2007. This approach is unique to this study as the first of its kind undertaken in the field of housing renewal to attempt to collect detailed *qualitative* data relating to the same cohort of residents over such a prolonged period of time. By providing a rounded account of their experiences, it provides a counterpoint to the other findings chapters, all of which, quite intentionally, pay relatively little attention to the 'stories' of the subjects referred to within them. This is because the analysis presented within them is configured thematically, in order to most effectively tease out the impacts of the improvement programme.

Janette's housing story

In her housing story, Janette, a 51 year old mother of five from Portobello, portrays the transformation of her house from a rundown property with rotten, leaking windows and no central heating into somewhere "comfy and cosy", where she enjoys spending time with her family. However, Janette is quick to point out that although the houses in Portobello look better inside and out, the estate's problems have not gone away.

Selected extracts from Janette's story



The houses all look posh
Now. they have new windows
and doors.

"The houses look all posh now they have new windows and doors."

"I love what they (WDH) have done. It's fantastic. It's so much better than it was before...yes, on the whole, yes, and I'd do it all again. It's much warmer now... it's really cosy."

Interviewer: "What about Portobello then, is it a better place to live than it was in 2007?"

Janette: "No, it's still a shit hole."

Lorraine's housing story

Lorraine has lived in Belle Vue all her life and her story highlights how the improvement programme has brought her closer to her neighbours and made her feel less inclined to move from the flat she has occupied for 28 years. She also emphasises the important work of the NMP in improving the quality of public spaces locally.

Selected extracts from Lorraine's story



*I like the fireplace
didn't have one before.
can have the fire on without the central heating*

"I like the fireplace, I didn't have one before. I can have the fire on without the central heating."



This sign makes the area look better thanks to the neighbourhood management team working on our behalf.

"This sign makes the area look better thanks to the Neighbourhood Management Team working on our behalf."

Coleen's housing story

The story of Coleen, a single mother and long standing resident of Belle Vue, provides valuable insights into the transformation of her property from a 'house' that she rents from WDH to a 'home' for her and her son. Following completion of the improvement programme, Coleen feels warmer, more comfortable and more proud of her modernised home, which, significantly, now feels like a "private house."

Selected extracts from Coleen's story

"It's not what you would think of as a council house, now. It's more how you'd think of a private house."

"Before the house was done I never bothered with the front garden. But once the house was done I started doing it. I've entered a WDH gardening competition this year and I got a letter through to say I'd won a prize."



"I took this photo because I like my patio doors and didn't think that, because I was in a WDH property, I would ever get the chance to have them."

① I took this photo because I like my patio doors and didn't think that because I was in a WDH property I would ever get the chance to have them.



② I took this photo because I like the kitchen as it's very modern and I was able to choose everything down to the last detail. I also have more workspace and it looks a lot bigger.

SECTION THREE – POLICY MESSAGES

9. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The study identified a number of policy lessons for WDH in relation to Portobello and Belle Vue:

- WDH has the opportunity to position itself in the vanguard of efforts to create a 'Big Society' in Portobello and Belle Vue and the wider district as a whole. This will require leadership and shared resources. However, it will not happen without the comprehensive support and frameworks that WDH can provide
- options worth consideration include the creation of dedicated resource streams or Community Budgets and the devolution of aspects of urban governance
- WDH is the best placed organisation to coordinate this activity and lead on partnership working with other agencies such as Wakefield Council, which will improve the delivery of local services and reduce central costs
- residents may not always recognise organisations or programmes in the way that professionals do – a focus on outcomes is more important, and efforts should be made to avoid 'brand confusion' and complex layers of organisations and programmes
- the local environment within a neighbourhood is as important to residents as their homes. The right balance between public and private custodianship of space needs to be found – just now, 'anything goes' and residents think it looks unattractive. While, to some extent, its scope to do so may be limited, WDH needs to be proactive here and play a role in 'managing' (in the broadest sense) the local environment
- the long-term stewardship of the local environment needs to be coordinated by WDH, although mechanisms for its delivery need to involve local people, perhaps through establishing 'garden champions', 'community janitors' or an Environmental Improvement District scheme based on the Business Improvement District (BID) model. The successes of the Neighbourhood Management Pilot in (Agbrigg and) Belle Vue need to be recognised and built upon
- Portobello and Belle Vue are, to some extent, isolated: physically, socially and in terms of the local housing market and economy. WDH should examine how it and local communities could contribute to the local economy. In doing so, through initiatives such as the community champion programme, it should build on the community development activities undertaken by itself and other agencies including the Portobello Community Forum and Groundwork. The Government's belief that the private sector will fill the void left by public sector cuts is misplaced and, in isolation, it is unlikely to provide this added support and alone will not regenerate or reconnect these areas
- changes in the regime for social housing can be used sensitively to bring about diversity within the area and to develop closer connections with the local housing market. Portobello and Belle Vue can become attractive neighbourhoods that meet a range of housing needs and demands given the right housing and the right mechanisms – including tenure flexibility
- the study shows that there is a lot of pride among residents and WDH could consider implementing reward schemes to further promote this: the use of decorating and maintenance vouchers for reward, and not just as a compensation tool, would be popular and effective
- the Department of Communities and Local Government recently published a consultation document, *Local Decisions: a Fairer Future for Social Housing*, which outlines proposals that will provide housing associations with an opportunity to offer its new tenants flexible (duration) tenancies. In order to maintain neighbourhood stability, in areas like Portobello, WDH should continue to offer long term tenancies. Stability is

helpful in a number of inter-related ways. First, a stable community is more likely (than an unstable one) to be socially cohesive. Second, a stable community is more likely to be able to develop the capacity and skill sets required by the 'Big Society.' And third, stability has a positive effect on tenants' housing satisfaction – in line with the findings of other studies, the research found it to be positively related to their length of residence.

A number of broad policy lessons emerge from the research, which have resonance for *all* agencies with a stake in disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as Portobello and Belle Vue. These include national, regional and sub-regional policy makers, local authorities, the police, health agencies, education agencies, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, and community groups.

- the problems of disadvantaged areas cannot be 'solved' by housing agencies alone because they extend well beyond the housing domain. They can only be addressed by the adoption of a holistic approach to regeneration and 'neighbourhood management' (in the broadest sense) which, in addition to housing, should also be concerned with education, health, worklessness, crime, and anti-social behaviour. Therefore it is imperative, particularly at a time of financial austerity when resources are scarce, that the agencies responsible for these areas work together in partnership, along with local residents. By working together, agencies are likely to see greater returns on their investments
- residents in the study area expressed their dissatisfaction with the perceived failure of key local agencies to make a long term and sustained commitment to it. It was reported that periods of investment in the area were often followed by "fallow" periods where agencies appeared to lose interest and, in the eyes of residents, became "invisible." As a result, this made residents mistrustful of local agencies and reluctant to engage with them. Therefore it is imperative that stakeholders maintain a continuous, visible and meaningful presence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods such as Portobello
- in recent years, (in theory but not always in practice) local communities have been at the heart of numerous initiatives to regenerate disadvantaged neighbourhoods in this country. However, the emphasis placed by the Coalition Government on 'localism' and the 'Big Society', and the dramatic reduction in public spending in disadvantaged areas, will place an even greater onus on them to take the lead in tackling the problems of their neighbourhoods. In many areas this may prove to be an impossible task and a (very persuasive) case could be made for arguing that residents have been 'set up to fail'. Notwithstanding this important point, renewed efforts should be made to foster and develop the capacities and skill sets of communities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, particularly in those areas, such as Portobello, where the community infrastructure is relatively under-developed.

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Over the last few years, one of the largest stock transfer housing associations in this country, Wakefield and District Housing (WDH), has modernised its housing stock as part of the Decent Homes Programme. It has done so to a standard - the "Wakefield Standard" - beyond that required by this programme.¹ Two of the first areas in the Wakefield district to see their housing stock improved were the Portobello and Belle Vue neighbourhoods of inner city Wakefield. The physical environments of these areas have also been improved by WDH, although in Portobello this programme is still ongoing and will not be completed until early 2012.

In December 2006, a team based at the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University was commissioned by WDH to evaluate the impact of their work in the two areas over a four year period, and in January 2007 the team began work. Since the study began, the team have produced three *Annual Review Reports*. The first, which was produced in December 2007 (CRESR, 2007), was concerned with establishing the 'baseline' position in the study area *before* the modernisation programme had begun. The second (CRESR, 2008) and third (CRESR, 2009) reports were concerned with providing some initial insights into life in the study area *after* the modernisation programme had been completed.

However, these insights are only partial and have to be treated with a degree of caution. This is because they are based on relatively small scale data collection exercises: quite deliberately, much of the study team's fieldwork has been undertaken in the first and last years of the study. However, this report, which is the *principal* and *final* output to emerge from the study, draws on a comprehensive data set and therefore is able to provide a robust account of the impact of the improvement programme² in Portobello and Belle Vue.

In doing so, it provides one of the most detailed and thorough assessments undertaken in the UK of the impact of a housing improvement programme. This is an area which has not been adequately addressed by research in this country (Walshaw, forthcoming). It does so at a time when there is great interest in housing improvement as both policy makers and practitioners reflect on the legacy of the largest ever housing improvement programme undertaken in this country: the Decent Homes programme.

This report synthesizes some of the key issues to emerge from the *Annual Review Reports* produced by the study team. However, it should be noted that it does not seek to present *all* the issues raised in them as they are important and valuable research outputs in their own right, and should be read alongside this report. Thus, for example, the key issues to emerge from detailed studies of the experiences,

¹ More information about the Wakefield Standard can be found at:

<http://www.wdh.co.uk/living/improvements/Pages/ImprovementsStandards.aspx>.

² Although, as noted earlier, the regeneration programmes in Portobello and Belle Vue comprised two elements – housing stock modernisation and improvements to the physical environment - for the purposes of this report, they are referred to collectively as the 'improvement programme'.

attitudes of young people and black and minority ethnic (BME) residents undertaken by the study team are not explored in detail in this report but are instead showcased in the *Second* and *Third Annual Review Reports*, respectively.

1.2. Research Objectives

As noted earlier, this study is concerned with exploring the impact of the improvement programme in Portobello and Belle Vue. More specifically, its principal research objectives, which were highlighted in the *Research Brief*, are to:

- assess the impact of the housing regeneration and investment programme on the Portobello and Belle Vue area as a whole
- explore its impact on the distinct neighbourhoods of Portobello and Belle Vue
- examine its impact on distinct population groups within the two neighbourhoods
- assess how Portobello and Belle Vue 'performs' relative to other areas in the district and the sub-region
- identify the 'lessons learnt' from the Portobello and Belle Vue improvement programme
- disseminate the key lessons learnt from the study across Wakefield and District Housing and, if required, more broadly.

1.3. The Structure of the Report

This report is divided into nine chapters, including this one. These chapters are arranged into three sections.

Section one, which comprises chapters two and three, is concerned with setting the research in context. Chapter two begins by profiling the study area and highlighting the key features of the improvement programme. It then explores the broader policy context within the study area and concludes by reviewing the academic literature on housing modernisation programmes. Chapter three is concerned with highlighting the approach taken to the research by the study team. It begins by highlighting some of the theoretical and methodological challenges associated with impact assessment and then highlights some of the key features of the approach taken to the research by the study team. It concludes by highlighting the research instruments used by them.

Section two comprises chapters four to eight of the report and presents the key findings to emerge from the research. Its introduction presents a framework for understanding the impact of the improvement programme, which highlights five key 'headline' impacts. The most important of these - enhanced resident satisfaction with accommodation - is explored in chapter four, which also considers another 'headline' impact: WDH's modernised properties are reported to be warmer and less expensive to heat. Chapter five is dedicated to the third impact to accrue from the programme - enhanced emotional well-being - while chapter six considers the two remaining 'headline' impacts identified by the study: that is, WDH tenants are now investing more 'resources' in their homes and spending more time within.

The penultimate chapter in section two, chapter seven, notes that the overall impact of the improvement programme appears to be being diluted by three (inextricably linked and overlapping) issues that are not directly connected to the programme *per se* and 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; recession, and in Portobello, the (poor) quality of its green spaces and property

boundaries. The last chapter in the section presents the housing 'stories' of three long standing WDH tenants, Janette, Lorraine, and Coleen, whose circumstances, experiences, perceptions and attitudes have been tracked closely since the study began in 2007. All three have lived in the same property since the project began and are therefore able to provide a valuable (and rounded) insight into the impact of the improvement programme.

Section three comprises one chapter, chapter nine, which summarises the key findings to emerge from the study and its key policy messages, which are organised into five main sections:

- 'holistic regeneration' in the new political and economic environment
- awareness and perceptions of the improvement programme
- the local environment
- reconnecting Portobello and Belle Vue, including the local economy and the local housing market
- involving communities and residents.

SECTION ONE – CONTEXT

2. Context

2.1. Introduction

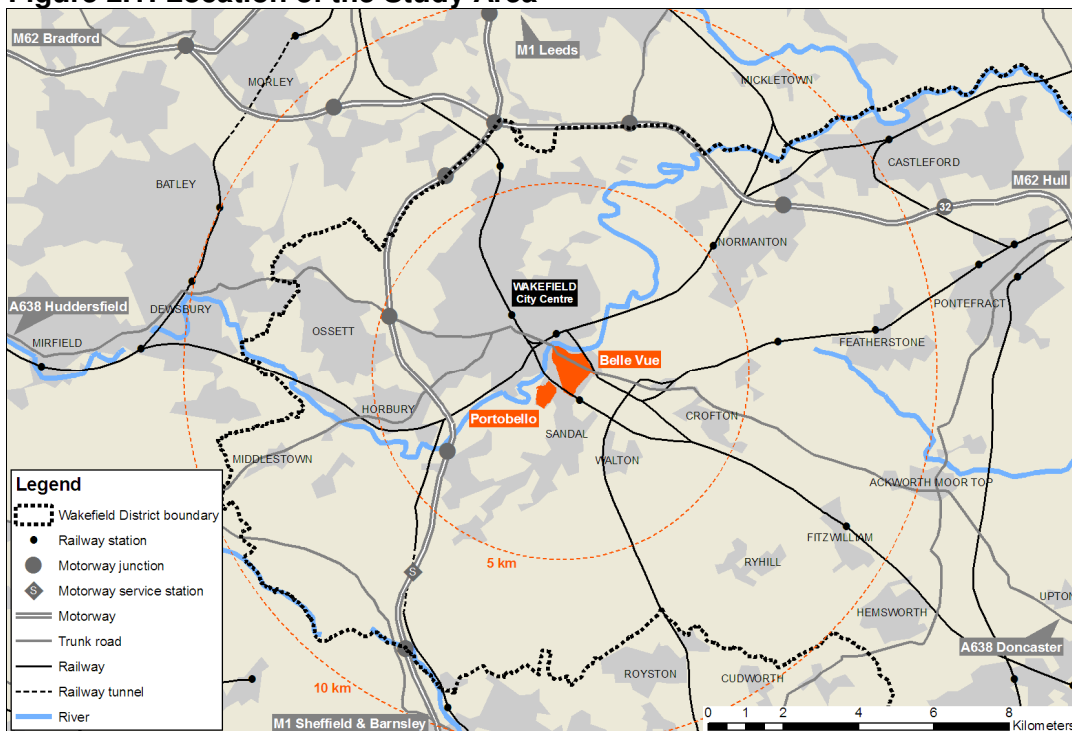
This chapter provides some context to the study and this report. It begins by providing background information about the study area and then moves on to highlight the key features of the improvement programme undertaken there. The penultimate section examines the broader policy context within the study area while the last section provides a brief review of the literature on housing improvement programmes. In doing so, it highlights where the study seeks to contribute to knowledge.

2.2. The Study Area

Introduction

As the *First Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2007) provides a detailed and comprehensive profile of the study area, this section is concerned with highlighting only its most salient characteristics. When doing so, particular reference is made to data relating to the time period immediately before the improvement programme commenced. This is because, as noted earlier, any significant and relevant changes since this period are highlighted in the main body of the report, which is concerned with exploring changes within the study area over the last four years, with particular attention focusing on those that can be attributed to the improvement programme. Figure 2.1 highlights the location of the study area.

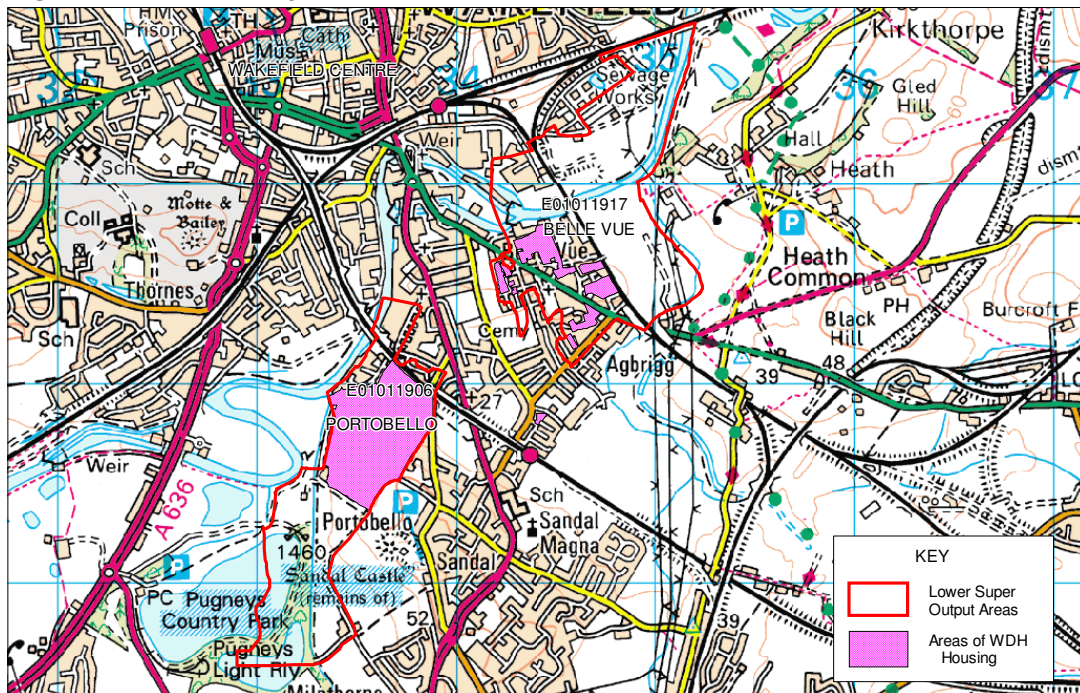
Figure 2.1: Location of the Study Area



Source: ©Crown Copyright Ordnance Survey

The study area comprises two distinct neighbourhoods: Portobello, a social housing estate; and Belle Vue, a mixed tenure neighbourhood, as figure 2.2 illustrates.

Figure 2.2: The Study Area

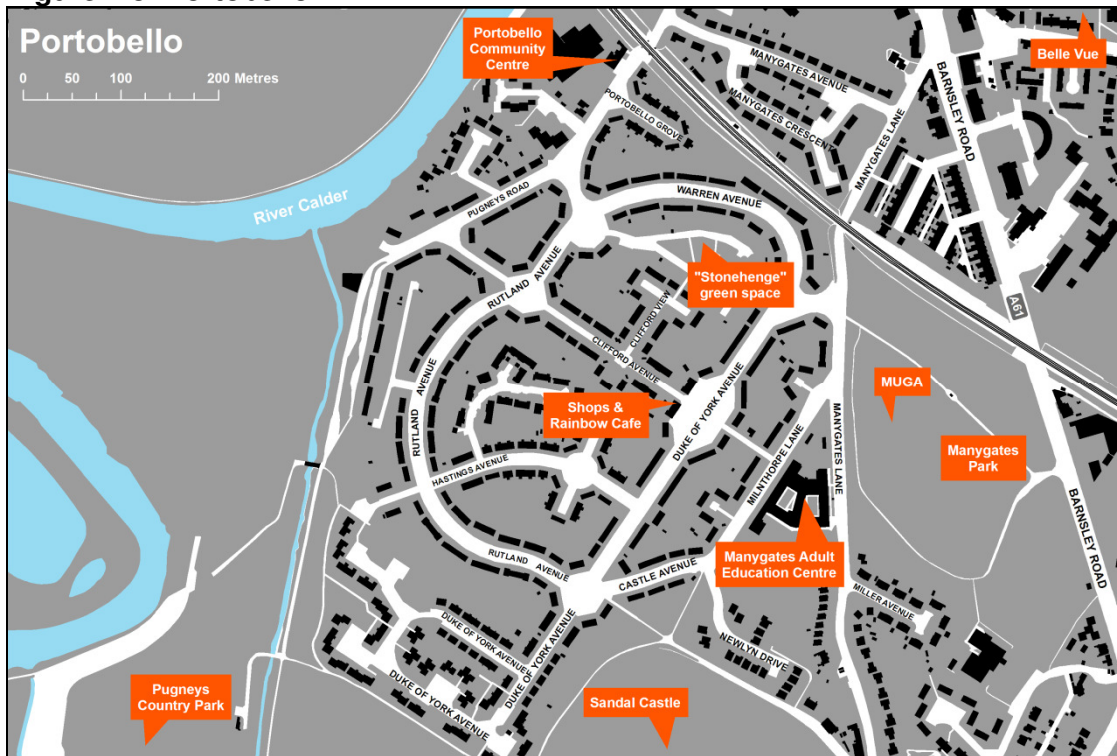


Base Map Downloaded from Digimap: Ordnance Survey Crown Copyright

Work began on building the Portobello estate, whose layout is highlighted in Figure 2.3, in the 1930s. The estate, which predominantly comprises “traditional” family houses, is located on a greenfield site on the edge of Wakefield. Although it is only a mile from the centre of the centre, it is bounded by a number of (aesthetically attractive) open spaces: Manygates Park; Sandal Castle; Pugneys Country Park and the River Calder. Within the estate itself there are a number of open spaces and it may be described as being relatively green; in addition to the numerous public green spaces within it, its gardens are relatively large.

The estate has a small shopping centre which comprises six units. However, at the time of writing only three of these were occupied. These units are occupied by a newsagent, an off-licence and the Portobello Community Forum (PCF), through the guise of the Rainbow Café, which opens for three days a week (the role and function of this organisation is explored in section 2.4). Until relatively recently a fourth unit was occupied as a ‘fish and chip’ shop but this closed in 2009.

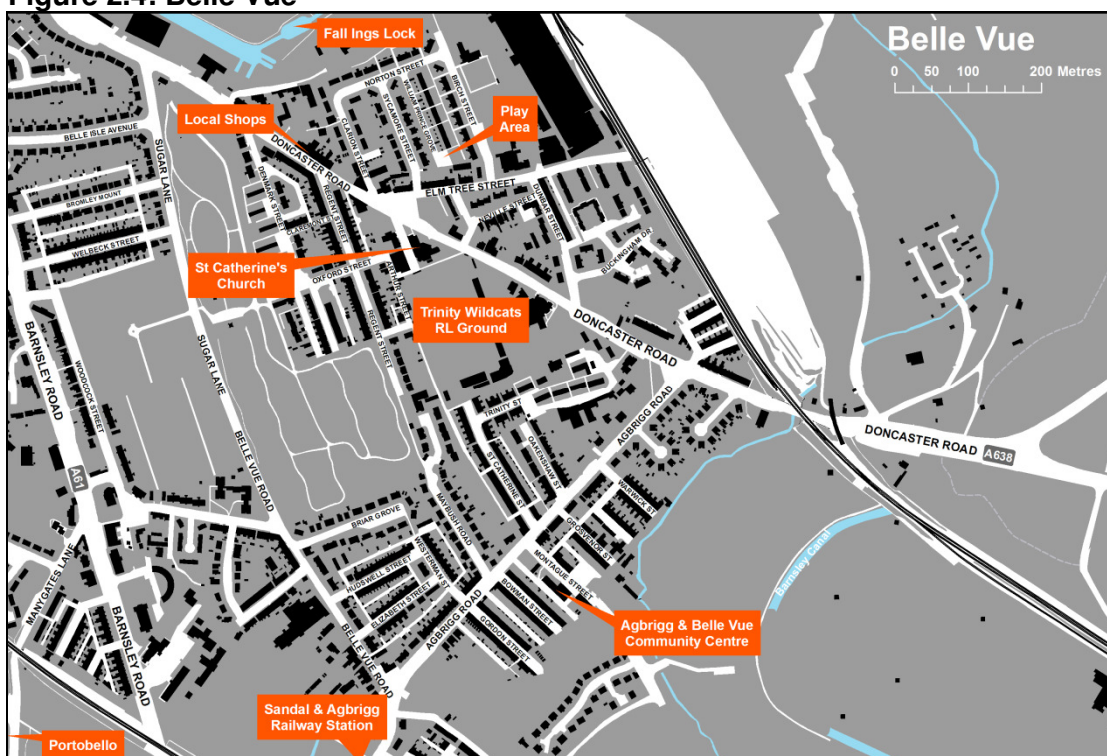
Figure 2.3: Portobello



Source: Ordnance Survey/Digimap, a JISC/Edina Supplied service.

In stark contrast, Belle Vue, whose layout is highlighted in Figure 2.4, is relatively well served in terms of shops. The area, which comprises a mixture of property types, has a longer history than Portobello and was once a major centre for mining and engineering. Unlike Portobello, there are relatively few green spaces within Belle Vue, although part of the area is bounded by a canal, and it has much higher (property) density than its counterpart. The area is divided by one of busiest transport arteries in Wakefield: the Doncaster Road. Congestion on this road, and in the area as a whole, hits its peak when the professional rugby league team which is located in the area - the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats - play their home games.

Figure 2.4: Belle Vue



Source: Ordnance Survey/Digimap, a JISC/Edina Supplied service.

Housing

In terms of the housing stocks of Portobello and Belle Vue, both have a mix of housing types. In Belle Vue, the most common housing type is terraced housing (49.9 per cent) followed by flats (32.1 per cent) and semi-detached houses (10.1 per cent). In Portobello, three property types account for nearly 95 per cent of the housing: semi-detached (37.5 per cent); terraced (33.4 per cent); and flats (23.8 per cent).

Table 2.1: Types of Dwelling, 2001

| % of Total | Belle Vue | % | Portobello | % |
|---------------|------------|------|------------|------|
| Detached | 30 | 3.8 | 38 | 5.3 |
| Semi-detached | 79 | 10.1 | 268 | 37.5 |
| Terraced | 390 | 49.9 | 239 | 33.4 |
| Flat | 251 | 32.1 | 170 | 23.8 |
| Caravan/Other | 32 | 4.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| TOTAL | 782 | | 715 | |

SOURCE: Census of Population, 2001, Census Area Statistics, ONS Neighbourhood Statistics. Crown Copyright.

The tenure mix within Belle Vue and Portobello differs markedly, as table 2.2 reveals. In Portobello, the dominant tenure is social housing, which accounts for 76.5 per cent of the housing stock, and most of the social housing units on the estate are owned by WDH. The situation is very different in Belle Vue and the area may justifiably be described as a 'mixed tenure' area, with three main housing tenures represented in the area: social renting (76.5 per cent); home-ownership (37.6 per cent) and private rented (18.3 per cent). The location of WDH's housing in the study area is highlighted in Figure 2.2.

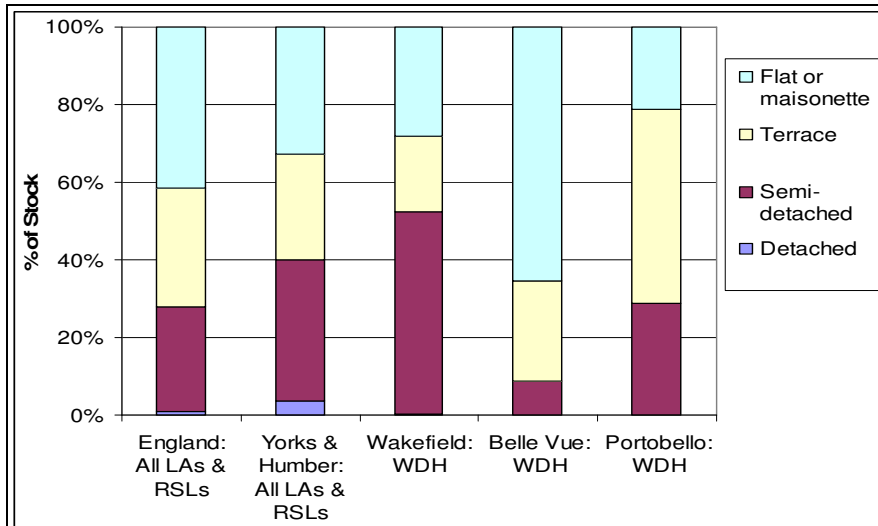
Table 2.2: Tenure of Resident Households, 2001

| % of Total | Belle Vue | Portobello |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Owned outright | 15.6 | 5.4 |
| Owned with mortgage | 22.0 | 13.5 |
| Shared ownership | 1.2 | 0.5 |
| Social rented | 42.9 | 76.5 |
| Private rented/other | 18.3 | 4.2 |

SOURCE: Census of Population, 2001, Census Area Statistics, ONS Neighbourhood Statistics. Crown Copyright.

Figure 2.5 portrays the distribution of WDH stock by dwelling type for the two parts of the study area, in comparison with its portfolio across Wakefield as a whole, and with social rented housing generally in the wider region and in England. Again, a major contrast between Belle Vue and Portobello emerges. Thus, the former has flats and maisonettes making up the bulk of its social housing, whereas the latter has an above average presence of terraced dwellings. In Belle Vue the proportion of terraced houses is around the regional average, but it has relatively few semi-detached units. Portobello lies close to the national average for this type of dwelling, but in turn is well below the norm as far as flats and maisonettes are concerned.

Figure 2.5: WDH, RSL and Local Authority Housing Stock by Dwelling Type, 2006



SOURCE: WDH Property Records; DCLG Survey of English Housing, 2005-6, Tables S120 and S136; Census Area Statistics Table K056.

NOTE: Yorkshire and the Humber figures have been derived by combining Census data with non-tenure specific counts contained in SEH Table S136.

During the early 2000s, demand for social housing in Wakefield increased at a much greater rate than the regional and national averages, with the waiting list almost quadrupling between 2001 and 2007, with the largest growth from 2004 onwards (see Table 2.3). This saw the percentage of households in the District registered on the list rise from just under four to over 13. This meant that, excluding London Boroughs, Wakefield had the twelfth highest proportion of its households on the waiting list of all English local authority districts.

Table 2.3: Growth in House Waiting Lists, 2001-2007

| | % Increase 2001-2004 | % Increase 2004-2007 | % Increase 2001-2007 | % H'holds on List 2001 | % H'holds on List 2007 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| England | 38.3 | 16.5 | 61.1 | 5.1 | 7.8 |
| Yorkshire & Humber | 31.4 | 36.6 | 79.6 | 7.3 | 12.4 |
| West Yorkshire | 63.4 | 39.3 | 127.7 | 5.2 | 11.2 |
| Wakefield | 38.8 | 182.7 | 292.4 | 3.6 | 13.4 |

Source: CLG Housing and Planning Statistics - Live tables: Tables 406 and 600

Prior to commencement of the modernisation programme in 2007, this huge surge in the number of people looking to move into social housing was inevitably mirrored by high levels of interest in any dwellings that became vacant and were offered for letting in Portobello and Belle Vue. During this time, around 10 per cent of WDH properties in the study area became available for new tenancies each year (compared to eight per cent of all WDH stock). According to data extracted from *Homesearch* (the new choice-based lettings system introduced in October 2006) each of these then attracted large numbers of bids, although there were variations between the two areas and according to property type (see Table 2.4). Unfortunately there are no equivalent figures for WDH properties as a whole.

Table 2.4: WDH Tenancy Bids: Average Number per Property, 2006-2007

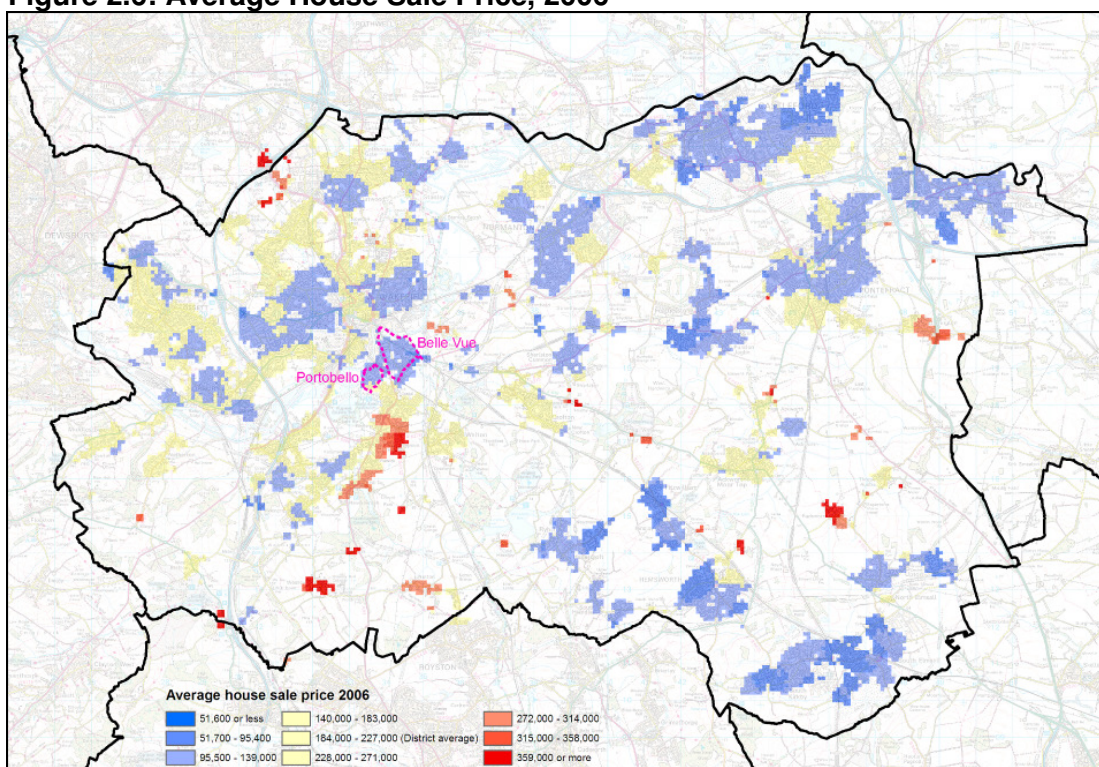
| | Flats | Houses | Singles | All |
|------------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| Belle Vue | 33.2 | 107.8 | n/a | 45.1 |
| Portobello | 15.5 | 74.4 | 32.5 | 52.7 |
| Study Area | 30.5 | 84.7 | 32.5 | 47.5 |

Source: WDH Homesearch records for Belle Vue and Portobello properties

House sale prices are also often used as a barometer of the 'health' of a neighbourhood. In some areas this reflects external confidence in the area's housing market. In other types of neighbourhood, however, prices reflect changes that are brought about by regeneration or house building activity. Portobello and Belle Vue are two contrasting neighbourhoods in terms of the housing market. As noted earlier, in Belle Vue, a significant proportion of the housing stock is in the private sector – either owned or rented – and as such there is a mature local housing market as properties are bought and sold. By way of contrast, the local authority origins of much of Portobello's housing has meant that very few properties have traditionally been bought and sold. Furthermore, the uptake of the Right to Buy scheme has been relatively low.

Figure 2.6 shows the average house prices in Wakefield prior to the commencement of the improvement programme. It reveals that Belle Vue and Portobello were low priced areas. Typically, in 2006 house sale prices were around £40,000 cheaper in the study area than across the district as a whole. Belle Vue prices were below the £100,000 barrier, while a typical house sale in Wakefield, West Yorkshire or across the region was around £140,000. Prices in Portobello were lower than those in Belle Vue.

Figure 2.6: Average House Sale Price, 2006



Data sourced from Land Registry 'price paid dataset.' Background map © Crown Copyright Ordnance Survey. All rights reserved. Wakefield and District Housing, 2008.

The local population

In 2007 it was estimated that the study area had a population of 3,228, based on the two Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), with the number fairly evenly divided between Portobello and Belle Vue. In terms of age structure the two are rather different, with Belle Vue having an above average proportion of people of working age, and Portobello an above average proportion of children and young people. Both have relatively small numbers of older people (i.e., people over pensionable age).

As table 2.5 illustrates, the area has a significant BME population who are predominantly resident in Belle Vue: Portobello is a largely 'white' area. The largest non-white group in Belle Vue is 'Asian' and this group accounted for 15.6 per cent of residents in the neighbourhood in 2001. The study area also has a small Polish population, which is predominantly housed in Belle Vue.

Table 2.5: Ethnic Origin of the Resident Population, 2001

| % of Total | Belle Vue | Portobello |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| White | 83.4 | 96.9 |
| Mixed | 0.6 | 1.0 |
| Asian | 15.6 | 1.6 |
| Black | 0.2 | 0.5 |
| Chinese/Other | 0.2 | 0.0 |

Source: Census of Population, 2001, Census Area Statistics, ONS Neighbourhood Statistics. Crown Copyright.

In terms of households, in 2001 both parts of the study area had on average fewer people in each household than in the larger benchmark areas (see Table 2.4), with Belle Vue well below, and Portobello slightly below, these levels. This was closely linked to the relatively high proportions of single person and lone parent households in both parts of the study area. Interestingly, although both were above benchmark averages on both counts, Belle Vue had far more single person households and Portobello far more lone parent households.

Table 2.6: Average Household Size, 2001

| | No. of Persons |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Belle Vue | 2.11 |
| Portobello | 2.29 |
| STUDY AREA | 2.20 |
| Wakefield | 2.39 |
| Yorks & Humber | 2.41 |
| England | 2.42 |

SOURCE: Census of Population, 2001 (from Neighbourhood Statistics). Crown Copyright

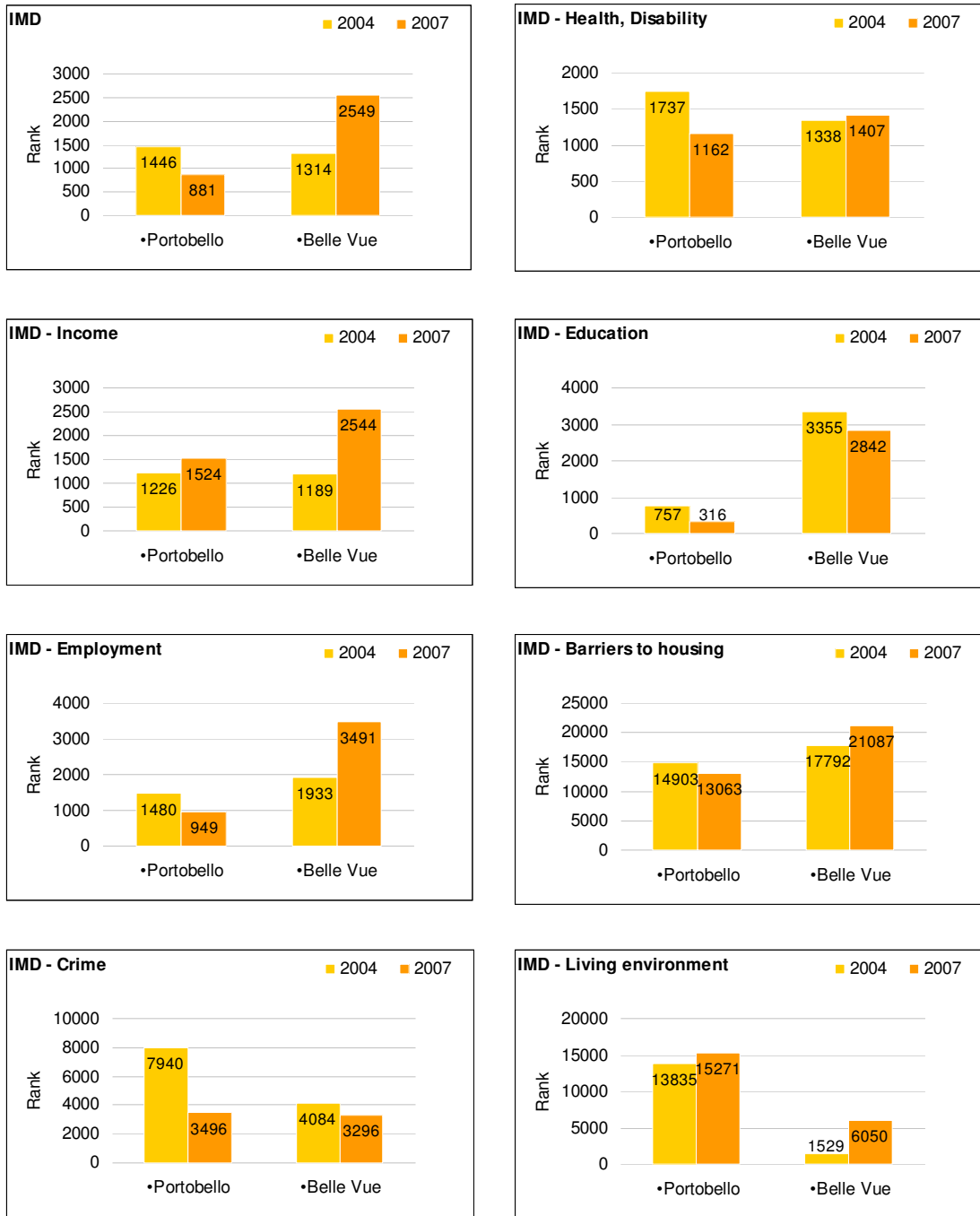
Multiple Deprivation

Analysis of the 2004 and 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation revealed that both neighbourhoods continued to fare relatively poorly, being ranked in the most deprived areas in England as a whole. The charts in Figure 2.7 summarise the positions of the two areas and the changes between the two years.³ However, there did appear to be some divergence, with Belle Vue having an improved comparative position, but Portobello the opposite. In other words, in 2007 Belle Vue was ranked lower among England's neighbourhoods than it was in 2004, while Portobello was ranked higher (where 1 = the most deprived neighbourhood in England).

Portobello was ranked as particularly deprived in terms of employment, and education, skills and training. 26 per cent of households are classed as 'employment deprived'. In contrast, Belle Vue had particularly high deprivation scores in terms of health, crime and the quality of the living environment. Both areas were classed as income deprived, with this affecting 42 per cent of households in Portobello and 37 per cent of households in Belle Vue.

³ Note that comparison should **not** be made of scores between different time periods. However, it is legitimate to compare ranks.

Figure 2.7: Change in Index of Deprivation neighbourhood rank, by indicator



Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2004, 2007 (ODPM/DCLG)

2.3. The Improvement Programme

As part of a broader programme to refurbish its properties, WDH has improved 812 of its properties in Portobello and Belle Vue. As table 2.7 reveals, WDH has installed central heating, new windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms in all of its properties. Some properties have also had roof replacements and new damp-proof courses. The work was undertaken in three phases across the study area: Portobello 1; Portobello 2 and Belle Vue. As the table illustrates, Portobello Phases 1 and 2 were completed in April 2008 while the Belle Vue phase was completed in August 2008. Keepmoat undertook much of the improvement work.

Table 2.7: A Summary of the Housing Improvement Programme in Portobello and Belle Vue

| | Portobello Phase 1 | Portobello Phase 2 | Belle Vue |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| No of Properties | 273 | 273 | 266 |
| Type of Construction | All properties have been built using traditional techniques. Property types range from town, semi detached family properties and bungalows built in circa 1940 to two storey flats built between 1960 and 1980. | All properties have been built using traditional techniques. Property types range from town, semi detached family properties and bungalows built in circa 1940 to two storey flats built between 1960 and 1980. | All properties have been built using traditional techniques. Property types range from town and semi detached family properties to two storey flats built between 1940 and 1980. |
| Extent of works | Replacement of windows and doors, rewiring, central heating, New kitchen and new bathrooms. Some properties will also have new roofs and new damp-proof courses. | Replacement of windows and doors, rewiring, central heating, New kitchen and new bathrooms. Some properties will also have new roofs and new damp-proof courses. | Replacement of windows and doors, rewiring, central heating, New kitchen and new bathrooms. |
| Start and Completion dates | 25 June 2007 to 4 April 2008 | 11 June 2007 to 4 April 2008 | 22 October 2007 to 8 August 2008 |
| No of properties Completed | 220 | 276 | 207 |
| No of properties Working in | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Average Cost | £19271 | £19271 | £15941 |
| Average Time in Property | 24 | 28 | 25 |
| Satisfaction rating | 91% | 91% | 89% |
| % of local labour Employed | 32% | 42% | 32% |

The broader physical environment in the study area is also being improved with particular attention focusing on open spaces and 'greening' the environment. This work is funded by WDH with Groundwork being employed to undertake the improvements. Most of this activity will be undertaken in Portobello, which has considerably more open space than Belle Vue, whose public spaces have been improved by the Agbrigg and Belle Vue Neighbourhood Management Pilot (NMP) that was based in the study area for three years of the evaluation⁴ (more information about the pilot is provided in Section 2.4). The environmental improvement in Portobello, which began in April 2010, will run for two years and will involve seven projects with the most visible and high profile being the project centred on the shopping area, which involves improvements to shop frontages and the space in front of the shops. At the time of writing, two projects had been completed.

⁴ WDH's environmental improvement programme in Belle Vue was confined to the installation of property railings in one part of the neighbourhood and some small scale minor cleaning and shrub works. However, it is also worth noting that it made a financial contribution to the William Prince Grove play area refurbishment project.

2.4. Policy Context, Initiatives and Developments in the Study Area

For the first three years of the evaluation, part of the study area - Belle Vue - was also home to another policy initiative: the NMP in Agbrigg and Belle Vue, which closed on March 31st 2010. This pilot, which was one of three across the borough – the other two were located in Kinsley and Fitzwilliam and Airedale and Ferry Fryston – was concerned with creating “Safer Stronger Communities” by:

- “better management of the local environment
- increasing community safety
- working with young people
- encouraging employment opportunities
- developing support for community groups; and
- empowering local people to take a more pro-active role in decision making.”

(Wakefield MDC, 2007 available from: www.wakefieldlsp.agbriggandbellevue).

The Agbrigg and Belle Vue Neighbourhood Masterplan, which was published in November 2007, highlighted the activities that the NMP planned to undertake in the area. The pilot was based in the Agbrigg and Belle Vue Community Centre on Montague Street, where a small team was located. The neighbourhood management team worked closely with local residents in the area. Meetings to discuss local issues were well attended by local residents and a Board, which included some residents, was established in the area.

The NMP undertook a number of activities. These included: improving footpaths and ginnels; the creation of a community recycling area; community clean-up events; community impact days; the refurbishment of the William Prince Grove play area; the construction of a ‘welcome to Belle Vue’ structure on the corner of Doncaster Road/ Elm Street; and the production of community arts work in the form of banners lining key thoroughfares in the area.

There have been other policy initiatives in the study area, although these have been on a much smaller (and less formal) scale than the NMP and (especially) the improvement programme. One is worthy of particular mention here - the Portobello Community Forum (PCF) – as it has been behind a number of key developments within Portobello during the course of the study. The PCF is a vehicle for allowing all key stakeholder organisations on the estate, including WDH, to work together in partnership. As part of this process, the PCF meets on a regular basis to discuss estate issues. The principal driving force behind the PCF is Sally Martin, who is funded by the Church Urban Fund to undertake community development work on the estate. Sally (and the PCF) is based in the Rainbow Cafe, which is located at the heart of the estate in its shopping area.

The PCF has been behind three significant developments on the estate since the evaluation began, all of which have been supported and partly funded by WDH: the refurbishment of the community centre, which was re-opened (after a long period of closure because of serious structural defects) in the summer of 2008; the modernisation and reconfiguration of the Rainbow Cafe in two phases, the last of which took place in 2010; and the construction of a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on Manygates Park, which opened in 2010. Furthermore, the PCF are the driving force behind the annual community festival, Soul Portobello, which is held over the period of a week in the summer.

2.5. The Literature on the Impact of Housing Improvement Programmes

The history of housing modernisation in England can be traced back nearly 40 years to the introduction of General Improvement Areas and Housing Action Areas which emerged in response to poor quality private sector housing during the 1970s (CRESR, 2009). These initiatives heralded the start of a general shift away from redevelopment towards refurbishment, a trend which continued into the 1980s and 1990s, when attention began to focus on the quality of the public sector housing stock following years of under-investment and poor design quality.

Over the last decade in particular, many studies have sought to explore the impact of housing modernisation programmes, yet the literature on the subject is limited in two principal ways. Firstly, because most of it is quantitative in nature, it sheds relatively little light on the impact of the programmes on residents themselves and, to a large degree, their voices are conspicuous by their absence. As part of this phenomenon, most recent studies in the field have been output driven or technical in nature, being concerned with standards, finance or value for money, and have neglected the views of residents' as the immediate beneficiaries. This approach is perfectly exemplified by the recent, and only, review of the Decent Homes programme which was undertaken by the National Audit Office (National Audit Office, 2010).

The failure to afford residents a 'voice' in the evaluation of regeneration initiatives has sparked calls for more longitudinal and participatory approaches which encompass exploration of their attitudes and perceptions. This view is predicated on the belief that residents prefer to express their views in "holistic visions" using "emotive aesthetic reasoning" which cannot be captured by quantitative techniques (Smith and Grimshaw, 2005).

Secondly, most studies into the field have tended to be concerned with exploring the impact of modernisation in a specific area and have not adopted a holistic multi thematic approach to evaluation. These include some (excellent) studies which have sought to capture the views of residents, albeit only in relation to one specific improvement area (Gilbertson *et al*, 2006; Cole *et al*, 1999; Cole *et al*, 2005). In terms of specific impact areas that researchers have been concerned with, there has been a particular concern about the impact of housing improvement programmes on health and energy efficiency.

The literature on housing modernisation identifies a number of areas where improvement programmes may have a positive impact. These include: bringing empty properties back into use (Department of the Environment, 1996; Department of the Environment, 1997), health, emotional well-being, safety and security in the home (Gilbertson *et al*, 2006; Allen, 2000, Critchely *et al*, 2008) and energy efficiency (Bell and Lowe, 2000). However, there is little evidence to suggest that housing modernisation schemes ameliorate socio-economic problems within a neighbourhood. More specifically, research suggests that they have little impact on poverty and social deprivation (Crook *et al*, 1996; Central Research Unit, 1996), estate image and reputation (Dean and Hastings, 2000), local enterprise (Department of the Environment, 1996), and levels of housing demand (Department of the Environment, 1997).

It is also worth flagging up at this juncture that there is other literature of relevance to this study – that relating to the "home." It is relevant because it highlights the importance to residents of a number of 'psycho social' aspects associated with living in a property that may potentially accrue from modernisation, or be enhanced by it, as "property" becomes "home." These include the importance of home: as a safe haven; a place of autonomy; and a source of status (Saunders, 1990; Giddens, 1991).

2.6. Summary

- the area comprises two distinct neighbourhoods: Portobello, a social housing estate; and Belle Vue, a mixed tenure neighbourhood
- work began on building the Portobello estate, which predominantly comprises “traditional” family houses on a greenfield site on the edge of Wakefield, in the 1930s. Although the estate is only a mile from the centre of Wakefield, it is bounded by a number of (aesthetically attractive) open spaces: Manygates Park; Sandal Castle; Pugneys Country Park and the River Calder. Within the estate itself there are a number of open spaces and it may be described as being relatively green: in addition to the numerous public green spaces within it, its gardens are relatively large. The area has a small shopping centre which comprises six units. However, at the time of writing only three of these were occupied
- in stark contrast, Belle Vue is relatively well served in terms of shops. The area, which comprises a mixture of property types, has a longer history than Portobello and was once a major centre for mining and engineering. Unlike Portobello, there are relatively few green spaces within the area, although part of the area is bounded by a canal, and it has much higher (property) density than its counterpart. The area is divided by one of busiest transport arteries in Wakefield: the Doncaster Road. Congestion on this road, and in the area as a whole, hits its peak when the professional rugby league team which is located in the area – the Wakefield Trinity Wildcats – play their home games
- in 2007 it was estimated that the study area had a population of 3,228, which was fairly evenly divided between Portobello and Belle Vue. The area has a significant Black and Minority Ethnic population who are predominantly resident in Belle Vue: Portobello is a largely ‘white’ area. The largest ethnic group in Belle Vue is ‘Asian’ and this group accounted for 15.6 per cent of residents in the neighbourhood in 2001. The study area also has a small Polish population, which is predominantly housed in Belle Vue
- as part of a broader programme to refurbish its properties, WDH has improved 812 of its properties in Portobello and Belle Vue. WDH has installed central heating, new windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms in all of its properties. Some properties have also had roof replacements and new damp proof courses. The work was undertaken in three phases across the study area: Portobello 1; Portobello 2 and Belle Vue. As the table illustrates, Portobello Phases 1 and 2 were completed in April 2008 while the Belle Vue phase was completed in August 2008
- the broader physical environment in the study area is also being improved with particular attention focusing on open spaces and ‘greening’ the environment. This work is funded by WDH with Groundwork being employed to undertake the improvements. Most of this activity will be undertaken in Portobello, which has considerably more open space than Belle Vue (the public space improvement programme in Belle Vue has already been completed). The environmental improvement in Portobello, which began in April 2010, will run for two years and will involve seven projects with perhaps the most visible and high profile being the project centred on shop area, which involves improvements to shop frontages and the space in front of the shops
- for the first three years of the evaluation part of the study area - Belle Vue - was also home to another policy initiative: the neighbourhood management pilot (NMP) in Agbrigg and Belle Vue, which closed on March 31st 2010. The NMP undertook a number of activities. These included: improving footpaths and ginnels; the creation of a community recycling area; community clean-up events;

community impact days; the refurbishment of the William Prince Grove play area; the construction of a 'welcome to Belle Vue' structure on the corner of Doncaster Road/ Elm Street; and the production of community arts work in the form of banners lining key thoroughfares in the area

- there have been other policy initiatives in the study area although these have been on a much smaller (and less formal) scale - the NMP and (especially) the improvement programme. One is worthy particular of mention here - the Portobello Community Forum – as it has been behind a number of key developments within Portobello during the course of the study
- over the last decade in particular, many academic studies have sought to explore the impact of housing modernisation programmes, yet the literature on the subject is limited in two principal ways. First, because most of it is quantitative in nature, it sheds relatively little light on the impact of the programmes on residents themselves and, to a large degree, their voices are conspicuous by their absence. Second, most studies into the field have tended to be concerned with exploring the impact of modernisation in relation to a specific theme and have not adopted a holistic multi-themed approach to evaluation (Walshaw, forthcoming).

3. Research Approach

3.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the approach taken to the research by the study team. It is divided into three parts. It begins by highlighting some of the conceptual problems associated with impact assessment and then continues by highlighting the key features of the research approach. The final section sets out our approach to the presentation of our analysis and findings throughout the rest of the report.

3.2. The Difficulties Associated with Assessing the Impact of Area Based Improvement Programmes

As has been noted by a number of other studies, researchers are confronted by a number of conceptual problems when seeking to highlight and measure the impact of area based regeneration programmes, such as the one undertaken by WDH in Portobello and Belle Vue. These problems, which were first identified in the 1994 report, *Assessing the Impact of Urban Policy* (Department of the Environment, 1994), are summarised in a recent report produced as part of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) national evaluation (DCLG, 2010, p18)⁵:

- “the **counterfactual**: what would have happened to the area in the absence of intervention – if it is not possible to identify a plausible counterfactual, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to establish with any certainty that proportion of change occurring in any intervention area which can reasonably be attributed to the ABI (area based initiative) in question
- the **confounding** problem: arising from the fact that outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods can be affected by many policies, some of which may arise from activity undertaken by the relevant ABI, others which reflect wider market and government forces and the impact of other ABIs
- the **contextual** problem: deprived areas operate within different social and economic conditions, relatively modest changes in outcomes achieved by an ABI in more disadvantaged regions of the country might actually be ‘worth more’ than larger changes in more prosperous localities
- the **contiguity** problem: the benefits arising from interventions in any ABI can spill over into adjacent neighbourhoods
- the **combinatorial** issue: assistance is often delivered in different packages.”

Researchers are confronted by another important problem: that is, some impacts of a regeneration programme may emerge long after its evaluation has been completed, and therefore will not be captured by it.

⁵ *The Assessing the Impact of Urban Policy* (Department of the Environment, 1994) report identified a sixth ‘C’: choice, which was defined as follows: “(another conceptual problem with area based policy evaluations is) the changing choice problem which arises from the fact that the sets of places targeted to receive preferential assistance alters over time and across different programmes so that any decision to assign particular authorities to ‘policy on’ or a ‘policy off’ set cannot apply unambiguously over the whole time span and for all elements of the policy.” (op.cit, p4)

Even for generously funded evaluations, such as the NDC Evaluation, there are no easy solutions to these problems and the difficulty of identifying outcomes to emerge from area based programmes has been recognised by O'Reilly (2007). However, there is one problem that the researcher may be able to (to some extent) nullify: the counterfactual. This was the case in the NDC national evaluation which established a comparator sample, comprising residents in 'policy off' areas similar to the 39 NDC Partnership areas. However, it was not possible to establish a comparator sample for this study. This was because a suitable comparator area does not exist in the local area for the simple reason that WDH has improved *all* of its housing stock in the Wakefield district. Furthermore, social landlords across the country were also undertaking significant housing improvements at the same time, diminishing the possibility for comparison outside Wakefield.

While the importance of these conceptual problems should not be downplayed, we feel that (to a large degree) we have negated most of them by the approach we have taken to the research. This is now explored in further detail.

3.3. Research Approach

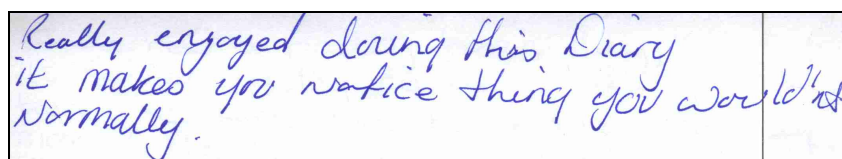
The key features of our approach to the research were:

- firstly, in order to minimise the impact of the conceptual challenges associated with impact assessment highlighted above, a **multi-method design** that included numerous research instruments. This allowed the data to be triangulated from a range of perspectives. Furthermore, the use of a multitude of research methods allowed the study team to gain a comprehensive and detailed dataset in relation to the study area, thereby enhancing its integrity
- secondly, **placing residents at the heart of the research process**. This involved both ensuring that they were involved in the mechanics of the research process itself and that fieldwork centred on capturing their "voices", by employing an approach which focused on exploring their experiences, attitudes and perceptions
- thirdly, in order to facilitate this, we employed a number of seldom used (in the context of policy evaluations) and "**innovative**" **research instruments** (diary keeping; photography; and film making) which helped to maintain the focus on residents and beneficiaries of the improvement programme
- fourthly, a recognition that the study area comprised two very **different neighbourhoods**. Wherever possible we treated Portobello and Belle Vue as two discrete study areas and much of the analysis presented in this report is presented at the neighbourhood level
- fifthly, the emphasis placed on **tracking change at the individual level** in order to maximise the opportunities provided by the length of the study. As will be explored below, we have done so through both our qualitative and quantitative work
- sixthly, a **multi-thematic approach**, which reflects our belief that the impact of housing improvement programmes may not necessarily be confined to the housing domain alone. We have examined data relating to a number of domains including health, crime and anti-social behaviour, education, and economic activity. Furthermore, we have not confined our attention to exploring the impact of the programme on WDH tenants only – we have also sought to establish its impact on other residents in the area and the neighbourhood as a whole

- seventhly, in line with the objectives of the *Research Brief*, a particular focus on the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of **a number of population groups** of particular interest to WDH (and ourselves): younger residents; older residents; BME residents; and economically inactive residents
- finally, the importance of highlighting key findings, issues and policy lessons from the study as soon as they emerged. WDH and their partners have responded to many of these. As such, the study may be described as being “**action research.**”

The principal research instruments employed by the study team were:

- **residents’ surveys.** In both 2007 and 2010 we commissioned BMG Ltd to survey residents in the study area, with more than 500 residents being interviewed on both occasions. The statistical error associated with a sample of this size is relatively small so that the data to emerge from the surveys is comparatively robust. In order to maximise the accuracy of our assessment of change within the study area, BMG were instructed to re-interview as many of the 2007 sample as possible to permit a longitudinal analysis. A longitudinal data set comprising some 157 respondents was achieved. The data analysed from the surveys was subject to a range of statistical analysis techniques including logistic regression modelling, which is described in Appendix One
- **in-depth resident interviews.** In all, some 95 in-depth interviews were conducted with residents throughout the course of the project, with interviews lasting between thirty minutes and an hour. In order to explore change at the individual level, eight residents were re-interviewed on a number of occasions during the study so that their housing ‘stories’ could be followed over the duration of the project (three of these stories are presented in chapter eight). The remaining interviews can be categorised into two overlapping groups: those that were concerned with assessing the impact of the housing improvement programme; and those that were concerned with exploring the views of the four key population groups identified above of particular interest to WDH and the study team
- **resident diary keeping exercise.** A small number of residents took part in a solicited diary keeping exercise which involved them recording their thoughts, experiences, and feelings over a one week period. The exercise proved a great success and we were able to garner new insights into the study area, insights that would not have been secured from the use of more ‘traditional’ research methods. Our diarists also appeared to find the exercise useful, as the following excerpt, which is one of many contained in the report, illustrates:



Really enjoyed doing this Diary
it makes you notice things you wouldn't
normally.

- **resident photography.** Some fifteen residents took part in a *photo novella* exercise. This involved residents photographing aspects of their lives that were of interest and/or importance to them using a disposable camera given to them by the study team. They were also asked to articulate the significance of photographs. Again, on a number of different levels, this exercise proved a great success and this report contains numerous photographs (complete with explanatory captions) produced by residents

- **resident focus groups.** A number of resident groups were held during the course of the project, some of which were configured by population group and some by theme. Along with the data generated from the diary and photography exercises and resident interviews, the data generated from the resident focus groups was subject to rigorous qualitative data analysis
- **film making.** A community film making company, Littlestar, was employed to make films about the study area *before* and *after* the improvement programme in order to highlight its impact. Thus in 2007, Littlestar, working very closely with members of the local community, many of whom received film making training and conducted interviews, made two films about life in the study area; one which was concerned with Portobello and one with Belle Vue. In 2010, Littlestar returned to the study area to make another two films about how it had changed in the eyes of local residents. Through the use of hyperlinks, this report links to a number of parts of these films, which are available in their entirety at: **hyperlink - insert link to webpage where both films are available in full**
- **stakeholder interviews.** Throughout the course of the project more than 80 interviews were conducted with representatives from a range of organisations with a 'stake' in Portobello and Belle Vue including: community organisations; WDH; Wakefield Council; developers; contractors; letting agents; estate agents; community development organisations; schools; West Yorkshire police service; local businesses; and health agencies
- **secondary data collection and analysis.** Consistent with the desire of the study team to adopt a holistic approach to the research process, as noted earlier, it examined data relating to a large number of themes. While the team collected and analysed data throughout the course of the study, it focused its efforts on producing a comprehensive baseline for the study area (in year one) and establishing whether and how this baseline had changed by the end of the study (in year four).

3.4. Approach to the Presentation of Analysis

It is worth, at this juncture, to briefly reflect on the approach taken by the study team to the presentation of the analysis it has undertaken in relation to the impact of the improvement programme on the study area. When writing this report, we were faced with two options about how to present it. We could either present all of our analysis, regardless of whether it highlighted a demonstrable impact of the improvement programme (or not); or could simply concentrate on highlighting such analysis that revealed a tangible and robust programme impact. After consultation with WDH, we decided to adopt the latter approach in order to keep this report a manageable length. **This means that this report focuses solely on those areas where the programme was shown to have an impact and ignores those areas where it appeared that it did not.** As such, it is important to remember that it only showcases a small proportion of the analysis undertaken by the study team.

3.5. Summary

As has been noted by a number of other studies, researchers are confronted by a number of conceptual problems when seeking to highlight and measure the impact of area based regeneration programmes, such as the one undertaken by WDH in Portobello and Belle Vue, the so called six Cs: the counterfactual; the confounding; the contextual; the contiguity; the combinatorial; and choice problems. While the importance of these conceptual problems should not be downplayed, the approach

taken to the research by the study team has (to a large degree) negated most of them.

The key features of our approach to the research were:

- first, in order to minimise the impact of the conceptual challenges associated with impact assessment highlighted above, a **multi-method design** that included numerous research instruments
- second, **placing residents at the heart of the research process**
- third, in order to facilitate this, we employed a number of seldom used (in the context of policy evaluations) and “**innovative**” **research instruments** (diary keeping; photography; and film making)
- fourth, a recognition that the study area comprised two very **different neighbourhoods**. Wherever possible we treated Portobello and Belle Vue as two discrete study areas
- fifth, the emphasis placed on **tracking change at the individual level** in order to maximise the opportunities provided by the length of the study
- sixth, a **multi-thematic approach**, which reflects our belief that the impact of housing improvement programmes may not be necessarily be confined to the housing domain alone
- seventh, in line with the objectives of the *Research Brief*, a particular focus on the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of **a number of population groups** of particular interest to WDH (and ourselves): younger residents; older residents; BME residents; and economically inactive residents
- finally, the importance of highlighting key findings, issues and policy lessons from the study as soon as they emerged. WDH and their partners have responded to many of these. As such, the study may be described as being “**action research.**”

The principal research instruments employed by the study team were:

- residents’ surveys
- in-depth resident interviews
- resident diary keeping exercise
- resident photography
- resident focus groups
- film making
- stakeholder interviews
- secondary data collection and analysis.

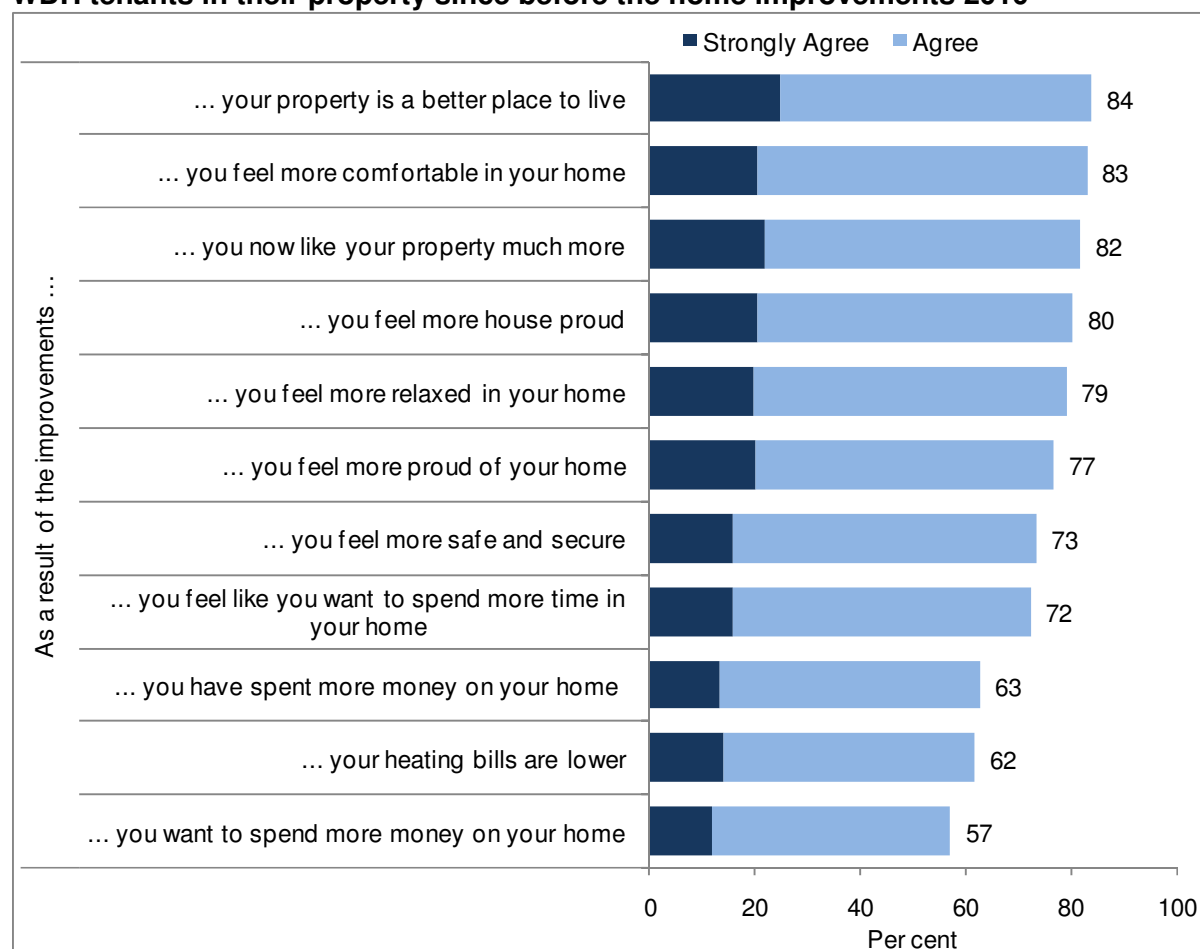
SECTION TWO – FINDINGS

Introduction to the Section

This section presents the key findings of the study, with particular attention focusing on highlighting the key impacts of the improvement programme. The identification of these was based on a rigorous analysis of *all* the data sources examined by the study team, whether quantitative or qualitative, or primary or secondary. This analysis revealed a complex situation where impacts were interrelated and overlapped, and where some appeared to be more important than others, with there appearing to be a 'hierarchy' within them.

However, data garnered from the 2010 household survey provides useful a starting point for understanding these impacts, and the data presented in the figure below is particularly illuminating.

Figure S2.1: Views of the home as a result of the housing improvement programme: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

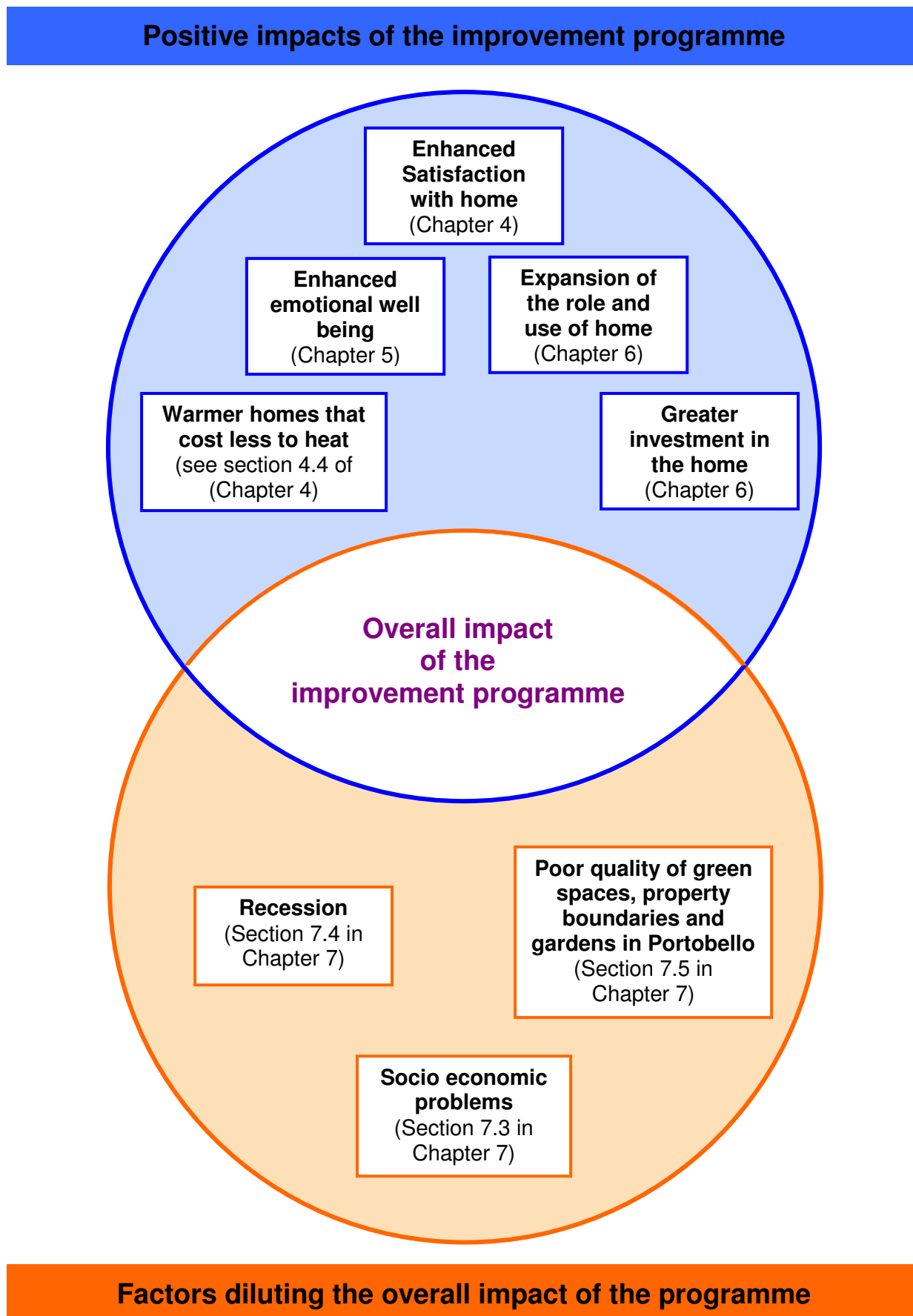
Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

The figure paints a very positive picture, highlighting a number of positive impacts of the programme, many of which extend beyond the primary objective of housing modernisation as defined by the Decent Homes programme i.e. to ensure that properties are wind and weather tight, warm and have modern facilities (National Audit Office, 2010).

While the impacts identified above are inextricably interconnected, it was possible to group them into five, albeit overlapping, categories, which, on the basis of all the analysis undertaken by the study team, represent the principal impacts of the improvement programme. The key impacts of the programme, which are also highlighted in figure S2.1, are:

- enhanced resident satisfaction with their homes
- warmer homes that cost less to heat
- enhanced emotional well-being of residents
- greater investment in their homes by residents
- expansion of the role and uses of the home.

Figure S2.2: A Framework for Understanding the Impact of the Improvement Programme



Each of these "headline" impacts identified in Figure S2.2 are explored over the course of the next three chapters. The most important of these - enhanced satisfaction with the home and greater emotional well-being – have their own dedicated chapters (four and five respectively). Findings relating to the warmth and heating of the home are considered as part of the exploration of enhanced satisfaction with accommodation in section 4.4, given the centrality of warmer homes to enhanced satisfaction with the home. The two remaining headline impacts are explored in Chapter Six, which looks at changing attitudes towards the home.

As noted earlier, we found that each of the headline impacts identified above were underpinned by a number of 'lower order', but still important, impacts to accrue from the improvement programme, and these are also explored in the next three chapters. Reflecting the research approach taken by the study team, which involved the utilisation of a number of research instruments, the discussion draws on a range of different data sources including: in depth resident interviews; stakeholder interviews; resident focus groups; photo novella exercises; resident films; secondary data; and household surveys.

At this juncture, it is important to make three important observations about the analysis of the material garnered from the last of these sources.

- first, in addition to analysing the data at the *aggregate* level (i.e. for the sample as a whole), the study team has undertaken *sub group* analysis which has explored how the results differ (or not) by key population groups. This revealed there to be very few statistically significant⁶ differences in the outcomes experienced by the groups examined. These included the following eight 'paired' groups: residents in employment and not in employment (aged 16 to 64); economically active and inactive respondents (aged 16 to 64); men and women; and residents with long standing limiting illnesses and those without. The significance of household composition and length of residence at current address was also assessed as part of this exercise
- the second relates to the important issue of the statistical validity of the analysis undertaken by the study team, particular in relation to exploring changes between 2007 and 2010 and/ or differences between sub groups. Although the margin of errors⁷ associated with the aggregate samples sizes used by the study team are relatively small (in both 2007 and 2010, more around 500 residents were surveyed), some of the findings may not be statistically significant, particularly when the data is disaggregated and/ or the differences in response are relatively small. Thus, where differences are statistically significant, this is acknowledged in the commentary
- third, and linked to the preceding point, the study team have made extensive use of the statistical technique, logistic regression modelling, to better provide a more accurate assessment of associations between variables and, in doing so, to provide a clearer (and more robust) understanding of some of the key issues to emerge from the impact analysis (further information about this technique is provided in section 4.9 and Appendix One).

Before turning our attention to the first of the key impacts to emerge from the improvement programme – enhanced satisfaction with accommodation – it is important to return once

⁶ Statistical significance is explained in Appendix 1.

⁷ Margin of error is the degree of confidence that can be placed on a given statistic. Since the percentages within this report have been garnered from a sample survey and not a survey of the entire population they represent only an estimate of the true population. If a different sample of residents had been sampled a different estimate would most likely have been obtained. However, it is possible to estimate the expected margin of error at a given level for a given statistic and within this band we have a given level of confidence (in this study 95 per cent) that the true population value lies. The margin of error associated with the full 2007 and 2010 samples is roughly plus or minus 2.5 to 4.5 per cent depending on the given percentage response: percentages closer to 50 per cent have a wider margin of error compared to those around 0 and 100 per cent.

more to Figure 4.1. This is because it notes that the overall impact of the improvement programme appears to be being diluted by three factors that are not directly connected to the programme *per se and* 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; recession; and in Portobello, the poor (quality) of its green spaces and property boundaries. These important issues are explored in the penultimate chapter in this section, chapter seven.

The last chapter in this section presents the housing 'stories' of three long standing WDH tenants in the study area, Janette, Lorraine and Coleen, whose circumstances, experiences, perceptions and attitudes have been tracked closely since study began in 2007. All three have lived in the same property since the project began and therefore are able to provide valuable *rounded and multi dimensional* accounts of the impact of the improvement programme.

4. Enhanced Satisfaction with the Home

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned principally with exploring the most significant and direct impact of the improvement programme: that residents are more satisfied with their homes. In doing so, it also explores another of the programme's key headline impacts: that WDH's modernised homes are now perceived to be warmer and less expensive to heat. It identifies the key drivers of enhanced satisfaction with accommodation, which in their own right are important impacts to accrue from the improvement programme. The penultimate section posits that housing satisfaction may have actually reduced since the programme was completed and explores the reasons for this. The chapter concludes by using the statistical modelling techniques to highlight:

- the aspects of the home that exert the largest influence on residents' satisfaction with their accommodation
- the individual elements of the improvement programme that have the largest relative influence on residents *'liking their homes much more'* and thinking their *'property is a better place to live.'*

4.2. Exploring Enhanced Satisfaction with the Home

The nature of the improvement programme meant that one of its principal objectives was enhanced satisfaction with accommodation (which is also sometimes referred to as 'housing satisfaction'). As noted earlier, housing satisfaction has increased. It has increased by a statistically significant level – 11 percentage points – that is well beyond what might have been expected for this type of programme (the percentage of WDH tenants 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their accommodation increased from 77 per cent in 2007 to 88 per cent in 2010). For example, this rate of increase is significantly greater than that experienced in the 39 NDC areas, many of which have been subject to housing improvement programmes. The proportion of social renters in these areas who were satisfied with their housing only increased by three percentage points i.e. from 75 per cent in 2002 to 78 per cent in 2008.

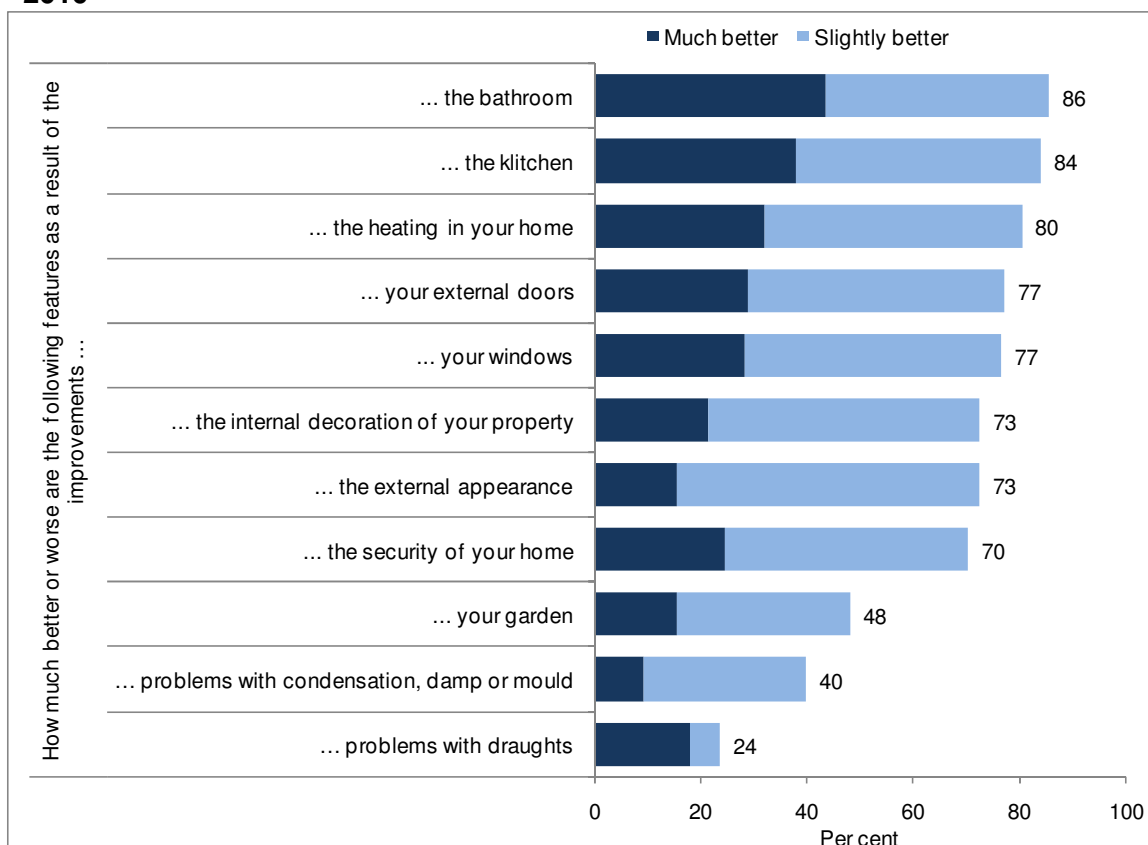
However, it should be noted that increases in housing satisfaction were not evenly experienced by all household types. Couples with dependent children were most likely to experience improvements in satisfaction with accommodation (they experienced a 22 percentage point increase) followed by single parents (16 percentage point increase). There were also indications that the older the resident and the longer they had lived in their current property, the more likely they were to experience positive outcomes. This point is illustrated by the experiences of the longitudinal respondents Janette, Coleen and Lorraine featured in Chapter 8, who are all long standing tenants of their current properties.

Other data collected by the study confirms that a corollary of the housing improvement programme is that residents like their homes more. For example, as is illustrated in Figure 5.1 at the beginning of Chapter five, more than four out of five WDH tenants reported that the improvement programme had made their *'property a*

better place to live in' (84 per cent) and made them *'like their homes more*' (82 per cent).

In order to gain an understanding of *how* and *why* the improvement programme has increased housing satisfaction, the household survey asked a series of questions to determine satisfaction with individual aspects of the home. Figure 4.1 presents a summary of the response to these questions.

Figure 4.1: Perceived impact of the improvement programme on key aspects of the home; WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

The results are positive with at least 70 per cent of tenants considering that eight of the eleven aspects that could have been improved have got better as a *direct* result of the improvement programme. Those features considered to have improved the most were, in the vast majority of cases, all directly and tangibly improved as part of the improvement programme.

The other aspects listed were either not addressed by the improvement programme (e.g. gardens), or were possible *indirect* impacts⁸ of the programme, such as reductions in condensation, damp, mould and draughts. Despite not being explicitly targeted by the improvement programme, it is perhaps surprising to find that only 40 per cent of tenants felt that the first three problems had been alleviated and only 24 per cent felt that their homes were now less 'draughty.' The latter is particularly

⁸ One feature falls outside these categories: internal decoration. WDH did not internally decorate the properties it modernised. Instead, tenants were given decorating vouchers to a maximum value of £250 which could be used at a local DIY superstore. Further discussion about this can be found in Section 4.5.

unexpected in light of the number of tenants that felt that closely related features, such as heating, windows and doors, had improved considerably.

However, when attempting to assess the salience of findings relating to indirect impacts of the improvement programme, two key "health warnings" should be borne in mind. First, when identifying changes with regard to less tangible aspects of the home, such as the presence of damp or draughts, it is important to note that tenants' recollections of these issues may not be as accurate as those relating to more tangible (and important) aspects of the home, such as the kitchen and bathroom. Thus, while memories of a tired old kitchen and obsolete (and cold) bathroom may be all too clear (and 'real') for tenants, their recollections of more nebulous features such as (the prevalence of) draughts, damp and mold are likely to be more vague and less certain.

Second, it is also extremely difficult to disaggregate the impact of the improvement programme when a number of other potential factors are at play. The best example of this is in relation to security. While new windows and doors undoubtedly improve the security of the home, and this is recognised by the majority of tenants, it is also influenced by a host of other factors personal to the individual. Tenants may feel more vulnerable than they did in 2007 for a range of reasons unconnected to their property, yet these vulnerabilities may in turn impact on their notions of what constitutes a secure home.

The qualitative data collected by the study team provides more detailed insights into the interplay and relationship between observed impacts and explanatory factors. The following sections, then, combine data from both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study relating to residents' perceptions of the impact of the improvement programme to highlight the key drivers of enhanced housing satisfaction, which in their own right are important impacts of the improvement programme.

It uses Figure 4.1 as a loose framework to do so. However, it also makes reference to another factor which is not identified in the figure, but which has undoubtedly contributed to enhanced satisfaction with accommodation, and which, again, is an important impact of the programme in its own right: an enhanced level of satisfaction with repair of the home. The next five sections of the chapter, then, are concerned with exploring these important drivers (and impacts), specifically:

- a home with modern facilities, which encompasses impacts associated with modernised kitchens and bathrooms
- a warmer home, which explores impacts related to new heating systems, doors, and windows
- enhanced satisfaction with the internal decor of the home
- a more secure home, which encompasses impacts related to new doors and windows; and
- enhanced satisfaction with the state of repair of the home.

4.3. A home with modern facilities

Residents interviewed during the first year of the study were primarily concerned about the poor condition of their windows (which were sometimes rotten) and a lack of central heating (see Janette's story in Chapter Eight for more on this). Besides the general need for comprehensive modernisation, the need for new bathroom and kitchen facilities was scarcely mentioned. The most likely explanation for this is that

improvements to these facilities are, quite understandably, considered a lesser priority when compared to the fundamental need for a warm and weather tight home – windows and heating are higher priorities in this regard. It is possible to surmise, on the basis of the interview and diary data gathered in year one, that for many residents the installation of central heating and new windows alone would have been sufficient to improve satisfaction with the home (see Janette's story).

Three years on, it is clear that residents appreciate the 'comprehensiveness' of the improvement programme and the improvements it has yielded in terms of the efficiency and manageability of all aspects of the home. Testimony to this was the fact that residents interviewed immediately following the completion of works in year two of the study, were as keen to highlight the benefits of new bathrooms and kitchens as they were to praise the 'priority' improvements to windows, doors and central heating systems.

During year two, residents', tended to comment on how their new kitchens were easier to use and to keep clean.

"I like the kitchen best, particularly the sink because it is nicer than any I've had before...the kitchen is definitely easier to use and keep clean." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

Specifically in relation to bathrooms, the addition of a shower was praised by several residents for its convenience and because it provides instant hot water - previously residents would have to "plan ahead" for a bath to ensure that sufficient hot water was available:

"The shower has really made a difference. We don't even bother with the bath anymore. It's so much easier and always hot. You don't have to plan for a shower like you do a bath." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

Similarly, five residents also lauded the installation of new immersion heaters which gave them access to plentiful supplies of hot water and several recalled how, on many occasions in the past, their baths had run cold before they could get in them.

"I think it (the new bathroom) is fantastic I love it. I've got an immersion heater and I only need to put it on for two hours an hour or press the boost button and I can have a really hot bath. I like a really hot bath. Before I had that, I'd run it halfway and the water would go cold." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

Kitchens and bathrooms remained a popular feature into year three and featured heavily in residents' photo novellas. In particular, they appreciated the level of choice afforded to them over the layout and details of their new kitchens and bathrooms (see Coleen's story). The more "modern appearance" of kitchens and bathrooms and increased workspace and storage space in kitchens were also emphasised by many residents. Of those residents who were surveyed in 2010, most considered their bathrooms and kitchens as the features of the home that were most improved (86 per cent and 84 per cent of WDH tenants, respectively – see Figure 4.1).

The kitchen is clearly a very important part of the home for many residents. It tends to be somewhere that residents spend a lot of their time and one of the key places where they entertain visitors. It is also the first part of the home that visitors see as they enter the house through the back door. It therefore is possible to see how improvements to kitchens have had a significant impact on the way residents feel about their home as a whole and their new kitchens are clearly a source of pride for many residents (see Coleen's story).

"I just love the kitchen. And when anybody comes they don't think that it's a WDH property because it's quite modern and because I've got actually more work space. Before I only had a small area before. I love the tiles and everything. Everything's coordinated and you were able to choose it all yourself; the handles, plus the paintwork as well. You could pick different colours; whatever you wanted." (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)

It appears that the improvements to kitchens have encouraged some tenants to spend even more time in them.

I: "Do you think that the improvement programme changed the way you use your home at all?"

R1: "Well, she does spend more time in the kitchen now. She likes to bake."

R2: "I do, I'm always baking now and my grandson sits on the stool in there and watches me. And then my daughter will turn up and she'll sit on the worktop. I've always told her off for that and she still does it even now she's in her 30s."

R1: "There never would have been room for all of them in there before it was rearranged." (Male and female resident, Belle Vue, year four)

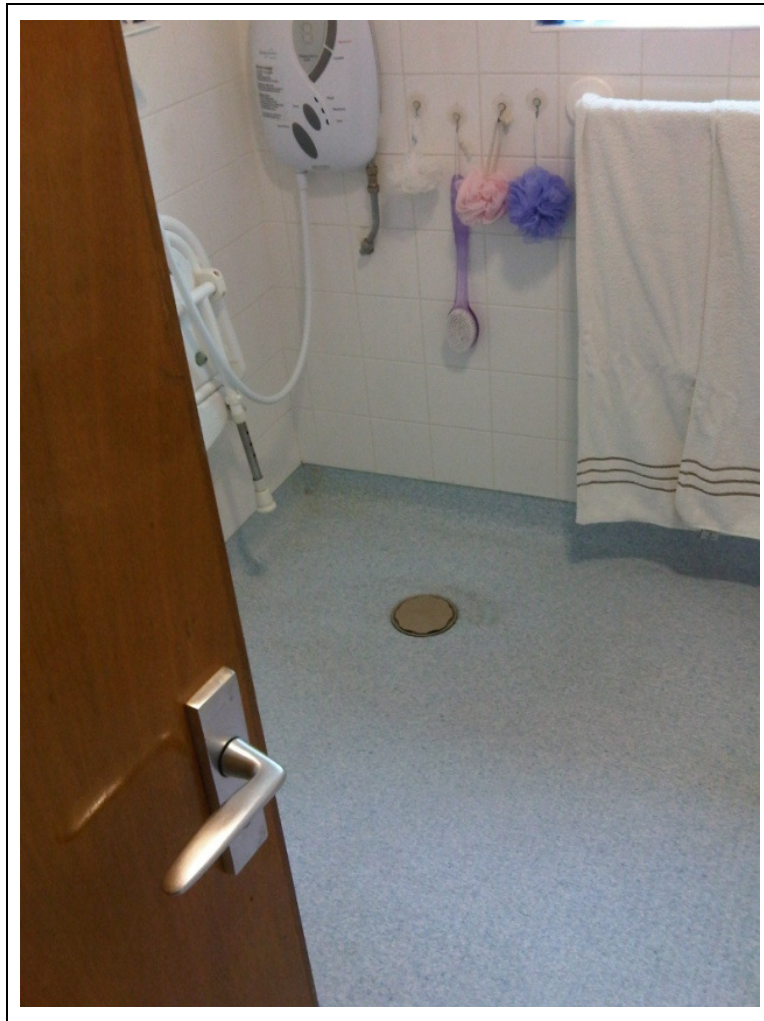
As noted at the beginning of this chapter, analysis of the survey data was undertaken to try and ascertain whether any particular 'sub groups' were more likely than others to feel that particular aspects of the home had improved as a result of the improvement programme. The only statistically significant finding to emerge from this analysis was that men were more likely than women to feel that their home's kitchen had improved as a result of the improvement programme. No possible explanations for this variation are forthcoming from either the survey or qualitative data.

The opportunity to "personalise" elements of their new bathrooms and kitchens was also praised by residents who appreciated the opportunity to select tiles and cupboard doors and to help design the layout of their kitchens (see Coleen's story).



⑩ I took this photo because I was able to choose a border tile to go round which makes it look more modern and my friend who lives in S. Yorks were not given this option.

"I took this photo because I was able to choose a border tile to go 'round which makes it look more modern. And my friend who lives in South Yorkshire was not given this option." (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)



"We really like the wet room. I'm disabled and it makes life so much easier for me. The shower is always hot. And I really like the border tiles because we picked them." (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, male, year three)

In summary, the installation of new kitchens and bathroom facilities proved to be one of the most popular features of the improvement programme, despite not being identified by residents as a particular priority for improvement at the outset. However, as is explored in section 4.8, there is some evidence to suggest that the higher levels of housing satisfaction associated with these improvements may begin to decline as the benefits of these modern facilities becomes the "norm" and memories of their "newness" begins to fade.

4.4. A warmer home that costs less to heat

In addition to the widely held opinion that local homes were generally "run down" and in need of modernisation, tenants interviewed in year one of the study, including Janette, whose housing story is told in Chapter Eight, specifically identified cold homes resulting from a lack of central heating as being a major concern to them. As the *First Annual Review Report* (2007) identified, this deficiency caused particular difficulties for the elderly, those on low incomes and those with young children.

Following the completion of the modernisation works in year two of the study, residents have consistently reported that their homes are warmer (see Lorraine's story). In the final year of the study, 80 per cent of WDH tenants felt that the heating in their home was much or slightly better than it was in 2007. Linked to this, 77 per

cent felt that both external doors and windows had also got much or slightly better (see Figure 4.1). The following series of quotes highlight how residents attribute their warmer homes to a combination of the installation of central heating and the fitting of new windows and doors which prevent draughts and damp.

"Before these windows I had wooden windows. You can feel the difference. These are double glazed. When you have the heat on... it does feel warmer and quieter. It dulls the noise from outside. I could hear the noise from the rugby ground before." (Belle Vue resident, male, year two)

"Oh, yes, it's a lot warmer for starters...it's the windows and doors. They are airtight and don't let the draughts in like the old ones. And it's the new boiler, too." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

"When it was done, especially when that cold weather come. It were a godsend and I thought: 'by gum, it's made a real difference. The central heating. Everything.' It were a lot warmer." (Portobello resident, male, year four)

The improved warmth of the home was also highlighted by residents participating in the photo novella exercise conducted in year three of the study. Commenting on the image below, this photo novella participant highlights the important role that the new windows and doors have played in creating a warmer (and quieter) home.



(Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)

Some residents have also observed savings in relation to their heating bills, primarily (they argue) as a result of the improved efficiency of their heating systems. However, some also felt that the enhanced insulation provided by new windows and doors also

contributed to lower heating bills. This was because less heat was being lost from the house, thereby reducing the demands on the central heating system. These findings did not begin to emerge in earnest until the third year of the study, after residents had received a couple of heating bills and had time to reflect on the issue.

During year three, eleven residents reported notable reductions in their heating bills. One resident estimated savings of £80 per month despite fuel price increases.

I: "Are there any other benefits to the new windows and doors?"

R: "It's a lot warmer. A lot warmer."

I: "You've really noticed that have you?"

R: "Yes, so my bills are cheaper."

I: "By how much?"

R: "I used to have just a gas cooker and a coal fire so it used to cost me about £30 a week in the winter just for coal and firelighters and wood. That were just to keep the fire on, keep me hot water. Now there's a combi boiler I'm lucky if it costs me £10 a week and that's for all me electric and all me gas. And they say prices have gone up!"

I: "So you're really making savings?"

*R: "A lot, yes. Some people have said to me that they aren't sure if they are making savings or not. But I think if they'd had Parkray in and had to buy the coal for it they'd have worked out straight away how much they were saving."
(Portobello resident, female, year three)*

*"I don't have to put the fire on anymore and I only had one radiator put in here (the lounge). It never used to be as warm as this. It was always a very cold house and I used to have the (gas) fire on low all day to keep it warm, and upstairs was very cold. It's 100 per cent warmer. Sometimes too warm. This last two days (during October) is the first time I've had the heating on since about March and in years gone by I would have it on in the summer sometimes...it was cooler in the house than out. I'm glad I didn't have two radiators put in here. I think the double glazing has made the difference."
(Portobello resident, female, year three)*

However, those residents with a long standing limiting illness were less likely to agree that their heating bills were lower as a result of the improvement programme. This is not a surprising finding as it is possible to see how those spending most time in the home and who therefore use most heating are less likely to appreciate what amounts to relatively marginal savings on their heating bills.

Although a significant number of residents reported savings on their heating bills, it was equally the case for some that they had not noticed any savings and felt that any potential reductions had been offset by large fuel price increases. However, it is evident that the benefits associated with having a warmer home extend far beyond reduced heating bills. Echoing the findings from previous studies concerned with the impact of housing modernisation schemes aimed at improving energy efficiency (Gilbertson *et al*, 2006a, 2006b, 2008), it is clear that many residents are experiencing feelings of greater comfort and ease in daily life brought about by the improved efficiency and functionality of the home, yielding benefits for their sense of "emotional well-being" – an impact discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The following quotes demonstrate how modern and more efficient heating and hot water systems have helped to streamline previously convoluted household routines. It is apparent in these accounts that some of the drudgeries of daily life have been effectively circumvented by the installation of new systems.

"Oh, you see before it were fine when fire were on. When radiators were on. That were OK. There were no problem. But there were times when you'd think it's got to go out so I can clean the ashes out. But you knew then that bin were full so you'd to let it out. That were the time when you got up first thing in the morning and got out of bed and thought: 'oh, God, bloody freezing in 'ere'. You'd get down and clean it all out but by time you'd done that... I'd got me little electric fire which I used to put on. Top it up. And then I'd get fire going. But it took an hour or hour and half to get properly going right." (Portobello resident, male, year four)

"We've had a new boiler and you've just got to turn on the tap and you've got boiling hot water. Before you used to put the heating and water on and you had to wait at least an hour for it to heat up. It's brilliant now ... My partner... thinks it's great because he can just jump in the shower and get off to work quickly, which he couldn't do before." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

4.5. Improved internal decoration

As Figure 4.1 highlights, nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of WDH tenants thought that the improvement programme had made *'the internal decoration of their property' 'slightly' or 'much better.'* Although, as noted earlier, the internal decoration of the home was not directly within the remit of the improvement programme, residents did receive a decorating allowance, in the form of vouchers, to make cosmetic improvements to their modernised homes. In the *Second Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2008) we identified that, following completion of the improvement programme, a number of residents had felt inspired to embark on a more comprehensive programme of redecoration, which extended beyond the value of the decorating allowance.

"I received £180 of vouchers for paint and things which covered two rooms. But I got the whole house done while I was at it." (Female focus group attendee, Belle Vue, year two)

Other residents were driven to redecorate by a desire to put the finishing touches to the work done to their home. Indeed, many felt strongly that the renovation of their homes would not be considered 'complete' until comprehensive redecoration had been undertaken.

*"Yeah, but if it were totally decorated, all me hallway were done and everything were done then it would be fantastic, definitely. **But I'm still not feeling right because my decorating isn't done and it still feels unfinished.**" (Belle Vue resident, female)*

This trend had also come to the attention of local stakeholders and, in the following quote, one key local stakeholder draws attention to the link between a greater sense of pride in the home and the discernable desire amongst residents to make additional improvements to their properties.

"The improvements have motivated people to go out and buy a pot of paint. It has definitely kick-started some DIY ... People are certainly more house proud now." (Stakeholder, Portobello, year two)

This sense of new or restored pride in the home is also discernable in residents' accounts of how they feel about their improved homes and is explored in detail in Chapters Five, Six and Eight.

As will be considered in Chapter Seven, by year three of the study the ability of many residents to make additional improvements to the modernised home was greatly reduced as they grappled with the consequences of recession. We continued to find this to be the case in year four of the study. That said, in the same year 90 per cent of WDH tenants still rated the internal decoration of the home as 'good'.

4.6. A more secure home

Some 70 per cent of WDH tenants surveyed in 2010 felt that the security of their home had improved as a result of the improvement programme. However, it was not an issue that tenants raised unprompted when interviewed, although when probed on the subject, many did acknowledge that they felt more secure in their homes.

Residents interviewed in year two of the study, following completion of the improvement programme, began to highlight improved security as a (perhaps unanticipated) benefit of the programme. The installation of new, more robust windows and doors is almost certainly at the root of their feelings of greater security.

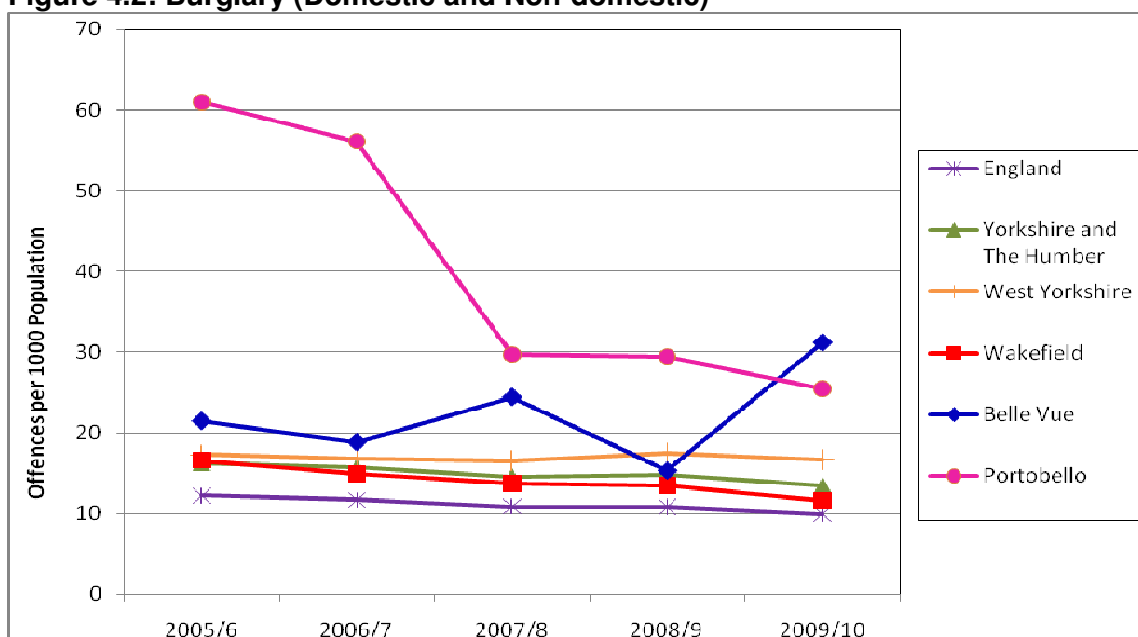
"We've seen the police trying to kick one of these doors in and that made me feel secure. They could not get through the door!" (Portobello resident, male, year two)

I: "You said you feel more secure, why is that do you think?"

R: "Oh, yes. We've got lockable windows for a start which we never had. There's dead locks on these doors which we never had on the other doors, well I think there's about four or five dead locks on front door where before you just had your single lock. You had your chain. I had noticed again watching these programmes on telly an ex-convict who used to do a lot of burglaries came on one day. He said: 'I'm going down this estate. And I'm going to tell you a house I can get in within 10 seconds.' He walked down the street and he were looking over hedge and things like that. 'That one there 10 minutes I'll be in it.' And then he come across this double glazed (house). He went: 'no chance you can forget that.' And the presenter said to him: 'you just said '5 minutes to get into that last house, what's the difference?.' He said: 'that is what I call old fashioned door, old fashioned windows. Brilliant for me to get in there. I can get in there 5 minutes flat. Now you're talking different kettle of fish here. Dead locks. Windows locked. Double glass. So if you smash one you've got to smash other... by the time you hit the door everybody in street would be up'". (Portobello resident, male, year two)

Analysis of local crime data indicates that reported crime levels across the study area have been progressively falling over the last four to five years. Of particular relevance are the statistics relating to burglary. Although the burglary rates in Portobello and Belle Vue are considerably higher than the national and local averages, they have nevertheless been falling relatively consistently since 2005/06, as Figure 4.2 reveals. Portobello experienced pronounced reductions between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Reductions were also experienced in Belle Vue during this period but trends have generally been more variable. Whilst it is not possible to establish exactly *why* these reductions have occurred, it seems entirely reasonable to posit that the installation of more robust, 'lockable' windows and doors has contributed, to some extent, to the reduction in the number of burglaries. The less consistent reductions in burglary rates that have occurred in Belle Vue may also reflect, in part, the mix of tenures present in the neighbourhood and the related variations in levels of security.

Figure 4.2: Burglary (Domestic and Non-domestic)



Sources: West Yorkshire Police via WMDC; ONS Neighbourhood Statistics.

Regardless of the extent to which the improvement programme has impacted on burglary rates locally, it is clear that, at the very least, residents feel much safer. Accordingly, a number of residents commented that the security of their home was now one thing they did not have to worry about.

'It gives you confidence when you close it and lock it up. I feel more safe. It's something I don't have to think about now.' (Belle Vue resident, male, year two)

It was not only the fact that the new windows and doors are 'lockable' that has reassured residents. It was also reported that improved sound insulation has resulted in residents being less aware of outside noise and therefore less anxious and more relaxed⁹. This benefit was particularly highlighted and appreciated by older residents.

"On a night you couldn't have your windows open or your door open because you can hear every single thing. But since I've had new windows and doors you can just close it out and relax." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

We also found that a statistically significant higher proportion of economically active respondents, compared to economically inactive respondents, felt that the security of their home was good and that their external doors were good. Whilst it has not been possible to identify a clear explanation for this difference, a possible explanation is economically inactive residents are more likely to spend a greater proportion of their time in their home and, as a result, be more critical of its shortcomings.

⁹ Previous studies relating to the impact of housing modernisation on the lives of residents have identified how feelings of greater security are central to feelings of greater well-being amongst residents (Gilbertson et al 2006, 2008). In light of this, residents' sense of security in the home is subject to further exploration in Chapter Five.

4.7. Satisfaction with the repair of the home

Addressing the poor state of repair of social housing stock in England was one of the key objectives of the Decent Homes programme. Improving residents' satisfaction with the repair of their home therefore represents one of the most basic objectives of the Wakefield improvement programme.

The percentage of WDH tenants that were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the repair of their accommodation has increased by a statistically significant amount since 2007, rising by 14 percentage points to 81 per cent. These findings are reinforced by data from the longitudinal panel of 158 respondents who were interviewed in the same property in both 2007 and 2010. The increase in their satisfaction with the repair of their home was found to be statistically significant.

Turning now to the qualitative data on this issue, the majority of residents interviewed felt that their home was in a far better state of repair than prior to the improvement programme. While the survey data provide only snapshots of this issue at two points in time, the qualitative data provides a more nuanced account of how residents' feelings about the condition of their homes changed over time. The next section of this chapter reviews findings on housing satisfaction from each year of the study.

4.8. Exploring housing satisfaction over the course of the study

Looking back to the findings from year one of the study, it is clear that the repair of their homes was at the forefront of residents' minds after many years of living in unmodernised housing:

"The condition of the social housing stock on the estate came in for much criticism.....Social housing tenants in Portobello and Belle Vue also spoke at length about problems to do with their housing Residents in the study who were dissatisfied with their accommodation focused on two major issues of concern when it came to WDH housing: that the properties were in need of modernisation and were in a poor state of repair. There was general agreement amongst both residents and stakeholders that the housing stock had been "neglected" in recent years." (CRESR, 2007, p. 77)¹⁰

By the time we spoke to them again in year two, immediately following the completion of works, residents were beginning to appreciate the benefits of their modernised homes. This was despite having to 'recover' from the considerable upheaval associated with the process of improvement. The situation at that time is summed up by the following series of quotes from residents:

"We couldn't quite take it in. They [Keepmoat] had been and not finished yet and were coming back and that was the biggest complaint we had at the time. But then when they were finished we were all dead proud of it." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

"What a slow job it was. Oh dear, dust everywhere. But they have done a damn good job; very nice indeed." (Belle Vue resident, male, year two)

When interviewed in year three, over eighteen months on from the completion of the improvement programme, residents appeared to have put the "upheaval" of the modernisation process behind them. All 38 residents interviewed were pleased that

¹⁰ Janette's story in Chapter Eight provides further insights in to the sort of problems residents were experiencing at this point in time.

their homes had been modernised and appeared unreservedly satisfied with the improvements done to their homes (for further discussion on this point, see Chapter Eight: Residents' Housing Stories).

"I love what they (WDH) have done. It's fantastic. It's so much better than it was before" (Portobello resident, female, year three)

"Oh, it's lovely now, really nice and modern. I love it." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

It was at this point, as residents appeared to reach what might be viewed in hindsight as the "peak" of their satisfaction, that they began to 'look beyond the front door' and reflect on the condition of the external environment (see Janette's story). As a result, many expressed dissatisfaction with the green spaces in their neighbourhood and, as reported in the *Second Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2008: 97): *"there was a widespread belief that the improvement programme would only be complete' once the environmental improvement work had been undertaken."* This issue is revisited in Chapter Seven.

Although satisfaction with the repair of the home has increased significantly, it may have reached its peak quite soon after the completion of modernisation works. Having a functional modern home may have quite quickly become "the norm". It is quite possible that, had the household survey have been conducted last year, satisfaction with the repair of the home may have been greater still.

Indications that satisfaction with the repair of the home may have peaked around the third year of the study suggest that residents' expectations can change quickly. Indeed, prior to the improvement programme in 2007, a large number of tenants (77 per cent) felt satisfied with the repair of their property, perhaps indicating that their expectations were low at this time. This is particularly striking given that there were public acknowledgements by government and WDH of the need for a modernisation programme. On the basis of how residents' attitudes towards their homes have changed over the course of the study, it is possible to see how, as a result of the improvement programme, residents are following a trajectory of rising expectations in relation to both their home and their neighbourhood. In short, rising satisfaction is shortly followed by rising expectations.

4.9. Using Logistic Regression Modelling to Further Understand the Key Aspects of the Home and the Improvement Programme

The previous section of the report examined residents' satisfaction with individual aspects of the improvement programme, and provided some insights into residents' ranking of the key elements of the programme in terms of the extent to which they have impacted on their satisfaction with the home. This exploration clearly demonstrated that it is very difficult to disentangle the impact of individual elements of the programme as residents frequently identified positive outcomes or effects of the improvement programme which were invariably attributed to the cumulative impact of a number of component elements. For example, many residents talked about having warmer homes but invariably attributed this to a combination of more efficient heating systems, new windows and new doors.

This section of the report aims to identify which improvements have had the largest impact on residents' satisfaction with their accommodation. In addition to evidence from the in-depth interviews, statistical modelling techniques have been used to

assess the relative importance of each component element of the improvement programme. In doing so, this section of the report aims to answer two key questions:

1. which **aspects of the home** have the largest relative influence on overall satisfaction with accommodation? This analysis includes those aspects of the home not directly addressed by the improvement programme, in addition to those that have been.
2. which **improvements to the home** have the largest relative influence on making residents *'like their property much more'* and think it is a *'better place to live'*? This analysis seeks to identify the specific elements of the improvement programme that have exerted the largest influence on making residents like their property more.

In order to address these questions, logistic regression modelling has been employed to assess relationships between perceptions of aspects of the home/features of the improvement programme and the outcome in question (for example, satisfaction with accommodation). Logistic regression uses the survey data to develop models that predict the probability of an occurrence; in this case either whether a WDH tenant is either 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their accommodation or whether a WDH tenant agrees that, as a result of the improvement programme, they now like their property much more and think it is a better place to live, given one or more explanatory variables.

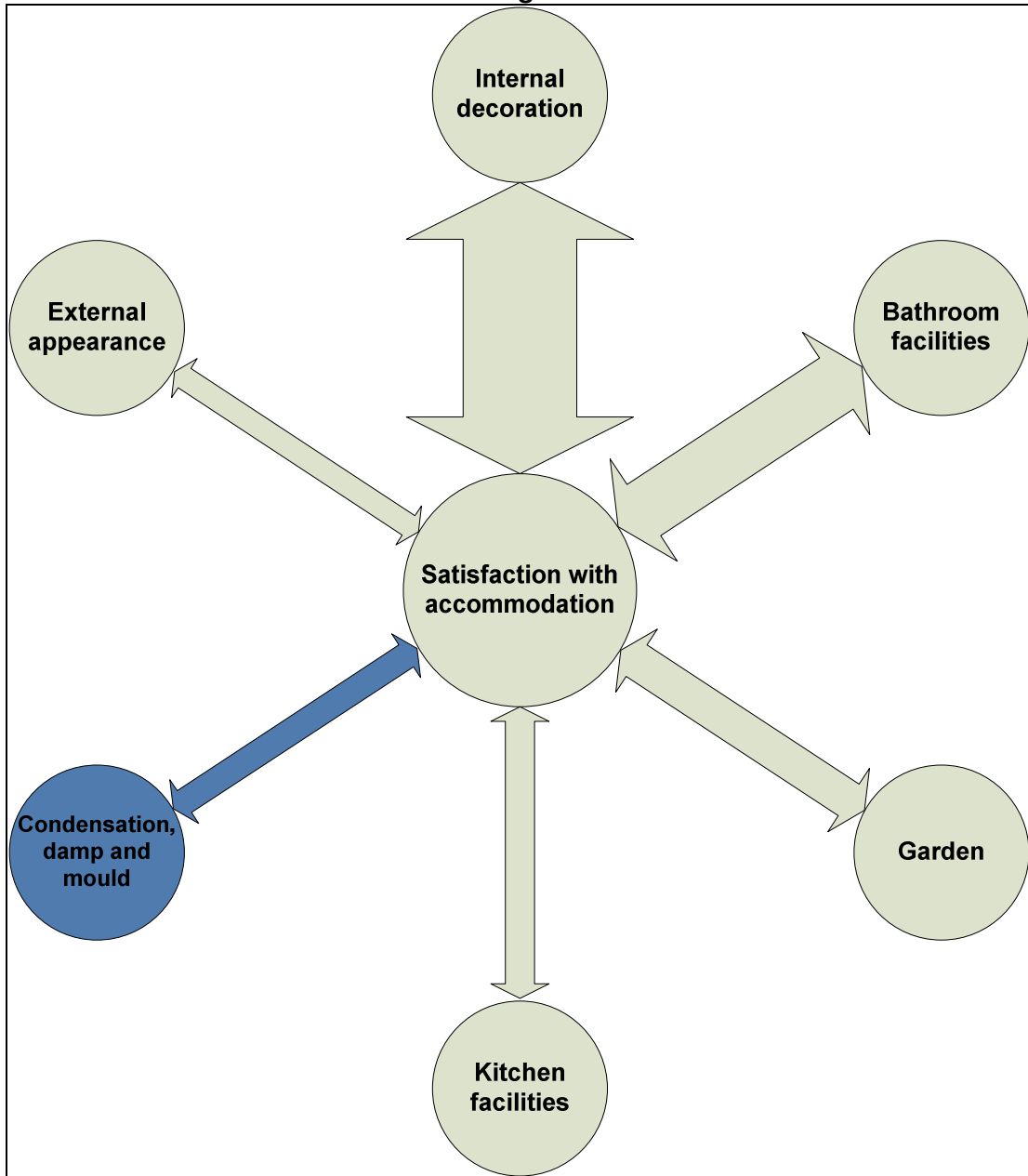
An attractive property of modelling techniques, such as logistic regression, is that relationships between the response variable and individual explanatory variables can be isolated and assessed whilst controlling for other variables in the model. This allows us to explore questions such as: what influence do good kitchen facilities have on satisfaction with accommodation taking into account the respondent's view that their home has a good standard of internal decoration? Or, to what extent does the perception that kitchen facilities have improved impact on how much residents like their property and consider it a better place to live, taking into account that the internal decoration of the home has also been improved?

The two key questions set out above will now be explored in turn using the techniques described.

4.9.1. Which aspects of the home have the largest relative influence on overall satisfaction with accommodation?

The model developed to address this question uses responses to the 2010 survey to identify five aspects of the home in relation to which there is statistical evidence that they influence the probability of being very or fairly satisfied with the accommodation. The outcome of this analysis is shown in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Aspects of the home and their relative influence on overall satisfaction with accommodation amongst WDH tenants 2010¹¹



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)
Base: WDH tenants (308)

¹¹ The wider the arrow the greater the level of influence. Dark shading implies a negative relationship.

As Figure 4.3 reveals, having good internal decoration emerges as the most important 'predictor' of a WDH tenant being satisfied with their accommodation overall. Other predictors of satisfaction include having a home: with 'good' bathroom facilities; with a 'good' garden; with 'good' kitchen facilities; with a 'good' external appearance; and without condensation, damp or mould problems.

At first sight, the relative importance of the internal decoration of the property is perhaps a little surprising, and we found little by way of explanation for this in our qualitative work. However, it is possible that this finding may be a corollary of two inextricably linked factors. First, as noted earlier, it appears that the improvements made to residents' homes has focused their attention on aspects of their home, such as internal decoration, that (in their eyes) have not been 'addressed', and which therefore make the modernisation programme 'incomplete.'

Second, of all the aspects of the home, internal decoration is the one where tenants are most able to exert control over and most likely to feel empowered in relation to. Furthermore, it is the one area where they can truly put their "mark" on their homes and personalise them to their own tastes, so that they feel like their "own" (see Coleen's story). As will be explored in more depth in Chapter Six, many residents felt that the improvement programme had provided them with an opportunity for this to happen. It had done so in two ways. First, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, it had given them (for the first time) a house that they were "proud" of and that they wanted to invest their time and financial resources in. Second, by providing tenants with decorating vouchers, it had given them (to some degree) the financial wherewithal to allow this process of home 'personalisation' to occur.

The other key 'predictors' of satisfaction identified broadly resonate with findings from the qualitative programme which highlight the importance of having modern facilities. Although residents talked about the benefits of new kitchens and bathrooms seemingly in equal measure during in-depth interviews, the analysis presented in Figure 4.3 suggests that a 'good' bathroom is a stronger influence on satisfaction with the home than having a 'good' kitchen. This is perhaps because the introduction of showers and instant hot water into tenants' bathrooms, in many cases for the first time, has a more fundamental impact on satisfaction with the home than the replacement of cupboards and work surfaces.

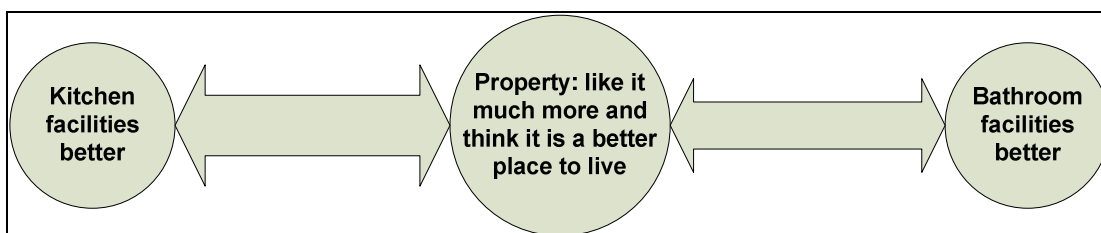
Other noteworthy findings include the discovery that a 'good' garden also emerges as a more important influence on satisfaction than a 'good' kitchen. This finding provides further confirmation of the importance residents attach to their gardens, an issue discussed in detail in Chapter Eight (see Coleen's story).

The analysis presented above takes into consideration all of the key features of the home in its broadest sense. The following section seeks, more specifically, to identify the particular features of the improvement programme that are the most important 'predictors' of positive perceptions of the home as denoted by 'liking your property much more' and thinking it is a 'better place to live.'

4.9.2. Which improvements to the home have the largest relative influence on making respondents 'like their property much more' and think it is a 'better place to live'?

In response to this question, Figure 4.4 reveals that thinking that your kitchen and bathroom facilities have got better are the two most significant 'predictors' of a WDH tenant liking their home much more and thinking that it is a better place to live. As the width of the arrows demonstrates, improvements to kitchen facilities are slightly more significantly associated with improved perceptions of the home.

Figure 4.4: Improvement to aspects of the home associated with WDH tenants liking their property much more and thinking it is a better place to live;¹² WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

This outcome is not unexpected given that both kitchens and bathrooms have consistently been singled out for praise by residents during in-depth interviews, and also represented a key theme to emerge from residents' photo novellas. Through the qualitative programme, the bathroom has emerged as a keystone in the modernised home with electric showers and having hot water perceived as markers of "modern-ness". However, as noted earlier, the kitchen has also emerged very clearly as the hub of the home within an area where the home is very much at the centre of daily life. The kitchen can be seen as the "face" of the home, a source of great pride for many residents which is so often the first, and sometimes the only, part of the house that visitors will see. Coleen's story, featured in Chapter Eight, provides further illustration of the importance attached to these two facilities by many residents.

It is, however, important to bear in mind that because this analysis focuses on establishing the relative influence of key elements of the improvement programme on positive perceptions of the home, it does not take into account the relative influence of other important features of the home, such as internal decoration and the garden. As discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven, residents' definition of the home is more wide-ranging than the narrow definition implied by the Decent Homes Standard. Therefore the significance of the findings revealed by Figure 4.3, which demonstrate the centrality of internal decoration and the garden to satisfaction with accommodation, should not be underestimated in light of the findings exhibited by Figure 4.4.

4.10. Summary

- given the nature of the improvement programme, enhanced housing satisfaction had to be one its principal objectives and, as noted earlier, reassuringly it has increased. But, it is important to note, that it has increased by a (statistically significant) level – 11 percentage points – well beyond what might have been expected for this type of programme (the percentage of WDH tenants satisfied with their accommodation increased from 77 per cent in 2007 to 88 per cent in 2010). For example, this rate of increase is significantly greater than that experienced in the NDC areas subject to housing improvement programmes
- the key drivers of enhanced satisfaction with accommodation, which are important impacts of the housing improvement programme in their own right, are:
 - a home with modern facilities, which encompasses impacts associated with modernised kitchens and bathrooms

¹² Again, the wider the arrow the greater the level of association.

- a warmer home, which explores impacts related to new heating systems, doors, and windows
 - enhanced satisfaction with the internal decor of the home
 - a more secure home, which encompasses impacts related to new doors and windows; and
 - enhanced satisfaction with repair of the home.
-
- a logistic regression model was used to pinpoint the most important aspects of the home and elements of the improvement programme in terms of their impact on satisfaction with the home. This analysis revealed that good internal decoration is the most important 'predictor' of a WDH tenant being satisfied with their accommodation overall. Other predictors of satisfaction include having a home with a good bathroom, garden, kitchen, external appearance; and a home devoid of condensation, damp or mould
 - improved kitchen facilities followed by bathroom facilities emerged as the most significant predictors of 'liking the property more' and reporting that it was 'a better place to live'. This is not unexpected given that both kitchens and bathrooms were consistently singled out for praise by residents we spoke to.

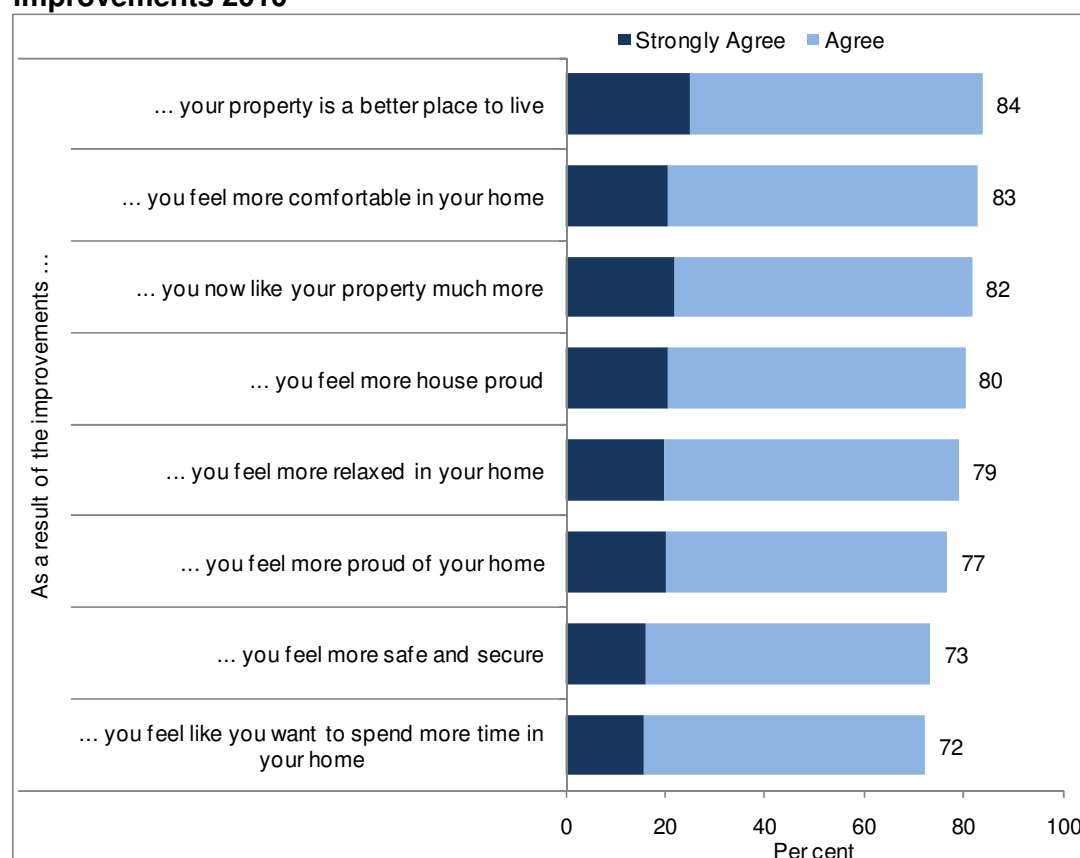
5. Enhanced Emotional Well-being

5.1. Introduction

All of the impacts associated with the improvement programme explored so far have had a physical dimension, and represent largely anticipated outcomes of the improvement programme. However, in addition to these very tangible impacts, there is also significant evidence to suggest that some residents have experienced benefits in terms of their 'emotional well-being' following the improvement of their homes. This chapter, then, seeks to explore the nature, scope and significance of these apparent benefits and the extent to which they can be attributed to the improvement programme.

Figure 5.1 highlights a number of outcomes of the improvement programme that, as will be revealed as this chapter proceeds, constitute key indicators (and, importantly, drivers) of greater emotional well-being amongst WDH tenants. Each of these indicators is examined during the course of this chapter and, in doing so, the processes by which they contribute to a sense of greater well-being are elucidated as far as is possible.

Figure 5.1: Selected views of the home as a result of the home improvement programme; WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

The views and opinions of residents expressed during the course of an interview or focus group seldom emerge in the same structured fashion as survey results. Instead, respondents tend to express their views as "holistic visions" from which it is difficult to disentangle and isolate individual causal factors (Coatham and Jones, 2008). In relation to a concept as intricate and subjective as emotional well-being, it seems inappropriate and unnecessary to attempt to structure the evidence around a superimposed framework into which the data does not squarely fit. Therefore, a more fluid approach is taken to the presentation of this chapter which allows the reader to appreciate the interrelationships between the various factors underpinning the greater sense of well-being discernible amongst residents.

It should also be noted that Figure 5.1 represents the extent of the **statistically significant** quantitative data relating to emotional well-being. Other data garnered from the BMG survey in relation to emotional well-being was found to be **statistically insignificant**.¹³ This data provides an additional insight into emotional well-being, albeit one that should be treated with caution and seen as being indicative and not authoritative.

A good case in point is an emotional well-being 'change' question in the 2010 household survey which asked respondents to rate their current emotional well-being compared to three years ago (i.e. prior to the start of the improvement programme). This revealed that on a scale of one to ten, where one was a 'lot worse' and ten 'a lot better', 72 per cent of respondents rated their emotional well-being as six or above. However in addition to being statistically insignificant, there is another "health" warning associated with this data – WDH tenants were not the only residents to enjoy an increase in their level of emotional well-being with those other tenure types enjoying similar increases.

5.2. Understanding Enhanced Emotional well-being

5.2.1. Conceptualising emotional well-being

In order to establish a more operational definition of 'emotional well-being' for the purpose of this discussion, it is useful to borrow from the work of Gilbertson *et al* (2006). They found that beneficiaries of the home energy efficiency scheme 'Warm Front' "*did not say they felt healthier but that they simply felt 'better'.*" (Gilbertson *et al.*, 2006: 952). This description chimes with the findings set out in this chapter in so far as the benefits that residents reported are not limited to, or particularly concerned with physical health, but instead a broader sense of "feeling good", better or happier in the home.

Gilbertson *et al* examined how households that benefited from the Warm Front scheme felt about their homes post-improvement and their findings are of relevance to this study. The study found that most households reported feelings of improved physical health, comfort and, most notably, improved mental health and emotional well-being following the improvements to their homes. Other significant findings included: reports of improved family relations; an increase in the number of rooms used during the winter; improved nutrition as a result of improved kitchens; greater levels of social interaction; and an increase in 'comfort' and 'atmosphere' within the home.

A number of these findings are echoed in the study area, with residents either directly reporting, or alluding to, feelings of increased comfort and ease in daily life brought about by the improved efficiency and functionality of the home as a result of

¹³ Statistical (in)significance' is explained in Appendix 1.

the improvement programme. Local stakeholders were aware of this important development.

"The houses are much nicer now and the living conditions are much better. And if you live in better living conditions you feel better about yourself." (Stakeholder, Belle Vue, year two)

In terms of the key indicators of emotional well-being, which, it is important to note, also underpin it, many WDH tenants reported that the improvements undertaken to their homes had made them feel more relaxed within them. Indeed, as Figure 5.1 illustrates, 79 per cent felt this way and the views of three were typical of many we interviewed.

I feel so much more relaxed here now because it's just a nicer place to be, you know?" (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

R: "Before it was just somewhere where you come and go to bed, it wasn't somewhere you could relax."

I: "So how do you feel about your house now?"

R: "It's smashing, really nice and cosy. We love spending time in it." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

"Before it (the respondent's home) was just somewhere where you come and go to bed, it wasn't somewhere you could relax...it's smashing, really nice and cosy. We love spending time in it." (Belle Vue resident, female, year 3)

Furthermore, more than four out of five (83 per cent) tenants reported that they now felt more comfortable in their homes, which is another important marker of enhanced emotional well-being (see Janette's story). The adjectives 'relaxed' and 'comfortable' were frequently used by residents when describing how they felt in their newly modernised homes, alongside other terms, such as 'comfy' and 'cosy', which also had connotations to emotional well-being. Another marker (and driver) of enhanced emotional well-being, is that residents are much more proud of their homes, an issue which is discussed at length in section 6.3.2 of the next chapter (see also Coleen's story).

As noted earlier, an important impact of the improvement programme is that most WDH tenants feel safer and more secure in their homes. Indeed, as Figure 5.1 shows, this was the case for nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of them. It is widely accepted that feelings of safety and security in the home are central to emotional well-being and mental health and many residents made direct connections between the two, including one from Portobello.

"I used to check windows and doors several times every night and I don't now. I feel very secure...I don't know whether it's the double glazing or the doors. I can relax now, without always thinking: 'ooh, did I hear a noise?' And waking up in the night worrying that someone was trying to get in. I don't hear anything from outside now and I think that helps, too." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

In the following quote, one resident admits that prior to the installation of new windows and doors, he was deterred from leaving his property for any length of time because he was concerned that it would be burgled. However, now he feels confident (and "relaxed") enough to go on holiday.

"As it was (prior to the improvement programme) I never felt relaxed because obviously there were quite a lot of break-ins going off. And I used to think I can't

stay in forever. I've got to go out; got to have a bit of a life. So off I used to go. But it always used to be at back of my mind: "what am I going to come home to?" 'Is there going to be a broken window or a break in?'. I go out now and don't even think about it. It's great. If you'd said to me seven year ago: 'would you go away on a week's holiday?' I'd have said: 'no chance.' Now? I'm going in August." (Portobello resident, male, year four)

These findings chime with those of two *Decent Homes* health impact assessments undertaken in Ealing and Sheffield, which found the installation of new windows and doors to have had a major (positive) impact on the mental health and well-being of residents (Gilbertson, Green and Ormandy, 2006b, 2008). Adding further significance to these findings, the same research indicated that ill health linked with crime or fear of crime is a greater problem than ill health linked with cold or unsafe dwellings.

5.2.2. From 'House' to 'Home'?

Reflecting (in part) residents' enhanced emotional well-being, between years two and three of the study there was a notable change in their emotional attachment to where they lived. More specifically, they increasingly began to refer to their residence not as 'house' but 'home'.

R: Well, you just got by. You made the best of things. But the bathroom was a bit drab. It was years and years old. Everything was tired but you made the best of it by keeping it nicely and keeping it clean. That's all you could do.

I: And how about now?

R: Well, it's more like a proper home now. It feels like home. (Portobello Resident, female, year three)

Related to this transition from "house to home", data garnered from the household surveys suggests that the longer a tenant had been resident at the same address and the older they were, the more likely they were to have more positive perceptions of their home following the improvement programme. This finding resonates, to some extent, with the qualitative data in so far as the transition from "house to home" appears to have been predominantly experienced by longitudinal respondents who have occupied their current homes since at least 2007.

These respondents were, therefore, in the best position to appreciate the full extent of the improvements to their property. In relation to age, although it is accepted that older people generally tend to be more satisfied (Campbell *et al*, 1997; Galster, 1987, Bines *et al*, 1993), it is also possible to hypothesise that tenants who are both long standing and older have a wider range of reference points in terms of the condition of the home over time, and may therefore be more appreciative of the improvements that have occurred. The 'housing stories' of residents featured in Chapter Eight of this report illustrate how the feelings of three longitudinal respondents towards their homes have changed over time. Coleen's story is particularly illustrative of this transition from "house to home".

An additional outcome of this transition is a sense of greater ownership of the property amongst residents, which, as the following extract from the Belle Vue film suggests, may have been engendered, at least in part, by the choice that residents were afforded over the modernisation of their home. For example, many residents reported how much they appreciated being able to design the layout of their kitchen and choose from different designs of tiles and other fixtures and fittings.

INSERT HYPER LINK TO 09.18 IN THE BELLE VUE FILM (COLEEN TALKING ABOUT HOW HER HOME FEELS LIKE HER OWN)

5.2.3. *The impact of the housing improvement process on emotional well-being*

As previously noted, this study is concerned with the *outcomes* of the improvement programme and not with *process* issues. However, issues related to process may be behind an important finding to emerge in relation to enhanced emotional well-being: it appeared that it only began to increase in year three of the study.

Research undertaken by Gilbertson *et al* (2006a) and Allen (2000) has found that the actual process of improvement evokes feelings of impotence and stress for many beneficiaries. Allen (2000) posited that tenants' experience of the process depended on the level of control they have (and want) over what happens to them and their home during that process.

As noted in the *First Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2007), many residents found the improvement process to be very stressful and when interviewed in year two of the study, shortly after their homes had been modernised, it was apparent that this experience was affecting their ability to fully 'enjoy' their homes. However, between years two and three of the study, as residents have 'recovered' from the disruption associated with the process and regained 'control' of their home, levels of relaxation in the home have evidently increased (see Residents' Housing Stories in Chapter Eight for further discussion on this point).

In the final year of the study, there were fewer references in the in-depth resident interviews to enhanced well-being. This perhaps is not an unexpected development given that we are now approaching three years after the completion of the improvement programme and it is logical to assume that residents' desire to "show off" their homes and their enthusiasm for new kitchens and bathrooms may be "wearing off". *This does not mean, however, that the benefits of warmer, more efficient homes have evaporated, simply that residents have become less effusive about them as they have become the 'norm.'*

A theme that has emerged consistently, yet implicitly throughout this chapter, is the importance of 'comprehensiveness' in promoting a sense of greater well-being amongst residents. When asked what they liked best about their modernised home, one resident replied:

"I couldn't pick one thing. It's having a modern kitchen and bathroom and feeling warm and comfy all the time. It just makes you feel good." (Portobello resident, female)

This quote illustrates how for this resident, along with many others, it was the cumulative impact of a range of improvements done to the home that was making her "*feel good*." In this vein, it is important to bear in mind that the outcomes reported by Gilbertson *et al* (2006a) resulted from a more limited improvement programme which focused on improving energy efficiency only. Therefore, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the benefits of the more extensive WDH programme are potentially greater for residents. The above quote effectively demonstrates the cumulative impact that a range of improvements can have on residents' well-being. The combination of feeling "*warm*", "*comfy*" and having an efficient and attractive new kitchen and bathroom simply makes this resident "*feel good*."

5.3. Summary

While as noted earlier, emotional well-being is highly complex, analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data garnered by the study team in relation to it suggests that for WDH tenants in our study area, four, inextricably linked, factors appear to underpin it.

- **warmth, comfort and relaxation within the home:** the sense of greater comfort and relaxation that residents feel in their homes, primarily as a result of having warmer, more secure homes, emerge as key drivers of improved emotional well-being
- **pride in the home:** a greater sense of pride in the home emerges as both a factor contributing to a sense of greater well-being and a by-product of it. In relation to the former, feeling 'ashamed' or 'embarrassed' by their home created a barrier to their enjoyment of it which has now been removed by the improvement programme. Many residents are evidently working hard to maintain and preserve the 'newness' of their modernised home as a result of the pride and pleasure they derive from it.
- **safety and security in the home:** echoing the findings of a number of previous studies into the relationship between housing modernisation and well-being, feelings of greater safety and security also emerge as central to emotional well-being primarily as a result of the installation of new windows and doors
- **length of residence:** there is some evidence to suggest that the older the tenant and/or the longer they have been resident at the same address, the more likely they were to view the changes to their home positively and experience a positive step change in their feelings about their property. A manifestation of this was their tendency to view their residence not as 'house' but 'home.'

This chapter has also found the following:

- one of the most important impacts of the improvement programme is that the emotional well-being of residents has improved. While it is a highly complex concept, and therefore is not easily measured, both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the study team supports this assertion
 - more than three quarters (79 per cent) of WDH tenants reported that the improvements undertaken to their properties had made them feel more relaxed within them
 - more than four out of five (83 per cent) reported that they now felt more comfortable in their homes. The adjectives 'relaxed' and 'comfortable' were frequently used by residents when describing how they felt in their newly modernised homes, alongside other terms, such as 'comfy' and 'cosy', which also had connotations to emotional well-being
 - tenants are much more proud of their homes
 - tenants feel safer and more secure in their homes with nearly three quarters (73 per cent) reporting this
- reflecting (in part) residents' enhanced emotional well-being, between years two and three of the study there was a notable change in their emotional attachment to where they lived. More specifically, they increasingly began to refer to their residence as 'home' and not 'house'
- this study is concerned with outcomes of the improvement programme and not with process. However, issues related to process may be behind an important finding to emerge in terms of enhanced emotional well-being: it appeared that it

only began to increase in year three of the study after the negative effect of the disruption caused by the improvement programme had dissipated for most residents.

To conclude, this chapter has demonstrated that housing improvement programmes can have an impact beyond 'physical' health and enhance the well-being of tenants. In establishing this, it contributes to the emerging body of evidence around what influences individuals' well-being. While a number of previous studies have pointed to causal links between the quality and condition of housing and the emotional well-being of tenants, (Gilbertson et al 2006a, 2006b, Critchely et al 2008, Gilbertson, Green and Ormandy, 2006b, 2008), this study is the first to conduct detailed qualitative exploration of this issue with residents over such a prolonged period.

The significance of improvements in the emotional well-being of tenants should not be underestimated and, as the World Health Organisation's definition of emotional well-being emphasises, it is a key determinant of resilience during challenging times:

"Emotional well-being refers to a sense of balance in one's life...it is about how we feel, think and behave, particularly when faced with life's challenges and adversities. A person in good emotional health engages in productive activities, has fulfilling relationships, feels good about one's self and knows how to care for self and others." (WHO, 2008).

This definition particularly resonates in the current policy context, highlighting that personal emotional well-being must be attained before an individual can turn their attention to caring for others or to the pursuit of community interests. In this sense emotional well-being can also be seen as one important pre-condition for contributing to the 'Big Society'. This important issue is revisited in Chapter Nine, *Conclusions and Policy Implications*.

6. Other Impacts

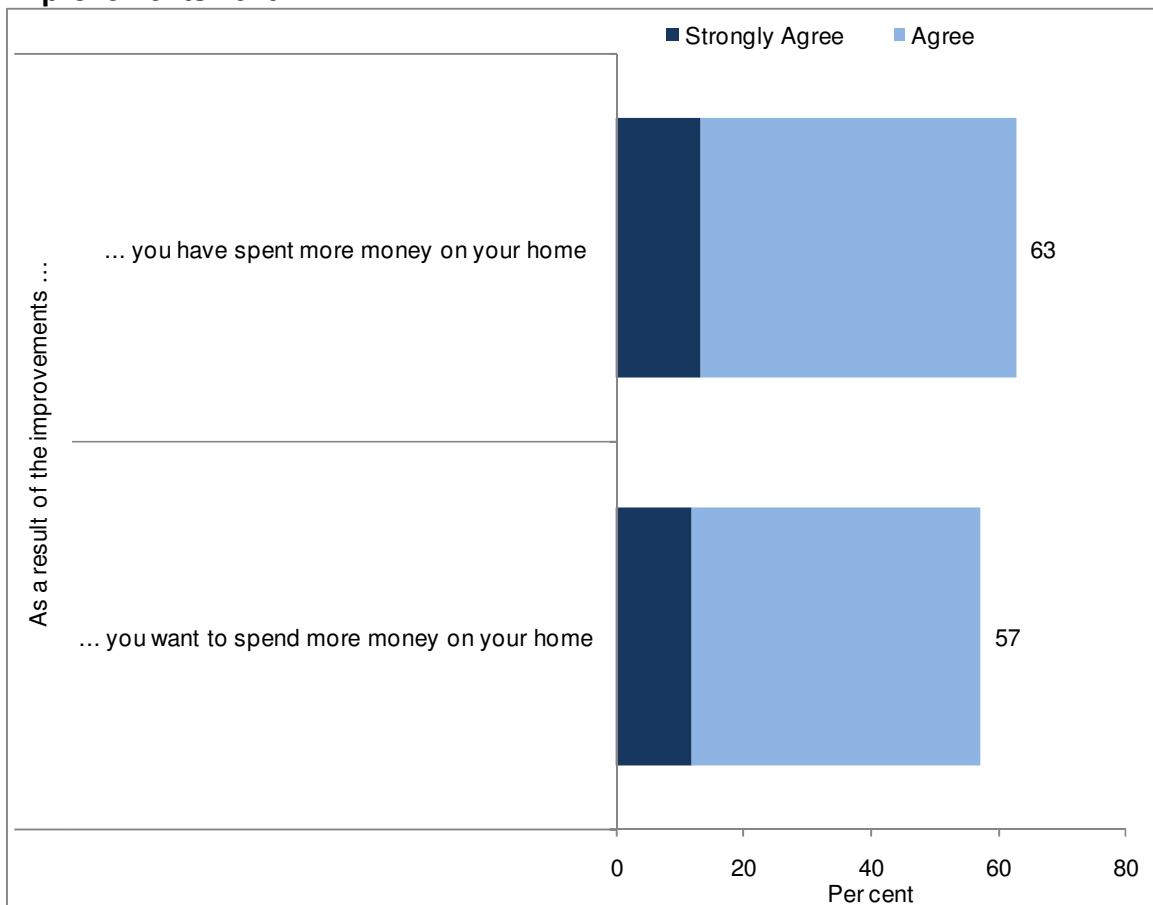
6.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with exploring the two headline impacts identified in the introduction to Section Two of the report that so far have not been explored - that is: i) tenants are investing more 'resources' in their homes; and, ii) are spending more time within them.

6.2. Greater Investment in the Home by Residents

Both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the study reveals that, since the modernisation programme has been completed, tenants are investing more financial resources in their homes. Data generated by the household survey clearly demonstrates this. As Figure 6.1 reveals, 62 per cent of WDH tenants report that they have spent more money on their home as a result of the improvement programme, with 57 per cent reporting that they would like to do so.

Figure 6.1: Investment in the home as a result of the home improvements programme; WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

The in-depth interviews with residents revealed that the improvement programme had encouraged them to invest in their homes almost immediately following completion of the improvement programme, which appeared to trigger a wave of DIY and home improvement activity. This trend continued to develop into the third year of the study, as identified by the *Third Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2009, pp 35-36).

"As noted in the Second Annual Review Report (CRESR, 2008), several residents we interviewed last year reported that they had made additional improvements to their modernised homes and "stepped-up" their maintenance "programmes" for their properties and gardens. One year on, the desire of residents to "build on" the modernisation work done to their properties by undertaking additional improvements to them is still very much in evidence."

The desire amongst residents to make additional improvements to their modernised homes manifested itself in a variety of ways, including: employing window cleaners (for the first time); fitting new flooring or carpets; decorating; and improvements to the garden (see Chapter Eight for further discussion on this point).

"People we speak to really like what's been done...we've even seen window cleaners going 'round now, haven't we? People clean their windows now 'cos they're all new." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

"Before the house was done I never bothered with the front garden. But once the house was done I started doing it. I've entered a WDH gardening competition this year and I got a letter through to say I'd won a prize." (Belle Vue resident, female, year four).

"Definitely, I wouldn't have done (decorated) all through (if my home hadn't been improved), I wouldn't have started from top to bottom and done everything. And that's what it did. It gave me that incentive to get it done." (Portobello resident, male, year four)

It appears that the key factor driving greater investment in the home is that residents are much more 'proud' of their modernised homes, a phenomenon which is explored in the next section. It appears that 'investment levels' reached a peak in years two and three of the study directly following the completion of the improvement programme. During this time, residents were spurred on by the receipt of a decorating allowance issued by WDH and felt inspired by the "newness" of the modernised home. However, since this period, it appears that investment levels may have reduced as the impact of the economic downturn has begun to 'bite' in the area (this issue is explored in detail in the next chapter - see Janette's story).

It is important to note that investment in the home was not solely financial in nature – a number of residents reported that they were now spending more time on housework, as a direct consequence of the pride they felt in their newly modernised homes. Linked to this, there was a discernable desire amongst them to preserve the "newness" of the modernised home.

"I'm always cleaning. I just want to keep it nice. I wish I could freeze it exactly how it was when they had finished the work and keep it exactly like that." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

Linked to this, stakeholders have also observed, over time, a renewed sense of "ownership" of their property amongst tenants who are, as a result, taking more responsibility for the maintenance of properties and gardens (see Coleen's story). This is not to say that the majority of tenants were 'neglectful' of their responsibilities

prior to the improvement programme, but instead that a greater proportion have now been motivated to take better care of their homes.

This view was shared by a Portobello based stakeholder who believes that the improvement programme has been positive in two ways in terms of tenants' attitudes towards the maintenance of their homes. Firstly, it has 'rewarded' those tenants who have always taken a diligent approach to maintenance by giving them "even more reward for their efforts." Secondly, it has encouraged a "borderline" cohort of tenants, who traditionally have been ambivalent towards the maintenance of their homes, to devote more of their time, effort, and on some occasions, money, to this activity.

R: "Tenants are definitely making more effort but, for me, you get a mix of tenants. You get some that have always looked after their properties and always will do. So for these people, the improvement programme has meant that they are getting even more reward for their efforts. And then you get a borderline group who sometimes look after their houses and would make an effort, if they see that things are improving. And then you get a group who just don't care. And whatever you do, they wreck they place."

I: "How large or small are these groups? What are the proportions of residents in each of them?"

R: "Well, I'd say that the first group comprises about 50 per cent to 55 per cent of the population on Portobello. And then when you add the second group that covers about 80 to 85 per cent of the estate. And that means that last group accounts for about 10 to 15 per cent of the population." (Local stakeholder, Portobello, year three)

While most residents we spoke to fell into the first category, some fell into the second¹⁴. Members of this group reported that the improvement programme had provided them with motivation to take better care of their properties and gardens.

"I could never have faced decorating the whole place before because I knew it would just be papering over the cracks, as they say. And what it needed was what it got in the end, a complete overhaul. We were swimming against the tide before." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

Another noteworthy finding relating to investment in the home is that respondents with a long-standing limiting illness are more likely to have made additional improvements to their property following the improvement programme. Although it has not been possible to pinpoint exactly why this is the case, it is possible to see how increased 'exposure' to the property may fuel the desire to make additional improvements in order to create the best possible home environment.

6.3. The Changing Role and Use of Home

Two important findings to emerge from the research are that residents are spending more time in their homes and are using them in different ways. While WDH participants in the 2010 BMG household survey were not asked to indicate how much time they spend in their homes, they were asked whether the improvement programme had made them more inclined to do so. As Figure 5.1 in Chapter Five revealed, nearly three quarters (72 per cent) replied in the affirmative; the data garnered from the in-depth interviews conducted with residents revealed that many did indeed appear to be spending more of their time at home (see Coleen's story).

¹⁴ We did not interview any residents who fell into third category.

However, while the improvement programme has undoubtedly encouraged residents to spend more time in their homes, it is important to note that only two of the six interrelated factors (which are outlined below) that appear to be behind this trend could be directly attributed to it.

- the creation of warmer and more comfortable homes
- the creation of homes that tenants are proud of
- a declining and poor local 'neighbourhood infrastructure'
- recession
- the existence of local close knit social networks
- (in Portobello only) a decline in "neighbourliness"?

6.3.1. Warmer and more comfortable homes

As noted earlier, one of the key 'headline' impacts to emerge from the improvement programme is that tenants now live in warmer and more comfortable homes. As this issue has been considered at length in section 4.3, it is sufficient to simply say here that this development has undoubtedly encouraged residents to spend more time within their homes, as the following quote illustrates.

"We've always had people 'round but, yeah, I suppose I do (have more friends visiting) now it's decorated nicely and it's warm. We have a laugh. I've always got my nephews and nieces 'round here." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

6.3.2. Enhanced Pride in the Home

A clear (and important) impact to accrue from the improvement programme is that tenants are now much more proud of their homes. As Figure 5.1 at the beginning of Chapter Five reveals, 80 per cent felt more 'house proud' as a result of the improvement programme with 77 per cent reporting that they felt 'more proud of their home.' Residents' enhanced pride in their homes is clearly evident in the quotes below.

"I was proud of what we had done to the house ourselves. But, yes, I do feel more proud now. It looks smarter from the outside with the new windows and doors. It's made us think about doing a few things with the garden that we had been putting off." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

"Yeah, we all do (have friends around more often) in the area. It's a lot more. You feel you want to be at home more and have friends 'round. I did a barbeque in the summer for the first time so I could show it off." (Belle Vue resident, female, year two)

"I like having people 'round for coffee now to show it (my house) off." (Portobello resident, female, year 3)

Their enhanced 'pride' was noted by a local stakeholder who believed that it had been the principal catalyst behind them investing more resources in their homes.

"The improvements have motivated people to go out and buy a pot of paint. It has definitely kick started some DIY. People are certainly more house proud now." (Stakeholder, Portobello, year two)

A Belle Vue resident noted that, before her home was improved, she felt "embarrassed" by its condition. However, since its modernisation, these feelings had reversed to the point that she felt sufficiently confident to throw a party for the first time. (See also Coleen's story).

I: "You said your home's more comfortable now: would that make you more likely to invite others 'round?"

R: "Yeah, I've had a New Year's Eve party here when I wouldn't have before. I'd have felt embarrassed." (Belle Vue resident, female, year four)

Similarly, another resident, this time in Portobello, describes how, prior to the improvement programme, he felt embarrassed by the coldness and run down appearance of his home, which made him reluctant to invite visitors inside.

"Of course (I feel more house proud) because before when somebody come and the fire wasn't going cos I were cleaning it out, which were most of the time, I used to think 'oh it's a bit cold in here. And subconsciously I'd try and keep them outside talking because I'd be a bit... with house being cold... And obviously I'd got carpets down. But they were getting a bit worn and I'm thinking to myself: 'if they see that carpet they'll think: 'what's up with him?'" (Portobello resident, male, year four)

6.3.3. A declining and poor local neighbourhood 'infrastructure'?

The third factor that has contributed to tenants spending more time in their homes is that there has been an erosion in the quality and quantity of neighbourhood 'infrastructure' in the study area, which has seen the closure of important and valued places for social interaction, such as pubs, shops, and cafes. This issue afflicts both neighbourhoods but is a particular problem in Portobello, whose only remaining social venue is the Rainbow Café, which operates limited opening hours. On the other hand, Belle Vue still benefits from a private social club (the Conservative Club) in the immediate vicinity.

The value of social interaction in social spaces such as pubs, cafés, community centres and shops has been recognised by Hickman (2010). He notes that there has been a reduction in the quantity and quality of neighbourhood amenities in lower income neighbourhoods in this country, a trend which has been exacerbated by the recession. As a result, the opportunities for residents to interact in public spaces within them, such as shops, pubs and cafés, has reduced. These spaces have been described as being "third places" of social interaction after the home (first) and workplace (second) by the American academic, Ramon Oldenburg (Oldenburg, 2007; Oldenburg and Brisset, 1982).

Drawing on the experience of residents in six deprived neighbourhoods across Great Britain, as part of a Joseph Rowntree Foundation study of the links between poverty and place, Hickman (op.cit) found that:

- third places are important and valued mediums for interaction in lower income neighbourhoods, with shops and markets emerging as being particularly important
- although all socio-demographic groups made use of third places, residents who spent most of their day at home (because they were unemployed, in poor health, retired or had childcare responsibilities) were particularly likely to use them

- some residents were deterred from using some third places because they perceived their regular users to be unwelcoming or even hostile. Others found it difficult to use them because of ill-health or disability, because they were reluctant to venture from their homes after dark, or because they lacked the 'social confidence' to do so
- some respondents simply did not want to socially interact with other residents, and their (non-) use of third places reflected this fact. A number of interviewees chose to avoid third places *precisely* because they were places where social interaction was likely to happen
- in addition to performing a "practical" function as a medium for social interaction, third places also appeared to have a symbolic role within deprived neighbourhoods: they were seen by residents as being a marker of the "health" and "vibrancy" of their neighbourhoods.

It appeared that some residents were reluctant to visit those social venues that did exist within the study area because of the (perceived) high cost of doing so. This was clearly the case for one Belle Vue resident who noted how he, like an increasing number of his counterparts, only socialised at home because it was cheaper than doing so in formal social venues, such as the local Conservative Club.

I: "Where do people 'round here go to socialise?"

R: "Me, personally, I might buy a few cans and we have them here, friends will come here or the only option is nights out up town."

I: "So there's nowhere to go 'round here, in the neighbourhood?"

R: "Yeah, there's a Conservative club but it's member's only. They knocked down all the other Clubs or they shut down. There's nowhere. I tend to have people 'round here. It's cheaper because you can go to supermarket and buy a big case of beer for £10. And you could buy a take away between a couple of you and have something to eat and drink and socialise. That's what most people do now." (Belle Vue resident, female, year four).

6.3.4. Recession

It appears that the recession has also contributed to WDH tenants spending more of their time at home. It has done so in two ways. Firstly, as alluded to in the quote above, declining income (and low) levels has meant that many residents cannot afford to socialise outside the home. Secondly, for most people an inevitable concomitant of reducing working hours and job loss is that more of their time is spent at home. This was certainly the case for the following resident who had recently experienced a reduction in her working hours.

R: "I've had my hours cut again, so it's less than part time. I was pot washing and I really liked it and I'm getting more on benefits now. But I liked working. I just cannot find the right job without travelling out of Wakefield because that would eat into my wages too much. I don't need a job for the money, I'm just bored. "

I: "What do you do during the day then?"

R: "I'm just here in the house. My sister will come 'round with the kids and my mum maybe. But I just stay here and clean...you notice things that need doing more when you're here all the time." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

As noted earlier, the impact of the recession on the study area and the improvement programme is considered in more detail in Chapter seven.

6.3.5. Close knit social ties and connections

Notwithstanding the importance of the recession and declining neighbourhood infrastructure as a driver of the behaviour of residents, it does appear that the improvement programme has encouraged them to spend more time in their homes, where much valued social interaction takes place. However, as first posited in the *Third Annual Review Report* (CRESR, 2009), it is also evident that socialising within the home is nothing 'new' and, it could be argued, that the improvement programme has simply served to reinforce an existing way of life in the study area, whereby much of life is centred in the home, where family, friends and neighbours interact.

This tendency is apparent across the study area, but appears more prevalent in Portobello owing to the estate's insular and isolated nature. Local stakeholders have repeatedly pointed to the unusually close knit networks of family and friends that exist, particularly in Portobello, by way of explanation for this dominant preference for socialising in the home, a view supported by residents' accounts of their lives.

"I've got 11 mates living 'round here within stone throwing distance and we all get on, all the kids run around in here. I haven't got kids so they don't bother me." (Portobello resident, male, year three)

I:" Where do you go if you want to go out, have a drink or socialise?"

R: "I don't really go out now. I used to go to Brook House (club) or Foresters (pub) but I don't bother. Everybody's always here anyway, either in the kitchen or in the garden if it's nice. My friends and family are all on 'Bella as well." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

6.3.6. A declining sense of 'neighbourliness' in Portobello?

In Portobello, another factor *may* also be contributing to residents spending more time in their homes: the apparent decline in 'neighbourliness' in the estate over the course of the evaluation. However, crucially, it is important to note that this trend may be a *result* of people spending more time in their homes and not a *cause* of it. Statistically significant data garnered from the household survey reveals a decline in 'neighbourliness' in Portobello:

- there has been a five percentage point decrease (from 91 to 85 per cent) in the number of Portobello residents who would describe the people who live in the area as friendly between 2007 and 2010 (in Belle Vue there has been a three percentage point increase from an already higher base of 90 per cent)
- there has also been a nine percentage point decrease in the number of Portobello residents who feel part of the community from 76 to 67 percent (in Belle Vue 78 per cent of residents feel part of the community and this has not changed between 2007 and 2010)
- additionally, the survey identified a 15 percentage point reduction in the number of Portobello residents who felt they knew people in the area from 73 to 58 per cent (in Belle Vue there has been a three per cent increase from 55 to 58 per cent).

6.4. Summary

- this chapter has been concerned with exploring the two headline impacts identified in the introduction to Section Two of the report that were not explored in Chapters Four and Five - that is: i) tenants are investing more 'resources' in their homes; and, ii) and are spending more time within them

- both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the study reveals that, since the modernisation programme has been completed, tenants are investing more financial resources in their homes. Data generated by the household survey clearly demonstrates this. Some 62 per cent of tenants report that they have spent more money on their home as a result of the improvement programme, with 57 per cent reporting that they would like to do so
- investment took a number of forms including: employing window cleaners (for the first time); fitting new flooring or carpets; decorating; and improvements to the garden. Not all investment was financial in nature – a number of residents reported that they were now spending more time on housework
- it appears that the key factor driving greater investment in the home is that residents are much more 'proud' of their modernised homes
- residents are now spending more time in their homes. While WDH participants in the 2010 household survey were not asked to indicate how much time they spend at home, they were asked whether the improvement programme had made them more inclined to do so. Nearly three quarters (72 per cent) replied in the affirmative; data garnered from the in-depth interviews conducted with residents revealed that many did indeed appear to be spending more of their time at home
- six interrelated factors appear to be behind this trend:
 - the creation of warmer and more comfortable homes
 - the creation of homes that tenants are proud of
 - a declining and poor local 'neighbourhood infrastructure'
 - the recession
 - the existence of local close knit social networks
 - (in Portobello only) a decline in "neighbourliness".

7. Assessing the Overall Impact of the Programme

7.1. Introduction

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that the improvement programme has had a number of positive impacts. However, it appears that they have been confined solely to the housing domain. Furthermore, it appears that the overall impact of the programme is being diluted by two (inextricably linked and overlapping) issues that are not directly connected to it *and* 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; and the recession. And in Portobello another factor appears to have diluted the impact of the housing improvement programme: the poor (quality) of its green spaces and property boundaries.

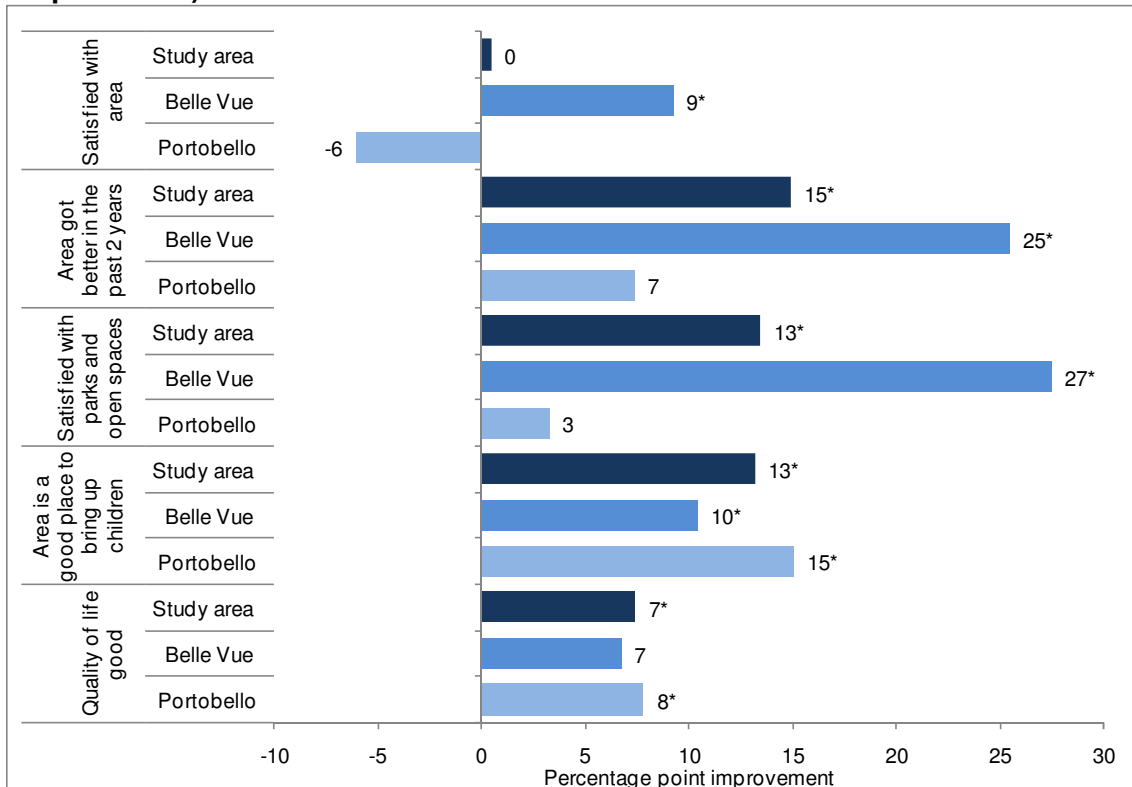
However, before exploring these issues, an important point needs to be made about the study area. That is, although it does have a number of deep rooted socio-economic problems, in one part of it - Belle Vue – neighbourhood quality of life has improved over the last three years, a trend which it appears can be attributed principally to the work of the NMP. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that, in some respects, quality of life in Portobello may also have improved. These important issues are now explored.

7.2. Improved neighbourhood quality of life

Residents were asked a number of questions about their views about life in their neighbourhoods, and their responses to four key questions are outlined below. The most robust, accurate, and commonly used measure of neighbourhood quality of life is area satisfaction - "*How satisfied are you with this area as a place to live?*" As figure 7.1 reveals, it remained unchanged (at 75 per cent) in the study area throughout the course of the study. However, this masks a very different picture at the neighbourhood level: while area satisfaction declined in Portobello it increased markedly (and statistically significantly) in Belle Vue.

Before exploring the reasons behind this trend, it is important to acknowledge that, as noted earlier, other measures of neighbourhood quality of life in Portobello present a different account of how the area has changed during the course of the study, and suggest that it has actually become a better place to live. Specifically, a greater proportion of residents think that the area has become a '*better place to live*'; more residents think that the area is a '*good place to bring up children*'; and the proportion of residents reporting that they experience a good quality of life has increased significantly.

Figure 7.1: Neighbourhood Quality of Life outcomes; 2007 to 2010 (All respondents)



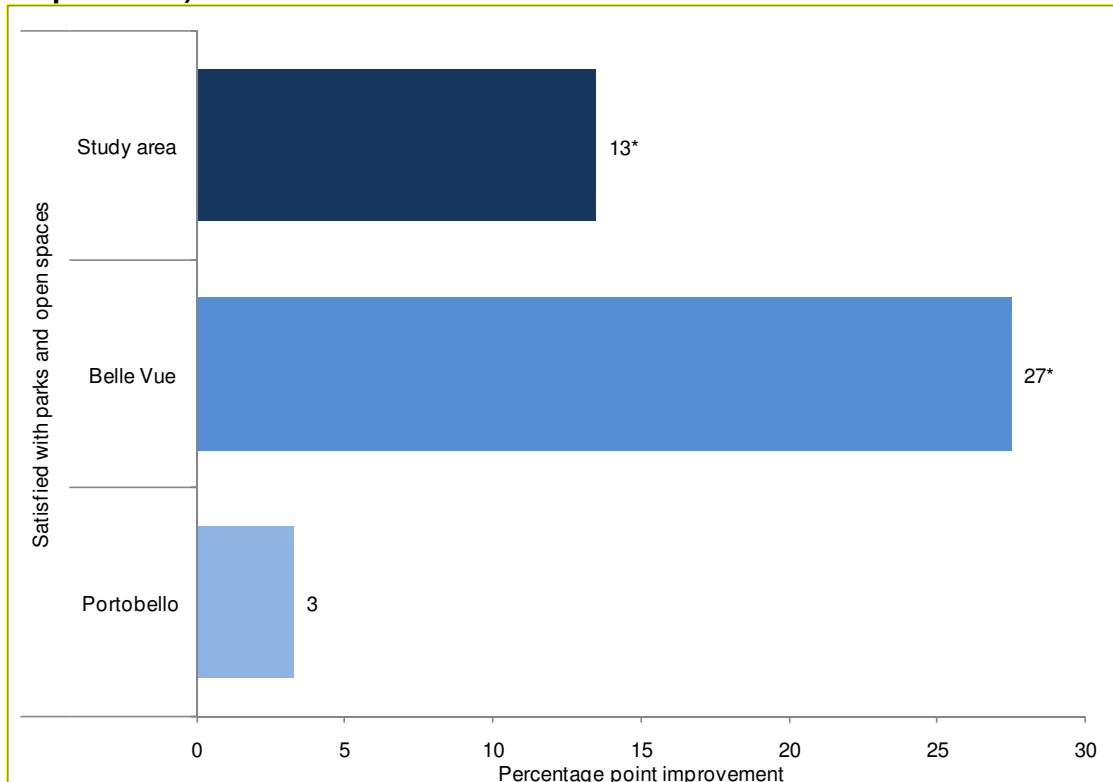
Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)

Base: all respondents: 2007 Study area (505), Belle Vue (217) Portobello (288); 2010 Study area (500), Belle Vue (210) Portobello (290)

* indicates significant change at a 0.05 level

The qualitative work undertaken by the study team suggests that the main factor behind the increase in neighbourhood satisfaction in Belle Vue is the NMP that was based there between 2007 and 2010. Data garnered from the 2010 Residents' Survey supports this assertion. As figure 7.2 reveals, in the domain where it was most active – (improving) public spaces and parks – satisfaction increased markedly (and statistically significantly): satisfaction with parks and open spaces increased by 27 percentage points between 2007 and 2010 in Belle Vue.

Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces, Change 2007-2010 (All respondents)



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)

Base: all respondents: 2007 Study area (505), Belle Vue (217) Portobello (288); 2010 Study area (500), Belle Vue (210) Portobello (290)

* indicates significant change at a 0.05 level

A constant thread to run through the in-depth interviews conducted with residents in Belle Vue was their reference to how the physical environment in the area had improved. Residents attributed this to the work of the NMP. For example, a number highlighted how the installation of a 'Welcome to Belle Vue' feature had improved the physical environment in the area. This was clearly the view of one participant in the photo novella exercise.



I: "So do you think the neighbourhood has changed over the last year at all?"

R: "Yes, it's certainly improved with different things that have gone on. It's certainly improved."

I: "What's changed then?"

R: "Well, we've got a big sign that says: 'Welcome to Belle Vue.' And the houses look better so it certainly looks a lot better." (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)

In a similar vein, another photo novella participant highlighted the positive impact the installation of the sign had had in the area, although she was concerned about its future upkeep.

I: "Has Belle Vue changed over the last couple of years?"

R: "They (NMP) are trying. I must admit they are trying. It's improved a lot. We have has a new playground made just 'round the corner and that's lovely. They've done a Belle Vue sign which looks lovely." (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)



(4/5) UP KEEP VERY POOR
BUT LOOKS GOOD

The improvements to the spaces around the lock were also welcomed by residents.



14) LOCKS NICE Picnic AREA WELL
15) KEPT. - (BUT ^{NEW} FLOWER BEDS BE KEPT UP TO

"Looks nice picnic area. Well kept but will new flower beds be kept up to current standard?" (Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)

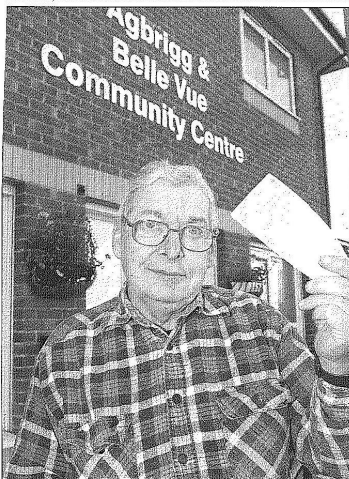




Local playground very handy for children
Nice to have somewhere to take youngsters.
much improved

(Photo novella participant, Belle Vue, female, year three)

Although it is important to note that some residents we spoke to in Belle Vue in were unaware of the NMP, many highlighted its positive impact in the area. A feature in the Wakefield Express on 27th November 2009 reported the strength of feeling amongst local residents and stakeholders regarding the success of the NMP in terms of improving Agbrigg and Belle Vue, and their dismay about its impending closure.



PLEDGE: Winston Bedford has pledged to donate £5,000 from his life savings in the hope of saving Agbrigg Neighbourhood Management Team. w0286a948

Pensioner's £5k pledge to save pioneering team

A DETERMINED pensioner has offered up his life savings in the hope of saving a community project.

The Agbrigg and Belle Vue Neighbourhood Management pilot scheme has been fighting for three years to rid the community of its tarnished image of racial conflict, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

Despite its amazing efforts it will lose its council funding in March. But 68-year-old Winston Bedford has offered a cheque for £5,000 to keep the scheme running.

Mr Bedford of Montague Street, said: "In an area which had so much conflict, this scheme is the only thing that has brought everyone together.

by Colin Strachan
editorial@wakefieldexpress.co.uk

"It has improved so much that it will hurt to see it go. These people are family to me, I can turn to them in any situation and I know they will help."

But unfortunately the group can't take the generous donation as it is against procedure to accept gifts.

The Neighbourhood Management Team (NMT) has worked on more than 60 projects since the scheme began in April 2007, including renovations of Agbrigg Park, resurfacing of roads and alleyways, and the creation of a community garden to replace what was once a patch of rubble and waste.

The work began after a survey

showed that nearly three in four residents felt the area had a poor or very poor image.

Sam Liddicott, chairman of the Neighbourhood Management Board, said: "I know a woman who was ashamed to get off the bus because people would see where she lived.

"But people enjoy their community now. People who were brought up here come back and say, 'wow, what happened here?'"

More than 2,500 issues have been dealt with since the scheme began, with the help of local authorities, public services and partner agencies.

Javed Iqbal, board member, said: "This is a community that has bounced back."

When the scheme ends, the

Neighbourhood Management Board will continue to work with the Agbrigg and Belle Vue Community Association – but the NMT will no longer be able to function.

The board believes the daily running cost of the NMT is around 8p per household, and that residents value the importance of the team so much that they would be willing to contribute to costs.

Mr Iqbal added: "We know the commitment, passion and drive is still there to keep this going."

Board member Najeeda Asghar said: "If the NMT goes, the foundations we have built will crumble. It has taken three years for them to bring a divided community together – we cannot let all this time and effort go to waste."

Furthermore, there was concern that gains in neighbourhood quality of life would not be permanent and would be lost with the demise of the NMP. This was clearly the view of one resident we spoke to who felt that the "progress" she had observed in the area over the last couple of years would be undone if the neighbourhood management pilot was to come to an end. Speaking in the autumn of 2009, she was unaware of its impending closure.

"If you call Debbie (Parr) at Neighbourhood Management she'll get anything done for you in the neighbourhood. But you do have to ask, things don't just get done like they should, without residents having to ask for their neighbourhood to get tidied up. Round Street is a mess. Rubbish everywhere. And she got that tidied up. But now it's back to how it was. It's short term fixes to the problems." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

"If Debbie wasn't around anymore then it would be a tip again wouldn't it? Like it was a couple of years ago. It's really important what they are doing. It's keeping the place in order." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

However, it is important at this point to make one final point about the impact of the NMP: that is, not all residents we interviewed were impressed with its contribution to the area. Indeed, some felt that it had done too little to improve the area. This was because they felt that, in practice, it was an Agbrigg focused and oriented initiative.

"They (the NMP) said that they had some money for some flags to be made for Agbrigg and Belle Vue, but where's Belle Vue's? They are only in Agbrigg. We've never seen anything of the sort in Belle Vue. It's sounding racist, but down that end (Agbrigg) it must be 70 per cent Asians. And I just feel that all they do is to try and make them happy. So Belle Vue misses out because they are scared of there being a riot, I think. That's upset a lot of people, those flags, because Agbrigg looks really good with them and we didn't get a piece of that." (Belle Vue resident, female, year two)

R: "They (Agbrigg residents) got that garden done (adjacent to the community centre) and they've had all them flags put up. And they keep saying: 'you're going to get them'. I know we've got this welcome sign, but I always think that when people talk about it, it always seems to be the Agbrigg area that comes first. It seems that more money is spent on Agbrigg area than it is in Belle Vue area."

I: "Right, so you feel they've had more investment in Agbrigg?"

R: "Yeah, definitely. I know they did the play area here which we've been to a few times, but it doesn't seem to be as well maintained as the Agbrigg garden and areas 'round there. Cos I've got some friends that live down Agbrigg and it seems a lot cleaner and tidier than this area does. I don't know whether it's because it looks nicer, but the community in Agbrigg look after it more." (Belle Vue resident, female, year two)

7.3. Socio-economic problems

The persistence of the study area's socio-economic problems was highlighted in both the *Second* and *Third Annual Review Reports* (CRESR, 2008; CRESR, 2009) and there is little sign of these problems abating. Indeed, at the time of writing the study area remained very much a deprived area, with deprivation being greatest in Portobello. This point was acknowledged by most stakeholders we interviewed. For example, a stakeholder who worked on the estate was frustrated by the apparent stubbornness and magnitude of the estate's problems, problems she felt that were "so big" that the area was "beyond help".

"I find Portobello hugely frustrating, like lots of other agencies who work on the estate. We work really hard here and try so hard to turn things around. But the problems are so big around here that it's almost like the area is beyond help." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Another stakeholder, who works across a range of neighbourhoods, shared this view and was becoming increasingly frustrated by the apparent lack of "progress" in the area and the hostility that residents appeared to display towards agencies.

"I think that things are actually getting worse on the estate. ASB is getting worse. The IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) stats are worse. I've worked here since 2002. And it's definitely getting worse. And just look at what happened last week to those youth outreach workers on Manygates Park? (two outreach workers were assaulted by a "local" youth in the Autumn of 2008). It was awful and they were just trying to help." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

The relative deprivation of the study area has been highlighted earlier in this report in Chapter two, at least as far as the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation covers it. That these patterns have persisted is reflected in the data garnered by the study team in relation to the following domains:

- income and welfare benefits
- employment and unemployment
- health
- educational attainment and skills
- crime
- 'barriers to housing and services' and 'the living environment'
- anti-social behaviour.

7.3.1. Income

Both Portobello and Belle Vue consistently fare badly on comparative measures of individual or household income. Thus, the 2007 Indices of Deprivation (IMD) ranked both areas within the most deprived 10 per cent of all neighbourhoods in England. They also fall within a wider area estimated to have just under 30 per cent of resident

households living in poverty (i.e., receiving below 60 per cent of the median income). This was the second highest figure for all such areas in Wakefield. It is likely that this situation has persisted, or even worsened, given the increase in the numbers claiming welfare benefits, including Income Support and Pension Credit (see section 7.4 below).

7.3.2. Employment

In line with these low incomes, both areas also suffer from high levels of employment deprivation (or worklessness). However, there was some divergence between Portobello and Belle Vue here, with the former falling within the most deprived 5 per cent in England according to the 2007 IMD, but Belle Vue only in the worst 15 per cent. However, the rapid rise in the numbers claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in both areas over the last two years indicates that their relative position in terms of people in employment is unlikely to have improved.

7.3.3. Health

Both Belle Vue and Portobello fell within the most deprived 10 per cent of English neighbourhoods in terms of health deprivation, according to the 2007 IMD. However, according to the PCT's 2009 Lifestyle Survey there are contrasts as well as similarities between the two areas. Thus, both neighbourhoods have relatively high levels of smoking compared to Wakefield as a whole. On the other hand, the rates for obesity and being overweight on the one hand, and hazardous or harmful drinking on the other, are well above the District average in Portobello, but below it in Belle Vue.

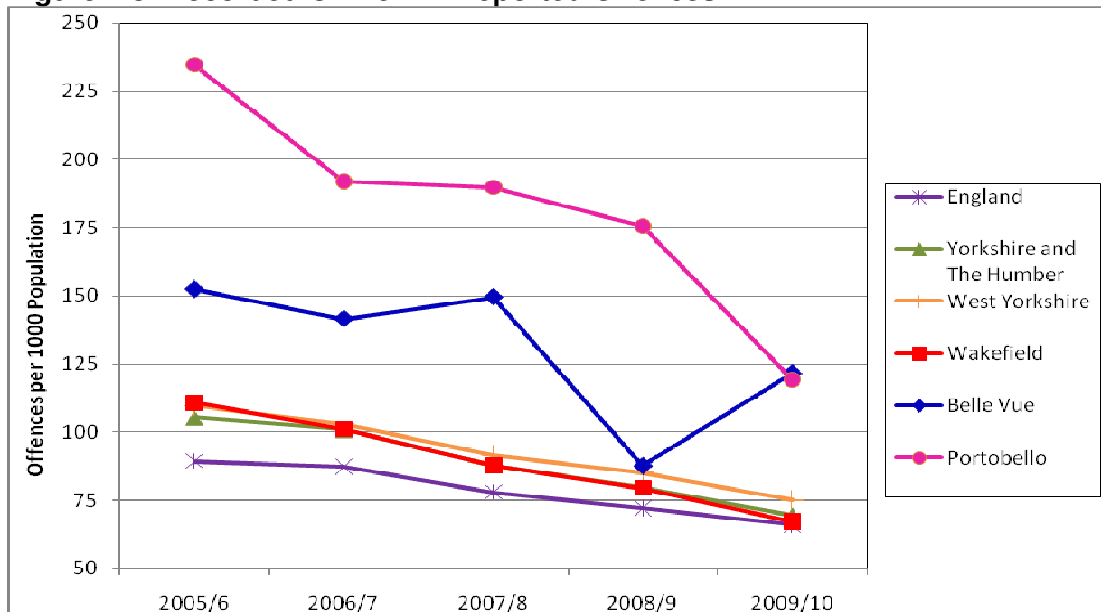
7.3.4. Educational attainment and skills

Portobello fell within the most deprived one per cent of English neighbourhoods in the 'education, skills and training' domain of the 2007 IMD, with Belle Vue in the most deprived 10 per cent. More recent evidence suggests that the educational attainment gap has been narrowing for both areas, but that in Portobello this has so far been restricted to younger age groups. However, persistently high levels of unexplained or unauthorised pupil absence from school remain a major problem in both areas.

7.3.5. Crime

According to the 2007 IMD, both parts of the study area fell within the most deprived 15 per cent of English neighbourhoods in terms of crime. More recent figures suggest that their relative position has improved, especially in Portobello, where the gap with local, regional and national averages has narrowed considerably over the last three years (see Figure 7.3). However, despite this drop the reported crime rate in the study area is still considerably higher than in Wakefield, Yorkshire and Humber, and England as a whole.

Figure 7.3: Recorded Crime: All Reported Offences



Source: West Yorkshire Police logs, via Wakefield MDC

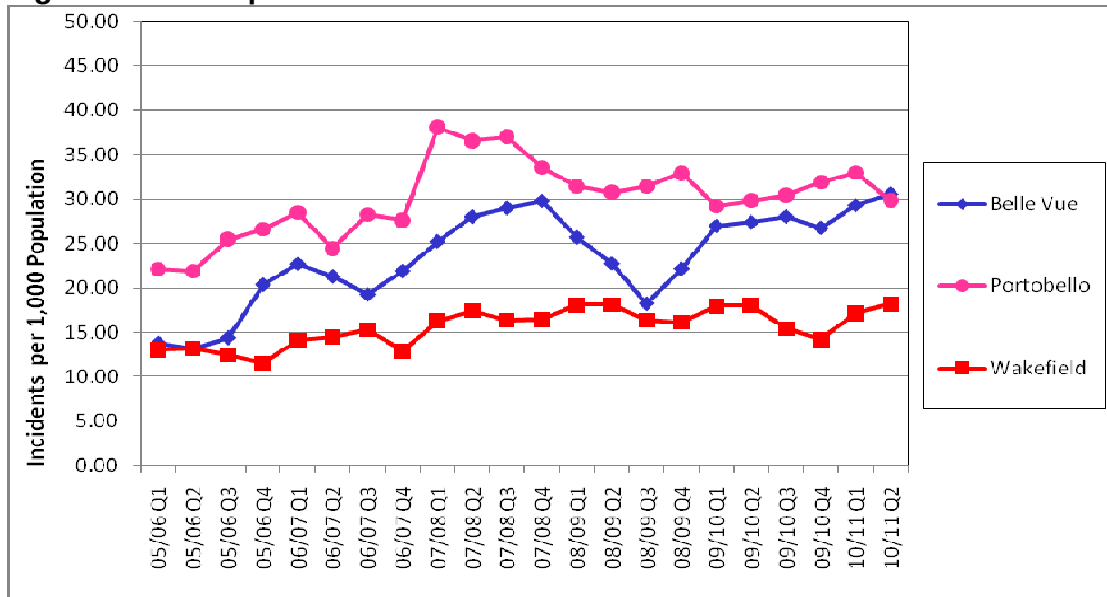
7.3.6. Other aspects of deprivation

The 2007 IMD also includes domains covering 'barriers to housing and services' and 'living environment'. The two parts of the study area have middling to upper scores and rankings for these, apart from the latter with respect to Belle Vue, where it is in the most deprived 20 per cent.

7.3.7. Anti-social behaviour

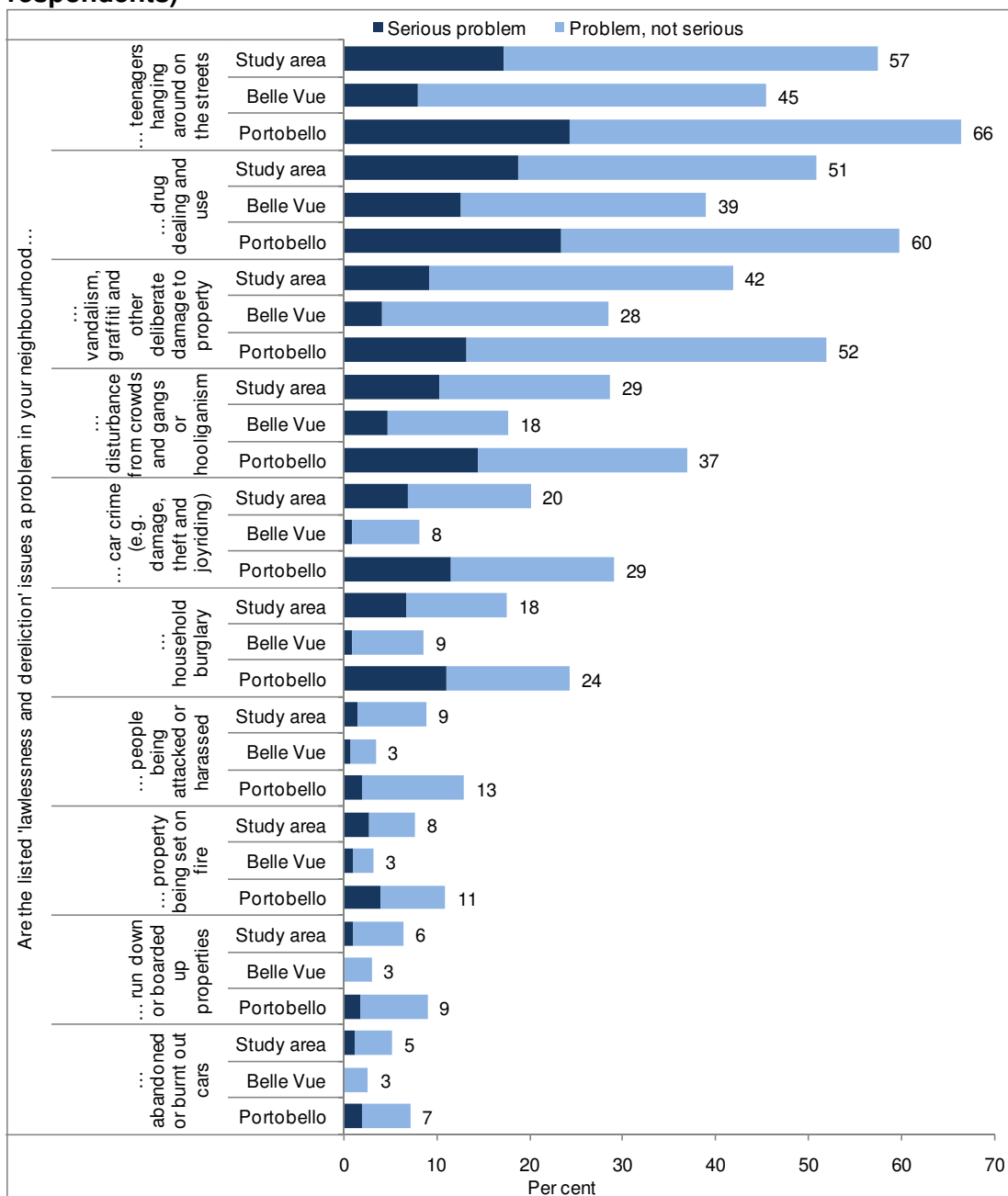
One issue connected with deprivation that is not captured by the IMD domains concerns anti-social-behaviour (ASB). Secondary data in relation to this issue indicate that the relative incidence of such problems is higher in both Belle Vue and Portobello than in Wakefield as a whole (see Figure 7.4). Data garnered from the 2010 survey of residents undertaken by BMG sheds further light on the issue - Figure 7.5 highlights the (reported) prevalence of a number of anti-social-behaviour problems in the study area. It reveals that the study area, and Portobello in particular, has a number of ASB problems.

Figure 7.4: All Reported ASB Incidents



Source: West Yorkshire Police logs, via Wakefield MDC

Figure 7.5: 'Lawlessness and dereliction' issues that are a problem; 2010 (All respondents)



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: all respondents: Study area (500), Belle Vue (210) Portobello (290)

Three of the biggest problems relate to the gangs (and their activities) that were reported to exist in the area: 'teenagers hanging around the streets'; 'vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property', and 'disturbance from crowds and gangs of hooliganism'; which were cited as being problems by 57, 42, and 29 per cent respectively of residents.

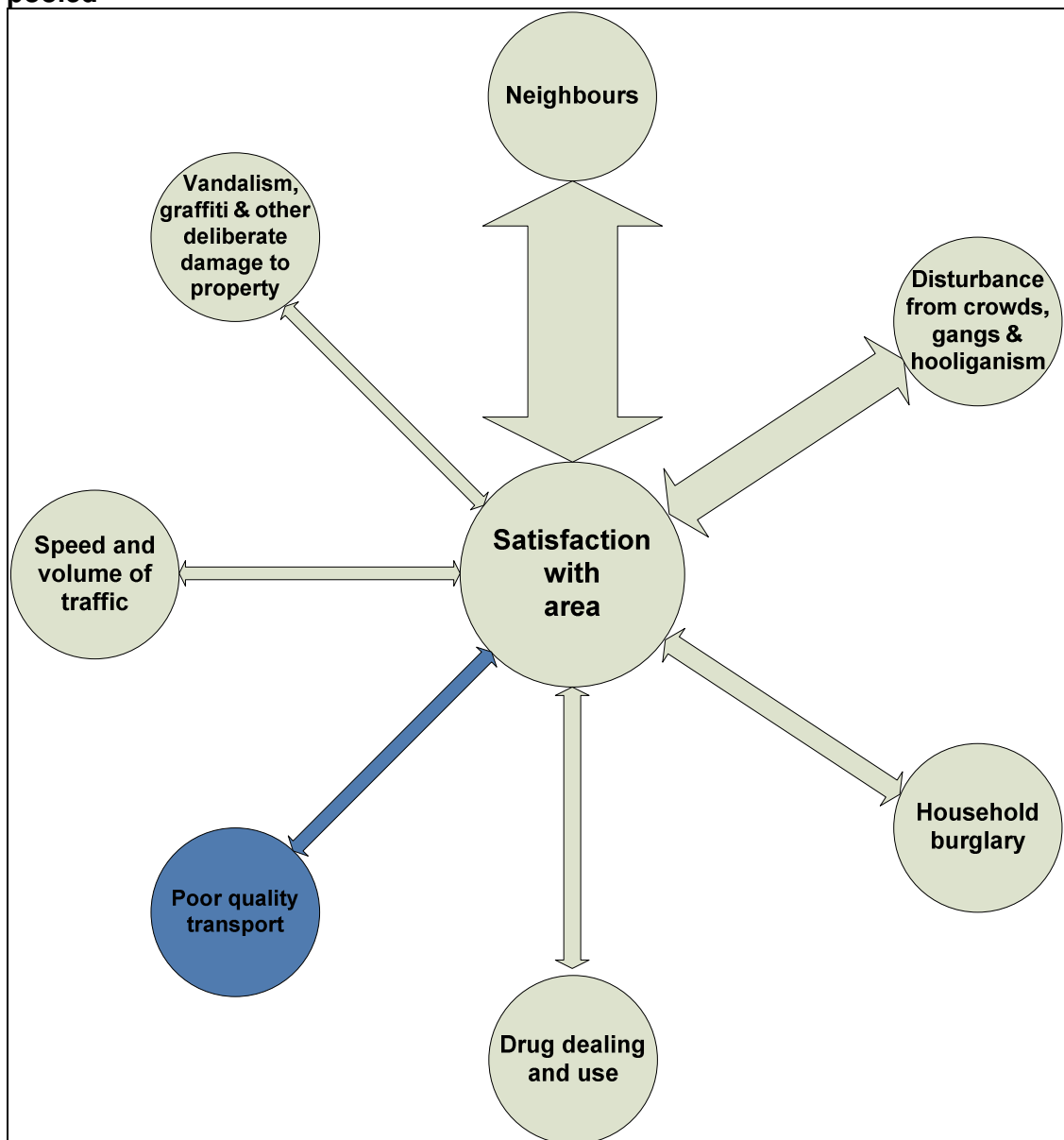
The importance of the last two of these issues is reinforced by the analysis presented in Figure 7.6, which highlights the key findings to emerge from a statistical modelling exercise which identified neighbourhood problems that are (statistically) significantly associated with neighbourhood satisfaction. In doing so, it also highlights

the strength of relationships. The figure reveals that seven¹⁵ neighbourhood problems are significantly statistically associated with neighbourhood satisfaction:

- vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property
- disturbance from crowds and gangs of hooliganism
- drug dealing and use
- household burglary
- the speed and volume of traffic
- poor public transport, which had a positive association with neighbourhood satisfaction; and
- problems with neighbours, which had the strongest statistical relationship with area satisfaction.

¹⁵ In all 17 neighbourhood problems were included in the model. The ten problems that were not significantly statistically associated with neighbourhood satisfaction were: dogs causing nuisance or mess; litter and rubbish in the streets; run down or boarded up properties; abandoned or burnt out cars; poor quality or lack of parks or open spaces; car crime (e.g. damage, theft and joyriding; teenagers hanging around on the street; property being set on fire; racial harassment; people being attacked or harassed

Figure 7.6: Problems with the neighbourhood associated with satisfaction with being satisfied with the area as a place to live¹⁶; all respondents 2007 and 2010 pooled



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)
Base: all respondents (1005)

Returning now to the issue of the anti-social behaviour of gangs, it appeared to be more on an issue in Portobello than Belle Vue and the residents we interviewed there as part of the qualitative research work-programme were more likely to highlight the issue than those in Portobello. Respondents identified the gang, the self-styled, Bella Crew, who congregated outside the shopping area in Portobello, as being a particular problem. Many residents felt that this 'problem' had become more acute in the last couple of years.

"I've noticed that the ASB problem has got worse. In the present climate those people who have always been on the borderline of doing illegal stuff have dropped over onto the other side and are doing stuff that they shouldn't be doing. It's the same problem on a lot of our estates. The problem outside the shops has got worse. I think there are more children hanging around. There has been an influx of youngsters who have grown-up at the same time on the

¹⁶ The wider the arrow the greater the level of influence. Dark shading implies a positive relationship.

estate. I've tried really hard with ASB but with legal system as it is - it is too lenient - it is hardly worth going to court. An example needs to be set of someone before things change." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

"On a personal level I feel like it's got worse because I know them more. After five years the boys who were 11, who had potential, are now 16 and all they're doing is hanging around." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

I: "So just in terms of Portobello how has it changed or not over the last year?"

R: "I think it still presents a number of challenges to us in management terms in terms of tackling and managing elements of anti-social-behaviour."

I: "Just on ASB is it on any particular part of the estate?"

R: "Yeah, it's particularly around the shops, Duke of York Avenue. Around the café area. Not at the café because it's when the café's closed. But particularly focusing on that small area." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Several respondents highlighted the growth in the number of young men congregating outside the shops.

I: "Do you think the problem with kids behaving in an anti-social way, particularly outside the shops, has got worse since we last spoke last year?"

R: "Oh, yes, definitely. It's getting worse"

I: "Why?"

R: "Well, in the past it just used to be teenagers hanging around outside the shops and most of them would be in their early teens with the oldest perhaps being 17. But these kids have grown-up and not left. So some of the kids hanging around aren't in fact kids at all – they're young men they're 18, 19 and 20. They just won't leave Portobello and, as a result, it is the most intimidating it has ever been over there. And they are there from 3pm to 9pm." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

"The police are always down there (the area outside the shops). It's on a weekend when it's at its worse. It's not just kids either. There are adults that join in, too. It's definitely got worse over the last year and I don't know why." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

After several failed attempts to gain access to members of the Bella Crew, who appeared keen to keep their distance from the study team, in 2010 we were finally able to do so, and in-depth interviews were conducted with eight current¹⁷ members of the gang then aged between 16 and 21. The key issues to emerge from these interviews, which are explored in more depth in another of the study team's research outputs, *Portobello Residents' Perceptions and Experiences of the Local Labour Market, Unemployment, Worklessness and Recession* (CRESR, 2010), include:

- while local stakeholders and residents alike tend to regard Crew members as 'NEETS' (Not in Education, Employment or Training), it appears that relatively few fall into this category. Although every member of the Crew we interviewed had left full time education, the majority of those who had recently left compulsory education had identified 'pathways' into their preferred area of work in construction, manual crafts or the armed forces with many aspiring to emulate their father's career paths

"I want to get an apprenticeship in a construction firm so I'm starting college in September. I want the job, the car the lot." (Bella Crew member, 16)

¹⁷ The Bella Crew has a long history having existed on the estate for several decades, with 'membership' being passed down through the generations.

"I want to go in the Army as soon as I can. My dad used to be in the RAF and fly planes and that. And I've just decided to go into the army because, from what he's told me about what he did, it's good." (Bella Crew member, 17)

- all of the Crew members we spoke to were engaged in informal 'cash in hand' employment working for local gypsies on an ad hoc basis. Work of this nature was reported to be particularly plentiful over the summer

"I don't need to sign on. I'm earning enough doing bits and bats working with Gypsies, doing anything as long as it's legit." (Bella Crew member, 19)

- the Crew members we interviewed who were eligible so 'sign on' refused to do so for fear of being dubbed "dole dossers", and they preferred to rely on earnings from 'informal' employment.

"I'd rather do without money than sign on. It's dole dosing, isn't it? I'm not a dole dosser." (Bella Crew member, 18)

- the majority of Crew members were reluctant to move off the estate regardless of the limited opportunities for employment locally. This reluctance generally stemmed from an unwillingness to move away from the close networks of family and friends they had established on the estate

"I would never leave because we stick together; we've got each other's back no matter what happens." (Bella Crew member, 19)

- all members we spoke to were aware that many residents had concerns about 'the Crew' and their behaviour but felt these views were based on misconceptions and assumptions about their behaviour, and that nothing had occurred to substantiate these views. As they see it, they are simply "hanging out" and are not the 'bums', 'yobbos' or 'hoodies' that they are perceived to be by many residents in Portobello

"You get put into groups and we're one of the groups that people don't like. If we see a woman in a big blouse we don't think she's going to mug us, but they think that just because we wear hoodies. And there are lots of us it means we're going to mug them and cause bother." (Bella Crew member, 16)

- the Crew feel they have been made scapegoats for all the estate's problems and reported that they were constantly being moved on and dispersed by Police and PCSOs. The group themselves attribute crime on the estate to a small group of hardcore of drug addicts of which they claim not to be part of:

"Most of the people 'round here who cause trouble are drug addicts. Everything what gets pinched on here more or less comes down to drugs. And they're trying to say it's us doing it just because they see us stood at the shops." (Bella Crew member, 19)

- the majority of members we spoke to were very loyal towards Portobello and felt it had improved in their lifetime. One 21 year old felt the estate had become a much better place to live during his lifetime

"We're proud of living here and we all think Portobello's getting better. If you look at this estate 20 years ago you wouldn't think it was this estate. There were flats burnt out; cars burnt out in middle of roads; everything. Look at in now." (Bella Crew member, 21)


- there was a consensus amongst Crew members who we interviewed that they, along with other young people on the estate, were being marginalised in terms of the allocation of public resources locally with most (they felt) being allocated to older residents. However, the MUGA installed in Manygates Park last year is extremely popular and the Crew have undertaken to 'protect' it. There were also widespread calls for a new youth shelter in the park which would provide somewhere to meet which was sheltered:

"We've only ever got one thing what we wanted on 'ere and that's a football court. It took us years to get that and it'll be looked after. We'll make sure it is." (Bella Crew, 17)

Returning now to the broader issue of ASB in Portobello, both residents and stakeholders we spoke to noted that the problem on the estate was not confined solely to the intimidatory behaviour of members of its gangs: graffiti and vandalism, problems which were highlighted as having a (statistically significant) adverse affect on neighbourhood satisfaction in Figure 7.6 and arson and fly tipping were also reported to be problems.

"The estate is such a mess. There's rubbish everywhere. The gardens are a mess. Clifford Avenue is the worse and there is graffiti all over the shops and they (youths) keep lighting fires. They set fire to the bins." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

Although the material presented below was garnered from a teenage resident in the first year of the study, the vandalism problem he highlighted was still very much evidence in its last year.

| Monday 30th July | Photos |
|---|---|
| 1. Activities | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you do today? (Please remember to include your feelings about what you did) | |
| For example, places you went to, people you met, things you did. | |
| <p>My mum and I took my dog Sandy for a walk. We went first to the Phillip Bennet's memorial garden (this was done by the kids of Portobello in memory of Phillip who died age 12 from meningitis). I like it here as you can see for miles, even as far as the Emlymoor mark. We then went to the field to let sandy have a run.</p> <p>One thing I don't like pe about Portobello is the vandalism, I've taken a photo of the phone box near us covered in paint and the door ripped off. also Jacque came round.</p> |  |
| 2. Your thoughts on today as a whole | |
| Thinking about your day was it a good, bad or okay day? | |
| Why do you think this? | |
| Continue on the back of the page, if necessary | |

I took this photo because I don't like the vandalism which takes place around Portobello, the doors here have been ripped off and paint had been thrown over it.

Several residents believed that the increase in ASB had been a key factor in the closure of the local 'chip shop' and there was a sense that, for some residents, the area outside the shops had become an area to avoid. Furthermore, many residents,

particularly the elderly, appeared to be increasingly reluctant to use Portobello's local shops:

"There are thugs drinking around the shops and people daren't go to the shops. My neighbour gets her windows broken every week and egg thrown at the house just because she has a disability and so does her son. You hear people saying all the time that they won't go to the shops. The police are always down there." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

I: "Do you think the neighbourhood has changed in recent years?"

R: "Yes, I'd say it's changed in the last eight, nine months. Now most nights you've got 40 or 50 kids out there (outside the shops) all at once and it is very, very intimidating for these old folks that live here. They daren't go to shops. But there's just nothing for them (local children)." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

"It (the problems in Portobello) has definitely got worse. The anti-social behaviour outside the shops by the kids has got really bad. They're smoking skunk and cannabis and drinking. It's so intimidating. It has definitely got worse over the last year. The old people won't use the shops because so they're so scared of the kids." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

As the above quote illustrates, drug dealing and use was also perceived to be a problem in the study area and it was cited by more than half (51 per cent) of all residents as being a problem. Furthermore, as noted earlier, it was found to be a key driver of neighbourhood satisfaction. Again, residents in Portobello were more likely than their counterparts in Belle Vue to feel this way (60 per cent compared to 39 per cent). Analysis of the qualitative data collected by the study team revealed a similar picture: 'drugs' was a problem that was frequently raised in in-depth interviews, with residents in Portobello being most likely to do so.

"We've had one or two problems with drug dealer up the dirt track there. We noticed a lot of strange cars coming. And they'd park here or park up the estate there and get out and walk up the path and two minutes later walk back. And then there'd be a young lad on a push bike and he'd go up. I didn't want that with the children and me neighbour's got children as well so we rang the police. Both of us did. I have noticed a couple of what I call suspect people going up and down. I think the police did come out and catch somebody once: a guy that came regularly in a particular make of car that we'd seen come quite a lot and I think the police did come one day when he was there. He was buying I would imagine. But it's still going on." (Portobello resident, female, year four)

In the following quote, a Portobello resident notes that the problem has got worse in recent times and is a particular problem in the summer months. This quote also highlights the perceived relationship between drug related issues and the problem of gangs, which was highlighted earlier.

"We had a lot of problems with drug addicts but they were meek and mild and if they did anything wrong and you told them about it they were quite OK. But the new generation that's moved in now... it's got to the point where people don't want to go out after dark. It's not nice. It really has changed. We all dread the summer because last year there was a gang of 17 of 'em out 'ere boozing and drugs. And you daren't even go out and put your bin out." (Portobello resident, female, year four)

Some Portobello residents noted that drug dealing and use was often done 'flagrantly' and was 'tolerated' by the bulk of residents on the estate, who had "given up" reporting the problem to the Police.

"Well, I can tell you. My next door neighbours. They use and deal drugs quite openly on doorstep as does somebody over there. The police never do anything. It's quite open. But I just keep this (her mouth) shut" (Portobello resident, female, year three).

The following quote provides further evidence of the complex interrelationships that exist between drug dealing, drug use, the prevalence of gangs and petty crime on the estate.

"Oh, yeah anything goes out of my garden. They couldn't get in my shed one day so they took the hinges off. The lads that are taking this stuff; they're only young and then they'll go to another bit of estate when it's dark, door to door selling. Selling your garden stuff for drug money. But they seem to think, the council, that crime is down. And I think it's just people are just so fed up with police they don't report anything anymore." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

A number of Belle Vue residents who took part in the qualitative research undertaken also highlighted the problem of drug dealing and use. However, unlike in Portobello, where the issue appears to be an estate-wide phenomenon, in Belle Vue the problem appeared to be concentrated in one location: the one bedroom flats and bedsits at Norfolk and Suffolk House and Buckingham Court on Buckingham Drive, which reportedly housed a high number of transient single households. A WDH tenant from Buckingham Drive described the problems that had occurred in the area.

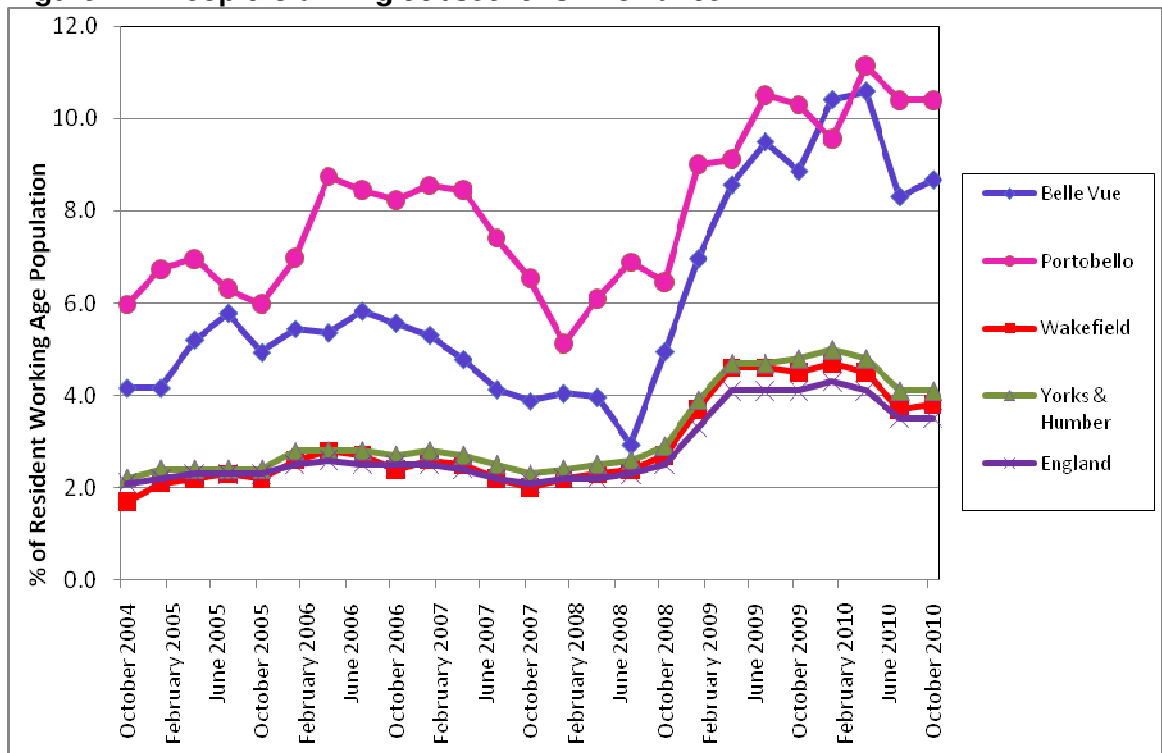
"There has been some problems with one of my neighbours that's been found to be drug dealing. And that's been horrible because it's scary. You get all sorts coming down to collect them. But that was sorted police wise. Touch wood. I hope it's been sorted." (Belle Vue resident, female, year four)

7.4. Recession

Data collected by the study team reveals that the recession has had a disproportionately large negative affect on the study area and its residents, and in doing so, diluted the overall impact of the improvement programme. It has done so in two ways. First, it appears that it has exacerbated (some of) its existing socio-economic problems, such as worklessness and claims for welfare benefits. Second, a corollary of declining household income levels, brought about by recession through job losses and reduced working hours, has been that residents now have less financial resources to spend on their homes.

Before these issues can be explored, it is important first to consider the nature and scope of recession in the study area. In line with the findings of other studies, it appears that its impact has been greater in the study area than in other more affluent parts of Wakefield. Evidence of this is provided by Figure 7.7, which highlights the proportions of Jobseekers Allowance claimants in the study area, Wakefield, Yorkshire and the Humber, and England. As the chart clearly reveals, the growth in claimants in the study area has been much more marked since the recession began in February 2008 than in the district, region and England as a whole.

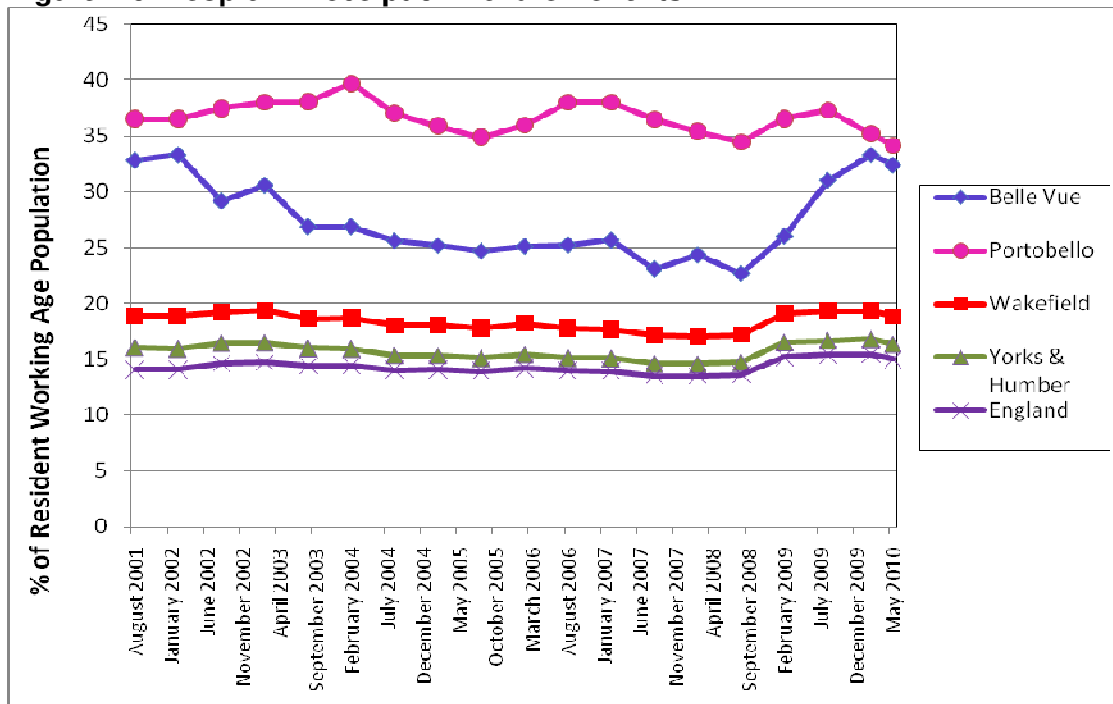
Figure 7.7: People Claiming Jobseeker's Allowance



Sources: Claimant Count with Rates and Proportions (DWP) 2004-2010 (downloaded from NOMIS); Resident Population Estimates for Local Authorities (National Statistics), 2001-2009; Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band for Middle and Lower Layer Super Output Areas (Experimental Statistics), 2001-2009 (downloaded from Neighbourhood Statistics). Crown Copyright

Further evidence of the disproportionately large (negative) impact of recession on the study area is provided by Figure 7.8, which highlights welfare benefit receipt. Interestingly, more recently the level in Portobello has started to stabilise, whereas Belle Vue experienced a sharp increase between September 2008 and December 2009.

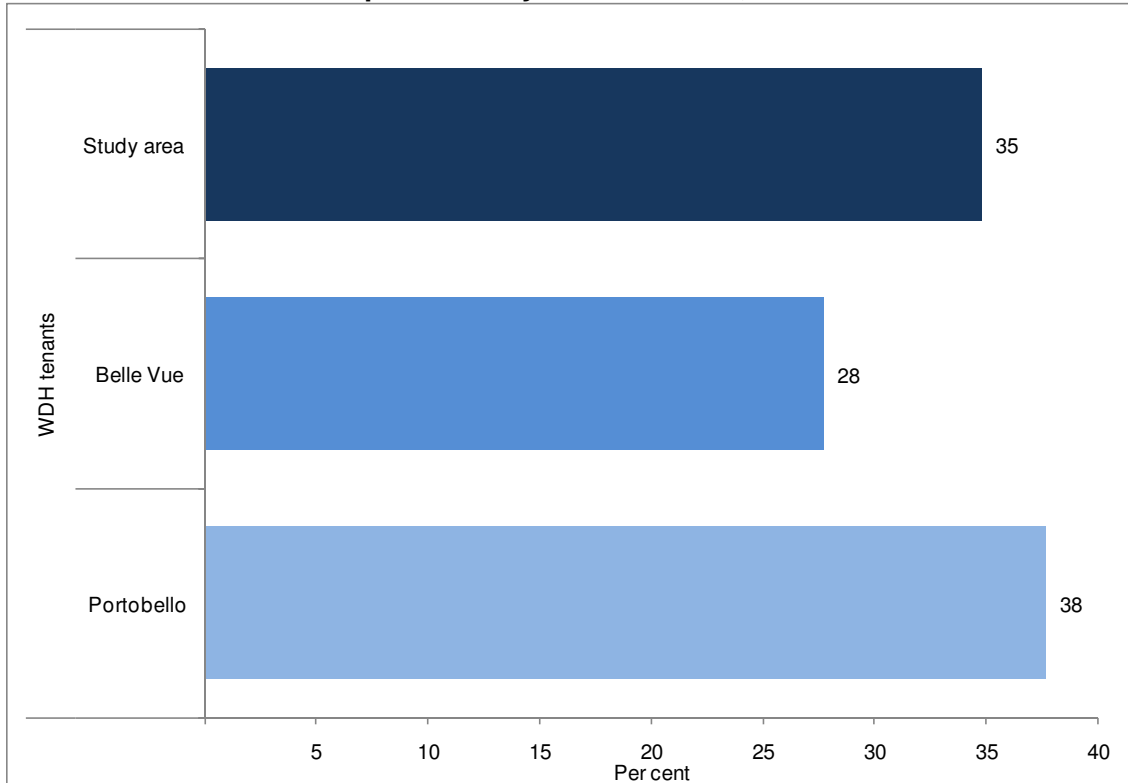
Figure 7.8: People in Receipt of Welfare Benefits



Sources: Benefits Data: Working Age Client Group (DWP) 2001-2010 (downloaded from NOMIS); Resident Population Estimates for Local Authorities (National Statistics), 2001-2009; Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band for Middle and Lower Layer Super Output Areas (Experimental Statistics), 2001-2009 (downloaded from Neighbourhood Statistics). Crown Copyright

Data garnered from the 2010 survey of residents conducted by BMG supports the assertion that recession has had an adverse effect on the financial situation of WDH tenants, thereby reducing their ability to improve their homes. First, as Figure 7.9 illustrates, more than a third (35 per cent) of WDH tenants reported that the economic downturn has made it more difficult for them to invest in their homes, with tenants in Portobello being more likely to report that that was the case (38 per cent).

Figure 7.9: Percentage of WDH tenants who state the economic downturn had made it more difficult to spend money on their home; WDH Tenants 2010

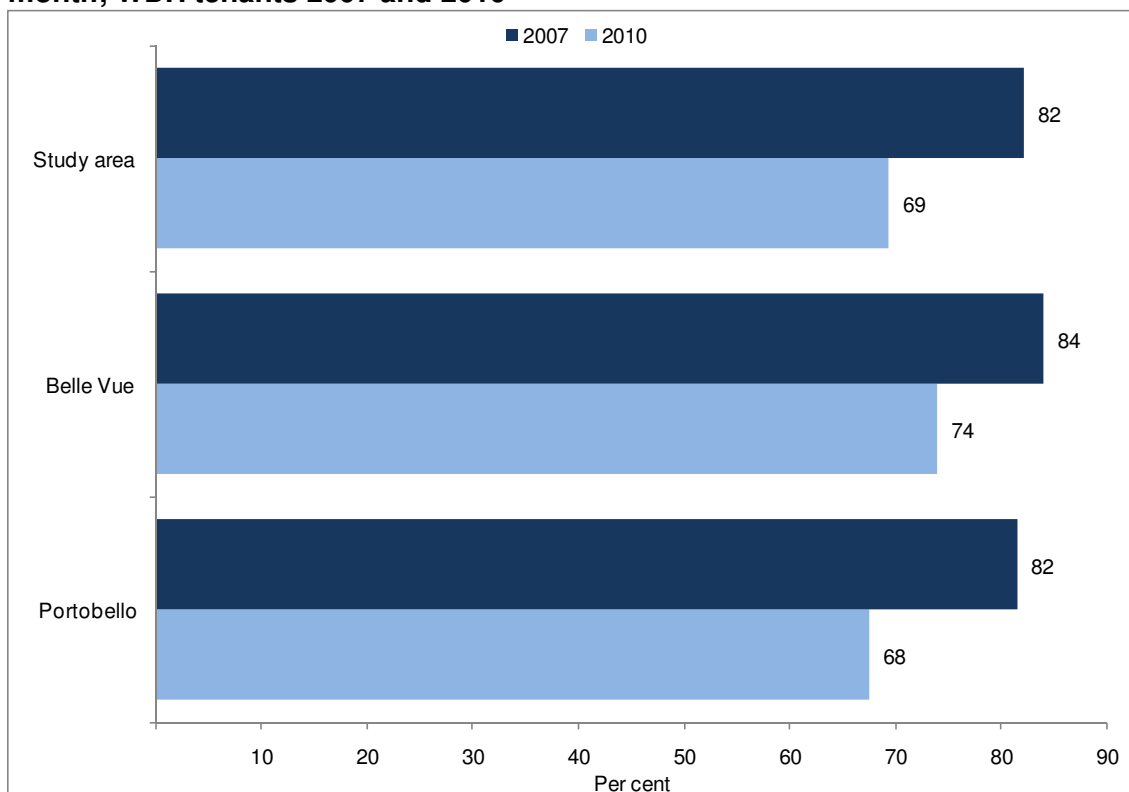


Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants: Study area (308), Belle Vue (101) Portobello (207)

Second, as Figure 7.10 reveals, the proportion of WDH tenants in the study area reporting that they saved at least £10 per month fell from 82 per cent in 2007 to 69 per cent in 2010, a change which is statistically significant.

Figure 7.9: Percentage of residents with regular saving of at least £10 per month; WDH tenants 2007 and 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants: 2007 Study area (288), Belle Vue (82) Portobello (206); 2010 Study area (308), Belle Vue (101) Portobello (207)

A number of residents who were interviewed as part of the qualitative research undertaken by the study team reported that they were unable to carry out planned improvements as a result of their reduced incomes or concerns about their future income. It was clear that this was a source of great frustration for these residents who evidently wanted to make the best of, or "finish off", the renovation of their newly modernised homes.

I: "Has the recession impacted on you or other members of the household?"

R: "Yes, it has had an impact because my husband has less work. He lays floors and that has meant that we have had to get our new telly on the tick. It's one of those: 'buy it now pay it back in a year's time' deals.' And I wanted to redecorate in here (the lounge). I was going to get it re-plastered. But we can't afford to do it, which is a shame."

I: "So when will you redecorate it?"

R: "No time soon because we haven't got the money....hopefully, my husband will start to get more work and then maybe we could do it...But I don't see it happening for a couple of years." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

R: "I'm a single parent with an illness and I still haven't been able to decorate me house. And I've been living like it for two year. And it absolutely gets me down."

I: "Because it's been modernised does it make you feel more down because the house it nice and you want to do it?"

R: "Yeah, yeah, that's absolutely right. I really want to get it looking finished off so my son has more respect for the house. But he won't until it's finished." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

"Yeah, but if it were totally decorated, (if) all me hallway were done and everything were done then it would be fantastic, definitely. But I'm still not

feeling right because my decorating isn't done and it still feels unfinished." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

Local stakeholders agreed that residents were increasingly financially constrained in terms of the improvements that they could afford to carry out as a direct result of recession.

"Recession has stopped people spending as much money as they would like on their homes. They've got shiny new kitchens and would love to put in new carpets and new fireplaces. But with recession they can't afford to do this. They haven't got the money. And I think people feel better about themselves if they do stuff for themselves and make a mark on their homes. They don't want handouts. They want to do stuff themselves." (Local stakeholder, Portobello)

Another marker of recession in the study area, and Portobello in particular, is the increased presence of money lenders.

I: "Has recession had an impact on people's ability to decorate or improve the home?"

R: "Well, certainly on all our estates and Portobello is no exception. But there is the growth of the money lender. We have money lender problems in the area and they charge large amounts of interest. So if you wanted to finance Christmas or you wanted to finance a new three piece suite, because, you've had your house renovated, then they're around. And then they send their bother boys when you haven't paid up." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

In the following quote, a WDH stakeholder explains that "loan sharks" are only one facet of a bigger debt problem in the area and that, apparently as a result of recession, residents are 'jeopardising' their tenancies by falling into rent arrears as they prioritise payments to less sympathetic lenders. He goes on to suggest that many residents do not have the skills to manage a household budget, thereby exacerbating their situation further.

I: "Has recession had any impact on the area?"

R: "Yes, in a number of ways. Rent arrears have shot-up and people keep asking me what's going on. But I've got loads of residents on housing benefit and there is a gap between what they get paid in benefit and the rent. So I can't do anything about it. People simply haven't got any money. And some of them have borrowed off loan sharks and catalogues and they understandably pay this debt first because they have heavies who put a lot of pressure on them to pay. We obviously don't do this so, quite understandably, they don't prioritise paying us.....I also think people need to be educated. They need to be educated about how to look after a house and how to run a house and how to manage their money without getting into debt." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

There is evidence to suggest that the recession has exacerbated some of the area's socio-economic problems. For example, a number of stakeholders argued that it is one of the main reasons behind the increase in ASB in Portobello. This was because it has 'taken away' the labouring jobs that local young men would traditionally have taken up, with the boredom and frustration that ensued resulting in them behaving in an anti-social manner.

I: "Has the recession had any impact on Portobello and the people who live on it?"

R: "Definitely, yes. When we've run workshops people have talked about being laid-off and the labouring jobs that would have employed the young men who hang around the shops have gone. I met one young man, who was about 22,

who had a job and was doing really well. He had a young child and another on the way. But he lost his job and then got arrested for burgling a house on Portobello.” (Stakeholder, Portobello)

I: "Someone said that there's a sense that where it (ASB) had changed recently is, that instead of three or four years ago it being 12, 13, 14 year olds, now you're getting 19, 20, 21 year olds getting involved. Would you concur with that?"

R: "I would absolutely go with that. I guess that's the lack of opportunity, lack of picking up opportunities and going with it."

I: "Do you think recession's played a role in that?"

R: "I do. Even guys who really want to work are not working. There are quite a lot who don't care about work but there are quite a few who really do want to work and have lost jobs." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Although the problems associated with concentrations of unemployed young men are not unique to Portobello, stakeholders do feel that their reluctance to leave their neighbourhood to seek opportunities elsewhere is more specific to it. These sentiments echo the views of many other stakeholders interviewed over the past two years who believe that Portobello residents feel a particularly strong tie to their neighbourhood, which is often attributed to a fear of the outside world. Many believe that Portobello is viewed by residents as a “safe haven” as a result of the long established and extensive networks of family and friends that most residents have on the estate. It seems possible that the effects of recession may serve to reinforce these tendencies and further reduce residents' contact with "the outside world".

I: "Why is this happening?"

R: "They (the young men) won't even go to into the centre of Wakefield. They won't leave Portobello. And they've got no ambition. They feel safer and happier hanging around here and they fear the outside world to be fair. There are no jobs for them to go to but it's like they're nervous of leaving." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

It is possible to see how, in a number of ways, recession is undermining the impact of the regeneration programme in the study area, and Portobello in particular. One local stakeholder quite effectively summed up the connections and interrelationships between the various ways in which recession has impacted on the estate and demonstrates how, cumulatively they militate against the regeneration of the estate.

"For me the big issue on the estate is employment. I was chatting to a young lad the other day: he's going to be moving into a new house and has all these plans for it. But these plans will only happen if he gets a job. But what happens if he doesn't? For me, employment is the key to it (the regeneration of the estate). More people would pay rent... they're not avoiding paying on purpose. They just don't have any money. More people would spend more money on their homes and maybe some of the young men hanging around the shops would have somewhere to go." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

7.5. The (Poor) Quality of Property Boundaries, Gardens and Public Spaces in Portobello

As noted earlier, public spaces in Belle Vue have been improved as part of the NMP there and, as a result, resident satisfaction with them has increased markedly in the last three years. However, in Portobello, environmental improvement works only began one month before the BMG Residents' Survey took place in May 2010, and the programme will not be completed until April 2012. Therefore, perhaps not

unexpectedly, many residents (and stakeholders) in the estate expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of its public spaces. In addition, they also expressed their dissatisfaction with another element of the physical environment: the (poor) quality of gardens and property boundaries in the estate. And there was a consensus that the inadequacy of the physical environment of the estate was undermining the overall impact of the improvement programme.

It was widely felt that the improvement programme would not be 'complete' until the programme of environmental improvements had been undertaken. Indeed, many Portobello stakeholders interviewed felt that improvements to the external environment were of equal importance to the modernisation of the housing stock.

"The trouble is, is that it's not that obvious that the estate has been modernised. Yes, I accept that the outside of the properties look much nicer but the boundaries are a mess, as are a lot of the green spaces in the area. When I go to other areas, it is much more obvious that they have been improved. For example, Aysgarth has had a lot of work done on it and it looks really good; the area has had environmental improvements and the houses have been modernised. It looks smashing." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Two Portobello stakeholders suggested that the poor condition of the external environment also engendered a sense of (what they described as) 'apathy' amongst residents and discouraged them from taking more 'responsibility' for their gardens and public spaces. Stakeholders routinely expressed concerns regarding the lack of responsibility that residents appear to feel for their gardens and public spaces. One stakeholder, who had been active in the area for a number of years, attributed this to the historically "paternalistic" approach to the management of the estate, in so far as Portobello residents were used to having things "done to them and for them."

"I think there's more paternalism here (Portobello) than there is on other estates. So consequently, if it were me, for example, and there was some risk to my small children, then I would remedy it by putting up fencing myself. What they (Portobello residents) will do is wait and moan and wait and moan. Now, some of it is that they can't afford it. But (for) others it is (because) that they wouldn't have the wherewithal to take any ownership of their immediate community."

The same stakeholder went on to qualify this observation by drawing an analogy with a child that is persistently 'let down.'

"If we couldn't deliver environmental improvements in Eastmoor we could get away with it. Portobello is the foster child whereas Eastmoor, in comparison, is the child that may come from a poorer family but knows it's loved and cared for. Portobello should have the highest priority because the child that you always depress is the child that remains depressed for the rest of their life. Because the kids in care who've always had promises of sweets tomorrow, as opposed to the reality of my kids who, when I've said: 'no we can't afford that', can cope differently with it." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Stakeholders believed that once the environmental improvements were completed residents would feel more able and motivated to maintain the improvements. For example, one noted:

I: "Do you think there's any sense of, say after the modernisations; do you get any sense of more ownership with the estate?"

R: "Not at the minute. I think people are still waiting for it all to be done. I think some people are fed up that it's not happened yet."

I: "The environmental improvements?"

R: "Yeah, I think it'll be when all of it's done that it'll have a bigger effect.
 I: How would you tell then if you were measuring lack of ownership? What are indicators of lack of ownership?"
 R: "I think it's things like untidy gardens and littering on public areas and graffiti and things. And I think because it doesn't look finished people are treating it as though it's not finished."
 I: "Do you think it does look like it's not finished?"
 R: "Yeah"
 I: "So because it doesn't look finished people therefore aren't treating it as well?"
 R: "Yeah, that's what I think anyway. You might get people who want to keep their gardens tidy... and then you'll have other people thinking: 'why should I spend time on mine when theirs looks like it does?'"
 I: "So you think if they get the environmental improvements done and looking great people would think 'oh I should...?'"
 R: "Look after the place? Yeah. I hope so because there still seems to be burnt out telephone boxes and things in front of the shops."
 PH: "And you think people see stuff like that and think..."
 R: "Why bother? Yeah." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

In a similar vein, another stakeholder noted:

I: "On the improvement programme, what impact has that had on people's lives and the neighbourhood?"
 R: "To be honest, since they've all stopped coming in the (Rainbow) Café, sitting drinking tea whilst their houses have been done, not a lot of impact. I think the big impact will come when the environmental work is done."
 I: "Do you think the environmental work is more important for the neighbourhood than the housing modernisation itself?"
 R: "I do except I don't think you could have had one without the other. But looking wider than the house, I think the environmental programme could potentially bring a real whoosh of energy. It's like when people's homes are modernised, then you think: 'oh, everything has its place and it feels easier to manage.' I think this area in terms of graffiti, litter, all of that, will seem easier to manage when it looks better. The first stage is complete. There's no doubt looking at all those windows and doors that it looks different to how it did." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

In line with the findings of the *Second* and *Third Annual Review Reports* (CRESR, 2008; CRESR, 2009), there was a consensus amongst respondents that the quality of the physical environment varied considerably across Portobello, with the estate having a number of poor quality "hotspots." These include: the area immediately outside the shops on Duke of York Avenue, which at the time of writing was being improved by Groundwork; the "Stonehenge" open space; and two roads where property boundaries and gardens are perceived to be problematic, Clifford Avenue and Clifford View. Furthermore, there was a sense that the gap between the 'best' and 'worst' areas was growing.

R: "When I lived on Pugneys Road, everyone did their gardens; made them lovely. Well, I walked down that road a couple of weeks back and I couldn't believe my eyes. There's nobody got a decent garden. It's just idleness to me. There aren't any railings between the gardens. It's just one big messy space. I doubt anyone knows where their garden starts and the others end. Those who have always taken care of their patches are taking more care than ever and the others are taking less care than they ever have."
 I: "Why are people taking more care than ever do you think?"

R: "Well, I think they have been given a boost since their houses were done up. Because you want it all to look nice; not just your house." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

Respondents were asked to give their views on the environmental programme currently being undertaken on Portobello, and its likely impact. Some felt that it would have a positive impact on the estate.

I: "Do you think that the improvements that are planned for green spaces on the estate will make a difference?"

R: "Yes, because, although the houses are really nice now the estate still looks a right state and Clifford Avenue is an eyesore...I think the good work they (WDH) have done is being spoiled by the green bits on the estate...and as I said before, Clifford Avenue is a dump... a right mess." (Portobello resident, female, year three)

But others were concerned that its impact would be limited by the inevitable "trashing" of some of the completed projects. A number of residents were particularly concerned about the "sustainability" of the project planned for the area outside the shops:

"Yeah, it would be nice if they sorted it (the area) out 'round the shops and the parks but what's the point? It's a waste of time. It'll just get trashed. They (local children) burnt a bench down on the park the other day. That's what will happen to whatever they put in. Any money would be better spent on a youth club or something, where they can be supervised and kept under control." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

Thus, given these concerns and the poor quality of property boundaries in the area, it is perhaps not surprising that many residents argued that work to improve and restore boundaries should take priority over improving public spaces in the area:

I: "What do you think of the plans to improve the green spaces on the estate?"

R: "I think what they're planning is barmy. It's ridiculous. It's bollocks. Sorry, about my language. But it's barmy. They (WDH) are going to spend one million pounds on the shops. But whatever they do will be trashed within an hour and there will be graffiti everywhere as soon as they do it."

I: "So what should be done?"

R: "I think the fences should be sorted-out as they're a mess and they make the place look scruffy and I think that people would look after their gardens better if there were proper fences. Some of the gardens, particularly on Clifford Avenue, are a right state." (Portobello resident, female, year two)

A number of stakeholders noted that improving property boundaries would be a crucial, and very tangible and visible, "marker" to "outsiders that the area had been improved.

I: "What has been the overall impact of the improvement programme?"

R: "It's had an impact. But the big problem for me on the estate are the boundaries and fences. It's a massive problem for me. I think the priority should be to sort-out the fences and boundaries at the front of properties so that people coming on the estate can see straightaway that it has been improved." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

Furthermore, these improvements would attract new residents to the estate:

I: "And would it (the housing improvement programme) make someone living in another part of Wakefield like Eastmoor think: 'Oh, I might move to Portobello' or not?"

R: "Not yet. I think that potentially the next phase (the environmental improvement programme) will have the effect."

I: "So you think almost the next phase, the environment outside is probably more important than the housing improvements?"

R: "Yes, to draw people onto the estate, I think so. The problem with this estate is that there are areas that are lovely, with really nice neighbours and really nice gardens. And then there are areas that are just like hell. Clifford Avenue's horrendous. Clifford View is lovely 'round the corner and I would say Rutland is horrendous, that big circle going up there. But Warren is lovely. All those nice gardens."

Residents highlighted many benefits that would accrue from the installation of new railings or fences. In addition to making the area look more presentable, they were considered important for clearly defining private space, protecting gardens and deterring intruders.

It is important at this juncture to make two more salient points about the property boundary issue. First, in the last year WDH *has* improved property boundaries on the estate, albeit in only one part. In early 2010 it funded the installation of high quality metallic railings in the Woodville Court area of Duke of York Avenue which abuts the Pugneys Country Park, a development which has been very much welcomed by residents living there.

<http://research.shu.ac.uk/cresr/wakefield-housing-improvement-evaluation/portobellofilm.html#t=04m46s>

INSERT HYPERLINK TO 04.46 MINUTES ON PORTOBELLO FILM (ANNIE TALKING ABOUT HER FENCING)

However, the (perceived) 'failure' of WDH to introduce this type of boundary feature in other parts of the estate has resulted in the emergence of (what one stakeholder described) as "fence envy" amongst residents. She did however, indicate that WDH were working towards a solution whereby (what she termed) "*secure gardens*" could be rolled out across a wider area of the estate.

"It's beautiful fencing and we really think it's going to have a great impact for those properties. It's a small number but there's massive fence-envy now.... I'm looking at directing bits of other monies there (towards more fencing). WDH are looking at that broader picture because secure gardens are important to people which may have been under estimated. It has come over running through your (CRESR Annual Review) reports and other contact we've had with people. It can prevent neighbour disputes. It increases pride; improves the overall appearance to the area. I feel quite strongly about providing secure gardens and we've looked to get as much for our money as long as we can."

This quote also serves to highlight the importance of robust fencing to residents and the benefits that clearly defined boundaries can lead to including: reductions in neighbour disputes; greater pride amongst residents in their gardens; and, linked to this, a greater propensity for them to maintain their gardens; and improvements in the overall appearance of the estate.

Second, residents in Belle Vue also attached great importance to property boundaries. This was clearly the case for one participant in the photo novella exercise.



③ I took this photo because again I like the windows. However the bad point is I was promised railings around the front (other residents on ~~the~~ this area have them) but have since been told it may not happen. Having them would make me feel more secure and also I would do more planting etc in the garden.

In a similar vein, another two residents in the neighbourhood noted.

"Most areas have got railings around the front gardens except here. It's just an added security and I've had quite a few problems since living here. I've even had fireworks put through me letterbox. And I think when you've got a fence 'round it says: 'this is private property' and might make them think twice. It just looks a lot neater and tidier as well." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

I: "To make this place a better place what could be done? If you were telling WDH: 'We want X, Y and Z done ' what would you tell them to make it better?"
R: "I want fencing 'round me house like everybody else...it looks a mess without it. Especially because some have and some haven't." (Belle Vue resident, female, year three)

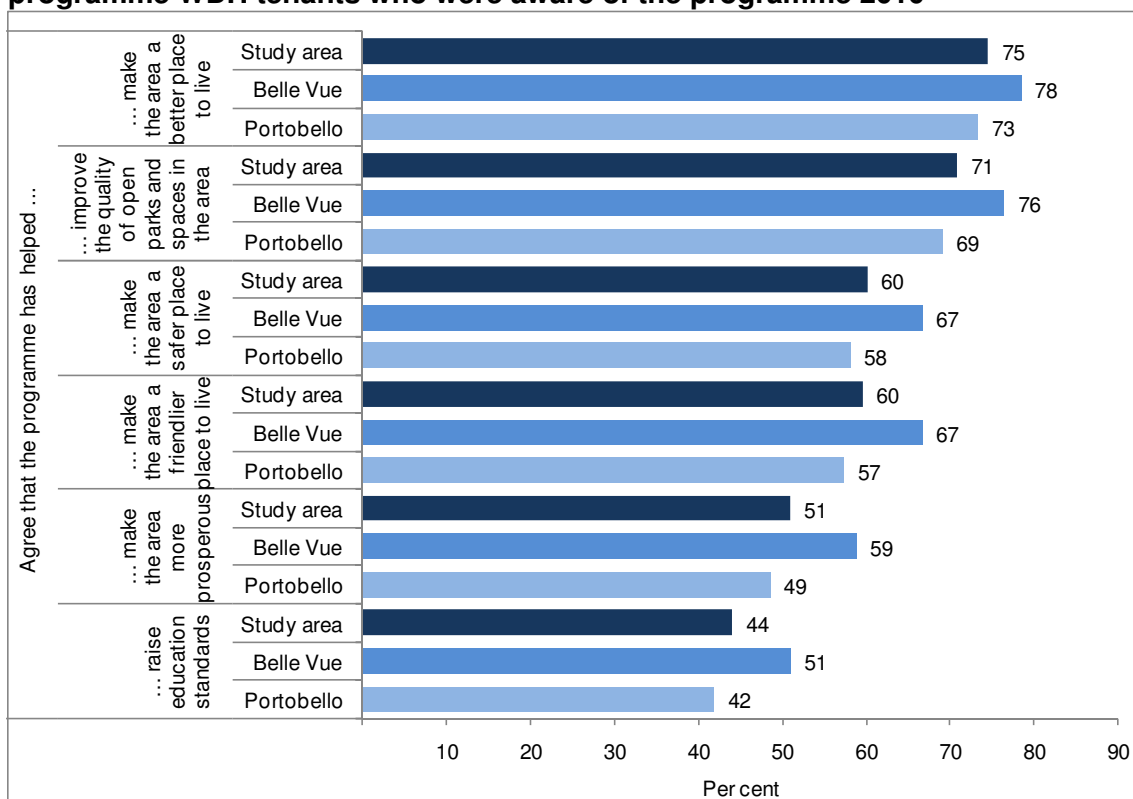
7.6. Conclusion

The preceding commentary has explored how the impact of the improvement programme has been diluted by two (inextricably linked and overlapping) issues that are not directly connected to the programme *per se* and 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; and recession. And in Portobello another factor appears to have diluted the impact of the housing improvement programme: the poor quality of its green spaces and property boundaries.

However, it is important at this juncture to make another salient point about the overall impact of the programme, specifically in relation to the important issue of how WDH tenants perceive its impact. That is, while most viewed the improvement programme as having a positive effect on the study area, there was some confusion about who had funded the programme with some residents being unaware that WDH had done so.

As Figure 7.11 reveals, most WDH tenants reported that the improvement programme had had a positive impact in the study area, although there appeared to be some confusion about the activities that it encompassed. For example, 44 per cent thought that it had helped improve educational standards in the area. This very welcome finding (for WDH) is at odds with other data, both quantitative and qualitative, collected by the study team, analysis of which revealed there to be little evidence that (at the time of writing) the improvement programme had had a positive impact on educational attainment in the study area.

Figure 7.11: Respondent perceptions on the impact of the improvements programme WDH tenants who were aware of the programme 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants who were aware of the programme: Study area (187), Belle Vue (51) Portobello (136)

However, there was some confusion amongst WDH tenants (and other residents) about who had funded the programme, confusion which did not appear to dissipate as the study progressed. Indeed, as the following quote illustrates, residents were possibly less likely to be able to identify who funded the improvement programme as time went on.

"I forget exactly what I had done now. But they did all the main things like new bathroom, boiler, kitchen units and that. The lady from the council come 'round and told me how it was going to work and I could choose some things. I remember that much." (Portobello, male resident, year four)

Some residents thought 'the council' (i.e. Wakefield Council) had funded the improvements:

"Keepmoat carried out the improvements. I have no idea who paid for them...the council I suppose." (Female resident, Portobello, year two)

And some clearly associated the improvement programme with Keepmoat, as the day-to-day "face" of the programme, and did not appear to have reflected on the

issue of who had funded the improvements. This was true of both Portobello and Belle Vue residents:

"Keepmoat did the work. I've no clue who paid." (Portobello, female resident, year two)

"I assumed that Keepmoat obtained the funding via some sort of grant from elsewhere." (Belle Vue, female resident, year two)

Several local stakeholders were not surprised by this finding and understood why Keepmoat were so prominent in residents' minds, particularly in Portobello:

"WDH are much more visible in other parts of the district... they're very visible in Eastmoor... they've got an office there. But in Portobello they haven't got much of a presence and they tend to be a bit invisible...I'm not surprised that residents don't know that WDH paid for the improvement work...Keepmoat were very visible. They obviously did the work and they also had large containers and did the Community Centre." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

A number of stakeholders speculated that a large proportion of residents living outside the study area in other parts of Wakefield were unlikely to be aware of the improvement programme, with awareness being particularly low of the improvement work in Portobello, because of its relative geographic isolation:

"Portobello is like a little island. It's cut-off and it's a little world of its own..." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

"The funny thing about Portobello is it's almost like a huge cul de sac. There's only two or three ways out." (Interview with stakeholder, Portobello)

I: "When you chat to people not necessarily concerned with Portobello would they be aware that Portobello's been modernised and improved? Would people pick up on that?"

R: "In a strange way probably not, because you'd never actually go through Portobello. Whereas what's happening on the redevelopment of Marsh Way [estate] in Wakefield City Centre is very visible, from the road and from trains, and it's highly publicised in the Wakefield Express, the local paper. But Portobello is unlike other estates. You would never, ever go to Portobello unless you needed to. You'd never drive through it for any reason other than if you were visiting somebody in Portobello. So other than that, people probably wouldn't know." (Stakeholder, Portobello)

In Belle Vue it was noted that the location of much of WDH's housing at some distance from Doncaster Road, to some extent, undermined the 'visibility' of the improvement programme in the area. And a number of stakeholders suggested that the 'failure' to regenerate more 'visible' parts of the area was a missed opportunity to change the image of the area – as a local estate agent noted:

"The improvements clearly aren't obvious, particularly from the main drag (Doncaster Road). It's that stretch, where the shops are that could do with investment because that's the view of Belle Vue most people in Wakefield get."

"People don't realise that this is council housing and they can't see it from the road anyway." (Belle Vue resident, female, year two)

7.7. Summary

- it appears that the impact of the improvement programme is being diluted by two (inextricably linked and overlapping) issues that are not directly connected to the programme *per se* and 'housing' issues: the severity of the area's socio-economic problems; and recession. And in Portobello another factor appears to have diluted its impact: the poor quality of the estate's green spaces and property boundaries
- however, it is important to note that although the area does have a number of deep rooted socio-economic problems, in one part of it - Belle Vue – neighbourhood quality of life has improved over the last three years, a trend which can be attributed principally to work of the NMP, through the improvements it has made to parks and open spaces in the area
- the persistence of the study area's socio-economic problems was highlighted in both the *Second* and *Third Annual Review Reports* (CRESR, 2008; CRESR, 2009) and there is little sign of these problems abating. Indeed, at the time of writing, the study area remained very much a deprived area, with deprivation being greatest in Portobello
- the relative deprivation of the study area was reflected in the data garnered by the study team in relation to the following domains: income; employment; health; educational attainment and skills; crime; 'barriers to housing and services' and 'the living environment'; and anti-social-behaviour
- three of the biggest problems relating to anti-social-behaviour in the study area were concerned with the activities of the gangs that were reported to exist in the area. '*Teenagers hanging around the streets*'; '*vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property*'; and '*disturbance from crowds and gangs of hooliganism*' were cited as being problems by 57, 42, and 29 per cent respectively of residents. These problems appeared to be more acute in Portobello where the anti-social behaviour of gangs was an issue that was highlighted in many of the in-depth resident interviews conducted by the study team. The most prominent (and visible) gang in Portobello are the 'Bella Crew', who congregate outside its shopping area. The study team interviewed eight members of the crew and the chapter highlighted some of the key issues to emerge from these interviews
- data collected by the study team reveals that the recession has had an adverse effect on the study area and its residents, and in doing so, diluted the overall impact of the improvement programme. It has done so in two ways. First, it appears that it has exacerbated (some of) its existing socio-economic problems, such as worklessness and anti-social behaviour. Second, a corollary of declining household income levels brought about by job losses and reduced working hours as a result of the economic downturn, has been that residents now have less financial resources to spend on their homes
- there was a consensus amongst both residents and stakeholders that the inadequacy of the physical environment in Portobello is undermining the impact of the improvement programme there. They expressed concern about the poor quality of its open spaces, property boundaries and gardens. However, it is important to note that many of the open spaces within the estate are being improved by a WDH funded environmental improvement currently being undertaken by Groundwork, which is due to be completed in April 2012. Furthermore, early in 2010 WDH installed high quality property boundaries in one part of the estate
- most WDH tenants feel that the improvement programme has had a positive impact on the study area, in a number of respects. However, there was some

confusion amongst them about who had funded the programme with many being unaware that WDH had done so.

8. Residents' Housing Stories

8.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the housing 'stories' of three long standing WDH tenants in the study area, whose circumstances, experiences, perceptions and attitudes have been tracked closely since the study began in 2007, along with five other residents. All three have lived in the same property since the project began and therefore are able to provide a valuable (and rounded) insight into the impact of the improvement programme. This approach is unique in so far as no previous study undertaken in the field of housing renewal has attempted to collect detailed *qualitative* data relating to the same cohort of residents over a relatively prolonged period of time.

Before turning our attention to the 'stories' of the subjects presented within this chapter and our approach to the qualitative longitudinal research, it is important here to reflect on why it has been written and its nature and scope. In short, the chapter has been written to provide a counterpoint to the other findings chapters, all of which, quite intentionally, pay relatively little attention to the 'stories' of the subjects referred to within them. This is because the analysis presented within them is configured thematically, in order to most effectively tease out the impacts of the improvement programme. That is not to say that they do not present valuable in-depth insights into the lives of the individuals referred to. But merely that these insights are limited as invariably references are confined to only one aspect of a subject's housing experiences, and therefore only present an incomplete and partial account of their housing 'story', unlike this chapter which provides a more detailed and fuller account of the housing experiences of its subjects.

It is important at this juncture to make another important point about the purpose, nature and scope of this report. That is, although some of the analysis of the qualitative data presented in the preceding chapters incorporates a *longitudinal* element within it, one of the primary reasons for including this chapter in the report was to provide the study team with an opportunity to mine over time the qualitative data it has collected. By doing so, it is able to provide a more complete account of how the improvement programme has changed the lives of some residents in the study area. So there is a strong temporal thread to the analysis presented within this report.

In addition to being interviewed during every year of the study and, in some cases, also attending residents' focus groups, each of the subjects featured in this chapter have also taken part in some of the "alternative" research activities conducted at various points in the programme including: a diary keeping exercise conducted in 2007, prior to commencement of the improvement programme; and photo novella exercises conducted before and after the improvement programme.

Before turning our attention to the 'stories' of the three residents presented in this report, it is important to reflect on how they were selected. In short, they were chosen because they were, in the context of the research, 'interesting' cases whose 'stories' help to illuminate some of the issues raised in the preceding chapters. However, it is important to note that, quite inevitably, this process was, to some extent, subjective and arbitrary and reflects, to a large extent, the willingness of these residents to engage with the research on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. The subjects

featured are therefore not necessarily representative of the population of the study area as a whole.

Each of the subjects featured, although ultimately satisfied with the improvements undertaken to their homes, as the majority of residents were, had different experiences of the improvement programme and derived a different series of benefits from it. This highlights an important point to emerge from the research: that is, to some extent, the impact of the improvement programme differs according to the circumstances and outlook of the individual. The following summaries of the three stories featured highlight the differences between the perspectives and experiences of the three subjects: Janette; Lorraine; and Coleen.

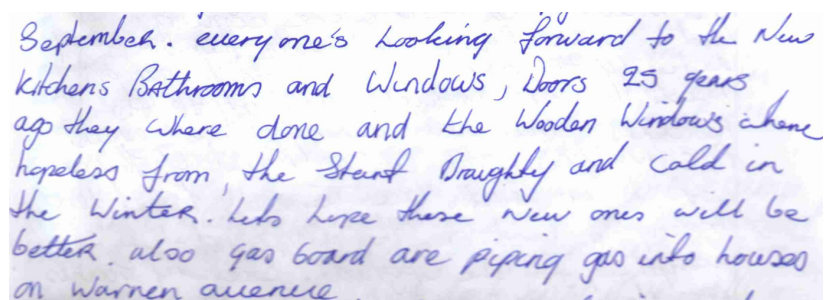
In her story, Janette, a 51 year old mother of five from Portobello, portrays the transformation of her house from a rundown property with rotten, leaking windows and no central heating, into somewhere "comfy and cosy" where she enjoys spending time with her family. However, Janette is quick to point out that, although the houses in Portobello look better inside and out, the estate's problems have not gone away.

Lorraine has lived in Belle Vue all her life and her story highlights how the improvement programme has brought her closer to her neighbours and made her feel less inclined to move from the flat she has occupied for 28 years. She also emphasises the important work of the (now defunct) Neighbourhood Management Pilot in improving the quality of public spaces locally.

The story of Coleen, a single mother and long standing resident of Belle Vue, provides valuable insights into the transformation of her property from a *house* that she rents from WDH to a *home* for her and her son. Following completion of the improvement programme, Coleen feels warmer, more comfortable and more proud of her modernised home, which, significantly, now feels like a "*private house*".

8.2. Janette's housing story

Janette is 51 and lives with her husband and five children in a WDH property in Portobello. She has lived on the estate all her life and has participated in the research every year since it began in 2007. In year one of the study, Janette participated in the residents' photo novella and diary exercises during the summer of 2007 just before the improvement programme began. She was looking forward to the modernisation of her home and her photographs and diary entries highlighted the poor quality of the local housing stock at that time. The condition of windows and doors, which were reported to be rotten and to leak in wet weather, were a particular concern for Janette as demonstrated by the following extracts from her diary.



September. everyone's looking forward to the new kitchens Bathrooms and Windows, Doors 25 years ago they were done and the wooden windows were hopeless from the start Draughty and cold in the winter. lets hope these new ones will be better. also gas board are piping gas into houses on Warren avenue.

"Everyone's looking forward to the new kitchens, bathrooms and windows, doors. 25 years ago they were done and the wooden windows were hopeless

from the start draughty and cold in the winter. Let's hope these new ones will be better."



"It's before they put the new windows in on Rutland Avenue. It was raining that day which doesn't help".

Janette was interviewed again in year two of the study in 2008, just after the completion of the improvement programme. At this time she was recovering from (what she described as) the "upheaval" of the modernisation process. Nevertheless, she was beginning to enjoy the improvements undertaken to her home but did not feel that Portobello had improved as a place to live. She was particularly keen to emphasise the benefits of the new windows and doors which had previously been a source of great frustration.

"I like my windows and doors the best, they used to be draughty with loads of condensation and they leaked. I feel much more secure now they're in too. It looks nicer with the doors, windows and roofs but it's still the same old Bella. It's not really changed it as a place."



The houses all look posh now. they have new windows and doors.

"The houses look all posh now they have new windows and doors."

By the time Janette was interviewed again in year three of the study in 2009, she appeared to have 'recovered' from the "upheaval" of the modernisation process and was evidently very pleased that her home had been modernised. She also identified a number of benefits to emerge from the modernisation that she had not previously mentioned, such as feeling warmer and more "cosy".

J: "I love what they (WDH) have done. It's fantastic. It's so much better than it was before."

I: "You mentioned that you had a lot of problems when your homes were modernised: was it worth all the problems you went through?"

J: "Yes, on the whole, yes, and I'd do it all again. It's much warmer now... it's really cosy."

In her final interview with the study team in 2010, Janette was still very satisfied with her modernised home and again highlighted a range of benefits associated with it. She also observed that other residents on the estate were taking better care of their properties as a result of the improvement programme.

"The housing improvement programme were a success I think because people have tidied their houses up a bit since it's been done. (It) looks nicer; windows look nice and it's a hell of a lot warmer, cosier, quieter. And they're a lot safer than the last lot."

Yet, in spite of her positive opinions about her home, her feelings about living on Portobello remained unchanged.

I: "What about Portobello then, is it a better place to live than it was in 2007?"

J: "No, it's still a shit hole."

8.3. Lorraine's Housing Story

Lorraine is a pensioner in her sixties and has lived in her flat in Belle Vue since it was built 28 years ago. She has lived in the neighbourhood all her life. She lives alone and has participated in the research every year since it began in 2007. When she is not looking after her grandchildren she volunteers for a number of local causes.

Lorraine first became involved with the research when she attended the screening of the first residents' films in 2007. She was first interviewed in the second year of the study at which point the improvement programme had just been completed. Despite the upheaval of the process of improvement, Lorraine said she was *"more pleased than she expected to be when she saw the mess they were making, but it turned out fine."*

HYPERLINK TO 07.23 IN BELLE VUE FILM (LARRAINE)

She also explained how she had become much closer to her neighbours while the improvements were being done and explained how they had supported each other throughout the upheaval of the process.

"We all found ourselves in the same boat for the first time. We would all gather round at each other's flats while they were doing the work. It was whoever had a working kitchen really; we would pile in for a cup of tea and a moan."

Almost as soon as the improvements were completed, Lorraine took advantage of the decorating allowance she received from WDH and decorated her entire flat, not just the two rooms covered by the allowance.

Lorraine also instantly noticed how much warmer her flat was following the installation of a new boiler, loft insulation and double glazing.

"It's much, much warmer in here and easier for me to control than the old system. I can set a timer and know that when I come in I won't have to wait for it to get warm."

When interviewed during her first winter in the flat after the improvements were completed, Lorraine reflected that she had put on her heating much later in the year than she normally did.

"I would have had it (heating) on by now but I'm not wearing no cardigan or anything yet and it's October, so it can't be bad?"

Lorraine also took part in the photo novella exercise in year three of the study and used this to highlight her appreciation for her new fireplace, which she liked because it provided a focal point for her lounge and enabled her to heat it without putting on the central heating.



*I like the fireplace
didn't have one before.
can have the fire on without the central heating*

"I like the fireplace ... didn't have one before... can have the fire on without the central heating."

It was also in year three of the study that Lorraine began to look beyond the improvements to her home and reflect on the condition of the neighbourhood more broadly, which she felt had improved a great deal in recent times.

"Belle Vue has improved a lot recently. There's been a real cleaning up and brightening up of the area. It's really noticeable."

She attributed these improvements to the work of the NMP which operated in the Belle Vue and Agbrigg area between 2007 and 2010, and took photographs as part of the photo novella exercise to highlight their good work.



This sign makes the area look better
Thanks to the neighbourhood management team
working on our behalf.

"This sign makes the area look better thanks to the Neighbourhood Management Team working on our behalf."

In the final year of the study, Lorraine remained pleased with her modernised home and was still enjoying the benefits of it but was, at the same time, beginning to feel that they had become "ordinary" to her now. Nevertheless, it was clear that the improvements done to her home had made her far less likely to want to move.

"I would never think about moving unless I couldn't get up the stairs. And the improvements have made it much nicer. It has definitely made me less likely to move."

This renewed sense of commitment to her home was clearly due in no small part to the sense of ownership she, and reportedly her friends and neighbours, now felt towards their homes, which no longer felt like "council housing".

"How can anyone say they don't like having all this done? I know that people think the same as me. I know one lady said to me - she lives in a house, not a flat - she doesn't feel as though she's living in a council house now. It feels so much better."

8.4. Coleen's Housing Story

Coleen is in her mid thirties and lives with her son in a WDH property in Belle Vue. She grew up in the neighbourhood and has lived in her current property for around eight years. She works part time at a shop in Wakefield city centre. Coleen has been involved in the research since the second year of the study when she attended a residents' focus group. At this point in time, the improvement programme had only just been completed but Coleen already felt very positive about the improvements done to her home and was keen to highlight how much warmer it was.

"Mine (home) is basically the same as it was beforehand. But it is a lot warmer because, I've got a large kitchen dining room and when they (the plumbers)

first came, I'd no radiators at all in me bedroom. It were just one at top of stairs. So they fitted all new ones in the bedrooms. But the one in the kitchen: apparently the one that were put in when the house were first built were the wrong size. But they've put the right one in now. It's a double one and it's really, really warm in there now."

She was also particularly pleased with the patio doors installed in her kitchen that open out into the back garden and took a number of photographs of them as part of the photo novella exercise conducted in the third year of the study.

"I've got French doors now at the back onto the garden which was only a single door and double panel glass before. They look similar to what you'd buy privately."



"I took this photo because I like my patio doors and didn't think that, because I was in a WDH property, I would ever get the chance to have them."

Coleen had previously felt that patio doors were a "luxury" that she would never be able to access as a social housing tenant. Indeed, throughout the course of her involvement in the study, Coleen has repeatedly made reference to her home feeling more like "her own" or akin to a "private property", as a result of the improvement programme. The patio doors are viewed as the ultimate marker of this transition.

She was also very proud of her new kitchen, particularly because she was afforded so much control over the layout and detailing of the refit. As the photo taken by Coleen overleaf illustrates, she is especially pleased with the "modern" appearance of her new kitchen and the additional space created by the new layout.



② I took this photo because I like the kitchen as it's very modern and I was able to choose everything down to the last detail. I also have more workspace and it looks a lot bigger.

"I took this photo because I like the kitchen as it's very modern and I was able to choose everything down to the last detail. I also have more workspace and it looks a lot bigger."

Coleen was equally pleased with the improvements to her bathroom and again, appreciated the opportunity to put "her stamp" on it by selecting the design of the tiles. The installation of a "power shower" was also welcomed.

INSERT HYPERLINK TO 08.45 ON BELLE VUE FILM (COLEEN DISCUSSING HER BATHROOM)

Over the course of her involvement in the study Coleen repeatedly described the transition of her property from a house that she rented from WDH to a home that felt like her own. Moreover, as a result of the improvement programme, she felt that her home was of a comparable quality to a private home with none of the hallmarks of social housing.

"It's not what you would think of as a council house now. It's more how you'd think of a private house."

As a result of the pride she feels in her modernised home, Coleen has invited friends around more often and thrown a party for the first time. She has also been inspired to take up gardening and recently won a prize for her efforts.

"Before the house was done I never bothered with the front garden. But once the house was done I started doing it. I've entered a WDH gardening competition this year and I got a letter through to say I'd won a prize."

8.5. Summary

- this chapter presents the housing 'stories' of three long standing WDH tenants in the study area, Janette, Lorraine and Coleen, whose circumstances, experiences, perceptions and attitudes were tracked closely over the course of the study. By providing a rounded account of the experiences of these tenants, it provides a counterpoint to the other findings chapters, all of which, quite intentionally, pay relatively little attention to the 'stories' of the subjects referred to within them. This is because the analysis presented within them is configured thematically, in order to most effectively tease out the impacts of the improvement programme
- in her housing story, Janette, a 51 year old mother of five from Portobello, portrays the transformation of her house from a rundown property with rotten, leaking windows and no central heating, into somewhere "comfy and cosy" ,where she enjoys spending time with her family. However, Janette is quick to point out that, although the houses in Portobello look better inside and out, the estate's problems have not gone away
- Lorraine has lived in Belle Vue all her life and her story highlights how the improvement programme has brought her closer to her neighbours and made her feel less inclined to move from the flat she has occupied for 28 years. She also emphasises the important work of the (now defunct) Neighbourhood Management Pilot in improving the quality of public spaces locally
- the story of Coleen, a single mother of one and long standing resident of Belle Vue, provides valuable insights into the transformation of her property from a *house* that she rents from WDH to a *home* for her and her son. Following the completion of the improvement programme, Coleen feels warmer, more comfortable and more proud of her modernised home, and, significantly, it feel like her "own."

SECTION THREE – POLICY MESSAGES

9. Conclusions and Policy Implications

9.1. Introduction

The Wakefield Housing Improvement Programme is a commitment to improve the WDH housing stock to the 'Wakefield Standard', which exceeds the national Decent Homes Standard. Housing in the areas of Portobello and Belle Vue was among the first to be improved since the inception of the Programme in 2008.

This report is the culmination of a four year project studying the ongoing impacts of the improvement programme in Portobello and Belle Vue. It was a wide-ranging study examining the personal, social, economic and environmental benefits of the programme. It used a range of innovative research methodologies to canvass the views of local residents and stakeholders at key points throughout the improvement programme. The project included the following primary modules:

- detailed questionnaire surveys of residents in 2007 and again in 2010 (before and after the improvement programme)
- in-depth interviews with residents and local stakeholders
- statistical analysis of primary and secondary data sets
- resident diary keeping and photography, in the form of *photo novella* exercises
- the making of films in which residents talk about their homes and neighbourhoods and the impact of the improvement programme

9.2. The improvement programme

WDH's housing improvement programme has been a sustained effort to improve the housing conditions of thousands of WDH tenants within the district of Wakefield. By adopting a higher standard than that of the national Decent Homes programme, and by complementing housing modernisation with wider environmental improvements, it has materially improved life for WDH tenants within Portobello and Belle Vue, two very different neighbourhoods to the south of Wakefield city centre.

The programme has enabled a significant investment in the housing stock, not only to ensure its decency for current residents but also to ensure it meets the needs of future tenants.

Yet, as one of the most significant local organisations working within neighbourhoods across the district, WDH naturally expects the impacts of its investments to go beyond 'bricks and mortar' in order to 'create neighbourhoods where people want to live.'¹⁸ This takes the remit of the organisation – and the expectations of its housing investments – way beyond a relatively narrow concern with 'asset management'. It also places WDH at the heart of efforts to build a 'Big Society'.

A lot has changed since WDH started its improvement programme and since we started our project. Not least, there have been fundamental economic and political

¹⁸ This is the first milestone, to be achieved by 2010, of WDH's *Vision to 2020*.

changes, with more to come. Some of these changes will represent considerable challenges for both WDH and its tenants, particularly in neighbourhoods such as Portobello and Belle Vue. There will also be opportunities, particularly for WDH.

9.3. Summary of findings

We found that the improvement programme had a range of impacts both on the housing stock itself and on its occupants in terms of their satisfaction with the home and their sense of well-being. However, these impacts have been counterbalanced to some extent by a number of social and economic challenges which have moderated the overall impact of the programme beyond the 'bricks and mortar'. In summary:

9.3.1. Housing impacts

- we found a wide range of positive impacts on the physical condition of the housing, sometimes extending beyond the primary objectives of the government's Decent Homes Programme
- significant improvements to bathrooms, kitchens and in the heating of the home were observed by more than 8 out of 10 residents
- decorating vouchers enabled residents to make significant improvements to their properties' decorative order. As a result, 9 in 10 residents rated the internal decoration of their home as 'good'
- improved security of the home was also identified by many residents as being a positive benefit of the programme
- older tenants and those who had been in their homes for longer were more likely to view the improvements positively
- new tenants (who did not live in their property before the improvement programme), on the other hand, were less likely to appreciate the extent of the improvements made and therefore did not exhibit the same high levels of satisfaction.

9.3.2. Impacts on the well-being of residents

- more than 8 in 10 residents thought that their property was a better place to live following the improvement programme
- a similar proportion felt more comfortable and relaxed in their homes, liked their home more, and felt more house-proud following the improvement programme
- in this context, a number of residents described the transition of their property from a house, or somewhere to merely exist, to "a home" that they enjoyed spending time in.

9.3.3. Impacts on attitudes towards the home

- we found evidence that the improvement programme encouraged residents to invest more of their own time and resources in the maintenance and further improvement of their home
- that said, the impact of the recession often worked against these best intentions by limiting the extent to which tenants were able to fund additional improvements to their homes. Nevertheless, the desire to undertake these improvements was not diminished

- there is evidence that residents are now using their homes more for entertaining and socialising. This is a reflection of greater pride in the home but also of a lack of social facilities in the neighbourhood and the close-knit networks of family and friends that exist in the study area.

9.3.4. Overall impact of the improvement programme

- neighbourhood satisfaction has declined in Portobello, but has increased in Belle Vue. This can be principally attributed to the work of the Agbrigg and Belle Vue Neighbourhood Management Pilot, which ended in March 2010. Satisfaction with parks and open spaces in Belle Vue showed the biggest increase
- both areas remain among the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country – especially Portobello
- anti-social behaviour and the activities of ‘gangs’ of young people continued to be particular problems, especially in Portobello. Although these were important issues, it was problems with neighbours (and not young people) that had the largest negative impact on neighbourhood satisfaction
- the economic recession had an adverse impact on the area and its residents. It affected their ability to carry out planned improvements to their houses and gardens that would have capitalised on WDH’s improvement programme. Residents experienced more everyday financial problems, and the use of predatory lenders and the incidence of arrears increased
- the recession also exacerbated problems relating to residents’ feelings of security in their lives, and in Portobello, this had a knock-on effect in terms of anti-social behaviour, ostensibly perpetrated by young men struggling to find work
- there remained widespread dissatisfaction with the appearance of the local environment in Portobello. It was widely felt that the improvement programme would not be complete until it was reflected in the external environment
- together, these issues have served to dilute the impact of the improvement programme beyond the realm of the house.

9.4. Policy implications

This final section of this chapter considers the policy implications of our work since 2007, particularly with regard to this changed environment and also in terms of the likely changes yet to come. The section builds on the series of policy recommendations that we have already made in our three previous reports, and also considers these in the context of the new political and economic environment in which public services, especially housing and neighbourhood services, will be delivered.

Our comments are organised in five main sections, as follows:

- ‘holistic regeneration’ in the new political and economic environment
- awareness and perceptions of the improvement programme
- the importance of the local environment
- reconnecting Portobello and Belle Vue to the local economy and the local housing market
- involving communities and residents

9.4.1. Holistic regeneration in the new political and economic environment

We have previously talked extensively about the need to adopt what we have called a holistic approach to regeneration. This extends the direction of travel that the housing sector has been taking for some time but capitalises on the strong position of WDH as a high performing stock-transfer organisation with considerable capacities and resources.

At its heart, the need for a holistic approach stems from the need to secure maximal return on investment for the housing improvement programme. Evidence elsewhere, supported by our findings specific to Portobello and Belle Vue, strongly suggest that 'bigger picture' factors such as the areas' deep-rooted social and economic problems will otherwise undermine the long term effectiveness of the physical regeneration of the housing stock. In particular, the onset of the recession in 2008 has had an effect on the areas' residents, especially those in employment at that time. Most immediately, residents found (and will continue to find) it difficult to maintain their homes and improve them in a way that capitalises on and consolidates the improvements that WDH has made. This has ramifications beyond the house itself: the built environment, gardens and external appearance of houses are all important aspects of the area's self-confidence and image. Residents were particularly concerned about these aspects, but they will be more powerless than ever to effect changes for the better. We return to the issue of the local environment later.

More fundamentally, perhaps, is the multifaceted nature of the problems facing the two neighbourhoods. Although slightly different in each case, they nevertheless share a similar root cause: the effects of long-term processes of economic change. Portobello, as a planned community allied to a particular industrial sector, has been particularly exposed in this regard. The knock-on effects are intergenerational and extend to policy areas like education, public safety, health and economic participation. A strategy for regeneration must pay serious attention to each of these related areas. Although WDH does not have a statutory responsibility for these, it has a significant vested interest in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the neighbourhoods in which it has assets – not least to safeguard and enhance their value. Like all housing organisations, it also has moral obligations to its tenants and leaseholders. In areas where WDH is the largest single landlord (such as Portobello and even mixed-tenure areas like Belle Vue) there is considerable merit in exploring the broader regeneration activities that WDH can support.

Although it has already had considerable successes, we believe that there is considerable potential for WDH to do even more in its neighbourhoods and for their residents. The political and economic environment increases this potential, rather than decreases it. WDH is the organisation that features most prominently in many residents' lives (although there are some problems with "brand recognition", which we address later in this section). Moreover, the successes associated with the work of the Neighbourhood Management Pilot (NMP) in Belle Vue, which was supported by WDH and other key local partners, are testimony to the efficacy of this holistic approach.

It is important to note WDH already works 'holistically' in many ways. For example, its appointment of five Health Inequality Case Workers (HICWs), who offer intensive and holistic support to individuals and families to develop their capacity to improve all aspects of their health and well-being from physical and mental health to accessing employment, is clear evidence of this. And this initiative, which is delivered in partnership with NHS Wakefield and a range of other statutory and voluntary sector service providers, is evidence that WDH has recognised the importance of mental health as a driver of the life opportunities of its tenants: a survey conducted by employment agency Working Links in 2008 identified poor mental health as a key

barrier to employment amongst the long term unemployed. Finally, WDH's commitment to the pursuit of its vision to "create confident communities" is further evidence that it recognises that housing interventions alone cannot address the problems of its disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

The overall goal of holistic working might be that WDH becomes the recognised neighbourhood manager, with specific competences and responsibilities, in areas where it owns and manages a significant proportion of homes. Although the detailed opportunities and infrastructure for enhancing the neighbourhood management will become clearer over time as the coalition government's 'Big Society' ideas take shape (and through related legislation such as the Localism bill), there are several mechanisms through which WDH could extend its involvement in holistic regeneration and neighbourhood management, as follows:

- WDH engaging its partners, and in particular Wakefield Council, in a dialogue about how it can help to achieve public service efficiencies in designated neighbourhoods
- broadening the scope of WDH's local presence (i.e., neighbourhood offices) and virtual portals (i.e., the WDH website) to encompass a range of neighbourhood services and advice, acting as agents and/or 'signposters' for statutory services. The current effort to establish a One Stop Shop in Portobello is a positive development along these lines
- giving consideration to expanding the range of services offered at the Rainbow Café and other similar neighbourhood 'hubs' to include, for example, basic community Post Office and banking facilities.¹⁹

For too long the attention of urban policy makers has been paid to deprived neighbourhoods only sporadically or through concentrated 'bursts' of activity. For the housing improvement programme to be more than this it must be part of something broader and longer term in nature. There are of course considerable challenges in making intensive urban managerialism self-sustaining. Options worthy of consideration by WDH include setting up some form of 'community chest' to consolidate funding streams from various sources, Participatory Budgeting, or devolving aspects of urban governance (including spending decisions) to local neighbourhood or community assemblies. It seems clear to us that, while there are potential benefits, Localism and the 'Big Society' will not work without clear structures, some form of shared vision and local legitimacy, and funding. WDH has a potentially important role to play in each of these, and they might usefully build upon the structure provided by WDH's Local Management Committees.

There is potentially some logic in prioritising funds to Portobello over Belle Vue because the latter has a more mixed economy, more private sector housing and services and has received more intensive neighbourhood management funding, all of which improve its prospects for sustainability. In Belle Vue, there should perhaps be more emphasis on measures to involve private interests in urban management, and to galvanise community engagement and the development of civil society organisations (similar to the Portobello Community Forum, PCF).

The *Total Place* agenda²⁰ will be important in this regard, as will the recent announcement to pilot Community Budgets.²¹ Specifically, there is a need to

¹⁹ Several local authorities have developed clear guidance on these matters. There are various options, not all of which need to be particularly expensive. Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council provides one such example of guidance. See: Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (2008) *Post Office and Community Shop Advice and Information Pack*, available at: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/business/support/postofficeadvice.htm> (accessed 17 November 2010).

²⁰ <http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/>

consider how new models and funding streams can be used to build upon the positive impact that the Neighbourhood Management Pilot in Belle Vue has had.

9.4.2. Awareness and perceptions of the programme

WDH enjoys a strong national reputation as a deliverer of excellent housing services. Yet, in common with those in other parts of the country, some residents do not make the distinction between WDH as their 'new' housing association and Wakefield Council as their 'old' landlord prior to transfer in 2005. There is a need to reflect on two issues here. The first is whether forging a distinctive brand (based on organisational values) is as important as emphasising local values and commitment. The development of WDH's local offer could include additional commitments tailored to specific neighbourhoods or estate types. A local offer from a large landlord of 32,000 dwellings cannot otherwise truly reflect local circumstances or needs. Such neighbourhood-specific 'local offers' might include, for example, a commitment to an additional level of maintenance or environmental stewardship, or the use of local labour in maintenance and management tasks. Such positive incentives might be used as a mechanism to improve the popularity of neighbourhoods.

The second issue relates to how the improvement programme was seen by tenants – specifically, whether it was recognised as a special programme or otherwise 'routine' in some way. We found many residents, including those who had had their homes improved, unaware of WDH's improvement programme – or they did not associate the improvements with WDH. This suggests, among other things, that specific programmes and funding streams can often be unimportant to residents – what matters to them are the outcomes. In this context, the improvement programme was not a 'bonus', but a periodic capital investment in the condition of their homes. There was also confusion about who undertook (and funded) the improvements. The fact that WDH's programme was of a high standard may be lost on residents that do not have comparators to judge it against. The distinction between council, WDH, contractor or other bodies can be lost on (or is irrelevant to) tenants. Indeed, the proliferation of agencies can be a cause for confusion or concern about value for money and organisations such as WDH should be at all times aware of this. Our suggestions to enhance the management of urban neighbourhoods, with WDH in a prime role, could also serve to reduce this confusion.

Our findings in general have significant implications for the measurement of satisfaction. It is clear that the concepts of satisfaction with the neighbourhood and with the home may be closely linked and are also very complex. There are justifiable questions about the feasibility of measuring changes in satisfaction, such as having appropriate reference points and being able to disentangle the components of change. Inevitably, satisfaction with something 'new', such as the improvements made to homes, will erode over time, both as those improvements suffer wear and tear and also simply as the memory of the benefits they brought begins to fade. In addition, residents who move into an improved property have no experience of the property in its unimproved state, and therefore satisfaction levels will naturally erode over time as a consequence of population turnover. It may be appropriate to consider other ways of measuring 'satisfaction', for example through the concepts of well-being or 'happiness'. The concepts of satisfaction with a neighbourhood (or home) and satisfaction with WDH's performance as a landlord should not be conflated. It would also be helpful to ask about satisfaction with specific aspects of the home as well as satisfaction overall.

²¹ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/1748116>

9.4.3. *The importance of the local environment*

Residents told us that although their homes were important to them, their local environment was just as critical. The improvement programme has led to safer, warmer and more modern homes throughout the study area, and this has helped to foster a sense of ownership and pride – and the sense of security that comes from this. Yet, it would appear that this is being undermined, to some extent, by the poor quality of the local environment in Portobello. In particular, residents expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the appearance of the estate as a result of attempts to create defensible space in their gardens. There is a clear need to balance the private and public character of the area. The provision of more consistent and uniform boundary fences, for example, was frequently cited as the one big improvement that could be made in this regard. At present, a ‘mishmash’ of privately erected boundary treatments prevails. A carefully chosen and durable fence could serve to incentivise care and investment beyond the gardens to the estate and their housing more widely. There is scope, for example, to extend the metal fences of the style provided by the Groundwork Trust working on behalf of WDH, which have proved popular.

The study area has few public spaces that are genuinely usable, and the quality of existing spaces tends to be low. The NMP improved this situation in Belle Vue. In Portobello, the problems are widely recognised and are being acted upon, not least through the environmental improvement programme now under way. In Portobello, where a garden suburb style predominates and there is a reasonable amount of open space, roads are very narrow and there is significant encroachment of cars onto pavements and grass verges. The grassed areas are featureless. There is particular dissatisfaction with the open space between Clifford Avenue and Warren Avenue in Portobello commonly referred to as ‘Stonehenge’. It is frequently the location of anti-social behaviour and is felt to jeopardise the security of those properties backing on to it. Efforts should be redoubled to find some form of productive use for this area and to improve its natural surveillance. The solution could even involve a limited amount of new housing development.

Nearby Manygates Park, on the other hand, is a significant asset to the area. The MUGA has been successful, although there remain issues of territoriality among groups of youths using it. (We also reflect on the territoriality of the study area as a whole in the next section.) The refurbished children's play area on William Prince Grove in Belle Vue is another example of a successfully restored recreational space. In some ways the study area is poorly served by usable public open space, despite its proximity to Manygates Park and the Pugneys nature reserve. Both are quite remote from Belle Vue in particular. Apart from a public telephone kiosk, there is no reason for residents to use the open space outside the parade of shops on Duke of York Avenue, yet the installation of some children's play equipment or similar attracted concerns about misuse or loitering. It is of particular concern that there are few “third places”²² in the area like pubs which could play an important function in the daily social interaction of residents. The closure of the chip shop was a significant loss in this regard. The scope and target of the environmental works being undertaken as part of the improvement programme are welcome, but thought needs to be given to how these spaces are improved upon and maintained over the long term.

The £1.2 million improvement works currently being undertaken by the Groundwork Trust and funded by WDH are addressing many of these and other issues related to

²² Hickman, P. (2010) *Neighbourhood Infrastructure, ‘Third Places’ and Patterns of Social Interaction*, Living Through Change in Challenging Neighbourhoods research paper no. 4, Sheffield: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

the local environment in Portobello. But even this investment may not address all aspects, and there will be a need to monitor and maintain the local environment beyond the current projects.

Through the long-term stewardship of the local environment, we believe that WDH should work to enhance opportunities for local people. It has the opportunity to take seriously the role of being a hands-on urban manager, and there is sense in managing its estates (especially those like Portobello) in a comprehensive way with a focus far beyond the housing stock. WDH's responsibilities as a landlord need to be extended and balanced by a sense of responsibilities to its tenants and their life chances. In this vein, there is potential capacity for keen local residents to act as local organs of WDH, in return for some form of payment or in-kind benefit. Local communities could be given some limited powers and budgets over matters that are of importance to them. Tenants with skills (or who are willing to learn) could be recruited to act as garden champions to complement WDH's existing gardens competitions. There may be scope to set up a type of Streetscape Improvement District (in the mould of a Business Improvement District) on a street-by-street or block basis, where residents vote to pay a very modest service charge (or donate some in-kind benefit) to pay for collective improvements such as fencing and enhanced grounds maintenance. A 'Toolbank' similar to a successful scheme in Sheffield,²³ could provide residents with affordable access to tools and resources. A community janitor model could meet a range of targets, including tackling worklessness, providing training, enhancing local commitment and so forth.

9.4.4. Reconnecting Portobello and Belle Vue to the local economy and housing market

One of the key issues facing the two study neighbourhoods is the weakness of their connections with other parts of the city and the sub-region. This is particularly true in terms of the housing market and the local economy.

In the case of Portobello, the disconnection is also physical. It is remote and isolated from the rest of the city, despite its proximity to the city centre 'as the crow flies'. There are few reasons for people who do not live there to visit the area. Its position adjacent to the significant assets of Sandal Castle and Pugneys nature reserve is an irrelevance to anyone from outside the area – instead, Portobello should be visible as a vibrant and attractive neighbourhood through which people pass to access these facilities. There is also some evidence to suggest that the isolation of the study area contributes to strong forms of territoriality, which in turn can dissuade new residents or businesses from moving into the area. Portobello in particular appears to display strong forms of 'bonding capital', and may be described as a type of 'defended neighbourhood' where the influence of outsiders is either irrelevant or is otherwise actively resisted.²⁴ Although such 'bonding capital' can be an asset, neighbourhoods also need what is referred to as 'bridging capital'.²⁵ Without it, communities fail to reach out to other areas and communities, and fail to access resources that they might otherwise benefit from. Belle Vue and, to an even greater extent, Portobello need to develop stronger forms of bridging social capital through having a more diverse local economy and greater social mix (although too much of this will dilute the 'bonding' social capital).

²³ See <http://www.gca.burngreave.net/tool-bank> for more details of the Toolbank scheme.

²⁴ Kintrea, K., Bannister, J. & Pickering, J. (2010) Territoriality and disadvantage among young people: an exploratory study of six British neighbourhoods, *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 25, pp. 447–465.

²⁵ Putnam, R. (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

9.4.5. Local economy

Reinvigorating the local economies of Portobello and Belle Vue will not be an easy task, especially given the current economic situation. There is a role for organisations like WDH to play in supporting local labour markets, and a strategy that relies solely on the private sector or on 'trickle down economics' is unlikely to work. Many residents express concerns that there is not a long-term commitment, economic or otherwise, to the area.

There is, therefore, some potential for WDH and its partners to instigate 'new deal' forms of service delivery, which use local labour and direct labour organisations, and are aimed at lifting local families out of worklessness. This could be linked to, or otherwise complement, more informal forms of local involvement in service delivery (such as the community janitor model outlined earlier). This also suggests that initiatives such as the Wakefield Homebuilder Construction Training Programme have an important continuing role to play.

Local businesses and services are very important to the area. Yet there is concern that the business base in both parts of the study area has been dwindling. The closure of the chip shop in Portobello was a particular blow, in the sense that it signalled a lack of confidence in the provision of basic local services. In order to prevent further erosion and indeed promote provision of basic local services, WDH should consider supporting local businesses in a material way – including the lowering of rents – although we recognise that there may be legal impediments to such moves. A vibrant mixed economy also contributes to land use mix, which is important in signalling confidence and in creating natural surveillance and active citizenship. Local businesses also provide job opportunities for local people – although we have noted with some concern that local people struggle to access these.

9.4.6. Local housing market

As we suggested earlier, the potential for some limited new housing development in the study area should not be overlooked. Portobello, in particular, has little in the way of housing diversity or wider market activity. It may be appropriate to consider the development of some very limited in-fill housing for low cost home ownership or shared ownership. The benefits of this would be widening the range of housing opportunities in the area; encouraging new population into the area; and supporting the viability of local services.

There are, of course, genuine concerns about gentrification and rising prices but a balanced perspective would see that this is unlikely to happen in Portobello or Belle Vue to the extent that it would be problematic or would cause displacement. WDH should not shy away from policies that would attract new residents to the area where this would help to ensure the viability of the community and an appropriate level of mix.

There are significant proposals on the table around the reform of social housing tenancies.²⁶ Specifically, WDH may find itself with powers to grant more flexible forms of tenancy, including two-year fixed tenancies, and it may also have powers to charge rents of up to 80 per cent of market rents. Both of these moves would inevitably bring social housing closer to the market. The key challenge for WDH is how these mechanisms might affect (or be used to improve) the sustainability of Portobello and Belle Vue as communities. In Portobello in particular, a housing

²⁶ DCLG (2010) *Local Decisions: A Fairer Future for Social Housing*. Consultation, November 2010. London, Department for Communities and Local Government.

market does not exist in the normal sense. Both of these mechanisms, if used appropriately and sensitively, might help to diversify the housing and socio-economic base of the study areas. But WDH should continue to treat allocations with care, especially given our findings about the importance of 'good neighbours' in enhancing neighbourhood satisfaction. There will also be issues around decreases in Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance, which will affect many residents in the study area and potentially reduce WDH's income in these key neighbourhoods. Careful consideration will be needed of the impact of policy changes on the sustainability of Portobello and Belle Vue as neighbourhoods.

9.4.7. Community involvement and participation

It is clear that a successful and sustainable model for Portobello and Belle Vue will need to involve both of their local communities in a real way. This must be more than tokenism or representation, but extend to material involvement in service delivery. The achievements of the Belle Vue Neighbourhood Management Pilot and the ongoing Portobello Neighbourhood Pathfinder led by West Yorkshire Police, which were valued by many local residents and stakeholders, demonstrate the importance of local community models which have real resources and achieve tangible outcomes.

The coalition government's ideas for a 'Big Society' will clearly have some resonance here. There are distinct challenges in fostering community involvement in deprived areas where there may be a sense of having been abandoned or let down by the state (e.g. in terms of long term economic change). Community facilities should be supported, but it also helps if they can have a clear role to play in service delivery, neighbourhood management, and other aspects of 'everyday life' in the area. In this sense, the Big Society is less about voluntary participation, but more about engagement. Working closely with Wakefield Council, WDH will probably be the most important player in delivering the Big Society in Portobello and Belle Vue – but it will mean a combination of support and resources, and not 'blind faith' in volunteerism and extracting something-for-nothing.

A recent report²⁷ in Yorkshire and Humber found considerable variation in the potential for community participation in decision-making, governance and civil society. It found that, in the region, six per cent of the population account for around 40 per cent of civic activities – and it argued that this 'civic core' is disproportionately found in more affluent districts. Rates of volunteering in Wakefield, by contrast, are among the lowest in the region. In particular, the report notes the dangers that the Big Society idea may be seen as a way of replacing, rather than complementing, public funding to address inequalities. The relationship between organisations like WDH and local communities and citizens is crucial in this regard. WDH cannot sit by and rely on the Big Society: it must be in the vanguard of it. Some of its ideas in Eastmoor, for example, may be moving in the right direction, such as those for coordinating and signposting local service delivery.

WDH should continue its work on financial inclusion, especially in terms of sustaining work and tenancy; and taking more responsibility for gardening and maintenance. We found lots of evidence of pride in their homes among residents – this should be capitalised upon through incentives to residents to care for and maintain properties and communal areas. The provision of decorating vouchers might be used as a reward (e.g. for 'clean' tenancy files or rent account), and not just as a form of compensation during the improvement works. This is an approach used successfully

²⁷ Wells, P., Gilbertson, J., Gore, T. and Crowe, M. (2010) *A Big Society in Yorkshire and Humber?* Draft Report, October 2010. Sheffield: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

in other areas. We found that decorating vouchers were a very important driver of satisfaction and that they empowered residents.

Community cohesion

The long length of tenancies, especially in Portobello, is a considerable strength of the area. Community cohesion is supported by having stable communities. But, in reality, there is a mixture of choice and constraint underpinning this situation. While loyal to the area, many residents expressed desires or aspirations to move. Furthermore, the environment in which residents will be able to *choose* to stay in their neighbourhood in the long term will become more challenging. As noted earlier, the government is intending to remove security of tenure for new tenants. There will be pressures to increase all rents to around 80 per cent of market rates. These may have fundamental implications for community stability, and WDH will need to consider how it might wish to implement these proposals in the study area. Broadly, though, the ability to cater for more diverse housing needs in the study area could be advantageous.

There is a clear need to develop sophisticated responses to the cultural and ethnic diversity in the area (especially Belle Vue) that go beyond translation and tokenism. Community tensions are nothing new in all sorts of areas, particularly deprived ones – policy should not imply favouritism or overt positive discrimination, but should be aimed at improving general economic and environmental conditions for all, while being mindful of removing barriers. WDH could work with local communities to support the development (from the grass roots level) of groups and social facilities. These may work best not taking a neighbourhood focus but rather emphasising cross-cutting issues and communities of interest throughout the district – e.g. social facilities for Asian women. Support at youth level is likely to reap particular rewards: football matches, for example (such as the Kick Racism out of Football event in Eastmoor) could be promoted and supported using a community chest.

The issue of activities for young people in the study area is critical. There was concern about the (perceived) anti-social behaviour perpetrated by groups of young people and the problem of territoriality is often most acutely expressed through their actions (even if it is actually intergenerational in its roots). Some of our proposals about the involvement of local people in service delivery should apply particularly to young people. While the MUGA in Manygates Park has been a big success, it is clear that it is inadequate on its own as a source of things to do for young people.

Finally, although our resident surveys have provided some insight and WDH is able to draw on its STATUS survey, there is an ongoing requirement to better understand local residents' needs. WDH should use all of its available 'eyes and ears', including local housing officers and neighbourhood officers, to build up and maintain 'wish-lists' of improvements that residents would like to see and problems that need to be tackled. Personal relationships are likely to be key to this, and it is more important than ever in neighbourhoods like Portobello and Belle Vue that the dominant landlord is not seen as remote or impersonal. This extends to all residents, and not just social housing tenants. Linking in with an earlier point, detailed tacit knowledge about the area should be seen as a resource to guide local decisions – especially if there could be some form of locally devolved budget or chest. The PCF will potentially be an important source of information and coordination for such a process. There will potentially be less emphasis in the future on benchmarking and measuring everything against targets or on providing detailed evidential justifications – the tenor of policy is about 'what makes sense and what works', and in this vein, tacit knowledge is a tremendous asset.

The PCF has been an instrumental force for positive change in part of the study area – although the situation in Belle Vue is inevitably more complex. It is clear to us, though, that community forums have an important role to play but also that their funding is precarious and inadequate. We have outlined some ways in which community organisations might begin to make a more involved and formalised contribution to the stewardship of their neighbourhoods, but it will require support and WDH will need to take the driving role in providing the necessary frameworks and help in accessing resources.

9.5. Summary

- the housing improvement programme has materially improved life for WDH tenants in Portobello and Belle Vue
- the pairing of housing modernisation and wider environmental improvements is important – but is only part of the story. To ensure maximal return on investment will require a sustained engagement with the neighbourhoods to ensure that they remain ‘places where people want to live’ and where residents’ life chances can flourish
- WDH will need to position itself in the vanguard of efforts to create a ‘Big Society’ in Portobello and Belle Vue. But this will require leadership and resources – it will not happen without the support and frameworks that WDH can provide. More specifically, WDH will need to provide active support and resources to community organisations, which should be given tangible roles, responsibilities and powers
- options worthy of consideration include the creation of dedicated resource streams or a ‘community chest’ and the devolution of aspects of urban governance
- WDH is the right organisation to coordinate this activity and will want to discuss with Wakefield Council the best ways of doing so, both as a way of improving the delivery of local services and as a way of reducing central costs
- residents may not always recognise organisations or programmes in the way that professionals do – a focus on outcomes is more important, and efforts should be made to avoid ‘brand confusion’ and complex layers of organisations and programmes
- the local environment is as important to residents as their homes. The right balance between public and private custodianship of space needs to be found. WDH needs to be proactive here and take equal responsibility for the environment beyond the home
- the long-term stewardship of the local environment needs to be coordinated by WDH, although mechanisms for its delivery need to involve local people, perhaps through establishing ‘garden champions’, ‘community janitors’ or an Environmental Improvement District scheme based on the BID model. The successes of the Neighbourhood Management Pilot in Belle Vue need to be recognised and built upon
- Portobello and Belle Vue are isolated, physically, socially and in terms of the local housing market and economy. In everything it does, WDH should examine how it could best involve communities and contribute to the local economy. The private sector alone is not going to regenerate or reconnect these areas
- the new regime for social housing, if it is implemented, should be used sensitively to bring about diversity within the area and to develop closer connections with the local housing market. Portobello and Belle Vue can be

attractive neighbourhoods that meet a range of housing needs and demands given the right housing and the right mechanisms – including tenure flexibility

- there is a great deal of pride among residents. This should be encouraged. WDH could consider implementing reward schemes and the use of decorating and maintenance vouchers for reward and not just for compensation.

Bibliography

Allen, T. (2000) Housing Renewal- Doesn't it make you sick? *Housing Studies*, 15 (3), pp. 443-461.

Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (2008) *Post Office and Community Shop Advice and Information Pack*, available at: <http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/business/support/postofficeadvice.htm> (accessed 17 November 2010).

BBC (2010) Government Planning to measure people's happiness. *BBC* [online] 15th November. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk. [Last accessed: 17th November 2010]

DCLG (2010) *The New Deal for Communities Programme: Assessing Impact and Value for Money Volume 6*. London: Department of Communities and Local Government.

Bell, M. and Lowe, R. (2000) Energy efficient modernisation of housing: a UK case study. *Energy and Buildings*, 32 (3), pp. 267-280.

Central Research Unit (1996) *Partnership in the Regeneration of Urban Scotland*. Edinburgh, HMSO.

Coatham, V. and Jones, T. (2008) Forgotten Voices? The importance of longitudinal evaluation of urban regeneration projects. *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 2 (1), pp. 74-85.

Cole, I. and Reeve, K. (2001) *Housing and Physical Environment Domain: A Review of the Evidence*. CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield.

Communities and Local Government (2010) *Local Decisions: A Fairer Future for Social Housing*. Consultation, November 2010. London: Department for Communities and Local Government.

CRESR (2008) *Portobello and Belle Vue Housing Impact Study Second Annual Review Report*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.

CRESR (2007) *Portobello and Belle Vue Housing Impact Study: First Annual Review Report*. Sheffield: CRESR.

CRESR (2008) *Portobello and Belle Vue Housing Impact Study: Second Annual Review Report*. Sheffield: CRESR.

CRESR (2009) *Portobello and Belle Vue Housing Impact Study: Third Annual Review Report*. Sheffield: CRESR.

Critchely, R., Gilbertson, J., Green, G. and Grimsley, M. (2008) *Housing Investment and Health in Liverpool*. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

Crook, A.D.H., Darke, R.A. and Disson, J.S. (1996) *A New Lease of Life? Housing Association Investment on Local Authority Housing Estates*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Dean and Hastings, (2000) Dean, J. and Hastings, A. (2000) *Challenging Images: Housing Estates, Stigma and Regeneration*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Department of Environment (1994) *Assessing the impact of Urban policy*. London: HMSO.

Department of Environment (1996) *An evaluation of Six Early Estate Action Schemes*. London: HMSO.

Department of the Environment (1997) *Housing Action Trusts: evaluation of baseline conditions. Regeneration research summary*. London: DETR.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity press.

Gilbertson, J., Stevens, M., Stiell, B. and Thorogood, N. (2006a) Home is where the hearth is: Grant Recipients' views of England's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (Warm Front). *Social Science and Medicine*, No. 63, pp. 946-956.

Gilbertson, J., Green, G. and Ormandy, D. (2006b) *Decent Homes, Better Health- Sheffield Decent Homes Health Impact Assessment*. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

Gilbertson, J., Green, G., Ormandy, D., Stafford, B. (2008) *Decent Homes, Better Health- Ealing Decent Homes Health Impact Assessment*. Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

The Guardian (2010). David Cameron defends plan for well-being index. *The Guardian* [online] 25th November 2010. Available at www.guardian.co.uk [Last accessed on 25th November, 2010].

Hickman, P. (2010) [Neighbourhood Infrastructure, 'Third Places' and Patterns of Social Interaction: Research Paper 4 \(PDF from Living Through Change website\)](#). Sheffield: CRESR, Sheffield Hallam University.

Kearns, A., Hiscock, R., Ellaway, A. and McIntyre, S. (2000) Beyond four walls: The psycho social benefits of home: Evidence from West Central Scotland. *Housing Studies*, 15 (3), pp. 410-987.

Kintrea, K., Bannister, J. and Pickering, J. (2010) Territoriality and disadvantage among young people: an exploratory study of six British neighbourhoods. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 25, pp. 447-465.

National Audit Office (January, 2010) *The Decent Homes Programme*. London: TSO.

Oldenberg, R. (2007) The Character of Third Places, in: Carmona, M and Tiesdell, S (eds), *Urban Design Reader*. Oxford: Architectural Place.

Oldenberg, R. and Brissett, D. (1982) The Third Place. *Qualitative Sociology*, pp. 265-284.

O'Reilly (2007) Comments on Rhodes et al (2005): Some further thoughts on assessing the effects of area-based initiatives on local outcomes. *Urban Studies*, 44, pp. 1145-1153.

Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Saunders, P. (1990) *A Nation of Home Owners*. London: Unwin Hyman.

Smith, I. and Grimshaw, L. (2005) Evaluation and the New Deal for Communities: Learning what from whom?' in: Balloch, S. and Taylor, D (eds) *The politics of evaluation*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

The Young Foundation (2010) *The State of Happiness: Can Public Policy Shape people's well-being and Resilience?* London: The Young Foundation.

Walshaw, A. (2011) From House to Home: residents' perceptions of housing modernisation. *The Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*. Vol.4 (3)

Wells, P., Gilbertson, J., Gore, T. and Crowe, M. (2010) *A Big Society in Yorkshire and Humber?* Draft Report, October 2010. Sheffield: Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

Working Links (2008) *Breaking Down Barriers*, available at:
<http://www.workinglinks.co.uk/PDF/ResearchResponsePaperPopulus.pdf> (last accessed 14 January 2010)

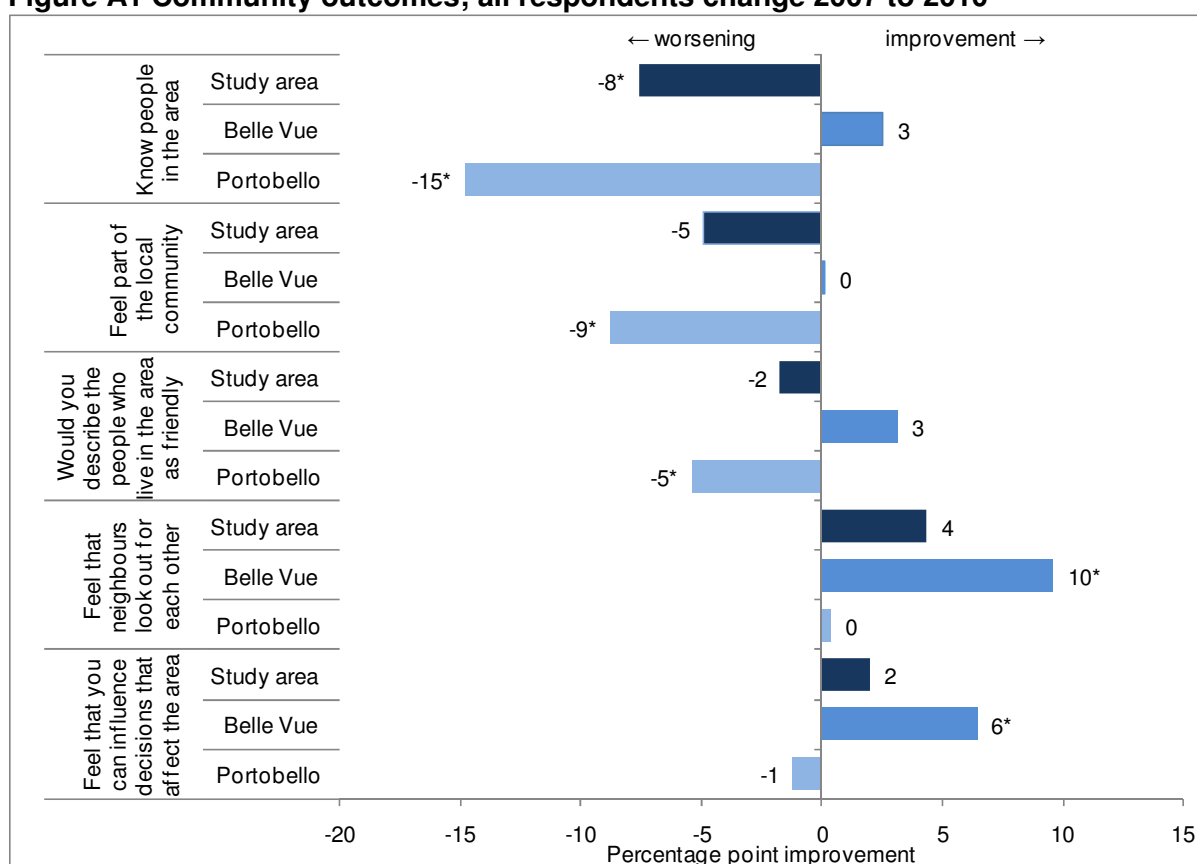
World Health Organisation (2008) *The times of well-being*, available at:
http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Regional_Medical_Services_Oct08.pdf (last accessed 14 January 2010)

Appendix 1: Statistical Significance and Logistic Regression Modelling Explained

A1.1 Statistical Significance

Significance testing has used a z-test for proportions to identify significant difference at a 0.05 level. Statistically significant change is important because only for outcomes showing this can it be said that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the change observed, between 2007 and 2010, has not occurred due to chance. For example, between 2007 and 2010 in Portobello satisfaction with the area fell by 6 percentage points. However, this difference is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that there is not enough evidence to establish whether this difference in change is 'real' or has appeared due to chance: arising from sampling. That is if another sample of residents had been interviewed, then it is possible no change would have been identified.

Figure A1 Community outcomes; all respondents change 2007 to 2010



Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)

Base: all respondents: 2007 Study area (505), Belle Vue (217) Portobello (288); 2010 Study area (500), Belle Vue (210) Portobello (290)

* indicates significant change at a 0.05 level

Table A2 Community outcomes; all respondents change 2007 to 2010

| | | Percentage point change | 2007 Per cent | 2010 Per cent |
|---|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Feel that you can influence decisions that affect the area | Portobello | -1 | 19 | 18 |
| | Belle Vue | 6* | 10 | 16 |
| | Study area | 2 | 15 | 17 |
| Feel that neighbours look out for each other | Portobello | 0 | 65 | 65 |
| | Belle Vue | 10* | 68 | 77 |
| | Study area | 4 | 66 | 71 |
| Would you describe the people who live in the area as friendly | Portobello | -5* | 91 | 85 |
| | Belle Vue | 3 | 90 | 93 |
| | Study area | -2 | 90 | 89 |
| Feel part of the local community | Portobello | -9* | 76 | 67 |
| | Belle Vue | 0 | 78 | 78 |
| | Study area | -5 | 77 | 72 |
| Know people in the area | Portobello | -15* | 73 | 58 |
| | Belle Vue | 3 | 55 | 58 |
| | Study area | -8* | 66 | 58 |

Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)

Base: all respondents: 2007 Study area (505), Belle Vue (217) Portobello (288); 2010 Study area (500), Belle Vue (210) Portobello (290)

* indicates significant change at a 0.05 level

A1.2. Logistic Regression Modelling

Within chapters four and seven, the statistical modelling technique 'logistic regression' has been used to assess:

- which aspects of the home are associated with overall accommodation satisfaction? (chapter 4)
- which improvements to the home are associated with making respondents like their property much more and think it is a better place to live? (chapter 4)
- which problems with the neighbourhood are associated with a respondents satisfaction in their area? (chapter 7)

Logistic regression uses the survey data to estimate models that predict the probability of an occurrence for a dichotomous (binary) event. For instance whether a WDH tenant is 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with their accommodation, given one or more explanatory variables. An attractive property of modelling techniques, such as logistic regression, is that relationships between the response variable and individual explanatory variables can be assessed whilst controlling for other variables in the model. So for instance, what is the influence of having good kitchen facilities on satisfaction with accommodation whilst taking into account that the respondent's home has good internal decoration?

Another attractive feature of logistic regression is that the coefficient attached to explanatory variables can be expressed as an odds ratio (OR). ORs reflect the probability of a given outcome occurring given the respondent has a given characteristic compared to if they did not: all other things being equal. An OR value greater than 1 indicates having the given characteristic is associated with on average, a greater likelihood of the outcome occurring compared to the base group; vice versa for a ratio less than 1.

For example, an OR of two implies that a person with a known attribute, say being satisfied with their bathroom facilities, is on average twice as likely to be satisfied with their accommodation compared with another person who is not satisfied with their bathroom

facilities; after all other factors have been taken into account. The Wald statistic indicates if the explanatory coefficient is significantly different from zero so as not to have occurred due to chance. The selection of 'explanatory factors' into each of the models shown below has been based on a forward stepwise method using the Wald statistic.

The results from the logistic regression models are presented diagrammatically in figure 4.3, figure 4.4 and figure 7.6. In addition, more detailed summaries of the final models have been provided below. Please note that two logistic regression models have had to be utilised in assessing factors associated with being satisfied with accommodation and in the assessing factors associated with respondents liking their property much more and thinking that it is a better place to live. This is due to a high level of correlation between:

- being satisfied with bathroom facilities and being satisfied with kitchen facilities
- and feeling that the home improvement programme has made bathroom facilities better and feeling that the home improvement programme has made kitchen facilities better.

Tables A3a and A3b- Aspects of the home and their relative influence on overall satisfaction with accommodation amongst WDH tenants 2010

a) including kitchen facilities

| Outcome: very or fairly satisfied with accommodation | Odds Ratio | Wald |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Constant | 0.07*** | 10.97 |
| External appearance of your property | 2.82* | 2.88 |
| Your garden | 4.76** | 6.56 |
| The internal decoration of your home | 18.42*** | 19.94 |
| Your kitchen facilities | 4.21** | 4.71 |
| Problems with condensation, damp or mould in your home | 0.31** | 3.90 |
| -2 Log likelihood | 98.08 | |

b) including bathroom facilities

| Outcome: very or fairly satisfied with accommodation | Odds Ratio | Wald |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Constant | 0.02*** | 17.93 |
| External appearance of your property | 3.89** | 4.95 |
| Your garden | 4.18** | 5.61 |
| The internal decoration of your home | 14.73*** | 18.60 |
| Your bathroom facilities | 9.15*** | 11.35 |
| -2 Log likelihood | 96.15 | |

Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants (308)

* significant at 0.1 level; ** significant at 0.05 level; *** significant at 0.01 level

Tables A4a and A4b - Improvement to aspects of the home associated with WDH tenants liking their property much more and thinking it is a better place to live; WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements 2010

a) including kitchen facilities

| Outcome: like property much more and think it is a better place to live | Odds Ratio | Wald |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Constant | 0.52 | 2.01 |
| Your kitchen facilities | 12.41*** | 22.11 |
| -2 Log likelihood | 114.82 | |

b) including bathroom facilities

| Outcome: like property much more and think it is a better place to live | Odds Ratio | Wald |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Constant | 0.61 | 1.08 |
| Your bathroom facilities | 9.29*** | 17.06 |
| -2 Log likelihood | 121.04 | |

Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2010)

Base: WDH tenants in their property since before the home improvements programme and aware of the home improvements programme (146)

* significant at 0.1 level; ** significant at 0.05 level; *** significant at 0.01 level

Tables A5 - Problems with the neighbourhood associated with satisfaction with being satisfied with the area as a place to live; all respondents 2007 and 2010 pooled

| Outcome: very or fairly satisfied with the area as a place to live | Odds Ratio | Wald |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Constant | 9.62*** | 193.19 |
| Problems with neighbours | 0.33*** | 31.97 |
| Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property | 0.68** | 4.39 |
| Household burglary | 0.57*** | 7.24 |
| Drug dealing and use | 0.62** | 6.03 |
| Disturbance from crowds and gangs or hooliganism | 0.49*** | 14.56 |
| Poor public transport | 1.93** | 5.06 |
| The speed and volume of road traffic | 0.68** | 4.49 |
| -2 Log likelihood | 910.05 | |

Source: Belle Vue and Portobello Survey (2007 and 2010)

Base: all respondents (1,005)

* significant at 0.1 level; ** significant at 0.05 level; *** significant at 0.01 level